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THE ARCTIC  
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OF NORWAY

Institute of Teacher Education and Pedagogy

# Teaching English at multi-graded schools

*A qualitative study on the effects that the school structure has on the English teachers*

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## Acknowledgement

These months have gone by so quickly. Suddenly my time as a teacher student has passed and a new era is about to start. The process of writing this thesis has been exciting, challenging and educational. It has given me much knowledge and understanding of the English teachers at multi-graded schools. As a future English teacher in Finnmark, this is something that I value and appreciate.

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## Abstrackt

About 30 per cent of the Norwegian schools have less than 100 pupils attending to them. These schools are naturally organized in several ways. Multi-graded schools are however used as a method for teaching, especially in smaller schools where the pupils would benefit from being in larger groups than their original grade can provide them with. There are little information and rules to how the teachers are to approach to this school structure. This research aims to find how find how the school structure of small multi-graded schools affects the English teachers and their work.

To answer the research question I chose to use a qualitative approach. Two English teachers who both teach English at multi-graded schools were interviewed. The number of informants is to small to generalize the findings. Together with the theoretical framework of the thesis, it can however give some points of view on the situation of teachers at multi-graded schools.

Individual preparatory work with a focus on variety in the teaching, is one of the ways that I have found to describe the work of an English teacher at a small multi-graded school. In addition to this, relations of different forms and varieties are in focus.

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# 1 Introduction

As an introduction to this this thesis I will start by telling about my reasons for choosing to write about English teachers at multi-graded schools, and the way that they are affected by the school structure of their school. I will say a few words about the aim of the study and also mention some limitations that this research has got. To end chapter 1, an outline of the thesis will be presented.

## 1.1 Background

The year I turned six I did what all other six-year-olds in Norway do. I started primary school. When the first day of school finally arrived I was happy, excited and extremely proud. I put on my new backpack and went to school where I meet up with all of my fellow peers and my new teacher. I must say, I was not very nervous at all this day. I already knew all of my classmates. All eight of them. And the teacher? She was married to my older sisters godfather. In addition to this, she was also the mother of a good friend of mine. Actually, we had been on a couple of summer vacations together too.

As you may understand, I did not grow up in a big city. My hometown had just below a thousand citizens at the time I started primary school. In the second grade my peers and I got mixed with the pupils who started in the first grade. From then on, up until my fellow pupils and I graduated from lower secondary school, we were mixed with the grade underneath us or the grade above us. However, we were never mixed with both the grades at the same time. At the most, I believe we were about 20 pupils in our classroom. As in most other groups and classes, we had some very bright and motivated pupils, some pupils who were not as motivated, we had a couple of pupils with learning disabilities and a few other diagnoses. At all times, almost two years separated the oldest and the youngest pupil.

I had never really reflected much about my first ten years of school, until I started my education as a teachers student. At my fourth year I had my practical period at an open-plan school, with mixed aged classes. I taught them in English, among others. At this school, pupils from eighth to tenth grade were mixed together in large groups. The groups had some motivated pupils who spoke English fluently with an amazing

vocabulary. There were however some not as motivated pupils as well, who was not even able to understand what they themselves read.

The main difference between the groups in my school and in the practical school, was the size of the groups. One of them had somewhere between eight and 20 pupils, while the other one had somewhere between 50 and 60 pupils. In the group I taught in at my practical period, there would usually be a peer that would match the level of cognition and social abilities, as another pupil. There would always be two or more teachers in the classroom at all times and the group was often separated into smaller units. In my class back home, we could easily be 15 pupils with completely different needs, and there was never more than one teacher in our classroom at all times, which of course means that we usually were all together.

Ever since my practical period I have often wondered how my teachers did it? How did that one teacher adjust the teaching material and the methods for both my bright and motivated peer who read Harry Potter in English, and my 1,5 years younger peer with no eager to learn and with interests of anything English, besides soccer. With an inner wish to get more knowledge about this school structure and teachers working there, I was never in doubt that this was the theme I had to write my master thesis about.

## 1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to get better knowledge about the English teachers at multi-graded schools and if this school structure has any influence on the English teachers and their work. I would like to get an impression of English teachers experiences and their understanding of how their work, with all that follows, is affected by the school structure at schools with mixed aged classes. With all of this in mind, my research question ended up being “to what extent do the school structure of small multi-graded schools affect English teachers and their work?”

I chose to go through with a qualitative study that is based on two interviews with teachers from two separate multi-graded schools. I have also looked at some different theories that are discussed in relation to the findings in the interviews. Hopefully this study can also be a supplement to the theory about multi-graded schools. Measured

against the number of pupils attending schools with this structure and the number of multi-graded schools in Norway, the amount of studies done and theories existing are few.

### 1.3 Limitations

As most studies and research, mine too has some limitations. First and foremost have I only got two informants for my project. Originally I was going to interview three informants, however one had to withdraw. An amount of informants that is this small may put a limit to the reliability of my study. A research question like mine would defiantly benefit from more data for the analysis and for the findings to be able to represent all English teachers at multi-graded schools.

There are a limited amount of theory and research done on the area that I am to study, and most of those from newer date are not written and done in Norway. This challenges my research since the school systems are different in Norway and for example England and The USA. In addition to this, most of the studies does not define or separate small and larger multi-graded schools. Because of this, the theory and research is limited and this may affect the result of my study.

### 1.4 Outline

There are six chapters in this thesis. The first chapter, that is already presented, is an *introduction* to the topic and the research. In chapter two, I have looked into different theory concerning the research question, together forming the *theoretical framework* of my study. These theories will be discussed in relation to the findings from my research, in chapter five, called the *discussion*. In chapter three, *methodology*, I will explain the methods I used to collect data for this research. In chapter four, I will present the *findings* from my interviews. Lastly, in chapter six – the *conclusion*, my final thoughts and reflections upon this study will be given.

## 2 Theoretical framework

To be able to answer my research question, I find it necessary to get a better understanding of the multi-graded school system. Because of this I will look into the definition of multi-graded schools and what theories and research say about this school structure. The English language curriculum, the core curriculum and the education act will be essential, to find whether the Norwegian laws and government has any particular limitations or rules targeting the multi-graded school system.

### 2.1 Multi-graded schools

A multi-graded school is a school where the pupils from two or more grades are mixed together and form a group (Melheim, 1998, p.9). The differentiation between the age-groups will be erased and the group will be treated as one unit. The topics that are taught will be equal for the whole group, independent of what age the individual pupils have reached. The methods and tasks will usually be the same, and there will normally be one teacher present at all times. Nevertheless, the pupils have the same right to adapted teaching as any other pupil in Norway. Adapting one topic and tasks for pupils at three different ages and stages will require quite some effort from a teacher. With that said, the groups can be parted in smaller units when this is of value for individuals or the group (The Education Act, 1998, §8-2). This can however be challenging to perform in a class when there is only one teacher present.

When the grades are getting mixed together, there are multiple compositions to choose from. My impression is however that it is normal to follow the division of the competence aims, as far as possible. An example of the structure may then look like this: the first and second grade forms one group, the third and fourth grade are mixed together, the fifth grade will form one group together with the sixth and seventh grade, and the eighth, ninth and tenth grade will together create one group. This is only one set of composition. The schools will consider and use the alternatives that suit their mass of pupils, the staff of teachers and the organising of the school better.

## 2.2 Why multi-graded schools?

The reasons for organising the pupils into mixed aged groups, rather than in homogeneous grades based on the pupil's year of birth, are several. The divisions may be set up as a pedagogical and didactical method, especially in larger schools. However, this school structure is often necessary at schools that have a small amount of pupils, typically less than 100 (Berg-Olsen, 2012, p.2). Giving the pupils who attend to these small rural schools the education that they deserve and have a right to, often leads to mixed-aged groups being the best alternative for providing a solid education. Multi-graded schools will however often be of both a social and educational advantage, as well as a better use of resources (Berg-Olsen. 2012).

According to The Education Mirror (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017), there were 2858 elementary schools in Norway in 2016. The average number of pupils in each school was 220. However, 30 per cent of the Norwegian schools had less than 100 pupils. This number equals 900 schools with less than 100 pupils. In Troms and Finnmark half of the schools had less than 100 pupils attending to each school. There are a lot of small towns in Norway, and especially in Troms and Finnmark. The distance between the towns and cities is long, especially in these two counties. In addition to this, the population is relatively low. Nevertheless, the pupils have the right to attend to the school closest to their home, and the municipalities are quite free to part the pupils in groups from what they feel will benefit them more (The Education Act, 1998, §8-2).

## 2.3 A historical perspective

To get a better understanding of the multi-graded school, it will be valuable to look at learning and the school system in a historical perspective. Melheim (1998, p.59-64) gives a long and detailed description of the school system from the last couple of hundred years in Norway. It all started with large families, several siblings and generations living close together. The children taught each other what they knew, and learnt from their parents and grandparents. The learning happened in natural contexts, such as playing and spending time together. Then, at about year 1740 teachers started travelling around from one home to another. He would bring educational resources and

teach the pupils what they needed to learn. The children in Norway were taught in their own homes for approximately 120 years before the actual school building became a fact, and then it were the pupils who had to travel to the teacher and not opposite (Melheim, 2009, p.11)

Melheim (1998, p. 61-2) writes that when we first got schools in Norway, the pupils were all together in one large group with all ages and stages of both social and cognitive abilities. The teachers had essential roles in these first schools, as authoritative and all knowing. However, the pupils were still a great resource for one another. The older pupils were often used as pedagogical resources for the youngest pupils, and this of course eased the work of the teacher. Then new laws were introduced. The groups were not larger than 35 pupils and the pupils from seven to ten years of age were to be taught together, and the pupils from 10-14 years in another group. There were not a lot of textbooks or other resources, and because of this the teacher with his knowledge were highly important and necessary in the classroom.

