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Teaching and learning English in vocational education programmes in a Norwegian upper secondary school

Some vocational teachers', English teachers' and specialized workers' evaluation of teaching and learning in the school subject English

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Foreword

Writing a thesis is an interesting process, and the paper you hold in your hands is the result of such a process. The path towards the finished product has been challenging yet rewarding, and I have experienced both personal and professional growth through the course of the last year.

My hope is that this paper can contribute to the understanding of the role played by the school subject, English, in the working life of specialized workers in different trades.

To all who contributed to this process, I thank you.

To my supervisors, Annelise Brox Larsen and Clas Dale, I thank you for constructive feedback and interesting discussions.

Tromsø, May 2018

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Summary

The goal for this thesis is to study how teachers and specialized workers evaluate teaching and learning in the school subject, English, through upper secondary school, and, in answering this, to contribute to the question regarding the relevance of English in the workers' profession. The study has a qualitative research design. Semi-structured focus-group interviews were conducted with the teachers, as well as in-depth interviews with the specialized workers. A theoretical framework, based on earlier studies about vocational teaching and learning, is presented. The findings have also been investigated from a perspective of pragmatic learning, sociocultural learning theory and situated learning.

The findings in this study illuminate two perspectives: firstly, what skills the specialized worker believes s/he needs proficiency in and, secondly, what skills the teacher believes the specialized workers need proficiency in. Lastly, the findings explore how the vocational teachers and the teachers in English co-operate to vocationalize their teaching. The specialized workers favour proficiency in communicative, productive and receptive skills. They consider themselves to show a clear distinction in proficiency between productive and receptive skills. The findings also indicate that the most beneficial tool for a vocational pupil is learning strategies. The teachers assert that the pupils need training in productive and receptive skills but focus largely on writing. Vocationalization is important but difficult to achieve. The teachers also state the importance of contributing to the self-cultivation of the pupil. They show examples of co-operation regarding vocationalizing but also emphasize different obstacles.

The study concludes with a need for a stronger focus on productive skills, especially proficiency in speaking skills. There is also a need for a greater focus on creating situations in which the pupils imitate, impersonate or simulate situations that they will encounter in their profession, as this will also lead to a greater understanding of the relevance for the pupils. Vocationalization and co-operation receive considerable attention from the teachers but are hindered by circumstantial factors. The teachers and specialized workers evaluate the teaching and learning in the school subject, English, to be in some accord with what the specialized worker encounters in his/her working life. They find relevance in learning strategies, everyday English, and vocationalization; the specialized workers state a need for more training in the productive skills.

Keywords: vocational education programme, language teaching, language learning

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1 Introduction

English is considered to be a global language and a lingua franca for many people around the world. The importance today of knowing how to communicate in English is perhaps greater than it was a few decades ago. The globalized world economy, social media and the more obscure borders between countries create the need for a language that we can use for communication when our mother tongues differ.

In the regulation of the education law of Norway, Chapter 1 § 1-3, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training states that "Education in the common core subjects is to be adapted to all vocational programs" (Slette, 2012, p. 291). The result is that teachers in English face the challenge of making their teaching suitable for up to nine different vocational programmes and even more trades, all of which have their own distinctive contents and tasks.

The topic for this master thesis is a study of the term 'vocationalization' and of how English-teachers co-operate with vocational teachers to give the pupils in vocational programmes at upper secondary school the skills they need in their later working lives. Through this study, three voices will be heard: those of the vocational teachers and the English teachers but, perhaps most importantly, those of the specialized workers, whose position in this thesis reflects their role as former pupils and apprentices.

The interest in studying vocationalization came from my teaching practice in a vocational educational and training programme school (abbreviation: VET). During this period, I experienced firsthand how teachers in English worked to adapt their teaching to the needs of the VET pupils' future professions and everyday lives. Vocationalization has been granted attention in recent years in Norwegian vocational schools through the FYR project (*fellesfag yrkesretting og relevans*), launched by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (abbreviation: UDIR) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015).

The sphere in which the teacher and pupil interact each day is controlled and affected by many factors. The educational system in Norway is like a funnel. Decisions on a governmental level have to drain down to each individual teacher. This framework is an ever-changing spiral, and it is in this sphere that the study is conducted. Figure 1 illustrates the model of analysis used to place this study in relation to other different levels. The model is inspired by Coleman's (1990) bathtub model, also found in TFOU's (*Trøndelag Forskning og Utvikling*) main report (Iversen et al., 2014). It has been further developed and modified to

include the level of analysis that this study focuses on: the apprenticeship/working-life level that the pupils in VET programmes meet in their future. The main focus is at the classroom- and working-life levels. The classroom level is where the pupils first acquire their skills, and the working-life level is where they later put them to use. The rest of the model is there to show that both the classroom- and the working-life levels are affected by other levels. Activity in the classroom is controlled by the school's administration, the organization, use of resources and priorities. The administration is controlled by the governmental level. The pupils' motivation, accomplishment and their learning outcomes also play an important role.
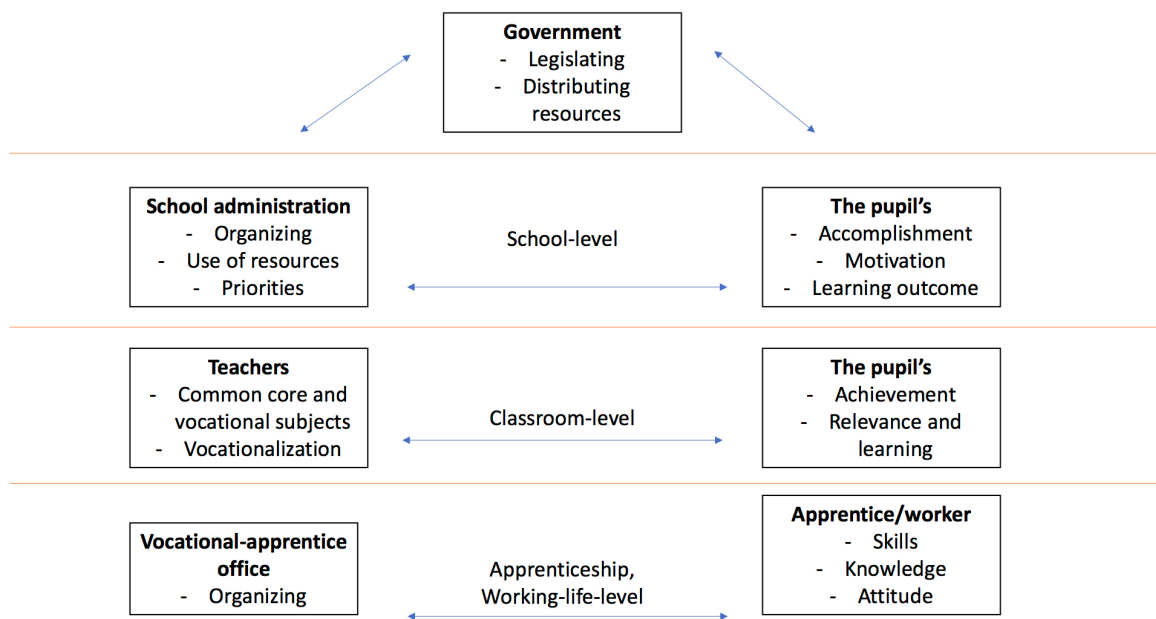
Figure 1 Level of analysis, inspired by Coleman (1990) and TFOU (Iversen et al., 2014)

1.1 Background

Schools focus on making teachers work together to ensure the quality of the education. The main idea is co-operation, and teachers often work together in teams established around the different classes. Teachers from both English and the vocational field work together, and much of the work done might be in accordance with what the specialized workers meet in their professional practice. Vocationalizing the common-core subjects has received great attention throughout the years in the VET schools, especially after shifts in reforms and changes in curriculums. Ultimately, it is the teacher's responsibility to choose the content and method of his or her teaching; i.e., the teacher decides the importance of vocationalization in the common-core subjects. In a survey by TFOU, a large pool of teachers was asked which role the common-core subjects play in the vocational programmes, given a multiple choice.

The teachers were distributed equally: 52.6 percent answered that the common-core subjects should "contribute to analytical skills, education and knowledge of the cultural heritage", while 53.9 percent stated that their role was to "strengthen the vocational competence the pupils achieve" (TFOU, 2014). The differentiation may result in a large difference in both how each pupil experiences vocationalization and how well prepared they are to meet the profession's needs.

Vocationalization of English and other common-core subjects is one of the measures introduced to fight the drop-out rate in the VET programmes in upper secondary schools. UDIR states that one of the side effects of vocationalizing the common-core subjects might be a contribution to both enhanced teaching quality and to realizing the goal to get more pupils to pass upper secondary school (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). In the period from 2011 to 2016, 25 percent of those who started a vocational programme dropped out (SSB, 2017).

According to Hernes (2010), three factors come into play for the Norwegian labour market, all of which have had a remarkable effect on vocational education. The first big change is found in the large scale of new technology available. Technology changes quickly, and schools often have problems in keeping up with developments, as well as in being able to put new technology into the budget. Secondly, the shortage in specialized workers has had a great impact. In theory, a labour shortage should be good for those vocational pupils who have finished their time in school and are ready for an apprenticeship, but the trend shows us that, rather than taking on apprentices, the labour market employs workers from the EU. The third factor that defines the current labour market is that foreign labour is used everywhere in the specialized work sectors (Hernes, 2010), perhaps leading to a greater focus on proficiency in communicative skills.

Over the last 20 years, Liv Mjelde, a professor emerita in vocational pedagogics, has conducted several studies, in one of which she found that 89 percent of the apprentices preferred to learn at the workplace rather than in school. One apprentice stated: "I think it is too much school. In my specialty it is better to work among customers, not among books" (Mjelde, 2002). As a different way to structure the teaching and learning, some schools have tested exchange models. These differ from the regular dual model, in which the pupils are in school for two years and work as apprentices for two years (2+2). Exchange models are alternative ways to distribute the training between school and business, in vocational programmes. In these models, the pupils alternate between training in business and training in

school (Høst, Nyen, Reegård, Seland, & Tønder, 2015). These exchange models have three goals: better education/training, better implementation and better co-operation between schools and businesses. From the businesses perspective, this asserts that the goal is to educate more proficient workers, while the schools try to make more pupils choose an apprenticeship over the extension year. The quality of the teaching is enhanced, due to a closer connection between theory and practice (Høst et al., 2015). Ensuring that the pupils understand the relevance, regarding their later professional practice, contributes to erasing the distinction between theory and practice.

In Martinsen, Wendelborg, and Røe (2014) study, six factors are presented as obstructing vocalization. Teachers might be teaching in different programmes, leading to difficulties in interdisciplinary co-operation because they have too many people and trades to relate to. Implicitly, the teachers lack the time to vocationalize; they also experience the syllabus, the curriculum and the examination as obstructions to vocationalization. Yet, several research articles reveal a positivity towards vocalization, and teachers work to give their pupils proficiency in skills that they will need in their future professions. Much of the research done in the vocational field has been studied from the perspective of either the teachers or the pupils. This study has chosen to include an important group, whose voice has not been prominent in this research field: that of the specialized workers, who have completed a VET programme and an apprenticeship, and are currently active in the labour market.

1.2 Thesis and research questions

Based on the missing voice of those who have already completed their education, the thesis for this study is:

"*How do teachers and specialized workers evaluate the teaching and learning in the school subject, English, through upper secondary school, and what is the relevance of English in the workers' professions?*"

Based on the thesis, three research questions have been developed to help answer the question posed by the thesis. These research questions are the starting point for the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and for the empirical survey.

1. *In which skills does the specialized worker think s/he needs to be proficient, in regard to his/her working life?*

2. *What skills do the teachers think that the specialized worker needs in his/her working life?*

3. *How do the English-teacher and the vocational teacher co-operate to vocationalize?*

1.3 Outline

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework that forms the basis for the empirical survey. The methodological choices made are presented in Chapter 3, while Chapter 4 presents the findings, which are later discussed in Chapter 5. The final two chapters conclude and suggest how this study contributes to the research done in vocational and didactic studies, with a suggestion for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the relevant theory and research connected to this thesis and the research questions. Based on the distinction between teaching and learning, both learning theories and didactic implications for teaching and learning will be presented. The fields investigated in this chapter are in accord with the findings presented in Chapter 4.

