

Pupils' and teachers' reflections in the wake of the 2020, 2021 and 2022 cancellation of written exams

The benefits and drawbacks of written examination in the English subject at
Norwegian upper secondary schools



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Abstract

This study concerns how cancelation of centralized exams in the English subject in 2020 and 2021 affected teachers and pupils at Norwegian upper secondary schools. The aim of the study is to describe and reflect on how the cancelation of exams affected teachers and pupils when working towards the end of the semester. Additionally, the study also investigates how the absence of exams affect teachers' ability to calibrate their assessment practices. Finally, the study attempts to describe the benefits and drawbacks of written examination for pupils, teachers, and the Norwegian school system. The study utilizes a mixed methods approach through a combination of quantitative- and qualitative data. Statistics on average exam- and overall achievement grades stemming from nearly 400.000 grades are used to establish deviations in grading in 2020 and 2021. The study also implements pupils' opinions on assessments in the English subject through an online survey answered by 98 pupils. Materials from seven structured interviews with upper secondary school teachers is used to better understand how teachers experienced the cancelation of exams.

Assessment of English as a foreign language learners can be challenging for teachers. The present study found that the cancellation of exams temporarily created an opportunity for teachers to grade their pupils more favorably. While statistics show an abnormal increase in average overall achievement grades in nearly all subjects, materials from the interviews revealed that there were many factors influencing this development. The study also revealed that pupils find the threat of a written examination at the end of the course stressful. The overall goal from these materials is to shed light on final assessment practices in Norwegian upper secondary schools and to add valuable inquiry and research into the field of applied linguistics.

Keywords: EFL Assessment, language proficiency testing, teachers' assessment, grading practices

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1 Introduction

This thesis is a mixed-methods study of how teachers and pupils were affected by the cancelation of written exams in 2020 and 2021, as well as how the absence of a written exam in ENG1007¹ has influenced their opinion about final assessments in EFL at Norwegian upper secondary schools. The study includes quantitative data such as statistics collected from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR), and a digital survey answered by 98 upper secondary school pupils. Additionally, it also utilizes qualitative data provided by seven upper secondary school teachers through structured one-on-one interviews with the participants.

For the Norwegian education system, final assessments are the primary piece of information regarding a pupil's academic skills. The grades that make up a pupil's diploma are used when deciding which pupils are accepted to which educational programs and it is therefore vital for this system that the grades are an accurate representation of each pupil's skill level in each subject. While most grades on report cards are overall achievement grades decided by the pupils' teachers, some of the grades stem from centralized exams. Previous studies such as Gravaas et al. (2008), Hovdhaugen et al. (2018), and Hodne (2020), have shown significant deviations between overall achievement grades and exam grades. In order for diplomas to have any value, the grades included need to be of high quality, and in order to achieve that, the assessment practices used have to be reliable.

Quantitative data is especially useful when previous studies on a given topic is limited (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Due to the recency of the subject at hand, similar studies were not available at the time of writing. The quantitative materials collected include a selection of statistics collected from UDIR, and a questionnaire answered by 98 pupils in ENG1007. The statistics from UDIR provide insight into how assessment trends have developed for the past 14 years. Furthermore, they are also used here to establish differences in overall achievement grades and exam grades at Norwegian upper secondary schools. The questionnaire, on the other hand, is useful for giving pupils a chance to voice their opinion about final assessments in ENG1007.

¹ ENG1007 is the official subject code for the English subject at Norwegian upper secondary school (general studies)

In addition to the quantitative data, the study also makes use of qualitative data. Qualitative data can according to Ørevik (2018: 93) be a valuable component for adding depth to the quantitative data. The qualitative data collected in this thesis consists of interview transcripts from seven one-on-one interviews with upper secondary school teachers in Rogaland. The interviews provide insights into how teachers were affected by the cancellation of exams.

A quick google search reveal that the debate regarding the benefits and drawbacks of removing exams at Norwegian upper secondary schools all together is as active as ever. While this debate has probably existed for as long as exams have existed, the cancellation of all centralized exams in 2020, 2021, and now 2022, have most certainly led to increased activity. Pupils, teachers, researchers and politicians all contribute to this debate with different perspectives². Some are worried for the pupils' ability to successfully complete a written examination³, while others are more concerned with what written examinations do to their mental health⁴. In some articles, new approaches to final assessments are even suggested. One such suggestion⁵ is to replace traditional exams with portfolio assessment⁶.

After reviewing theory on assessment of EFL (English as a foreign language) pupils, as well as previous studies related to final assessments at Norwegian upper secondary schools, it became apparent that there existed an opportunity to contribute to this field. The cancelation of centralized exams in 2020 and 2021 provided the researcher with an opportunity to approach the matter from a different perspective. In an attempt to understand how teachers and pupils are affected by the ENG1007 written exam, the following research questions were defined:

1. In what way did the cancelation of exams in 2020 and 2021 affect English teachers in Norwegian upper secondary schools (general studies)?

² https://www.utdanningsnytt.no/eksamen/eksamen-bevare-eller-skrote/321203?fbclid=IwAR2cIPdUPIW5_M67obBv0BIL00vS62HNfSY8ttTJiRieoPBe27GBM6g3oFw

³ <https://www.nettavisen.no/norsk-debatt/a-droppe-eksamen-er-uansvarlig-og-en-bjornetjeneste-for-avgangselevne/o/5-95-390186>

⁴ <https://www.aftenbladet.no/meninger/kommentar/i/8Q8dyA/vurderingshysteriet-i-skolen>

⁵ <https://www.nrk.no/norge/sv-vil-ha-med-regjeringa-pa-a-avvikle-dagens-eksamen-1.15921865>

⁶ A form of assessment where pupils compile a portfolio of texts throughout the year. At the end of the year, pupils select a couple of those texts that are to be assessed by an external sensor.

- How was their ability to get their pupils to complete the course influenced by the announcement?
 - How was their ability to assess pupils influenced?
2. In what way did the cancelation of exams affect teachers' attitude toward final assessment in English at Norwegian upper secondary school?
 3. How did the absence of centralized exams impact teachers' ability to calibrate their own grading practice?
 4. What are the benefits and drawbacks of having a written examination in ENG1007?
 - For pupils
 - For teachers
 - For the Norwegian education system

The first research question will be answered mainly through the use of relevant data from the interviews. Additionally, statistics from UDIR will be included to establish historical trends in grading. The statistics from UDIR will also be used to identify any major changes in grading practices following the cancellation of centralized exams. The second and third research questions are answered using data collected from the interviews and the follow-up questions, while the fourth research question also includes data from the questionnaire answered by upper secondary school pupils.

At first, Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background on assessment and testing in EFL. Chapter 2 then continues by providing a brief overview of a report published by UDIR prior to the creation and introduction of the LK20 exam format. Finally, the chapter explores similar studies looking at systematic differences between exam grades and overall achievement grades in Norway. The methodology and materials selected for this thesis is presented and discussed in Chapter 3. The data collected for this study is then presented in Chapter 4, using visual aids such as graphs and tables when applicable. Chapter 5 features a discussion of findings in relation to each research question. At last, Chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the thesis as well as concluding remarks. Chapter 6 is followed by a list of the references used in this thesis and all the relevant appendices.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Assessment and testing in EFL

The question of how to best evaluate the language proficiency of foreign language learners has been researched for decades. While new techniques and approaches to language assessment are continuously being developed, some methods are more commonly used than others.

2.1.1 Historical overview

In order to better understand why pupils language abilities are tested and assessed in the way they are, it is useful to first understand how the theory of language assessment has developed. According to Hasselgreen & Øreviks (2018:362) accounts of the history of assessment in second and foreign language learning, the works of Lado (1961) are widely believed to have influenced “the birth of serious study of language testing in the 1960s”. At the time, answers were deemed either right or wrong, and pupils were graded in reference to each other in what is now known as norm-referenced assessment. In 1967 an article named “The significance of learners’ errors” was published by Corder. According to Frith (1978: 155), this paper marked the beginning of a different way of interpreting how L2 pupils acquired knowledge and how their first language influenced that knowledge. The name “Interlanguage theory” was first introduced by Selinker (1972). It emphasized the importance of errors and how errors could give teachers valuable information about how each pupil approached the learning of a second language. A few years later, in 1978, the concept of self-assessment was, according to Little (1999: 2), pioneered by the Council of Europe and Mats Oskarsson, which in turn led to the development of portfolio assessment. The third and perhaps most relevant branch of assessment that developed was the acceptance of criterion-based assessment, which according to Bøhn (2019: 234), has been used in the Norwegian school system since 2001.

2.1.2 Norwegian Context

In the Norwegian school system, all the aforementioned methods of assessment can be found to have been used during the relevant time period. Hasselgreen & Ørevik (2018) summarize this by pointing to how EFL (English as a foreign language) pupils in the 70s were assessed by red-marking on grammatical errors such as subject-verb concord and noun inflection. Moving on to the M87 curriculum period, interlanguage theory influenced a shift where

“pupils should not be afraid of making mistakes but treat them as a source of learning. It is important to take care of the joy and desire to learn that pupils have when they start learning English” (Norges Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, 1987: 205, researcher’s translation). In 2001, criterion-referenced assessment was introduced, and both the LK06 curriculum and the LK20 curriculum state that pupils shall be assessed in line with the competence aims of the subject curriculum.

Overall achievement grading is mandatory in all subjects. At the same time, an examination is based on a somewhat random selection of pupils or classes for each subject where according to UDIR, approximately 20% of pupils in VG1 shall be selected for one of the available subjects (Udir-2-2018⁷). In reality, when looking at statistics from school years 2007/2008 until 2018/2019, this makes it so that historically, approximately 10% of pupils in VG1 general studies are selected for a written exam. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the nationwide attendance in ENG1002⁸ in the school years ranging from 2008 – 2019. Over the twelve school years, 405 328 pupils attended ENG1002, with 40 317 pupils participating in the written exam, making the overall average just under 10%, as illustrated by the burgundy line. The orange and red columns should be read in reference with the numbers posted on the left side of the figure, while the exam participation lines in grey and burgundy should be read in reference to the percentages posted on the right side of the figure.

⁷ <https://www.udir.no/regelverkstolkninger/opplaring/eksamen/trekkordning-ved-eksamen-for-grunnskole-og-videregaende-opplaring-udir-2-2018/>

⁸ ENG1002 was the official subject code for the English subject prior to the introduction of ENG1007 in 2020

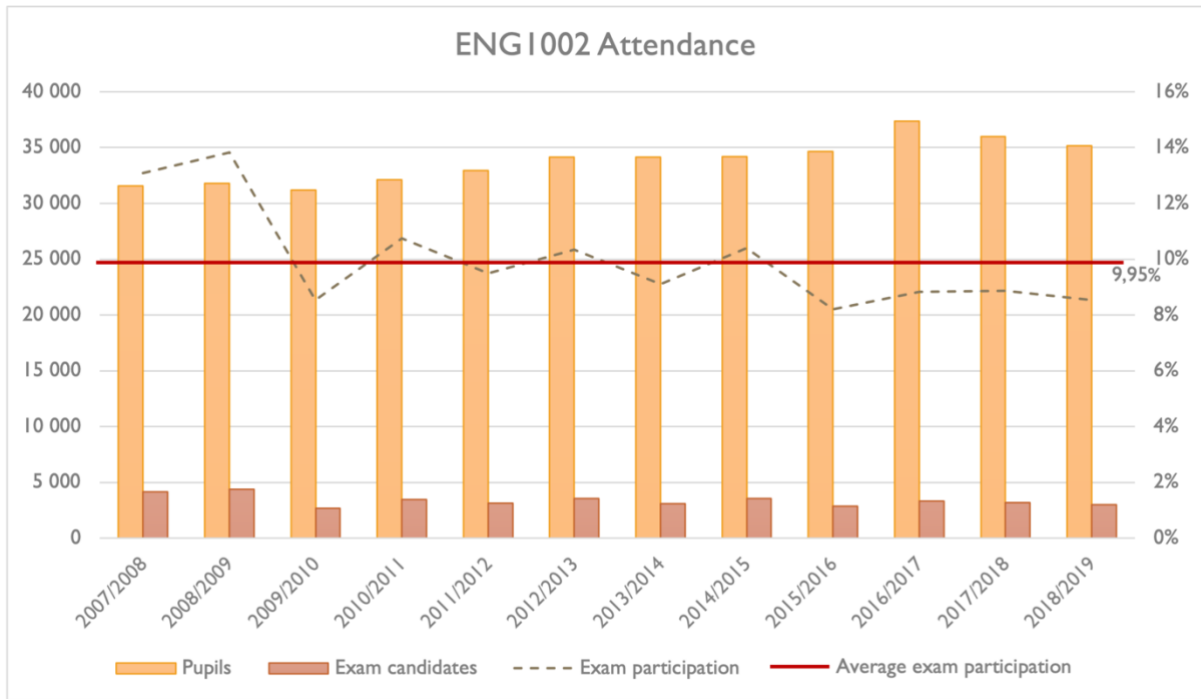


Figure 1: ENG1002 Attendance Chart

The Education Act states that: “The purpose of assessment in subjects is to promote learning and contribute to the desire to learn, and to provide information about competence during and at the end of the training in the subject.” (Opplæringsloven 2020: § 3-3, Researcher’s translation). It is commonly interpreted that this is done through two main functions of assessment, formative- or summative assessment. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010:7), formative assessment entails that the teacher evaluates “pupils in the process of “forming” their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process.” In addition, Hasselgreen & Ørevik explain that “formative assessment is undertaken to document the pupil’s progress, pinpoint areas of improvement, and generally guide the pupil in his or her ongoing learning process” (Hasselgreen & Ørevik 2018: 381). As such, formative assessment is most often the function of assessment used when the purpose of the assessment is to “promote learning and contribute to the desire to learn” (§3-3). Summative assessment on the other hand “aims to measure or summarize, what a pupil has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction” (Brown and Abeywickrama 2010: 7), and it is therefore fitting for the section of the education act §3-3 that seeks to “provide information about competence”

Overall achievement grades and exam grades are both products of summative assessment, however, they are very different in the way they assess overall competence in a subject. UDIR explains that even though both forms of final assessment say something about a pupil's proficiency in the subject, the framework for how they measure proficiency is different, and therefore the grades are not directly comparable. UDIR goes on to explain how:

“The overall achievement grade is an expression of the pupil's overall competence. The pupil must have the opportunity to show competence in several and varied ways in order for the teacher to gain sufficient knowledge of the pupil's overall competence. The overall achievement grade is therefore based on a broader assessment basis over a longer period of time, than is the case for the examination grade.

The exam grade is an expression of the competence the pupil shows in the exam. The exam paper must therefore give the candidate the opportunity to show their competence in as large a part of the subject as possible.”

(UDIR⁹, researcher's translation)

According to Blömeke et al. (2020: 12), it is of great significance to get both overall assessments and exams right as they are used by pupils when applying for further education or employment. They are therefore of great importance, and as a consequence, it is of the utmost importance that pupils are given a fair assessment of their proficiency in any subject. The exams at Norwegian upper secondary schools are regulated by the Education Act. While the exam is addressed on several occasions, for the purpose of this thesis the most relevant one is §3-22 which states that:

An examination grade must express the competence that an individual pupil or private pupil demonstrates in the examination. The examination shall be in accordance with the competence goals in the curriculum, cf. § 3-3. The examination shall allow the pupil or private pupil to show their competence in as large a part of the subject as possible based on the examination form.

⁹ <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/sluttvurdering/standpunktvurdering/>

Whether there should be an exam in the subject, when in the training course there should be an exam, whether there should be pre-preparation time in the subject, and whether the exam should be centrally or locally given is determined in the curriculum in all subjects. The Ministry determines how many exams there should be in primary and lower secondary school and at all levels in upper secondary education.

(Opplæringsloven §3-22, Researcher’s translation)

With the exception of centralized exams, which are assessed and graded by external sensors, teachers are the ones responsible for assessing and grading their pupils abilities in every other form of assessment. In an effort to help teachers do this and in an attempt to create some common baselines for teachers, UDIR has developed and published a table outlining characteristics of goal achievement after VG1 (see figure 2). UDIR does advise however that the table is only intended to help teachers set overall achievement grades and that all assessments must be measured in accordance with the curriculum aims. Hodne (2020:15) criticizes the table both for lacking distinctions between all available grades 1-6, and for the fact that some characteristics of goal achievement are very similar to one another and that it therefore can be challenging for teachers to distinguish between grades.

Low competence in the subject, grade 2	Good competence in the subject, grade 4	Excellent competence in the subject, grade 6
The pupil understands, communicates and reflects in a simple way on some information from oral and written texts.	The pupil understands, communicates and reflects on content and information from different types of oral and written texts.	The pupil understands, communicates and critically reflects on complex content and information from different types of oral and written texts.
The pupil expresses himself/herself simply and comprehensibly and adapts to some extent language of a general, academic and / or subject-specific nature and structure to the purpose, recipient and situation in oral and written texts.	The pupil expresses himself/herself with clear and varied language of a general, academic and / or subject-specific nature and adapts the form of communication to the purpose, recipient and situation in different types of oral and written texts.	The pupil expresses himself/herself with precise and nuanced language of a general, academic and / or subject-specific nature and adapts the form of communication in a clear and coherent way to the purpose, recipient and situation in different types of oral and written texts.
With guidance, the pupil uses relevant information from some English-language sources in their own oral and written text production and states the sources.	The pupil uses relevant information from various English-language sources appropriately in his or her own oral and written text production and provides them accordingly.	The pupil uses relevant information from English-language sources independently and critically in his or her own oral and written text production and gives them up accordingly.
With guidance, the pupil processes parts of their own oral	The pupil processes their own oral and written texts based on	The pupil processes their own oral and written texts based on

and written texts according to specific feedback.	feedback in an independent way based on knowledge of language and academic assessments.	feedback in a reflected and critical way, based on knowledge of language and academic assessments.
The pupil shows some intercultural competence in oral and / or written texts by explaining and reflecting in a simple way on linguistic and cultural diversity, social conditions and English-language cultural forms of expression.	The pupil shows broad intercultural competence in oral and / or written texts by explaining and reflecting independently on linguistic and cultural diversity, social conditions and English-language cultural forms of expression.	The pupil shows broad intercultural competence in oral and / or written texts by explaining, seeing contexts and critically reflecting on linguistic and cultural diversity, social conditions and English-language cultural forms of expression.

Figure 2: Characteristics of goal achievement after VG1 in oral English (UDIR 2020, researchers translation).

2.1.3 Examinations in the English subject (ENG1007)

Whenever big changes such as the introduction of a new curriculum is implemented, teachers are affected. Ellingsund & Hellekjær (2009) researched the washback effects on English teachers' teachings following the introduction of LK06. Through interviewing teachers, Ellingsund & Hellekjær (2009) showed that a minority of their interviewees reported only minor effects. More concerning was their finding that several teachers reported that they were afraid that the new exam format would make it much harder for low level learners to successfully complete the exam. This was predominantly an issue in vocational programs.

The education act was revised in 2020, introducing updated regulations, which included a new overall curriculum named LK20 and a new subject curriculum for English VG1 general studies named ENG1007¹⁰. With the introduction of the new curriculum, a new exam format was also introduced. The education act as of 2020 states that "The pupil may be selected for a written exam. The exam must have a preparation part. Written exams are prepared and censored centrally." (Education act¹¹ §3-26, §3-27, §3-28, researcher's translation)

The exam as of LK20 differs from the previous format in both form and content. While the exam as of LK06 featured a combination of one short answer section and one long answer section, the new format "consists of four types of assignments, type 1 (reception), type 2 (mediation), type 3 (interaction), and type 4 (exemption)." (Eksamensveiledning 2021, researcher's translation). While the original implementation of the new format was planned

¹⁰ ENG1007 is technically the subject code when addressing VG1 English (general studies) specifically. The overall English subject curriculum is called ENG01-04 and includes general information, as well as specific sections for age groups ranging from year 2 (age 7), to year 11 (age 17).

¹¹ <https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2006-06-23-724> (§3-26, §3-27, §3-28)

for spring 2021, the nationwide cancellation of exams delayed the implementation. On February 28, 2022, the government passed a temporary directive¹² ordering the cancellation of written exams in 2022 as well. The earliest implementation of the new exam format will therefore be in 2023.

2.1.4 Validity and reliability of language testing.

Language proficiency is challenging to measure in part due to the complexity of the term. Bachman (1990:16) gives an in-depth account of how the term has developed from referring to “knowledge, competence, or ability in the use of a language, irrespective of how, where, or under what conditions it has been acquired”, to a term primarily associated with the testing of L2 learners language ability. Since the publication by Bachman in 1990, the term has regained some of its traditional meaning, primarily through increased focus on the language proficiency needed for academic purposes in the United States. Wolf (2020: 97) describes how the American pedagogical initiative known as the Common Core State Standard (CCSS) in 2012 introduced four major language and literacy demands relevant for the testing of language proficiency.

(1) engaging complex texts (reading standards), (2) using evidence in writing and research (writing standards), (3) working collaboratively and presenting ideas (speaking and listening standards), and (4) developing linguistic resources to do the above-mentioned tasks effectively (language standards).

Wolf (2020: 97)

In the United States, these four language and literacy demands are, as of 2021, considered the standard for English language proficiency testing. They are also very similar to the four sections featured in the ENG1007 written exam.

According to Gronlund (1998: 200), the validity of a test is the most important quality of any language test. Validity is defined as “the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment” (Gronlund 1998: 226). Simply put, the validity of a test indicates whether or not the test actually measures what it attempts to measure. This can, according to Brown &

¹² <https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2020-05-26-1061> (§8, §8a, §8b, §8f, §8g.)

Abeywickrama (2010: 30), be difficult to establish, but some common methods of determining the validity of a test are to analyze if there is sufficient correlation between the knowledge needed to complete it successfully and the course or unit being tested. Another approach is to compare statistics of two forms of assessment that both are aimed at testing the same abilities.

A test's reliability is also important in that it directly influences how test subjects perform. Brown & Abeywickrama (2010: 29) provide examples of how factors such as the length of a test, how questions are written, and possible time limits all influence the test taker. Furthermore, they also describe how the question format, being either subjective with open-ended questions that require judgment by a sensor, or objective with close-ended questions or multiple-choice questions that can be graded automatically with predefined values, affects the reliability of tests.

2.1.5 The purpose of final assessments

Bachman (1990) categorizes language tests as being used for one of two objectives. They are either created to provide information relevant within the context of educational programs or to provide information about language users' abilities and attributes relevant for the research of language, language acquisition, and language teaching. Depending on the intended use of the test, several factors should be considered in order to assure the validity and reliability of the test; however, Bachman emphasizes that “the single most important consideration in both the development of language tests and the interpretation of their results is the purpose or purposes the particular tests are intended to serve.” (1990: 54).

Final assessments of EFL pupils at Norwegian upper secondary schools are within the context of educational programs.

In educational settings the major uses of test scores are related to evaluation, or making decisions about people or programs. In order to justify the use of tests for educational evaluation, certain assumptions and considerations must be made regarding the usefulness and quality of the information which tests provide.

Bachman (1990: 54)

For pupils, the purpose of language tests as final assessments is first and foremost to evaluate their language ability or proficiency in an effort to establish their readiness for future education. While Bachman here refers to standardized tests such as the “Test of English as a Foreign Language” (TOEFL), which many international institutions use, similar attributes can be found in the written ENG1007 exam in Norwegian upper secondary schools. Interestingly, Bachman (1990: 61) cautions that tests that are intended to measure the degree to which a pupil has successfully mastered a course of instruction should be based on the syllabus of the course in question and not on the theory of language proficiency.

Another common purpose of language tests is, according to Bachman (1990: 62), to evaluate and compare language courses or programs. This is in some ways similar to how the written ENG1007 exam is used to assess teachers’ and schools’ grading practices.

2.2 Assessments and recommendations on future exams.

In 2020, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, published a report titled: “Assessments and recommendations on future exams.” Sigrid Blömeke was in charge of a group of scholars from universities, representatives from teacher and pupil unions, and one representative from UDIR. The group was tasked with reviewing the then current exam system and making suggestions as to how the system could be improved in the upcoming LK20 curriculum. In the following paragraphs, some important outtakes from their findings will be presented.

First and foremost, the report establishes the functions, or rather lack thereof, associated with the exam, stating that the wording is unclear and that some functions should be clarified in the upcoming education act of 2020. The main issue, according to Blömeke et al. (2020: 11), is that the education act fails to show why pupils should take an exam. They do praise that the education act §3-22 states that “the exam shall enable pupils to show their proficiency in the subject” (Researcher’s translation). Still, it is in the report emphasized that this paragraph fails to properly define “why” pupils should be assessed by an exam. The report goes on to recommend that the wording should clarify that one of the most essential functions of the exam is external quality control. It is emphasized that the external control function of the exam should be interpreted as a benefit both for teachers and pupils, as it can provide teachers with important perspectives on how to shape future courses and a tool for calibration

of assessment. For the pupils, the exam should serve as an independent evaluation, thereby allowing pupils to be evaluated by an external examiner. This aspect would therefore clarify why pupils should have an exam.

The exam is one of two possible summative assessments in any given subject, the other being an overall achievement grade (Blömeke et al. 2020: 11). Overall achievement grades and exam grades are two equal but different summative assessments in Norwegian upper secondary schools. Both forms of final assessment measure pupils abilities. The overall achievement grade is based on a broad assessment of a collection of written assignments, oral competence, and overall effort. The exam on the other hand is based on a test that is limited by time, and therefore also in its ability to measure proficiency related to all competence aims in the given subject. Blömeke et al., therefore, argues that while statistics can be used to assess teachers, schools, or regions by school owners and administrations, they should not do so due to the fact that overall achievement grades and exam grades are not directly comparable. (Blömeke et al. 2020: 12)

2.3 Systematic deviances between exam grades and overall achievement grades

In the 21st century, numerous studies have been exploring different factors that influence assessment in different classrooms and factors that lead to systematic deviations between exam- and overall achievement grades (Hægeland et al. (2005), Dale & Wærness (2006), Gravaas et al. (2008), Galloway et al. (2011) (analysis of previous studies), Hovdhaugen et al. (2014), Hovdhaugen et al. (2018), Hodne (2020)). It is widely documented both in these studies and by official statistics from UDIR that inconsistencies in exam grading and overall achievement grading have existed for the past 20 years, however, recent reports from UDIR, specifically in their 2020 annual publication of *The Norwegian Education Mirror*¹³ indicated that the deviation between exam grades and overall achievement grades could theoretically be more significant than ever due to an increase in pupils' average overall achievement grades in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 subjects in 2019 and 15 subjects in 2018 (Utdanningsspeilet 2020: 116). While many factors could be influencing this massive increase, it does support Hovdhaugen et al.'s finding that "the exam is often seen as a guideline and is thus given a calibrating function for overall achievement grading" (2018: 3,

¹³ <https://www.udir.no/in-english/education-mirror-2019/about-the-education-mirror/> (2020 version only available in Norwegian)

researcher's translation). Other factors could include; increased sympathy for pupils due to the pandemic and homeschooling, or the extra time pupils and teachers were given to work on the overall assessment due to the cancelation of exams, or other factors yet to be theorized. However, these are yet to be researched due to the recency of the events.

When looking back, Hægeland et al. (2005) was the first sizable Norwegian study focused on analyzing and describing systematic differences in grading. The report published by SSB, the national statistics bureau, featured a quantitative analysis of all overall achievement grades and exam grades recorded in 2004 in both lower and upper secondary schools. By analyzing deviations between overall achievement and exam grades on an individual level, Hægeland et al. (2005) found that systematic differences in grading existed. The dataset analyzed indicated that the correlation between overall achievement grades and exam grades could be influenced by the number of pupils in a class, the gender of the pupil, and by the socioeconomic background and educational level of the pupils' parents. According to the study; boys, pupils with highly educated parents, and pupils from large schools, were the ones that were most negatively affected when comparing their exam grades there with their overall achievement grades.

In 2006 Dale & Wærness published a thorough review of assessment and testing during Reform 97. While the book gave an account of several different factors, some factors are particularly relevant for the present thesis. First and foremost, Dale & Wærness (2006) advocated for introducing good and bad levels of achievement for each grade in an effort to show that grades were very much dependent on pupils' prerequisite knowledge in any given subject. By introducing different levels of achievement for each grade, it would, according to Dale & Wærness (2006), be easier to motivate pupils by giving them grades of encouragement while still being fair according to criterion-based assessment. More importantly, Dale & Wærness (2006) expressed concern about the vague nature of the assessment criteria associated with Reform 97 and pointed to how they made it very hard for teachers to assess their pupils without considering their prerequisite knowledge. According to the authors, this, in turn, led to a situation where it was quite difficult for teachers at different schools to assess their pupils from a common baseline.

Gravaas et al. (2008), is a study similar to Hægeland et al. (2005) in that it uses a considerable dataset to look for trends in overall achievement- and exam grading. The most

significant difference between the two is that Gravaas et al. (2008) does this in light of the new LK06 curriculum, whereas Hægeland et al.'s. (2005) study was subject to R94.

Furthermore, they also supplement the primary data set, which consisted of information on grading from schoolyear 2006/2007 with grading information from a few previous years. The study concluded that systematic deviances in grading did exist and that some trends could be found. Girls were found to steadily outperform boys on both overall achievement grades and exam grades. It was also found that pupils received better exam grades than overall achievement grades when the tests were oral, while the opposite was true for written tests. Lastly, Gravaas et al. (2008) also studied how pupils' backgrounds influenced grading trends by analyzing the collected data in light of their parent's region of origin and educational level. According to their findings, pupils of western descent did better than pupils of non-western descent.

Galloway et al. (2011) did an in-depth analysis of previous research on the deviation between overall achievement and exam grades in lower secondary schools. They focused primarily on data from 2001-02 until 2007-08 retrieved from research published by Hægeland et al. (2005) and Gravaas et al. (2008). Their analysis found a correlation between the number of pupils at a school and the pupil's ability to achieve the same or a better grade on the exam. From their analysis, Galloway et al. (2011) showed that pupils from small schools were likely to underperform on exams compared to the grade they received for their overall achievement. It was argued that teachers at small schools tended to overestimate their pupils' abilities due to a lack of pupils for comparison. Additionally, Galloway et al. (2011) were also able to identify that classes that did not perform well in an exam setting were often overvalued by their teacher and that this was consistent regardless of the subject. Furthermore, they also found that teachers tended to undervalue classes that did collectively well on exams. Galloway et al.'s (2011) findings would indicate that teachers use the full specter of their pupils proficiency levels in the calibration of their own grading practices.

Hovdhaugen et al. (2014) researched overall achievement grading practices at public and private schools in Norway. The report was ordered by UDIR after a series of news articles revealed significant deviations between overall achievement grades and exam grades at several private schools in Norway. Using mixed methods, Hovdhaugen et al. (2014) combined quantitative data and qualitative data to analyze and discuss if pupils at public schools and private schools were assessed and graded on equal terms. Furthermore, they also

researched if, and how, exams could serve as a guideline used for calibrating teachers' assessment and grading practices. They concluded that exams could potentially be used for calibration of grading, but that it relied on the validity and reliability of the exam. Additionally, they were also able to show that average exam grades can vary significantly from year to year, which in turn led them to question exams' ability to function as a method of calibrating grading practices.

More recently, Hovdhaugen et al. (2018) conducted a mixed-method study where they enquired about which functions the exam grade and the overall achievement grade fulfilled in teachers' assessment culture. The study combined statistics from a selected eight upper secondary schools (general studies) in Norway in the subjects "Norwegian VG3" and "Mathematics R2". In addition to statistics from the years 2007/08 through 2010/11, the study also conducted group interviews with 32 teachers, each employed at one of the eight schools. The quantitative data collected and analyzed suggested that the overall achievement grading remained as more of a constant and that exam grading was fluctuating somewhat more in the same timespan. Through the group interviews, Hovdhaugen et al. (2018) found that, in general, teachers had high regard both for exam grades and overall achievement grades but that they also emphasized how different they were in their form of assessment. Furthermore, the majority of participants had, according to Hovdhaugen et al. (2018) suggested that sensor training like the one given to teachers responsible for assessing centralized exams should be offered to all teachers involved in overall achievement grading. Some participants also reported that their mindset was different when assessing centralized exams as opposed to when they were setting overall achievement grades. The reason given was the human aspect present in setting overall achievement grades, the desire to give pupils the benefit of the doubt whenever possible, and the lack thereof when you go through a pile of anonymous exam papers as a sensor. Hovdhaugen et al. (2018) concluded that both the exam grade and the overall achievement grade had their purpose but that they were not suited as quality assurance for each other as they measure two very different aspects of proficiency. Finally, the study recommends that a forum should be created where teachers can discuss overall achievement grading on a national level.