From the end of the 1930's the centralization were introduced and the pupils got more divided by age and grades than in mixed-aged groups (Melheim, 1998, p.62). It was in this period English was introduced as a subject in school as well. It was however not mandatory for the municipality to offer the English subject in school before the late 60's (Drew and Sørheim, 2009, p.28). The development of the more divided structure of the groups in school has continued through the years. Nevertheless, multi-graded schools are still a fact, especially in small rural towns. Since the late 90's there have again been created some new multi-graded schools in the cities, with background in the pedagogical advantages of this structure (Melheim, 1998, p. 64).

## **2.4 Organizing of the teaching**

I have looked further into the work of English teachers at small multi-graded schools for my research. These schools are usually to be found in the districts of Norway, in small towns with few inhabitants. There will often be only one school to find in these towns, and all of the pupils from first until tenth grade attend to it. The Education Act (1998, §8-1) has stated that all pupils have the right to attend to the school that is closest to

their home, or the school that is designated for the area that they live. Some municipalities have only got one school for all towns and residents, which mean that the travel may be long for some of the pupils. Municipalities are therefore to decide that pupils from certain areas may attend to a school in the neighbour municipality, if this is viewed as the best alternative. (The Education Act, 1998, §8-1).

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, there are several different ways of structuring the classes or groups at schools. The municipalities are quite free to decide which structure they want to have at each school, nevertheless, there are a few limitations that has to be taken under consideration. Firstly, the Education act (1998, §8-2) points out that the pupils' social belongings have to be safeguarded. It is also stated that the attention should be headed towards the security and pedagogy, and the groups may therefore not be larger than what is justifiable. Lastly, the organization of the classes or groups should not be divided according to gender, ability or ethnic affiliation.

In The core curriculum (The Royal ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1996, p.44) emphasizes the importance of the pupils showing each other respect, helping one another and contributing in each other lives. It is also highlighted that these interactions should occur independent of age and class. Older pupils are obligated to show empathy and sensitivity toward their younger peers, and visa versa. The schools are to help organize this, and may for example implement a buddy system.

#### **2.4.1 School -and group size**

The last two decades a lot of the small schools in the districts of Norway have been closed down, and larger schools have been established. The main reasons for this are economical and change in number of pupils. Nevertheless, 7,7 per cent of the Norwegian children and teenagers still attend to schools with less than 100 pupils. (The Union of Education Norway, 2011, p.41-2). This number may not seem that high. It is however important to remember that a large proposition of these find place in the two most northern counties, Troms and Finnmark. 38,2 per cent of the Norwegian children and teenagers attend to schools with 100-299 pupils, while the percentage is 51,1 at schools with 300 pupils, or more. (The Union of Education Norway, 2011).

In larger schools, the number of pupils per class or group is usually also higher than in smaller schools. In schools with 150 pupils or less, the average number of pupils per group is 12,3. At schools with 150-399 pupils, there are an average of 17,5 pupils, and at schools with 400 pupils or more, there are 19,1 pupils per group. As we can see, there are an average of six pupils more per group in the larger schools, than in the smaller ones. This of course also affects the teacher density, which hence will be higher at smaller schools. (The Union of Education Norway, 2011, p.41).

## 2.5 Stated by law

To answer my thesis question it is necessary to know what the Norwegian laws and curriculum say about multi-graded schools and organizing of the pupils in mixed-aged groups, rather than in grades decided by their birth year. The English language curriculum is central to look at for information about its' adaption to the multi-graded schools. L-97 and LK-06 will also be necessary to mention. Adapted teaching turned out to be central concepts in the search of written laws of the multi-graded school, and will therefore have a subchapter of its own.

### 2.5.1 The Curriculum

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotions in Primary and Secondary Education and Training, is the current Norwegian curriculum. It will hereby be called LK-06. LK-06 has one section for each of the subjects in school. They are all divided in aims that are to be reached after the second, fourth, seventh and tenth grade. The English language curriculum is divided into four main areas with aims suited for each category. Language learning is the first category and has its focus on knowledge about the language, how to use the language and how each individual can learn English. The next two categories are oral and written communication. This part of the curriculum accentuates the importance of communication, both in written and oral communication, but also reading and listening. The last category is culture, society and literature. Here the cultural understanding, as well as social issues and literature, is the main focus (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).



The structure of the subject curriculums that LK-06 has been given fits the multi-graded schools and their organization quite well. LK-06 is much more considerate of the schools that follows the structure of a multi-graded school, than the previous curriculum called L-97 (The Royal ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1996). L-97 was structured with aims that were to be reached after every year in school, and this was more challenging for the multi-graded schools, than today's structure. In addition to this, one of the main criticisms of L-97 was that it did not consider adapted teaching to a level that was to be expected (Dale, 2010, p.26).

Drew and Sørheim (2009, p.44) emphasizes that the previous curriculum had stricter directions for content and didactical methods, than the current curriculum provides. LK-06 makes it easier to adapt and vary the content of the teaching for the diversity of pupils. Because of this it is easier to implement in the multi-graded schools. LK-06 will probably make planning of the lessons more work for the teachers, since the tasks and texts are not given, as in L-97 and other previous curriculums. It will however be easier to motivate the pupils with problems and methods that are made especially for them, rather than for all of the pupils in Norway (The Royal ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1996, p.232-8; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).

### 2.5.2 Adapted teaching

LK-06' focus on adapted teaching is mentioned. Nevertheless, the importance of this term should be explained further. The Education Act (1998, §1-2) demands that the education must be adapted to the pupils' abilities and preconditions. Adapted teaching is however not an aim that must be reached, it is a didactical method that ought to be used. Report No. 31 to the Storting (2007-2008, p.76) describes adapted teaching as variations in tasks, methods, sources, themes, intensity and in organization. Nevertheless, as we have seen it is also expressed that the focus should be on each and every pupil. The education is to be modified for each individual, their age, level of development and knowledge, as well as the elements mentioned above (Report No. 31 to the Storting, 2007-2008).

To be able to give all of the pupils an education that is tailored for them as individuals, Briseid (2006, p.35) differentiation needs to be done. Differentiation in school means to differ between the pupils and give them tasks and topics that are suited for their cognitive level (Briseid, 2006, p.35-7). It is important to keep the numbers from chapter 2.4.1 in mind. In an English class from a larger school, the English teacher would have to adapt the lessons for about 19 pupils at the same age. In a smaller school, the teacher would have to adapt it to about 12 pupils in three different ages.

Foreign language learners will naturally have different perforations in both methods used for teaching as well as in learning strategies to use themselves while learning. Drew and Sørheim (2009, p.20) emphasize this and continue by saying that we are all unique and our minds work differently to process a new language. Some of us are more visual and learn best through the thing that we can actually see. Some are auditory learners and process what is heard best. Others are kinaesthetic learners and prefer to learn by being physically active. Even if we prefer one method before another that does however not mean that we are not able to learn through the two others. Nonetheless, we may learn faster through our preferred learning method (Drew and Sørheim, 2009).

## 2.6 Relation and respect

The Education Act (1998, §8-2) utters that each and every pupil must be attached to one teacher. This will be the pupils contact teacher, and he or she has the main responsibility for all the pupils in one class or group. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (n.d.) states that the contact teacher will be the teacher that the pupil is to contact when something is wrong or when wondering about something. It is therefore of importance that there is a mutual respect and trust between the pupil and the teacher. It is however also important that the teacher manages to maintain a professional relationship with the pupils, for the sake of the teaching environment. Furthermore The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Teaching (n.d) stresses the importance of the contact teacher as a role model when speaking of social interactions. He should among others be polite, kind and be truthful. The contact teacher will also be the link between the school and the home. This relationship will be of great importance for the pupils experience of being seen in school and hence trust the teacher (Nordahl, 2007, p. 15).

According to Vibe, Aamodt and Carlsten (2009, p. 201-7), the relations between the teachers and the pupils in Norway are sincerely good. It is however stated that the teachers and the pupils seem to get along even better in smaller district towns, than in the larger cities. It should be clarified that this count for the schools with less than 100 pupils. The reason for this result is not given. It may however be interesting to consider the relation between good relationships, respect and whether others can affect the pupils in this matter. The result from a research done by Linda M. Hargreaves (2009), on respect for the teachers at schools of different sizes and structures, from others in the society, may be used as one of the explanations on this.

Hargreaves (2009, 224-6) asked teachers about the their perception of respect received from in-school and external sources, in large and small rural schools. There were no significant differences between the small and large schools on the teacher's perception on respect from the pupils, their co-workers or the senior management. Nevertheless, the teachers at the small rural schools felt more respected by the governors, the pupils' parents and the local community than the teachers at the larger schools. Both groups of teachers felt that the media and the public may not show a great deal of respect for them as a professional group. All in all, Hargreaves (2009, p.126) concluded that the mutual respect between the teacher and others are more likely to be found in small rural schools, than in the large and urban schools.