2.1 *Bildung* ideal

In the general part of the curriculum, published by UDIR, the purpose of the education can be found:

> The goal for the education is preparing children, youths and adults to meet all obstacles of life and master the challenges together with others. It should give each student competence to take care of themselves and their lives, and at the same time remaining willing to help others. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006a, p. 2)

These goals, set by UDIR, are consistent with the German tradition of self-cultivation, named *bildung*. The term '*bildung*' may, from an etymological perspective, stem from the term '*imago Dei*' (image of God). The idea is that humans carry with them the image of God, and the goal is to become an image of God themselves. The *bildung* ideal then becomes something that each human aspires to. Regarding education, the term connects different aspects that tie together the teaching that enables pupils to succeed in all aspects of life.

According to Ulvik and Sæverot (2013), there is a distinction between *bildung* and education. *Bildung* is a process, set in motion by attitude and action, while education is characterized as a targeted activity to reach a goal. These goals are communicated by the established competence aims in the curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006b).

Ulvik and Sæverot (2013) establish three target areas, the first of which states that pupils are to qualify for a subject or profession. Qualification is achieved through working with the competence aims. The second target area is socializing, which deals with how pupils are to become a part of the already existing sociocultural, political, religious and moral norms of society. The third target area concerns itself with building an identity, through individuality and responsibility (Ulvik & Sæverot, 2013). Together, these three target areas contribute to *bildung*.

The *bildung* ideal shows itself in two different ways in this study. First, school is an agent of *bildung*-enabling, especially in the area of developing pupils' proficiency in societal skills. The second agent is the workplace, where, through situated learning, the pupil is self-cultivated, to later prosper in the working life environment. The perception of the role the school subject, English, should fulfil, as stated earlier, is divided almost 50/50 between the teachers. About half of the teachers focus on what we might label self-cultivation, while the other half focus on vocational skills (TFOU, 2014).

2.2 Perspectives on learning

Teaching and learning are two concepts that are important when discussing vocational learning and language learning. One could say that these two are mutually dependent: when discussing one, the other is discussed implicitly. This study focuses on sociocultural learning theory and pragmatic perspectives on learning. It is beneficial to include such thinkers as Dewey and Vygotsky when combining vocational pedagogics and language pedagogics.

The vocational subjects in school have often been called pragmatic subjects, whilst the common-core subjects have been called theoretical subjects. According to Mjelde (2002), this perception leads to a lack of understanding of the diversity in the vocational traditions. The unique thing about vocational pedagogy is its traditions that build upon practical work. The misunderstanding comes from not acknowledging that practice comes from mind working. Vocational pedagogy is influenced by a pragmatic perspective on teaching and learning. The pragmatic perspective is inspired by the thinking that learning through practice and

experience, through trying and failing, and through action is the very basis of what we call knowledge.

Dewey was the pioneer of pragmatics, he promoted workshop learning and co-operation in his work. He opposed the normal formalism in the organization of teaching. He challenged the system that favours school classes and specific studies. He emphasized integrational approaches, especially through experiments, a typical way of organizing teaching in vocational programmes. Through experiments, the pupils will either confirm or deny the hypothesis they have made. They will gain knowledge about the circumstances the experiment is connected to, and theory will, to a large extent, be connected to practice. Dewey formulated it through the following example:

> Take the textile industry as an example of such an hypothesis. I am now talking about a school that we hope to have in the future. It consists of a work room where one engages in real things, one sews, spins and weaves. Children come directly in contact with work, with different types of silk, cotton, linen and wool. One gains knowledge while one works with the material, its origins, measurements and use, and the different types of machines that are used to refine the raw materials. (Dewey, 1915)

By experiencing a situation, coming in direct contact with the work and engaging in real things, the pupil will know change. It is this process of change that Dewey labels "learning".

One of Dewey's most important ideas was to get experiences that the child gains outside school to match the experiences in school, explaining how these two worlds can unite to strengthen and nourish each other, instead of being two separate parts of human life (Dewey, 1990). The latter idea is connected to both situated learning and relevance, terms which will be returned to in the following sections.

In the recommended action-oriented approach to language learning, mentioned in the general part of the curriculum in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006b), terms from sociocultural learning theory are present, and this might be seen as one of the central approaches to learning for language didactics.

The Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, is the founder of sociocultural theory, which is both a theory about cognitive development in children and a theory of how culture and society reside in the individual, through social interaction from birth (Vygotskij, Cole, John-Steiner,

Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). The sociocultural perspective says that learning happens in social settings. It is social because it happens in interaction with other humans, and it is situated because physical and social contexts where learning happens are an integrated part of learning activities.

We use language to communicate with others, and in this way our cognitive thinking is developed further through interaction with others (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007). As a result, Vygotsky states that learning happens in interaction with others, and the founding idea is that language is the tool for thinking. Vygotsky developed two different stages to describe learning, the first of which is the level of current development, where the pupil is located early in a learning process. In the stage of current development, the pupil can solve problems without help, using his/her own thinking. However, the pupil has the potential for development, in the extension of this stage. This level is what Vygotsky calls the zone of proximal development. This zone is the area between what the pupil can manage on his own and what he can manage with help from others (Vygotskij & Kozulin, 1986).

Another important view of learning is situated learning. Situated learning is learning through participation in social practice, i.e. the relationship between a new worker and those with experience. According to Lave & Wenger (1991), a new worker becomes a participant in the community of more experienced workers; this is what they label "legitimate peripheral participation". They also make the distinction between a learning curriculum and a teaching curriculum: the former being the field of learning resources in everyday practice, viewed from the perspective of learners, and the latter, in contrast, being constructed for the instruction of newcomers (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

To provide an example of how situated learning and the term 'relevance' are closely connected, a parallel can be drawn between what happens in school and what happens in working life for the specialized workers. In school, the pupils in VET programmes are constantly undergoing a practice of mimicking, imitating, impersonating and simulating situations that they will encounter when they start their professional practice. Using didactical methods, e.g. roleplay in the workshop, the vocationalization and relevance of what they do in the workshop will be unquestionable, because the relevance will be obvious.

Teaching and learning in the vocational programmes is a mixture of theoretical- and pragmatic learning in school. Although skills included in competence aims for vocational

programmes are best achieved through practical work, training in common-core subjects is necessary for professional development. Different knowledge acquired in school contexts is meant to be transferable to working life and higher educational contexts (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008).

Eraut (2004) emphasizes that transfer of knowledge from the classroom to working life is a complex process that is often ignored in learning processes, as a result of the cultural gap between formal education and the work site. If the pupils are unacquainted with how the transfer of knowledge might happen, the effect that education has on work life will continue to be lower than expected, and the quality of the work might worsen as a consequence of the limited use of relevant knowledge (Eraut, 2004). The transfer of knowledge can also be viewed as a learning strategy and, ultimately, as a part of situated learning. Exchange models are one contribution that might make the transfer of knowledge easier.

2.3 Competence – a composed term

The term 'competence' is present in all publications from UDIR and is thus important for teachers and pupils at all levels of education. Competence is a difficult term to work with, because it has no definite definition. Falck-Pedersen and Jordahl attempted the following definition:

> Competence may be defined as the knowledge, skills and attitudes the pupils have acquired, and the competence aims say something about what the pupil should know after the end of his or her training (Falck-Pedersen & Jordahl, 2013, p. 363).

Competence may be said to be the ability to transform acquired knowledge into actions. To make your actions competent, you will need proficiency in knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The Norwegian education law determines that pupils are to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, so they can master their lives and participate in working life and the social community. Democratic understanding and democratic participation are central aspects in the education law. There is also a focus on the pupils' own development and a strengthening of their identity (Bjørke, Dypedahl, & Myklevold, 2014).

Derived from the above-mentioned literature, the following model is presented, emphasizing that competence is made up of knowledge, skills and attitudes:
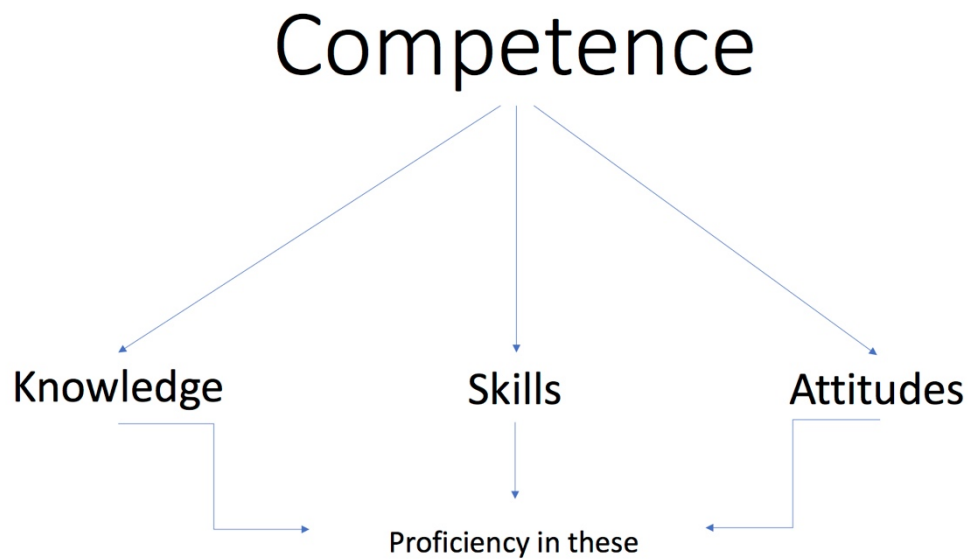
Figure 2 Competence and proficiency

The question could then arise: what does "knowledge, skills and attitudes" mean? The *Longman dictionary of contemporary English* (2009) defines the term 'competence' as "the ability to do something well".

Subcategorized as knowledge, skills and attitudes, these terms are defined as follows:

- Knowledge: the information, skills, and understanding that you have gained through learning or experience.
- Skill: an ability to do something well, especially because you have learned and practised it.
- Attitude: the opinions and feelings that you usually have about something, especially when this is shown in your behaviour.

As we can see from these definitions, the term 'competence' is overarching, but the definitions glide into each other, making a definite definition a challenge. These important terms will be returned to throughout this study, and, whenever they are mentioned, they will be accompanied by the term 'proficiency', which is defined as "a good standard of ability and skill" (*Longman dictionary of contemporary English*, 2009).

2.4 Productive and receptive skills

In the English subject's didactics, the focus has always been on language teaching and language learning. Teaching a language is a difficult task, mainly because each language has

its own properties that may be difficult to decode. One way we can divide skills that are needed in English is to view them as productive and receptive skills. Productive skills are writing and speaking, while receptive skills are reading and listening.

Speaking skills deal with how to express oneself verbally, and they are used in both prepared verbal production and spontaneous interaction (Bjørke & Grønn, 2014b). Speaking is a language skill that follows its own rules and has its own logic. The speaking skills may seem easier to acquire, but even though the requirements for correct language are fewer in spoken than in written communication, the pupil must hold a substantial linguistic proficiency to be able to listen and understand, present topics orally, and to participate in spontaneous interaction. The pupil needs to know the language's vocabulary and grammatical structures, how sounds are pronounced (phonetics, intonation, prosody), how the words are built (morphology), how words are ordered (syntax) and what the words mean and how the groundwork for the words' meanings are constructed (semantics). In addition to all this, pragmatics and sociolinguistic competence are important, for example to be recipient-oriented, i.e. how to adapt a message. All of these aspects boil down to the question of communication: how do I formulate what I want to say to whom and for what purpose? (Bjørke & Grønn, 2014b).