Hodne (2020) analyzed assessment culture and practices through interviews with six lower secondary school teachers, supplemented by quantitative data from Skoleporten¹⁴ and a practical assignment where all six interviewees were tasked with assessing the same exam paper from 2018. The result showed significant deviations between the teachers and what factors they emphasized the most when grading. One participant assessed the paper as a being deserving of grade 2, three participants gave the paper the grade 3, and two participants gave the paper the grade 4. Analysis showed that this was mainly due to the way each teacher weighted the different characteristics of goal achievement. One of the reasons this particular exam paper was chosen was that the pupil had not sufficiently marked which task he or she was answering. As a result, some participants immediately downgraded the paper, while others were more lenient. While most participants highlighted the same positives and negatives of the paper, some participants were more inclined to focus on the mistakes made. In contrast, others turned a blind eye to the most significant one and graded the paper as if the clerical error had not been made.

When analyzing statistics from Skoleporten, Hodne (2020) supplemented the findings with data points of individual achievements from the western region of Norway. Her analysis of the materials collected showed that while the statistics collected from UDIR indicated some deviation between overall achievement grades and exam grades in ENG1002, the data points of individual achievements showed significant deviations between overall achievement grades and exam grades and that these deviations varied significantly between schools. At one of the schools, only one-fifth of the pupils achieved the same grade in both forms of final assessment, while roughly half the pupils achieved one grade lower on the exam compared to their overall achievement grade, and roughly one-third of the pupils dropped down two grades. When asked, the teachers participating pointed out that it can depend on the exam and that some exams are better suited for what the pupils have been prepared for than others.

¹⁴ Skoleporten was a portal used by UDIR to publish statistics about exam- and overall achievement- grades. 01.07.2021, the portal was decommissioned, and the data is now available at UDIR's own website: <https://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/statistikk/statistikk-grunnskole/>

3 Methodology and Materials

The following chapter outlines and discusses the methodology and materials chosen for this thesis. The four research questions of this thesis require a selection of quantitative data to establish grading trends in ENG1007 and its prequel, ENG1002. Additionally, a combination of quantitative data collected from pupils, and qualitative data collected from teachers was needed to gain insight into the opinions of the people affected by changes in final assessment practices in ENG1007. A mixed-method study consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data was therefore chosen. When researching similar topics, Hovdhaugen et al. (2014), Bøhn (2015), and Hodne (2020) all used some combination of a mixed methods approach. In the following chapter, a mixed-method approach consisting of a combination of quantitative and qualitative research will be described and discussed in general. Additionally, the specifics of the methods used in this thesis will be outlined. Furthermore, the selection and sampling of participants is covered, as well as how privacy issues regarding both interviewees and minors have been addressed. Finally, this chapter will outline how both the interviews and the questionnaire were designed and carried out.

3.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative material is useful when a research question requires the collection and analysis of a large amount of data in order to establish and describe trends. In describing the major characteristics of quantitative research, Creswell (2012: 13) includes:

- Analyzing trends, comparing groups, or relating variables using statistical analysis, and interpreting results by comparing them with prior predictions and past research
- Collecting numeric data from a large number of people using instruments with preset questions and responses

The first point included from Creswell's (2012) list of major characteristics of quantitative research is particularly relevant to the first use of quantitative materials in this thesis. In order to establish and describe trends in final assessment in the English subject at Norwegian upper secondary schools (general studies), statistics covering nearly 400.000 grades was collected from UDIR. The second point described by Creswell (2012) is relevant to the questionnaire

distributed to nearly 100 pupils, which is the second use of a quantitative method in this thesis.

3.1.1 Statistics from UDIR

Statistics collected from UDIR are included in the analysis to show national trends. Each year, UDIR publishes data outlining all exam- and overall achievement grades in upper secondary school. Statistics dating back to 2007/2008, covering more than 330.000 pupils, are used to establish trends prior to the cancelation of exams in 2020. Analysis of this data should serve as a reliable baseline, however, two changes made in 2020 create some validity issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, in 2020, several counties merged, which reduced the number of counties from 19 down to 11. While this does not impact the statistics when looking at the data from a nationwide perspective, it does mean that an analysis looking at pupil density concerning differences in overall achievement grades is not directly comparable. Secondly, an even more significant validity issue with the historical records is that schoolyear 2020/2021 introduced a new curriculum. Even though English proficiency is still measured through overall achievement, the characteristics of achievement and the competence aims have been altered. It is therefore no longer an apples-to-apples comparison between statistics prior to 2020/2021 and statistics from the year of the new curriculum.

3.1.2 Utdanningsspeilet

Each year, a report summarizing notable developments in Norwegian education from kindergarten to upper secondary school, is published by UDIR. The information, statistics and comments presented are compiled by UDIR and includes statistics from SSB (the national statistical institute of Norway) and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). OECD is an international organisation that works together with governments to help “shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.”¹⁵ The publication also includes outtakes from some relevant research articles that helps shed light on recent developments.

3.1.3 Questionnaire

A digital survey was believed to be the best approach for collecting information from pupils. Firstly, a digital survey is easily distributed, and it therefore has the ability to reach many

¹⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/about/> (accessed 27. 04. 22)

possible participants. Secondly, it makes it possible for the researcher to collect data from participants without having to interact with them in person. Due to the unpredictability of Covid restrictions this was seen as an important factor. The questionnaire (appendix 1) was made in an effort to include pupils' perspectives on final assessments in English at upper secondary school. Research implementing pupils' perspectives on exams is currently lacking and can, according to Blömeke et al. (2020: 59), prove very valuable.

When the questionnaire was formed, it was still uncertain to what degree the data collected would prove useful for the study. While the questions in the survey were designed to gain some insight into pupils' beliefs, privacy concerns restricted the questionnaire to be exclusively comprised of multiple choice questions. As such, the pupils were only given an opportunity to express their opinion through predetermined answers. One alternative method of collecting data from pupils could have been to conduct an interview with a few selected pupils, as was done with some teachers. Another approach could have been to organize group interviews; however, both of those options were quickly ruled out due to the following issues: Sampling of participants, obtaining consent from legal guardians, and the time investment needed in order to get a pool of participants big enough for the results to have any merit.

The questionnaire was constructed to take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The main reason for making such a short survey was to prevent the participants from losing interest and focus before finishing all questions. Additionally, it was believed that teachers would be more inclined to participate if as little time as possible was used to complete the survey. With that in mind, the questions were all designed to be swiftly answered using multiple choice. It was also believed that it would be best to present the questions and their accompanied answers in Norwegian, as this would allow all pupils regardless of their English proficiency to hopefully understand and answer the questions to the best of their ability. While most pupils would probably understand the questions, it was believed that some could struggle with differentiating between the intensifiers used to distinguish the degree to which they found a given statement true or false. All future references to questions and answers originating from the questionnaire have been translated by the researcher and as a result, some minor differences in wording is to be expected, but the essence of all questions and accompanying answers should be accurate.

Some questions asked the participants to assess a claim presented to them. These questions could be answered by choosing one of the six following alternatives: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “slightly disagree”, “slightly agree”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. These six alternatives were chosen as they force the participants to form an opinion. It was believed that the questions in this category were such in nature that every participant should be able to form an opinion that leaned in one way or the other.

Part one of the questionnaire included two questions that asked participants to confirm or deny that they were, in fact, attending VG1 English (Eng. 1007), making them eligible to participate in the study. Part two of the study consisted of seven questions focusing on assessment. Part three of the survey consisted of six questions focused on the English exam.

Participants for the questionnaire were recruited by inviting the teachers interviewed in the study to encourage their pupils to answer the questionnaire during class. Out of the seven participants, five participants wanted their pupils to attend. With 99 respondents, the average number of respondents per teacher is just below 20. Originally, the researcher was supposed to schedule an appointment where the introduction to the questionnaire could be read, and the pupils could be monitored when answering. Unfortunately, national Covid restrictions made it impractical for the researcher to visit the classes taking part in the survey. It was therefore decided that the teachers would be responsible for introducing the questionnaire and monitoring the pupils’ participation. This should be considered as a possible reliability and validity issue. By outsourcing this task, the researcher could no longer ensure that all participants were given the same introduction nor how potential questions were answered. It also meant that the teachers involved had the opportunity to influence participants knowingly or unknowingly.

3.2 Qualitative data

Qualitative data is valuable when the research question investigates trends, and the thesis “seeks to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and note how this tendency varies among people.” Creswell (2021: 37). Furthermore, a qualitative approach is, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), “particularly relevant when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited” (in Bøhn 2015: 3).

3.2.1 Interview

In an effort to provide all participants with an opportunity to fully express their opinions, an approach utilizing interviews was believed to be preferred. This idea was founded in Strauss and Corbin (1998) who recommended that: “qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods” (1998: 11)

When designing a suitable interview, it was decided to base the interview guide (appendix 3) on a structured interview approach. Contrary to a traditional structured interview, however, the interview guide used for this thesis consisted mainly of open-ended questions. While this is unorthodox, the considerations and advantages of choosing this approach were many. First and foremost, a structured interview “leaves little room for error” (Fontana & Frey 2000: 650) as it is conducted in a way that dictates the setting, the wording, and the order of questions. It is also favorable as it minimizes the researcher’s role in the interview and subsequently his or her ability to influence the interviewee. Conducting a structured interview also minimizes the researcher’s influence on the respondents, which is especially important as the study attempts to highlight individual teachers’ beliefs or attitudes towards a particular subject. Furthermore, a structured approach should allow the researcher to directly compare and analyze answers in a way that would be more difficult if a semi-structured or an unstructured approach had been used.

The unusual interview type chosen for this thesis, was selected based on two fundamental ideas. Firstly, in line with the research questions at hand, the primary target of the interviews was to gather information about teachers’ beliefs, and as such, it was deemed critical not to influence subjects during the interview. Secondly, it was considered to be equally important to allow the participants to express their opinions as freely as possible while still having them answer questions relevant to the research questions.

Based on the desire not to influence the participants, a structured interview was chosen as it allows the researcher to remain as neutral as possible by sticking to a script outlining the conversation. The same reasoning was used for choosing One-on-One interviews as opposed to focus groups. While focus group interviews would have facilitated a more significant number of participants, this could have led to a validity issue where some participants felt uncomfortable sharing their attitudes or experiences honestly among colleagues. The anonymity a One-on-One interview provides makes it more likely that participants would feel

comfortable sharing their beliefs, seeing as they only need to trust the person conducting the interview, and the document describing how their personalia and the audio recording would be deleted as soon as the interview was transcribed.

Open-ended questions were preferred for all questions regarding the participants’ beliefs or subjective thoughts on any given subject. The reasoning for this is linked to the second fundamental idea, which highlights the importance of structuring the questioning in order to collect the necessary data while still allowing the participants to fully express their opinions. Some general questions were closed-ended, and in some cases, probes were used when applicable. With these considerations in mind, an interview protocol was designed using Creswell’s (2021: 261) “Sample Interview Protocol”. Figure 3 shows how numbered questions were supplemented with probes (labeled by letters) where applicable. This arrangement allowed the researcher to ask expected follow-up questions as needed.

Participant X	
General information	1. Gender
	2. Age
	3. Education
	a. Lektor/masters and PPU
	b. Subjects
	c. Other relevant education
	4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?
Experience	5. Experience
	a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)
	b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam?
	i. How many times?
	ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?
	a. Did you take advantage of the offer presented to you?
	b. Did you find it helpful?
	i. Could you elaborate?
	c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?
	i. How many times?
	ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature preparing you for that assignment?
	a. Did you take advantage of the offer presented to you?
	b. Did you find it helpful?
	i. Could you elaborate?

Opinions about the exam	6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statements that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?
	7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same thing, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.
	8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:
	a. Measure pupils' proficiency
	b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)
	c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)
	9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?
	10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?
	11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?
	2020
a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?	
i. Approximately for how long?	
13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?	
14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?	
15. In what way did the cancellation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?	
16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?	
a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?	
b. Do you think this could also be influenced by "compassion for the general misery in society"?	
17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?	
a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?	
2021	18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?
	a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?
	i. Approximately for how long?
	19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?
	20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?
	21. In what way did the cancellation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?
Assess	22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?
	a. Was/Would that (have been) a fair thing to do?
	23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?
25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?
a. How do you weigh oral and written English?
26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?
a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?
b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

Figure 3: Interview protocol

Each interview started with the researcher introducing a letter of compliance (see Appendix 2) which explained the intent of the interview. Furthermore, the letter also described how the materials collected from the interview would be handled, stored, and eventually deleted. After signing the letter of compliance, the interview started with the researcher introducing the interview as a structured interview. It was emphasized to the participants that the researcher would attempt to remain as neutral and unresponsive to their answers as possible, but they could of course ask questions if they had trouble understanding or otherwise answering the questions asked. Lastly, the participants were informed that:

For the purpose of this interview, all questions will be presented in English. You as the respondent are however free to answer all questions in a language of your choice. Your choice of language is not part of the study, and what is most important in your choice is that you feel comfortable answering the questions presented to the best of your ability. You may also switch between languages during the interview if this helps you answer the question at hand.

Interview guide (Appendix 3)

Participant 7 was the only participant that chose to answer in Norwegian for the entire duration of the interview. Participants 1 and 6 alternated between using English and Norwegian when answering questions. The remaining participants primarily used English when answering questions, with the exception being short words or phrases that are more commonly used in the Norwegian education system. All statements included in the thesis have been transcribed by the researcher to the best of his ability. When applicable, the references indicate if the transcription has been translated from Norwegian to English by the researcher.

The test run

When starting the interview process, the first interview was treated as all the other interviews, however, it was also intended to test the interview protocol. While the test run indicated that the interview design worked as intended, it also showed that some questions were difficult to understand and that some questions should be added. Participant 1 was the interviewee taking part in the test run, and given the changes made following this interview, some questions were not presented to him. Participant 1 was informed prior to the interview starting that the interview protocol could be slightly altered after the fact, and that while it was intended to test the protocol, his participation would be presented alongside the other participants' answers. After the first interview, the following changes were made:

Question 8 added.	To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives: a) Measure pupils proficiency. b) Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture. c) Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula.
Question 9 added	In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?
Question 10 added	In general, do you believe that the benefits of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?
Question 11 added	Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?
Question 23 added	Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

3.2.2 Interview participants

The two following criteria were mandatory to qualify as a participant in the interview process. Firstly, all participants had to be qualified as teachers of English in upper secondary school. Secondly, all participants had to be actively teaching English at upper secondary school during the period in question. The period in question was defined as starting in spring 2020 and not ending earlier than spring 2022. These criteria were set in order to ensure that all participants had the relevant experience needed to share their opinion on the subject. In addition to these mandatory criteria, the researcher tried to diversify participants as best as possible in an attempt to allow for a wider specter of opinions. This was done through

variation in gender, age, amount and type of experience, as well as the current employer (school).

The approach chosen to recruit participants is in line with a convenience sampling, as described by Dörnyei:

An important criterion of sample selection is the convenience of the researcher: members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer.

Dörnyei (2007: 98-99)

Seeing as this thesis is written at the University of Stavanger, one criterion was that all participants needed to be available for interviews in Rogaland. This one criterion meant that the diversity of participants was somewhat compromised. Questions relating to the duration of homeschooling would most definitely have received a wider variety of answers if answered by participants from all parts of Norway. It was however believed that most questions would to a lesser degree be affected by the teacher's location. Furthermore, it was also believed that the participants attending the study would be able to provide diverse answers that would hopefully be representative of several teacher's opinions, regardless of their location.

Recruiting a maximum of one participant from each school was believed to help combat an overrepresentation of beliefs pushed by the administration and/or the culture at one school, as well as mitigating potential validity issues with participants discussing the interview questions with each other in between interview sessions. In an effort to mitigate the risk of researcher bias, it was decided that if a situation arose where several individuals from one school were interested in participating, participants with experience as sensors on written exams in the English subject should be prioritized. Fortunately, this was never an issue.

Using mainly two modes of recruitment, a total of eight participants were selected. Three of the participants were recruited directly by the researcher, mainly through conversations about the project during an annual subject fair for upper secondary school English teachers. The remaining participants were invited to participate through an e-mail sent to 58 upper

secondary school English teachers in Rogaland. In total, seven teachers replied to the e-mail. Out of those, one respondent said that she had started teaching in August 2021, and that she did not have any experience with the subject at hand. Another teacher responded that she worked exclusively with pupils from vocational programs and that she therefore was outside the scope of the study. Remaining were five eager English teachers that thankfully accepted the invitation.

Participant 8 had to be omitted from the study as her place of work focused primarily on guiding a select few individuals for a short period of time leading up to an exam for external candidates. Unfortunately, this meant that while her remarks were interesting, they fall outside the scope of the current study.

3.2.3 Follow up questionnaire

Due to the continued development of the COVID-19 restrictions, UDIR was, on December 9th, 2021, tasked by the Department of Education to put together a risk assessment evaluating the possibility of canceling all written exams in upper secondary school planned for spring 2022. When the interview guide was developed, and subsequently when the first few participants were interviewed, it was not possible to include questions relevant to this new development. Participants interviewed later in the process were eager to discuss the continued development, and it was therefore decided that the study could benefit from creating and distributing a short follow-up questionnaire that addressed the cancellation of exams in 2022 as well as some preliminary findings from the study. The following questionnaire (Figure 4) was distributed to all interviewees via e-mail.

Follow up questions regarding cancellation of written English exams in 2020-2022
As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.
1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?
2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunktvurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplæringssituasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunkt karakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?

b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?

3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some lose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

a. Do you agree with this perception?

4. Utdanningspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefor feel the need to have you clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils' English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

Figure 4: Follow-up questionnaire

After receiving responses from five out of the seven interviewees, it became apparent that question 3 was too vague in stating that preliminary findings indicate that the exam is “Very beneficial for teachers.” The question should further have specified which aspects of the

exam that could be seen as beneficial for teachers, in order for them to give extensive and accurate replies.

3.3 Privacy concerns

When conducting a mixed-methods study such as this one, one of the most important aspects to consider is the participants privacy. Fortunately, the quantitative data collected from UDIR does not require any review from the researcher as the data published within the privacy guidelines applicable to UDIR. While restrictions such as a minimum amount of datapoints is required for UDIR to publish information on pupils grades, this does not impact this particular study as the data relevant for this study is on a nationwide scale.

The questionnaire raised a few major concerns, the first of which was the fact that the target group consisted solely of minors. The privacy of minors is strictly regulated and enforced by NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) and normally requires a legal guardian's signature. Thankfully, NSD has allowed smaller research projects dealing exclusively with non-sensitive data gathering to include pupils above the age of 15, as long as they consent to being a part of the study¹⁶. The only piece of sensitive data pupils could be at risk of sharing by taking part in this digital questionnaire is their IP-address. Fortunately, SurveyXact makes it possible to anonymize participants by including end-to-end encryption of all answers and thereby concealing their IP-address. Additionally, by making all questions multiple-choice, participants were unable to disclose identifiable information unintentionally. These two factors made it possible to distribute the questionnaire to pupils without requiring the signature of a legal guardian.

Some privacy concerns had to be considered in relation to the interviews. Firstly, an application had to be submitted and approved by NSD. The application was necessary, in part due to the use of a recording device during the interviews. The recording and storing of such data is strictly regulated by NSD and according to the application, the audio file had to be deleted as soon as the transcription was finished, and no later than 30.06.22 which marked the end of the predicted research period. According to the dispensation given by the NSD, all participants were required to be informed about the audio recording prior to the interview

¹⁶ <https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/oppslagsverk-for-personvern-i-forskning/barnehage-og-skoleforskning/> (accessed 27. 04. 22)

commencing through a letter of compliance. All participants have received, signed, and handed in a copy of the letter of compliance.

4 Presentation of Findings

In the following chapter, the relevant findings collected from the various methods used will be presented using visual aids when applicable, and summaries or quotes from participants when relevant. For the purpose of keeping the information as structured and concise as possible, the presentation of findings will feature the following subchapters: 4.1) Statistics from UDIR, 4.2) Quantitative data from the questionnaire, 4.3) Data from the transcriptions of the interviews conducted, and 4.4) relevant data collected from the follow-up questions.

4.1 Statistics from UDIR

Figure 5 shows the past ten years' evolution of grades in the top ten subjects at upper secondary school (general studies). From the table, a steady increase in average grading can be seen every couple of years up until 2019-20, where suddenly the average has improved in eight out of the ten subjects. This was raised as a concern in Utdanningsspeilet (2020) as it was stated that:

pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects in 2020, compared to 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

(Utdanningspeilet 2020: 116, Researchers translation)

However, Figure 5 shows what appears to be a stabilization in 2020-21, where the only two subjects to achieve higher overall achievement grading was Natural Science (Vg1) and Physical Education (Vg3). From the table it is also apparent that grades in Social Studies dropped by 0,2 points, this is the only decline reported in the past ten years.

Overall achievement grades for top ten subjects (2011-2021)										
Subject / Schoolyear	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Social Studies	4	4	4	4	4,1	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,1
Natural Science, Vg1	4,1	4,1	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,4
English, Vg1	4,1	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,5	4,5
Physical education, Vg3	4,4	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,6	4,7	4,8	4,8	4,8	4,9
Geography	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,4	4,4	4,4	4,5	4,5
Norwegian (Primary) Vg3,	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,9	3,9	4	4	4,2	4,2
Norwegian, Vg3, Oral	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,6	4,6
History, Vg3	4,2	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,4	4,5	4,6	4,6
Religion and Ethics	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,6	4,6
Norwegian (Secondary) Vg3	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,7	3,8	3,8	3,8	4	4

Figure 5: Overall achievement grades for top ten subjects (2011-2021)

When looking more closely at a 14-year history of ENG 1002 and the newly introduced ENG1007, it appears that a 0,1 increase in the average overall achievement grading can be expected approximately every three years, with an average increase of 0,036 points every year. In figure 6, each year is represented by a yellow column for the average overall achievement grade. The yellow dotted line is a trend line which indicates that the rise to 4,5 points was not expected until 2022-23. Figure 6 also shows exam grades in gray columns; however, as evident by the variation from year to year, these are much more unpredictable, and it was therefore decided not to include a trendline.

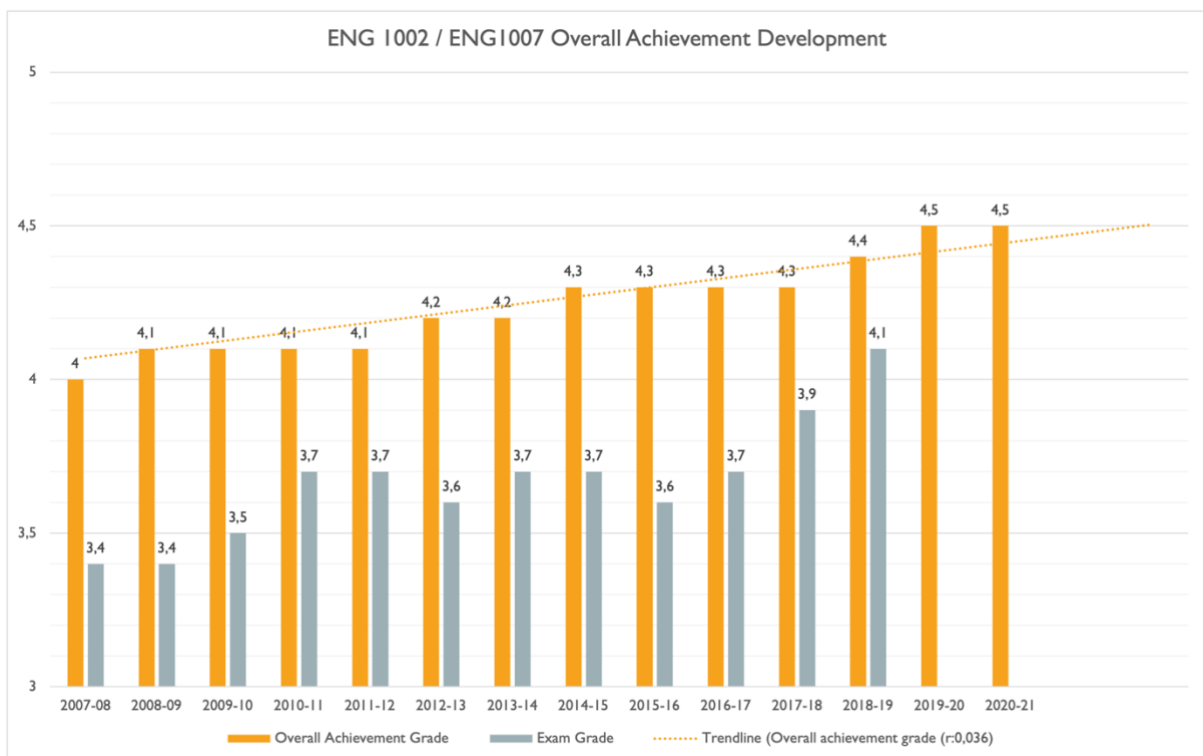


Figure 6: ENG 1002/ ENG 1007 Overall Achievement Development

Figure 7 illustrates the development of overall achievement grade distribution from 2007-08 until 2020-21. While some development has occurred for all grades, the most significant reduction can be seen with grade 3, which has been reduced from accounting for 21,7% of overall achievement grades in 2007-08 to only accounting for 10,7% of overall achievement grades in 2020-21. Grade 3 is followed by grade 2, which has been reduced from 6,8% to 2,1%. The most significant increase can be seen with grade 5, which has increased in frequency from 28,1% in 2007-08 to 38,6% in 2020-21, making it the most common grade today. Grade 5 is closely followed by grade 6, which increased in frequency from 5,1% in 2007-08 to 14,5% in 2020-21.

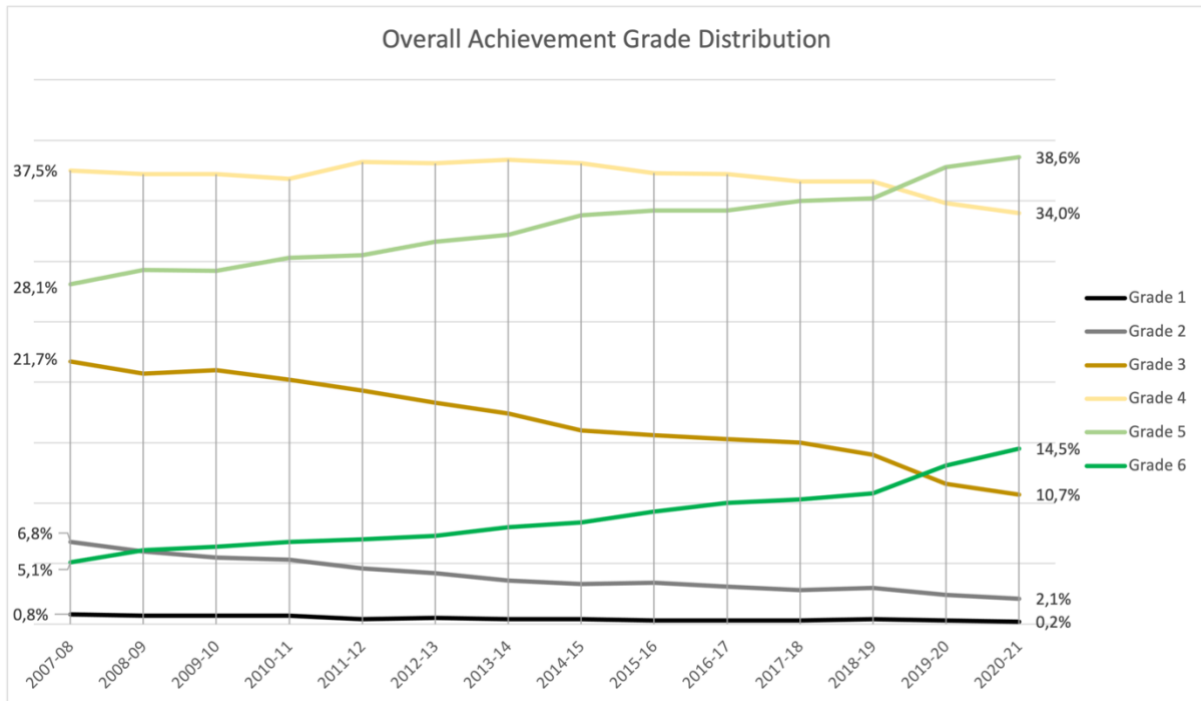


Figure 7: Overall achievement grade distribution

Similar to Figure 7, Figure 8 shows the frequency of each grade 1-6, only in a table format. Additionally, Figure 8 also includes the average overall achievement grade each year as previously shown by the yellow columns in Figure 6.

Overall achievement grade distribution							
Grade	Overall average	1	2	3	4	5	6
2007-08	4	0,8%	6,8%	21,7%	37,5%	28,1%	5,1%
2008-09	4,1	0,7%	6,0%	20,7%	37,2%	29,3%	6,1%
2009-10	4,1	0,7%	5,5%	21,0%	37,2%	29,2%	6,4%
2010-11	4,1	0,7%	5,3%	20,2%	36,8%	30,3%	6,8%
2011-12	4,1	0,4%	4,6%	19,3%	38,2%	30,5%	7,0%
2012-13	4,2	0,5%	4,2%	18,3%	38,1%	31,6%	7,3%
2013-14	4,2	0,4%	3,6%	17,4%	38,4%	32,2%	8,0%
2014-15	4,3	0,4%	3,3%	16,0%	38,1%	33,8%	8,4%
2015-16	4,3	0,3%	3,4%	15,6%	37,3%	34,2%	9,3%
2016-17	4,3	0,3%	3,1%	15,3%	37,2%	34,2%	10,0%
2017-18	4,3	0,3%	2,8%	15,0%	36,6%	35,0%	10,3%
2018-19	4,4	0,4%	3,0%	14,0%	36,6%	35,2%	10,8%
2019-20	4,5	0,3%	2,4%	11,6%	34,8%	37,8%	13,1%
2020-21	4,5	0,2%	2,1%	10,7%	34,0%	38,6%	14,5%

Figure 8: Overall achievement grade distribution

Figure 9 and Figure 10 similarly illustrate the frequency of exam grades in the same period. It is apparent that the frequency of grades is much more varied and that a clear trend like the

one visible for overall achievement grades cannot be established with exam grades. The only apparent trend visible is that grades 3 and 5 appear to mirror each other, meaning that when one of them increase in frequency, the other decrease a similar amount, and vice versa.