## 2.7 Textbooks

According to Drew and Sørheim (2009, p.115) using the textbooks for teaching is a strong Norwegian tradition. Furthermore they state that none of the curriculums from Norway have ever discussed the use of the textbook in the teaching. There are however both positive and negative sides by basing the lessons on the textbooks. Drew and Sørheim (2009, p.115) have listed some of the matters that are provided in the textbooks, such as

*“Ready made materials with activities on the four language skills and exercises in the workbook...tasks for discussion...a wide range of material, usually more than a average teacher can collect”* (Drew and Sørheim, 2009).

The textbooks provide the pupils with “a sense of security” (Drew and Sørheim, 2009). It is safe to work with texts in the books. They are usually straightforward and easy to read. Additionally, the answers to the tasks will often be found in the in the texts. However, In addition to providing both the pupils and the teachers with several advantages, it is reasonable to consider what the teacher can provide with out the textbook as well. Drew and Sørheim (2009) writes that a group of children or teenagers may respond differently to didactical methods and lesson content from one day to the next. Because of this it is important that the teacher is able to improvise from what is going on in the classroom at any particular time. A textbook will never be able to sense the shifts in the class, a bright and awake teacher on the other hand will. It is however important to mention that the teacher and the class do not have to chose between never using the textbook and always using it. The teacher knows the pupils better than the textbook authors and will because of this always be the best designer of the teaching (Drew and Sørheim, 2009, p.115-6).

Harmer (2003, p.305) brings to light that teaching without textbooks will lead to more time planning the lessons for the English teacher. They will need to have access to material that they can use in class and be able to chose what is more proficient for the group that is to be taught. It is also of high importance that the teacher can manage to sew together the materials that he have found for the lessons. Material that is chosen randomly and does not really fit together may be of less value for the pupils than working in the textbooks would have been (Drew and Sørheim, 2009, p. 123).

## **2.8 Working in teams**

Working in teams and cooperating has become a great part of a teacher’s daily work. As mentioned in ch.2.3, historically, it has been common for the teachers to work individually. Today however the teacher’s work is filled with by cooperation and sharing (Vibe et.al., 2009, p.97). Teamwork contributes to a common perspective of the work and will often lead to a unified group of colleagues. The teachers share and discuss didactical methods, subject content, issues that arise in their work and positive experiences in class. Having a good and established teamwork among the teachers at a school can also reduce the amount of individual planning, and opens up for using the

suggestions from the co-workers in their own teaching (Bjørnsrud and Engh, 2012, 402).

There is reason to believe that the size of the schools, and therefore the amount of co-workers available, would be crucial for teamwork. Fewer pupils usually equals fewer teachers for each subject, and less people to cooperate with. In a research done on this specific topic, the results could however not show significant differences in teamwork from larger to smaller schools. There may of course be several reasons for this. The tight community and bond at smaller schools where all the teachers know one another, can be one of the explanations (2009, p.104). Nonetheless, Vibe et.al. (2009, p.104) brings up something that concerns me. This research also has data showing that language teachers are the ones who cooperate the least together.

Teaching in teams is also a method that more teachers and schools open up for today. According to Vibe, et.al. (2009, p.101), about half of the Norwegian teachers perform this teaching method at least once every week. There are however evidence showing that performing team-teaching is less common in smaller schools with less than 100 pupils. As mentioned earlier, this probably is an effect of the school structure and fewer teachers than in larger schools.

## 2.9 Learning theories

Through history there have been several theories on how the human being learn language better. I will have a look at three different learning theories, the behaviouristic, the cognitive and the sociocultural, and find what role each of them has in school and how they affect the teacher's role in the classroom.

### 2.9.1 Behaviouristic theory

According to the behaviouristic theory and Skinner "practice makes perfect" (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011, p.55). B.F. Skinner did studies on how input - the stimulus, was related to the output - the response (Harley, 2017, p.16). This means that getting immediate positive stimulus from the teacher on language, behaviour and tasks, would

lead to the pupils wanting to do more of the activity and doing it correct. However, this would also mean that negative stimulus would have to be given when language, behaviour and tasks is incorrect, leading to the pupils not wanting to do things incorrect again. The behaviouristic learning strategy is rather traditional. The content and the dissemination of the content, would be the most essential part of the lessons and the education. In addition to this, the role of the teacher would be extremely central, since it is he who would control the pupils learning process through stimulus and choice of topics and didactical methods (Jensen and Aas, 2011, p.54-5).

### 2.9.2 Cognitive theory

In the cognitive theory, the individual is in focus. The attention in this theory is drawn to how a person receives and process information (Jensen and Aas, 2011, p. 56). Jean Piaget was an important developmental psychologist and will always be remembered for his theories on cognitive development. He studied the development of language and divided the progress into stages at the same time as he found what drove the child from one stage to another interesting. (Harley, 2017, p.81). According to the cognitive theory that Piaget has designed, a child will try to make new information understandable through what it already knows and understands. (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011, p.57) He also found that the complementary process of assimilation and accommodation were central processes in learning. Assimilation means applying what you already know to the world, while accommodation is adjusting what you know into something new. Therefore the knowledge of a child will grow as it interacts with the world, and the knowledge structures that the child is in position of will change when a situation where it cannot explain something that occur (Harley, 2017, p.82).

The focus in the cognitive theory by Piaget, is in the didactical methods used for teaching and not on the content. Piaget viewed learning as a result of action. He believes that a practical approach to the education, where the child itself would be able to acquire knowledge about the world through it's own interests, would be the best way to learn (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011, p.60). If we are to believe Piaget, knowledge cannot be translated from the teacher to the child or in-between the pupils. Because of this, the teachers role in a classroom with a cognitive approach would be quite passive. The

teachers main job would be to challenge the pupils, not to teach them (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011).

### 2.9.3 Sociocultural theory

In the sociocultural theory, social interactions and linguistic activity are both considered significant for the learning process. Vygotsky, who is to be considered one of the most central people in the development of sociocultural theory (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011, p.61-2), viewed language to be the most complex, as well as sophisticated system for higher thoughts. He expressed the importance of sharing knowledge about a language, using the language and communicating as significant for the learning process (Harley, 2017, p.85).

To explain the learning process further, Vygotsky developed a theory called the zone of proximal development. According to this theory, what the pupil knows right now is his actual developmental level. At this level, he will be able to solve problems by himself. The next level is the level of potential development. At this level the pupil will be able to solve problems with adult guidance, or in collaboration with someone else with a higher degree of competence than himself (Lyngnes and Rismark, 2011; Vygotski, 1978, p.86). Being in the level of potential development is the desirable, so is cooperation, fellowship and working together against one goal. The teachers should be experts, using their knowledge to help the pupils solve issues and learn new matters. A school where the pupils can interact with one another and with the teacher, is according to the sociocultural theory something to strive for. The school should be viewed as a unit where everyone works together to expand their cognition. (Jensen and Ass, 2011, p.56-7)

## 3 Methodology

According to Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p.16) methodology is about how we can proceed to determine whether our assumptions about a topic are in agreement with reality or not. When making a study on schools and the education system, Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012) state that social science research methods are the direction you have to look towards. Social science research methods will tell us how we can get information, analyse it and determine how our data can say something about social conditions and processes (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.16).

### 3.1 Two methods

In social science research Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p.17), points out that there are two main methods for gathering data. These two are called quantitative and qualitative methods. One of the main differences between quantitative and qualitative methods is the degree of flexibility. Whether flexibility is a benefit or not of course depends on what you study and how you want to do your research. While quantitative methods focus more on numbers and matching data up against each other, qualitative methods are more flexible and allow adjustment, reflection and a wider range of answers. (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.17). Each of these methods has their advantages and disadvantages. If using a quantitative method, all the informants will get the same questions.

#### 3.1.1 Quantitative method

In quantitative method you often use questionnaires to collect data. All of the units, meaning the people contributing to your research (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.123), will receive the same questions. Usually these questions have a few alternatives that the informant way chose as his or her answer. The flexibility in this method is therefore quite low. The researcher has to be able to ask the correct question and be good at interpreting the possible answers he or she possibly can receive (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.17). The data in quantitative methods will always be measurable. Christoffersen and Johannesen (2012, p.141) writes that the data in



quantitative method is to be analysed statistically, usually by making tables and figures of the collected data and by referring to statistical goals, such as median, average. Studies with quantitative methods will have answers that are comparable (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.17).

### **3.1.2 Qualitative method**

Qualitative methods are, according to Thagaard (2013, p.12), well suitable for studies on fields that there have not been made quite that many investigations. This is because of the flexibility and openness that follows with this method. The two most common approaches in qualitative research are interviews and observation. Interviews allow spontaneity. In both the methods the contact between the researcher and the informant will be crucial for the collected data (Thagaard, 2013, p.13). In interviews the questions will be open and may be adjusted from one informant to another, this does however mean that the researcher has to be able to understand the informant and have the ability to connect with him or her. Compared to quantitative method, this method does not give answers that necessarily will be comparable, however the researcher has to interpret answers and actions. (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.17).

## **3.2 Choice of method**

I chose to use qualitative method for my study. The reason for this is that I believed this method would be the most suitable for my research question. Thagaard (2013, p.40) expresses qualitative methods to be the most relevant if you are to study and understand a persons' experiences and perceptions. I wanted to gain knowledge about English teachers at multi grade schools, and insight in how they understand and experience educating pupils at schools with this type of school structure. With this is consideration I found the qualitative method, and more specifically interviews, to be the method best fitted for my study.