As stated above, the requirements for written skills are often deemed stricter than those for speaking skills. Lund (2014) made an important point that we have different types of writing. It might be difficult to prepare pupils for their future working life and societal participation because of difficulties in anticipating the kind of writing they will become engaged in. Lund (2014) asserts that writing in any foreign language gives the pupils more arenas to participate in, and the opportunities to prepare the pupils for the demands of their later profession are of great importance. Trine Gedde-Dahl in Lund (2014) makes a distinction between subject writing and citizen writing. Subject writing concerns the writing you will encounter in your future profession. Citizen writing revolves around being able to participate effectively in society e.g. writing applications, e-mail or letters from readers. For both the subject writer and the citizen writer, the challenge is to learn a role language; these roles are affected by the discourse they write in and may be e.g. school language, vocational language or civic language.

The two receptive skills may be divided into reading and listening. We construct meaning from both reading and listening; i.e., we are never passive in our efforts to create meaning in a situation involving communication (Bjørke et al., 2014).

The importance of reading has changed, in line with the technological, cultural and economic development of the rest of society. The requirement for proficiency in reading is important in a society where the flow and complexity of information is increasing. According to Bjørke and Grønn (2014a), proficiency in reading is a skill that never stops developing. The fact that pupils are exposed to words and grammatical structures in new contexts contributes to the consolidation and expansion of language skills.

If you are to learn a foreign language, you need to be exposed to that language. The pupil needs to be provided with a lot of input and exposure to the language. It is necessary to establish a classroom culture in which not only the teachers, but also the pupils, speak English (Bjørke et al., 2014). This claim from Bjørke has support in the field of theoretical linguistics. According to Chomsky in (Slabakova, 2016), three factors that are essential to the growth of language within an individual: a) genetic endowment, b) experience, and c) principles not specific to the faculty of language. This aligns with Bjørke's claim about the importance of experience. Language acquisition "depends on abundant comprehensible input available to the language learner. Without comprehensible input, no specific language can be learned. The importance of the second factor for the growth of language is indisputable" (Slabakova, 2016, pp. 5-6). Linguistic input, or exposure, is everything we hear around us, and, in the case of exposure: the more the merrier. This promotes a classroom culture in which the language to be learned is present at all times.

2.5 Learning strategies

In the education principles, learning strategies are emphasized as an important element for the pupils' learning; the school needs to stimulate the pupils and apprentices to develop their own learning strategies and ability for critical thinking (Bunting, 2014).

The active role in the learning process is controlled by the individual when s/he is thinking and, even better, thinking about thinking. Awareness about one's own learning can be tied to the term 'self-regulated learning'. It is often defined as "learning that is initiated, controlled and governed by the learner himself" (Bjørke et al., 2014). Self-regulation dictates that it is important to make the learners aware of their own strategy for learning. Self-regulated

learning is closely connected to assessment for learning, meaning that the teacher always gives feedback to the pupils about what they need, to improve their language progression.

The education principles mention learning strategies:

> Learning strategies are methods the pupils use to organize their own learning. They are strategies to plan, implement and evaluate one's own work to reach competence aims determined on a governmental level. This also involves reflection over newly acquired knowledge and usage of this in new situations. (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006c, p. 3)

It is important that the teacher is aware of this, to enable learning in the subject; it is important that the pupils learn both the subject and how to learn the subject. It is important for the teacher to have this perspective in his or her teaching (Bunting, 2014).

Pupils that we refer to as self-regulated are proactive in the learning process; this means that they understand what they need to learn and construct their knowledge from this. Self-regulation depends on metacognition. Metacognition is defined as "thinking about thinking" and needs to be separated from cognition itself. Cognition is thinking, solving problems, understanding, remembering and focusing. Metacognition is the awareness the pupil has about his or her knowledge and control of his/her own cognitive activity (Bunting, 2014).

Previously mentioned examples of transfer of knowledge and situated learning can be tied together with learning strategies. When a pupil acquires strategies for transferring the knowledge acquired in school into worksite settings, s/he has developed a beneficial learning strategy. This is why situated learning, for example through mimicking, can be a valuable strategy for both showing relevance and easing the transfer of knowledge between the school and the worksite.

2.6 Vocationalization and relevance

Vocationalization of the teaching, and relevance in the teaching are two important factors that have been important in the relationship between the vocational programme and the common-core subjects.

> By vocationalizing the common-core subject, the teaching methods, content and vocabulary that are used in teaching the common-core subject should have relevance

for each and every worker's professional practice. The vocationalizing also tries to show how skills from the common-core subject are used and are useful for training in the vocational subjects and in the professional practice, regarding the relevant occupations. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008, p. 80)

This definition states that the content in the common-core subjects should be relevant and useful for the profession each pupil wants to educate him- or herself for. The purpose of vocationalization is obvious and concerns itself with using the common-core subjects to strengthen the pupils' development of vocational knowledge. (Hiim, 2014)

Sleveland (2014) establishes four different forms of vocationalization. The first is to lower the bar, the second is to base the vocationalization on the common-core content, the third bases itself in the vocational programme's content, and the last one concerns interdisciplinary integration. The distinction is not clear-cut, and a didactic approach can include several or all of these.

The term 'relevance' is often mentioned together with, but secondary to, vocationalization, as an accessory. Relevance means that it directly relates to the subject or problem being discussed or considered (*Longman dictionary of contemporary English*, 2009) and, in the case of vocationalization, that the pupil realizes this relevance. As a result, the vocationalization of the teaching should be relevant, according to the pupil's future profession and also to him or her personally (Iversen et al., 2014). The FYR project launched by UDIR defines relevance as the usage of content, learning methods, learning arenas and vocational terms in education that are relevant to the pupil's professional practice and adult life (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015).

Vocationalization and relevance are closely connected to pragmatic theory and situated learning. Vocational training and vocationalization of the school subject, English, expose pupils to practising similar situations and participation in the practice field. Whenever the teaching allows for a simulation, the relevance will be hard to disregard.

Early training in the profession is necessary, to understand the profession's basic societal tasks and the purpose of the education. Theoretical and disciplinary knowledge need to be related to practical examples, when the pupil has an overview of what the practice and the profession are about. After the pupils have experienced the practice and its challenges, they will see that they need mathematics, Norwegian, English, etc., as well as more specific vocational theory, to be able to describe, make decisions about and understand the practice.

Vocationalizing the common-core subjects will, from a pragmatic perspective, state that the common-core subjects are used in descriptions, justifications and in problematizing concrete tasks in the vocational practice (Hiim, 2014). By intertwining theory and practice in this way, the distinction between them may slowly be erased.

2.7 Co-operation
Johnson and Johnson present the following definition of co-operation:

> Co-operation is working together to reach a common goal. (Aakervik, Haugaløkken, Johnson, & Johnson, 2006, p. 16)

For almost a century, the school has worked as an organization facilitating mass production (Aakervik et al., 2006). The work has been divided into small pieces and left for individuals, who have worked alone with their own pieces, often in competition with others.

W. Edwards Deming in (Aakervik et al., 2006) asserts that 94 percent of things that fail in an organization can be traced back to the organizational structure, not to the individuals involved. Deming also asserts that the organization of co-workers in teams is a prerequisite for quality management and improvement. According to (Aakervik et al., 2006), there is no reason to believe anything different in the organization of schools.

One of the main challenges presented in (Aakervik et al., 2006) is changing the structure and, even more importantly, the school culture, so that teachers may work together to ensure each pupil succeeds. A team-based organizational structure in school is labelled "the co-operative school" (Johnson et al. in (Aakervik et al., 2006). Co-operative schools have certain features: a teaching staff that is organized in teams, a school-based decision-making structure and staff meetings that use co-operative procedures. The core in this is to use interconnected teaching teams that constantly work to empower teachers. To create and maintain the co-operative school, the administration of the school needs to work in the most beneficial way, to empower teachers in doing a better job every day (Aakervik et al., 2006).

3 Methodology

According to Jacobsen (2015), there will be three common phases in sampling data, regardless of whether the method is qualitative or quantitative. The first phase concerns developing a thesis. The thesis is either explanatory or causal, because we are interested in either cause or effect. The second phase involves choosing how to examine the phenomenon

we are studying. Jacobsen (2015) describes an important difference in examinations that are correlational/explanatory and those which are causal. In the third phase, the type of information you wish to sample – qualitative or quantitative – is chosen. According to Jacobsen (2015), an explorative thesis will require an intensive procedure. The thesis chosen for this study was explorative in order to grasp the nuances in the meaning and understanding of how both the specialized workers and the teachers evaluated teaching and learning.

For this study, a qualitative method was chosen in order to bring out a diversity of nuances. The qualitative research design enables the researcher to grasp the experience and mindsets of participants (Jacobsen, 2015). A qualitative research design was chosen to facilitate an in-depth study of the phenomena, and interviews were conducted with both specialized workers and teachers. The teachers were interviewed in focus-group interviews, while the specialized workers were interviewed individually through semi-structured interviews. The choice of a qualitative research design enabled the study to discover the ways in which the specialized workers' education corresponds with what they face in their professional practice.

There are several advantages and disadvantages inherent in choosing a qualitative study. One advantage is that qualitative data is not restrained in a rigid system in which only one answer can be given. Because of this freedom, the interviewee is at liberty to define what s/he believes is the correct understanding. Such liberty often leads to both a diversity in nuances and a unique understanding of a phenomenon. Qualitative approaches are often flexible, and the process is interactive, enabling the interviewee to provide his or her untainted meaning. There are also some disadvantages associated with a qualitative approach: it requires large resources, and the process takes a lot of time. Transferability is often a problem, and the results may be difficult to transfer to other fields. Due to the diversity in nuances, decoding might be difficult, and the researcher might end up studying a phenomenon created by him/herself, instead of what s/he actually intended to analyse.

3.1 Ethical evaluation of the project

Privacy and ethics have been considered throughout the entire process of writing this master thesis. The project was approved by NSD (*Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste*) several weeks before the interviews were conducted. The teachers' contact information was provided by the vocational school, and the teachers were told that participation was voluntary. The specialized workers voluntarily contacted the researcher after a posting on social media suggested that participants were needed for this master thesis. All the informants were told

that they could revoke their participation in the study at any time. The informants signed the form of consent (Appendix 1) for the interview as they signed up for the project. The documentation and all the answers given by both teachers and apprentices/workers have been made anonymous, and all information prone to recognition has been deleted.

3.2 Selection

Qualitative selection is based on the strategic selection of informants with characteristics or qualifications that are relevant to the thesis and the theoretical perspective (Thagaard, 2013). For the selection of informants, purposeful sampling, which is described in Creswell (2013), was used. The study's informants were chosen from three different subtypes of purposeful sampling: criterion, snowball and convenience.

Criterion sampling states that: "all cases that meet some criterion; useful for quality assurance" could be potential informants (Creswell, 2013). Two groups of teachers were needed for this study: one group of vocational teachers and one group of English teachers. To investigate the phenomenon, it was preferable to conduct the research in a vocational school, where the vocational teachers and English teachers worked closely together. The snowball subtype of purposeful sampling identifies interesting cases from people who know people who have knowledge about which informants that can have information (Creswell, 2013). Based on both these subtypes, it was easy to gain access to informants through an acquaintance of the researcher's: the principal at the vocational upper secondary school where the study was conducted. This also made the selection of informants fall under the subtype 'convenience', saving time, money and effort, but at the expense of information and credibility (Creswell, 2013). Through co-operation with the principal, matching the vocational teachers with the English teachers was an easy task. The principal had access to the teachers' schedules, which enabled a time to be suggested for interviews which was compatible with all their schedules.

According to Jacobsen (2015), it is important that the selection of informants does not exceed 20 informants, because an interview might take up to two hours, and the data is rich in content and requires time to analyse. After a thought process and comparison with other studies of the same size, it was decided to include nine teachers and four specialized workers. The English teachers were selected because of their background in teaching English at a vocational school and the vocational teachers for their teaching in different programmes. It was decided not to focus on experience, age or gender in this study, because they were deemed unlikely to affect

the results. The English teachers are labelled ET1, ET2, ET3 and ET4; the vocational teachers are labelled VT1, VT2, VT3, VT4 and VT5. All the teachers taught in different vocational programmes: technique and industrial production-, construction-, electrical-, and vehicle programmes.

The specialized workers were chosen because of their different backgrounds in education and professional practice. Two were construction workers: carpenter worker 1 (CW1) and carpenter worker 2 (CW2). CW1 and CW2 also owned their own construction companies. One of the specialized workers was a skipper, labelled maritime worker (MW), and the last participant worked as a telecommunications technician (TW). None of the specialized workers interviewed were former pupils at the vocational school where the teachers were interviewed.