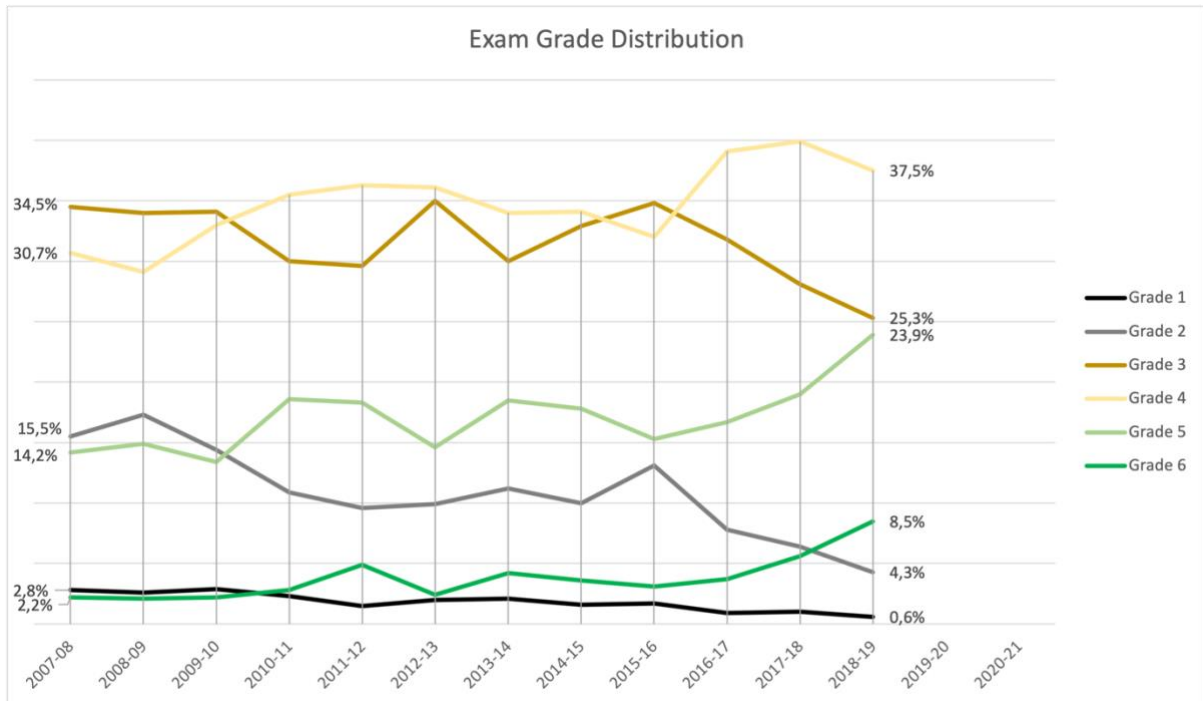


Figure 9: Graph showing Exam Grade Distribution

Exam grade distribution							
Grade	Overall average	1	2	3	4	5	6
2007-08	3,4	2,8%	15,5%	34,5%	30,7%	14,2%	2,2%
2008-09	3,4	2,6%	17,3%	34,0%	29,1%	14,9%	2,1%
2009-10	3,5	2,9%	14,4%	34,1%	33,0%	13,4%	2,2%
2010-11	3,7	2,3%	10,9%	30,0%	35,5%	18,6%	2,8%
2011-12	3,7	1,5%	9,6%	29,6%	36,3%	18,3%	4,9%
2012-13	3,6	2,0%	9,9%	35,0%	36,1%	14,6%	2,4%
2013-14	3,7	2,1%	11,2%	30,0%	34,0%	18,5%	4,2%
2014-15	3,7	1,6%	10,0%	32,9%	34,1%	17,8%	3,6%
2015-16	3,6	1,7%	13,1%	34,8%	32,0%	15,3%	3,1%
2016-17	3,7	0,9%	7,8%	31,8%	39,1%	16,7%	3,7%
2017-18	3,9	1,0%	6,4%	28,1%	39,9%	19,0%	5,6%
2018-19	4,1	0,6%	4,3%	25,3%	37,5%	23,9%	8,5%
2019-20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2020-21	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Figure 10: Table showing Exam Grade Distribution

4.2 Quantitative data from the questionnaire

In total, 98 pupils took part in the online questionnaire. Out of those, three pupils answered that they were not attending the regular ENG 1007 course, and an additional three pupils failed to complete the survey. This leaves the questionnaire with 92 complete responses that are relevant for the purpose of this thesis.

4.2.1 Expected Overall Achievement Grade.

The four tables in Figure 11 illustrate the pupils' expected overall achievement grade (EOAG) and how they correspond with the grade they received on their previous assessment and the grade they expect to receive if they are selected for a written examination. For instance, when looking at EOAG 4, the table visualizes that out of the 23 pupils that expected to get a 4 as their overall achievement grade. One pupil (bottom left) received a lower grade than 4 on his or her previous test, and the same pupil also expected to do worse on the exam than the overall achievement grade he expected. Just above that pupil, we have a pupil that did receive a 4 on the previous test, but he also expects to get an exam grade that is below the grade he expects to get for overall achievement. Eleven pupils had a 4 on their previous test, and they also expect a 4 both in overall achievement and in an eventual exam. Seven pupils got a grade lower than 4 on their previous test but still expect to get a 4 both in overall achievement and at an eventual exam. One pupil (top, middle) received a higher grade than 4 on his previous test, but still expected to receive grade 4 both for his overall achievement and on a potential exam. Two pupils (middle, right) had received grade 4 on their previous test and expected to get grade 4 for their overall achievement, but they also expected to receive a higher grade than grade 4 on the exam if selected.

		Expected Overall Achievement Grade 3		
		Pupils : 2		
Previous Test Score	Above	0	0	0
	Equal	0	1	1
	Below	0	0	0
		EOAG -		
		Below	Equal	Above
		Expected Exam Result		

		Expected Overall Achievement Grade 4		
		Pupils : 23		
Previous Test Score	Above	0	1	0
	Equal	1	11	2
	Below	1	7	0
		EOAG -		
		Below	Equal	Above
		Expected Exam Result		

Expected Overall Achievement Grade		5		
		Pupils : 57		
Previous Test Score	Above	1	3	0
	Equal	3	19	1
	Below	13	16	1
		Below	Equal	Above
		EOAG - Expected Exam Result		

Expected Overall Achievement Grade		6		
		Pupils : 11		
Previous Test Score	Above	0	0	0
	Equal	4	1	0
	Below	5	1	0
		Below	Equal	Above
		EOAG - Expected Exam Result		

Figure 11: Pupils expected overall achievement grades

4.2.2 Pupils' experience with written assessments in ENG1007

The pupils participating in this questionnaire answered several questions regarding their experience and beliefs about written assessments in the English subject at upper secondary school. Figure 12 shows that out of 92 respondents, only 3,2% were “very dissatisfied” with the grade they received on their last test before answering the questionnaire. A further 6,5% answered that they were “quite dissatisfied” and 21,5 % were “fairly dissatisfied. The majority of the pupils asked were however satisfied with their grade, with 21,5% being “fairly satisfied”, 25,8% were “quite satisfied” and 21,5% were “very satisfied”.

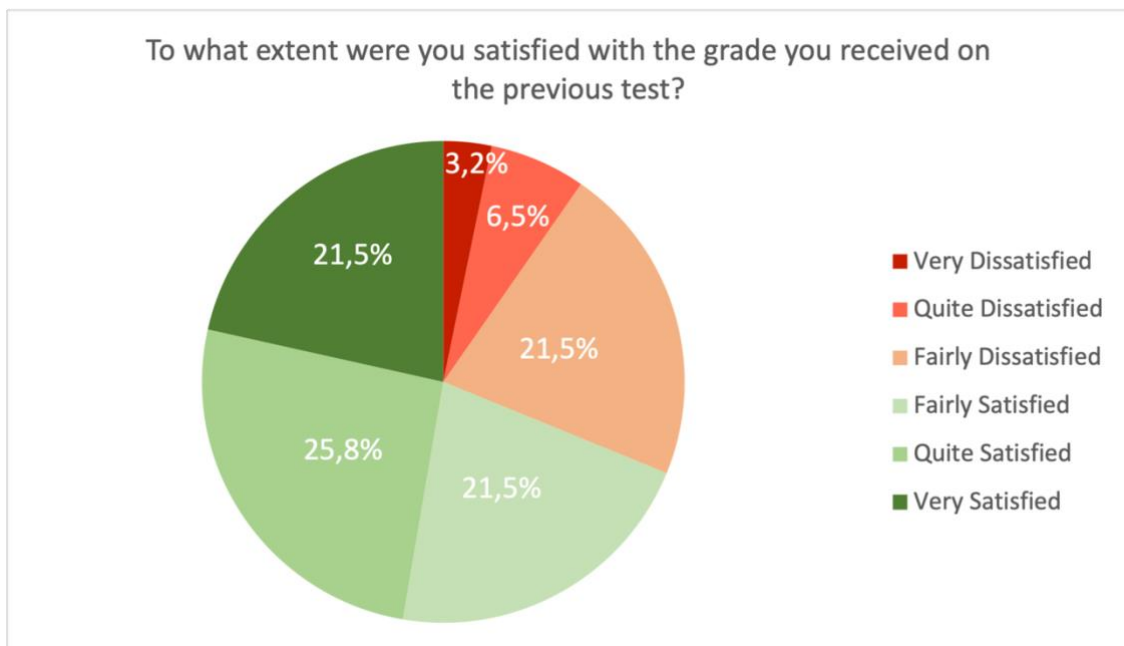


Figure 12: Pupils' satisfaction with previous assessment

Following the question regarding their satisfactory level, the pupils were asked to assess the fairness of the grade they received on their previous test. While only 5 pupils or 5,4% thought the grade was unfair to some extent, 16,1% thought the grade they received was “fairly fair”, 47,3% thought it was “quite fair” and 31,2% found it to be “very fair”. Figure 13 illustrates the overwhelming extent to which the pupils answering thought that the grade they received was fair. Put together, the responses to the two questions illustrated in Figure 12 and Figure 13 indicate that for the most part, pupils viewed the grade they received on their last test to be on the fairer side regardless of their satisfactory level. When looking at the responses on a macro level, it can be mentioned that the one pupil that responded that he/she felt that the teacher was “very unfair” also reported that he/she received grade 5 and that he/she was very satisfied with the grade itself. The one respondent that found the grade “quite unfair” also reported that he/she had received grade 4, and feeling “fairly dissatisfied”. Out of the final three pupils that answered that they found the grade “fairly unfair”, one had received grade 3 and was “quite dissatisfied”, one had received grade 3 and was “fairly dissatisfied”, and the final one had received grade 4 and was “quite dissatisfied”.

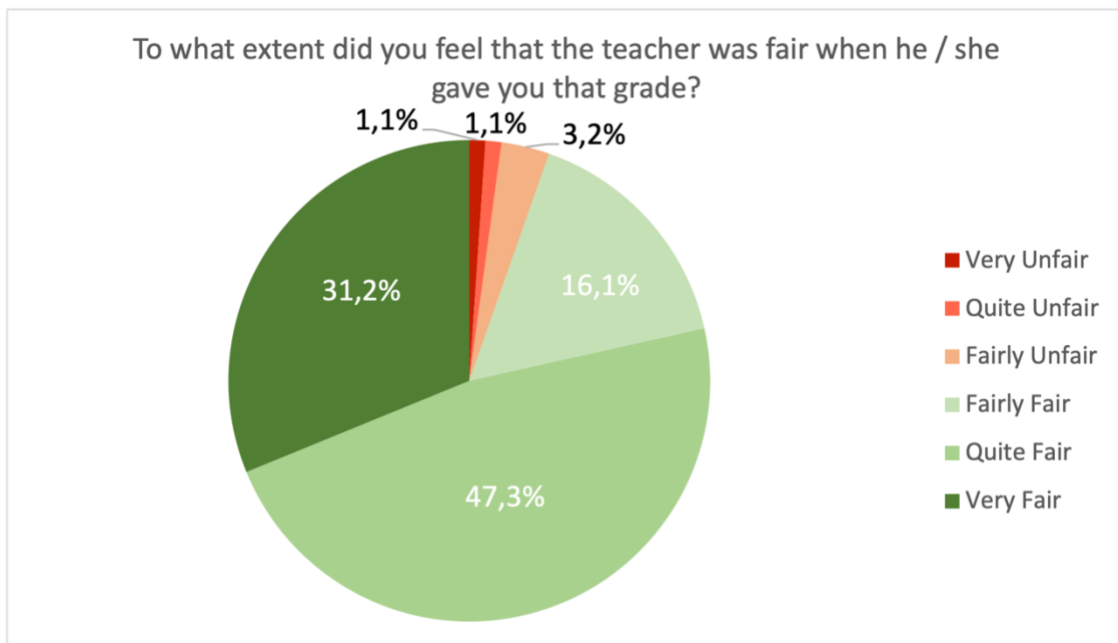


Figure 13: Pupils' thoughts on the fairness of their previous assessment

Figure 14 illustrates the extent to which the pupils believed that they would have received a different grade if the test had been graded anonymously. It is important to note that a different grade does not necessarily mean a better one, still, 25,8% “strongly disagreed” with

this statement, and a further 32,3% “disagreed”. 18,3% “slightly disagreed” while 17,2% responded that they “slightly agreed” with the statement. Three pupils or 3,2% “agreed” with the statement and an additional three pupils “strongly agreed”. Interestingly, one of the pupils that “slightly agreed” also reported that he or she had received grade 6, that this was “very fair” and that he or she was “very satisfied” with the grade.

This pupil’s answers to the questions presented so far are illustrated in Figure 15 alongside the other two pupils that also answered “slightly agree” and the three pupils that answered “strongly agree” on the question regarding anonymous grading of the test in question.

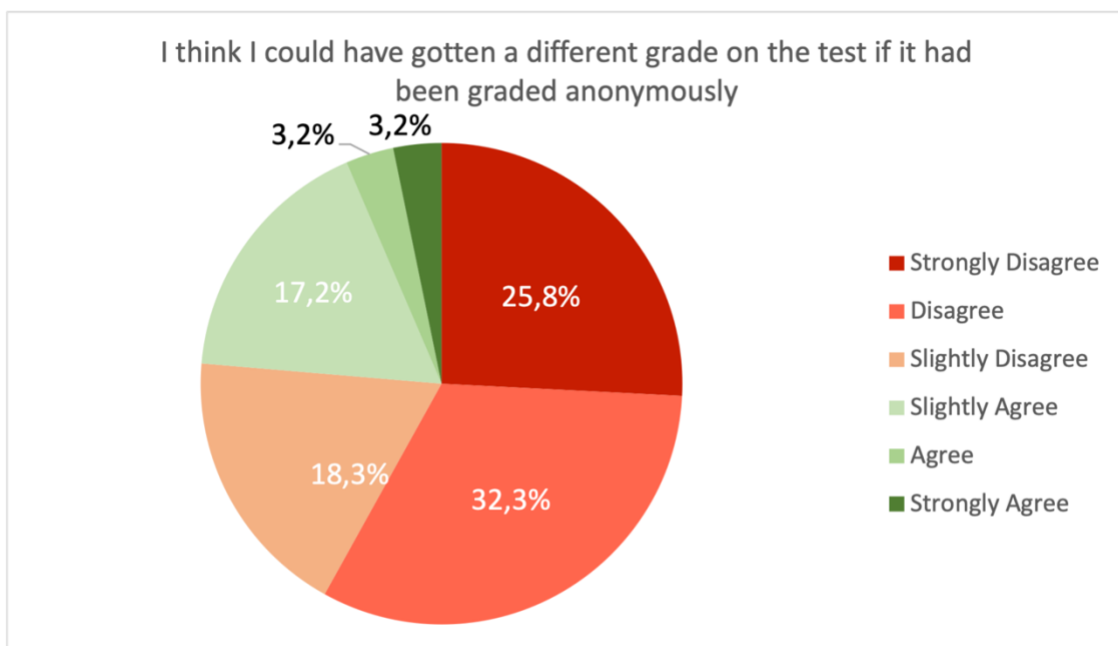


Figure 14: Pupils' beliefs about anonymous grading

I think I could have gotten a different grade on the test if it had been graded anonymously	To what extent did you feel that the teacher was fair when he/she gave you that grade	To what extent were you satisfied with the grade you received on the previous test	What grade did you receive on your last written assessment in English
Strongly Agree	Very Fair	Fairly satisfied	4
Strongly Agree	Fairly Fair	Fairly Dissatisfied	3
Strongly Agree	Fairly Unfair	Quite Dissatisfied	3
Agree	Very Fair	Very Satisfied	6
Agree	Fairly Fair	Fairly satisfied	5
Agree	Quite Fair	Fairly Dissatisfied	4

Figure 15: Pupils answering that they would have received a different grade if the test was anonymous

As evident in Figure 15, there is no apparent group that thinks that they could have received a different grade if the test was graded anonymously. Grades range from 3 to 6, and while some were more satisfied with the grade, others were less so. They also differ in how fair they perceive the grade they received, but apart from one pupil, all the others were of the opinion that the grade they received was on the fairer side.

For the final question related to written assessments, the scope was widened by asking the pupils if they believed that “All written tests in VG1 should be graded anonymously”. While the previous questions yielded responses that were somewhat unified, with only a few pupils choosing outlier responses, the pupils’ opinions on anonymous grading in general, seem to be more evenly distributed between the possible answers. Figure 16 shows that 6,5% “Strongly disagree”, 12,9% “disagree” and 18,3% “slightly disagree” with the statement, while 32,3% “slightly agree”, 17,2% “agree”, and 12,9% answered that they “strongly agreed” that all written tests in VG1 should be graded anonymously.

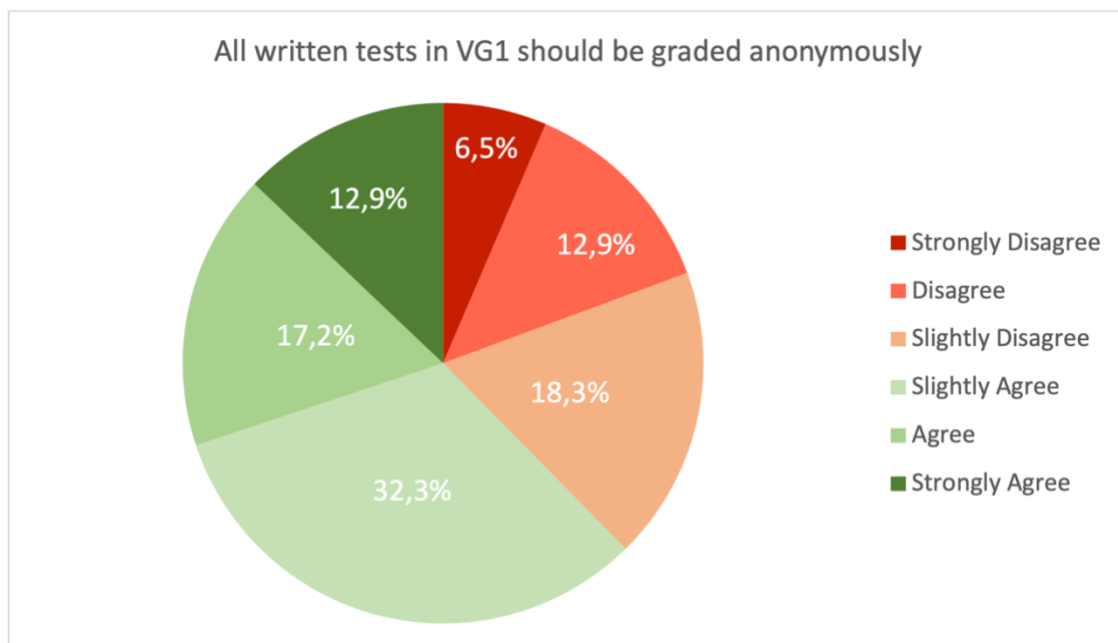


Figure 16: General thoughts about anonymous grading

4.2.3 Pupils’ thoughts about the fairness of exams

On the final page of the questionnaire, the pupils were asked if they believed that exam assessments were fairer than in-class assessments. Figure 17 shows that 3,3% “strongly

disagreed” with the statement, 15,2% “disagreed”, and 13,0% “slightly disagreed”. On the other hand, 38,0% “slightly agreed”, a further 22,8% “agreed” and 7,6% “strongly agreed”.

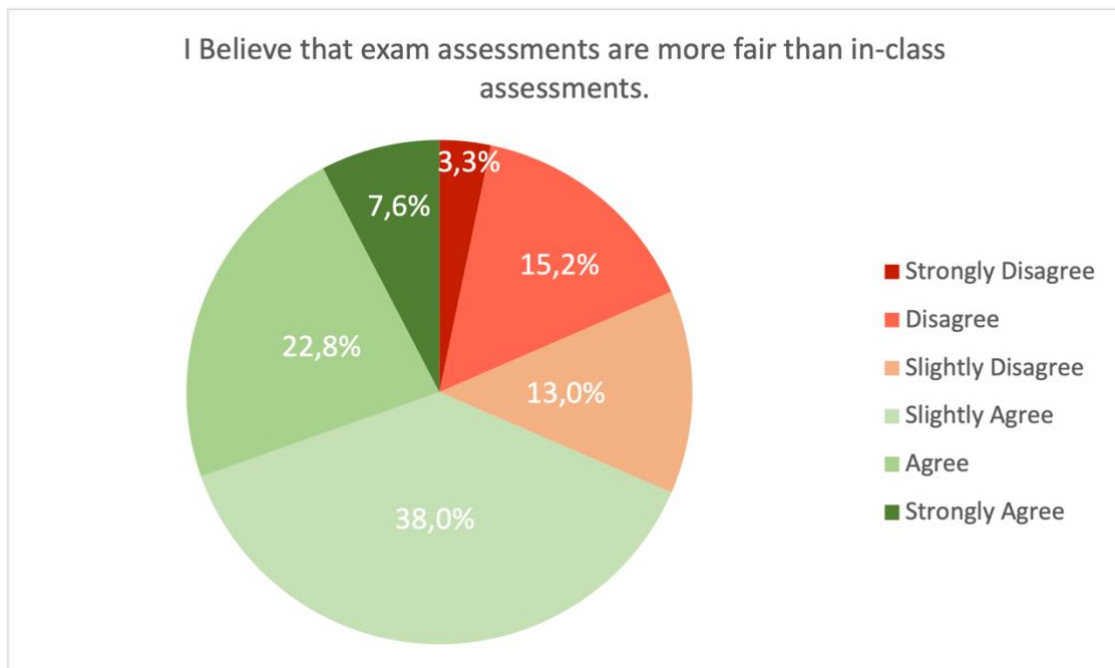


Figure 17: Pupils' beliefs about the fairness of exams

4.2.4 Pupils' feelings about the ENG1007 exam

The section of the questionnaire asking the pupils about the exam opened with an explanation of the current exam system. After reading the introduction, 16 pupils answered that they did not know that they could potentially be selected for a written English exam after VG1, while 76 pupils answered that they did know about this possibility. As illustrated in Figure 18, 66% reported that they were stressed by the idea of a potential ENG1007 examination with 27 pupils answering “Yes, absolutely”, and 34 pupils answering “Yes, somewhat”. On the other hand, 33% were not particularly stressed, with 27 pupils answering “No, not really”, and 4 pupils answering “No, definitely not”. When asked how often they thought about the exam, 2 pupils answered “Daily”, 24 “Weekly”, 33 “Monthly”, 27 “Less than monthly”, and 6 “Never”. Figure 19 provides a visualization of how frequently the pupils attending the questionnaire were occupied by the exam.

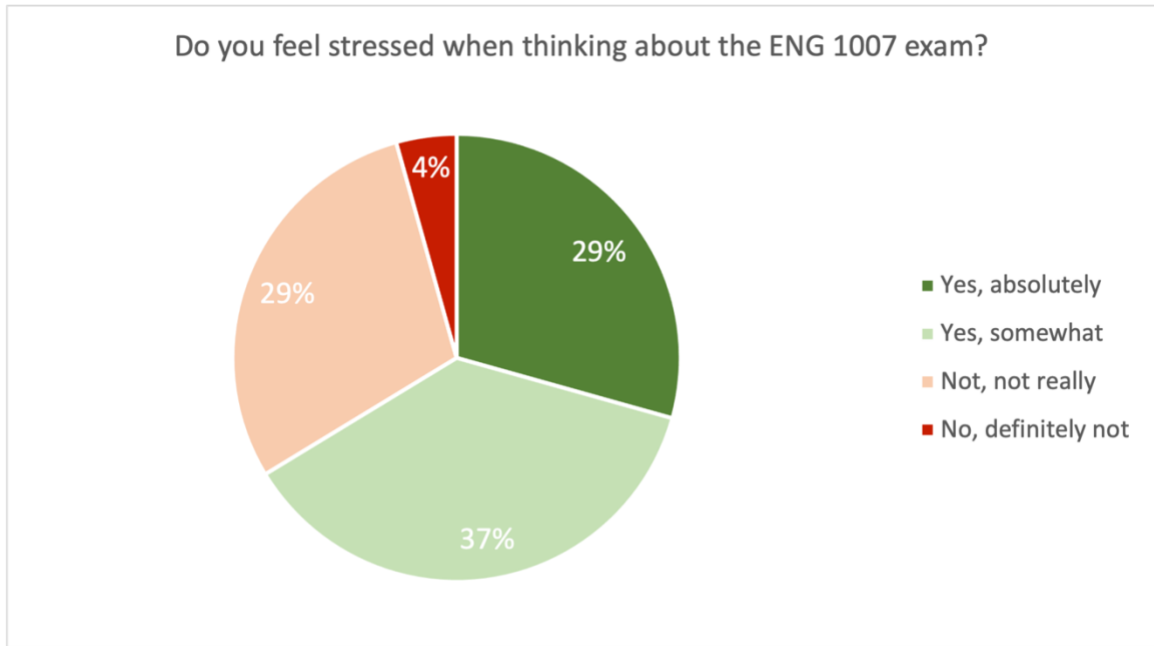


Figure 18: Exam stress

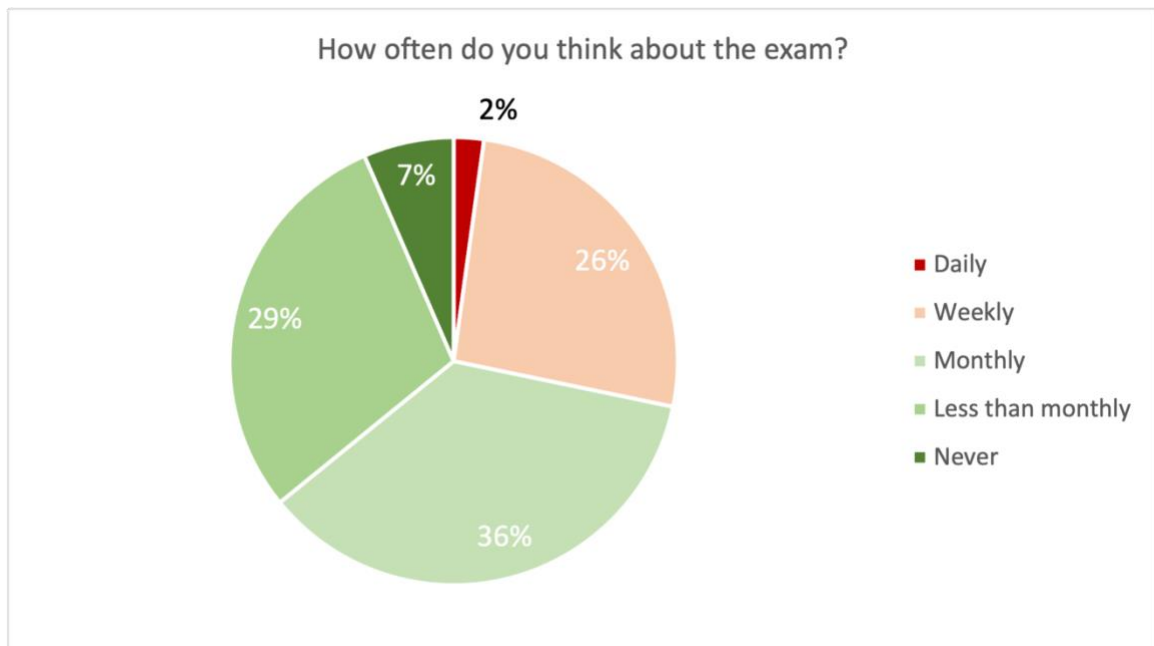


Figure 19: Frequency of exam thoughts

Finally, the pupils were asked if they hoped that the 2022 ENG1007 written exam got cancelled. As illustrated in Figure 20, the vast majority of pupils hoped it would, with 49 answering “Yes, absolutely” and 30 answering “Yes, somewhat”. Only 13 pupils answered “No, not really”, and none of the pupils answered “No, definitely not”.

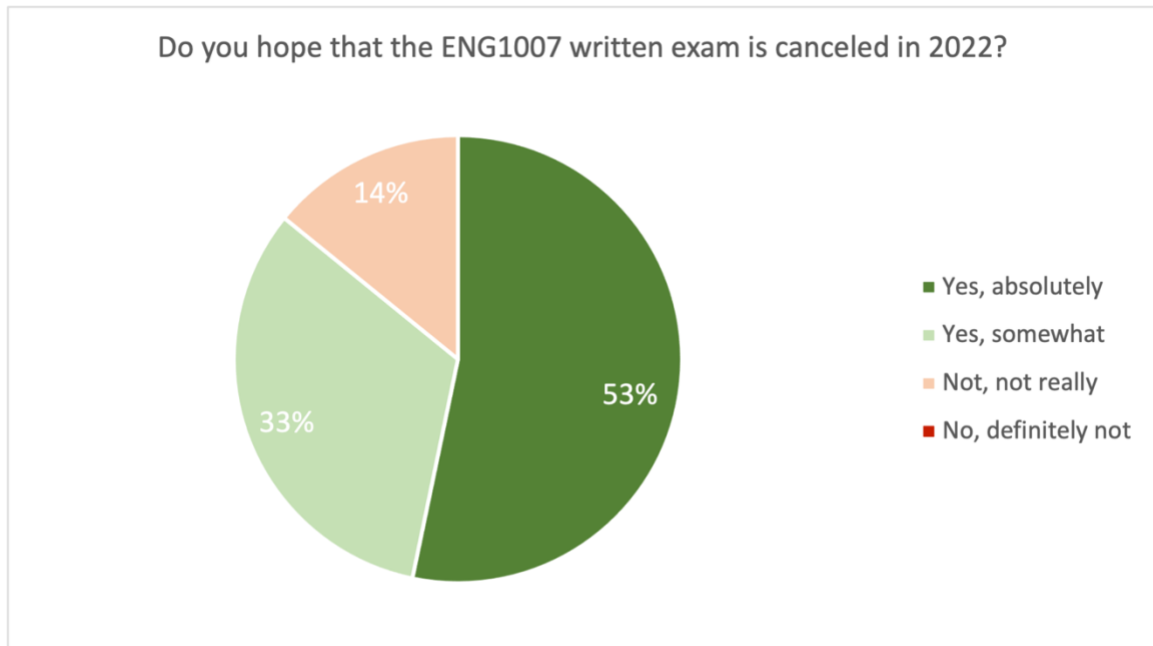


Figure 20: Cancellation of 2022 ENG1007 exam

4.3 Data from Interviews

The following sections will provide a summary of the answers provided by the seven teachers participating in the interviews. For the purpose of this thesis, the researcher has attempted to include all relevant statements. However, it should be noted that whenever data collected is summarized, there exists the possibility of some statements missing a broader context. The interviews can therefore be found in their entirety in the Appendices, each in their own sub chapter.

4.3.1 Participants

Image 1 is an illustration of the seven participants whose opinions will be presented in the following chapter. As illustrated by the figures, the youngest participant was 32 years old, and the oldest was 57 years old when the interviews were conducted. The years of experience (y/exp) displayed indicates each participant's experience working in general studies at Norwegian upper secondary schools. A combined 89 years of experience has contributed to this study through each participant's willingness to participate in the interview process.