The reason I chose interviews as my research method is that I wanted detailed and complementary answers (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.17). I wanted to know about something that cannot be observed and that cannot be measured in

numbers. As Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p.77) writes, conversations are important for people to fully understand one another. By interviewing my informants I would be able to ask questions, get answers and immediately be able to reply. A dialogue would give me the possibility to respond directly if I felt a question was misunderstood or re-ask the question if I did not feel it was fully answered to.

### 3.2.1 Qualitative interview

Christoffersen and Johannesen (2012, p.78) emphasises that qualitative interviews are used when the researcher has to give the informants more freedom to express themselves, than a questionnaire could supply. According to Thagaard (2013, p. 58), interviews are also the most suitable method for studies where information about how the informants experience and understand his or her surroundings. Furthermore she explains that information and stories that are uttered in an interview are to be considered as social interactions between the interviewer and the informants. Informants are participating in interactions with the interviewer, by telling about their personal experiences. (Thagaard, 2013, p.58). The data that is collected through qualitative interviews should, because of this, be treated with respect.

Conversations are important to understand one another. They are important to enlighten someone's thoughts, feelings and their meanings. (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.77). Experiences and perceptions have a way of coming forward when the informants can contribute to deciding what is going to be talked about in the interview. (Christoffersen and Johannesen, 2012, p.78). Because of this, the qualitative research interview is often arranged as a conversation with structure and purpose.

When I was to plan the interviews for my study I wanted to give the informants the opportunity to participate in a conversation, rather than me asking questions and just answering them. This was both so that their interests would be heard, and to enrich my research. With this in mind I decided that a semi-structured interview would feel most appropriate for my study. When using this method you will have and use an interview guide that is used as a base for the conversation. Nevertheless, themes, questions and the order of the questions can vary and do not have to be the same in all of the interviews (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.79)

Other alternative to semi-structured interviews would have been structured -or unstructured interviews. Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p.78-9) explain these strategies further. An unstructured interview would have a topic that should be given to the informants in advance of the interview. Informal settings are not unusual in these interviews and they will often proceed more as a conversation than an actual interview. Unstructured interviews may even happen spontaneously. One of the things that are important to consider in these interviews, is the importance of the relation between the informant and the interviewer. They might have had no contact in advance and the informant might not have any information of the study.

### 3.2.2 Creating the interview guide

Before I could interview my informants and start collecting data for my study, I needed to prepare an interview guide. For my semi-structured interviews, the interview guide was meant to be a guideline for the interviews. The interview guide is a list of the themes and questions that should be included at some point in the interview. The topics will usually follow a specific order, however, there is nothing wrong with topics being brought up at an earlier stage in the interview, or if the informant includes any other relevant information (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.80).

The interview guide would be there to keep the conversation on track, so that I would acquire the information I needed for my research. At an early stage of my research I was quite certain that I wanted to focus on the challenges by being an English teacher at multi grade schools. The questions in my interview guide are therefor affected by this state of mind. Nevertheless, the more theory I read and the more I spoke of my study, I found that the challenges were not the only thing I was curious about. I wanted to know if and how this school structure affected the teachers and their work, both good and bad.

When constructing my interview guide, I used the model of Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, p.80) as a guideline. They present a list of what an interview guide should contain. What information should be given beforehand and what questions to ask at what point of the interview is central in their instructions. First and foremost, the interviewer has to help establish a relation with the informant, and build trust between him and the informant. This will be crucial for the answers that will be given. The

interviewer should start by presenting himself and give information about the project and what type of questions he or she can expect to be asked. Further more, information about consequences of being a part of the project should be given, so should information about anonymity and how the material from the interview will be stored. It is also important to remind the informants that they are able to quit the interview at any point, and that they are able to not answer questions if they are uncomfortable.

When starting the interview one should start by asking easy questions that may have nothing to do with the study. In this phase, relations between the two parts are being built, and as mentioned, the relationship between the informant and the interviewer may be the key to the following answer in the interview. My first question was:

1. "Would you like to tell a bit about yourself?"

The next step in Christoffersen and Johannessens guide is to ask questions that will move the attention to the topic of the interview. The questions in this part of the interview are called introduction questions. The introduction questions that I asked my informants was the following:

2. "For how long have you been working as an English teacher at a multi-graded school?"

The next question is a so-called transition question. This is where the interviewer moves on to questions that acquire information from personal experiences. Question six turned out to be a bit vague, and I therefore elaborated it with what is written in 6 a. I chose to include the explanation of the question in the second interview as well. My transition questions were:

3. "Have you been working as an English teacher at schools with other school structures?"
  - a. "What are the biggest differences?"
4. "How is the education structured in relation to the aims of the curriculum and that all the pupils will reach every the aims?"
  - a. "How is the education structured with mind on the textbooks and reaching the aims in the English language curriculum?"

At this point, it felt natural to move on to the key questions of the interview. At this stage, situations that require elaboration will usually occur. As mentioned in chapter 3.2.1. the purpose of the questions in the interview guide is to make sure that the interviewer gets the information he or she needs for the study. The key questions in my interview guide were:

5. "Do you believe there are any particular advantages or disadvantages for the strong or weak pupils in English, when they attend to a multi-grade school?"
6. "Have you ever reflected upon the degree of affection the school structure of multi grade schools have anything to say for the English lessons?"
7. "What do you view as the biggest advantage in teaching English at multi grade schools, versus schools with other school structures?"
8. "What do you view as the biggest disadvantage in teaching English at multi grade schools, versus schools with other school structures?"
9. "Do you believe there are more or less challenges in English teaching at multi grade schools, compared to other subjects?"
10. "Are there any situations (topics, methods etc.) where you find it specifically difficult to teach English at multi grade schools?"
11. Have you got any good solutions or precautions that can help you avoid difficult situations that may occur in English lessons at multi grade schools?

Lastly, before thanking my informants for participating in the interviews, I summarised the questions that I had asked and the answers that the informant had given. Then I told them that there was only one question remaining:

12. Do you have anything else to add?

The fourteenth question marked that the interview was heading towards the end, and the informants got the chance to include any information that they thought would be of interest for my study, either as additions to what they had answered to the past questions or as new information.

### 3.3 Selection strategy

The focus in my research was on English teachers at multi graded schools. For my study, I wished to include teachers at schools that are considered to be district schools, and not more than one teacher from each school. I tried to get in touch with schools that had a different number of pupils, to get diversity in my research. The election of informants was based on specific criteria, and is therefore called criteria based election (Cristoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.51).

#### 3.3.1 Sampling selection

When I was to find informants for my study I started by looking up all of the schools with multi grade classes, in my area. I reached out to five different schools, asking if they had an English teacher who would be interested in participating in my study. Three English teachers replied with the message that they were interested in contributing to my study. Sadly one of the informants contacted me a couple of days before the interview, telling me s/he had to withdraw from the research. At this point I decided that I could not spend more time trying to find a replacement, and therefore continued my study with only two informants. My informants were of the same gender, one were quite new to working as a teacher at a multi-graded school. The other had been working at a school with this specific structure for 17 years, and had only been teaching at schools with other structures when s/he was a student.

#### 3.3.2 Collecting data

Before sending in my interview guide to NSD, I tried to interview one of my family members, who is a journalist, to see whether or not the questions worked together and if they were suited to give me the information I needed from my research. This family member is not an English teacher and her only experience from schools with multi grade classes is from her years at primary and lower secondary school. Her answers were because of this quite limited, I did however feel that my questions were good enough for me to get the information I would need for this research.

When the time came for the actual interviews to be held, I planned to meet up with the first informant at a café after dinnertime. We both had a cup of coffee and I started and went through with the interview as planned. I learnt that some of the questions needed to be explained further before the informant was able to answer. I took this into consideration when holding my second interview. This interview was more challenging to do, because of distance and tight schedules. My informant therefor suggested that we would use modern technology, in form of FaceTime, to go through with the interview, and I found this to work just as well as the traditional interview. The interviews lasted for about 30 minutes and both of the interviews were transcribed a short time after the interview found place.

### **3.4 Analysing data**

To answer my research question, “to what extent do the school structure of multi grade schools affect English teachers and their work?” I started analysing the data that I had collected in the interview soon after finishing the interviews. In this chapter I will tell you more about the approach I had while doing this.

### 3.4.1 Interview analysis

Analysing the interviews was a process of several steps. I started by writing down absolutely everything that had been said during the interviews, this was done on the computer for the sake of the efficiency. Writing on the computer was faster than it would have been to write the hard copy by hand. This also gave me the possibility to make several copies for notes in the next steps of the analysing process. Step two was to structure the answers from each of the informants, to the questions. When this was done, I felt that the notes were much more tidy and ready for the next stage. I started sorting out the different thematic that were promoted by the informants, and I had to reflect upon what themes would be of importance for my research question. According to Thagaard (2013, p.181) this is called a thematic approach. By dividing the data I received from the interviews into themes, it also became easier to compare the answers that I had gotten from the two informants. Nevertheless, when having a thematic approach it is of high importance to keep the answers in context to get a complete understanding of the material (Thagaard, 2013).

## 3.5 Reliability and Validity

In order to know if the research is of value, the validity and reliability of the data should be considered. Further I will explain what validity and reliability means and reflect upon my research in light of these two concepts.