3.3 Collection of data

Different approaches were made to the collection of data: focus-group interviews were conducted with the teachers and open individual interviews with the specialized workers.

Focus-group interviews with the teachers were selected, to grasp the perspectives of both the vocational teachers and the English teachers at the same time. Conducting focus-group interviews could yield discussions between the English teachers and the vocational teachers and an interesting perspective on their daily work and co-operation with each other. The use of focus groups is beneficial when information about a phenomenon is needed from people with slightly different views (Jacobsen, 2015); e.g., if studying a school, it might be beneficial to hear from teachers from different programmes at the same time, enabling them to build up a common understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

There are a few pitfalls to look out for when interviewing several people at the same time. There might be an inequitable distribution in how much each person contributes to the common understanding of the phenomenon. The downside of this is that it may restrain the other respondents from communicating *why* they have the opinion they hold about the phenomenon. Jacobsen (2015) describes a few guidelines for group size, since this determines the group process: small groups if the thesis is explorative, the theme is complex and difficult, the participants are experienced and specialists, the theme triggers strong emotions and the goal is to cover more than one theme. Evaluation of these factors showed that the thesis could benefit from using focus-group interviews. Three small focus groups were arranged, with

three teachers per group. Two groups comprised one English teacher and two vocational teachers, and one group consisted of two English teachers and one vocational teacher. The system was based on which vocational teachers the English teachers co-operated with. Arranging the groups in this way meant they were not entirely homogeneous but a mix of teachers with English and two different vocational backgrounds.

A different approach was taken to the interviews with the specialized workers: open individual interviews. Thagaard (2013) presents two different perspectives on what the data from an interview actually constitutes. The first perspective presents a positivistic viewpoint, which emphasizes the fact that the data represents the interviewee's knowledge, attitudes and perspectives, representing his or her earlier experiences. The second perspective is a constructivist one. According to this perspective, the data is seen as a social interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, both of whom contribute to the knowledge and perspective that emerges from the situation. The second perspective states that the researcher affects the answers that the informant gives. These are important thoughts to bear in mind when designing the interview guide and in the interview situation itself. In an open individual interview, the researcher can "use himself as instrument, and use an implicit bodily and emotional way of understanding that enables unique access to the interviewee's life" (Kvale, Brinkmann, Anderssen, & Rygge, 2009). In this study, through this method, the informant's views and opinions could be grasped, regardless of the social context. There were also some practical reasons for the open individual interviews with the specialized workers: they did not live in the same area and they worked different hours.

The interview guides (Appendixes 2 & 3) were produced in accordance with the research questions. The intention was to emphasize the elements in the education that it was assumed both teachers and specialized workers would agree were of importance for later working life. Formulating the interview guide this way meant that any possible gap between the skills pupils achieve in school and the skills they need in their profession could be revealed. With the research questions and thesis in mind, two sets of questions were articulated: one for the teachers and one for the specialized workers. The interviews were recorded on a tape recorder and notes were taken throughout the interviews. These notes served as both a guideline to finding the different topics discussed in the interview and a critical perspective to the researcher, who took notes on his own questions and follow-ups.

3.4 Processing the data

Processing the data involves organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing categories, presenting the data and forming an analysis of it. These steps are interconnected and form a spiral of activities, all related to the analysis and representation of the data (Creswell, 2013).

Through qualitative analysis, the researcher aims to disassemble text into smaller components (words, sentences, paragraphs), reassembling them to understand the components in the entirety that is constructed. The researcher attempts to see all the components with a renewed perspective, leading to a thorough analysis of the different parts. This method is often called the hermeneutical spiral (Jacobsen, 2015). From a more practical perspective, the qualitative method revolves around four factors: documentation, exploration, categorization and reassembly (Jacobsen 2015).

Creswell (2013) presents data analysis as three steps, the first of which is preparing and organizing the data; for this step, the data in this study was stored as transcripts. These transcripts were reduced into categories in the second step and, lastly, the data in these categories was used in the discussion. The decision was made to record the interviews on a tape recorder, which enabled the conversations to be listened to multiple times and allowed movement back and forth in the interview. Hatch (2002) recommends transcribing everything, both the verbal and non-verbal data. As many aspects as possible were included in the transcription, but the visual aspect is only present in the interview situation. Sound recording is a decontextualized version of the interview conducted, without the visual representation of the interview situation, which might be interesting for analysis (Kvale et al., 2009). The transcriptions became a large pool of data that later went underwent a read-through- and categorization process.

The interviews resulted in three hours of recordings with the teachers and five hours of recordings with the specialized workers. All these recordings were then transcribed into text format. This was to enable the recordings to be disassembled and categorized into components ready for analysis. The categories were as follows:

- Productive/receptive skills
- 50/50 vocational/everyday English
- Anticipation of English usage

- Learning strategies

- Proficiency in skills

- Relevance and *bildung* ideal

- Organization and co-operation

- Vocationalization

Categorizing the transcriptions like this meant that the large unit of data could be restructured into smaller components that would be the basis for the later discussion. This made the data easier to process, from the overwhelming first sight of the data transcribed, to the categorization and dismantling, and into the discussion. The coding/categorizing procedure is a process of aggregating the text into smaller units of information and later using these codes or labels in the study (Creswell, 2013).

The overarching goal of a read-through of the text is to find meaning in the data. In reading through the transcripts, the researcher becomes acquainted with different dimensions that may help in choosing the framework for analysis. The framework is decided by finding units that fit together in meaning. These units are a part of the data, which contain an idea, episode or information (Hatch, 2002). The framework may change during the analysis, due to an ill fit or to improve it. The transcripts were read-through several times, to find an entirety in the data. One challenge of categorizing the data was that each category seemed to work as a cog-wheel: when data was put into one category, it also affected other categories; e.g., when data was put into the category "vocationalization", it also affected "co-operation" and the data placed in that category.

3.5 Quality assessment

Assessing the quality in research is often discussed in terms of validity, reliability and transferability. These terms are used to state how valid, reliable and transferable the qualitative data collected is (Jacobsen, 2015). There seems to be little agreement in the methodology literature regarding what constitutes a good quality study, but the three terms are used to ensure a good standard in the research. For this study, the quality assessment concerns itself with questioning whether or not the findings from the in-depth interviews enable valid conclusions to be drawn from what has been set as a goal to study.

The most important point in quality assurance is that the data collected actually answers the questions asked. There are two types of validity: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is used to check whether or not the data supports the conclusions drawn. External validity and reliability state that results from a defined area are valid in her contexts at a different time (Thagaard, 2013). The transferability questions whether or not the conclusions drawn depict what other teachers and specialized workers outside this study say about the same topic.

One reliability issue is the purposeful sampling used through strategic selection. Choosing informants from a school where the researcher had an acquaintance in the administration could affect the informants. The first interview took place in a conference room in the administration wing of the school. The informants appeared hesitant and reserved in their answers. After this interview, the researcher intuited that the informants' reserve was due to the interview taking place in the administration wing and that some of the questions enabled answers that could reveal scepticism towards the administration. Thereafter, a conference room was set up in the wing furthest away from the administration, in an attempt to avoid this administration effect. This effect is described in Bjørndal (2017), who states that one of the most important things about an interview is that it takes place in what he calls a "sheltered space". The next two interviews were rich in information, and, on questions that enabled scepticism towards the administration, no hesitation of any kind could be traced.

Another factor that might have affected the reliability in this study is the fact that the findings have been translated from Norwegian to English. The diversity of the English language may lead to several different ways to translate a sentence; nevertheless, the utmost caution has been used, to best preserve the voice and the meaning of the informants' quotes presented in the findings.

The external validity questions whether or not the results from this study can be true for other upper secondary schools with VET programmes. Based on the fact that the selection of informants was a strategic selection through purposeful sampling, it is doubtful that the findings can be transferred to other vocational upper secondary schools. Nevertheless, it is believed that both English- and vocational teachers from such schools might recognize themselves in the views on teaching and learning that appear in these findings. Another issue regarding transferability is that the researcher will always influence the situation to a degree;

the fact that a researcher is present may affect the answers given by the informants – one could argue, to an extent, that absolute neutrality may perhaps never be achieved in a study.

4 Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the thesis, by presenting the informants' thoughts on the different themes. This lays the groundwork for the discussion in Chapter 5.

The presentation of the findings bases itself in the research questions presented in Section 1.2. Each research question has been assigned different categories. Research question one had the subcategories of: productive/receptive skills, 50/50 vocational/everyday English, the use and anticipation of use of English, and learning strategies. Research question two was categorized into proficiency in skills and relevance and *bildung*. The third research question had two subcategories, the first of which was organization and co-operation, while the second was vocationalization.

4.1 Specialized workers' view on proficiency in skills

There were four aspects that made up the skills that the specialized workers thought of when they reflected upon the skills they need in their working lives. These were: the difference in productive and receptive skills, the distribution in importance of vocational and everyday English, the difference in use and anticipation in usage of the language, and learning strategies.

4.1.1 Productive and receptive skills

The specialized workers unanimously stated that they had poor proficiency in productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing, but a high level of proficiency in receptive skills, i.e. listening and reading. The following quotations illustrate this:

> *"I am really good at writing and reading English, but I will admit that it is hard to speak English; to speak fluently is hard. I do understand people who speak English, and I am able to answer when spoken to." (TW)*

> *"It is difficult to speak. I can't find the words fast enough, I end up using hand-signals… It is difficult, since I don't have the same vocabulary in English as in Norwegian." (CW1)*

> *"I have had a lot more use of spoken English rather than written; we don't write too much English in this profession." (CW1)*

The teachers stated the importance of both productive- and receptive skills. Verbal skills are what they thought the workers would need in their everyday lives, and the written skills are what they needed for the examination:

> "I believe one of the ways of making them [the pupils] cope in everyday settings is moving away from the 'writing tyranny' that we impose on them, even though that is what is tangible and easy to assess. We should focus more on the verbal skills, on those informal settings where you use the language; it is often in these situations that they will use the language. It is unlikely that they will write a five-paragraph essay later, but they will encounter situations where they need to speak the language. But then again, we need something tangible, something written, to evaluate and grade them." (ET1)

> "Writing always appears as a task in the exam, so they [the pupils] have to be drilled in writing." (ET1)

> "Even though they struggle with the writing, they have good comprehension, they are capable of some speaking." (ET1)

> "We want them to write sentences, even though it is hard to get them going (…). For many of them, the writing process, reflecting on a specific problem, isn't for them; they are practical people." (ET3)

One factor that might illustrate the reason behind a productive/receptive problem is the following quote from one of the specialized workers:

> "The thing was that, whenever we had a class in English, we spoke Norwegian instead of English. A large portion of our classes went like that; we read English texts and discussed them in Norwegian." (MW)

4.1.2 50/50 importance of vocational/everyday English

The specialized workers stated that they not only needed vocational and technical English in their professions, they also needed everyday English:

> "I use both technical and everyday English. I need the technical English, but I have an extraordinary need for regular English as well." (CW2)

The teachers seemed to have a clear idea of what the future workers would come into contact with:

> *"We know that, during life, they will come into contact with people through work and in other places where they will need English. We know that there is more and more of this, but they don't see it. You might think that the need for vocational competence has increased, but actually it is the need for basic English, because we live in such a globalized world. So, to have knowledge, one thing is to understand the language, but you have to know other cultures, it is about the whole package. At the same time as we have to vocationalize more and more, the common-core subjects, the basic knowledge, the general competence needs a lot of space as well." (ET2)*

4.1.3 The use and anticipation of usage of the language

When the specialized workers started school, they had conflicting views of how much English they would use when they began working:

> *"I didn't expect English to be of any importance, but that didn't prove to be true." (CW1)*

> *"I knew there was a lot of foreign labour, but our teacher made sure that we spoke English the entire time; he was very conscientious about that." (CW2)*

> *"I had never been in a work-related situation where I had the need for English; it might be because of the fact that I had nothing to compare it to, and at the same time the teacher did not make it clear enough how important English is. Of course, we had grades to tell us how good we were, but it wasn't communicated 'this is what you need, you can expect this'." (MW)*

4.1.4 Learning strategies

One of the aspects of teaching and learning that both teachers and workers emphasized was the value of learning strategies; these were seen as a tool that could be used for the specialized workers when they started working. Many of the workers had used different strategies several times.