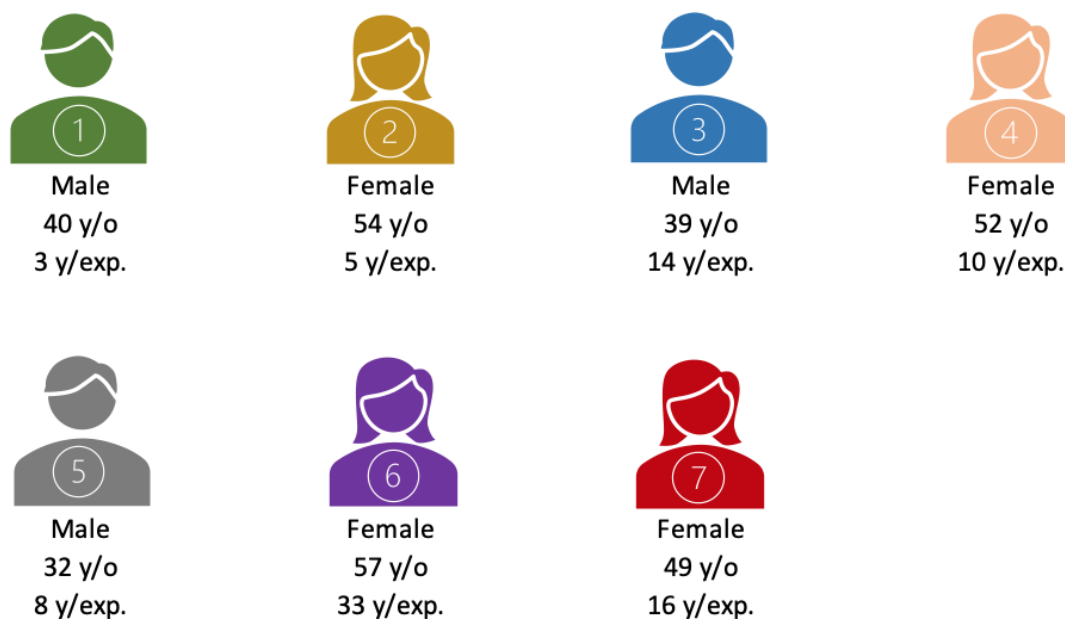


Image 1: Illustration of Participants

While the participants all worked at an upper secondary school in Rogaland when they were interviewed, their education and previous experience varied. Participant 1 had originally studied English, Physical Education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PPU). After finishing his teachers' training, he worked for ten years at a lower secondary school, during which he had also completed a one-year study in Music (60 credits) and a one-year study in Social Sciences (60 credits). Participant 2 had completed a bachelor's and master's degree in Business before transitioning to teaching by taking PPU. She had also completed a one-year study in English (60 credits) before starting her teaching career at an upper secondary school teaching mainly English at vocational programs. After working for six years at a school where the majority of pupils were in vocational programs, she transitioned to a school more focused on general studies. Participant 3 had a master's degree in English, and he had also studied history and PPU. For all of his 14 years of experience he had worked at an upper secondary school. Participant 4 explained that she had two master's degrees, one in French, and another in English literacy studies. Similarly to Participant 3, Participant 4 had also been working at an upper secondary school for her entire career as a teacher. Participant 5 had completed the "Advanced teacher education for levels 8-13", specializing in English, Applied Linguistics. He had also completed one module in History, and one module in Religion. Participant 6, which was the most experienced teacher participating in this study had taken a

master's degree in English Didactics. She had also completed a bachelor's degree in international studies, and a one-year study of French. Finally, Participant 7 was possibly the participant with the highest number of courses to her name. She first completed a degree in English and a degree in French. After working for a few years, she returned to university to complete a one-year study in History, and a one-year study in Sports, and a master's degree in PPU. Recently, she had also completed a part time study in Guidance Counseling.

4.3.2 Teacher Experience

Participants 2,3,4,6,7 all answered that they had had students of their own selected for written examination in English, however, participant 2 emphasized that she had never had students in VG1 English selected for a written exam. She followed up by explaining that due to her combination of subjects, she could almost guarantee that her VG1 pupils would never be selected for a written exam. The remaining participants estimated that they had been part of the VG1 written English examination: 3) three times, 4) two times, 6) eight times, 7) five times.

While five of the participants had been involved in written examination in English, none of the participants could remember to have been offered any tutoring or literature aiding them in helping their pupils approach the exam. In the following question regarding experience working as an examiner, participants 6 and 7 were the only two participants that had any experience working as examiners on the VG1 written English exam, but participants 2, 4, and 5 all expressed an interest in contributing if they were ever given the opportunity. Participant 1 answered that he had experience working as an examiner from teaching English at a lower secondary school, but that he had not yet been offered the opportunity at upper secondary school.

When asked about their work as examiners, Participants 6 and 7 both remembered taking part in a course in advance of the exam, that was supposed to help them prepare for the task. Participant 6 said that it was a long time ago and that she, as a result, did not remember too much from it. Participant 7 on the other hand, had a lot to say about the seminars she had taken part in concerning her arrangement as an examiner. She spoke very fondly about the seminars she had taken part in and explained how important they had been for her continued development as a teacher. Participant 7 said that her work as an examiner and the associated seminars had helped her become more secure when assessing pupils' English proficiency and

finished by saying, “For my continued development as an English teacher, it has been extremely important” (researcher’s translation)

4.3.3 Participants’ Opinion About the Exam as of LK20

When asked to mention three positive attributes to the exam as of LK20, several important advantages were mentioned by the participants. For ease of reading, the attributes mentioned have been roughly categorized and grouped accordingly. When looking at the format of the new exam, participants 1 and 6 both liked the way multimodality is incorporated through listening tasks. Participants 3, 5, and 6 all highlighted the versatility that has been incorporated, and they expressed that hopefully, this would allow all pupils to show their skills in several different ways. Participant 5 added that he hoped this would help low-level learners pass the exam. Finally, Participant 6 expressed her appreciation for the preparation period and the preparation material associated with the exam.

The other way of interpreting this question was to look at what the exam can offer pupils and teachers in a more general sense, as Participants 2 and 4 did. Participant 2 liked that the exam marks a natural end to the year and to the relevant subjects that are ending. Additionally, she also highlighted the importance the exam carries in terms of its ability to prepare the pupils for the future. Participant 2 also emphasized that English is an extremely important subject in an increasingly diverse society, finishing off by providing examples of how English has become the primary language in several courses at universities and many places of employment in Norway. When speaking about the good qualities of the exam, Participant 4 added that the exam was important for teachers due to its ability to “quality check that teachers across schools do the same.” Furthermore, Participant 4 explained that she used previous exams and accompanying answers to illustrate to her pupils what was expected of them to deserve the different grade scores. She also mentioned how this can be a great tool for her pupils by allowing them to see for themselves what they need to achieve, in order to get the grade they want.

After finishing their positive remarks, the participants were asked to highlight three negative attributes they associated with the written English exam. Participants 3, 5, and 6 were all concerned about the apparent length, difficulty, and lack of time introduced by the new exam format. Participant 3 said that it appeared to be very demanding, and Participant 5 thought that the new exam was so extensive that it was unrealistic for pupils to be able to complete it.

Participant 6 felt that the time crunch could probably increase stress, and as a result, lead to worse performances by the pupils. Participant 4 had very little negative to say about the English exam and exams in general; she was, however, concerned about the young age of pupils in VG1, and she followed up by expressing her disapproval of the Norwegian school system demanding pupils of such a young age to receive their final remarks so early. She followed up by emphasizing the long-lasting effects the grades given in upper secondary school might have for some students. Participant 2 did not have anything negative to say about the exam and instead stated: “I don’t want to feel sorry for the students because you know, life’s a bitch, and then you die.” She quickly followed up by apologizing for only having praise in her heart for the exam.

Question 8 regarding the written exam and its objectives and functions was one of the questions that received the most varying opinions from the participants. Participant 3 felt that it measured pupils’ proficiency to a high degree. Participant 2 said that it definitely measured writing and that it also measured understanding, while Participant 6 chose to grade each objective and ended up giving this objective a 4/6. On the other hand, Participant 5 felt that the exam as of LK20 had the potential to be great at measuring pupils’ proficiency, but that it in its current form was only deserving of a 3/10 due to its complexity, and low-level learners hindered ability to finish all tasks within the allocated time. Participant 4 was unsure and expressed her skepticism. Participant 7 felt that out of the three options, the new exam format was not tailored for measuring all pupils’ proficiency, adding that for some pupils, it is probably excellent, but that it has the potential to be traumatizing for low-level learners that can experience stress and anxiety related to the limited time available.

Overall, the participants were more inclined to think that the written exam as of LK20 was highly tailored towards the collection of statistics, with Participants 3, 4, 5, and 6, all ranking this objective the highest out of the three. Participant 7 ranked it second out of the three, while participant 2 said: “I don’t like that statistics thing, so it’s almost like I can’t have an opinion on it.”

The final objective the participants were asked to evaluate was its ability to; “provide teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula.” Participant 2 felt that this was the most important objective of the exam, and she followed up by saying: “that’s why this exam or lack of exam the last two

years makes it easier to give nice grades because I don't have anything to calibrate it.” Participants 3 and 6 both felt that this objective was achieved to a high degree by the new exam format. Similarly, Participant 7 ranked this objective as number 1 when compared to the others. Participant 5 was the only participant that was negative to the new exam's ability to achieve this objective, scoring it as a 3/10.

After being given the three functions or objectives described by UDIR, the participants were, in question 9, asked to define the most important objective or function of the exam. Participants 2,3,4 and 5 all said that the primary objective should be some sort of proficiency testing of the pupils. While Participant 5 felt that the most important skill to test was the pupil's ability to write and understand, Participant 3 was more concerned with limiting the number of competence aims included in the exam due to the limited time available to pupils. Participant 4 was also concerned with the limited time, however, her suggested solution was to extend the exam period to last several days. This would, according to her, allow the pupils to go through a more extensive examination without the immense time pressure and subsequent stress factor. It should also be mentioned that Participant 4 once again expressed her concern with the pupils' young age, seeing as some of them are only 16 years old when expected to complete an exam that will impact their GPA (grade point average) on their diploma for the rest of their life.

Participant 6 saw the written exam as a valuable tool that should be used to add depth to a pupil's overall achievement grade. She also added that the exam could and should act as some sort of quality assurance of pupils' grades and that “you might avoid some sloppy teachers who don't bother doing a proper job, uh, assessing their students.” For the most part, participant 7 expressed the same opinions as participant 6, adding that “the examination of pupils should be seen as a great resource for teachers and their ability to calibrate their assessment habits.” (Researchers translation).

After some reflection, all participants except Participant 7 agreed that the benefits of having a written exam outweighed the drawbacks. Participant 2 answered “definitely”, while Participant 3 was conflicted at first, but in the end, he answered yes. Participant 4 said yes but added that it was only as long as it was a good exam. Participant 5 said that he found it to be a good idea in general, adding that it is the difference between passing and not passing for some pupils. Participant 6 kept her answer short: “Yes, I think it does.” Participant 7, on the

other hand, had several major concerns regarding the pupils' mental health. She feared that many pupils could be terrified by the exam and that this could lead to some pupils dropping out, and others developing and suffering from anxiety.

The final question regarding the participants' opinions about the exam as of LK20 had the participants split with Participants 3, 5, 6, and 7 all answering that the English exam should not be mandatory for all pupils, while Participants 2 and 4 both responded that it should. Participant 4 added that she felt that the English exam should be mandatory in VG2 or VG3 and that VG1 was too early, but that it should be mandatory regardless. Participant 6's answer can be considered as a summary that more or less reflects Participants 3, 6, and 7's view on this matter.

Oh no, no, I don't think so. Why? Why should it? I mean, "standpunkt"(overall achievement) is a better way of showing us students' overall competence in the subject, the exam is simply just like you know, you just check a little piece of it, and I think it's problematic that for some students the nerves, they get nervous they don't, uh, perform as well as they would normally, you know, having a bad day. Or you could suffer from exam nerves and it, and it completely ruins your, your performance. So no, I don't think, yeah.

Participant 6 on question 11.

4.3.4 Participants Reflections on Spring 2020.

On the first three questions of this category, all participants answered similarly that they had worked in upper secondary school during the period, that they were involved in online teaching or homeschooling, and that this period lasted somewhere between two and three months. When asked about their initial reaction to the cancellation of written exams that year, their opinions differed slightly, with Participants 1 and 6 feeling relieved, Participants 4 and 5 feeling that it was necessary, Participant 3 describing it as "a fair choice", Participant 7 saying it was fine, and finally, Participant 2 reacting in devastation, adding that her pupils' motivation went to hell when the exam was canceled. When asked if the decision by the department of education to cancel the exam was correct, all participants except Participant 2 agreed. Participant 2 explained that not only was the decision in her opinion the wrong one, but the timing of the announcement was also horrible, "Because, we lost students. Our "ikke vurdert" (no assessment possible (researchers translation)) percentile increased, students

motivation, they just didn't see the purpose. It really effected the students. They were happy of course." (Participant 2, Question 14)

In regards to question 15, Participants 4, 5, 6, and 7 did not experience that the cancelation of the written English exam influenced them or their pupils noticeably when working towards the end of the semester. Participant 3 was pleasantly surprised that the cancellation of the written exam gave him and his pupils the time necessary to focus on finishing the curriculum. Participant 1 remembered the period as being challenging in terms of how to structure teachings and assessments, adding that he perceived his pupils as more relaxed. Participant 2 was clearly frustrated and angry thinking back to the period. She said that the pupils were difficult to motivate and that several pupils failed to show up to class due to a lack of motivation. Participant 4 also mentioned how she would normally use the threat of a possible exam as a motivational tool intended to push her pupils the extra mile, but that due to the overall situation in the world, her only concern was to make sure that her pupils were not depressed and that they kept "logging away on their computer".

In terms of setting overall achievement grades, Participants 1, 2, 4, and 6 all admitted that they had probably been kinder when grading in 2020. Participant 7 wanted to answer no, but at the same time, she also admitted that statistics from UDIR contradicted that, and so she revised her answer to maybe. Participants 3 and 5 both said no, but Participant 5 added that it was easier for pupils to cheat when answering tests from home and that that could have influenced the grade of some of his pupils. When reflecting on the reasons for their leniency, Participants 1 and 6 said that in their opinion, it was in part due to a feeling of guilt caused by their lacking digital competence during homeschooling. They also pointed out that they might have been more inclined to give higher grades to show some compassion for the miserable situation pupils were in. Participant 7 also said that she was affected by her digital skills being suboptimal, but she added that she thought that many teachers could have been inclined to give their pupils higher grades because they knew that their decisions would not be second-guessed by a written examination in the subject. Others, such as Participants 2 and 4 did not think that their quality of teaching was too negatively affected by online teaching, and they, therefore, did not think that this was a factor for them being more inclined to give their pupils higher grades.

When the participants thereafter were asked if the school they worked at officially or unofficially encouraged them to be nicer when assessing pupils, Participants 1 and 2 both answered that; yes, that instruction had been given pretty much officially. Participant 3 explained that his school had instructed the teachers to be more lenient on deadlines. Participant 6 explained that she did not feel like the school administration encouraged teachers to be nicer. Still, she acknowledged that teachers at her school probably felt an urge to be nicer to the pupils due to the miserable situation they were in. Participants 4 and 5 on the other hand both said no.

4.3.5 Participants Reflections on Spring 2021.

Answers to the questions regarding 2021 were pretty much identical to answers regarding 2020. One noteworthy difference was that Participant 6 was more frustrated when the exam was canceled in 2021, not because the decision was wrong, but because the decision was made so late, leading to unnecessary stress for pupils and teachers.

Finishing this set of questions, the participants were asked if and how their perspective on the importance and functionality of the ENG1007 written exam had been affected by the absence of written exams in 2020 and 2021. After some deliberation, participant 2 answered that having exams canceled made her realize even more so how important the exam is. She also added that it had made her realize how important the preparation part of the exam is, and how it allows pupils to experience first-hand that if they prepare well, they also write better. Participant 3 said that he had been conflicted about final exams for a while and that while he still believed that the exam has its place, the absence of exams had made him realize that pupils “learn regardless of whether or not there is an exam.” He did however also point out that he still felt that the exam was a useful tool for him as a teacher because it allowed him to evaluate his standards of assessment by comparing his pupils’ grade on a locally given mock exam with the grade they received on a centrally given exam.

Participant 4 was of the opinion that the absence of exams had not changed her perspectives on exams in general but she said that she hoped it had given UDIR a chance to reevaluate the new exam format which in her opinion was terrible. Participant 5 also said that the absence of exams had not really changed his perspectives on the subject as he had always felt the exam had its purpose, partly as a motivator, and partly as a safeguard that ensures that pupils and teachers are honest. Similar to Participants 4 and 5, Participant 6 did not think that the

absence of exams had changed her perspective on the importance of it. She did however emphasize that it had made her even more aware of the importance of what in her mind is the main objective of the exam, which is to act as a neutral assessment focused on being equal for all pupils in Norway. Participant 7 started by saying that she was unsure if it had changed her perspective. Unfortunately, she digressed, and the answer given to the question is as such not relevant.

4.3.6 Participants' Opinion About Assessment in General

This category of questions yielded the most similar answers from all participants. Firstly, all participants reported that they normally have two written assessments each semester. The participants also expressed their appreciation for collaboration between themselves and their colleagues when grading papers. Participants 1, 2, and 7 all found it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling, and they also felt that this might have influenced the grades of some of their pupils. The remaining participants did not experience the same difficulties.

4.4 Follow-up questions.

Unfortunately, only five of the interviewees were able to respond to the questionnaire in a timely manner. The following paragraphs will therefore summarize the responses provided by Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. Similarly to the transcribed interviews, complete responses from the participants can be found in the appendices.

4.4.1 Cancellation of exams in 2022

Participants 1 and 7 both felt that the cancellation of ordinary exams in 2022 was correct, arguing that the pandemic had to a varying degree affected pupils across the country. Participant 5 also felt that the cancellation of the written English exam in 2022 was a good decision, however he emphasized that his opinion was founded on the poor quality of the exam, not the covid-19 pandemic and factors associated with it. Participant 3 was conflicted, arguing that:

“On the one hand, I agree with the principle of fairness; the “because of varying degrees of infection – and thus level of teaching – exams cannot be held.” On the other hand, there are always elements that affect teaching in classrooms across the country. Thinking that all students sit their exam on equal terms is a fallacy. Thus,

an exam could have been organized for this year's students. At the very least, the locally held oral exams could have been conducted with the teacher being well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her teaching this year, amending the exam questions to fit his/her teaching.”

Participant 3, FQ (Follow-up question) 1

Finally, participant 2 expressed her disappointment not only for the consequences the cancelation had for 2022 but also for what this could mean for the future of written exams in upper secondary school. “I was terribly upset. For each year they cancel, it makes it harder for them to get started again”. She followed up by stating that her colleagues were all concerned for how unmotivated their pupils were now that they knew that school was essentially finished after their “heldagsprøve” (mock-exam, (researchers translation)) She also added that, in her opinion, the cancelation of exams was founded in the short closure of schools at Christmas times, and that:

Since we had that short closure, it was then used an argument that the students hadn't learned enough or something to that degree. By saying that, it seems the government has little faith in their teachers to do their jobs.

Participant 2, FQ 1

When asked to comment on the contents of UDIR's “Risk Assessment – Exam spring 2022¹⁷” the participants had very different ways of interpreting both the questions asked by the researcher and paragraph 5.2 as published by UDIR. Participants 1, 5, and 7 all thought that the paragraph expressed that; teachers' are better equipped to assess their pupils' proficiency level than an exam would be, with Participants 1 and 5 getting the impression or otherwise thinking that this was true in general terms, while Participant 7 interpreted the paragraph to be accurate in relevance to the pandemic and its subsequent consequences. Participant 3 similarly expressed how the paragraph outlines the advantages of teachers being in charge of assessing pupils' proficiency level, however, he also pointed out that a centralized exam would be more suitable for uncovering gaps in pupils' knowledge, adding that this would be unfair for the pupils. Participant 2, on the other hand, wrote that UDIR's statement made her think that the function of the exam is to assess teachers more so than the

¹⁷ <https://www.udir.no/eksamen-og-prover/eksamen/risikovurdering-anbefaling-eksamen-var-2022/>

pupils and it thereby serves as a way to identify whether a teacher is strict or kind when assessing his or her pupils.

While Participants 1, 3, 5, and 7 had little to say about what they thought about paragraph 5.2 in the risk assessment, Participant 2 was more concerned about its implications, stating that:

That paragraph concerns me as it does not seem like UDIR appreciates the value of having exams. As I stated earlier about holding teachers accountable, but also for the students to have the opportunities to practice working under time constrained circumstances to show their knowledge, as that is what will be expected of them in the University. In high school, the exams are an additional grade, yet in the university, the exam is usually 100% of their grade. To do well in those situations, it should be practiced. We grow from being challenged and living outside our comfort zones.

Participant 2, FQ 2

On the other hand, Participant 1 simply agreed with the statement, Participant 3 referred to his previous answer, and Participant 5 wrote that “I feel they portray the exam as approximately equal to that of a teacher’s evaluation.”

4.4.2 Interviewees’ thoughts about preliminary findings from the study

In response to the preliminary findings from the study that claims that the written exam is:

1. Very beneficial for teachers.
2. Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.
3. Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some lose points when compared to their overall achievement grade.

Participants 1 and 3 both found this to be in accordance with their beliefs. Participant 5 stated that he does not personally find the exam to be beneficial for him as a teacher. He continued by stating that he agreed with the exam being quite beneficial for the collection of statistics, but he also added that the statistics collected give little depth to the material collected.

Furthermore, he also agreed that the current exam can be beneficial both as a motivating factor and as a good environment for some pupils to excel in their performance, while it can be equally punishing for other pupils. Participant 7 stated that she was uncertain but that she felt that, in general, most pupils benefit from having a written exam, with the exception being

pupils that struggle with handling the pressure associated with having an exam. Participant 2 commented that the statement claiming that the exam is “Very beneficial for teachers” was too vague and followed up by saying that she was unable to comment. She did, however, express that, in her opinion, pupils most definitely benefit from having written exams in upper secondary school as they help prepare them for future challenges in both higher education and working environments. She also added that:

UDIR often seems to want to make it easier for the students, give them more choices and try and get everyone through the system in high school and we have to question whether that is such a good idea? When students apply for jobs, the potential employers look at their grades to get an idea as to what they know and to see how they performed in structured situations

Participant 2, FQ 3

When questioned about the statistics from UDIR which show that in 2020, upper secondary school pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, the participants had differing thoughts on how the lack of exams that year could have influenced this. Participant 5 expressed that he lacked the information necessary to conclude. Still, he did answer that, in his opinion, there are too many variables at play and that he “wouldn’t specifically mention the exam to be the primary cause of this increase.” Participant 1 answered that while the lack of exams could have influenced this, his perception was that the use of digital tests was probably a more important factor. Participant 7 agreed that the lack of exams was probably the main factor, and Participant 2 was even more adamant in her answer, writing that:

100%!!!! As stated earlier, without the exams, there is no calibration in the system. No quality control. This is both for the students to see what they know and if the grades received were fair (very important part as many think teachers are just being strict or some are too nice and the students become entitled) And it is very important to hold the teacher accountable to the curriculum and their duty to teach the students that material.

Participant 2, FQ 4

Participant 3 provided a long and detailed account of the factors he felt contributed to this development, citing “New public management” as the primary culprit. In short summary, he explained that throughout public institutions, there exists an increased expectation from department heads, principals, parents, and pupils that teachers should be more lenient in their assessment of pupils. He goes on to list several examples of what is expected before he finishes by stating:

To answer the question, the fact that there is no exam to serve as a safeguard for this highly corruptive and corrosive system of assessment, makes it all the more easier for teachers (and his/her superiors) to – either willingly or unwillingly – increase and improve their students grades, with little consideration to what the requirements of the course actually are.

Participant 3, FQ 4

On the final follow-up question, all participants were asked the following:

Among the participating teachers in this study, the exam was praised by some and cursed by others. However, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefore feel the need to have you clarify: Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils’ English proficiency?

Follow-up question 5

Participants 1 and 2 both answered yes. Participant 5 also said yes, but he also added that while the exam is fair, it is not the fairest way to evaluate pupils’ proficiency. He followed up by saying that in his opinion, teachers would more accurately determine the proficiency of a learner. Participant 3 answered no, adding that the new format has a very demanding scope that measure pupils’ efficiency rather than their proficiency. Participant 7’s answer was unfortunately too vague to conclude yes or no, but she did state that she thinks all pupils should be able to complete the exam in its current format, and she also added that it is probably better suited for higher proficiency pupils.

5 Discussion

In education, as in everything else, some events leave a greater impact on the thoughts and practices of those affected by it than others. When the introduction of a new curriculum, a new exam format, and a global pandemic all happen simultaneously, the consequences can be major and long-lasting. However, they also present a unique opportunity to gain valuable knowledge that would otherwise be inaccessible.

The Norwegian education system and its standards of assessment have continually developed from norm-referenced assessment, as first described by Lado (1961), to the criterion-referenced assessment introduced in the early 2000s, which is now the standard form of language assessment in Norwegian upper secondary schools. As evident in chapter 2 of this thesis, several studies (Hægeland et al. (2005), Dale & Wærness (2006), Gravaas et al. (2008), Galloway et al. (2011), Hovdhaugen et al. (2014), Hovdhaugen et al. (2018), Hodne (2020)) have researched inconsistencies between exam grades and overall achievement grades. The cancellation of all written exams in 2020, 2021, and 2022 allows for an in-depth analysis of the utility value of the ENG1007 written exam.

The following chapter will summarize and discuss the findings presented in chapter 4 in relation to the theoretical background. Each of the four research questions are deliberated in separate sections.

1. In what way did the cancellation of exams in 2020 and 2021 affect English teachers in Norwegian upper secondary schools (general studies)
 - How was their ability to get their pupils to complete the course influenced by the announcement?
 - How was their ability to assess pupils influenced?
2. In what way did the cancellation of exams affect teachers' attitude toward final assessment in English at Norwegian upper secondary school?
3. How did the absence of centralized exams impact teachers' ability to calibrate their own grading practice?
4. What are the benefits and drawbacks of having a written examination in ENG1007?
 - For pupils
 - For teachers

- For the Norwegian education system

5.1 How the cancelation of exams in 2020 and 2021 affected English teachers

The interviews revealed that the cancelation of all written exams in 2021 and 2022 had less of an impact on the teachers participating in the study than the researcher had anticipated. In the following two sub-chapters, the way in which the cancelation of exams affected the participants' ability to help their pupils finish the course and their ability to assess their pupils' English abilities will be discussed in detail.

5.1.1 How was their ability to get their pupils to complete the course influenced by the announcement?

Participant 2 experienced that the cancelation of exams in 2020 led to her pupils' losing motivation. How this affected their learning outcome in the final months of the semester is not clear, but it would be fair to assume that a loss of motivation is not beneficial for continued progress. This argument is strengthened by Participant 2's claim that several pupils no longer saw the purpose of making an effort and ended up with "no assessment possible", a grade used when teachers do not have sufficient grounds for grading pupils.

On the other hand, participant 3 praised the decision, as it gave him and his pupils the time needed to finish the curriculum. While it was likely that the curriculum could have been finished on schedule had it not been for national restrictions and a longer period of homeschooling due to the pandemic, the idea that canceling the exam gives teachers extra time to educate and help develop their pupils' English proficiency is important.

Perhaps most interesting, however, is the fact that Participants 4, 5, 6, and 7 claimed that they were not noticeably affected by the cancelation of exams. This is interesting because while it could simply be a result of teachers scrambling to finish the semester while learning how to structure the course using digital tools, it could imply that the exam is in many ways insignificant.

5.1.2 How was their ability to assess pupils influenced?

Statistics retrieved from UDIR show that the average overall achievement grades increased in 41 subjects in 2020, with English being one of them. As presented in Figure 6, the increase from an average of 4,4 in 2018-19 to 4,5 in 2019-20 was preemptive, as the trendline created

from the available data indicated that the average overall achievement grade would not reach 4,5 until 2022-23. The unexpected increase can in part be explained by Participants 1, 2, 4, and 6, all stating that they had probably been kinder when assessing pupils in 2020. The reason for their leniency is explained by Participants 1 and 6 as being a product of guilt caused by their lacking digital competence, but also in a way a product of compassion for the miserable situation in society as a whole. Participant 7 also mentioned that she might have been influenced by her less-than-optimal digital competence, but she also believed that it would be a lot easier for teachers to give their pupils higher grades when they knew that their judgement would not be questioned by a potential written examination in the subject. The idea that the written examination serves as some sort of quality check of teachers is definitely an important effect of the exam that will be discussed further in chapter 5.4.

5.2 Teachers attitude toward final assessment in English

As evident in chapter 4.4, for the most part, the absence of exams did not change many of the participants' attitudes towards exams in general. Several of the participants claimed that if anything, the absence of exams had only strengthened their previous beliefs. To summarize the findings presented in chapter 4.4, all the teachers interviewed felt that a written examination of pupils taking part in English at VG1 had its place. While the participants' views on how the exam was beneficial for them as teachers, their pupils, or the education system as a whole varied to some degree, most of them found it helpful. The two main properties highlighted by the participants were 1) Its properties as a motivator for their pupils, as expressed by Participants 2, 4, and 5, and 2) A guide helping them calibrate and adjust their grading practices, as expressed by Participants 3, 5 and 7.

Teachers attitude toward overall achievement grading was influenced by the cancelation of exams on several different levels. Participants 1 and 2 both expressed that following the announcement that all written exams were canceled, the school they worked at had urged them to be nicer when assessing their pupils. Neither of them mentioned that this had affected their attitude towards final assessments in the subject, but a fair assumption would be that they were perhaps given the impression that it is acceptable to give pupils higher grades as long as the external control element, being the possibility of an exam, is removed. This assumption might be a stretch, both because the overall achievement grade and the exam grade are not directly comparable and also because one would expect that highly educated

individuals such as teachers know that it would be unethical to do so. Another statement that supports this assumption, however, is that both Participants 5 and 6 highlighted the importance of the exam as a regulator that quality checks the work of pupils and teachers, with Participant 6 going as far as saying: “I think the exam might help to, you might avoid some sloppy teachers who don't bother doing a proper job, uh, assessing their students.”

What makes these findings concerning is not that a couple of teachers felt that they wanted or needed to give their pupils better grades during the pandemic, but rather that they indicate that without proper supervision and quality control, teachers can be tempted to give their pupils better grades than they deserve. In the worst possible scenario, this can then lead to a domino effect of teachers feeling that they need to give their pupils better grades for them to stay competitive when applying for higher education. Claiming that the previously discussed statistics published by UDIR is yet another indication of this happening, purely due to the absence of centralized exams, is beyond what those statistics can tell us. The fact that pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects in 2020 did raise some red flags in the 2020 publication of Utdanningsspeilet. While it is highly unlikely that a lack of supervision and external quality control leads to an exponential increase in grades, it is worth mentioning due to the severity of the possible consequences.

5.3 Calibration of teachers' assessment practices.

The absence of centralized exams only affects teachers' ability to calibrate their assessment practices if this is a method frequently used. Several teachers interviewed in this study mentioned how exams were useful for this purpose. Similarly, Hodne (2020) found that, out of six teachers interviewed, only one participant stated that she did not find the exam useful for the calibration of her assessment practices. While a quantitative study is needed to more precisely determine how common it is for teachers to use exam results to calibrate their assessment practices, it can be assumed that a large portion of teachers relies on this method for improving their practices.

When Hovdhaugen et al. (2014) questioned the exams usefulness as a tool for calibration of grading practices, their main concern was that the quantitative data analyzed showed that average exam grades varied significantly from year to year (2014: 30). This finding led them to advice against the use of statistics of exam grades and overall achievement grades to assess

the quality of a teacher's grading practices. However, the study also revealed that several teachers interviewed expressed that the most exciting day of the year was the day that the exam results were published (2014: 47). Some teachers interviewed in the study argued that the exam results allowed them to compare their own grading practices with the grading practices of an external examiner, which was a rare opportunity that many participants appreciated. Hovdhaugen et al. (2014) therefore acknowledged that it could be beneficial for teachers on an individual level to use exam results to calibrate their own grading practices.

While the present thesis was unable to determine the extent to which teachers rely on centralized exams to calibrate their grading practices, statements from some of the participants can provide an indication. When talking about the effects of all centralized exams being canceled, Participants 2, 6, and 7, all mentioned that they were excited to see what would happen to pupils' grades when centralized exams one day resume. Subsequently, they were also somewhat nervous to see how far they and their colleagues had drifted off from the expectations set by the exam. Their answers would indicate that in the absence of centralized exams, teachers lack the ability to properly compare their grading practices to the grading practices of teachers at other schools, and the grading practices of external examiners.

One additional finding worth considering is the pupils' belief that exams are more fair than regular in-class assessments. When asked about the fairness of exams, 62,4 % answered that they to some extent agreed with the statement. If this is an accurate representation of the target group's opinion, it could be argued that pupils would want their teachers to use exams as a reference when calibrating their assessment practices. There is, however, one reliability issue with this question. One factor to consider is that the pupils participating in this study have never experienced an exam firsthand. Their beliefs are based solely on presumptions stemming from what they have heard or read about this form of assessment. It was therefore unfortunate that the question itself was worded in a way that made it possible for some pupils to believe that this statement was true.

5.4 Benefits and drawbacks of having a written examination in ENG1007

Information gathered and presented in this thesis has revealed several benefits and drawbacks with having a written exam in ENG1007 and while most of the teachers participating in the interviews agree that the written exam has its place, many of them also pointed out that this is

only true as long as the exam is well put together. In other words, an exam of high validity and reliability is more than welcome by teachers. The pupils participating in the questionnaire on the other hand were overwhelmingly hoping for the cancelation of their upcoming exam in 2022.

5.4.1 For pupils

From limited data collected in the questionnaire, it is fair to say that a possible written examination in ENG1007 is not only something that 86% pupils do not want, but it is also something that 66% of pupils find stressful to think about, which according to this questionnaire is something 2% do daily, 26% do weekly, and 36% do monthly. This indicates that the majority of pupils frequently worry about an examination that is quite unlikely for them to be selected for, with approximately 10% of pupils selected for the ENG1007 written exam each year. This assumption is also strengthened by Participant 7 expressing concern for pupils' mental health. When asked to evaluate whether the benefits of having a written exam in ENG1007 outweighed the drawbacks, she expressed that she feared that many pupils could be terrified by the exam and that this could cause some pupils to drop out of school, and others to suffer from anxiety.

Contradicting this is Participant 2's experience, that the cancelation of exams led to some pupils dropping out. She also mentioned how she felt that her pupils' motivation dwindled when it was announced that the exam was canceled. Participants 4 and 5 both expressed through the interview or the follow-up questionnaire, that they considered the exam to be a motivating factor for many pupils. It can therefore be argued that the potential threat of an exam can be beneficial for some pupils motivation.

On the other hand, the interviews also revealed some benefits with canceling the exam. By removing the possible stresses of an exam, teachers such as Participants 1 and 3 felt that their pupils were more relaxed, with Participant 3 adding that this enabled them to finish the curriculum that year. Perhaps most interesting, however, is that several teachers, including Participants 4, 5, and 6, reported that from a classroom perspective, neither they nor their pupils were really affected by the absence of exams. This could indicate that while pupils do experience a lot of stress associated with the possibility of an examination at the end of the year, this stress does not contribute to better and more motivated pupils. If that was the case,

the cancellation of exams should have affected teachers and their pupils more severely than this study has been able to determine.

Going back to the data gathered from the pupils, it is interesting that while 86% expressed that they hoped the ENG1007 written exam in 2022 got canceled, only 28,3% expected to receive a lower grade on the exam compared to their EOAG. This is odd, partly because one would assume that pupils would be happy with receiving an additional 5 or a 6 on their report card, which 55,8% of pupils thought they would. One likely assumption is that the pupils do not see the point of taking an exam that presents a risk of receiving a bad grade. Another, perhaps more plausible explanation is that the pupils would like to reduce the stress, the possibility of being selected for a written examination brings.

The fact that 68,4% of pupils asked believed that exam assessments in general were more fair than in-class assessments, indicates that while pupils do not want to participate in an exam, this is not caused by them believing that the exam is unfair. On the topic of fairness, it is also fascinating that while 94,6% perceived their teacher as being fair when grading their previous assessment, 23,6% thought they could have received a different grade if the assessment was graded anonymously. It is perhaps even more interesting that 62,4% to some extent agreed that all written assessments in VG1 should be graded anonymously. While these answers seem counter intuitive, they could indicate that the pupils are willing to risk getting a lower or a higher grade on an assessment as long as they know that they are not judged by their teacher's presumptions about them. An alternative explanation is that the pupils do trust their English teacher to be fair when assessing them, but that they perhaps lack the same trust in other subjects.

Some limitations with this composition of answers provided by the pupils include 1) That the questions asked differ slightly in that two of them asked the pupils for their thoughts on one specific test that had already been graded, and the other one asked a question that made them reflect and form an opinion on future endeavors, and 2) That while the first two questions were limited to the ENG1007 subject, the question regarding anonymous grading included all written tests in VG1.

A few additional limitations with the data collected from the pupils should also be mentioned.

For one, the data collected is limited in that it is not possible to compare the answers given in this questionnaire with similar answers from pupils in 2019 or prior. This leads to a situation where it is difficult to assess exactly how pupils in general have been affected by the cancelation of exams. Secondly, with being a multiple-choice questionnaire, pupils were not given the opportunity to explain why they chose the answers they did. This would have been helpful when analyzing the data, but was unfortunately outside the scope of this study, primarily due to the GDPR restrictions.

5.4.2 For teachers

The primary advantage for teachers with there being a written exam at the end of the ENG1007 course is that it allows them to evaluate and calibrate their assessment practices. Participants 6 and 7 both expressed that their prior engagements as examiners had helped them get better at assessing their pupils. The other participants interviewed in this study had never been offered to work as sensors, but several of them (Participants 2, 4, and 5) expressed that they would be interested if they were offered to contribute. Apart from Participant 5, the remaining participants that answered the follow-up questions all agreed that the exam had the potential to be very beneficial for them as teachers. However, as expressed in the interviews by Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, for the exam to be beneficial, it has to be good. Participants 3, 4, and 6 all expressed that the new exam format introduced alongside LK20 had several downsides that worried them, with the primary one being that it was too extensive.

A second advantage with the ENG1007 course having an exam is that, according to Participants 4 and 6, it makes it easy for teachers to show their pupils what is expected in order to receive a certain grade. By showing pupils previous exam sets and examples of how a few different texts were assessed, teachers are given the opportunity to display the level needed to receive a good grade in the subject.

While there seems to be many beneficial factors for teachers, some of them mentioned that it would be uncomfortable for them if statistics gathered from the exam were used to imply that someone is not doing their job well enough. Thankfully none of the teachers interviewed in this study had experienced this. Participant 6 also mentioned this as a possibility, but she fronted the positive side effect of this happening, which would be that “sloppy teachers” could be avoided.

5.4.3 For the Norwegian education system

The main benefit with having a written examination as part of ENG1007 appears to be that a centralized exam might serve as a safety net which ensures that schools and their administrations are held accountable for the grades given by their teachers, to their pupils. It is worrisome that Participants 1 and 2 both felt that they were instructed by their administration to be nicer when assessing pupils. While these interviews only represent the individual opinions of the participants involved, the fact remains that two of them were of the impression that officials at the school they worked at had asked them to be nicer when grading their pupils. Having a centralized exam created and distributed by UDIR could help limit this as it provides a form of oversight which would raise red flags if systematic discrepancies were discovered.

If taken at face value, it can seem like the ENG1007 written exam is trying to balance the line between a language proficiency test, and a final assessment aimed at measuring pupils' language abilities as described in the curriculum. This is problematic as according to Bachman (1990) this choice needs to be made prior to designing the test, as criterion-based assessment and assessments of language proficiency each require tests that are specifically designed to measure one or the other. Blömeke et al., praised the education act §3-22 for stating that “the exam shall enable pupils to show their proficiency in the subject”; unfortunately, Participants 3, 4, 5, and 6 all expressed that the written ENG1007 exam fails to do this. Participant 4 went as far as calling the exam terrible, and Participant 3 said that “the new exam measures efficiency rather than proficiency”.

According to the majority of teachers interviewed, the cancelation of exams did not really affect their pupils' progress when working towards the end of the semester. Apart from Participant 2 who reported that her pupils lost all motivation, Participant 1 experienced that his pupils became more relaxed, and Participant 3 felt that the cancelation of exams allowed his pupils to finish the curriculum. All in all, this indicates that if anything, the absence of the exam was helpful for the continued learning of the majority of pupils. It is fair to assume that the main objective of education is learning. If pupils are more relaxed and at the same time given more time to focus on the criterion in the ENG1007 subject, the net effect could be that the pupils' proficiency development ends up being better off without an exam at the end. If, however, the absence of exams leads to a loss of motivation, this would most definitely lead to a net loss for pupils', teachers', and the education system as a whole.

6 Conclusion

This mixed-method study has researched the effects of canceling written exams at Norwegian upper secondary schools in 2020 and 2021. Statistics retrieved from UDIR was used to establish grading trends in English at Norwegian upper secondary schools, going back to 2007-08. Materials from seven structured interviews were then used to shed light on how English teachers in upper secondary school (general studies) experienced the cancelation of exams and how this affected them and their pupils. Finally, a questionnaire designed to give pupils an opportunity to share their experiences with assessment in written English at VG1 as well as their beliefs about written exams contributed to a better understanding of their thoughts on the subject.

Assessment theory was presented with an historic overview, and findings by Bachman (1990) showed why assessment of EFL can be challenging. Review of previous research revealed that systematic deviations between exam grades and overall achievement grades at Norwegian upper secondary schools is well documented (Hægeland et al. (2005), Dale & Wærness (2006), Gravaas et al. (2008), Galloway (2011), Hovdhaugen et al. (2014), Hovdhaugen et al. (2018), Hodne (2020)). Finally, the theory presented showed findings from Blömeke et al. (2020), which recommended several changes prior to the introduction of the LK20 written exam format.

The findings presented in this thesis suggest that the cancelation of written exams at Norwegian upper secondary schools in 2020 and 2021 impacted teachers and their pupils in several different ways. While one teacher was devastated by the decision as she discovered that her pupils lost their motivation, most teachers had no problem with the cancelation, as neither they nor their pupils were noticeably affected by it. One of the aspects that was particularly affected in 2020 was the abnormal increase in average overall achievement grades in 41 out of 46 subjects. Findings from the teachers interviewed indicated that there could be several factors influencing the abnormal increase in grades, the most predominant one being marking up students in sympathy because of the social situation caused by the pandemic. According to some of the participants, this was possible largely due to the cancelation of centralized exams which, to some degree, act as an external control of their grading practices. It looks like the biggest impact with the cancelation of the exam was that teachers lost a tool useable for the calibration of their assessment practices.

The pupils participating in the questionnaire were overwhelmingly in favor of canceling the exams in 2022 as well, which makes sense when we consider that both the teachers and pupils participating in this study for the most part agree that the ENG1007 written exam is more beneficial for teachers than it is for pupils. However, a majority of the pupils taking part in the questionnaire expect to receive either the same grade or a better grade in an English written exam while still thinking that their teacher is fair when grading their assignments. This leads to several questions which could be addressed in future researches.

While many questions arose during the writing of this thesis, the primary one surrounds the newly introduced exam format. Not only are the participants in this study skeptical about its quality, but pupils and parents alike seem to be more and more interested in getting rid of exams at lower and upper secondary schools altogether. This would, according to the findings presented in this thesis, be a major loss for teachers, as it would deprive them of one of the only tools available to them that help them evaluate and calibrate their assessment practices. For the exam to be beneficial for anyone, it does however require that it is of high quality in reliability and validity, and that it fulfills its purpose. Throughout this thesis, the newly introduced ENG1007 exam has been criticized by teachers for being too extensive. The scope of this thesis did not allow for an extensive analysis of the new format and its potential impact. It is therefore strongly suggested that the validity, reliability and overall quality of the new exam format is subject to further study.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Pupils in ENG1007

03/05/2022, 11:39

SurveyXact

Grunnleggende informasjon

Er du elev på VG1?

- Ja
- Nei

Deltar du i ordinær Engelsk undervisning på VG1?

- Ja
- Nei
- Nei, men jeg har engelsk med individuell opplæringsplan.

Utfoldende spørsmål.

Hvor mange skriftlige prøver/innleveringer (med karakter 1-6) har du hatt i engelsk på VG1?

- Ingen
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Flere enn fire

Hvilken karakter var den forrige du fikk tilbake i skriftlig engelsk? (på en prøve eller en innlevering)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- Jeg har ikke fått tilbake noen karakterer

I hvor stor grad var du fornøyd med karakteren du fikk på denne?

- 1 - Veldig missfornøyd
- 2 - Ganske missfornøyd
- 3 - Litt missfornøyd
- 4 - Litt fornøyd
- 5 - Ganske fornøyd
- 6 - Veldig fornøyd

I hvor stor grad opplevde du at læreren var rettferdig når h*n gav deg den karakteren?

- 1 - Veldig urettferdig
- 2 - Ganske urettferdig

<https://www.survey-xact.dk/servlet/com.pls.morpheus.web.pages.CoreSurveyPrintDialog?surveyid=1349352&locale=no&printBackground=false&printing=true...> 1/3

- 3 - Litt urettferdig
- 4 - Litt rettfærdig
- 5 - Ganske rettfærdig
- 6 - Veldig rettfærdig

Jeg tror jeg kunne fått en annen karakter på prøven om den hadde blitt rettet anonymt

- 1 - Helt uenig
- 2 - Ganske uenig
- 3 - Litt uenig
- 4 - Litt enig
- 5 - Ganske enig
- 6 - Helt enig

Jeg mener at alle skriftlige prøver på VG1 burde bli rettet anonymt

- 1 - Helt uenig
- 2 - Ganske uenig
- 3 - Litt uenig
- 4 - Litt enig
- 5 - Ganske enig
- 6 - Helt enig

Hvilken standpunktskarakter tror du at du får i engelsk til sommeren?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

Noen spørsmål om eksamen.

Skriftlig eksamen i engelsk er en prøve som ca. 10% av elevene på vgs blir valgt til å delta på. Prøven er laget sentralt, som betyr at elever fra hele landet får den samme prøven. Alle prøvene blir rettet anonymt.

I slutten av skoleåret kan du risikere å bli trukket opp til skriftlig eksamen i Engelsk. Var du klar over dette før denne spørreundersøkelsen?

- Ja
- Nei

Jeg tror at vurderingen på en skriftlig eksamen er mer rettfærdig enn vurderingen på vanlige prøver i klassen.

- 1 - Helt uenig
- 2 - Ganske uenig
- 3 - Litt uenig

- 4 - Litt enig
- 5 - Ganske enig
- 6 - Helt enig

Hvilken eksamenskarakter tror du at du får om du kommer opp til skriftlig eksamen i engelsk?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

Blir du stresset av å tenke på at du kan komme opp til eksamen i engelsk?

- Ja, Absolutt
- Ja, Litt
- Nei, Ikke egentlig
- Nei, Absolutt ikke

Hvor ofte vil du si at du tenker på eksamen?

- Daglig
- Ukentlig
- Månedlig
- Sjeldnere
- Aldri

I 2020 og i 2021 ble skriftlig eksamen i engelsk på VG1 kansellert. Håper du at skriftlig eksamen i engelsk blir kansellert også i 2022?

- Ja, Absolutt
- Ja, Litt
- Nei, Ikke egentlig
- Nei, Absolutt ikke

Tusen takk for at du tok deg tid til å delta på denne undersøkelsen.

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

”Lærere og elevers holdninger Eksamen i kjølvannet av Covid-19 og den nasjonale kanselleringen av eksamen”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å analysere eksamens rolle, samt påvirkning på Standpunktskarakterer i Engelskfaget ved videregående skoler i Norge. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Jeg heter Henrik Hodne Harestad og går på lektorutdanningen ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Jeg skriver for øyeblikket en masteroppgave i Engelsk angående karaktersetting i Engelskfaget på VGS. Ønsket mitt er å intervju Engelsklærere angående karaktersetting for å høre deres meninger og erfaringer rundt dette.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitetet i Stavanger er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du mottar dette skrivet fordi du er Engelsk lærer ved en videregående skole i Rogaland.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du stiller opp til intervju med meg. Det vil ta deg ca. 30 minutter. Jeg vil ta lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Det er kun jeg selv som vil ha tilgang til lydopptaket fra intervjuet.
- Lydopptaket vil bli tatt opp på egen PC som alltid vil være passord beskyttet. Selve programmet vil i tillegg også være passord beskyttet. Etter at materialet er blitt anonymisert så vil lydopptaket bli slettet.
- Du vil ikke kunne bli gjenkjent i publikasjonen ved denne master oppgaven. Du vil være anonym.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 30.06.21. Da vil opptaket være slettet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Stavanger har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med: Universitetet i Stavanger ved Kjetil Vikhamar Thengs Email: kjetil.v.thengs@uis.no
tlf:92846947

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
(Henrik Hodne Harestad/ Kjetil Vikhamar Thengs)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Lærere og elevers holdninger Eksamen i kjølvannet av Covid-19 og den nasjonale kanselleringen av eksamen?» og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i *intervju*
- at samtalen blir tatt opp*
- at opptaket kan lagres frem til prosjektet er avsluttet.*

Appendix 3: Interview guide

For the purpose of this interview, all questions will be presented in English. You as the respondent are however free to answer all questions in a language of your choice. Your choice of language is not part of the study, and what is most important in your choice is that you feel comfortable answering the questions presented to the best of your ability. You may also switch between languages during the interview if this helps you answer the question at hand.

Participant X	
General information	1. Gender
	2. Age
	3. Education
	a. Lektor/masters and PPU
	b. Subjects
Experience	4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?
	5. Experience
	a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)
	b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam?
	i. How many times?
	ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?
	a. Did you take advantage of the offer presented to you?
	b. Did you find it helpful?
	i. Could you elaborate?
	c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?
	i. How many times?
	ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature preparing you for that assignment?
	a. Did you take advantage of the offer presented to you?
	b. Did you find it helpful?
	i. Could you elaborate?
Opinions about the exam	6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statements that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?
	7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same ting, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.
	8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:
	a. Measure pupils' proficiency
	b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

	c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)
	9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?
	10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?
	11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?
2020	12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?
	a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?
	i. Approximately for how long?
	13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?
	14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?
	15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?
	16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?
	a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?
	b. Do you think this could also be influenced by “compassion for the general misery in society”?
	17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?
a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?	
2021	18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?
	a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?
	i. Approximately for how long?
	19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?
	20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?
	21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?
	22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?
a. Was/Would that (have been) a fair thing to do?	
Assessment	23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?
	24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?
	25. What do you usually base your pupil’s overall achievement grade on?
	a. How do you weigh oral and written English?
	26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?
	a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?
	b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?
	If time: How do you picture the perfect exam arrangement?

Appendix 4: Interview summary – Participant 1

Participant 1	
1. Gender	Male
2. Age	40
3. Education	
a. Lektor/masters and PPU	To mellomfag og PPU, (Engelsk og Kopsøving)
b. Subjects	Samfunnsfag årsstudium
c. Other relevant education	Musikk årsstudium
4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?	Utdanningsforbundet
5. Experience	
a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)	This is my third year so two and a half years almost
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam	no
c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?	Not in upper secondary school no
6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?	Could you please repeat, three positive ... (interviewer repeats question).. mhm. Three positive... eg har jo ingen erfaring med det, har jo ikkje hatt oppe elever. (How about your thoughts or ideas of the written exam, you have been part of the planning process. Talking about the written exam as of LK20. Do you have any thoughts?) I like the fact that there are listening tasks. Not only written tasks. Before there were one short answer and one long. Now there are lots of listening tasks and also some comprehension tasks. Apart from that I don't think of anything.
7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same ting, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.	Ehm. Of course ehm, most students they kind of fear written exam, I guess that's a negative thing. They also tend to get a lower grade then they do in overall assessment. (Good)
12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?	Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?
Yes
i. Approximately for how long?
Ehm, so half of march, April, may, June, so three months
13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?
It was a great relief. Because it was my first year in studieforbereidende, so yeah, it was a relief not having to worry about written exam
14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?
Yes, I think so without a doubt.
15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?
Ganske sånn spørsmål så du må tenke.... altså det var jo så spesielt for det atte når alt blei, når alt blei digitalt, så var det liksom, fokuset var bare på koss sko du klara å gjennomføre det, hadde aldri gjort det, så det va det som blei fokuset, å finne ut av koss ting funka å koss du sko få det her til å bli ok, sånn at, ja det blei nok veldig mye mindre fokus på verte mindre sånn læringstrykk, blei litt slakkere, og huske litt lite av det altså. Ehm ja, nei, nei men eg trur nok det er det som er sånn som eg husker det hvertfall, du brukte liksom alt energi på koss sko du gjør dette her, åsså fekk me jo og beskjed om at karakterer, viss me var i tvil så vipper me de opp. Altså det blei veldig sånn avslappa. Åsså litt sån kunstig høye karakterer. Vett ikkje om det var en gjenganger i heila landet. Trur hvertfall det var det her på skolen.
16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?
yes
a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?
(In your opinion) Yes
b. Do you think this could also be influenced by “compassion for general misery in society”
Yes
17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?
... ehm, Yes I think so.
a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?
(In your opinion) maybe, I'm not sure. I think I'll go with yes
18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?
Yes
a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?
Yes
i. Approximately for how long?
Only in one week in January

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

I was quite surprised

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

I'm not sure, maybe not. I can't remember what the situation was like with corona, was it in April or something they cancelled the exam, no I'm not sure about that one, but like I said I was surprised but if it was the right decision or not I'm not sure

21. In what way did the cancellation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

Ehm. I guess the atmosphere in the classroom was a bit more relaxed than it would have been if the exams were not cancelled, apart from that I do not think it affected what we did in any way. Maybe we would have, of course if the exam was not cancelled we would have spent quite a lot of time preparing, working on relevant tasks, yeah

22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

No

a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?

No I don't think so

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

Two

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

(Standpunktskarakter, ke baserer du den stort sett på) ja den er jo basert på dei to skriveøktene eg har etter jul då. Men tenke du liksom... Den siste telle mest då

a. How do you weigh oral and written English?

Difficult one, but I guess it should be 50/50

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Mhm, many times

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

Ehm, Yes of course, because I was not in contact with my colleagues, I barely talked to them, the answer is yes

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

Maybe yes.

Follow up questions regarding cancellation of written English exams in 2020-2022

As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?

Rett å avlysa sidan sidan pandemien har ført til svært mykje fråver blant elevar og lærarar mange stadar.

- 2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:**

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunktvurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplærings situasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunktkarakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

- a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?**

Ut I frå dette avsnittet les eg (veldig forenkla) at standpunktvurderinga er gjerne betre og viktigare enn eksamen.

- b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?**

Vanskeleg spørsmål, men eg heller mot å vera enig i det som kjem fram I avsnittet.

- 3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:**

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some loose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

- a. Do you agree with this perception?**

Eg har aldri ennå hatt elevar oppe I eksamen på VGS, men eg trur nok at dette kan stemma ja.

- 4. Utdanningspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.**

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

Det er eg litt usikker på. Avlyst eksamen kan nok ha noko å seie her, men eg tru kanskje det handlar meir om at mykje vurdering føregjekk digital.

- 5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefore feel the need to have you**

clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils' English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

Usikker. Heller mot ja

Appendix 5: Interview summary – Participant 2

Participant 2
1. Gender
Female
2. Age
54
3. Education
PED, and a couple other årsstudium. Bachelors and Masters were in Business, because I was going to come here and work at Statoil and make lots of money, and then I ended up having five kids, so I decided when I had been home for 13 years that teaching would be a good alternative, and actually this is exactly what I am supposed to be doing. So I went to the university and I took English, because I thought that you could teach English just because I have a whole lifetime of English, but you actually have to have an education (Laughter, shit). So, no I loved it, I loved taking English classes, much more than I did when I was a child. And, ehm, and then I took Kroppsøving, Idrett, So I teach Gym and I teach English, and I am also qualified to teach Økonomifag but I don't, and I don't want to, cause I don't want to teach in Norwegian. Even in Gym I teach in English.
4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?
Yeah, Lektorlaget.
5. Experience
a. Years teaching English at Upper secondary school (General studies)
First practice time in 2007 when I was still a student, and then I started teaching fulltime in 2010, and I worked at Øksnevad until 2016, and started at Sandnes in 2016, 5 years at general studies.
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written English exam
Yes but that was at Øksnevad. But you know that was amazing because, the students traditionally at Øksnevad don't do well, and the class before me, of the 16 students, two got threes, five failed and the rest got twos. So it was not high expectations. But my students, this is one of my credits, my honorable mentions, all my students got the grade I gave them. So that I, and this is why also, actually that was a great question, even though it is not studied, this is why this means so much to me that they have exams, because I got a chance to have confirmation that I was grading them correctly, actually I forgot about that, that was frickin awesome, I got a message from my avdelingsleder in the summer and she told me the grades and I was so, and I sent a message to all my students, I was so proud of them, that they had, yeah. But I have always held a high standard, and that is my

goal, is that the students will do as well as I've taught them, get the same grade basically that I thought that they were deserving of, or maybe a little better, because sometimes, the maturity, it all ripens right at the time of the exams.

i. How many times?

I can almost guarantee that my students in VG1 will never come up in written because I teach VG2 and VG3. But of course I will never tell them that.

ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?

Noo. Not that I can think of, no but for me it is always, I have taken courses on my own, one was Lesing og skiving et eller annet that they had at the university, and there they focused a lot on the whole backward planning and I totally believe that, and inherently in me it's always been like, what is the goal of this year. VG1 english is always a bit challenging because it is only one year, that's why I'm really strict on the language, that it is only formal language, any of the informal which I do because I'm supposed to, its not for grades, because I feel that the students will only try to do things properly and really put an effort into things when there is a grade attached to it. So the informal stuff is done for no grades or just godkjent/ikkegodkjent, and the grades, it's all formal, I'm almost a nazi about it, because, even in Norwegian they are a little bit more open with the I and the you, but I really wanna teach what they need, that academic writing, and now it is a part of the fagfornyelse, so I'm super happy, because it wasn't before, and that's why people were like "it's not important" Nobody wants to be the bad guy.

c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?

No, I want to. All the sensors, I have asked about that, because I think that that would be such a rich experience. It would be a valuable experience. They are all up in Bergen or something. The person in the fylke is like up there, and so, this is what I've heard, I don't know. I have been sensors for the orals, but not written

6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?

I would like to think of it as a "avsluttning". An ending to the year. I grade progressively, I tell my students that, in the beginning of the year when they come here from junior high school. Junior high school is very informal, very often the teachers my students have had, and this is predominant in a lot of junior high schools, it's not a criticism, it's just a comment, observation, don't have an education in english. In junior high school they place the teachers where they need them. Ehm, I've had many students and my own children as well who've said that they were better than their teachers in english, so therefore they get inflated grades, and ehm, and they are allowed to write however they want. Now when they come here, I have one year I have four written evaluations, so for me it is of utmost importance that I teach them academic writing, and they focus on that. Now ehm, I've, in the beginning it is a bit of a transition for them, they are not used to it, they're always thinking conversational and personal, so they get threes, and these are kids who have gotten these overinflated grades to begin with, and come here and it is a shocker. And in order to get the parents of my back and everything, I tell them, expect maybe some dips in the grades, but again, I told the students, and I tell them even before I give their grades, I have this speech to them to soften the blow, and again I'm not being super strict, its just that I have a way I want them to write, and the positive thing is that true the years I get feedback from students that they're super happy and their grades go up in Norwegian when they start writing like I want, so I know that I am on to something, but yeah, so I say

even though you have gotten a three and you get a five or a six in the end, I am not gonna say that oh but you had that three at the beginning of the year and grade you to a four or five you know, I'm not gonna do that, so I have a progressive, now final, I know this was a lot longer that it was supposed to be, sorry, hopefully the information will be useful somewhere else. So the final grade the exam is kind of, its their final performance in english, and especially since VG1 ony has one year. Final performance, final challenge and practice for the future, and ehm, yeah I mean that whole exam pressure thing is just, it is important for them to ehm, **again its that practice for the future I have to say that twice because that is the most important part.** Sitting down and having to write in english, they are going to need those things in everything, you know what I mean? Ehm, because the universities is going more and more towards engsih stuff, my daughter she is taking biotech in Ålesund, and masters is all in engsih, books in studies, oh, Idrett, many of the books were in engsih, I was translating to my students, to my fellow students.

7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same ting, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.

That's tough. Logistically I do not have any problems with it, and it does not affect my time, I do not have to grade it. I don't want to feel sorry for the students because you know life's a bitch and then you die, no I'm serious I don't, again that's a problem with parenting nowadays. Don't cuddle them, don't make it all easy for them. I'm sorry, I don't see anything negative with not having it. I feel that all the things that people could point out as being negative, are a positive, can be seen as a positive. I really do, I think that life is hard and that we should have struggles, and that we should prepare, and that we should sit and concentrate. Technology is making it so that they don't have to concentrate. I honest to God don't find one negative thing.

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

a. Measure pupils' proficiency

In writing it definitely measures, and also understanding. I think it does a very good job of that. And in life we need to learn to follow instructions, and we need to learn in certain events to do as we are told, my God its such a skill that they need for their future jobs and anything that you are doing, can you follow instructions and can you deliverer, and communicate.

b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

You know, I think that is the problem with the whole, when the statistics gets used, and schools get rated, In some ways there are advantages to that but I think that is always the detractor. That's the thing that takes away the attention from it. The focus shouldn't be that. Any time, this is something I feel very strongly about, my students don't do well on something, I have to take a bit of the responsibility. Doesn't mean I have to give them good grades, but I have to take a, I have to change something, I have to handle things differently. And it really annoys me when teachers, cause you have teachers that don't see that connection, but when students predominantly in a class don't do well it is because of the teacher. I mean of course you're gonna have some students that just don't care, and there is not a chance, I mean in our physical capacity to help them. There is always a chance, I believe in help for everybody, but I don't like that statistics thing so I cant even

have an opinion on it almost because I feel like that distorts the focus of what the exam should be about

c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)

Yeah but see on the national level that's important because again your GPA getting into university is very important. And when I worked at øksnevad I had this student who was questionable whether she should deserve a two or not. I always weighted a lot of that on innsats. I mean especially if they are inn between the two. And thank God in english we have the oral and the written put together, otherwise those kids wouldn't get through. But I was glad they weren't nurses, because nursing and other professions you really need to be clear as to what their abilities are because it could have to do with life and death. But I think it is very important because, and that's why this exam or lack of exam the last two years makes it easier to give nice grades because I don't have anything to calibrate it. Before it was, "you know Lars you're a nice kid and I know you, but you know I have to because you could come up to written and I don't want to be the teacher up there when we have the presentation of the grades and connecting exam grades and standpunktskarater in you know, we share that. And there is that class and there is this big difference. I don't want to be that teacher. And they all understood it, but when exams are taken away, yeah. And my daughter has to compete with pupils she went out one year before and so she is competing with pupils who haven't had exams and so they have these overinflated GPAs

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

Functions, in what way do you mean, because it tests, again, a written exam traditionally test that you are given questions, you have to reflect on them, and of course in writing you are showing reflection. (I'm thinking more in terms of the three that is listed now by utdanningsdirektoratet is the three previously mentioned, where one of them is to measure pupils proficiency, the other is to provide school owners with statistics, and third one is to provide teachers, principals and so forth information regarding the curriculum and exams. And so those are the functions that UDIR feel the exam should fill now. In your opinion, what function should the exam fill, and would you prioritize them?) Oh prioritizing first and foremost it's measuring the students abilities. Ehm and I think the second one would be the last one which has to do with grades and stuff on a national level. And then the statistics locally on this school. Again, don't get me wrong, I can see the advantage of it, because if schools are, if they are not reaching goals, if students, if they are putting out students that tests below the level that they should be then that should be looked at. And that is a helpful thing, but that is, I just feel like the attention always is like goes to that instead of other stuff. You know.

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

Oh totally. I know, you had to ask it.

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

To be honest, Yes I think it would be a huge advantage. I think it would be interesting to have some tverfaglig stuff, I mean their all into that stuff and actually to be honest I would love to, we talked about making a new class and stuff and making new courses, and it

would be interesting to have an economics but that focuses more on personal budget, paying taxes, ehm that was done in English, and you had modules. So you had this multipurpose course that went over the whole school year that all students had to take. And it had to do with useful life skills. And also one about mental health and not being an asshole, you know. Cleaning up after yourself, accountability, I mean, yeah. But then part of it could have been taught in English. But the subjects, the thing I love about teaching English. You are planning to be an English teacher, right? (Yes) It's such a takknemlig fag. Seriously, the students don't mind it, ehm you can do so many different things, it's almost, I change it every year. I change it a lot. Except for like the reading book because we don't have that many assets. But I change a lot and a lot of different topics, new things come up. 1984 we are reading in Norwegian too. And every year, international English, well it's not called that anymore, but every year there's something new that's relevant to the culture, society, can't culture, political correctness, all these issues. So it changes, you subject changes every year even if you do the same projects. And you learn so much from your students.

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Oh my God yes

i. Approximately for how long?

Ehm, we went out March twelfth, I know because I came back from a school trip, and went straight to lockdown, and we were here until right around 17. May, wasn't it? So, it was three months. Ehm, it was a hell. And my heart broke for the students and I got no support from the administration and I'm a tech-tard, no technologically it was a real struggle. And also took me the entire time plus more to realize that my kitchen table is not a desk. Did you know your kitchen table is higher? My shoulders. Three months I guess. And then we did have after that it still counts because in the juleperiode we had half the class here and half the class at home. That was a hell, that was a hell, so the half that was at home was getting in on teams, so you had to wait while you were getting everybody online, and of course the first class in the morning people did not wake up, and it was hell.

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

I was devastated, because, again, what happened is that especially for my VG3's because like I said, even though I didn't have the VG1's, the VG3's it's really important that they participate in that. And the motivation went to hell. And they got messaged way too early. So exams, in all my experience, in all the years and all the subjects I've taught, the exam is the thing that keeps them going in the end, because to be honest, especially the VG3's, and VG2's, they're so sick of it all, but the exam keeps them going. The exam, they know they have to keep, keep it up just a little bit longer just because this stuff may help them on the exam.

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

No. No because the thing is, I think they could have found some other way to do it, and also like I said, even if it was not logistically possible and there really was a concern, because at that time, no kids were getting it. No kids were a concern, it was just us old people, and if they were really concerned and it wasn't possible, again, I'm not going to assess what was and wasn't at the time, but they shouldn't have said anything until the

last minute. Because, we lost students. Our “ikke vurdert” percentile increased, students motivation, they just didn’t see the purpose. It really effected the students. They were happy ofcourse.

15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

Yeah no at the end. To be honest I’m just gonna say this straight out because you are going to delete my name and not put it in the study, and I just don’t give a shit anymore. I got so fed up because at that time we had been in lockdown and like I said, the students, how far do I have to go to chase after them, to call them up and then you call the dad and dad goes “oh I’m sorry I didn’t wake him up” what the hell your kid’s sixteen he should be waking himself up, I mean, you’ve obviously ruined this kid, so I mean fuck nay. Sorry, I have so much like almost anger because I just thought the whole thing was crap. The school didn’t do it to help us to help us to keep them motivated. Whoever makes the decision, and like I said, they could have just waited. Even though, it doesn’t affect them logistically if they waited until like a week or two before, you know, you would have kept so many more students in the system until, you know, it was necessary, but they told them so frikkin early. And then there was the constant maybe we’re going to have orals and stuff, so then that kept some but, no the Orals is usually easy for most people to bullshit themselves through, so the written is the one that is always a little bit more challenging.

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

Yeah no at the end. To be honest I’m just gonna say this straight out because you are going to delete my name and not put it in the study, and I just don’t give a shit anymore. I got so fed up because at that time we had been in lockdown and like I said, the students, how far do I have to go to chase after them, to call them up and then you call the dad and dad goes “oh I’m sorry I didn’t wake him up” what the hell your kid’s sixteen he should be waking himself up, I mean, you’ve obviously ruined this kid, so I mean fuck nay. Sorry, I have so much like almost anger because I just thought the whole thing was crap. The school didn’t do it to help us to help us to keep them motivated. Whoever makes the decision, and like I said, they could have just waited. Even though, it doesn’t affect them logistically if they waited until like a week or two before, you know, you would have kept so many more students in the system until, you know, it was necessary, but they told them so frikkin early. And then there was the constant maybe we’re going to have orals and stuff, so then that kept some but, no the Orals is usually easy for most people to bullshit themselves through, so the written is the one that is always a little bit more challenging.

a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?

I don’t want to say that my quality went down, but of course, the students were so unmotivated, so I’m sure that they were affected. I, again I resent the whole lockdown thing, because I worked my ass off, I mean I was 24/7, at home, that is a place you go to get away from school, and yes, I can grade stuff there, but that is my choice. And now there was no free stead, you know. But the students too, I also felt like I was taking their problems. I don’t really have students who necessarily suffer in the sense of abuses or the parents being alcoholics that I know of. But it’s like, the one family has too many kids and so the kid never gets any peace and his little brother cusses six times while he is having a presentation, and then you feel bad for him, and then you’ve got the only children who

were totally isolated because parents wouldn't let them go with anybody, and then you had some girls who were allowed to be with people, and then other girls that weren't, like my daughter number five, she was just devastated. I'm a very social person she said, and then she knew of other people who were getting to be social, so she resented us, so it was really, really hard. But I thought about that, and you know, I wanted to be able to do something about it, and actually very often when I had oral presentations and discussions with them, which we did plan during that time because you can do that on teams. It ended up taking three times as long because I sat and talked to them, you see that I do get off track, ehm, but I cared about my students so I was like, how are you? So being the therapist first, or after, so everything took so long, but, the quality, of course it's affected. I would like to think it wasn't necessarily on my point, I worked long and hard to find projects, and luckily I was in that creative phase that they could do stuff that still met "kompetansemål", and I was always explaining in case they came up to oral, but their motivation, it was the whole package. But I do know people who were total slackers.

b. Do you think this could also be influenced by "compassion for general misery in society"

That probably did affect me but you know if I didn't have exams on a normal basis, then it would be really easy for me to give nice grades, the "trynefaktor". No, no if the student was a three I didn't give him a five just because I felt sorry for him because he had all his brothers coming in all the time, no it wasn't like that but there was always the tendency to bump up a little bit. I do have integrity at the end of the day as far as that goes to but it did bother me, knowing that I bumped up students who I normally wouldn't have bumped up.

17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advise you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

Officially, pretty much officially. I mean it was again that; "Stakkars ungene" you know, that kind of thing. But like I said, I talked to a lot of my students too, and there were teachers who did not have their classes as planned, and who, yeah I mean what kind of assessments do you have and what kind of foundation do you have to give them a grade? So they took the easy way out.

a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?

No, and it pissed me off, because it's just like whenever you have the students you know I just gave assessments now just before you came. They read a book, and when you hear the "six" answer, it's like there is no doubt. And then when you have the other kids that are like in the four and five, its, you know, in some ways you like them, but you just know they're not a six, so you have to stand for what you believe in in your evaluation, I can't say you weren't as good as so and so. But the quality of the answers, they are so different. So, I think inherently as teachers we know what grade the students work deserves. But in a way when the exams were gone, and the tests, and also I knew that they were going to go to university and that they were going to compete with other students who had gotten nice grades at other places. So yeah, that happened with several of them last year too because they were VG3's and you know what study they want and you know they are going to compete with people who are getting higher grades too.

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Mhm.

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes both, ehm, in spring of 2021 there was, last year was a lot of half the class came one day and the class came another day, and so it was a mixture. Plus you had students which were quarantined all the time, and I had an "idretts" class and they had these football boys who were on "A-lag" so they were in 100% isolation, they weren't allowed to be with anybody except for their teammates. And that meant that all their evaluations had to be online. And that was on top off, because you don't do that in a normal class session because there in class you're dealing with your 28 other students and you have to do the online stuff with them after or before or. Its all bullshit. And also and then you come back, and that year we got 1900kr raise, that's 150kr a month. Lønnsnedgang, talk about it. Its like, go through this whole hell of a year and you get only 1900kr a year raise, and then you come back from lockdown and the school says "Oh, we've saved money, we're not 2 million dollars in debt anymore." Ant then you are like Fuck you, you know. Ehm, we've been working our butts off and we get no raise, and no seriously I was, its still with me. And I have always loved my job and I am very. I am someone who outspokenly says I love my job, all the time and, because I really really really do. The last year and a half have been so fucking heavy. So you are lucky you're not a teacher right now.

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

Yes both, ehm, in spring of 2021 there was, last year was a lot of half the class came one day and the class came another day, and so it was a mixture. Plus you had students which were quarantined all the time, and I had an "idretts" class and they had these football boys who were on "A-lag" so they were in 100% isolation, they weren't allowed to be with anybody except for their teammates. And that meant that all their evaluations had to be online. And that was on top off, because you don't do that in a normal class session because there in class you're dealing with your 28 other students and you have to do the online stuff with them after or before or. Its all bullshit. And also and then you come back, and that year we got 1900kr raise, that's 150kr a month. Lønnsnedgang, talk about it. Its like, go through this whole hell of a year and you get only 1900kr a year raise, and then you come back from lockdown and the school says "Oh, we've saved money, we're not 2 million dollars in debt anymore." Ant then you are like Fuck you, you know. Ehm, we've been working our butts off and we get no raise, and no seriously I was, its still with me. And I have always loved my job and I am very. I am someone who outspokenly says I love my job, all the time and, because I really really really do. The last year and a half have been so fucking heavy. So you are lucky you're not a teacher right now.

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

I'm trying to think how it differed from the year before. No I still don't think so, because the thing is you know, this whole thing is like we've never really known what its all about, we've never really known how serious it was. Ok, let me put it this way. My students have had, in the classes we've had the isolated episode here and there, and the kid has been in class a day or two, and no one else got it, I mean, I'm not saying, I'm not dismissing it but and also, all the kids have just been fine you know. So if the teachers were concerned its one thing, then the teachers can go with munnbind or, we've always been told we can do that or ehm, not go to school you know, but nobody, it didn't seem to be a topic for discussion. I mean, of course you can have the occasional person who whines about it but they still came to work. But no, I think that, to put people in a room, I mean, spread them out, the "kantine" could be used, there are alternatives, and and you can change the day. I mean it logistically would be a little bit of a challenge but I still think the

benefits would have been worth that effort. (And so just to clarify, were you more or less in agreement the first or the second time) Again I have to put my mind back into that time. In the beginning it was all so new, it was also unknown so, it seemed so scary, everybody was scared. But by 2021 again, kids weren't an issue, kids weren't a problem. Ehm and if they get it its just like having, and also no, no I think I was more annoyed the second time. Because also too the second time you see that there is a pattern, and the second time you are saying, o.k. how are we going to get back to this because then you are hearing from "Utdanningsforbundet" that you know: "stakkars unge", that thing. And then I'm kind of, I guess after the second time and if they do it this year I don't think we are ever going to be able to come back to exams, because its always the "poor kids" But my students also struck, again it may be mixing because of the oral and stuff, but when they have these oral and written exams it really pushes their limits in the sense in a good way because they really have to reflect and they have to focus for a certain period of time and and they have to give more of themselves and that's good. They grow from that and so I feel that them being not having to do it they're relaxing more and again they relax with not having to remember stuff anyways because we don't have to remember phone numbers. Think about how many phone numbers when you were a kid I knew probably 10 times more than you and you know I mean 'cause we did we had we had no addresses we we had to remember dates we had remember staff and we didn't have a phone telling us this and in this generation I mean having the exams whether they're written or English are even more important now because of society and the way that uh they don't have to strain their brain. Makes sense? OK

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

So thinking which class I had in 2021 and which one had 2020. No it it does make it hard you do lose that that you know the bubble air goes out of your bubble uh not that I think I've changed it and kind of made like and newspapers that they kind of record their year I had them actually write the first year I had them when we came back from lockdown I had half a class in two different rooms how the hell my supposed to teach a class in two different rooms, I'm one person but so I had them record I read they were left themselves and bringing to actually open them in March this year and it talked about how, what they knew the virus what they knew of corona and what the sources were and how they how their locked down was and I said try and think of both sides even if you'd loved it think of the negatives and vice versa and then also their concerns for the future I'm sure everything the letter there says in six months time will be back to normal so it's gonna be fascinating to open it but and so I just tried to find things that were more useful in a way because I had hoped that would teach them at writing is very therapeutic and that they should process what they felt and and then second year I did newspapers where they did class newspapers so that they could have and they had to put pictures so again when I knew they weren't doing an exam the whole thing with the we did have a "heildag" though, but the "heildag" was actually quite early and and actually students did worse on written home exams which is interesting because they traditionally do better on them because they might have some help but but they didn't because they couldn't concentrate when we had students doing writing at home they would because it was half the class I mean there was no other way to get around it I mean there's logistically we just had to do it and the students who wrote at home did worse than the students at school which was interesting that's an interesting fact uh but but yeah so my changing it the air went on my

bubble and I tried to just make things a little bit more fun but yeah something of some sort of value I mean "kompetansemålene" and everything you know

22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

I guess in both years in a way it's officially but unofficially it was just like you know against attitude "stakkars" and I should not pay for this you know kind of thing and so and also it was just kind of a common thing that I think a lot of people felt because you know they know that these kids are gonna go and compete against other kids who've got inflated grades

a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?

yeah I wish that there was some way that we could have had in fact it was we had been encouraged now that you bring this up 'cause it's something I never really thought about 'cause it wasn't something really out "åpenbart", but you saying it makes me think that yeah there was it was the "holdning" but I wish they had done the opposite. the one thing that I did feel was good is that the principal was actually quite clear that there would probably be more students failing this year. and so "blandet" now that I think about it because he did accept that because he can as a teacher sometimes you're afraid to fail students because you're not sure if the schools gonna have your back and there's nothing worse than failing a student and having them not stand up for you but but he was he was aware as well that there would be more students who would fall, the ones who fell off the wagon who usually fly under the radar that it disappeared it and locked down time so.

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

I don't know if it's changed because I've always thought exams are important but I've had, especially in English for example because my children have always said that when they had a writing in grade school in junior high school that they they never had to do anything, just to show up and write and for me that's so wrong. I mean because we're teaching them something inherently wrong so the beauty of the VG1 in something that I focused on in my classes is that you have to prepare. Because when you thought about something when you when you given some when you read something when you looked into something then your brain has a chance to process it and hopefully that will come out with reflections that ahaa kind of things you know and so that whole preparation is actually, 'cause the good thing about the English exam is specially written is there is preparation day and that day has always been somewhat of a nightmare for me in the sense that students just always go "can we go" you know they don't want to stay and I have always used a lot of time to explain no this is actually very very important. And those girls at Øksnevad who didn't, who got the grade that I wanted, there was a huge difference between the preparation for me and the preparation for my previous colleague because she didn't prepared at all she had given them to and had the "ansvar for egen læring" and ehm, they choked right I sat and I said no I am not gonna have you guys fail and they were terrified of failing because they knew the previous history, and so we we we read the text and we made sure that they understood them because they have to, the questions are based on these appendices that you get. And we discussed movies that they could possibly watch in the rest of their preparation when they put they stayed there from nine to one and actually I think we stayed even longer and all my students did really well. I was so proud of you know and but also I'm proud of me because I forced them to stay. Because teachers can look down on that preparation so to answer your question. having exams's cancels has made me realize

even more so I have become more consciously aware instead of subconsciously aware, but I've always been aware how important they are but yes! and it's because that's why when I saw this I was like "Eg e med" so because and also to like I said it's made me become more aware in the sense that now I realize how important that preparation part is as well and then students can see that when they do prepare they actually can write better.

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

We only, I do 2 written each semester and 2 oral. Yes but I also in order, this blows me away. I have colleagues who don't ehm, they say oh do the questions on page 26 and they don't have to turn them in. So like what the fu... you know why the students aren't going to do them and and I'm like hello you have to turn in everything in my class. You know and it takes me a little bit of time to "godkjennt/ ikke godkjennt" but then when I start to know who the students are then there's only certain students that maybe I'll even check. But I also I tell them to I'm really I'm strict, with a smile. I say you have to turn in all your assignments but if and they have to be complete sentences and they need to be complete assignments. I said if I see one time that you haven't turned in a complete assignment I will go back and stock every single thing that you ever done because I tell them I do spot checks. And, but I traditionally don't have any problems and if I tell the students, I mean again if you tell them what to expect. I have kids. If you tell them what to expect before it becomes a question then they know. Only formal language in academic writing and only in good structure and we work on that and then all assignments turned in and they get counted. I tell him that very often and there can be a four and a five and I said if you've done all your assignments then of course you get the five you know and if you haven't then of course you get the four so and if you've done nothing then of course you get lower than that so.

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

a. How do you weigh oral and written English?

Are we on VG1 or does it matter (Yes general studies) then it would be 50% oral and 50% written and that's the standard. And you know of course I take into consideration you know participations and some students are more active than others, and that again there those are factors that can sway, but traditionally it's what they've produced. Because and also very often what they've produced "hvis det stemmer med det de bidrar med I klassen" because some kids you see are very clever but they have this freak out when they're actually having to produce something for grade. And many of them I can get them to to to produce at a higher level because I can make them feel comfortable. So to get rid of those barriers so yeah so most of the time it's basically on what they've produced but if there is that anomaly that you feel that they present very well and they have a lot of knowledge but they can't put it into a structured format or no not structure format. But if there's something off then there might be some but basically it's the work so, because there's usually a lot of consistency in what they do. Not not trying to be that I give them all the same grade because I got the same grade before but there is usually consistency. but it's nice to see that they've improved because they've done they've taken feedback.

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Yeah, Not on many of the students but I have a very low threshold for doing it. I don't mind doing it for my other colleagues and stuff because sometimes you read things and

just think this is off and you don't know why you're like something something's up and yeah.

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

There I don't think I asked for any second, no I might have Martina, I might have sent her yeah. Yeah it is harder definitely because then you have to write a mail. The one year that I think, the first year we had it I was in an office with two or three two other women who were English teachers and it was very easy just to roll over to them and you know so but I have a good relationship with her she also teaches English so yeah I could send her stuff but yeah definitely

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

Yeah the thresholds higher, yeah you just kind of go with whatever and also to it's just, to be honest, and I hate this about that time. I mean I'm I just didn't give a ****. It's really really sad because I've always said to the students I can justify I can explain 'cause I'm more trying to tell them they can see a theme in the book but they can't explain why it's a theme. They can't pick out details to you know it's all that they come quickly to announce so they think they're good and and so and so when it comes to me I said anything that I do I can tell you why I do it because I'm really trying to reinforce that understanding that yeah we should have an understanding why we do what we do and we should be able to explain it, and The thing is if you can't put words on it then you don't know it. And so we do a lot of talking class 'cause like when we've been preparing for this book chat you know I make them less and then I tell them you are in a room with 28 other people who've also read the books you have some people that you can talk with about so because I tell them nothing about the book they have to figure it out themselves and. And I want them to learn that there is there's a big use, benefit to doing it so 'cause "kolokvier" and stuff like that and universities group that helps a lot of the "Idretts" students got through because I helped translate stuff for them because they didn't have a clue "sitronsyresyklusen" you know.

Follow up questions regarding cancelation of written English exams in 2020-2022

As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?

I was terribly upset. For each year they cancel, it makes it harder for them to get started again. The students start protesting more and after three years of not having them, next year's students will complain that it is not fair for them either. As this has been a debated issue in recent years, these cancellations give more fuel to the fire on behalf of cancelling them all together.

Also, when they cancelled them this year, it was (in my opinion) based on that schools had been closed around Christmas and that was a completely unnecessary closure and even the FHI did not support it. Since we had that short closure, it was then used an argument that the students hadn't learned enough or something to that degree. By saying that, it seems the government has little faith in their teachers to do their jobs.

My biggest fear is that they will cancel exams all together. Every one of my colleagues talks about how unmotivated the students are now that they know there will be no exams. After the 'heldag', they see no point in coming to class or learning new information. There is no 'carrot' to keep them going. And now after three years of uncertainty followed by disappointment for the teachers, many of them are disillusioned and unmotivated. When it comes to grades, 'trynefaktor' is going to play a much larger role as there will be no calibration for the 'standpunkt' grades.

2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunktvurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplæringssituasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunktkarakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?

The first word that comes to mind when I read that is 'trynefaktor'. And then I realize that maybe exams are more to hold the teachers accountable than the students. When there are no exams, grades can be whatever. Some teachers are soft and others are strict. When there are exams, the teachers need to be more respectful to the teaching plan and their grading. I have personal experience with colleagues not completing the curriculum that was intended for their subject. It is easy when the exams are locally given because then that colleague could make an exam that refers to what they actually went through. That helps the teacher, and to some degree the students, yet it is not ideal. When exams are given nationally, it puts pressure on the teachers to do their jobs. Unfortunately, that is more necessary than you realize. There are a lot of lazy teachers. This pandemic has made them more noticeable in a school setting.

So, based on what that paragraph said, I think the last part 'securing the student's learning and the teacher's chance to get through the pensum' is naïve and that again, having no exams opens up for teachers to be lazy and not accountable for what they teach in the classroom.

(Sorry if I have a negative view of teachers, but there are many of them)

b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?

That paragraph concerns me as it does not seem like UDIR appreciates the value of having exams. As I stated earlier about holding teachers accountable, but also for the students to have the opportunities to practice working under time constrained circumstances to show their knowledge, as that is what will be expected of them in the University. In high school, the exams are an additional grade, yet in the university, the exam is usually 100%

of their grade. To do well in those situations, it should be practiced. We grow from being challenged and living outside our comfort zones.

3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some loose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

a. Do you agree with this perception?

That perception is a bit vague. Good for teachers, how? Statistics, yes as well as helping the students qualify for their respective studies later. It is unfortunate if students get into programs they are not equipped to complete. The last point which indicates an issue with the current format, well that is what the students will get in the future and isn't it the intention of high school to prepare the students for university? The UDIR often seems to want to make it easier for the students, give them more choices and try and get everyone through the system in high school and we have to question whether that is such a good idea? When students apply for jobs, the potential employers look at their grades to get an idea as to what they know and to see how they performed in structured situations. Those are skills they will need in work as well. So, I guess, that is why I reacted to the last point, because not everyone needs to be a businessman or a plumber. We need people in all kinds of jobs and at all levels.

4. Utdanningspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

100%!!!! As stated earlier, without the exams, there is no calibration in the system. No quality control. This is both for the students to see what they know and if the grades received were fair (very important part as many think teachers are just being strict or some are too nice and the students become entitled) And it is very important to hold the teacher accountable to the curriculum and their duty to teach the students that material. The grades going up is no surprise and I am sure they will go up even more this year. How will the universities differentiate when everyone has good grades. I actually hope it causes chaos this year so that the UDIR will realize the importance of exams. I myself have gotten much nicer with grades and if someone complains, I just say, whatever and give them what they want. I am becoming indifferent and that is not positive for either me or my students.

5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefor feel the need to have you clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils' English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

Yes, as it reflects their writing skills, their level of reflection and understanding of the language. English is being used more and more in the university and workplace, so it is crucial that students have decent writing skills. Norway is a small country and is dependent on interaction with other countries and with English as the Lingua Franca, it's inhabitants should be proficient in English, both written and oral.

Appendix 6: Interview summary – Participant 3

Participant 3	
1. Gender	
	Male
2. Age	
	39
3. Education	
a. Lektor/masters and PPU	
	Masters degree
b. Subjects	
	English and History
c. Other relevant education	
	"Praksislærer studie"
4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?	
	Yes, Lektorlaget
5. Experience	
a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)	
	14 years
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam	
	Yes
i. How many times?	
	Maybe three or four times
ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?	
	No
c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?	
	No

6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?

OK so I I should volunteer 3 positive statements about the the present written exam. (Correct, in your oppinion) OK, at the written exam in LK 20, seems to be **versatile in that it tests many different skills**. Uh, it allows students to show their competence in many different ways. That might be sort of very familiar to point number one. Point #3 uh, I think it's. Is this a positive thing? It's completely new. It's a new way of thinking about the written exam. It's a huge step away from the old system of having the students write 2 separate responses, 1 short answer, 1 long answer. So it's. It's definitely something new, uh? Whether that's positive or neutral or negative it's a bit ehm, I don't know.

7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same ting, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.

OK.

So, uh.

Because it's a brand new exam. Some students might feel unprepared. They might not do all that well. Uh, the main problem that I see is that the exam asks a lot of the students that they should be able to complete a lot of tasks in a short amount of time.

Uh, some students might feel pressured because, uh, and exam is stressful enough as it is, but now that they may have to face the option or the possibility that they might not have enough time is an added pressure. Most students that I can that I remember have sort of submitted their written exam before the deadline, which means that they've had enough time to to write their responses.

That might not be the the situation in the new exam.

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

a. Measure pupils' proficiency

Uh, yes, I think yeah, the new exam that measures lead to a high degree.

b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

Uh, I would say to a high degree.

c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)

I would have to say the same to a high degree.

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

Uh, it should measure the students competence at the end of their their training. Uh, it should assess their level of competence in a selection of competence aims. It obviously can't assess them all, seeing as a student has a choice of tasks and because of the time limit. So it it should access uh, a restricted number of competence, aims and show the level of competence of the student at the end of their full of their training.

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

Uh, I have to think about that just a moment. Whether the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. (Of having a written English exam.) Uh, and that's a tricky one. Something I've discussed with my wife because she's very anti exam. Uh. She's also a teacher.

Uhm, and for those of us who are on the political left, we tend to be very negative against written exams.

And but I'm also part of a union which is very pro exam.

I'm very I'm very conflicted, UM. Let's see. OK, in my opinion I think. Students should be able. We should be able to expect students to perform on a specific date, for a specific purpose and not have their competence assessed only through a longer process. So in my opinion, I think the exams serves a purpose and that it does outweigh the negatives, yes?

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

No

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

Uh, I think it was six or seven weeks if I'm not mistaken.

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

I thought it was a fair choice because of the regional differences that some students would have an unfair disadvantage or advantage compared with other students, and they all have to compete to get into the same universities. So I thought it was a good idea.

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

Yes

15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

I think it allowed us to focus more on the curriculum instead of sort of training for a specific activity like the exam. Uh, we had. We got to do a lot of oral skills or they showed a lot of oral competence and I think we all sort of relaxed a bit more knowing that we didn't have that exam as a as something pressuring us to to to training in a specific way.

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

No.

17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

Uh, not necessarily by improving grades, but by being very lenient with students who submitted work very late. Uh, and to forget everything we were officially instructed to forget everything that had to do with deadlines. As long as they showed a competence

before we had to set the great we had to assess it, which became relevant for a lot of students who didn't really cope with home schooling.

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

Uh, let's see spring of 2021. One year ago. Maybe a little bit, but I seem to remember that we didn't have all that much homeschooling one year ago compared with two years ago. So so maybe some, but I don't remember how much.

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

the same because the regional differences in the country were still there, even though we didn't have a lot of home schooling in the Oslo area, there was so on a national level, it was still unfair.

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

Yes

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

Probably the same as a as in 2020. "

The final sort of the final couple of weeks were spent on an oral podcast project, which was, which was a lot of fun.

Uh, and we got to do we we gotta take our time with it and we spent a lot of time talking about other things like communication within a group, conflict resolution, how to build a team spirit? How to help each other out?

But what are our individual responsibilities when working with with the project without the students? So we did do a lot of sort of things that weren't necessarily on the curriculum, but things that are quite important as well to make cooperation and teamwork work. So we really took our time because we had the time so it really improved that project."

22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

Same response as in 2020, just the stuff with with deadlines and obviously whenever there's a situation where a student Uh, fails to get a grade, or gets a failing grade like a one or an i/v. There is usually some pressure from department heads to set a grade to give them other opportunities to determine a grade. So there is that kind of pressure, but that has nothing to do with the corona crisis. That's just a part of being a teacher.

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

Perhaps a little bit. I mean, I see that, uh, we. We teach the subject, these, uh, and students learn regardless of whether or not there is an exam. I don't necessarily feel that it is important, very important.

Uhm?

I've I've been conflicted about sort of final exams.

Perhaps I still feel that they do have a place, but it's it's still just a small percentage of students who get chosen for the written exam anyway, and I think it's OK to get to get that type of control every once in awhile. I always look forward to the exam results so that I can compare them with the with the mock exam, for instance, that we did earlier in this in the spring, just to see if students improve their grades stay at the same grade or gets a week or great for the written exam it.

It's helps me sort of, uh, with my own assessment, Uh, and assessing the level of of their writing.

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

The new curriculum or the new Education assessment reform has completely turned everything upside down when it comes to assessment. Usually we had like 2 written and two oral assessments which uhm, produced one term grade uh, but we've moved, at least I and some of my colleagues have moved away from from thinking about four official or formal assessment. We assess their competence in the classroom, in smaller classroom activities, we have some activities that turn out a bit bigger and we have them submit a text or a podcast, or we have some sort of presentation or discussion in some way, but we're not very clear on when, when are they being assessed and when do they get a grade because they show their competence and we can use their that competence throughout the entire here, so it's less predictable, it's less formal, it's easier for us as teachers to set a grade because we can use the competence that they show throughout the year, not just informal assessment so Uh, I don't have a number of how many sort of times they hand in something that is to be assessed.

If I have to compare with like previous handins or previous assessments, I would say they probably have one or two like bigger things that they hand-in in terms of writing and maybe one or two bigger things that they submit in terms of oral, but it varies a lot.

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

Uh, I had, in teams there is something called a class notebook, which is a part of the software where they can upload tasks that they solve in class. So I'll I read through the responses to classroom activities. I also keep a mental note of the oral proficiency that they show in class. In addition to larger projects and larger submissions of text that they submit at irregular intervals. So I have a broader basis to form a final grade on.

a. How do you weigh oral and written English?

I, I would say I, I try to avoid weighing them, uh, I try to think about the entire components of the student and set a great that represents their overall level without taking into consideration their oral proficiency or they're written proficiency.

Uh, because their communication in itself, their language, intonation, grammar itself is just a tool of expressing content. Same with written language is just a tool to use to express content and so measuring language ability in itself.

Uhm?

Is something I will I do more with individual tasks instead of the final grade?

So I tried to think of it kind of like the whole picture.

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Yes, we do that all the time.

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

No.

It was, it was more important because we didn't see each other at work. So we sent each other texts all the time to collaborate and to yeah can compare different ways of of assessing.

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

Uh.

Really, I think we're.

Uhm no it because the the cross checking of great.

Uh, uh, the grades don't deviate all that much from teacher to teacher in my experience

If time: How do you picture the perfect exam arrangement?

Yeah. OK, so, uh. Well, In my opinion, I think it would be a good idea to take one entire class instead of taking like 15 students from one class and then eight students from another class. Uh, I think I would prefer that.

In terms of length, I don't think it should exceed five hours because there are 16 year olds it that's more than enough.

Uhm?

Maybe a a mix between the old and the new? Uh, I think there are too many tasks now. It's too convoluted and too time consuming in my opinion, I've seen.

Uh, written exams, but I haven't sort of carried them out in in real life yet, so these responses of mine are based on not having a lot of experience with the new exam, so they're just my assumptions. I see that a lot of students struggled to work efficiently, and to get a lot of stuff done in a short amount of time, so I can imagine that that would have an effect on a written exam where they're at where they they are tasked with the job of completing a lot of different assignments.

Uh, I think it's a good idea that the exam measures different kinds of competencies, different kinds of qualities. But I think they've been a bit too ambitious for the present

exam, in that they've chosen too much. So yeah. It's I think it's OK that they have sort of overall task that they have to listen to something, but they have to make sure that the equipment is there that the school can provide equipment to everyone. So that's a bit of an organizational hurdle for schools to do. But if it's just one class per school, they should be able to find 30 headsets that are compatible with their computers.

Uh, but it's difficult because some of these computers may not have an auxiliary or oaks entry into their computers, so it might have to be Bluetooth, so the different sort of hardware issues that could come into play, but in. So, disregarding that, I think it's a good idea that that the written exam should also test sort of aural skills AURAL. Not «oral» skills.

Uhm?

So, uh, are you deal in terms of content content? Obviously the students should be able to produce texts that prepared them for academic life, which means they should have a topic question or thesis statement that they can organize a text around. They should be able to show their competency in in source referencing, so they the exam should. Both give them sources, but also encourage them to find their own, which has been the case in previous exams. Uh, because that always also distinguishes between the students who don't use any sources. The students who just use the sources provided and the students who also come up with their own sources and show creativity and originality. So I think that would be my ideal written exam.

Follow up questions regarding cancelation of written English exams in 2020-2022

As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?

Conflicted. On the one hand, I agree with the principle of fairness; the because of varying degrees of infection – and thus level of teaching – exams cannot be held. On the other hand, there are always elements that affect teaching in classrooms across the country. Thinking that all students sit their exam on equal terms is a fallacy. Thus, an exam could have been organized for this year's students. At the very least, the locally held oral exams could have been conducted with the teacher being well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her teaching this year, amending the exam questions to fit his/her teaching.

2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunktvurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplærings situasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunkt karakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?

They're saying that teachers can focus on and assess the competence the students have shown in class as a result of the teaching they've had, whereas a centralized exam would have uncovered a gap in some students' competence because of their "less than optimal" learning situation this year as students suffering from a global pandemic. Students' results would suffer from a centralized exam that cannot possibly take into the consideration the varying levels of teaching in Norwegian classrooms all over the country.

b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?

See my previous answer. The exam is broad in nature because it needs to take into consideration the breath of the entire subject. Regardless of teaching, all students should be able to sit and pass their centralized exams. Because this year's teaching has been lacking in certain parts of the country, this breadth would disfavour students from these parts.

3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some loose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

a. Do you agree with this perception?

Yes

4. Utdanningspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

NPM (New Public Management) has infected modern institutions (schools, police, hospitals, print journalism, etc), which means as individuals in those institutions have less power, authority, impact and influence over their own line of work. People ordinarily assume that teachers decide the grades of their students, but in recent years, because of NPM's emphasis on production and results, teachers are strongly encouraged to set "motivational" grades (better grades) for students, this includes their final grades that

find their way to their certificate and get them into their university of choice. The pressure that befalls teachers stems from department heads and school principals, but also guidance counsellors, contact teachers, parents, not to mention students themselves.

It is obvious that this development has skyrocketed during the pandemic. Because schools and principals are measured nationally by their statistics on drop-outs and so-called “negative grades” (1s and IVs – no assessment given) it falls on to them to ‘juke the stats’ (David Simon, *The Wire*) to get the results they want. The pandemic is very polarizing. Self-regulatory students can thrive with their new-found personal freedom, studying from the privacy of their home, whereas students who need the external disciplinary function of a teacher to work efficiently, lose out. It is this last group of people that teachers are ‘strongly encouraged’ to salvage by

- Ignoring deadlines, accepting work handed in mere days/hours before the final grade for their certificate is set
- Lowering requirements for passing a course, in essence creating an unfair system where some students have very little competence but still pass their course. “It’s the pandemic, it’s not the student” is the motto du jour the past two years.
- Chasing them physically in school and digitally on different platforms and social media to desperately get them to show some level of competence in between their physical or spiritual absence from school.

To answer the question, the fact that there is no exam to serve as a safeguard for this highly corruptive and corrosive system of assessment, makes it all the more easier for teachers (and his/her superiors) to – either willingly or unwillingly – increase and improve their students grades, with little consideration to what the requirements of the course actually are.

5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefor feel the need to have you clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils’ English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

The “current” exam is the new exam; big, new, with a huge diversity of tasks, but very demanding in scope. (At least the English written exam).

To answer the question: no I don’t think so, because it evaluates not their language skills and competence. It does not assess their proficiency, but their efficiency rather.

Appendix 7: Interview summary – Participant 4

Participant 4**1. Gender**

Female

2. Age

52

3. Education

I have two masters, Belgian master in translation English French in French and as this master was not recognized in Norway I had to take another one so I took another one here in literacy studies here at the UIS and I took also like all this teacher practice and logic in Belgium and I took also one year of international and European law in judge in Belgium yeah that's my education and now I'm taking a class at Oxford university online university northern renaissance painting is my second one in art history.

4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?

Yes, I'm a member of lektorlaget.

5. Experience**a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)**

10 years yes yes

b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam

yes I've had that, not for the first not in English Vg1, but from international English and "Samfunnsfaglig Engelsk" yes I have that, and oral also

i. How many times?

I think that I've had like maybe twice written exams in english. Yes twice written.

ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?

No, but I guess that sometimes we might have this "planleggingsdag" where we might discuss generally how to prepare them best.

c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?

No, never. No but apparently it's very selective they're really selective and often is the same match teachers will do that but if you want what would like to meet one of them one of my colleagues has been and she's the head of the English in a way department here so maybe if you would like to talk to her you could

6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?

well I think that it is it's a quality check you need that just to make sure that it's well that we in a way do the same job across schools because that is something that we've really often see when we are sensor when we are like oral it's minors then we can really see that sometimes there are differences between schools where they teach or what they focus on so I would say that that's probably like a quality check that is necessary here in Norway as when you go to university these grades are so vital everything is great based so then you have to make sure that these grades are quality checked I think it's good for the students also because then they also know where you know how to stretch or what what's what is expected being expected from them so I would always work with previous

corrected exam questions and we would in a way go through them very just to make sure that they understand what is being required and it helps me as a teacher also so that I see that it's not just me that I don't need to try to be upset me with me because I'm not giving them a good grade I can show them like a kind of say templates that is what is required my job is to get you to that level if you wanna five that's what it has to look like this so I think that it's to me these exams are important.

7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same thing, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.

maybe with might be a negative is that UM The thing is like you don't really know who is going to correct the exam and sometimes we may see that there might be differences in the outcome I think we will just need to trust this system and know that OK has been designed for the best I think negative I would say what I would find as a negative but I'm it's because I'm not Norwegian it's not that it's not compulsory to me I think that everybody should get it but the negative for me would be that you should not give exams or you should not have Afghan stock when you come first here you're at university that is maybe one of the only countries on earth where it happens whereas the grades are so important anywhere as children have been told since the younger the youngest age that they are good at anything they do so they would always be praised even if there's nothing to be praised about but we just we tend to look at the positive and whereas we're not pushing them hard enough and at the end of the day we require something pretty inhumane in the first year of high school when they had to adjust to a new school make friends and they have all this peer pressure suddenly they're too young they're far too young to have to bear this responsibility to do their best within a few months in five subjects and that maybe they would even have an exam in this so that I think is unfair and that is something that I don't understand from the Norwegian government

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

this thing is now OK when you talk about them not yet the exam do you think about the first year exam that's what you focus on let's Vg1 OK well now with this new of exam I'm very skeptical that they can measure measure pupils proficiency then it's proficiency in watts language proficiency maybe but I'm thinking that the questions I think that I will from what I read here I would say these objectives I think that indeed school owners and government is properly probably very happy with this new form because it gives them a lot of statistics and they can see like yeah well fine reading for performances like listen listening comprehension is this blah blah blah so it's like to go more in details to have maybe more statistics whereas this does not really measure pupils proficiency for us that the old version was probably better because it gave more freedom to the students to win away interpret and and and provide in a way and in giving like a satisfactory answer yeah

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

I understand that indeed the government would like to measure different types of proficiencies but you know here at school we are also we have this IB diploma also and I'm not teaching English in people I'm teaching French but then the language the students they take four exams they take it listening comprehension one hour reading comprehension one hour they had already exam and then in half and then they have to write an essay so these indeed I I agree with the government I agree with in a way the fact that shoot also test their reading comprehension and their listening comprehension

but again what is completely wrong with this exam is that within five hours these poor 15 year olds have two in a way to be tested in all these competencies right after each other whereas in the IB program there is one in a way one reading reading comprehension is on one day and then the students they can in a way fair a little bit for it but at least they know what to expect and it's a type of skills that they have to implement it for the exam and then it's John and on another day or maybe the afternoon they have then reading comprehension and I think this should be John separately and I wonder really whether the Ministry of Education has been talking to neurologists and psychologists to see if the brain of 15 year old brain can do this the way they did this new setup and probably this is to save costs right you squeeze everything sure that's it either you can do this or not so I I think it's a shame it's really a shame.

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

yes I think I think you need to and especially because of this system of the grades and yes but a good exam and then you have to ask for teachers what is a good exam because it's unfair to have been so nice and have been discussing all these new competence aims and what do you think about this and should we do it like this and what about this and maybe we should be more precise with this and then afterwards so we spend a lot of time on this and afterwards soon we receive this type of incomprehensible exam where we haven't even been asked what we think about

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

well it's difficult I think that's an English exam should be mandatory but to me it shouldn't be mandatory in the VG one because they're too young and to me English should be compulsory in VG2 and VG3 as well if we know that probably 60 or 70% of whatever happens in business in Norway happens in English why on earth shut are the students going to get five grades in Norwegian and just one in English why do they need to have "Nynorsk" when as even in Stavanger Aftenblad you only have like one article in published in nynorsk a day not more than that, so that discrepancy is very very strange and also knowing that when they study further even here in Norway subjects are going to be in English English should be compulsory until the VG3 with a compulsory written exam but not in the first year.

(do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?)

You know I I come from Belgium so I come from another tradition I'm thinking if really the idea that Norwegian and democratic idea to be as fair as possible if this is really like something something important then I I to me I think that it would be maybe we could sing to have a compulsory exams in more subjects than just Norwegian because like here we have also I'm head teacher of a class of a "forskerklasse" for school in yeah and OK they're good at everything they're really they're super brilliant but I think that it's pretty strange to know that they are going to have a compulsory Norwegian exam whereas I

don't know like maths is not compulsory or physics is not and especially well maybe if there's Norwegian is because language is important but then there should be English too

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Yes I did

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes I did

i. Approximately for how long?

Yes I did

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

well I saw that I was really pretty logical because like the lock down was in a way in spring and so close to the exam so I feel that that was predictable and also because some other regions in Norway had been closed for it for an even longer time that was indeed something that had to be done

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

Yes I think so.

15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

not really because this thing is like as in one only 20% of the students get the exam the students know that regardless they have to do their best in order to get like a good standpoint that's in a way their aim and then did the exam they don't really think about that it's not really focused and you know they don't but The thing is it's always as a teacher a good tool by the end of the year to really make sure that they're really focused on going to the extra mile knowing that we can threaten them with their eventual this possible exam so it's something that usually uh we might use as teachers to keep them very focused and motivated and until the end but last year the only concern was just to make sure that they were not depressed and that they they they would keep on you know way logging on their computer and working as good as possible

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

yes I think so and we had like several discussions The thing is like we as adults we felt so pitiful these poor kids and we could really see some being depressed.

it's just to know this thing is like in crisis situations like these we try to over focus on the positive and try not to wait to give too much weight to the negative maybe and and so so I guess is probably in in a way not that that was really that was probably unconscious so so I I don't I don't really we always would always try to do as teachers regardless when we have like a test Matt we sit together and we have the same test for all for the walls all the ten classes are BG one having the same test and then we would we would gather and we would exchange some we would give a text to all the other teachers and then we would correct and we discussed the grade so we regardless we have this quality check So what I'm saying that I'm nicer regardless it's not that I gave them like maybe I was 10% nicer than I'm usually but but we still have this quality check among us so it's not that we gave them like one great one it was like a one grade difference I don't think so thank you final question regarding exams

a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?

no I don't think so no The thing is like I think that's online teaching helped us also get a closer relationship with the students knowing them better other personal level uh that might maybe have affected also and I would say in English we cannot really say usually it's the subject of students like and that's a topic that was not too difficult to have them work with from home so I think that they didn't really missed much in the English subject what I've heard it would be more in maths or physics or science these are subjects that are difficult in a way to follow from home but in English with this breakout rooms and they could discuss so they worked on songs or they they worked on on the types of of resources so in a way it's it went fine it went fine

17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

No, not at all not at all so that that is well you know what we've been told to it which be fair and to be just to and to use more time and I think they could even in a way help us really really we needed more time to be able to to assess end to grade they were helping us to try to find a solution to do that so not not at all

a. Was/Would that have been a fair thing to do?

No and I have to say now this whole discussion is a bit that's true it's it's very it's a kind of a paradox the kids haven't learned as much as they should have been but and and but we cannot see that on their grades for the seniors like it's also because all of our competence aims are super wide and this evaluation criteria are super wide too so that there's so much room for interpretation and you can always think OK this was good almost very good and it's so so The thing is like the system allows it's still you know doing your job as you should not even mean away cheating but still that the outcome could be a bit different.

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Mhm

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

you know what that was for stuff that was shorter so let me see I don't know that maybe 4 weeks

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

well same saying I thought the singers like these kids were also already traumatized from the bar because of the previous year so I would say there was also expected a mom and in a way what can we do what can we say uh The thing is like with English do we know that well the kids start usually very good at it and they keep on learning and they keep on using the the language so if they're at school or not so I would say like the progression keeps on going and it's I would say probably that all these all these shutdowns did not impact that much on their on their language but as a French teacher there I saw that it was a disaster I could really see like the difference that there was no in a way they were not surrounded by French they they were not working and working on their own was not something they were not independent enough they didn't know enough as to be able to do stop here as in English I have to say I thought that that was probably one of the best subjects for them to work from home because it could have been watch this show and

write a blog entry about the show there's so many possibilities because there are so many resources

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

well I think so too yes because they were too too many differences and and The thing is like we see also here at most of our kids are they come from a good family and parents to help them they're supportive and they have a large home and they can work for they could work from home which we had some cases some students who could not really work from home because they had too many siblings or they could not really work from home because things happened at home and these were really in a way suffering so I think that that would have had a very negative outcome for these type of students

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

you know The thing is like really in English VG1 it's so seldom it's so rare that your class would have the exam that that well we just had that as a threat and we know we have to have them and we prepared for it and it's kind of easier to have them be prepared for the oral exam then maybe the the written exam with knowing like the type of texts they need to be able to right in a way we kind of position ourselves already from the beginning of the year just to make sure we plan that that they they should be able to work on speed and quality and that they could provide like a good good text in two hours or three hours by the end of the year so I thought that we had that in the back of our well in mind regardless throughout the year so the fact that they didn't get the exam didn't really impact that much

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

no I'm thinking no it's just like it's a crisis so then there's no exam and then regardless now UDIR came with this bad exam so we're just glad that we're not going to have two kids are not going to have to suffer through this exam and then we just hope that UDIR is going to take the time to maybe reconsider and think of it more thoroughly about this type of exam because because at least this exam well has to be cancelled uh

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

well you know we have a system here at school where there is a "prøve" planner and you are not supposed to have more than two assessments in one subject during one semester so I would say they've had but The thing is like then we use like other all the type of tasks that we in a way using our grade but I would say probably would be 2

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

well you know we either way yeah we a grade is given on a wide variety of different types of tasks and and then there would be well over tasks and written task and participation during class how much they deliver in a way that and and I have to say like my classes here is really excellent even when I was asking them to write a movie review a movie we watched in class from students wrote 1500 words for the movie review very excellent but what I'm what I what I then told them they had written an essay before and and they had received like good feedback on on their essays and I said that all the other texts that they would right after this essay they had to show me that they could do better and then they looked at the feedback on their first text and they tried to put that into practice in the

next text and so that gave them the opportunity in a way to show me that they they achieved they well they deserve like a better achievement for this Competence aims

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

we always do that and especially with some students might sometimes complain and especially in one that is something that we've seen that some have received extremely good grades when they finished middle school and then suddenly they're kind of in a way in shock when they see that while they usually got a 6 in English they only got 4 and that requires a lot of you know explanation and what's because these competence names are different expectations are different and I would often ask colleagues and that is a good way to avoid problems with students and issues

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

Not at all

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

no no no no I'm thinking like if during homeschooling we worked twice as much and we were always in a way available because everybody was stuck at home so then there was a huge corporation between us right.

Appendix 8: Interview summary – Participant 5

Participant 5	
1. Gender	Male
2. Age	32
3. Education	
a. Lektor/masters and PPU	Masters in Applied linguistics from UIS, which is basically reading and writing pedagogy
b. Subjects	I have history, a module there, and I hage got one year of religion.
c. Other relevant education	
4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?	Lektorlaget
5. Experience	
a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)	Im now at my 8 th year
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam	

No

c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?

No actually no. They have never asked me, but I would like to

6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?

so only positives that are I would say that you know it perhaps makes it easier for those, easier for lower level learners to pass, thats perhaps one statement. Ok, possitives, ehm, more thurogh examination of several different skills. What else could it be, I think it covers most of it.

7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same ting, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.

Too extensive, too time consuming and unrealistic for the pupils. I feel its, there are too many questions to pass each part of the test. Weaker pupils will struggle to get to the end of the test, they will have no chance basically unless we push them. So its too long for most people.

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

Is there a scale you want?

(Answer in a maner that feels natural to you, so you can either grade each one, arrange them by how effective you find them, or make up your own scale.)

a. Measure pupils' proficiency

I think it has the potential to measure pupils proficiency at a very high level, but it's too much. But right now I would scale it, I would say it's 3/10 currently, because those who are in a lower level of proficiency won't be able to reach, you know, they can't measure it if they cant reach the last part of the test basically. Or if they just finish a bit of it, a bit of it, a bit of it, a bit of it. So I would say 3/10 on measuring pupils proficiency currently, but it does have potential because it is supposed to cover everything.

b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

I would say five or six perhaps stop there tested is equal and locally you won't get that one to one ratio and yeah you know that they do before just an ordinary test I don't know where it is not getting the differentials for it the background information this is so important that you know statistics are not supposed to be one to one from an exam and a test in class is quite different 5 or 6/10 because it does give some information, for example if a teacher is giving a 6, and then the pupil gets a 4 or a 3 on exam, you know that would show the difference.

c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)

(Connection issues)

3/10 perhaps.

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

Ehm, the purpose should be the ability to test whether or not a student can write, because you need to be able to understand, be able to write and produce a passage, you

do not test the ability of listening, and you do not test the ability of speaking, so not listening and not speaking, but purely the graphic part of the spoken language,

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

Ehm, generally I think it is a good idea, because for some people it is a necessary thing they need, because as I said before, some pupils study a lot harder for an exam than they do for a test. So this is where they can really shine, so I would say it is important having it, because for some people it is the difference between passing and not passing, which is extremely important. Compared to a five or a six, which for me as a teacher is not really that important, but for me what is important is that they are able to pass, you know move on. Absolutely

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

No it would be too many exams. You could have one mandatory exam, but yeah, you cant say that your subject is more important than any other subject.

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Yep

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

Ohh, how long was it? Three months, I cant remember it, it felt like a long time.

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

That it was necessary

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

Yeah

15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

It didn't change anything. It depends on what students you have, and for me, my students had enough to do. It did not affect them negatively at all, it was just positive.

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

No absolutely not. But it was far easier for them to cheat, because you could not check who had done the work.

a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?

No, but they have in the last 2 years been asking us if we are too strict

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Was there a lockdown in that period? I did have like a small period.

i. Approximately for how long?

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

It was the right decision, I think it was the right decision, primarily because I did not like the exam, it was too extensive.

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

Yeah I think so.

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

I didn't really change anything.

22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

No

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

Not really no. I always felt it had its purpose. Partly as a motivator, partly as a checker of, you know giving people the opportunity to master, produce their best result and also to check that people get a grade based on cheating.

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

They have at least two written each semester, so two to three.

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

Both written and oral

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Constantly. I'm literally sitting in her office right now.

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

No, just as easy.

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

If time: How do you picture the perfect exam arrangement?

If it was up to me I would have used two days in order not to exhaust the students so that they can be at their very best. Perhaps three or four hour sessions, you have one day where you kind of focus on kind of smaller bits of information, not multiple choice, because that is what we call parrot knowledge "pappegøyekunnskap", but you can work with smaller bits of listening, and also have an oral bit as well where you can maybe have an oral presentation. And then you have that second day where you can have both a short and a long answer section to it.

Follow up questions regarding cancelation of written English exams in 2020-2022

As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?

I feel it was the right thing to do, more because I feel that the exam itself is not properly tuned for different levels of learners – there's too much content that needs to be sifted

through. Whether it was necessary for this year's exam to be cancelled purely on the premise of Corona is something I am a bit more doubtful of. The evaluation in itself is probably not optimized both in regards to form and length, without having specific solutions to the problem.

2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunktvurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplærings situasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunktkarakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?

I feel that the statement is accurate. Generally, I would say that a teacher would be better at accurately determining the level of proficiency of a learner over a longer period of time than what one exam can do in a short amount of time. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to this as a student may both overperform and underperform based off of their capabilities, motivation and so forth.

b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?

I feel they portray the exam as approximately equal to that of a teacher's evaluation and that generally the teacher should be better at evaluating the learners' levels of proficiency than an exam would, in the given situation.

3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some loose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

a. Do you agree with this perception?

- I don't see how it is very beneficial for me as a teacher, although it is used as external motivation by some. Although you could argue for your set grade being an external motivation throughout the year too. TLDR: No I don't consider it very beneficial for teacher, I don't see much value in it personally.
- It is obviously an easy method of collecting statistics, although it give little depth to the material collected.
- I agree that it benefits some students, some work well in exam situations, are motivated for them and generally would produce (far) above their level. There's too

many individual qualities that defines whether it is beneficial for X or Y. Similarly, there are those who would be punished slightly or hard by the exam. Generally, every evaluation causes these types of issues, although a year long evaluation of the students would give them most varied situations in which every/most learners would find situations where they thrive.

4. Utdanningspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

The information you are presenting might be a bit unspecific, as it could be mean that these statistics are based off of the general performance of VG1 students throughout a year and how they increased their grade from the start of the year towards the end of a year. Alternatively, it could be understood as their performance from lower secondary to upper secondary saw an increase or that there has been better performances from those at VG1 across those three years.

Anyhow, I wouldn't specifically mention that the exam to be the primary cause of this increase. There are too many variables, although it might have facilitated it partially. These changes are too significant for it to likely have one primary cause. Furthermore, I do not have insight into the details of e.g. exam drop-outs and so forth to analyze this properly.

5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefor feel the need to have you clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils' English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

Yes, I do think it brings a certain level of fairness. Is it optimal or the best way to assess a learner's proficiency, I would say no. There are always disadvantages to every situation and I do think that the teacher would more accurately determine the proficiency of a learner across a schoolyear than one evaluation has hopes of doing. TLDR: If the question is: is it the fairest way to evaluate a pupils' English proficiency, then no. Is it one fair way to measure the student's proficiency? Yes, it covers the majority of the students' language skills and if there has to be only one evaluation to define it all then this is probably the fairest way.

Participant 6
1. Gender
Female
2. Age
57
3. Education
Masters
a. Lektor/masters and PPU
I have a masters degree in English didactics from University of Bergen in 2016. I also have a bachelor in International Studies. It was social science and I have studied French.
4. Are you a member of a union? Which one?
Yes, Lektorlaget
5. Experience
a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)
33 years
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam
Yes, every year
i. How many times?
give or take probably All in all probably 20 But they included international English and social studies English as well. So on e.g. One, I've probably had students sitting for the exams seven or eight times.
ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?
No
c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?
Yes, three times
ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature preparing you for that assignment?
Yes, there were like sensor courses, "altså sensor kursing"
1. Did you take advantage of the offer presented to you?
Yes
a. Did you find it helpful?
Yes
i. Could you elaborate?
I can't really. I mean it's that's was. Uhm, a long time ago. I can't really remember what we did. I think we discussed. Uhm. The assessment ccriteria or something and we were given examples and we were asked to cooperate and discuss, you know, where would these end up? But it's it was during probably "reform 94" and so it's really long time ago. Yeah.

6. Now, I would like you to choose three positive words or short statement that you associate with the written English exam as of LK20?

Yeah. OK. So positive you said positive attributes? (Positive yes, positive attributes in either short sentence, so yeah.

All right. In the previous previous exams come and we talk, we are talking VG1 yes?

(Yes)

Attributes. I like that the exam. Gives the students a topic in advance, so the «forberedelses del» is OK. Uhm, there used to be ample time to create a long answer text. You know they could work with UM. Structuring their texts and figuring out what to write. They had enough time because it used to be two or three tasks in the exam, so that was good. I can't think of anything else. I mean, that's basically it. Sorry, yeah.

(That's fine.)

Yeah. So we were really curious about the new exams because we we felt all the teachers in my school at least, we felt that “fagfornyelsen”. It opens up for a completely different format than the traditional one, and we were excited like what's coming now. Will there be even, uh, will they change it to some kind of longer “mappe vurdering”. I mean there, there were several things they could have done. What they did do is keep to a 5 hour written exam where the preparation. A day of preparation and preparation material. So that was a bit disappointing, but.

Uhm.

I think in many ways **the new exam format opens up for the students to be able to show competency and a variety of skills** UM, we have worked quite a lot with the exam here at our school. We've tried it out with students, the various parts we've discussed what, what is the consequence for our teaching? What must how does it affect our teaching? And I'm not talking teaching for the test, all right. It's more about in many ways the exam sort of. It's “UDIRs konkretisering” in a way of UM, what they find important in the curriculum, you know the competence names are, they are very open and it kind of narrows down what kind of skills they actually expect students to have.

So we have worked quite a lot with the exam. We've tried it out with a lot of classes and we've had students give feedback so we I know that that many students are at our school. They are intrigued by the exam format. They find it challenging, but interesting.

So yeah, I I like the fact that the new exams take multi modality serious. They have oral texts like listening.

They are a bit challenging because as one of my students said, I can't just listen for facts because multiple choices that I get they require of me to understand the purpose of the text. So you need to analyse kind of. Yeah. So they are not as easy as they might seem.

Uhm, I like the fact that there is an attempt at fulfilling or having students show their competency and Corporation, it's called "samhandling" in the exam part where they, for instance respond in a thread of comments on a certain topic, and that requires of them to find out what is the genre of this. This thread kind of. So are they writing informally? What are they? What are they doing?

So yeah, so I like that it's varied. I like that students get the chance to show.

Uhm, their skills in a variety of of tasks, but I am worried about. OK, am I I should just talk about the positives, right?

(Yeah.)

OK. Those are the positives. Yes, done.

7. Good, thank you. Now I would like for you to do the same thing, however this time the words or statements should highlight three negatives.

Yeah. Uhm. I think the exams as they used to be was somewhat generic.

I I mean they they were quite similar every year and you had this short answer, long answer, the students knew what to expect.

And I don't think they never. Oh, that's a bit harsh, but but seldom created enthusiasm in the students.

Sitting writing these exams UM and I think the exams tested or tried pupils written skills are not as much their critical skills. And it left little room for students who weren't that trained or that good at writing long papers. So I'm not sure exactly what the exam.

I mean, what? Was it actually tried and tested? Did these students have a proper possibility to show their competency in written English.

Yeah.

So basically that's what I didn't like.

LK20

Yeah, negatives. I am worried about the final part. It is. Uhm, stipulated that students should spend one hour on part one, one hour on part two, one hour on part three, and then they have two hours to write a long answer text which requires of them to include material from the preparation material to I. I'm guessing that's where they're going to show critical thinking. Their ability to write academic papers, which is one of the competence aims for "studieforberedende" now they have to be critical to their sources, integrate sources into that text and to create a well structured paper takes a lot more time than two hours. I mean, I couldn't do it in two hours, so I'm worried about that part. And whereas one of the aims of the exam was to make sure that the actual grading would be more fair.

Because.

Many of the the tasks in the first two parts are corrected by robot I guess.

There are still sensors grading the final two.

And I'm worried about how. How will they? How will they will? Will the sensors still think that? OK, but they've had time enough to write a long answer respons, that is the way it was before. Kind of. If you get my points so as I'm.

I'm I'm thinking that was stress a lot of students and I'm worried that perhaps, uh, they won't be able to perform as well as they could have if there had been more time.

Yes.

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

Ohh Henrik, you should never give me choices. I'm bad at making decisions. All right, so uhm, I think I'll just grade them.

To what degree would you say the written English?

So you are thinking about the new written English exam?

(Yes yes, so LK20, correct)

on a scale from 1 - 6 where 6 is the best

a. Measure pupils' proficiency

4

b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

5

c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)

4

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

Yeah, it's it's, uh. It's it is well linked to the the previous question, it's a it's linked to a sort of quality check and it adds depth to.

Uhm.

It adds depth to the overall image of students competency in English because you "standpunktkarakter". Which uh.

Gives a more sorrow and varied in many ways, but still it's it's a local assessment of the students proficiency. And then you have the more neutral standard exam which tests all students on the same tasks. So. It's it's like a a quality check in a sense.

Uhm, I think many teachers use it as some kind of well, you know, you tell your students who need to work hard because there might be an exam at the end. I'm not saying it's good as a motivational aspect, but to some teachers I think it UM serves as, I don't know some kind of, It legitimizes the subject anyway. There will be "sentral gitt" exam at the end of this, and yeah, I think the exam might help to, you might avoid some sloppy teachers who don't bother doing a proper job, uh, assessing their students.

Yeah, and it gives you a chance to show their competency in different in a different setting.

Yeah.

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

And that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.
So yeah, OK, so.

(In reference to what we've spoken of earlier with your positive takes on the LK 20 exam and your negatives.)

I think that one.
Yeah, I think it does.

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

I hadn't considered that because.
It hasn't been a case. I'm a.

Oh no, no, I don't think so. Why? Why should it? I mean, "standpunkt" is a better way of showing us students overall competence in the subject, the exam is simply just like you know, you just check a little piece of it and I think it's problematic that for some students the nerves, they get nervous they don't, uh perform as well as they would normally, you know, having a bad day. Or you could suffer from exam nerves and it and it completely ruins your, Your performance. So no, I don't think, yeah.

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Yes

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

Oh, from the from the start of the corona. Shut down all until.
Somewhere in May, I think.

(Yeah. So two months approximately.)

Yeah.
Yeah, approximately.

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

I was relieved.
Yep.

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

Yes

15. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

Not a lot. I think it took away some of the stress UM and it gave us time to make sure that all students were given a proper chance to uhm, get the "standpunkt" they were

supposed to get, like before the coronavirus struck, so it gave us a chance to work closely with pupils instead of prepping for an exam.

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

2020 I think, yeah. A better grade. No, I don't think so because you know, it's the corona closed down or shut down didn't start until when was it March?

(Yeah.)

Yeah, I knew my pupils quite well by then, and I had enough time and opportunity to to give them a chance to complete their assignments and their "vurderingssituasjoner" so, I don't think it impacted on, on the grading. Uhm, but that is my opinion. I mean, we were also. Almost.

Not told, but we were perhaps.

Encouraged to to say if you are in between a Grade be kind because the situation is what it is.

Yeah.

17. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

No, we weren't instructed and we weren't.

I won't. I won't say no. Not from the "ledergruppe".

But.

But perhaps in our.

Amongst us as teacher Group, we discussed this a lot. Like I'm not sure I don't. Uhm. And perhaps.

We, we said, OK, this is if you are ever in doubt, this is a time when the benefits should be on on the student.

Uh.

So I think is more cultural thing like.

Uh, we felt perhaps bad because the digital school wasn't the way we hoped. We we didn't perform as well as we wanted to and we feel bad for the students to under stay at home. So of course these discussions, but they were mostly on on like.

Teacher level.

Uhm.

So we weren't told from our principal, didn't say it.

But I I'm not sure. No, it wasn't spoken out, but perhaps there was this kind of.

It was implied that if you are in doubt, this is the time to.

To let your doubt favor the student.

Yeah.

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Yep

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Yes

i. Approximately for how long?

It was on and of. Uh, and I really can't remember we had digital schooling. And then we had code red as we call it, which required of us to. The students were only in school once or twice a week. And then they were placed in two rooms, which made teaching extremely difficult. It was. It was easier to organize digital home schooling where we could discuss with them on teams, then have them in two rooms. So I I can't remember no.

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

Uh, in 2021 I was frustrated because it was communicated so late in the school year, so we spent the whole spring term not knowing what would happen and then late in the in the spring, we were told, OK, the the exams are off. It created a lot of stress for the teachers because students kept asking us. We didn't know what to prepare for. So we didn't know how the exams would be, so it added to our stress in a year that was completely bonkers. Bananas boiled.

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

Yep

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

The same as the year before, it didn't really impact. Uh, well, it did because Um, Making sure that having a proper, having proper grounds for your standpoint became even more important and even more doable, like we had more time. Yeah.

22. Did the school you work at officially, or unofficially instruct, or advice you as a teacher to be nicer when assessing pupils?

No. No, because why this this time we'd all become used to the corona at this step. It wasn't that big. It wasn't discussed anyway. No.

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

No, I don't think so. Uhm. No, it it's. It's perhaps it made me even more aware of the importance that what the exam does is. Oh, it's objective is to have some kind of neutral assessment that. Has a focus on equality like. It should be equal for all students in Norway. Uh, and that hasn't been the case for the past three years. It hasn't been possible because students have experienced such different times during Corona. I mean in Oslo, I read that for eight months they had at home schooling, whereas in perhaps a small city in the north, that wouldn't be the case. But no. And I'm not that interested in. I mean, exams aren't a great part of my work as a teacher. I do my best in the classroom. During the whole year, making sure that my students have a lot of opportunities to show, their knowledge and their skills and then the exam, you know it's there at the end. It's it's nothing more.

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

All that varies. They have quite a lot of written. Uhm, I mean, they do a lot of written work.

But like, are you thinking like formal assessments where we say this is this way you will be graded on this and there are.

(Great graded assessments.)

yeah, so we usually have two or three depending on. Usually we have three assessments in formal assessments in the autumn semester and three in the spring semester and.

All in all, it should be about 50/50 oral/written.

Yeah.

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

Well, the formal assessments are part of that, but also informal assessments, of course. UM, «underveisvurderinger» because, uhm yeah so at the start of the year, we tell our students there were these will be your formal assessments come in this term, but there will be informal assessments and UM work that you can.

Choose to include into your standpunktvurdering, if you like. Uhm yeah, så nå går eg over til norsk

Den nye vurderingsforskriften er jo ganske tydelig på at de skal vise bredde i sin kompetanse, og har mange muligheter for å vise kompetansen, så de foreslår for eksempel læringslogger skal inn i standpunkt, uhm, dialog med elevene, læringsamtaler, uhm, formelle og uformelle vurderinger, muntlig og skriftlig. Så det er mye som går inn i standpunkt som ikke nødvendigvis også er knyttet til disse formelle vurderingssituasjonene som de har.

a. How do you weigh oral and written English?

Jeg vektet dem likt.

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Ja, mange ganger, viss jeg er i tvil, eller viss jeg bare har lyst å diskutere en tekst. Vi har kryss-rettinger, altså vi jobber jo med vurdering, hele året i fagseksjonen i engelsk, og da har vi kryssretting, for eksempel, på fagseksjonsmøtene våre. Vi kjører ikke nødvendigvis de samme situasjonene i klassene, vi har felles halvårsplan, vi har felles tema vi jobber med men lærere løser det litt ulikt. Så vi har felles rettinger som er organisert, hvor noen lærere kommer med en oppgave og en tekst og spør om vi kan diskutere denne. Og jeg bruker også kollegaer.

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

Nei, teams er jo fin fint. Du kan dele oppgaver og skjerm og alt som er. Ingen problem.

Appendix 10: Interview summary – Participant 7

Participant 7
1. Gender
Female
2. Age
49
3. Education
Utdanning: Nei, jeg har gått på universitetet i Tromsø i min tid og der tok jeg engelsk grunnfag og mellomfag og fransk, deler av det hvert fall, exphil og de tingene som vi måtte ha i den tiden, også hadde jeg noen år der i jobba. Også kom jeg tilbake og så tok jeg historie grunnfag, da begynte jeg på Universitetet i Stavanger da. Så har jeg tatt idrett, jeg har tatt spes. ped., masteren min er spesialpedagogikk og PPU og sånt må man ha. Så jeg tatt ekstra utdanning innen litt idrett og litt sånn IKT, også senest da så jeg tatt en rådgiver utdanning på Nord universitet på Nesna en bachelor det er da innen rådgivning , så jeg har også noe rådgiving fra Universitetet i Stavanger
5. Experience
a. Years teaching english at Upper secondary school (General studies)
Ja jeg har jobba, før jeg ble lærer så jobbet jeg på Nylund skole barneskolen og da er det bestemt meg for at det skulle gå mot å jobbe med elever som har spesielle behov da så det er det som det er derfor jeg valgte min master innen spesialpedagogikk. Så kom jeg hit i 2005, jeg blir alltid så usikker, nei begynte vell høsten 2006 mente faktisk så da har jeg vært her i 16 år ja.
b. Have you ever had students of your own selected for a written english exam
Ja ja det er vel jeg jo da både på vg 1 og vg 2 vg 3 nivå for det underviser jo og har undervist alle nivåer opp gjennom årene som har vært her. De siste årene da forøvrig har jeg undervist i samfunnsfaglig engelsk. Før det underviste jeg i på VG3 da men før det hadde jeg litteratur engelsk, men det er noen år siden da. Så jeg har hatt elever oppe på til eksamen på alle nivå på skriftlig eksamen.
i. How many times?
Hvis vi tenker de første årene da var det jo helt tradisjon om at engelsk ble tatt ut nesten uansett altså sånn så da har vi ut fra det nivå somt ja nei hvis vi sier på vg 1 nivå og så kan jeg vel si at jeg har vært oppe til skriftlig sikkert 6 ganger hvis vi sier det sånn. 6 ganger, og på VG2, for det er jo egentlig bare 20% av elevene skal trekkes ut på VG 1 nivå men hvis vi sier 5 ganger så tror jeg ikke jeg overdriver. På VG 2 nivå, jeg har jo ikke hatt så mange år med VG 2 nivå. Egentlig hatt mest VG1 og VG3 så hvis vi sier vi har vært oppe på VG 2 nivå, tre ganger, når jeg har hatt de vel og merke. Så på VG 3 bare at de oppe på litteratur biten så har jeg vel hatt de oppe fire ganger, og på samfunnsfaget som jeg har egentlig at de minst oppe da bare en gang og det var sent nei det var ganske lenge siden så de siste 2 årene så har jo eksamen kansellerte da har jeg ikke hatt i opp selv om de har blitt meldt opp de siste årene har så har jeg ikke hatt de oppe til eksamen ha hvis man cirka det liksom er litt sånn vanskelig å huske tilbake da. Men som egentlig så har mine engelsk

grupper jeg har vel alltid blitt tatt opp jeg tror kanskje ett år ikke jeg blir tatt opp der elevene mine ikke blir tatt opp da.

ii. Have you ever been offered any courses and/or literature helping you guide your pupils towards the exam?

Jeg jobbet de første årene så kan du si det sånn da valgte jeg, da var det veldig mye prøving og feiling kan jeg si. Og fordi at jeg synes det var veldig lite informasjon hvordan du kan jobbe konkret med elevene fram mot eksamen. De senere årene så synes jeg UDIR har blitt flinkere å legge ut ting men også NDLA har også masse opplegg som forbereder læreren litt og elevene på hva og hvordan eksamen vil være både muntlig og skriftlig så sent som de senere årene så har det vært lettere å jeg har fokus liksom på på akkurat den eksamens biten også. Men jeg vil jo si at gjennom hele året så så har jo egentlig et sånn eksamens fokus i og med at vi hele veien har blitt skolert i at det vil bli en eksamen til slutt, og jeg er så vant med at mine blir tatt opp og ut og trukket ut så da har jeg en litt sånn fokus på starten av at det er en sjanse for å bli tatt ut til skriftlig eksamen og jeg jobber veldig mye med også ikke generelt men hvorfor med en oppgave med strukturen skal være på plass språket og innholdet skal være på plass. Men det jobber ikke så mye med tidligere eksamensoppgaver som jeg gjorde før. Det gjør jeg ikke. Før hadde jeg alltid en halv dags prøve før jul altså en heldagsprøve før jul og etter jul og før ja på våren da med tidligere eksamensoppgave sånn at de ble i mye større grad skolert, og det må jeg innrømme at det har jeg gått litt bort ifra nå altså og jeg jobber mye mer med underveisvurderingen og ikke så mye liksom det med sluttvurderingen så jeg har hatt et annet fokus på når det gjelder eksamen. ja jeg vet ikke om jeg svarte godt nok på oppgaven, nei eller på spørsmålet ditt.

c. Have you ever acted as a sensor on a written English exam?

Ja det er jeg. Jeg har vært 2 ganger som sensor, og det som er så gøy da jeg tenker jo at viss du jobber som lærer, i uansett hvilket fag du har, så synes jeg faktisk det kan nyttig selv om selve det med eksamen til slutt eksamen til slutt i om det er et spørsmål til de spørsmålene du stiller, så er jeg veldig enig i enda er det hensiktsmessig er det vits å ha eksamen til slutt for å fordi alt dette endret seg veldig, men det vil si hvertfall i og med at jeg faktisk har det erfaring da så synes jeg det var utrolig spennende vi fikk reist til Oslo på sensor skolering og da får du kalibrert deg litt med de andre lærerne du møter jo alle lærere ja fra det området da. Vi var fra vi hadde bare innom det til Kristiansand og heldige området møtes du var sikkert 200 sensorer som møttes da, og da gjennomgår vi eksamensoppgaven og vi blir på en måte enig i ja men disse er vi ikke enige i måten stilles spørsmål på dette kanskje ikke de kompetansemålene godt nok sant som man kan ha en slags diskusjon da diskusjonen om de eksamensoppgavene som blir gitt og da men da får vi jo ut en eksamen som elevene og får og så må vi lese gjennom det og så må vi komme opp med hvordan karakter vi ville gitt og hvorfor. Og da møtes vi gruppes etterpå med cirka 6 stykk der vi gjennomgår alle oppgaver å diskutere da hvorfor jeg ga den karakteren og hvorfor den gav den karakteren og jeg synes jeg må si det altså hver gang har vært med på det skal vi tenke å gud dette er så viktig fordi at men det er da det blir en konflikt mellom bør vi ha eksamen men det er da i det det har hvertfall det jeg så, at jeg ble så mye tryggere i vurderingsarbeidet mitt etterpå fordi jeg hadde vært med på det, fordi da ser jeg jo hvor strenge jeg var jeg visste da jeg så at jeg var strengere enn andre, ikke alle andre, og noen var enda strengere enn meg da så det er da du ser at det spriker, du skjønner at det med vurderingsarbeidet er veldig vanskelig og det er veldig mye øyet som ser det men men det som er kjekt da at de har vært i og skal være lest hva de går

igjennom til slutt og vi har ganske tøft diskusjoner og lærer vi ikke redd for å si det de mener så det er veldig spennende ok å være med på men da har vi jo da får alle disse oppgavene 200 og oppgavene dette som ga for det gjør vi jo så møtes vi igjen i Bergen nå blir det ganske lang greie da men det er ikke klart å strikke det kan være allerede har fått det forklart ja når du da for det første så når du da kommer tilbake fra Oslo så skal du sette i gang med rette staden og du retter og retter og rette og du har det fått en del oppgaver jeg lurer på om vi skal opp når det er lurer på om de har oppnådd det fra før av å gå gjennom og få den her massive altså så mange oppgaver utlevert å få den her. nå jeg glemte det tror jeg er leit leit etter det men den det blir slags dype du rette så mange oppgaver og du får en så god skoloring selv i hva som er bra hva som ikke er bra etter hvert så ser du veldig godt hvorfor rette lavt og hvorfor dette er middels svar for dette er høyt nivå og personen nå nå har vi jo gått litt bort ifra venn inndelingen på vår skole vi men det kan jo komme tilbake til etterpå hvordan vi jobber med vurderingsarbeidet men men det å ha den skoloringen og det å gjøre den store jobben. For det gjør du egentlig når du kommer hjem fra fra oppstart og var sikker fra klokken 05.00 jeg husker jeg pleide å sitte fra 5/6 til klokken 10/11 på kvelden det er ganske mange og jeg bruker ikke på 20 minutter per oppgave var såpass ny hvertfall jeg brukte ofte mye lengre tid selv om du ikke skal gjøre det helt absolutt russ ikke og så gikk vi gjennom alt og så lager vi inn alt sammen og på selve systemet som da var også også fant du da den nye samlingen i Bergen der alle lærerne møter eller alle sensorene møtes og så åpner du da denne dette ikke sant jeg husker ikke om det var på så det jo kjempespennende for en til å se for da sitter vi 3 stykker sammen hvor vi har 2 x seminar 2 sånne som åpnes i de som har rettet på de samme oppgavene, og så er det en ekstern en som er sånn eksternt så husker du ikke til og med begrepet fordi jeg har vært med på det men det har noe med en som er en oppgave eller en person som følger med da og og må ta opp oppgaven å være med å lese til når vi uenige og det skjedde jo første gang ganske ganske ofte at vi var og det var jo da jeg så at jeg må så la meg veldig jeg hadde gitt ganske mange stryk og. Og der jeg hører på deres argumenter og jeg tror jeg synes det var ekstremt nyttig i forhold til min jobb som lærer etterpå fordi jeg følte at jeg jeg kunne på en måte stå inne for de karakterene jeg ga til mine elever etterpå jeg følte meg så sykt mye tryggere på på vurderingsarbeid er rett og slett og det fineste kanskje var at jeg synes at jeg er bevege meg litt mer oppover også og altså i forhold til karakterer og da sendte at ser det at vi engelsklærer og generelt fremmedspråk og så videre, er veldig dårlig med å gi karakter 6 blant annet sant jeg ser de andre fagene får de mye seksere sitter løst men det gjør den ikke hos oss og nå tør jeg faktisk i større grad å gi elevene det der jeg synes at de er på det nivået ja det hadde jeg aldri turt men det er jo fordi jeg var helt usikker skjerm men jeg tenker at for min del bra jeg bare snakker for meg selv, så synes jeg at å være med på den prosessen hele denne karusellen på ekstremt viktig både i forhold til meg som engelsklærer men også den tryggheten jeg da vi fikk i vurderingsarbeidet men også som lærer gjennom år hvordan er jo oppe da den er jobber ikke sånn som sonans og akademiet og de det er bare å fokus på ikke sant at du skal ha eksamen slutte eksamen til slutt det gjør vi ikke men men det det er sånn gyllen middelvei jeg synes det var veldig veldig bra ja. Jeg kan si da også når du da opplever at det er gitt en toer på den andre karen er gitt en 5 eller så er du på den tredje person som går inn så åpner vi oppgavene som må vi lese gjennom dette nytt på nytt da og så må vi bli på én inn på nytt da så blir vi jo stort sett enig i da å justere oss ja

8. To what degree would you say the written English exam serve the following functions or objectives:

Jeg vil si det seg jeg legger meg litt på det siste nivået da personlig, fordi jeg følte at ja jeg synes at vi får en mer sånn slags nasjonal standardisert nivå og da. Alle er ikke enige om hvordan dette hvordan karakterer elevene skal få siden vi har karakterer i Norsk skole. Men jeg tror og at gir statistikk til stat, stat og kommune og så det det gjør det men hvis jeg skal rangere det så vil jeg si ja lærerne på topp ja de lærer hvert fall de som er med og vi lærer masse og så vil jeg si at de får staten får nummer 2 på lavere nivå de får opplysninger de trenger for å måle, måle kulturløser men når det gjelder elevene, om de lærer så mye så, så er egentlig sant ja tja jeg er midt i mellom der jeg vet at lærerne lærer mye, det kan jeg bekrefte for jeg har jo som om jeg levende lærer så mye med å ha en nasjonal eksamen til slutt som de skal ha det det er usikker på, skjønner du hva jeg mener? (Ja) men sånn jeg vet at det kommer helt an på hvordan du er som elev du hvis du blir trigget av eksamener du skal gjøre godt på så er eksamen tingen for deg og for andre elever så jeg eksamen grusomt, det er noe som altså det er nok til at de faktisk var ut fra skolen fordi de får så enormt presentasjonsangst så jeg tenker jeg at det er helt for noen elever i topp for andre elever i det bare helt grusomt og for noen, det å vite at de har eksamen er noe som trigger til økt læring mens for andre elever så fører det til bare større angst hvorfor ikke føles godt fram til økt læring, det hender bare eksamenene nei ikke det er noe jeg ikke skjønner, ja så det.

a. Measure pupils' proficiency

3

b. Provide school owners with statistics that should be considered when evaluating assessment-culture (locally)

2

c. Providing teachers, principals, regional and national offices with information regarding assessment-culture and curricula (nationally)

1

9. In your opinion, what function or functions should the written English exam strive towards?

nå spør du veldig godt, for på den ene siden altså spørsmålet om: trenger vi eksamen i det hele tatt da sant, og og og på denne siden så tenker jeg på lærerne og hvis vi skal ha etter det har vært for å måle og for å finne ut kanskje på er oss selv da litt slik at vi har en enighet i forhold til vurderingskulturen så er det nyttig men jeg vet mange her som vil være total uenig med meg av de andre, men då er det andre også som vil være enige da. Så får jeg tenker jeg på hvilken måte skal vi da klare å få gi noenlunde rettfærdige karakterer altså hvordan skal vi skal vi ha en opptaksprøve til slutt for å se hvem som, hvordan skal vi bestemme hvem skal komme inn videre på høyere utdanning da sant. Skal vi hvis vi velger å gå bort fra eksamen og karakter og eller ikke sikkert det er snakk om karakterer sånn sett da. Jeg synes det er faktisk veldig vanskelig spørsmål å svare på jeg har tenkt mye på det men jeg tenker på denne siden så synes jeg det er nyttig å ha eksamen fordi jeg tror det er bra at vi lærere møtes og at den biten jeg synes er så bra at du har det presset og om du skal gjennom, skal lese så mange oppgaver at du skal møtes og og du skal på en måte ha gjort en god jobb eller så blir det bare krangling når du møter dem, de andre sensorene så klart så så tenker jeg til nyttig for for meg da men den andre siden jeg vet ikke om det er så nyttig for elevene da, er du med på hva jeg mener? (ja jeg skal jo egentlig ikke uttale meg men jeg synes så viktig det du sier og og jeg opplever at

det lager veldig mange som tenker i de samme banene men at det er ingen som har klart å uttrykke det så bra som jeg nå synes at du har gjort og det synes jeg er veldig kjekt)

10. In general, do you believe that the benefit of having a written exam outweighs the drawbacks?

Sant og det er da vi må vekte det lovverk som er det før bra for oss å lære så tror jeg faktisk at det vil være drawback så jeg tenkt fordi at for lærere dette nyttig men det er mange lærere som rett og slett ikke vil være med på dette og jeg tror kanskje at de fleste alle lærere må jo ikke gjøre det men jeg tror mange lærere er nytt verdi stor nytte av å være med på den runden med vurderingsarbeidet aldri hvordan det faktisk er å sitte å rekke så mange oppgaver men drawbacks, det tenker jeg fordi elevene sliter psykisk og som og som hvor eksamensformen, ja ikke er bra for det rett og slett så dropper kanskje ut eller som opplever ja å få black out å gi opp når de kommer på eksamen og ikke minst oppleve og hele får veldig dårlig karakter fordi de ikke mestrer denne eksamensformen og det er også være med på en eksamen da og det gjør vi jeg er redd det vil vi bare se mer med framover på grunn av dette med unges psykiske helse og hvor vanskelig er at mange ja psykisk og ikke minst den koronaen og og hvordan du virkelig korona har hatt for elever med ja altså om den her undersøkelsen som pågår i disse dager da som alle elever på ungdomsskolen om eller på videregående skolen må ta for oss og det er jo da for å finne ut psykisk helse og så videre og generelt har ungdommene i dag og jeg tror at det vil komme fram at altså flere og flere elever vil slite og vil å slite av psykisk og det vil også gjenspeile seg i skolen resultater fremover også eksamensresultater og det er de rett og slett ikke har vært med å hatt eksamen heller jeg har ikke det det er jo en det er jo en generasjon hvor som har gått ut som ikke har hatt eksamen overhode og det vil ha betydning jeg har ikke hatt verken skuff skrifter med til eksamen og klart det påvirker de videre på høyere utdanning jeg tenker jo at dette er jo igjen det er tosidige greia det er jo en øvelse for langt inn da så må du kanskje legge om i hele eksamens biten hvordan de skal vurdere eleven til slutt, skal de vurderes?

11. Do you believe that the written English exam should be mandatory for all pupils in VG1? If so, do you believe that written exams should be mandatory in all subjects where they apply?

Nei

12. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2020?

Ja

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Ja det var jeg.

i. Approximately for how long?

Kan jeg sitte å tenke 2020 jeg underviser jo forskjellige fag år etter år og jeg har gjort som historie og engelsk så du lurer på hvor lenge, kan du stille spørsmålet på nytt, det du lurer på hvor (cirka hvor lenge var du involvert i hjemmeskole eller sånn nett) Det startet jo i mars ja ikke sant på våren da i mars og da kjørte vi undervisningen på nett når hele Norge ble nedstengt var det litt sånn problemer i starten med og så lære seg teams, det å få ikke minst elevene på teams vi gir de tilganger og så videre så det var egentlig litt, en del oppstartsutfordringer vil jeg si. Jeg ringte mye elevene da kan vi gjennom en telefon ja.

13. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2020 were cancelled?

Jeg synes det var greit ja

14. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2020 the correct decision?

jeg jobber på som vanlig, jeg gjorde ikke så store endringer jeg gjør sånn som jeg alltid hadde gjort, for å være ærlig.

16. Would you say you were more inclined to give a higher grade to pupils in 2020?

Kanskje. Nei jeg vil si nei, jeg kanskje mer i år ja, men men ikke da jeg tror ikke det jeg vet ikke, jeg er usikker jeg er usikker jeg er redd for er redd for det da for forskning viser at karakteren har gått opp så jeg vet jo at jeg mot sier meg selv viss jeg sier motsatt så.

a. Was this due to a lack of quality in online teaching?

jeg tror det er flere ting jeg tror det fordi ja dårlig samvittigheten som elevene lærerne har ja fordi de ikke har den digitale kompetansen til å følge de ordentlig godt opp jeg tror og det er tredje moment her faktisk, at når du til slutt blir vurdert altså for vi vet jo at statistikken der blir jo skolen målt, og vi har jo skoler som tradisjonelt sett har gitt veldig gode karakterer der vi vet at den kokes du, hvis jeg går på den skolen som får en mye bedre karakterer enn hvis jeg går på andre. Og når du da måle resultater for eksamen mot standpunkt så viser det seg de skolene gitt at en veldig stor motsetning det er verden stor motsetning mellom eksamenskarakter og standpunkt karakter og det, og jeg tror at når du til slutt blir altså det her nei jeg vet ikke jeg det er vel kanskje sleit ut det kanskje noe egentlig mistenke men det er kanskje lettere å gi en bedre karakter når du vet at vi ikke blir dobbelt, dobbelt sjekket.

18. Did you work as a teacher in Upper secondary school during spring 2021?

Ja

a. Were you involved in online or home schooling?

Ja

i. Approximately for how long?

Jeg, hvor lenge hadde de, vi hadde noen uker nede i 2001. Det er lett å huske sånn som det var i 2002 nå er noe med 2001 var i fjor da, jeg har ikke akkurat det vi en en periode der der skolen var var nedstengt på nytt og da følte jeg det gikk bedre og jeg følte det var mye tryggere på teams ikke sant og det var litt lettere å å jobbe.

19. What was your initial reaction when it was revealed that all written exams in 2021 were cancelled?

Jeg tenkte jo at det var. Nei jeg nei det var det var greit greit nok liksom det var same same på et vis for meg faktisk, ja det var liksom ok det er greit men det hadde vært greit om det ikke var eller om det var og. Og hvis jeg jeg jeg fikk jo opp en hel gjeng, det vet jeg jo nå og, hvis du da fikk jeg beskjed om det og i muntlig da har jeg allerede planlagt alt å laget opplegg på alt det de skulle ha i engelsk på de områdene og så videre og en og da sendte det til de andre skolene rundt her i Stavanger da nå har vi gjort taushet i ordning så var det jo mange som bare hvorfor gjør du det hvorfor har du giddet å gjort den jobben er du med mens jeg men hallo men det var jo før vi fikk vite at muntlig ble så jeg bare en nærmere sammen det har jo ikke noe med den skriftlige biten da så jeg tenker at det er veldig mange som bare, det hvor det blir også på et vis som har nærmest ja ja men det er gjorde fordi om man fikk vite at for du skal jo si rundt opplegget du har tenkt å du skal du skal få godkjent den den biten da før før eksamen men liksom den skal være og det var ikke som sagt mange som valgte ikke sende noe som helst for disse er ikke det ble avlyst

20. In your opinion. Was the cancellation of written exams in 2021 the correct decision?

En tja jeg, på grunn av det situasjon og alt hvor for supert den ser ut og hvordan elevene har der på elevenes vegne ja, på lærerens vegne tja ja hvis du skjønner, men for elevene ja det kan jeg si.

21. In what way did the cancelation of the written English exam influence you as a teacher and your pupils when working towards the end of the semester?

Ikke så veldig mye, men jeg kan si at jeg tok jeg hatet ikke så mye muntlig vurderinger så som det er eksamenssituasjonen som jeg pleier å ha vi har en liten runde sånn at de blir tryggere i at sant sånn sånn vil det være når du kommer opp til eksamen. Jeg hadde ikke så mye av det som jeg pleier å ha det kan jeg si.

23. Final question regarding exams; Has the absence of exams changed your perspective on the importance and functionality of the exam? In what way?

Det jeg er veldig usikker på, kan jeg svare at jeg er usikker? Jeg synes det er veldig vanskelig å svare på det det ja fordi eg på den ene siden det jeg perspektivet fra lærer og elev og jeg tenker at det er en jeg synes jo eksamen kan være bra og sant sånn som jeg har nevnt tidligere men jeg tror at det er en slags skoloring for læreren kalibrerings at vi er enige om hvor ligger vi og jeg tror mange elever har nytte av det fordi at de vil møte det press i fremtiden og, jobb i skolen i høyere utdanning og da er det godt å få puslet seg litt hvis vi tar bort alle disse tingene selv om det er tøft for elevene så er jeg redd for at vi gjør de en bjørnetjeneste. Jeg vet det er å banne i kirka når jeg jobber på en spesialskole ja men dette blir sånn at i dag, for 20 år siden når du skulle opp å ha framføring, ekstremt mange gjorde det og en som ikke gjorde det. I dag skal opp å ha framføring, halve klassen gjør ikke det. Hvorfor skjer det? Skjønner du hva jeg mener? (ja absolutt) Ja takk sånn at vi ikke sykelliggjør elevene mer enn nødvendig også

24. How many written assessments do your pupils usually have in English each semester?

Jeg har 2 skriftlig og 2 muntlig, to hvert semester.

25. What do you usually base your pupil's overall achievement grade on?

Jeg kan ikke tenke litt vurderingsskjema som vi har utarbeidet på vår skole hvor vi har satt ut nivådelte da fra fremragende til nybegynner så det er 4 deler. Så har vi gått inn og vi har jobba veldig mye med vurderingsarbeidet så vi har definert hva er høyeste nivå hva er laveste nivå, og da går det jo mye ut fra de verbene og som blir brukt sant at på laveste nivå så klarer du å si et par ting om det mens på høyeste nivå så klarer du ofte både drøfting analyser du klarer å gjøre rede for på en selvstendig måte sånt så at vi vil skille dem med på den måten da hvordan du ligger an ut fra det kompetansemålet som som vi har og det arbeidet har vært ganske stort og det gjorde jeg alene faktisk nå at jeg vet ikke jeg er så veldig fornøyd med har gjort det jeg tror det er nyttig selv om mange elever mange lærere er veldig uenig så tror jeg at nyttig for det kan bli bare sånn at du bare gjør det for å gjøre det men du skal jo kunne bruke det i vurderingsarbeidet så elevene skal vite at ok du ligger på nybegynner fordi de tingene, de tingene, de tingene og de tingene kan jobbe enda mer med kan vi bli enda flinkere. Eller du ligger på høyt nivå og det har du fått til og det har du fått til. Men jeg passer alltid på å gi de enda flere tilbakemelding på hva de kan bli enda flinkere på selv om de er på sekser nivå så tenker jeg alle har mulighet da. Jeg ser ofte på struktur, språk, innhold i oppgave, å jobbe veldig sånn skematisk er sånn veldig konkret med de elevene vet veldig godt hvorfor de får de karakterene de får og det er veldig lite krav. De, jeg snakker med hver enkelte elev etterpå og for å få en egen vurdering til slutt så jeg har en sånn dette er oppgaver, dette vurderingen, her ligger

rettelsen, her ligger tilbakemeldingene som jeg har skrevet skriftlig til alle og så er det en egen vurdering til slutt som igjennom sammen med det så jeg bruker ganske mye tid på dette.

26. Have you ever asked for a second opinion from a colleague when assessing written English?

Ja

a. Did you find it harder to ask for a second opinion during homeschooling?

Ja

b. Do you think this could have influenced the grades of any of your pupils?

Kanskje, kanskje kanskje

Follow up questions regarding cancelation of written English exams in 2020-2022

As in the interview, you are free to answer any questions in either English or Norwegian.

1. How do you feel about the cancellation of exams in 2022?

Jeg tror det var fornuftig at Regjeringen valgte å avlyse alle ordinære eksamener våren 2022. På grunn av korona epidemien og den uforutsigbare skolehverdagen for elevene så ville nok mange følte det svært urettferdig å måtte konkurrere på så ulike betingelser. Flere hevder at de ikke har hatt god nok undervisning. I tillegg gir dette elevene mulighet til å jobbe godt på slutten av skoleåret, slik at de får mulighet til å oppnå gode standpunkt karakterer. Derimot kunne vi nok ha gjennomført lokalgitt muntlig eksamen.

2. Prior to the cancellation of all regular exams in 2022, UDIR was tasked by the department of education to create an official risk assessment regarding exams in 2022. In the final report, UDIR states the following:

5.2 Standpunkt

Standpunkt vurderingen gir et godt utgangspunkt for å vurdere elevenes kompetanse gitt den krevende opplæringssituasjonen mange skoler og elever har hatt. Det er faglærer som setter standpunkt karakter, og lærerne har fulgt elevene over tid og er kjent med den opplæringen de har fått. Slik sett har skolen og lærerne større mulighet til å sikre at eleven får vist kompetansen sin, i lys av kompetansemålene i læreplanene, enn f.eks. ved en sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen.

a. How do you interpret this paragraph, in regards to how it compares overall achievement grading and exams?

Med tanke på korona epidemien og slik situasjonen er i dag, tror jeg det er fornuftig at faglæreren setter standpunkt karakterer. De kjenner elevene og har kanskje best forutsetning til å gi riktig karakter.

b. What are your thoughts on how the exam is portrayed by UDIR in this paragraph?

Litt usikker på hva jeg vil svare her for synes det er både og. Faglærer kjenner eleven og nivå ifm. oppnådd kompetanse i faget, men samtidig vil en sensor utenfra kunne være en «korrigerer» på resultatet.

3. Preliminary data collection indicates that the majority of participants have a perception of the exam as being:

Very beneficial for teachers.

Quite beneficial for the collection of statistics.

Partly beneficial for some pupils in its current format, where some gain and some loose points, when compared to their overall achievement grade.

a. Do you agree with this perception?

Litt usikker på dette spørsmålet. Jeg tror flere elever har nytt nytte av å gjennomføre eksamen, spesielt de som er konkurransedrevne. Usikker og angstfulle elever sliter mer.

4. Utdanningsspeilet 2020 show that VGS pupils' average overall achievement grades increased in 41 out of 46 subjects, compared to an increase in 18 out of 46 subjects in 2019 and 15 out of 46 subjects in 2018.

In your opinion, has the absence of exams facilitated this? Elaborate on your answer.

Ja, jeg synes det. Jeg nevnte dette i intervjuet. Jeg tror eksamen «edrueliggjør» lærere og fører til at de gir elevene mer realistiske karakterer.

5. Among the participating teachers in this study the exam praised by some, and cursed by others, however, all teachers seem to unconsciously refer to the exam as somewhat of a burden for the pupils. I therefore feel the need to have you clarify:

Do you think the current English Written exam system is suited to fairly evaluate pupils' English proficiency? (If possible, try to answer yes or no)

Jeg tror at alle elevene vil klare å gjennomføre eksamen, til og med de elevene med de svakeste resultatene. Imidlertid vil nok de flinkeste elevene ha de beste forutsetninger for å oppnå gode karakterer og dertil mestringsfølelse.

Samtidig tror jeg det kan være en risiko at de aller svakeste elevene vil prøve å unngå å gjennomføre eksamen, enten ved å la være å møte opp eller at de kun møter, signerer og går.