### 3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability is about the research data being credible and reliable. (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.23). If the outcome of a research would have been able to turn out the same way if a different researcher had conducted it, or if another researcher would have used other data collecting methods than I have used, the research is said to be reliable (Atkins and Wallace, 2012, p.25).

This study does have some limitations when it comes to reliability. Firstly, there are only two informants in this study. Whether these two are representative for all of English teachers at multi-graded schools is discussible. It is however reasonable to say that only



two informants' will not be sufficient to generalize the findings from the interviews. In addition to this, the two informants are in the same demographic group. The amount of years that they have worked at multi-graded schools, and therefore their experience, is however sufficiently different. One of them has been working at schools with other structures, while the other has not. With this in mind, the data will most probably be able to give a sufficient understanding of the effects that the school system of multi-graded schools, can have on the English teachers and their work.

The method used in this research is, as known, interviews. The relation between the informants and the researcher may affect the collected data. My this, I mean that if the relationship between the two parts is open and honest, the reliability will be strong. However, if the connection between the informant and the researcher has been poor, and the answers to the questions have been insufficient, this may weaken the reliability of the research (Thagaard, 2012, p.203). Nonetheless, the questions asked in my interviews were either asked in both direction of positive and negative answers, such as question 9 and 10,

9. "What do you view as the biggest advantage in teaching English at multi grade schools, versus schools with other school structures?"

10. "What do you view as the biggest disadvantage in teaching English at multi grade schools, versus schools with other school structures?"

or asked as open questions where there is not interpreted that any questions is expected or preferred. This is important so that the informant do not feel pressured to provide an answer that s/he would normally not give.

### 3.5.2 Validity

A research is valid if the collected data is representative for the reality of what has been studied (Thagaard, 2012, p.204). With that said, the validity should not be considered as final, as the data is valid or not. The validity measures the quality of the research and may be partly fulfilled (Christoffersen and Johannessen, 2012, p.24). The validity can be measured by a validity test. This can be performed by first observing to collect data, then a questionnaire will be conducted to find if the observations correspond to the answers that were given. Another way of deciding whether the research is valid or not,

is to use common sense, or face validity as Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012) refers to it as. There is no reason to believe that my informants would hold back information or not speak the truth. We had contact in advance of the interview where they were informed about the research, we had a nice tone and I do not believe any of the questions were to private.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

It is important for a researcher to make sure that ethical guidelines are taken care of and in place prior the data collecting and in the thesis. I reported my study to the Norwegian Centre for Research data, also known as NSD before I started my research. In my study there are some information that can make the informants recognisable, such as for how long they have been working as teachers and how many pupils there are at their schools today. It was important for me to keep my informants as anonymous as possible throughout the entire process of this research. Because of this, the interviews were transcribed shortly after they were completed, and the informants have never been referred to by name in written form, nor have I spoke of them to anybody else. The names of the informants were not mentioned on tape while recording the interviews either, that was however the name of the schools they currently work at and former employers. I therefore kept the recordings locked away at all times they were not in use. It is also my intention to delete the sound files as soon as I know that there will be no further use of them.

## **4 Findings**

In this chapter I will present the findings from the two interviews that I have done during this research. I have sorted out the information from the collected data that I find noteworthy and important to be able to answer my research question. The structure of the questions will be the same as in the interview guide, which was presented in chapter 3.2.2.

### **4.1 The informants**

From here on out I will refer to both of my informants with a female pronoun, the reason for this is to keep a tidy structure. I must emphasize that this does not necessarily mean that this is their actual gender. I will also refer to the informants as informant A and informant B when this is more appropriate to use than the female pronoun, or when I need to distinguish between them. Since the first question asked in the interviews was if the informants wanted to tell a bit about themselves, this will not be included here.

The second question I asked my informants was for how long they had been working at multi-graded schools, and if they had ever been working at a school with another school structure than this. Informant A had quite a long experience with multi-graded schools and teaching. Close to twenty years actually. She had also been working at that same school for all of these years. However, it is important to mention that a lot had happened during these years. The number of pupils had fallen quite a bit. A couple of years ago the school started a new project where the grades were parted in three groups. The textbooks are therefore no longer in use at this school either. Informant B had been working at a multi-graded school for four years. Before this she had both been in and out of other professions, though she had also been working at a larger school with parallel classes and big groups.

### **4.2 The school structure**

I had not included any questions of how the schools had chosen to organize their school structure in my interview guide. This however became a natural matter in more than

one of the other questions. I therefore found it essential to ask how the schools were structured. The focus was on the organizing of the groups and the teachers at the schools.

Informant A worked at a school that had about 50 pupils from first grade till tenth grade. The school that Informant B worked for had approximately 80 pupils from first till tenth grade. When speaking of such small numbers of pupils, this is a significant difference. This difference is also shown in the way that the schools have chosen to part the groups.

At the school that informant A works, they have been trying out a new structure for the last couple of years. Earlier they used to merge two grades together at the most. Some grades even had a large enough amount of pupils to provide them with individual lessons at all times. Now the structure has changed and the school has divided the grades into three groups. This means that the pupils from the first grade up until the fourth grade are one group. The pupils from the fifth grade are grouped together with the pupils from sixth and seventh grade. Lastly, the grades from eighth until tenth are merged together. With that said, this school does provide separate lessons for some of the grades in specific subjects. The first grade is, among others, by themselves in the Norwegian lessons. This is a choice taken with mind on adapted teaching. The youngest pupils will need to be provided with the basics, such as learning the letters and putting them together to make words. Giving the first graders their own lessons in the Norwegian subject will therefore be an advantage for both the pupils in this grade, and also for the pupils in second to fourth grade. The English lessons on the other hand are always given to the whole group, and not for individual grades. At this school there is one contact teacher for the first grade, and the eighth, ninth and tenth grade also has one contact teacher each. However, the second till the fourth grade share one contact teacher, and so does the fifth, sixth and seventh grade.

At the school where Informant B is working, they perform a structure of the grades and groups that do not give the same range in age, as in the school of informant A. Second and third grade are one group, while fourth and fifth grade form another group. Sixth and seventh grade are together, and eighth and ninth grade are the last two years were the pupils attend mixed aged groups. This means that both first grade and tenth grade are individual groups. This school provides two contact teachers per group, and the

main responsibility for these pupils are divided between the two contact teachers, regardless of which grade they originally belong to.

### 4.3 Reaching the competence aims

How the informants went on by planning lessons and how they taught, was viewed as essential to the research question. In addition to this, my impression is that English teachers are often depending on the textbooks to plan and go through with lessons. I felt curious on how my informants and their schools went about to make sure that the pupils reached the competence aims. The textbooks are produced for the different grades in school, and are hence supposedly a tool for the teaching and learning. In my first interview I asked the informant “how is the education structured in relation to the aims of the curriculum and that all the pupils will reach all of the aims?”.

This question did however turn out to be a poorly formulated, and my informant asked what I meant by this, since the curriculum is divided in aims that are to be reached after a two and three year period. I therefore chose to reformulate and asked how the education is structured, with mind on the textbooks and reaching the aims in the English language curriculum?

Informant B answered that since the competence aims are made with aims that are to be reached by every two to three years, this is not really that big of a challenge. She went on by enlightening me how she makes use of the textbooks in her groups. “The two different grades use the English textbook that is made for their grade. However, in some of the other subjects that they have in school, the whole group uses the same textbooks, and than we switch textbooks next year.” Informant B had the impression that both of these solutions seemed to work, and that they had never had challenges reaching the competence aims with this usage of textbooks.

At the school that informant A works, the teachers have had to restructure their way of mind in teaching, as a consequence of the new school structure. The focus is no longer in the textbooks, since this would be difficult to implement in a group with both fifth graders and seventh graders, who are all at different levels. Informant A could therefore

inform me that she now focus on topics in her English lessons, contra following the structure of a textbook.

#### **4.4 Teaching English in a mixed-aged group**

My sixed question in the interview was whether my informants believe the school structure affects the English lessons or not? The answer was yes, from both of the informants. They both believed that the lessons were affected by the structure.

Informant B especially felt that she has more time for each pupil in a multi-graded school rather than in a school with more traditional school structure. She also highlighted that it is easier to see all of the pupils for who they are, and therefore reach out to them during the lessons. In such small schools and towns you naturally know your pupils better, at least in a whole other way, than in larger cities and schools. You know what they are up to in the afternoon, whom they hang out with and who their parents and grandparents are.

Informant A answered that she believes that mixed-aged groups give the pupils a better opportunity to evolve, and that she as an English teacher can use the diversity in the group to help this process. As a direct effect of the mixed-aged groups, they do not use textbooks in the same way as they did before. This has lead to a more practical teaching and she feels that it is easier to adapt the content of the lessons to the group and each individual. Further she goes on telling me that a more adapted teaching in her English lessons means more variation. Her experience is that variation leads to more inspired and motivated pupils who dare to use and play with the English language.

#### **4.5 Pros and cons for the pupils**

I found my next question appropriate as the pupils are the teachers first and most important part of the job. Question seven was what impression the informants had on advantages and disadvantages for the pupils attending multi-graded schools. Informant A said that there are of course both positive and negative sides of multi-graded schools, also for the pupils.