> *"If something is unclear to me, I just go looking for information. The teachers did a good job at this, they taught us where to go to understand something." (MW)*

"The most useful teaching was when they taught us where we needed to go to figure something out: 'This is where you have to go to find more knowledge and to understand what you might not have understood'. I think that's important; you can't learn everything in school, but this is where you go to figure it out." (MW)

This aligns with the teachers' thoughts on teaching the pupils learning strategies:

"I would like to say that, no matter what kind of programme you have chosen, it is up to you yourself how much you come into contact with English. Are you a person who likes to speak English? This has to do with young people's development; they don't think 'What did I do in the last English class?', they live in the present, they meet another person and serve the need that arises there and then. Studies have shown that pupils that weren't particularly good in verbal English suddenly had amazing skills in written English, because of gaming. So how much can school prepare them for their working life? It doesn't matter, it is the pupil's own will that controls it. The school can't do everything, but we do the best we can and hope that we are able to give them some strategies for solving problems." (ET3)

"All the vocational programmes have an enormous number of terms. To enable them to acquire knowledge of how to find a new term, we need to teach them not to stop when they encounter something difficult; we need to teach them strategies to break the codes. We need to give them competence in change, to acquire new things. We can't teach them everything, but giving them tools to acquire knowledge is what we can do." (VT2)

4.2 Teachers' view on proficiency in skills

There were several factors that seemed important for the teachers, regarding the competence they argued that the specialized workers would need. These were proficiency and the relevance of the teaching in both their working and daily lives.

4.2.1 Proficiency in skills

Both the vocational teachers and the English teachers stressed the point that businesses should be more transparent about what they require of the pupils when they finish their time in school:

"We have discussed that we should try to co-operate with the businesses, that the businesses should come in here and say something about the importance of English. It is English and the common-core subjects that they [the pupils] flunk in. They just say: 'I'm going to be a carpenter, I'm going to be a mechanic, why should I know social science, Norwegian and English? I don't need it'." (ET2)

"They aren't mature enough to see this, so we need help from the businesses, help to make the pupils see what the business requires of them when they are done here. None of us have asked what the business needs in regard to competence in English, and it is the businesses' point of view that we lack." (ET2)

"If you are going to write an offer to a customer, it can't be full of errors or be imprecise… if you don't do a good job, you will appear unprofessional, that's just the way it is." (VT3)

"But of course, English as a working language on work sites is something that has happened very fast during recent years, so they haven't got their heads round it yet." (ET2)

One of the teachers seemed to doubt the pupils' ability to understand the importance of the language, even though it is present in every aspect of their later working life:

"The Directorate for Education in Norway says that all Norwegian citizens need to be competent in communication in a world language. They will encounter customers who are English speakers, customers that use English as a lingua franca. (…) Especially in the vocational programmes and in the constructions firms, there is a lot of foreign labour. It is important that they know English, so they are not strangers to each other in the working teams but make a connection. But I doubt that our pupils understand that fact." (ET3)

The specialized worker, who, in addition to being a carpenter, also owned a business, said this about the skills needed in English required of their employees:

"It is absolutely crucial that those who work here know how to speak English; it is expected of them." (CW2)

"It wouldn't work without English, there is the same need for English in this small business as in the larger companies. Everyone needs the basic skills in English, that is for sure; they will encounter it one way or another." (CW2)

4.2.2 Relevance and *bildung*

The teachers also spoke of the *bildung* ideal, the fact that the teaching also needs to be educational, to be of relevance for the specialized workers.

"We find the relevance in the educational aspect; they gain language knowledge, learn to read, understand, read between the lines, different perspectives. We are educating the entire human being." (ET1)

"I think they need English educationally to exist in society but also to cope in their working life. The pupils say themselves that they use English on a daily basis because of the foreign labour. It is the lingua franca usage – you don't know each other's mother tongues but use English as a compromise. No matter what you do, whether it is in business, ordering stuff, on vacation or in your working life, it is also educational, they gain knowledge about other parts of the world, central parts of the world, and there are big parts of the world that are English-speaking. Maybe their English learning can open their eyes and expand their horizon; that is also an important perspective in the English classes." (ET1)

"It takes time for them to see the value of the cultural competence, the literary competence, but they'll experience that they need to use English in their daily life, the verbal part, and that they need to understand the language; I think they'll experience those things from day 1. But those things are maturational processes…" (ET1)

The specialized workers seemed to have understood the importance of English and how it might contribute to a cultivation of themselves.

"Some of the English might have prepared me for situations I may encounter later in life, situations outside the workplace." (MW)

4.3 Vocationalization

In regard to how the English teacher works together with the vocational teacher to make their teaching vocational, organizational and co-operational factors seemed to play the largest role in vocationalization.

4.3.1 Organization and co-operation

The recurring problem for most of the vocational teachers was the diversity in their programme; e.g., in the construction programme, they had to include several sub-programmes, such as plumbing, carpenting, furniture carpenting, etc. Time seemed to be the greatest obstacle, as this quote illustrates:

> *"In many ways the greatest amount of learning will happen in their apprenticeship, and hopefully they get the theory and HSE (Health, Safety, Environment), the basic stuff in school. They will gain the largest amount of their competence during their apprenticeship. There is no time in school: in the first year they have 24 different areas that should be covered; it would be a utopia to cover all of them." (VT3)*

Although time and organization were unanimously presented as an obstacle, organization seemed to be granted a lot of time and attention, as this quotation illustrates:

> *"The planning, periodic plans, where we put the vocational programme first and afterwards tailor the common-core subjects to fit the vocational programme, that is the overview we are missing; instead, we are running around now, chatting and planning. We should have thought this through at the start of the year; these years are basically the same, the same cycles – we do know when it is relevant to write an application, where it is relevant to put in those elements. It is a big task, and it requires a lot of time to think about the whole school year in such big themes." (ET2)*

Some of the teachers argued that the problem was not organization but the teachers' attitude towards change:

> *"To be completely honest, I believe that it is the teachers' attitude that is the problem. If we had set ourselves to change the way we plan our teaching, we could have enhanced the quality of the education we provide for the pupils." (ET1)*

There seemed to be a strong aspiration for co-operation between the vocational teachers and the English teachers, despite the organizational problems that were presented. The following quotations illustrate the wish for co-operation and some of the challenges:

> "I think we teachers need to set ourselves to some change. We also need some suitable forums where we can work with this on a continuum; a team meeting once a month is not enough: we need a daily meeting place." (ET1)

> "The thing we aren't quite so good at is working together to structure our teaching. It is one thing to talk about it but another to put it down on paper." (ET2)

> "I think we need to get better at knowing each other's subjects – What are the competence aims? What terms do they need to learn, Norwegian or English? – and then use them; we need an integration across English and the vocational programme." (ET1)

> "We haven't sat down and compared where it is natural to co-operate, so that is perhaps something we should have done." (ET1)

One teacher had a concrete example of how she planned the vocational parts in the teaching:

> "I make plans for one semester at a time, and I always include a section with vocational English, lasting for three or four weeks at a time." (ET4)

One group of teachers had ideas that involved changing the entire teaching schedule and the way of traditional teaching, as the following quotation illustrates:

> "I think we have a lot of opportunities to develop the ideas that we have. (…) Then we can get even more vocationalization. But I think we have to reconsider the way in which we teach; we need to stop the 'classroom teaching' and replace it with 'workshop teaching', for the whole day possibly. Then, if the pupils had a mathematical problem, they could ask the maths teacher. I think we could gain from such a model, put on the protective clothing and give them some 'hidden' teaching." (VT1)

The specialized workers commented on what they had seen in regard to organization and co-operation. The following quotation shows one worker's thoughts on learning inside versus outside the classroom:

"I liked the practical things better than sitting in the classroom. It might have worked better for the English teaching to teach outside the classroom…. I believe it would, especially according to the vocational English, because those pupils that are there, they need it, they don't understand everything that's written down, and then you have to show them what the f**k a door is, how to construct a wall, and it would perhaps work better, if all the teachers had worked like that. You don't have to sit inside the classroom to learn, simple as that." (CW1)

The workers also claimed that the co-operation between the teachers had not been visible through their teaching, as the following establishes:

"The vocational teaching was the vocational teachers' responsibility, and the teaching in English was the English teachers' responsibility, there was a material distinction between the subjects." (MW)

"We had maybe one or two projects that were both vocational and English at the same time, but…there was no direct co-operation, the teachers could not be in the same class at the same time, it might have been because of the lack of time." (MW)

"The teacher did not care as much as he perhaps should have. He thought we were there to pass the time." (MW)

"Why we did certain things wasn't communicated at all. I don't think the teachers co-operated at all. I don't think those teachers were the best we could have had." (TW)

4.3.2 Vocationalization

As regards their vocational approaches to their teaching, the teachers worked in different ways; the reoccurring challenge for the teachers seemed to be the examination set by the Directorate for Education. The following illustrate the two ways English teachers reason about their teaching:

"I have made myself at home. I think I have worked at this vocational programme for years, and I can't work here without vocationalizing my teaching. I have spent more time at making the teaching of English vocational than the curriculum says, and a lot of times I feel guilty, and I'm nervous every time the exam is nearby. This is because I cannot have an oral exam without putting a lot of weight on the vocational topics where they might have to talk about HMS." (ET2)

"English has a special role in all this since it is a central given exam. A lot of the teachers' experience is that they can't vocationalize too much because English is a language they [the pupils] have had in school since first grade, so the exam has high standards. The vocational English isn't put into the system; it is often placed at the end of the school year, if we have the time." (ET1)

Two of the teachers had a concrete example of how they had integrated the two subjects to teach the pupils in vocational English:

"(VT4) came to me with a proposition to produce a manual for the tyre-changing machine. He had it in English, and we were going to translate it into Norwegian, but when we sat down with the textbook it turned into nonsense, so we decided to hit the workshop. (VT4) was going to demonstrate it, then I was going to write down the steps: first in Norwegian, then in English. After the pupils had translated this, we went together into the workshop and I demonstrated and presented the process both in English and Norwegian for the students. So, this is something we have worked with for four weeks." (ET4)

One of the vocational teachers stated that it was important to use English when he was teaching his students in the vocational programme:

"It is good that the English teachers vocationalize their teaching, but it is important for me to utilize my classes in the vocational subject to use English; the nice thing is that the pupils don't think they have 'English'." (VT4)

The specialized workers had experienced different levels of vocational English in upper secondary school:

"Well, yeah… we had some, we had some glossary tests and such: 'what is avbiter *and what is* elektriker*?' and such. That was pretty much it; the vocational English, at least in my programme, was bad." (TW)*

"We didn't have too much vocational English in the construction programme; there could have been more of that, I struggle knowing things in English, tools and such, I know that snekker *is carpenter, but not much more than that." (CW1)*

"It isn't like my teacher could have anticipated that I would come to work in the company I work for, but as long as you get general English about a wide topic, a wide vocational topic…if only we had more of that it would have been easier for me to use English in my daily life." (TW)

4.4 Summary of findings

The subcategories from the first research question showed that the specialized workers deemed themselves to have poor proficiency in productive skills but a high level of proficiency in receptive skills. They were able to understand English whenever they were listening or reading the language but, as soon as they encountered a situation where they themselves needed to either speak in a conversation or write sentences, they felt insecure. The teachers paid attention to both the productive and receptive skills they taught, but they also communicated a need to move away from what they described as the writing tyranny and to focus more on verbal skills, as this is what they thought the pupils would encounter later in life.

The workers had an extraordinary need for everyday English, i.e. non-vocational, communicative English. The required use of the language seemed to be distributed 50/50 between technical English and everyday communicative English. The teachers agreed on this specific point; they stressed the fact that the need for communicative English was increasing in parallel with the need for vocational English.

When the specialized workers had started their education in upper secondary school, they had anticipated English playing a minor role in their future profession. According to their interviews, this had proved to be wrong. They use the language on a daily and weekly basis.

One of the opinions that both teachers and workers agreed upon was the importance of learning strategies. The teachers came down differently on the importance of vocational English, but they all agreed that the most important thing was to teach good strategies for learning. This was in agreement with the pupils, who had been using different learning strategies to solve problems in their profession.

The teachers emphasized the need for proficiency in different skills in both business and daily life. Many of the teachers wanted the businesses in which the workers would work to co-operate closely with the school. They also stressed the importance of the *bildung* ideal that

they based much of their teaching on. They thought the pupils would not understand the value of this immediately but, through a maturational process, it would become clear.

The vocational teaching was strongly affected by two factors, according to the teachers: organization and co-operation. Time was a factor mentioned several times, and, together with the organization of the timetable and the physical workspace, it seemed to be the largest obstacle to vocational teaching. Some of the teachers recognized that the problem with co-operation and organization was due to a negative attitude towards change. Several examples of vocationalization were presented by the teachers, and integration across the vocational programme and English seemed to be given great attention. The specialized workers had experienced little or no vocational teaching in English and had experienced little or no co-operation between the teachers they had in school.

To tie the findings together with the research questions; these are presented in the following table.

Table 1 Summary of findings

Research questions	Informant narrative	Main findings
In which skills does the specialized worker think s/he needs to be proficient, in regard to his/her working life?	*"I use both technical and 'regular' English; I need technical English, but I have an extraordinary need for 'regular' English as well." (CW2)* *"It is difficult to speak. I can't find the words fast enough; I end up using hand-signals…It is difficult since I don't have the same lexicon in English as in Norwegian." (CW1)*	The workers had anticipated little use of English in their working life; this was proved wrong. The workers needed daily-life communicative English as much, or even more than, vocational English. They had different levels of proficiency regarding productive/receptive skills, having greater proficiency in the receptive skills.

		Of what they learned in school, learning strategies have proved to be the most helpful.
What skills do the teachers think that the specialized worker needs in his/her working life?	*"If you are going to write an offer to a customer, it can't be full of errors or be imprecise… if you don't do a good job, you will appear unprofessional; that's just the way it is." (VT3)* *"We find the relevance in the educational aspect; they gain language knowledge, learn to read, understand, read between the lines, different perspectives. We are educating the entire human being." (ET1)*	The teachers agreed with the pupils about the importance of learning strategies. The teachers promoted teaching that helped the pupils gain proficiency in a wide skill set that would enable them to be both good workers and citizens.
How do the English-teacher and the vocational teacher co-operate to vocationalize?	*"(VT4) came to me with a proposition to produce a manual for the tyre-changing machine. He had it in English, and we were going to translate it into Norwegian (…)."* *"To be completely honest, I believe that it is the teachers' attitude that is the problem. If we had set ourselves to change the way we plan our teaching, we could have enhanced the quality of the education we provide for the pupils." (ET1)*	The vocational teachers and teachers in English carried out several projects that integrated both vocational and common core subjects. The teachers discussed problems concerning the organization of teaching because of timetables, curriculums and physical workspace, but they also displayed a negative attitude towards change.

5 Discussion

Based on the research questions and findings from the informants, it has been decided to divide the discussion into two main areas: learning and teaching.

These two areas are what we describe as the education and training the pupils encounter. Presenting these two individually will contribute to the discussion of relevance for the worker in his or her profession and daily life, especially because of their mutual dependency. Together they will attempt to answer the thesis, repeated below:

"*How do teachers and specialized workers evaluate the teaching and learning in the school subject, English, through upper secondary school, and what is the relevance of English in the workers' professions?*"

5.1 Learning – from the workers' perspective

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue for situated learning, where learning happens through participation in social practice. The pupils are not recipients of knowledge, but they gain it through interaction with others. Learning happens through interaction and experimentation, and this aligns with the pragmatic perspective on learning. Sociocultural learning theory also states that learning is enabled through communication and interaction with others (Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007; Vygotskij & Kozulin, 1986). These views on learning contribute to both language learning and learning teaching, where one needs to be exposed to the language to enable learning and use the language together with others to enhance the process.

The first research question in this study was meant to illustrate the workers' view of the phenomenon, from a learners' perspective, and to answer the question about what skills the specialized worker believes s/he needs proficiency in.

When the specialized workers talked about what English they had met in their working life, they had not anticipated that English would play such an important role. They also stated that there was a large difference in their proficiency in receptive and productive skills. None of them had any problems comprehending speech or writing, but they had difficulties when they had to produce either speech or writing. The teachers also focused on the issue of productive

and receptive skills, and they emphasized the need for proficiency in verbal skills. The workers also had an extraordinary use for everyday English, some of them even stated that everyday English had a more prominent role in their lives than vocational English. The teachers also stressed the need for communicative English. The specialized workers all agreed that they had anticipated English would play a minor role in their working life, but they had been proved wrong.

The specialized workers need teaching that enables training to gain proficiency in productive and receptive skills. Writing is something they are less proficient in but also have less use for, according to them. It could be that they do not see the value of being proficient subject writers. This was something the vocational teachers stressed: they need proficiency in the writing that happens in their professional practice, in both Norwegian and English. The citizen-writer role seemed to be regarded as being of less value to the specialized workers. The challenge to separate these is to learn the role language, affected by discourse, as stated by Trine Gedde-Dahl in (Lund, 2014).

Speaking was almost unanimously a problem for all the specialized workers. This issue may have a solution, according to Chomsky in (Slabakova, 2016), termed "linguistic input and exposure". Creating an English-speaking classroom might contribute to the use of the language. Bjørke et al. (2014) argue for a classroom where the language is present at all times. It is the author's contention that it is the teacher's responsibility to construct such a language environment: one in which language is present at all times. The author suggests that the specialized workers had not experienced this kind of language environment during their English learning in school, and it had prevented them from becoming as proficient in the productive skills as they had the groundwork to become. The pupils need proficiency in authentic English, and this requires an environment that favours both language learning and language teaching. This kind of environment is made by working systematically with learning, a strong focus on the pupils' own effort, and systematic work with teaching (Bjørke et al., 2014). Through the interviews, the teachers seemed to have a greater focus on teaching than learning and showed a tendency to focus on circumstantial factors. They mentioned that they used Norwegian, because it seemed like the easiest method of teaching. This is also supported by the study's findings, in which the specialized workers stated that they had used Norwegian when communicating in their classes in English. This also traces back to learning strategies; many situations in the English classroom enable use of the language, but the pupils either do not seize the chance or are not given the chance to use the language. If they are

reluctant to use the language in school, they might be acquiring avoidance strategies to use later in their working lives. Building a language-learning environment might be difficult due to the amount of in-class time the teacher has with his or her vocational class. In general studies programmes, the pupils have 140 hours of English distributed over their first year. In the vocational programmes, English is distributed over two years, with 84 hours in the first year, and 56 hours in their second and final year (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). This leads to a timetable in which the teachers might spend as little as two hours in class per week and leaves little time for building a safe environment for language learning.

Proficiency in productive and receptive skills is also a part of communicative competence. Hymes in (Holmes & Pride, 1972) discusses the term 'communicative competence'. He states that one could judge communicative competence in two ways: "of grammaticality, with respect to competence, and of acceptability, with respect to performance" (Holmes & Pride, 1972). Communicative competence is something the specialized workers have had great use for in their professional practice and it is also the thing they had little training in, in school settings. Hymes also labels competence as dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use. From this, it can be argued that communicative competence is dependent on the knowledge the pupils have in phonetics, intonation, prosody, morphology, syntax and semantics, and, in addition, pragmatics and sociolinguistic competence. This knowledge is dependent on the ability for use; i.e. Hymes (Holmes & Pride, 1972) contends that you might have knowledge of all these grammatical factors, but if your ability for use (production) has a low level of proficiency, your communicative competence will be of poor proficiency. One could argue, however, that, as long as the specialized workers make themselves understood by the recipient, that is sufficient in regard to proficiency; yet it might prove insufficient for the HSE at the worksite.

The anticipation of how much English the specialized workers would meet in their working life was proved wrong, according to them. They had encountered more situations that required English than they had anticipated. This aligned with what the teachers stated about how little the school knew about the needs of business. It seemed to me that the co-operation between school and businesses could be improved. This might be difficult, since the main focus for the businesses is proficiency in the vocational skills and not proficiency in English. The Directorate for Labour Inspection in Norway states that increased work migration has led to a vast diversity in language and cultures at the construction sites, and the production sector in Norway has started to view language and communication as a security risk

(Arbeidstilsynet, 2014). Based on this, we can see that businesses with a strong focus on HSE need to either a) teach the foreign workers Norwegian or b) use English as a lingua franca. From a long-term perspective, alternative a) might be the most prosperous one, especially for the sake of the integration of workers. However, alternative b) is more practical, since English works as a lingua franca and most migrant workers often go back to their home country after some time. This notion of a target language (lingua franca), like English, to use in multilingual settings is not uncommon, according to Kraft (2017). Through her research on the multilingual work sites in Norway, she has found that workers use what we may call hybrid language, shifting between Norwegian and English. The hybrid language might be a result of the lack of proficiency in productive skills, which might lead to a security risk, which this study's informants also spoke of. The participants were well acquainted with using such a hybrid language that Kraft (2017) discusses and thought it worked well in the workplace.

To illustrate the discussion of proficiency in productive skills from the teachers' perspective, the model of levels of analysis is included. The reason for this is to emphasize that, in vocational programmes, there is always that extra level to take into consideration when facilitating learning. It appeared that some of the teachers saw the problem, instead of the opportunity, in making their teaching enable learning for the vocational pupils.
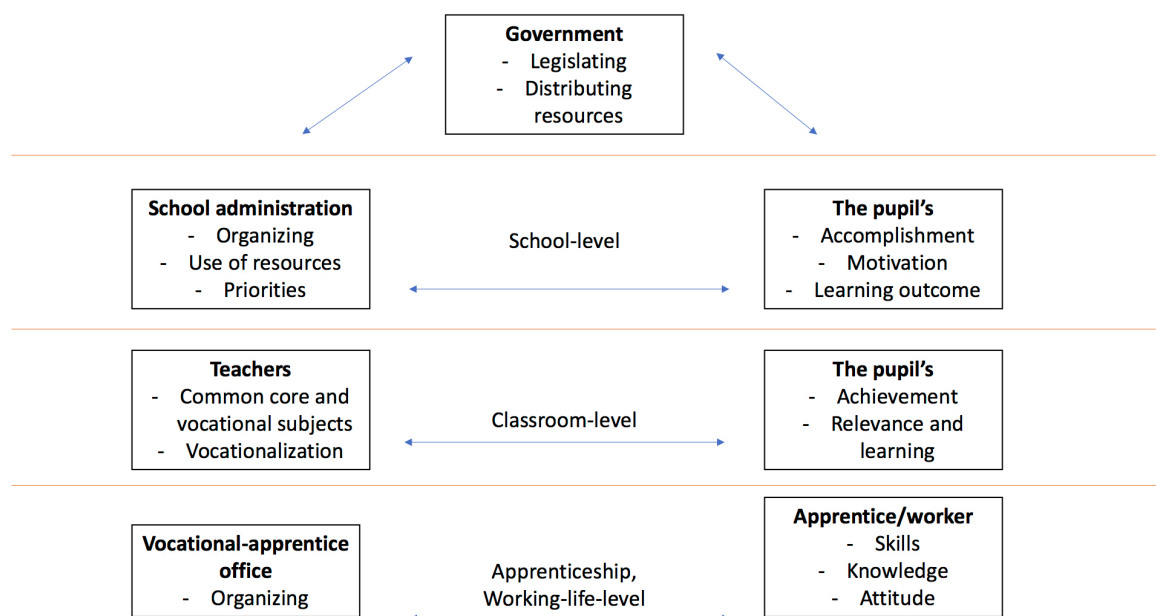

Figure 1 Level of analysis, inspired by Coleman (1990) and TFOU (Iversen et al., 2014)

Based on the model, the extra level that needs to be considered by both teachers and learners becomes clear. The working life/apprenticeship level is present and is something the pupils need to be prepared for. There is an impression that this preparation is seen as an obstacle to teaching, because the teacher does not have the required knowledge of the trade and views it as difficult to adapt their teaching for the different trades and situations. Seen from the teachers' point of view, organizing teaching in different vocational programmes, with their diversity, might be a difficult task, but, nevertheless, it is an important one. Taking into consideration the need the specialized workers had for everyday English, the teachers do not need to vocationalize at the expense of everyday English. Yet, in preparing pupils for the apprenticeship and working-life level, the teachers could benefit from using practical examples or activities for the pupils, enabling them to see the relevance of what they are doing. One teacher stated that they needed to move away from the writing tyranny; but moving away from something means moving towards something else. In other words, some of the teachers saw that they needed to stop the "writing tyranny" but did not present an alternative way of teaching that the pupils could benefit from. A didactical recommendation, based on sociocultural-learning theory and a pragmatic perspective, could be to construct settings in which the pupils may be presented with a vocational task, using English as the key language to complete it.

Another way to emphasize relevance could be by introducing exchange models, with the pupils starting directly in the apprenticeship situation and alternating between the workplace and school. Høst et al. (2015) published two reports on these exchange models, and several factors became evident. Firstly, the exchange attempts gave schools greater control of the learning process when the pupils were out in the businesses. Secondly, they saw that organization was difficult. For places where exchange was a natural solution to a problem, the vocational programmes were motivated to solve practical problems with exchange, but in those programmes where exchange was a more random project, it met resistance. One of the consequences they saw as a side effect of the exchange model was that some pupils did not manage too well. The requirements differed; pupils met a grown-up work environment and needed to adapt to a grown-up worksite with special rules and norms. Not all pupils are mature enough for this (Høst et al., 2015). In most cases where the exchange model was tested, it became evident that the criteria directed towards functioning in an adult working environment were hard for the pupils to cope with. The exchange model can be seen as an attempt to ease the process of transferring knowledge from the classroom to working life

situations. The pupils become well acquainted with the working-life setting they will enter after four years in an exchange-model-based school.

One surprising and interesting find was the specialized workers' need for learning strategies. They stated that the most useful thing they had experienced in school was how to solve problems when there was no blueprint. Eraut (2004) presents transfer of knowledge from the classroom to working life as one of the most important learning strategies. Based on the transfer, the author claims that, if the pupils are unacquainted with how they are to transfer knowledge and skills from school situations into working-life situations, the quality of their work might worsen. Thus, if one of the elements in the teaching has been a focus on the productive skills, e.g. writing, and the pupil encounters a situation where s/he needs to use the written language, a lack of ability to transfer his or her writing skills from his/her education to the working life situation might lead to a failure to produce the written text required of the pupil. One way of making the pupil understand the transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the working-life situation might be to introduce an exchange model, as mentioned above. For some teachers, this might provide a solution to the problems with the schedule and might free the schools from spending their entire budget on expensive machinery.

Bunting (2014) states that it is important to make the learners aware of their own strategy for learning and problem solving. Learning strategies presents an important perspective about professional practice. Although the study's informants had completed their apprenticeship, they emphasized that they had not finished their training. They will meet new challenges they have yet to encounter, and they need strategies to enable them to solve tasks where there is no blueprint.

The first research question asked what skills the specialized worker thinks s/he needs proficiency in, regarding his/her working life. Through the study, it became clear that the workers placed equal importance on the need for vocational English and everyday English. This leads to some implications for the didactical choices the teachers make, the most important one being that the English teachers do not need to vocationalize their teaching at all costs, as everyday English is of great importance in the workers' professions. It also became clear that the specialized workers deemed their proficiency in productive skills to differ from that in receptive skills. The productive skills, especially speaking, were emphasized as something they needed proficiency in. Training in speaking requires a classroom culture in which the language is present at all times. The findings in this study indicate that attention

needs to be given to the productive skills in English for vocational pupils, especially proficiency in speaking skills. Together, these constitute communicative competence, which is of paramount importance for ensuring both service and security in the workplace. One surprising find was that the specialized workers said that learning strategies were something they had found great use for in their professional practice. This was interesting because it suggested that the informants seemed to be self-regulated and had good metacognition: they were able to monitor their own learning and problem solving, both of which suggest a high level of proficiency in the ability to acquire skills and knowledge.

5.2 Teaching – from the teachers' perspective

The following sections will discuss what skills the interviewed teachers stated that the specialized workers need in their working lives, and how they co-operate and organize to vocationalize their teaching, so that it enables learning.

One unexpected aspect that became clear through the analysis of the findings was that the teachers focused more on teaching and less on learning. It seemed that they only talked about how they co-operated about the teaching, how they vocationalized their teaching and how circumstantial factors either enabled or prevented their teaching, i.e. they mentioned little about learning and how to best facilitate it for the learner. This is an interesting find that presumably could have appeared for two reasons. Firstly, it could be debated that, whenever we discuss teaching, we also implicitly discuss learning, since they are mutually dependent. Then again, learning may also happen without a teacher or instructor present, but there must be a situation that enables learning potential. Another aspect that needs to be highlighted is that English makes the distinction between teaching, i.e. the didactics the teacher uses to influence his or her teaching methods, and learning, i.e. the process that takes place in the pupil. This distinction is not as clearcut in Norwegian, in which, whenever these terms are discussed, they are often both included in the term '*undervisning*'. Learning, however, is something other than *undervisning*. The lack of a clear distinction between the two in the Norwegian education system might result in the organization of teaching more from the perspective of the teacher and less from the perspective of the learner.

The overarching goal of the education system is to educate the population. Through this process, the pupils are to gain proficiency in skills as they undergo a self-cultivation process. This process of self-cultivation is labelled *bildung* by the German school. Ulvik and Sæverot (2013) established three areas in which the pupils need training and proficiency: qualifying

for a profession, socializing, and building an identity. These target areas can be said to be covered by the curriculum that states what competence aims the pupils need to achieve. The Directorate for Education in Norway has determined that pupils need to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, to master the challenges of life and participate in both working- and social life. These three terms: knowledge, skills and attitudes are what constitute competence (Bjørke et al., 2014).

The second research question: "What skills does the teacher think that the specialized worker needs in his/her working life?", was meant to illustrate the teaching perspective that the teacher is responsible for. By looking for the skills that the teacher thinks the specialized worker needs in his working life, it was possible to grasp how the teachers focus their teaching, to enable learning.

One of the findings revealed that teachers tried to satisfy both business and societal needs when planning their teaching. They focused on what the pupils would meet in their working lives but also on what they would meet in regard to societal demands. One of the needs emphasized by most of the teachers was a better understanding of what skills the businesses needed. The teachers also focused on the importance of learning strategies, in accordance with needs communicated by the pupils, who had made use of learning strategies in their professions.

The teachers had a strong focus on developing societal skills, and they sought proficiency in the productive skills. However, they focused more on the written than the verbal skills; this became clear through what one of the teacher labelled as the "writing tyranny" they put their pupils under. They wished to place greater emphasis on the communicative skills but stated that the centrally set examination only tested the pupils' written skills. Another problem presented was the pupils' lack of proficiency in written skills when they started upper secondary school, meaning that this problem had roots back in the earlier parts of their education. This problem may be a result of the fact that gaining proficiency in the productive skills is quite a task, because what characterizes proficiency in the productive skills? According to Bjørke and Grønn (2014b), pupils need substantial linguistic proficiency to effectively adapt a message. The pupil needs training in phonetics, intonation, prosody, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics; aptitude in all these areas is required to be proficient in the productive skills. Both English teachers and vocational teachers also pointed towards a shift in the knowledge pupils enter upper secondary school with. They asserted that

some pupils do not even know what the tools they use in the vocational programmes are named in Norwegian, so it is even harder than before to learn the names in English. They pointed towards a historical shift: previously, pupils entered vocational programmes with a wider background knowledge than they have today.

One interesting find was the teachers' focus on the role the school subject, English, plays in regard to the *bildung* ideal. Some of the English teachers emphasized that the role that the school subject, English, plays in educating the human being is more important than its role in educating pupils for different occupations. They also stated that this was something the pupils were not mature enough to understand at this point but something they would understand the value of later in life.

According to the teachers, the vocational teaching was strongly affected by two factors: organization and co-operation. Time was a factor mentioned several times, and, together with the organization of the timetable and the physical workspace, it seemed to be the largest obstacle to vocational teaching. Some of the teachers recognized the problems associated with co-operation and organization to be due to a negative attitude towards change. Several examples of vocationalization were presented by the teachers. Integration across the vocational programme and English seemed to be given great attention. The specialized workers had experienced little or no vocational teaching in English and little or no co-operation between the teachers in the schools they had attended. None of the specialized workers had attended the school presented in this study, which might indicate that the vocational school in this study has a greater focus on vocationalization than that of other schools.

One interesting find was the difference in the "demonstration of vocational relevance" and the "integration of English with the vocational programme". This difference was emphasized by the study from Trøndelag Forskning & Utvikling (TFOU, 2014), and interdisciplinary integration between English and the vocational programmes is favoured, as it seems to be most efficient in regard to students' motivation and learning outcome. When informants in this study spoke of co-operation and vocationalization, some mentioned the need for a quite radical change to how they organize their teaching. They wanted to share workspace with those teachers they worked together with in teams and break up the timetable so that there would be no clear distinction between "English", "Social Science" or "Programming". This supports the finding that this particular school seemed to work differently and with a different

attitude towards vocationalization than the schools at which the specialized workers were former pupils.

According to Utdanningsdirektoratet (2015), there are four central elements that enable vocationalization, two of which are dependent on the school administration. The first is organizational development. A culture for co-operation and collective learning needs to be established through the entire organization. This aligns with the wish of many of the teachers that the school should work with the circumstantial elements to enable teaching that enhances the vocational presence in the English classroom. The second element is also dependent on the administration. Utdanningsdirektoratet (2015) states that there needs to be a strong focus on developing the interdisciplinary competence of all teachers. It was the teachers' impression that the school administration had not emphasized this. The last two elements to enable vocationalization, according to UDIR, are highly dependent on the teachers and their ability to co-operate and work in the collective school culture. These are: developing a culture for sharing, and producing teaching resources that enable learning for the vocational pupil. These were all elements mentioned in the interviews, and the teachers seemed to have started the process of developing these elements. In the author's opinion, there is much work to be done, by both the administration and the teachers. It was noted that, while some of the teachers seemed reluctant to work with vocationalization, others co-operated closely with each other. This assertion aligns with the results from TFOU (2014) study, in which 52.6 percent stated that the common-core subjects should be concerned with analytical skills, education and cultural heritage, while the remaining 53.9 percent stated that the role was to strengthen the vocational competence achieved by the pupils. One interesting find, which needs further commitment from the schools, is the missing voice from industry and businesses. Some of the English teachers were frustrated that they were teaching pupils skills that the curriculum stated they needed, rather than skills that the business required of them.

The findings revealed a division in the teachers' ability to co-operate with each other. Johnson & Johnson in (Aakervik et al., 2006) state that the teachers need to work together for the pupil to succeed. Johnson & Johnson assert that the co-operative school has a teaching staff organized in teams. Some examples of co-operation were found: especially one case, in which the English teacher and the vocational teacher on the vehicle programme had carried out an interdisciplinary project with the pupils. In this particular case, their departmental manager had encouraged them to use spare time to complete the project. The author argues that this is a good example of how co-operation between administration, English- and vocational teachers

leads to a beneficial learning situation, in which the pupil's learning outcome might contribute to his/her vocational and language knowledge.

This particular project presents an important view of vocationalization and relevance, especially when discussed from a situated-learning perspective. When these two teachers co-operated in their teaching, they went out in the workshop and changed tyres on the tyre-changing machine. By carrying out the project in English, they were simulating a real-life situation, in which the pupil had to explain how s/he went about completing this task in English. In carrying out this operation in English inside the workshop, it was hard for the pupils to question the relevance, as they could transfer this knowledge directly to a situation they knew they would encounter in later working life. This is a good example of transfer of knowledge from classroom to working life, where the cultural gap that Eraut (2004) asserts has been minimized, by using simulation as a didactical tool.

Examples of poor co-operation were also found, and these challenges seemed to align with those of Martinsen et al. (2014) study, in which six factors that hindered vocationalization were presented. They argue that interdisciplinary co-operation is difficult because there are too many people and trades to relate to, leading to a lack of time and ability to vocationalize the teaching. Another finding and factor that requires attention is that a few English teachers said they felt guilty when they vocationalized their teaching. This feeling was based on what they saw as a betrayal of what the curriculum focuses on. The curriculum for the vocational programmes is the same as for those who have chosen general studies, with six additional competence aims directed at vocational practice. They felt that they were doing the pupils a disservice if they vocationalized their teaching, because the examination at the end of the year is set by UDIR and focuses on skills other than the vocational.

The findings concerning co-operation agreed with what Trøndelag Forskning & Utvikling (TFOU) found when they mapped the pupils' experience of co-operation between the vocational- and English teachers. Thirty-eight percent of the pupils stated that they never experienced either the common-core teacher participate in the vocational classes or the vocational teacher participate in the common-core classes. Only 9.2 percent of the pupils stated that both teachers were always present in both classes (TFOU, 2014). In this study's findings, the specialized workers had seen no sign of co-operation between the teachers, aside from one or two projects over the course of a week or two. These participants had not completed their programmes at the same vocational school where this study was conducted.

This might suggest that the vocational school where teachers were interviewed for this study had a stronger focus on interdisciplinary work than the school the specialized workers had attended. The current study's findings indicated that co-operation and vocationalization were difficult because of organization, timetables and the centrally set examination; this is in agreement with other studies performed on challenges facing vocationalization (Borojevic, 2016; Hegna, 2012; Iversen et al., 2014; Martinsen et al., 2014). Vocationalization occupies little space in the curriculum; of the 24 competence aims that the teachers work with over the two years, six are related to the vocational practice (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). A side note should be that many of the teachers had set their minds on co-operation and experienced success in the classes where they co-operated across disciplines.

6 Conclusion

Through the interviews with both teachers and specialized workers, the findings indicated some alignment in how the teachers and specialized workers evaluated the teaching and learning. The study suggested both differences and agreement in how teachers and specialized workers evaluated productive/receptive skills, the importance of English, the use and anticipation of use of the language in working life, learning strategies, proficiency, and, lastly, the organization-, co-operation- and vocationalization of the teaching.

The thesis for this study was as follows:

"*How do teachers and specialized workers evaluate the teaching and learning in the school subject, English, through upper secondary school, and what is the relevance of English in the workers' professions?*"

The thesis created the groundwork for three research questions that have been paramount in this study.

1. *In which skills does the specialized worker think s/he needs to be proficient, in regard to his/her working life?*
2. *What skills do the teachers think that the specialized worker needs in his/her working life?*
3. *How do the English teacher and the vocational teacher co-operate to vocationalize?*

The aim of this master thesis has been to study what skills the pupils have had use for after finishing upper secondary school and whether these skills correspond with the education they received. In this context, it has been useful to illustrate the perspectives from both the specialized workers and the teachers, to acquire a holistic view of the phenomenon.

My research has shown that the specialized workers considered themselves proficient in receptive skills but lacking proficiency in productive skills, especially speaking skills. They also asserted that they had as much use for everyday English as they had for vocational English. The teachers stated that they would like a stronger focus on speaking skills, but written skills are what the centrally set examination tests. Circumstantial factors, such as in-class time, the curriculum and a centrally set examination, were used to explain why written skills are granted more attention. The teachers stated that they felt they were doing their pupils a disservice if they focused too much on vocationalization, especially because of the centrally set examination. The specialized workers emphasized the need for strategies to solve tasks and problems in situations where there is no blueprint. To enable the pupils to later solve such tasks in English, the teachers need to focus on learning strategies. The study has also shown that the teachers emphasized the importance of proficiency in societal skills and viewed English as a tool for a better understanding of this. The teachers also focused on vocationalization, co-operation and relevance, but some were hindered by organizational factors such as timetables, office arrangements, lack of knowledge of the trades and difficulties in co-operation.

The teachers and specialized workers evaluated the teaching and learning in the school subject, English, as having some agreement, in regard to what the specialized worker encounters in his/her working life. They found relevance in learning strategies, everyday English, and vocationalization, and the specialized workers stated a need for more training in the productive skills. The findings suggest that the teachers should focus more on didactics, vocationalization and language learning. Vocational and everyday English could be incorporated in both vocational- and English classes. This could be done by creating scenarios in which the pupils imitate, impersonate or simulate situations that they will encounter in their profession, preferably through interdisciplinary work with the vocational teacher. By choosing such a didactic method, the relevance will become obvious to the pupils, perhaps leading to greater motivation towards the English subject.

The research carried out in this master thesis is in the sphere of what the pupil perceives as needs: firstly, in his or her situation as a pupil and, later, in his or her professional practice. This perception of what skills are important varied considerably in both the teachers and the pupils. These are essentially the boundaries the teachers work within and also what has made this research so complex.

7 Further research

This study has contributed to highlighting what specialized workers who have completed a vocational education and training programme view as important skills in their professional practice. It has also included the perspective of teachers from both vocational programmes and English. It is anticipated that there is one additional perspective, which will require greater focus in the future. This study has shown that there needs to be agreement between three areas: the skills the specialized worker thinks s/he needs, the skills the teacher believes the specialized worker needs and, finally, the skills the employer requires of the specialized worker, in regard to proficiency in English.

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Appendix 1

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet;

"Investigating the compatability between education in English and the needs of Vocational Education and Training pupils in their working lives."

"Studie av samsvar mellom undervisning i fellesfaget engelsk på vg1 og vg2 yrkesfag og behovet yrkesfaglige elever har i arbeidslivet."

Bakgrunn og formål

Formålet med studien er å undersøke om det finnes samsvar i engelskundervisning gitt av skolen, og det fagarbeider møter ute i arbeidsliv (elever som har fullført vg1 & vg2 yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram).

Utvalget er valgt ut fra en yrkesfaglig videregående i Troms fylke. Utvalget er forespurt på bakgrunn av deres arbeid som engelsklærer og/eller yrkesfaglærer på yrkesfaglig skole. Utvalget av fagarbeider er forespurt på bakgrunn av deres status som fagarbeider i arbeidslivet.

Prosjektet er i utgangspunktet en mastergradsstudie som gjennomføres ved Universitetet i Tromsø, Norges Arktiske Universitet. Instituttet tilknyttet er HSL; Institutt for Humaniora, Samfunnsvitenskap og Lærerutdanning. Prosjektet vil kunne utvides.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltakelsen i studien krever 1 til 2 intervjuer. Disse vil ha en varighet på cirka 1 time, avhengig av hvor mye deltaker ønsker å svare. Det hentes ingen opplysninger om deltageren annet enn kontaktinformasjon, alder og kjønn. Svarene man gir på spørsmålene i intervjuet vil bli tatt opp ved lydopptak.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?
Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er kun prosjektgruppen som vil ha tilgang til dette (student og veiledere). Personopplysninger lagres konfidensielt, og vil makuleres ved studiens slutt. Deltakerne svar vil anonymiseres.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes senest mai 2020. Alt av personopplysninger og lydopptak slettes/makuleres.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Simon Berg Isaksen, 92890086 (student), hovedveileder Annelise Brox Larsen, 7764443, eller biveileder Clas Dale, 77646762.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.   1

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2

Intervjuguide – lærere

Under følger spørsmålsformuleringer til informantene knyttet til masterstudien jeg gjennomfører. Spørsmålene er lagt som rammeverk, og en løs struktur vil prege intervjusituasjonen for å kunne forfølge interessante temaer som måtte dukke opp.

FOKUSGRUPPEINTERVJUER MED ENGELSK- OG PROGRAMFAG-LÆRERE.

I – Generelt

- Kort: Hvor lenge har dere jobbet ved yrkesfaglig skole?
- Hvor godt kjenner dere til yrket elevene skal ut i?
- Hvor godt kjenner dere til FYR-prosjektet?

II – Relevans, yrkesretting og samarbeid.

- Hvorfor mener dere engelsk er viktig for elever på yrkesfag?
- Hvor godt kjenner dere til kompetansemåla i læreplan til deres respektive fag/og hverandres?
- Hva legger dere i relevans-begrepet i FYR?
- Hvor viktig er det å tenke på å møte arbeidslivets kompetansekrav og sikre mulighet til høyere utdanning når dere skal forberede læreplan og undervisningsopplegg?
- Hvor mye tid bruker dere til å planlegge undervisning sammen?
- Hvordan tilrettelegges det for samarbeid mellom fellesfag og programfag?
- Hvordan setter dere elevene i stand for det de møter i arbeidslivet?
- Hvordan jobber dere med integrering av engelsk i yrkesfaget?

III – Undervisningskontekst/arbeidslivskontekst

- I læreplanen for engelsk finner vi hele 6 kompetansemål som bruker ordene "knyttet til eget utdanningsprogram". Hvordan jobber (dere sammen) med disse i klassene dere har på yrkesfaglige utdanningsprogram?

- På hvordan måte er undervisningen som gis til elever på YF relevant for elevens fremtidige arbeids- og hverdagsliv?

- Hvordan forhold tror dere elevene har til yrkesretting og relevans?

- Hvordan forhold tror dere elevene har til læreplanene i både engelsk og programfaget?

- Hvordan synes dere FYR-prosjektet fungerer opp mot læreplanverket? Hvorfor tror dere det er sånn? Påstand - læreplanen sier lite om yrkesretting, og eksamen er sentralt gitt, mens FYR <u>kun</u> omhandler yrkesretting og relevans.

- I hvilken grad tror dere forskning på egen praksis kan føre til endringer som øker styrker på utdanningen?

Appendix 3

Intervjuguide – fagarbeidere

Under følger spørsmålsformuleringer til informantene knyttet til masterstudien jeg gjennomfører. Spørsmålene er lagt som rammeverk, og en løs struktur vil prege intervjusituasjonen for å kunne forfølge interessante temaer som måtte dukke opp.

ÅPENT INDIVIDUELT INTERVJU MED FAGARBEIDERE.

I – Generelt

- Viktig å få med (personalia anonymiseres):
    - Navn, alder, kjønn, utdanning, hobbyer, interesser, annen arbeidslivserfaring.
- Hva fikk deg til å ville bli "_____" ?

II – Bruk av engelsk

- Hvor mye bruker du engelsk i hverdag/yrkesliv? I hvilke situasjoner er dette?
- Vil du si at skolen har forberedt deg på disse situasjonene på noen måte? Isåfall, hvordan?

III – Arbeid- og hverdagslivskontekst

- Synes du undervisningen du fikk i engelsk på skolen er relevant for arbeid/yrkesliv? På hvordan måte?
- Har du i løpet av ditt utdanningsløp hørt om følgende begreper; FYR, yrkesretting?
- Når du startet på vg1 yrkesfag – hadde du da noen formening om hvor mye engelsk du ville trenge i ditt fremtidige yrke? Stemte det du først hadde trodd? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Hvor godt kjente du til du til kompetansemåla i læreplanen for engelsk – og hvordan vil du beskrive din egen kompetanse etter følgende mål?
    - Forstå og bruke et generelt ordforråd og et faglig ordforråd knyttet til eget utdanningsprogram.

- o Forstå hovedinnhold og detaljer i ulike typer muntlige tekster om allmenne emner og faglige emner knyttet til eget utdanningsprogram.
- o Innlede, holde i gang og avslutte samtaler og diskusjoner om allmenne emner og faglige emner knyttet til eget utdanningsprogram.
- o Forstå og bruke et bredt generelt ordforråd og et faglig ordforråd knyttet til eget utdanningsprogram.
- o Lese for å tilegne seg fagkunnskaper fra eget utdanningsprogram
- o Bruke egne notater for å skrive tekster med tilknytning til eget utdanningsprogram.
- o Fordype seg i et faglig emne innenfor eget utdanningsprogram og presentere dette.

- På hvordan måte jobbet lærerne dine for å gi deg kompetanse du har fått bruk for i arbeidslivet?