#### **4.5.1 Advantages for the pupils**

First and foremost she wanted to accentuate that it is an advantage that the groups are larger than they would have been if the grades had not been mixed. With more pupils comes more knowledge and abilities, and this leads to the possibility of the pupils using each other as learning resources. “The odds for one pupil standing alone at its’ level of knowledge is lower in mixed-aged groups. Learning when interacting with others is important and gives a stronger sense of achievement. Everyone can contribute with something.” Informant B told me that she felt like the biggest advantage was the small groups. Every pupil knows one another and feels safe in the classroom. This is a big advantage when you are to speak another language than your mother tongue. In smaller groups all the pupils will also get the help and attention that they need.

Informant A also felt that “it is easier to move smaller groups outside the classroom and the school, and less expensive, and this is a great way of building relations to the local businesses and community.” It is also emphasized that this is possible to do in all school subjects.

#### **4.5.2 Disadvantages for the pupils**

Both informant A and informant B seemed to agree on some of the disadvantages. The first thing that they both brought up was the difficulty of adapting the teaching to fit all of the pupils. Informant B said that “there might be a large gap between the knowledge and abilities from a weaker pupil in the lower grade, to a stronger pupil at the highest grade.” Informant A also told me that there are quite a bit of work with preparations in mixed-aged groups, everyone is to get work suited for their abilities. In addition to this, informant A said that “it is also a challenge when the social abilities are at two different planets.”

### **4.6 An English teacher at a multi-graded school**

The next two questions that I asked my informants was what the advantages and the disadvantages are for an English teacher at a multi-graded school, contra a school with other school structures. The answers I got from my informants at these questions were

quite similar, however both informant A and informant B added information to their answers that the other did not include.

#### 4.6.1 Advantages

Both informant A and informant B accentuated that the small groups give them an exceptional opportunity to offer the pupils the follow-up that they need and deserve. They both also said that they have more time for each individual, and informant B supplemented this by saying that “this leads to a strong connection to each pupil. You get to know their strengths and weaknesses and can use these in the education.” Informant A added, “You can use each and every pupil as a resource, both in teaching and socially”. Informant A continues by saying that the pupils are used as resources for each other. Helping one another both consciously and unconsciously, cooperating and working together, using their language and teaching each other new ways of using it.

#### 4.6.2 Disadvantages

One of the disadvantages that both of the informants wanted to emphasize was that the professional environment is much smaller than in bigger schools. They both seemed to agree on the fact that this leads to more individual work. They do not have a lot of others to share and discuss the issues that concern the English subject with, nor the work that follows this particular subject. In addition, informant B found that the professional environment is more vulnerable when someone gets sick .

Informant A said that she feels one of the disadvantages of being a teacher at a multi-grade school, on a general basis, is that she has to defend and document her methods, organisation and even knowledge at a higher degree than teachers at schools with other structures. She experience attitudes from others, who does not believe that a multi-grade school can be of the same quality as larger schools that follows other structures.

Informant B finds one of the challenges to be that she is to motivate and teach in a class where the pupils may be at such different levels of advance in English, and also socially. “They are at such different stages, some speak English as if it was their first language,



while others needs extra help and attention to understand and participate in the lessons”.

#### **4.7 English compared to other subjects**

“Do you believe there are more or less challenges in English teaching at a multi-graded school, compared to other subjects?”, was the next question that I asked my informants. Both agreed that English is not more challenging to teach, contra other subjects. Informant A said that “It is easier to differentiate and vary the methods in a language subject compared to for example in math class, where every step builds upon each other”. Informant B uttered her believe in that it is the teachers job to guide the pupils through the education and “every teacher in every subject just works with what ever they got”.

#### **4.8 Challenging situations?**

The answers I got to my eleventh question were not what I had expected in advance. I asked the informants whether there were any specific situations, methods or topics that were especially difficult to teach in English at mixed aged schools. Both my informants said “no, not really”. Informant A was very sure of her answer and therefore did not have anything particular to add. Informant B however added “no, not as I can think of right now at least.” She continued by saying that she had never thought, “Hum, how am I supposed to solve this topic”.

#### **4.9 Strategies**

My last question to the informants was if they had any special strategies to solve or avoid challenges that may occur for an English teacher at a multi-graded school. Informant B said that she has learnt the importance of always having a plan b. The reason for this is that things do not always work out as planned, both with individual pupils, the technology, the teacher staff and so on and so forth. She also wanted to express the importance of varied teaching methods to make sure that all of the pupils

will stay interested and motivated for learning English. The answer of informant A was of the same kind. She said "Variation - variation - variation!" She explained herself by telling that she uses quite some time planning and facilitating for many different elements in the teaching situation. Informant A utters her belief in that adapted teaching is the key for good teaching. Motivated pupils who dare to give of themselves, use the language that they got and wants to be playful are all effects of variation in the teaching.

## 5 Discussion

In this fifth chapter I will discuss the findings from my interviews using the theory from chapter 2 as a base for discussion. I want the correlation between the theory and collected data to become clear in this chapter, at the same time as they might challenge each other. The topics for discussion are divided into separate subchapters. As the topics sometimes affect one another, they may however touch in the discussion as well.

### 5.1 Adapting the education for different ages and stages

Adapting the teaching to all of the pupils in one group can be challenging. As we saw in chapter 2.4.1 there is an average of 19,1 pupils in each group at the larger schools. For comparison there are 12,3 pupils in each group at the smaller schools. I am not going to discuss whether it is more challenging to adapt the English lessons in a smaller group with a variety of ages, or in larger classes with a more homogeneous age group. Adapting the teaching may be challenging independent of the school structure. I will however view how the issues that my informants brought up during our interviews, concerning adapted teaching, affect their work and every day as English teachers at multi-graded schools.

#### 5.1.1 With mind on relations

Both of my informants wished to emphasize the fact that they have more time for each individual, than they would have in groups with a larger number of pupils. Informant B had, as mentioned in chapter 4.1, been working at a larger school with parallel classes before starting her work at the multi-graded school that she teaches at today. Her basis for comparison is therefore to be considered as valid.

When having more time for each pupil, the teacher will usually also get to know the pupil better and develop a good relationship to him. Informant B also stated this fact in her interview. Hence it will also be easier to adapt the English lessons, tasks, texts and methods to each pupil when you know more about their strengths, weaknesses and interests.

As written in chapter 2.6 it is important that the relationship between the pupils and the teacher is filled with respect and trust. At the same time this is a relationship that benefits from being professional. One of my presumptions in advance of the interviews was that a professional relationship between the teacher and the pupils might be more difficult to attain at a small multi-graded school, contra in a larger school. The background for this presumption was in the relations between the pupil and the teacher that will happen outside of school as well. Attaining a professional relationship was however a factor that was just briefly mentioned by informant B, and never mentioned by informant A. I can thereby assume that this issue might not be as significant as I first thought. In adapted teaching a close relationship seems to be an advantage independent of how strictly professional it may or may not be. I will discuss the issue of relationships of a multi-graded school further in in chapter 5.3.

Informant A found that one of the advantages of working as an English teacher at a multi-graded school, was that she had the possibility to use the diversity of the group to a larger extent than in a homogeneous age groups. In her classroom there would always be both at least one tenth grader and one eight grader. The pupils will most likely also be at different levels in advance. She has always found it important to promote the positive sides of the pupils, to help them discover each other's strengths. Now they all help each other and develop their language skills by communicating, interacting and listening to one another. In addition to this, they get to train their social skills. We saw that the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (n.d) stated the importance of the teacher as a role model with focus on social interactions in chapter 2.6. It seems as this set of mind is of importance, and that there is a good learning environment in the group that informant A teaches in.

I find similarities to Vygotsky and his the sociocultural theory and informant A and her teaching. As we could see in chapter 2.9.3, the sociocultural theory and Vygotski viewed sharing knowledge, using the language and communicating as essential in language learning. In addition to this, one will develop the language skills by guidance from others with more knowledge than oneself. The teacher is as mentioned important in the matter of guiding the pupils in the learning process by using his expertise. It is however reasonable to believe that it could just as well be the other pupils who could "be the expert", guiding his peers with his knowledge. The teacher's role often becomes more

passive when the pupils work in pairs or groups. The teacher will however have to take on the role as an observer, intervening in any necessary situation or to add to the pupils' information to one another when needed.

### 5.1.2 With mind on variation

Both informant A and informant B talked about variation being the key to providing the pupils with adapted teaching. Variation is important to motivate each individual at the same time as it allows them to grow and develop their English skills. As we could see in chapter 2.5.2, Report No. 31 to the Storting (2007-2008) agrees with the informants on this statement. Report No. 31 to the Storting (2007-2008) reported that adapted teaching means variations in tasks, methods, sources, themes, intensity and in organization.

Informant A emphasized the fact that her pupils ought to use the English language to a larger degree and more varied when she focuses on variation of the teaching. This however means that she has to use more time planning her English lessons. The school that informant A works at focuses on content and method rather than on the textbooks. In addition to this, informant B did not mention planning of the lessons as a problem in relation to adapted teaching. Because of this, preparing the lessons might be a greater issue without textbooks than when the textbooks are actively used.

Not using textbooks is an effect of the organizing of the grades at informant A's school. It is a method for adapted teaching, as it would be difficult to use one English book for three age groups. Preparing varied lessons while aiming for adapted teaching is according to Drew and Sørheim (2009) more difficult when the textbooks are used, than when the teacher designs the lessons himself. The books will not be able to read the pupils, in the same way as the teacher.

Variation in the English lessons means using different methods for learning. It also means focusing on different techniques. The content must vary and the role of the teacher and the activity level of the pupil should differ from one lesson to another. For Skinner and the behaviourists the content of the lessons was the focus, and the teachers had a significant role in the classroom. For the cognitivists and Piaget, the teacher's role was more passive. Piaget found that the pupils learn better through exploring and by basing their education on interests and knowledge that already exists inside of them. If a

sociocultural approach to the teaching were to be performed, the teacher would have to take on the role as an expert. He would have to challenge the pupils and help them gain more knowledge through asking questions and guiding them in the right direction. If we are to believe my informants and Report No. 31 to the Storting (2007-2008), it is necessary to vary between all of these theories for learning and mix them to provide the pupils with adapted teaching.

### 5.1.3 With mind on textbooks

In chapter 2.5.2 I wrote that Briseid (2006) states that differentiations need to be done in order for the education being tailored for each of the pupils. There are reasons to assume that teaching without textbooks would make it easier to differentiate between the pupils. As we saw in chapter 2.8 using the textbooks is an old Norwegian tradition and the books are produced to suit all of the pupils. It is also necessary to keep in mind that the textbooks are not mandatory in primary and lower secondary school. It is the aims in the curriculum that are to be reached, hence they must be the focus in the education.

As we could see in chapter 2.7, the textbooks that are made for the English subject are propositions for how the teachers may structure and go through with their teaching. The textbooks are created with mind on the aims in the English language curriculum. As both Harmer (2003) and Drew and Sørheim (2009) accentuated in chapter 2.7, using the textbooks frequently may save the English teacher quite some time in the preparatory work. Using the textbooks might as well challenge the English teacher during the lessons. This may be especially true in multi-graded schools. The reason for this is that they have pupils of both different ages and stages in the same classroom. Informant B however used two textbooks in her teaching. The grades each used the textbooks that were designed for their age. The thought behind this is clearly that the teaching is to be more adapted for each pupil than if they shared textbooks. Implementing the use of separate textbooks in practise on the other hand might challenge the adapted teaching. It may for example take twice as long for the teacher to present two different topics in the same lesson. This can again lead to some pupils having to wait longer to get help and this may challenge the relationship to the teacher when happening frequently.

## 5.2 More individual work

As answers to what the disadvantages of being an English teacher at a multi-graded school are, both my informants mentioned the amount of individual work. The professional environment is much more narrow in smaller schools than in larger schools. There might not be more than one English teacher at the entire school and if there are more English teachers, they are most lightly to teach at different age groups. Teaching English in the primary school will need a quite different approach than if you teach English in the lower secondary school. Because of this, it will probably be difficult to cooperate with each other for planning and discussing didactical methods, topics, texts and tasks.

In chapter 2.8 Vibe et al (2009) could inform us that there is actually little teamwork among language teachers at smaller schools. In addition to this, there is also less team teaching in smaller schools with 100 pupils or less, than there are in larger schools. There is reason to discuss if the lack of teamwork is an effect of the school structure. When Vibe et al (2009) speaks about language teachers, I can only assume that they include all the language teachers, for all the different languages that are taught in one school. The English teacher would then cooperate with both the French teacher and the German teacher. I find it reasonable to question if the language teachers work less together because they teach different languages. They might find it difficult to implement each other's work to their own subject. Nevertheless, they could benefit from sharing didactical methods with one another. The French teacher might know of an amazing way of teaching grammar, and the English teacher may have a great and efficient method for working with short informational texts.

A good and established environment that facilitate for teamwork will according to Bjørnsrud and Engh (2014) lead to less individual work and less time used on preparatory work. When working in teams the teachers can share experiences and give each other feedback on matters that concern their subject. Informant A brought up the fact that the professional environment at her school is smaller than in larger schools. This leads to her working more alone, hence having to trust her own competence to a larger extent than if she could have leaned on someone else for support. She stressed the fact that this

means more work for her with planning of the lessons and adapting the teaching. Having someone to share both good and bad experiences with is always positive. As a new teacher, I can only picture that it is of significant meaning having someone to share experiences with. Planning of the English teaching, organizing of the year and correcting and grading tasks are all factors that may be affected by the lack of teamwork.

### 5.3 Small town, small school

In chapter 4.5.1 Informant B accentuated that she knows her pupils in another way when teaching at a small multi-graded school, contra at a larger school. This may naturally be linked to the fact that there are fewer pupils in each class. It may however also be affected by relationships that will occur out side of the school when living in a small town. The relationships in and out of school may be of two extremely different relations. Maintaining the professional relationship of a teacher and pupil inside of the classroom, and also as a teacher and parent will be one of the issues to process when teaching at a smaller school.

My informants both mentioned the pupils knowing each other well as a positive factor in multi-graded schools. Daring to speak another language than the mother tongue feels safer when being surrounded by people you know, Informant A stated. Daring to play more with the language was also mentioned in relation to the good relationships between the pupils.

In the smaller towns all of the pupils will normally attend to the same activities or after school events. As children and teenagers in all towns and cities, I suppose that also these ones will have conflicts and discussion. Especially when interacting to such a large extent to one another. With that said, neither of my informants brought this up as a challenge in the small multi-graded schools. I do not doubt that conflicts happen. Nonetheless, maybe the teachers at these small schools are more aware of their professional role to prevent this, or when intervening conflicts.

Informant A mentioned that she experience attitudes from others when being a teacher at a multi-graded school. She felt that she had to prove her expertise and that being a teacher at a multi-graded school might not serve the same status as in larger schools. I



can only assume that this might also have to do with the different roles in the society that one lives in. At the same time I want to remark the fact that the parents and other people in the community might question the lack of textbooks in the school. They are used to textbooks being the teaching material, and might feel that they have to trust the teacher more now that she is the one responsible for all of the content in the English lessons.

We could see in chapter 2.6 that Hargreaves had studied the perception of respect received when working in larger schools versus in smaller schools. Her findings were of different conclusion than informant A's experience of this. Hargreaves found that the respect were higher for the teachers in smaller schools than in larger schools. There is however in particular one thing that makes this comparison unreliable. The study Hargreaves has conducted is done in England. The society in England and in Norway may view the teachers and their work differently.

## **5.4 Different schools and structures**

In chapter 4.2 the number of pupils in the schools that informant A and informant B works at, were introduced. There are about 30 pupils more in the one school than in the other. 30 pupils is not a number of significant meaning in a larger school. In a small school with less than 100 pupils however, 30 pupils are quite a lot. 30 pupils actually might be crucial for the teaching to carry out different didactical methods, to get more orally active pupils and not least for the social environment at a school.

Both the schools of the informants are multi-graded. As Melheim (1998) wrote, this does however only mean that the pupils are mixed together in groups regardless of their original grade. As we could also see in chapter 2.1 the groups can be organized in several different ways. The schools of informant A and informant B had chosen to organize the school structure differently. The groups are therefore not parted similarly, and the number of contact teachers are not equal, nor are how the teachers are organized in between the grades and the groups. In addition to this, the school that Informant A works at do not lay the foundation of the teaching in the textbooks to the same degree that they do in the school of informant B.

I find it necessary to ask if the English teachers that I have interviewed are affected differently by the school structure of multi-graded schools. We know that their schools are not organized similarly. According to the data collected through the interviews there are some differences. Informant A promotes using the pupils as resources for each other's learning in the English lessons, to a larger degree than informant B accentuates. The reasons for this may be multiple. I do however wish to question if the teacher's role in the classroom, and how they value this, might have something to say for this matter. In addition to this, the reason for the distinction in facilitating the use of the pupils as resources, may be caused by the focus on content versus the focus on methods.

Another fact that is important to accentuate here is that they organize their teaching differently. The school that Informant A works at have chosen to not to let the textbooks control the lessons. The school that informant B works at use separate textbooks for the grades in English, the English lessons are nonetheless performed in groups. They both however have only got one teacher present in the English lessons. It seems to me that the teaching in the English class of informant A points in the direction of sociocultural and cognitivistic at times. The teaching in informant B's English class however leans more towards a mixture of sociocultural and behaviouristic. They both however stresses variation as a tool to good teaching, and I do not doubt that they both have found methods to accomplish this in their own English class.

The answers to the questions of Informant A and informant B were in general however surprisingly similar to me. One thing they both brought up at several occasions during the interviews was that they valued the small groups at the multi-graded schools. They both described this by saying that they got more time for each pupil and they get to know all the pupils very well. The pupils show them both their positive sides as well as their negative ones. Knowing them well also lead to both of the informants feeling that it is easier to adapt the teaching to the pupils.

## 6 Conclusions

I asked “to what extent do the school structure of small multi-graded schools affect English teachers and their work?”

During the interviews I asked my informants if they had reflected upon the degree that the school structure of multi-graded schools affects their English lessons. They both seemed to agree and gave me exclusively positive answers. “More time for each pupil”, “Smaller groups that again gives me the possibility to give the pupils more adapted teaching”, “Tighter bond to each pupil”, “the possibility to use the pupils as resources in class”. Then I asked my informants whether they find it more challenging to teach English at a multi-graded school contra other subjects. Neither of my informants viewed it as more difficult to teach English than other subjects. Actually, the answers were rather that it might be easier than e.g. teaching math where every step builds upon each other.

Discussing the theory that I have found with the answers I got from my informants does not make me doubt the fact that it may be easier to teach English contra other subjects at multi-graded schools. At least, it is probably not more difficult. Discussing the answers that the informants have given me with the theory from chapter 2, does however make me see numerous matters that affect the English teachers and their work at multi-graded schools.

Firstly, they use much time working individually. Not only are language teachers at small schools the group of teachers who practices the less teamwork in Norway. There is usually few or no other person in the teacher staff that teaches English. They have to trust themselves and that the work they are performing is good. They usually cannot lean to anyone else for support when the issue is specifically for the English subject, and not a general school matter. Both long term and short term planning may take longer as a result of having to do it alone.

The English teachers are also affected by the school structure because the pupils attending the groups typically are at very different levels in English. The group will have up to three or four different ages in the same classroom at all times, and maybe even more if the number of pupils is extremely small. The knowledge of English can vary

significantly from one pupil to another. There might be one pupil in the class who speaks English fluently with an amazing vocabulary. If the group had been of a greater size, the chances of someone else also having great abilities in English would have been higher than in smaller groups. This affects the teacher because he has to help all the pupils develop their skills, not only the average pupil.

The English teachers are however also affected positively by the school structure at multi-graded schools. The groups will normally be smaller in multi-graded schools than in larger schools. This will give the teachers a great opportunity to spend more time on each of the pupils, and get to know their strengths and their weaknesses. In addition to this they will often know their pupils from more private settings as well. In smaller groups it is often more obvious who speaks English fluently and who can barely understand easy questions. The teacher then has to accentuate the strengths of every pupil, and build a good learning environment in the English classes.

There are several aspects of this study that could be interesting to do further research with. My research has found quite a few aspects of the English teachers and their work that is affected by the school structure of multi-graded schools. It would have been interesting to look further into the teamwork, or the lack of teamwork among English teachers at smaller schools. I am curious of the reason for this group of teachers performing less teamwork. It would also be of interest to see if it would have been possible to change this, and if so, would the pre-work of the English lessons and the long term plans be any easier to do? Another aspect that would have been meaningful to research further is varied English teaching, possibly even without English textbooks. More studies on this field might encourage teachers to try this method of teaching, even if they do not have any co-workers teaching the same subject as themselves to discuss with.

Informant B informed me that “every teacher in every subject just works with what ever they got”. As far as I can see this statement is true for the English teachers at multi-graded schools. They are affected both positively and negatively by the school structure of their schools. The important thing is however that they make the most of what they got and provides the pupils with the best education possible.



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## 8 Appendix

### 8.1 Interview guide

#### **Intervju guide**

Mitt navn er Tonje Kiil Bartholdsen. Jeg er 25 år og studerer master i lærerutdanning 5.-10.trinn, der hovedfaget mitt er engelsk. Jeg har en samboer og sammen har vi to barn, ei på 6 år og ei på 1,5 år. Jeg kommer fra ei lita bygd i Finnmark som heter Øksfjord. Jeg bodde i Øksfjord fra den dagen jeg så dagens lys frem til jeg skulle begynne på videregående skole og måtte forlate redet. Etter dette har jeg bodd i tre andre bygder og byer.

Jeg har gått på store skoler og små skoler, store klasser og i små klasser. Jeg har gått i klasse med bare jevn gamle, men også sammen med kullet over og under meg. Det var likevel ikke før jeg hadde vært i praksis både på skoler med tradisjonell klasseinndeling, på baseskole og på observasjon på fådelt skole, at det virkelig slo meg hvor store forskjellene er. Jeg hadde tidligere bare sett de ulike inndelingene fra en elevs perspektiv, men fikk nå et innblikk i hvordan de ulike strukturene kan oppleves fra en lærers ståsted. Nå bor jeg igjen i Finnmark hvor det finnes svært mange små bygder med fadelte skoler, dermed blir dette temaet særlig aktuelt for meg personlig.

Masterfaget mitt er som nevnt engelsk, og det er dermed her fokuset mitt vil ligge. Jeg skal altså skrive masteroppgaven min om hvordan det er å undervise i engelsk på fådelt skole. Jeg ønsker å se på utfordringer med denne typen skolestruktur i engelskfaget, hvordan og når problemene oppstår og på hvilken måte de eventuelt kan løses. For å få et valid bilde av dette temaet tenker jeg at jeg må snakke med faktiske engelsklærere på fadelte skoler, jeg ønsker derfor å gjøre noen intervjuer på henholdsvis rundt 30 minutter.

Informantene mine vil naturligvis fremstå som helt anonyme i oppgaven min og svarene vil ikke kunne spores tilbake til en spesifikk lærer på noen som helst måte.

Informantene vil få tilgang til mine analyser og funn i forbindelse med intervjuene, og også den ferdige oppgaven dersom de ønsker dette. Jeg ønsker også å understreke at hvert intervju også vil foregå på informantenes prinsipper, skulle det derfor dukke opp spørsmål som ikke ønskes å besvares er dette helt greit.



Jeg vil veldig gjerne ta lydopptak av intervjuene, samtidig som jeg også ønsker å ta notater dersom jeg skulle anse dette som nødvendig. Lydopptakene vil oppbevares trygt når oppgaven utformes og vil bli slettet når oppgaven er bestått.

Med vennlig hilsen  
Tonje Kiil Bartholdsen

**Intervju spørsmål:**

- Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv?
  
- Hvor lenge har du jobbet som engelsklærer på fådelt skole?
  
- Har du jobbet som engelsklærer på skoler med annen struktur?
  - o Evt. hva er de største forskjellene?
  
- Hvordan løses undervisninga ihht. læreplanmålene og at alle elevene kommer igjennom alle målene?
  
- Tror du det er noen spesielle fordeler eller ulemper for spesielt sterke eller svake elever i engelskfaget, når de går på fådelt skole?
  
- Har du noen gang reflektert rundt dette, i hvor stor grad det har noe å si for engelskundervisninga at du jobber på en fådelt skole?
  
- Hva anser du som de største fordelene ved undervise i engelsk på fådelt skole, kontra en skole med annen skolestruktur?
  
- Hva anser du som de største utfordringene ved å undervise en gruppe i engelsk på fådelt skole, kontra en skole med annen skolestruktur?
  
- Tror du det er mer utforende å undervise i engelsk på fådelt skole, kontra andre fag?

- Finnes det noen spesifikke situasjoner eller lignende der det kan være spesielt vanskelig å undervise i engelsk på fådelt skole?
- Har du innarbeidet noen smarte løsninger eller forhåndsregler for å unngå situasjoner som gjerne kan oppstå?

## 8.2 Approval from NSD



Kristin Killie

9006 TROMSØ

Vår dato: 21.11.2017

Vår ref: 56936 / 3 / STM

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### Forenklet vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 31.10.2017.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>56936</i>	<i>Å undervise i engelskfaget på fådelt skole</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>UiT Norges arktiske universitet, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Kristin Killie</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Tonje Kiil Bartholdsen</i>

### Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, vurderer vi at prosjektet er omfattet av personopplysningsloven § 31. Personopplysningene som blir samlet inn er ikke sensitive, prosjektet er samtykkebasert og har lav personvernulempe. Prosjektet har derfor fått en forenklet vurdering. Du kan gå i gang med prosjektet. Du har selvstendig ansvar for å følge vilkårene under og sette deg inn i veiledningen i dette brevet.

### Vilkår for vår vurdering

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet
- krav til informert samtykke
- at du ikke innhenter [sensitive opplysninger](#)
- veiledning i dette brevet
- UiT Norges arktiske universitet sine retningslinjer for datasikkerhet

### Veiledning

#### Krav til informert samtykke

Utvalget skal få skriftlig og/eller muntlig informasjon om prosjektet og samtykke til deltakelse.

Informasjon må minst omfatte:

- at UiT Norges arktiske universitet er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon for prosjektet
- daglig ansvarlig (eventuelt student og veileder) sine kontaktopplysninger
- prosjektets formål og hva opplysningene skal brukes til

*Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.*

- hvilke opplysninger som skal innhentes og hvordan opplysningene innhentes
- når prosjektet skal avsluttes og når personopplysningene skal anonymiseres/slettes

På nettsidene våre finner du mer informasjon og en veiledende mal for [informasjonsskriv](#).

#### **Forskningsetiske retningslinjer**

Sett deg inn i [forskningsetiske retningslinjer](#).

#### **Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet**

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endringsskjema.

#### **Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet**

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

#### **Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt**

Ved prosjektslutt 15.05.2018 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

### **Gjelder dette ditt prosjekt?**

#### **Dersom du skal bruke databehandler**

Dersom du skal bruke databehandler (ekstern transkriberingsassistent/spørreskjemaleverandør) må du inngå en databehandleravtale med vedkommende. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se [Datatilsynets veileder](#).

#### **Hvis utvalget har taushetsplikt**

Vi minner om at noen grupper (f.eks. opplærings- og helsepersonell/forvaltningsansatte) har [taushetsplikt](#). De kan derfor ikke gi deg identifiserende opplysninger om andre, med mindre de får samtykke fra den det gjelder.

#### **Dersom du forsker på egen arbeidsplass**

Vi minner om at når du [forsker på egen arbeidsplass](#) må du være bevisst din dobbeltrolle som både forsker og ansatt. Ved rekruttering er det spesielt viktig at forespørsel rettes på en slik måte at frivilligheten ved deltakelse ivaretas.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt med oss dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Vennlig hilsen

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren