

Hild Rakstang Betten

## Lean on Each Other

Peer Respons in Second Language Writing  
Development

Master's thesis in Fag- og Yrkesdidaktikk og Lærerprofesjon -  
Studieretning Engelsk og Fremmedspråk

Supervisor: Lise Vikan Sandvik

May 2020



# Abstract

Peer response is a method of assessment which can be useful as a tool to enhance learning in the classroom. This research is based on a qualitative case study with focus on the students' perception of peer response and how peer response can impact the students' development in English writing as a second language. Peer response was used as a tool for the development of writing competence through portfolio assessment in a group of students with limited prior experience with peer response. The research findings indicate that the students perceived peer response as an educational and constructive method, and they experienced that they developed their texts through the peer-response. The students had mainly a positive attitude towards peer response. This finding is supported by previous research from all around the world. This research also indicates that students prefer oral peer response as formative assessment during the writing process to written teacher response and that they prefer peer response on content and teacher response on grammar, structure, and spelling. The theoretical foundation of this research is grounded in a socio-cultural perspective, previous research about peer response and assessment in second language writing and writing competence.

# Sammendrag

Medelevvurdering er en vurderingsmetode som kan være effektiv for å øke elevenes læring i klasserommet. Denne forskningen er basert på en kvalitativ kasusstudie hvor fokuset er elevenes oppfatning av medelevvurdering og hvordan medelevvurdering kan påvirke elevenes utvikling av skriferdigheter i engelsk som andrespråk. Medelevvurdering ble brukt som et verktøy i elevenes skriveutvikling gjennom et prosessorientert arbeid hvor elevene hadde minimal erfaring med medelevvurdering. Forskningen indikerer at elevene oppfattet medelevvurdering som et nyttig og konstruktivt verktøy, samt at de utviklet tekstene sine gjennom tilbakemeldingene de fikk fra sine medelever. De fleste elevene i denne forskningen hadde et positivt syn på bruken av medelevvurdering. Tidligere forskning på medelevvurdering og skrivning i andrespråk støtter opp under disse funnene. Forskningen indikerer også at elevene foretrakk muntlig elevveiledning fremfor skriftlig lærerveiledning i den formative prosessen av et skriveprosjekt. Elevene foretrakk også å få veiledning fra medelever på innhold og lærerveiledning på grammatikk, struktur og rettskriving. Det teoretiske grunnlaget i forskningen er bygget på et sosiokulturelt perspektiv, teori om skrivekompetanse og medelevvurdering, samt tidligere forskning.

# Preface

At the beginning of this process, I had difficulty choosing what I wanted to research. I wanted it to be relevant in my work as a teacher. During this process, we had a subject at the university about the assessment, and during this course, I saw the benefits of using the students as each other's assessors. So, a big thanks to my supervisor Lise Vikan Sandvik for helping me to choose a topic and narrow it down. Furthermore, to keep me on my toes through working with this master.

Also, I want to thank my friend Kari Anne for being patient with me during this time and even bringing me to her cabin to force me to write. Thank you to my daughter who made this last semester bearable through doing all the chores at home and babysitting for her brother, so I had the time to write. Furthermore, I want to thank Geir for allowing me to use a room at his office as a study room while the study hall at the university was closed.

Moreover, a huge thanks to Marte and Minna, who helped me with the language and used several hours reading through my master and pointed out all the mistakes I had made.

I could not have done this without you all, so thank you for giving me the opportunity and being patient with me this last year. It has been an exciting and educational journey.



# Table of contents

Figures .....	7
Tables .....	7
1 Introduction .....	8
1.1 Background .....	8
1.2 Research questions .....	9
1.3 The context of this research .....	10
1.4 English language teaching in the Norwegian Curriculum .....	11
1.5 Clarifications and definitions .....	12
1.6 The structure of this paper .....	12
2 Theory of Research .....	14
2.1 Oral peer response in socio-cultural theory.....	14
2.1.1 Mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding.....	14
2.2 Peer response .....	16
2.2.1 Involving students through peer response .....	16
2.2.2 Peer response vs teacher response .....	18
2.2.3 The context of giving and receiving peer response.....	19
2.3 Writing competence in second language writing .....	20
3 Methodology .....	24
3.1 Ethical consideration and validity .....	24
3.2 Participants and data .....	25
3.2.1 The process of peer response .....	25
3.2.2 Interviews.....	26
3.2.3 Students' texts .....	27
3.2.4 Survey .....	28
3.3 My role as a researcher .....	29
4 Analysis and Findings .....	31
4.1 Analyses and findings of the interviews .....	31
4.1.1 Students' perception of peer response.....	34
4.1.2 Students' writing process and development of writing skills using peer response .....	35
4.1.3 Students perception of teacher response versus peer response.....	36
4.2 Analysis of the students' texts and findings .....	38
4.2.1 Changes from the first draft to the second .....	39
4.2.2 Changes from the second draft to the third draft.....	40
4.3 Analysis and findings of the survey .....	43

4.3.1	Students' perceptions of peer response .....	43
4.3.2	Students perception of learning outcome in writing English through the use of peer response .....	44
5	Findings across the different datasets .....	46
5.1	Students' perception of peer response.....	46
5.2	Students' development of writing skills through peer response .....	46
5.3	Students' perception of peer response versus teacher response .....	47
5.4	Students negative perception of peer response .....	47
6	Discussion .....	48
6.1	Modelling peer response in the classroom .....	48
6.2	Students perception of peer response .....	49
6.3	Students writing process and development of English writing competence through peer response.....	51
6.4	Students' perception of peer response versus teacher response .....	54
7	Conclusion .....	57
7.1	limitations and implications .....	57
7.1.1	Limitations .....	57
7.1.2	Methodical limitations.....	58
7.1.3	Implications .....	59
7.1.4	Implications for practice .....	59
	References.....	61
	Appendix .....	65



# Figures

Figure 1: Hillocks' plans and processes in composing .....	21
Figure 2: A modified version of Hillocks' plan and processes in composing .....	22

# Tables

Table 1: Summary of the research period .....	10
Table 2: Interviews.....	26
Table 3: Number of words in each draft.....	27
Table 4: The survey .....	28
Table 5: Examples from the empirically close coding.....	32
Table 6: Students' perception of peer response. Example of the grouping of codes.....	33
Table 7: Changes made after peer response on content .....	39
Table 8: Changes after peer response on grammar, spelling and structure .....	41
Table 9: Changes made by the students after peer response.....	42
Table 10 Students perception of giving peer response.....	43
Table 11: How pleased were you with the response you got from your peers? .....	44
Table 12 the students' perception of peer response .....	44
Table 13: Question about what the students learned from giving peer response .....	45

# 1 Introduction

English is an important language in our global world where people communicate across the borders. Teaching English as a foreign language can be challenging, but also exciting and educational. I have been working as an English teacher for several years, and during this period, I have experienced both myself, and my colleagues struggle to manage time. Peer response might be saving time for the teachers, but more so it benefits the students by requiring and allowing them to take a more active part in their learning process (Topping, 2009). The purpose of this study is to become familiar with the students' perception of peer response. Additionally, I seek to unveil whether peer assessment in a Norwegian junior secondary school can have an impact on the development of these students' writing competence. As a language teacher, I know from experience that while the students wait for the formative response from their teacher, the writing process tends to halt. A teacher is only one person, and it takes time to assess texts and give proper feedback to all the students. A teacher will most likely always sense a lack of time – time for preparations, time for assessments and time to see and acknowledge every single student in every single session. By conducting research and learning how to use peer response, it can in time become a part of the curriculum and ease the time pressure on teachers while continuing to allow students to receive a formative assessment in order for them to develop their writing skills.

## 1.1 Background

In the Norwegian school, students at the lower secondary level are between the age of 13 and 16 years old. In other words, they are in their early teens. The purpose of teaching is for the students to develop their cognitive skills and develop higher mental structures (Langseth, 2009). The learning outcome is one way of measuring the success of teaching. Teaching English as a foreign language requires awareness and the ability to acknowledge that all learning is a process that can be challenging yet exciting, both to the teacher and the students. To benefit from this process, receiving continuous feedback is essential for the students to progress and develop their writing skills (Bijami, Kashef & Nejad, 2013). In this thesis, I explore the use of peer response as a tool in formative assessment. "Peer feedback can complement teacher and self-feedback and is a useful strategy to promote students' learning and to help them improve their writing" (Lee, 2017, p. 83). I aim to explore how it can help students, both as assessors and assessees, to develop a more profound knowledge of the language which they are studying

Research such as that of Burner (2014); (Burner, 2019) implies that Norwegian schools have had an insufficient focus on assessment as a method of improving students' learning process. Most often, teachers prepare lessons without involving the students in either learning goals or assessment (Sandvik, 2011). According to the Norwegian "Educational Act 3-1" from 2009, the students are entitled to both formative and summative assessment in learning English as a second language. Furthermore, they are entitled to be informed of the learning goals and to be included in the assessment process. The Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (UDIRd, 2006) states that

assessment literacy can be understood as the use of methods, different kinds of assessment and assessment result, development of a language for assessment, and the coherence between goals and assessment (Fjørtoft & Sandvik, 2016). The concept of student involvement is beneficial to the learning environment as well as an incentive to motivate and enhance learning outcome, which again may improve the measurable results. Involving the students in the assessment process at an early stage can motivate them further (Solberg & Solberg, 2011). Involving the students in assessing each other can be an element in the motivation for learning.

Leitch et al. (2007) conducted a study among students in elementary school in Northern Ireland about which kind of feedback the students felt was most useful to them. One of the assessments they preferred was formative peer assessment without grading, and they wanted to be involved in the process of assessment. The students increase their level of knowledge by assessing each other's work and are more open to give and receive feedback if they are involved in the process. Through involving the students in creating the assessment goals, the students gain a deeper understanding of the assignment and through peer assessment, reach a higher level of knowledge. Another research done by John Hattie (2007, in Smith, 2009) emphasizes the importance of students' involvement in assessment to achieve a higher level of knowledge. He found that if the students were involved in the assessment process, they were not only more motivated, but it also increased their level of knowledge (Smith, 2009). How assessment competence is perceived is a direct reflection of the learning environment. In both macro and micro perspective, we have several cultures and subcultures mapping the climate for change and willingness to learn and implement new methods of learning. In order to optimize the use of a new method, it is important to take the time needed to understand its purpose and criteria before implementing.

In my experience, the use of peer response as part of the formative assessment in learning a second language varies from teacher to teacher. According to Burner's (2016) research, peer assessment was new to the teachers in his study. Nevertheless, there was a broad consensus among them regarding the benefits of using peer assessment in developing students' writing competence as the students became more involved in the whole writing process. The students need practice and guidance in order to be equipped to give a quality response to their peers. Through this practice and guidance, they might prove to be equally as efficient as a teacher. Some researchers claim that in certain settings, the students respond better to assessment from their peers than from their teacher (Yu & Lee, 2016).

## 1.2 Research questions

After having decided on the topic, I spent some time shaping and re-shaping my research questions. My focus was to unveil whether the students actually saw any use in peer response and if so, whether it consequently would gain footing in their written work. To limit my findings in this research project, I chose to focus on the students' perception and how students can develop their writing competence in English as a second language.

My research question for this thesis is: How can peer response have an impact on the students' development of writing competence in a lower secondary school in English as a second language?

Furthermore, in investigating my research question, I also ask the following sub-questions:

- What are the students' perceptions of peer response?
- How can students develop their ESL writing skills through peer response?
- What are the students' perceptions of peer response versus teacher response?

### 1.3 The context of this research

The focus of my study is the student's perceptions of peer response and how the students develop their English as a second language (ESL) writing skills through peer response. I have chosen to do a qualitative case study to try to find answers to my research questions. A case study is a research conducted in a context where the focus of the research project occurs (Postholm, 2010).

My research is based on an educational assignment conducted in a Norwegian eighth grade ESL classroom over five weeks. The teachers received detailed instruction of the assignment in advance. Also, the students were given the assignment with goals and an outline of what was expected of them when. The students' assignment was to write a travel journal from an English-speaking country, and the focus in the research project was the writing and response process. The students had two hours in class weekly and could write at home between the sessions. The eighth grade was divided into three groups, so I had the opportunity to observe the same session conducted three times. The events that were conducted in the classroom are shown in the table below. The competence goals in this project are listed in appendix 1.

**Table 1: Summary of the research period**

What was done in the sessions	
<b>Week 46</b>	The students were told which country they were travelling to and wrote a mind map about their country. The teachers modelled how to give feedback on the mind maps. Students worked in groups with peers who wrote a travel letter from the same country and compared mind maps. The researcher collected: observations for the interview guide.
<b>Week 47-48</b>	Students wrote the first draft of the travel letter. The teachers modelled how to give feedback on the first draft with a focus on content. Students read the text to their peers with the same country and gave each other oral feedback on content. Research collected: first drafts and response students gave
<b>Week 49</b>	Students wrote a second draft based on the feedback from their peers. The teachers modelled how to give feedback on grammar, spelling and language. The teachers gave a mini-lesson in grammar. Students sat in groups with the same peers as the previous weeks and shared their texts. The students gave oral feedback on grammar, structure and spelling. Research collected: Second drafts and response students gave
<b>Week 50</b>	Students wrote a third draft based on the feedback from their peers and handed in the text on Google Classroom. Research collected: third drafts and interviews
<b>Week 51</b>	Students responded to the survey for the research project

The teacher's role in this assignment was to guide, model and assist the students when needed. According to Lee (2017), modelling can help students to develop the skills necessary to give a constructive response to their peers. The students who participated in this research had limited experience with peer response. Taking consideration of their limited experience, their teacher and I decided on implementing modelling of peer response. I describe my role as a researcher in chapter 3.3. The modelling was implemented in the session where the students gave each other feedback. The students were given examples of constructive response. There were three sessions with peer response. The first sessions were after they had written a mind map where the students exchanged ideas. The second was after the first draft, where the focus was giving peer response to content. The third sessions were after the second draft, where the students gave peer response to grammar, spelling and structure. The students were at different academic levels, so the teacher placed them in groups suited for this task. According to Lee (2017) "grouping can have a direct impact on the outcome of peer feedback" (p. 94). And this was taken into consideration when deciding the size of the groups.

## 1.4 English language teaching in the Norwegian Curriculum

Assessment in the Norwegian curriculum is based on the Council of Europe view on language learning (Langseth, 2009). In 2003 the Council of Europe developed a report about second and third language learning in Norway, *Language education policy profile for Norway* (OECD, 2003). The Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK06) is based on this report, and this curriculum is the foundation for the teaching plan in this research. In the Norwegian curriculum, there are four main areas in English as a second language: learning, oral communication, written communication, and culture, society and literature. In my research, I focus on the areas of *written communication* and *writing competence* in this project. The Norwegian curriculum states that to write English, one has to express ideas and thought in an understandable and meaningful way through using the English language. "The main subject area includes writing different texts in English in different situations where written communication is necessary to stimulate the joy of writing, to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge" (UDIRa, 2006). It also "involves developing vocabulary and using orthography, idiomatic structures and grammatical patterns when writing (UDIRa, 2006). The curriculum also covers creating structure, coherence and concise meaning in texts". In my research, the focus will be on several of these types of writing competence: content, grammar, orthography, structure, and concise meaning in texts.

In the basic skills, the goal of learning how to write in English is defined as "being able to express oneself in writing in English means being able to express ideas and opinions understandably and purposefully using written English. It means planning, formulating and working with texts that communicate and that are well structured and coherent." (UDIRb, 2006). There are goals after second, fourth, seventh and tenth grade in the Norwegian curriculum. In this research project, the focus will be after tenth grade because my participants are in the eighth grade. The goals the students' writing assignment focuses on are listed in appendix 2, where the main goal is how to "use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to develop one's English language skills" (UDIRc, 2006).

Research has shown that response has a significant impact on the students learning and development of knowledge (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2019a). A good response culture is motivating when learning is the goal. This is also stated in

"Regulation of the Education Act", underlining that the students should be active participants in the assessment process of their work, competence and development in the different subjects (UDIR, 2015). Peer response is not a regulated demand in the Education Act but can be used as a learning tool for the students (Langseth, 2009). Langseth also states that the feedback should be formative and constructive so that the students can help each other to develop their knowledge and be a resource for one another, while at the same time gain insight in their development and academic level. Peer assessment is also a time-saving activity for the teachers and gives the student an insight into the process of assessment to use in developing their level of knowledge (Topping, 2009).

## 1.5 Clarifications and definitions

There are some key terms I use in my research paper. These terms are defined and described in the following section.

The choice of using *peer response* instead of other terms was determined when I read the book "*Peer Response in the Second Language Classroom*" by Liu and Edwards (2018). At the beginning of the process, I chose to use the term peer assessment, but as Liu and Edwards state "the term peer response has traditionally been used to describe the evaluation of written work only" (p.2). In my research, I study the process of response during the students writing process and not the final grade they received. I study how peers can influence the students writing development in written English, and therefore I chose to use the term peer response. I choose to use the definition from Liu & Hansen (2018):

Peer response is the use of learners as sources of information and as interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume the roles and responsibilities more typically taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing (Edwards & Liu, 2018, p. 1).

In this research, *writing competence* is defined through the Norwegian curriculum where writing is one of the main competences and focuses on communication through writing both with oneself and with others (UDIRb, 2006). Learning how to write in one's first language consist of using structures and skills already known by the students to communicate through a specialized version of the language. The students use their pre-existing linguistic knowledge to learn a standardized system to communicate (Weigle, 2011). In this research, I use a definition of writing competence from the Norwegian curriculum: "*Being able to express oneself in writing* in English means being able to express ideas and opinions in an understandable and purposeful manner using written English. It means planning, formulating and working with texts that communicate and that are well structured and coherent" (UDIRb, 2006).

## 1.6 The structure of this paper

This research paper is structured with seven chapters. In chapter two I will present the theoretical framework and previous research as a foundation for the discussion. There are three main areas: socio-cultural perceptive, peer response and writing competence. In chapter three I will present the methodological choices I made throughout the process of collecting data. In this chapter I will also describe ethical considerations, validity and the participants and data in this research. The three methods used to collect data were

interviews, analysis of students' texts and a survey, and these will be closer described in this chapter. In the next chapter, chapter 4, I describe the analyses of the interviews, students' texts and survey, and in chapter five is about the findings across the different datasets. In chapter six I will discuss these findings with theory and previous research before the conclusion in chapter seven.

## 2 Theory of Research

There are several theoretical aspects to consider when researching the use of peer response to develop students' writing competence. In this chapter, I define the theoretical foundation upon which this research is built and discuss previous research in relevant fields. The discussion will construct the demarcation to the theoretical framework around the use of peer response in developing students' writing skills.

### 2.1 Oral peer response in socio-cultural theory

Oral peer response can be linked to a socio-cultural perspective on learning, where knowledge is contemplated as constructed through interaction with others and in a context (Vygotsky, 1978). Within oral peer response, language is used as a mediating tool to raise the students' level of knowledge. According to Lev Vygotsky and the socio-cultural perspective (SCT), learning is constructed best through social interactions, and second language learners will acquire a higher level of competence through learning a language in social settings and by using the language in interaction with others (Evensen, 2007; Villamil & Guerrero, 2019; Vygotsky, 1980). In oral peer response, the students communicate through the use of language to give each other feedback, and therefore the socio-cultural theory is relevant for this research. Peer response can be embedded in the sociocultural perspective because it highlights mediation, internalization, developmental change and cultural embeddedness (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b).

Learning within the socio-cultural theory is "a social phenomenon embedded in specific cultural, historical, and institutional context" (Villamil & Guerrero, 2007, p. 25). Social interaction leads to the development of higher forms of thinking and the ability to perform specific complex skills. It begins with an external dialogic that develops the students internal-dialogic. Vygotsky (1978) believed that students learn in two situations. First, they learn in social interaction (intermental learning), and when this learning is consolidated, the students internalize the knowledge (p 57). This belief means that students acquire new knowledge in interaction with their peers and teachers before they internalize the knowledge. Therefore, using peer response as a tool can strengthen the students' process to internalize knowledge about writing in English as a second language.

#### 2.1.1 Mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Mediation is "the result of the transformation of lower forms of thinking (elementary perception, involuntary attention natural memory) into higher forms of thinking (voluntary attention, logical reasoning, planning, problem-solving) through cultural mediation" (Villamil & Guerrero, 2007, p. 26). To develop the mental skills needed, the students must develop in a social context working with peers and teachers. Mediation can be divided into three categories: mediation by others, mediation by the self and mediation by artefacts (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). Peer mediation is an important factor for students' internalization and development. Vygotsky stated that

We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is



interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's developmental achievement (Vygotsky 1978, p.90).

Through the use of language as a mediation tool in a social context, like peer response, the students can develop their competence within *the zone of proximal development* (ZPD). Through the use of oral peer response in developing writing competence, one can say that the students can achieve an increased level of knowledge. Mediation is highly dependent on the use of language, and to be able to operate at a higher level of the intellectual stage, the individual must internalize external actions. This internalization is done through the ZPD. ZPD is the gap between what a student can do on its own and what he or she can do with some help from a teacher or peers (Vygotsky, 1980). Learning happens within the ZPD, and it is important to give the students assignments which develop their knowledge and expand the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1980). Through working with peers and teachers, the students develop within the proximal zone of development and increase their level of knowledge. In peer response, the students can help each other to reach an increased level of knowledge through working within their ZPD to increase their writing skills in writing English (Watanabe, 2008).

Students have different academic strengths in various aspects of writing, which makes them experts in their area and help their peers acquire more advanced knowledge about writing (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). *Self-regulation*, *other-regulation* and *object-regulation* are three dimensions in how students acquire new knowledge. The first stage, object regulation, is when the students are focused on objects and are controlled directly by the environment. The second stage, other-regulation, is where the students are regulated by someone more knowledgeable in a social activity. The third stage, self-regulation, is where the students have conscious control over their attention and can regulate their learning (Ellis, 1999). Peer response is other-regulation. What the students learn and which changes they make in their texts is how the students use the other-regulation and transfer it to self-regulation (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). According to Villamil and Guerrero (2019), this process is in a socio-cultural perspective where the students adapt knowledge about their own writing process through the use of peer response in developing writing skills. Through peer response, the students use each other as experts to help the novice learner to transfers from other-regulation to self-regulation. Scaffolding is also a key aspect of the learning process.

In this research, scaffolding is defined as the support students receive from their peers to develop their language writing competence (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Through identifying/knowing the students' level of knowledge and adapting this level into the assignment, the students can develop their skills through working with their peers (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). One can use scaffolding, not only when an expert helps a novice learner, but also between peers to expand the ZPD (Hyland, 2019). Peer response is a social context where students learn from each other and give feedback using scaffolding within the ZPD and work even though there are no experts or novices (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 24):

The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge.

This statement can be transferred to oral peer response, a practical activity in which the students interact with each other and develop their writing skills through speech. In this research, I view the process of developing knowledge as an interaction between students and in a context (Vygotsky, 1986). Peer response is an activity that bases the learning on social interaction and developing of knowledge through the use of the language. In peer response students work together and build each other's knowledge through guiding and using the language as a mediation artefact. Even though Vygotsky does not specifically mention peer response as an activity, it can be linked to the response process of using instructions within the zone of proximal development to lead the students to expand their knowledge in writing English (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Even though there are many aspects of the socio-cultural perspective that are essential when discussing the effect of peer response in developing students writing skills, some are more valuable to answer my research questions. The language as a mediation tool in developing students' knowledge within the zone of proximal development is crucial when discussing oral peer response. When students work together, they use scaffolding to reach a higher level of knowledge through working together. Other terms I implement further in the discussion is other-regulation and self-regulation. The long-term goal of peer response is to give the student a tool to correct their errors (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). All these terms will be discussed further on in the discussion to answer my research questions.

## 2.2 Peer response

This thesis investigates the students' perception of peer response and how peer response can have an impact on students' development of writing competence in English as a second language. In the following paragraphs, I begin with a more general theoretical framework of what response is and continue with previous research on peer response. In this literature review, I refer to both the term response and assessment because the response is only a part of an assessment. According to Liu and Edwards (2018), both peer response and peer-assessment are terms where students take part in the evaluation of peers' work. However, peer response is mainly mentioned in terms of formative written work while peer assessment is the whole assessment process, as mentioned in chapter 1.5.

According to Hattie and Timperley (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), assessment is "information provided by an agent regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (p. 81). They further state that feedback is given to a student's performance to fill the gap between the student's actual level of knowledge and the aimed level of knowledge in writing. Feedback can be formative (during the process) or summative (after the assignment is completed). Peer response can be a useful tool in the formative assessment to improve the students learning (Fjørtoft & Sandvik, 2016; Sandvik, 2011). They further state that when a teacher masters the use of proper formative assessment the teacher has to diagnose the knowledge the student possess, make goals and discover what is needed for them to meet these goals or how to fill the gap between the level they are at and the wanted level of knowledge.

### 2.2.1 Involving students through peer response

Studies on assessment in ESL have found that the teachers' understanding of learning goals in English as a second language can influence how the teachers educate his or her students (Langseth, 2016). According to Langseth, assessment in ESL is based on the

learning goals of the Norwegian curriculum, and many teachers base their teaching and assessment on the guidance for exams. This phenomenon can make the assignment teacher-guided instead of involving the students in the development of new knowledge. More student involvement in the classroom can increase the students understanding of what is expected of them (Sandvik, 2012). Further, studies have investigated how peer response can be a valuable tool to involve the students more in developing their competence in English writing (Rollinson, 2005). The response should be cohesive between the student's assessment, and the teachers work with the local curriculum. Furthermore, research shows that through thorough work with the local curriculum, the students reach a higher level of competence and a better understanding of their own learning process (Langseth, 2016). The students adapt to the response they receive, and therefore both the students' and the teachers' understanding of the learning goals has to be the same.

Peer response can be used as a tool in the process of giving a formative assessment. Through working together as partners throughout the process of writing, it can contribute to creating a positive environment for the students. Peer response is a process involving assessors and assesses and can give the students skills they can use for the rest of their life. Peer response is a good way of helping the students learn both as an assessor and an assessee and has a pivotal role in improving student writing skills (Bijami, Kashef, & Nejad, 2013). According to Bijami, Kashef and Nejad is peer response a handy learning tool in students' development of knowledge. The students respond better to the feedback they receive from their peers than their teacher, and, it is more effective as a formative assessment (Sandvik & Buland, 2016). Student involvement is an important element in both the learning environment and the results because it increases motivation and enhances the learning outcome of their education (Solberg & Solberg, 2011).

To involve the students in assessing each other can be an element in the motivation of learning. Leitch et al. (2007) conducted a study among students in elementary school in Northern Ireland about which kind of feedback the students felt was most useful to them. One of the assessments they preferred was formative peer assessment without grading, and they wanted to be involved in the process of assessment. The students increased their level of knowledge by assessing each other's work and were more open to giving and receiving feedback if they were involved in the process. By involving the students in creating the assessment goals, they achieved a deeper understanding of the assignment and gained a higher level of knowledge through peer response (Leitch et al., 2007). Another research done by John Hattie (2007, in Smith, 2009) emphasizes the importance of students' involvement in assessment to achieve a higher academic level. He argues that if the students were involved in the assessment process, they were not only more motivated, but it also increased their level of knowledge. Hattie also stated that assessment that makes the students accountable for both their own and their peers' education are the most valuable. Assessment can contribute to increased motivation, but it can also decrease motivation or in the worst case, make the students give up (Smith, 2009). In another study, the author describes a research project done in a Swedish lower secondary school regarding whether peer assessment can be used to be better writers in English or not (Berggren, 2015). The main ideas expressed are that peer assessment could be implemented in the process of learning the skill of writing and that the students' writing skills improved with the use of peer assessment, both by receiving and giving an assessment. Berggren (2015) bases her findings on text-based analyses from 26 student texts.

Another way of using peer response to develop students writing competence is through portfolio assessment. It can be defined as "a collection of written texts written for different purposes over a period of time" (Weigle, 2011, p. 198). In art-related subjects and first language writing portfolio assessment is widely used. When students write a portfolio, they have a collection of texts they have "had the opportunity to develop and reflect upon over a long period of time" (Burner, 2014, p. 140). Portfolio assessment focuses on process and progress and is a useful tool for working with formative assessment in the classroom, where the students have to be actively involved in the process (Burner, 2014). Portfolio assessment allows the students to develop their work together with their teachers and their peers and allows them to reflect and rewrite their text to a greater extent than just a grade. The students have to be active participants in their learning process, and portfolio assessment has its base in the process-oriented nature (Burner, 2014). Integration of peer response in the process of developing text in the production of a portfolio can be a positive element based on the fact that students should receive feedback during the process of a long writing assignment (Baker, 2016). The writing assignment in this research is part of a portfolio assignment, although this is not the focus of this research.

### 2.2.2 Peer response vs teacher response

Some of the benefits of using peer response are plentiful since there are more students than teachers. Studies have shown that peer response has cognitive gains, improvements in group work, and saves time for the teacher (Topping, 2009). Through interacting with other students and using peer response as a tool, the students take the role of a trained teacher and achieve a deeper understanding of the subject they are working with (Bijami et al., 2013). According to Watanabe (2008) learning through interactions with peers of different levels can be both positive and negative and that it not only the proficiency level that matters but also how the students interact with each other and the complicated nature of peer-peer interaction (Watanabe, 2008).

The teacher's instructions can influence the students' focus in the different stages of peer response (Edwards & Liu, 2018). The teacher can guide the students through modelling and examples in the different stages, and through this modelling help the students to be better responders (Lee, 2017). Through proper training in giving peer response, the students can give quality responses to their peers' texts (Coté, 2014; Savignon & Ho, 2007). According to Hyland (2000), the teacher is an influencer of how the students give the response to each other, and how the teacher structure and monitor a session with peer response has an impact on how the students implement peer response and impact the students' perception of peer response (Hyland, 2000). Training in peer response increases the level of relevance in the response the students give (Choi, 2014; Rahimi, 2013). This argument is relevant for my research because we modelled the peer response sessions before the students did the peer response themselves.

Using oral peer response in formative assessment can benefit the students' development through interaction with other peers and students have different preferences relying upon teacher response and peer response. Previous research shows that students are mainly positive towards peer assessment (Bratkovich, 2014; Jacobs, Curtis, Braine, & Huang, 1998) and that peer response can be easier to understand than teacher response (Zhao, 2010, 2014; Zheng, 2012). According to Jacobs et al. (1998), peer response can be less threatening than teacher response and if it is of good quality (Bratkovich, 2014). The use of face to face peer response allows the students to discuss their mistakes and responses, and previous research shows that students tend to learn more while

discussing the response face to face than just read written response (Savignon & Ho, 2007). According to Wang (2014), peer response can sometimes be more valuable than teacher response (Wang, 2014). Ho (2015) found that students prefer face to face because it is given immediately, and this helps the students in their writing process (Ho, 2015). Earlier research has also found that the use of L1 in oral peer response engages the students, regardless of the level of knowledge, the opportunity to engage in deeper engagement and helps the students to give better peer response (Savignon & Ho, 2007; Yu & Lee, 2014; Yu & Lee, 2016; Zhao, 2010).

In research about peer response versus teacher response, the findings were that peers focus more on content and teachers tend to comment more on grammatical concerns (Bratkovich, 2014; Paulus, 1999). Both peer and teacher response is valuable to a learner, though peer response often tends to focus more on meaning and teacher response on structure and grammar (Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006; Yangin Eksi, 2012). When students give peer response on grammar, they should be guided to focus on specific parts of grammar which the teacher knows will help the students to develop their writing skills further (Liu & Edwards, 2018).

### 2.2.3 The context of giving and receiving peer response

Using peer response as a development tool in the classroom, a teacher must always think about how the cultural aspect plays a role. The teacher must ask herself, for instance, how the group is dynamic, and whether the students are familiar with give critics to other students, or if they only give positive feedback. Berg (1999) found in her research that students improve their text based on peer assessment and that proper training and involvement. A teacher must focus on the group climate and try to encourage the students to look at each other's text with critical eyes (Hyland, 2019). According to Hyland (2019), there are challenges in using peer response in cross-cultural settings; however, the advantages outweigh the drawback regarding writing competence, social development through proper training and peer review sheets. Overall peer response can enhance the students' development of writing skills in English as a second language "and is a useful strategy to promote students' learning and to help them improve their writing" (Lee, 2017, p. 86).

According to Lundstrom and Baker (2009), students learn more from giving response than receiving the response and that peer response foster self-reflection and self-revision for the writer. The result of their study was that student who gave peer response gained a higher level of knowledge than students who only received peer response (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). According to Liu and Edwards (2018), peer response to content should be after the students have written their first draft. The focus of different topics in different peer response sessions can be valuable to allow the students to focus on one topic at a time. As I have done in the execution of the assignment given to the students, they focused on content after the first draft and grammar, spelling and structure after the second draft. The most valuable time to give peer response to grammar is before the final draft (Liu & Edwards, 2018).

Peer response can be divided into two modes: traditional modes and technology-enhanced modes (Edwards & Liu, 2018). Since this research project focuses on face to face response, I only focus on traditional modes which include written feedback as well as oral feedback face to face. The challenge with face to face response is the time limit set by the schedule of the classroom. This challenge can make the peer response limited because of the time limits set by the teachers (Edwards & Liu, 2018). In face to face peer

response, the students are divided into groups of two to four. One of the benefits is that the students can clarify what they mean and have a conversation about both the given response and what the author thought when he or she wrote it (Edwards & Liu, 2018). In this research project, the students were in groups of four and conducted face to face peer response.

## 2.3 Writing competence in second language writing

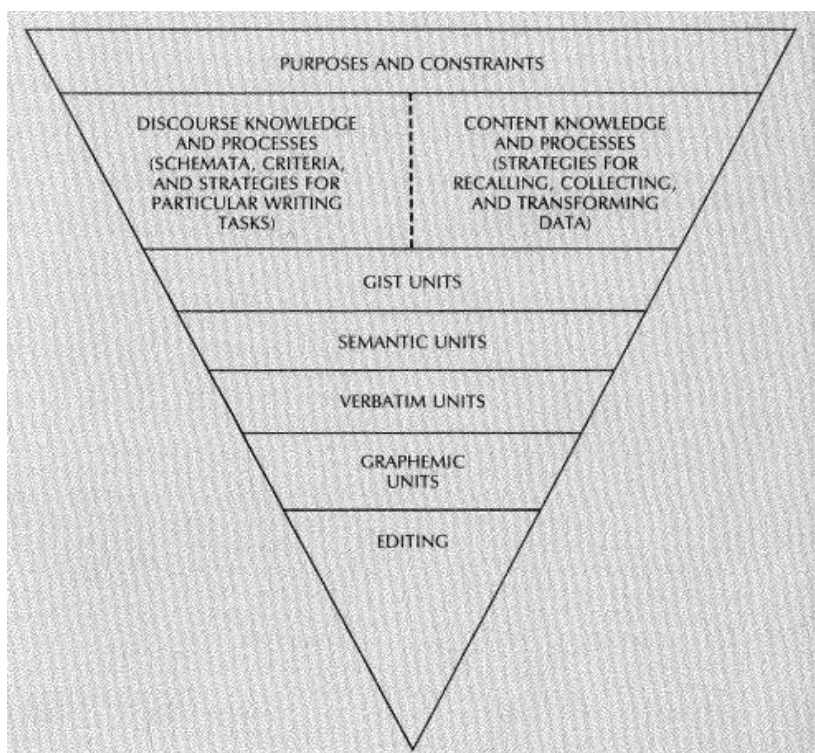
Writing competence in second language writing is an essential element in students' English education. The focus on writing competence is important in my research because I will, later on, analyse texts written by the students to see how they have improved their writing through peer response. I begin by defining the development of writing competence in light of a socio-cultural perspective before I define what second language writing is and continue with writing competence and previous research on this topic. Combined, these create a theoretical background to discuss and understand my research findings.

Developing writing competence in a socio-cultural perspective, the students not only acquire knowledge about the writing process directly from the teacher or themselves, but it is socially constructed through the context or interaction with their peers and teachers (Bijami et al., 2013). To write is not just how to write the sentences grammatically or structurally correct, but also to acquire knowledge of how writing works and the importance of being aware of the contexts and whom it is written for (Sandvik, 2011). Writing competence in this research is defined as development in both form, structure, spelling and grammar. Different social and cultural contexts influence the students and have an impact on the individual student's development. It is a non-linear, spiral process. It can be communicative, functional and contextual (Sandvik, 2012).

According to Hyland (2019), the term second language writing is used when referring to "writing done in a language other than the writer's native language(s)" (p. 2). He also states that second language writing is not just what is done, but also what is produced, taught, analysed and learned. A good writer knows who the reader is and works with the text to make it as understandable as possible for the reader (Drew, 1998). When acquiring competence in a new language, writing is an important skill and learning to write can be a process where the students learn in interaction with each other. Burner (2019) carried out a study in 2016 about the use of portfolio assessment as a formative assessment in developing writing competence in English as a second language (Burner, 2019). He found that peer response in the process of developing a written text in English was beneficiary for the students in their development of English writing competence. Previous research on second language writing has been mainly focusing on correcting errors and individual writing instead of how to use formative assessment to improve the students writing competence in English as a second language (Burner, 2019). Burner suggested that there is a need for more research about the use of students' involvement in the process of formative assessment in English writing in Norway. This research is a contribution to research on how peer response can be used as a tool in developing English writing competence through formative assessment. Berggren (2015) conducted a research in a Swedish lower secondary school regarding whether peer assessment can be used to improve students writing competence. She found that peer assessment can be implemented in the process of developing the skills of writing and that students writing competence improves with the use of peer assessment, both by receiving and giving assessment (Berggren, 2015).

Writing competence can be understood as having a general knowledge and understanding within a language and manage to structure it correctly and can consist of different types of writing, from forming the letters to writing an academic text. Hillocks (1987) challenged the pure "process" as an effective mode of writing instruction in L1. Through 500 experimental treatment studies in L1 composition, instruction Hillocks had three focus areas: duration of instruction, mode of instruction and focus of instructions. He found that there was no connection between the duration of instruction and that the environmental mode was the most effective way for the teacher to plan activities that would result in a higher level of learning for the students. This mode includes «specific, structured, problem-solving activities, and tasks with clear objectives; multiple drafts and peer revision are a part of the classroom activity, but explicit criteria for evaluation are considered» (Dyer, 1996, p. 314). The sessions are mostly spent in small groups and individual task completion and leave the teacher lectures to a minimum. Hillocks also found that the focus of the instruction when it came to grammar, traditional grammar teacher was ineffective, while inquiry and the use of scale, sentence composing, and models were very effective in learning grammar.

As illustrated in figure 1, Hillocks´ (1987) plan of processes in composing consists of different levels of the writing process and shows that these are hierarchical. Hillocks comments on the fact that the writing process is a stop-review-start again process where the teacher is a guide for the students. This view can be transferred to peer response where the students are guides for each other instead of using the teacher. Hillocks focused on writing in students first language, although it can be transferred to second language writing because writing in the second language is also a process based on the same principals as described in figure 1. According to Dyer (1996), "the idea is that students naturally learn to write by writing, and that the more they write, the better writer they become" (p. 313), and this apply to both L1 writing and L2 writing.

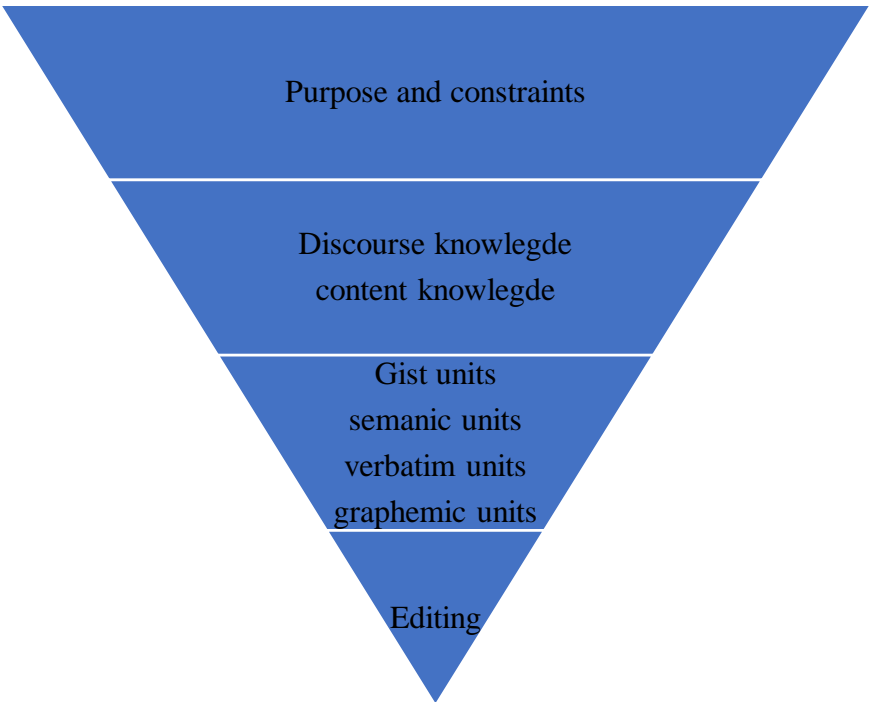


**Figure 1: Hillocks´ plans and processes in composing**

The first trapezoid is purpose and constraints, and it influences the rest of the levels. The focus of purpose and constraints is who the reader is, and it changes as a result of the students' thoughts and writing process. The second level is divided into sections with content knowledge and process and discourse knowledge and processes, and these two are intertwined. The first one "has to do with recalling and transforming content" (Hillocks, 1987, p. 72), and the second is about how the students know how a text should be but struggles to make it happen. Gist units are how the students know what to write within the frame that is given, organising the content. Semantic units, verbatim units and graphemic units are all about the orthography and how the students represent the content. The last level is editing and involves, for instance, correction of spelling, grammar, restructure of syntax.

Hillocks have been used to analyse how teachers respond to students' written texts (Kronholm-Cederberg, 2009), and it highlights the importance of the context and is not just useful in the developing of writing in students first language but also when they are working with a foreign language. The situated contexts are important, and this can also be transferred to peer response. Through teacher modelled peer response sessions, the students have a context where they focus on the different areas of Hillocks' plan and processes in composing. The first level for the students is to focus on the content and develop each other's skills in writing English.

In this research, I chose to divide Hillocks' plan and processes in composing into four parts related to the response sessions, as shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2: A modified version of Hillocks' plan and processes in composing**

I chose to modify Hillocks' model because the students conducted three sessions of peer response. The different response sessions were based on Hillocks' plans and processes in composing where the students' focus in the first session was on purpose and constraints, the second sessions on discourse knowledge and content knowledge and the



third session were on language, grammar and structure. According to Hoel (2000), Hillocks' plan and processes in composing can be used in the response process (Hoel, 2000). She uses all the seven steps. However, I chose to simplify it and make only four stages, where the fourth is the editing process, to be able to discuss my findings in the light of this model. This model is relevant for my research question because through the use of Hillocks' model as a guide the students will know what to focus on when in the peer response sessions.

## 3 Methodology

To limit this research, I chose to do a qualitative case study in a Norwegian English lower secondary school. A case study is a research method where the researcher uses already existing limitations for whom the study will include and exclude (Tjora, 2017). A case study gives a detailed description of the phenomenon and context, and in this case, the phenomenon is explorative activities at school in a limited period. In a case study, the researcher gives a detailed description of what is studied, and its context and it can sometimes be challenging to separate the different variables from the context (Postholm, 2010). A case study design allows me to study the students in their ordinary environment. This research is also multiple-method because my findings will be based upon interviews, text analyses and a qualitative survey. In this chapter, I present the ethical aspects, the data collected in this study and I also reflect on my role as a researcher.

### 3.1 Ethical consideration and validity

In a research project where personal information is necessary, it has to be approved by NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste), an archive for research data and a convey of data and data services to the research community. It is owned by the Ministry of Education and serves as a competence centre guiding the researchers in topics such as data collection, data analyses, method, privacy policies and research ethics (Tjora, 2017, p. 262). This project is approved by NSD as valid research.

NESH (2016), the national research ethic committee for social science and humanities is one of the three national research ethics committees in Norway. Their main focus is to give knowledge to researchers and students about the ethical aspect of the research. This is done through ethical guidelines that are obligatory for the researcher to follow. The guidelines are mainly an aid for the researcher and focus on relevant parts the researcher has to consider (NESH, 2016). The main areas of the guidelines are regarding the consideration of the participants, groups or institutions, research society, task research, and how the researcher convey the findings.

Research with participants under the age of 15 years old requires a focus from the researcher on ethical issues. One of the ethical elements is collecting consent form from the parents (appendix 3). In this study, 25 of 66 students' parents gave consent for their child to participate in the study. The consent form included information about the intention of my study, who would access the information collected, how the information would be collected and that in the final paper, there will be used pseudonyms. I also notified the parents that all the information collected will be confidentially handled and that all the data will be deleted after the project was completed.

Another ethical issue in qualitative research is for the researcher to be objective and not bring his or her presumptions into the analysis (Tjora, 2017). As a teacher using peer response in my teaching, I must be aware of my presumptions and work around them to be as objective as possible. I also have to consider that the data was collected at my school, however in another class. This can affect my result because I know the teacher, and even though I developed this assignment, she moderated it to suit the class.

## 3.2 Participants and data

The group of participants in this study is 20 out of 66 eighth grade students in a Norwegian English lower secondary school. The research data consists of interviews with a survey and written student texts. To limit the study, I chose to focus on six students' texts and interviewed four of them. The students participating were chosen randomly by their English teacher. I also surveyed 19 of the 20 students. The students conducted three modelled sessions with peer response. In the text analyses, I chose to focus on texts in three versions from the six students. I chose to interview only four students because two of the students were sick the day of the interviews. The students conducted the writing process in their ordinary classroom and worked in groups created by their teacher. The interviews were conducted in separate rooms next to their classrooms.

### 3.2.1 The process of peer response

The focus of my research is to analyse how they developed their text – based on the response given to them by some of their peers – and their perception of peer response, and not the specific assignment given to the students. The data was collected over the time of 5 weeks with two sessions each week. Through the process, I was an active observer in the classroom. I both taught, guided and observed what the participants actions in the process (see chapter 3.3 for my role as a researcher). In each response session, their teacher and I modelled how it could be done. We had made an example text which we modelled a response session with and changed it during the process. According to Liu and Edwards (2018), this is a way of guiding the students to focus on specific responses at specific times in the process. There were three response sessions, first on the mind map, second on the content and third on grammar, structure and spelling. The students had an overview of the process through an information sheet they received at the beginning of the process. Throughout the writing process, the students worked in groups of 4 or 5, and they were working with a travel letter from the same country (appendix 4). They worked in the same groups throughout the whole process. Since the students wrote individual texts, they worked on their own between the response sessions. During each response session, I followed three groups of students with four students in each group. The feedback they gave each other formed the foundations for the questions I asked in the semi-structured interviews after they had completed the process. I chose to analyse six texts in three versions and interview four students.

In the response sessions, the students were in groups of four or five, and they were told to focus on one paragraph at the time. In the first response session, with a focus on content, the students shared their document with the rest of the group and read their first paragraph out loud. The others responded orally, and the student who received feedback made comments in the text about changes the peers suggested. The next student then read out loud, and this went on till the session ended. In the second session of peer response, with a focus on grammar, spelling and structure, the students read each other's texts and gave oral feedback. It was the same procedure as in the first round of response, with a focus on one paragraph at a time. Through analysis of the texts, I saw that the students did not have time to receive feedback on more than the first paragraphs of the text, both in the first and second round of response (see chapter 4.2). Since I had limited time to conduct my research, I did not have the time to continue with the peer response at a later stage.

### 3.2.2 Interviews

In this research, I have conducted two interviews (groups of two in each interview) with totally four students after a period of working with peer response. I chose to use a semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview has an interview guide. However, the participants' answers allowed me to interact with them outside only following the interview guide. (Postholm, 2010). The interview guide (Appendix 5) contained the main questions, although I asked follow-up questions during the interview. The main questions were based on the observation I had done throughout the process and previous theory about peer response and writing in second language writing. In this sort of interview, the researcher is not entirely aware of which answers the participants will give, and which direction the interview will take (Postholm, 2010).

**Table 2: Interviews**

	Interview 1 (Eva and Hanna)	Interview 2 (Mark and Frank)
Time	9 minutes and 11 seconds	9 minutes and 14 second

Table 2 shows how long the interviews were. In the interviews, the aim was to make the students tell me their perception of peer response (see chapter 4.1 about the interview data). I had made an interview guide, although I also asked follow-up questions that were not in the interview guide. Since the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, the students could focus on what to say, not how to say it. Examples of the questions in the interviews are:

“What did you think of working like this in English?”

“What is the difference between the response you receive from your teacher and the response you receive from your peers?”

“What is your experience of working with peer response?”

“What did you do with the response you got?”

I also chose to have a focus group interview because the goal of the interview was to figure out the students' thoughts about peer response and if they felt they had improved their writing skills or not through the use of peer response. A semi-structured interview is focused and short, consequently it does not allow the participants to talk about much other than the specific topic, and the researcher must define the topic in advance (Tjora, 2017).

To analyse the interviews, I have chosen a stepwise deductive, inductive approach (SDI) for my analysis (see appendix 1). In this approach, a researcher has to work in stages, from raw material to concepts or theories (Tjora, 2017). Both theory and empirical data are processed in a nonlinear method to figure out how the empirical data and earlier research and theory can be combined. This method can be associated with Grounded Theory, where the researcher uses their empirical data to find new theories (Fejes & Thornberg, 2015). In my thesis, I do not create any new theories because the project is limited to only one case study with a limited number of students, and therefore an SDI analysis will be more suited for this research. SDI also fits my study because it is a method to have systematic progress and a balance between working with empirical data

and theory. Through using the SDI analysis, I can base my research from a theoretical perspective (Tjora, 2017). Qualitative analysis is not a linear process but rather a dance where the researcher has to go back and forth several times to discover the findings and categorize them. There is a distinct difference between analysing through the collection of data and analysing the collecting data. The most important parts of the process are sorting, categorizing and reduction (Postholm, 2010).

Sorting is a way of finding structure in complex empirical data and making sense of which part of the data material belongs in which category (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2015). To find a structure, I have to organise my material both during the collection and after the data collection is done (Tjora, 2017). Sorting my material is to categorise the themes that are the same and code the sequences that contain the same issues. To find valuable categories, I had to become familiar with my material and work with the sorting process both during and after the collection. In SDI, the coding is inductive empirical-based coding, where I used terms that were already used in the empirical data (Tjora, 2017). This process made it easier for me to read the codes and understand what the participants were talking about; nevertheless, with this method, the number of codes can be massive. The categories were developed through the process and when I saw what my material told me. When coding in the SDI method, the purpose of the first coding was to become familiar with the material and have empirically close codes. This process created a lot of different codes, and in the next step of the process, I had to make grouping codes. The goal of this way of coding is to reduce the influence of presumptions and theories (Tjora, 2017).

### 3.2.3 Students' texts

In this section, I explain how I went forth analysing the students' texts. I have analysed three drafts of six students' texts. Text analysis is in this research project used to understand the development in the students writing skills through reading and analysing the text and my understanding of the development through peer response.

Table 3 presents the number of words the students changed when rewriting after peer response to illustrate how they developed their texts throughout the writing process. In analysing the texts, I did not only analyse the number of words changes but also what they had changed regarding content from the first draft to the second and grammar, structure and spelling from the second draft to the third. The number of words can illustrate how the students developed their texts after receiving peer response.

**Table 3: Number of words in each draft**

	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6
1 <sup>st</sup> draft	633	455	640	689	479	946
2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	1088	810	744	733	703	1013
3 <sup>rd</sup> draft	1108	811	782	781	777	1013

Analysing students texts can in a qualitative approach be divided into three sections: the first dimension where the writer is studied and what he or she wants to communicate through his or her text, the second dimension where the focus is shape and content and the third dimension where the texts are analysed concerning the social interaction (Fejes & Thornberg, 2015). In my study, the focus will be on the changes the students made

between the response sessions. Additionally, I focus on whether they have made changes according to the response they have received from their peers. In this research, my main focus will be within dimension two, where the focus is on how the students have improved their texts both in content, spelling, grammar and shape and discuss my findings according to Hillocks' plan and processing in composing (see figure 1 in chapter 2.3). When analysing texts, I have to be aware of the context in which they are written (Tjora, 2017). In this research, I have chosen to focus on the students' development throughout the writing process, through the use of peer response as a formative assessment.

### 3.2.4 Survey

There is not much in the literature about qualitative surveys; however Jansen (2010) defines it as «The qualitative type of survey does not aim at establishing frequencies, means or other parameters but at determining the diversity of some topic of interest within a given population» (Jansen, 2010, p. 3). The focus of a qualitative survey is to provide examples of significant variations amongst the students, not count who has the same characteristics. In my study, I use the survey to support my findings in the interviews and text analysis based on more students.

In the qualitative survey (appendix 6), the focus was on the students' perceptions of peer response and the process of using peer response to develop their writing skills. I chose to have mainly multiple-choice questions to collect various types of data to shed light on the research question.

**Table 4: The survey**

Number of answers (20)	Number of questions (11)	
19	Multiple-choice	Short answers
	8	3

The survey was conducted after the students had ended the writing process. The survey consisted of 11 questions where eight were multiple-choice, and three were short answer questions (table 4). 19 of the 20 participants answered the questions. The survey was conducted by their teacher in an English session after completed "Christmas Around the World". The focus in the survey was the students' perception of peer response, and examples of the questions are:

"What is your perception of giving response to other peers' texts?"

"What was easiest to give peer response to?"

"What did you think of working with English writing this way?"

The short answer questions were follow-up questions where the students could elaborate on what they had learned and what they thought about using peer response as a method in learning English writing. I chose to survey in Norwegian. After all, it is their first language, allowing the students to write more freely without looking for words when answering the survey.

### 3.3 My role as a researcher

During the five weeks as the students worked with “Christmas Around the World”, I was an active observer which involved teaching alongside their teacher in the modelling sessions and observing the students in the peer response sessions (Postholm, 2010). I was available for questions during the process of giving and receiving peer response but tried to be as passive as possible. In a qualitative study, there is a close relationship between me as a researcher and the participants (Postholm, 2010). For more valid results, the participant has to be treated with respect, and the researcher has to be aware of his/her role during the data collection period. My data collection was after the writing project for the students were conducted, and during the project, I was an active participant in the classroom while I was observing. The interview guide was based on my observation in the classroom. As an active observer in the study, there are some ethical aspects the researcher must consider—for instance, the integrity of the participants during the research. The researcher must also attempt to be objective in the analysis, and the participants must also know the researcher’s role in every situation (Postholm, 2010).

My data collection consisted of interviews with four students, analyses of six students’ texts and a survey. Since I was interviewing youths, who knew that I was collecting data, I had to be aware not guiding them into giving me the answers I wanted and instead allow them to say what they wanted to say. I had to make them realize that what they said were important to me, and doing so by listening (Postholm, 2010). I chose to interview the students two and two to allow them to discuss together and so that they could lean on each other if they were not sure what to say. Some of the difficulties when interviewing eight grade students are that they can be shy and quiet and that they only answer what they think I want them to answer. In this case, the students seemed honest. They even disagreed with each other on some questions during the interviews, especially when it came to whether they had learned most from giving or receiving the response.

After my data collection, I analysed the interview. I had to be objective in my analysis of the data material and not be influenced by my assumption of what I would find. Another important case is the participants’ rights to be anonymous (Postholm, 2010), and I chose to have pseudonyms to not reveal their identity in my paper. I chose to use the SDI method for analysing the interviews because I then had to focus on what the material told me and not focus on what I thought I found. The method of close empirical coding made me see something other than what I expected to see. Even though I had made some categories before I began the analyses, I had to discard them and make new ones based on the data material I had. The categories were about what I thought before, although they were more based on the empirical data I found, rather than my presumptions.

Because I was an active participant during the writing process, the students knew who I was, and this seemed to make them more at ease in the interviews. I had to take into consideration that the students knew that I was a teacher at another level at school, though the students seemed to adapt to my role quickly. At the beginning of the process, the students turned to their teacher instead of me for help. After a few sessions, however, they treated me at the same level as they did to their teacher. This observation

showed me that when being a researcher in a qualitative study, it is not always easy to distinguish between the roles in different situations. When I was observing their peer response sessions, I told them that they should not think about me being there. In the first sessions, the students turned to me for help if they needed. I encourage them to talk to each other and rely on their peers' knowledge, and in later sessions, they hold the conversation, and they did not turn that much to me for help.



## 4 Analysis and Findings

The methods used to collect data to execute the analysis is interviews, texts analyses of the students' texts and a survey completed by 19 students. To analyse my interviews, I have used SDI (stepwise deductive inductive) analysis (Tjora, 2017). In the texts' analysis, I have marked changes done from the first draft to the second draft and from the second draft to the third draft. In the survey, the focus was on the students' perception of peer response in developing their writing skills in English as a second language. The theoretical foundation is in a socio-cultural perspective where the language is used as a mediating tool to enhance learning in the zone of proximal development with the transition from artefact regulation and social regulation to self-regulation (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). I have chosen to analyse the three different components of my data material separately and combine them in my discussion in three main areas: students' perception of peer response, students writing process and development of writing skills through peer response and students' perception of peer response versus teacher response

### 4.1 Analyses and findings of the interviews

The interviews were conducted in a group room next to the students' ordinary classroom. I had two focus interviews with two students in each interview. The two interviews lasted respectively 9 minutes and 11 seconds and 9 minutes and 14 seconds (table 2). I chose to conduct and transcribe the interviews in Norwegian because this is their first language and research shows that students express their thoughts more comfortably in their first language (Savignon & Ho, 2007; Yu & Lee, 2016; Zhao, 2010). The interviews were then translated into English. Therefore, the students' statements in this analysis are my translation from Norwegian to English. I began with codes worded similarity to what the students worded themselves. This coding was then as close to the empirical findings as possible (Tjora, 2017). Some of the codes were relevant for my thesis, and some were irrelevant. Through this process, I became more familiar with my empirical material. Table 5 shows an excerpt of my empirical codes.

**Table 5: Examples from the empirically close coding**

Encoding	Interview
<p><b>Liked to receive a quick response and talk to someone</b></p>	<p>Me: What did you think about working in groups and give feedback to each other then?</p> <p>Mark: I thought it was better to give it to each other than waiting for the teacher to give</p> <p>Frank: And it was nice because then you could talk to someone and get tips from them about what to do and stuff</p>
<p><b>With teacher, one has to wait, and with peers, one gets it immediately</b></p>	<p>Me: What is the difference between receiving feedback from the teacher and peers then?</p> <p>Mark: When you receive it from the teacher you have to wait until the whole class get feedback and when you receive it from a peer you can get it straight away</p> <p>Frank: That was what I was going to say</p>
<p><b>Liked to receive oral feedback</b></p>	<p>Me: How was it to talk together and sit with those you gave feedback to then?</p> <p>Eva: I thought it was better than receiving it written on classroom like... because then you can explain more</p> <p>Hanna: Yes, maybe you can... (Both talking and challenging to understand what they are saying)</p>
<p><b>Learned both from giving and receiving response</b></p>	<p>Me: What did you learn most from? Giving or receiving responses?</p> <p>Hanna: I think both like...</p> <p>Me: Both?</p> <p>Hanna: but I feel... maybe mostly giving response</p> <p>Eva: I think the opposite. Like... when I received responses like... then it is not always I saw what I had done wrong myself like uhh...</p>

From the two interviews, I ended up with 52 empirical close codes. In the process of coding, I had to ask two questions for each code to ensure that the codes were empirically close codes and not just represented organized empirical data.

1. Could the code be produced *before* the coding process?
2. What does the code *itself* tell us? (Tjora, 2017)

I answered these questions by looking at my data material and my empirically close codes and found that they could not be produced before the coding process and that the codes told me what the participants had expressed during the interviews.

At the next stage, I categorised the existing empirical codes. The number of codes (52) made it impossible to provide a structure needed in qualitative analysis (Tjora, 2017). After empirically coding my material, I grouped my codes. This process made it easier to understand my material, and I ended up with 14 groups of codes. Table 6 illustrates how I grouped the codes about the students’ perception of peer response. The following is an example of how I organized my codes in the categories of my research data.

**Table 6: Students’ perception of peer response. Example of the grouping of codes.**

Liked working with peer response	Like to receive an oral response from peers immediately	Felt they learned both from giving and receiving peer response	Better to give a response on content rather than spelling	Like modelling and to know what to give a response to when
Fun to work with English this way	Like to get oral feedback from peer	Felt they learned both from giving and receiving peer response	Easiest to give response to content	Learned to focus on the positive and correct errors
Liked this method of working with English	Positive towards oral peer response and to get help from more than one peer		Harder to give response to grammar than content	Knew what to give response to when
Liked to work this way	Liked to get response immediately			Liked that teachers modelled response
Better to work like this in English and to get help from peers				
Liked working like this				

After categorising the empirically close codes, I ended up with three categories relevant to my research question:

- Students' perceptions of peer response
- Students' writing processes and development of writing skills through peer response
- Students' perceptions of teacher response versus peer response

In the following paragraphs, I present the finding within the three categories.

#### 4.1.1 Students' perception of peer response

The students' overall perception of peer response was constructive, and a work method they appreciated. There were 18 empirically close codes related to students' perceptions of peer response. Since the students had not worked with peer response before this project, they had no assumptions about the method before the assignment began.

There were several statements from the four students indicating that they found peer response useful when learning English as a second language. I began both interviews by asking what they thought about working like this in English. All four students answered that they liked it and used positive adjective like good, interesting and constructive to describe it. Eva and Hanna were straight to the point and answered that they thought it was a lot better than what they were accustomed. When I asked what they thought was better, Eva said:

"I thought it was better to hear what others thought, and when the teachers do it, they only write it. And to hear it from more than one person and stuff."

At the beginning of the interview, Mark and Frank were more interested in the topic they had worked with and that they learned a lot about their country and what the traditions were there. After asking some follow-up questions, they also commented that it was valuable to receive an immediate response because then they could continue the process of writing faster. These comments show that using peers in the process of response, allows the students to receive a response when they are in the middle of a process, which again gives them tools to progress and develop their writing skills. One of the last comments from Eva was that "this was fun". Two of the students began and ended the interview with positive comments on the project and working with peer response.

Eva and Hanna emphasized that the oral peer response was better than the written one, as they saw value in sitting in groups being able to explain and ask questions.

Me: How was it to sit together and talk together with the peer you gave feedback to then?

Eva: I thought it was better than it just is written in Classroom because then you can... like... explain a bit more.

Hanna: yes, maybe you can... (they talk at the same time and it is challenging to hear what is being said)

Here the two students were eager to talk about the topic and enthusiastically interrupted each other making it difficult to catch what was being said.

All four students also agreed that content was easier to give the response to than grammar, spelling and structure. In the interview with Mark and Frank, Mark commented:

"I thought it was easiest to give response to content because I was unsure whether it was correctly written or not".

Frank agreed, and they both nodded. Eva and Hanna also commented that it was easier to give the response to content rather than grammar, spelling and structure.

Frank and Mark agreed that giving response on content was easier than giving response to grammar, spelling and structure, and they thought a combination of both teacher and peer response would optimize their texts. When I asked Hanna and Eva about the same, they agreed that they thought it was easier to comment on content. This view indicates that students were more confident to give a response to how they could improve the content of a text and that they are still novices and uncertain about grammar, structure and spelling. The students show reflection on their level of knowledge and that they felt peer response to be useful in developing and improving their writing competence.

In the interview with Mark and Frank, I asked them what their perception of giving and receiving a response to their peer was. They had comments such as "I thought it was nice because then you could talk to someone and get advice from them about what you could changes and stuff.". On the notion of giving response Frank answered: "It could be difficult sometimes because it is not always you see what is wrong, but it was fun to read others' texts and get some tips and stuff." They were both felt they had learned something from working with peer response, though they were not clear whether they preferred to give or to receive a response.

#### 4.1.2 Students' writing process and development of writing skills using peer response

The students found peer response to be a constructive tool in their development of writing skills. They felt they had learned something and improved their texts after receiving peer response. There were eight empirical codes in my interviews about their writing process and the development of writing skills through using peer response. The students were eager to share their thoughts about what they had learned through using peer response. Some of the students felt they had learned from both giving and receiving and some more from one or the other.

Me: What did you learn most from? Giving response or receiving response?

Hanna: I think both.

Me: both?

Hanna: But maybe I learned most from giving response actually

Eva: I actually think the opposite, because when I received the response it is not always, I know what I had done wrong myself. Like...

After these comments, they did not want to talk more about the topic. However, they both agreed that they had learned from working with peer response and that it had improved their texts. Later in the interview, I asked them if they had learned something from reading their peers texts.

Me: Did you learn something from reading some of your peers' texts and give feedback to them?

Hanna: Yes, because in a way you could see more your own mistakes when looking at others and then maybe think than I have the same mistakes.

Eva: Yes

Both parts of the interview indicate that the students reflected on their learning outcome of using peer response in the development of writing competence. Even though they disagreed in what they learned most from, Hanna and Eva agreed that they easier could find errors in their texts after giving response to their peers. They were both active in the conversation when talking about what they had learned, which indicates that the students preferred to develop their texts through peer response and that they felt they developed their writing skills in the process. I then asked Hanna and Eva if they thought they learned most from giving or receiving the response. They disagreed on this question. Both Eva and Hanna focused on what they had learned about writing in English during the process. When Mark and Frank were asked what they had learned through peer response, they were more focused on the response than their development and writers in English. Like Mark said when I asked him what he had learned from giving response: "Maybe that you have to say something positive too, not just tell them what is wrong". Mark and Frank were not so eager to talk about their development however they wanted to focus on the process of giving the response. Mark and Frank confirmed that they had learned from the process; however, they were not able to concisely express what they had learned.

When we talked about what kind of changes they had made after receiving peer response, Eva gave me a clear answer when she said: " hmmm... I wrote a new chapter from a new date because I received feedback on that it was too big a gap between November and December. So that is the biggest at least". This answer indicates that the response groups had conversations about content and how they could develop their texts by adding more information and descriptions. Frank and Mark said that they corrected what they received a response to, and that is was mostly adding names of the people and descriptions they corrected. All four focused on the content, and my impression is that they felt they had improved their texts based on the Peer-response.

#### 4.1.3 Students perception of teacher response versus peer response

Overall there were 12 empirically close codes in the interviews about teacher response versus peer response. The students talked about having to wait when they received a response from their teacher as one of the differences between peer response and teacher response. They also reflected on which text parts they wanted a response from the peers and which part they wanted a response from the teacher.

In both interviews, the topic of peer response versus teacher response came up. When I asked them about what they thought about working in groups and giving feedback to each other Mark said: "I thought it was better to give each other feedback than waiting for the teacher to do it". Both Eva ´s and Marks' comment indicates that the students ´ perception of peer response was that it was preferred as they received the feedback immediately away rather than having to wait for the teacher ´s response. There were several comments throughout the interview about this topic. One of the comments from Mark was: "When you receive it from the teacher you have to wait until the teacher has given response to the whole class and when you receive it from a peer you get it straight away". A comment from Hanna was interesting when she responded to my question about what they usually do when they receive a response from their teacher:

Hanna: I have.... When we had 'Christmas Around the World', we got response from each other and then I changed the text, but when I have gotten response from the teachers, I have not done that many changes in my text.

She would not elaborate on this; however, later in the interview, she said that they usually did not receive that much response on their first drafts. Hanna's statement indicates that she preferred peer response to teacher response because she was able to do changes in her text. However, it can also indicate that she did this because she got the response when she was in the writing process and not long after the process was ended.

In both of the interviews, the students mentioned the time it took to receive a response from the teachers. They commented that oral peer response was constructive because they got the feedback immediately. Eva stated that:

Eva: I thought it was better to hear what others thought, and when the teachers do it, they just write. And to hear it from more than one person and stuff.

Eva stated that it was better to receive an oral response because then they could explain more, while Frank and Mark agreed that when they received an oral response from their peers, they could quickly begin to improve their text. When I asked Hanna and Eva about how it was to receive an immediate response, Eva answered: "It is so much better, because then you do not forget it, and I can easily forget things". This response indicates that the students like the method of talking to each other and discuss how their peers' texts could be improved as they received an immediate response.

The students also expressed that they wanted both peer response and teacher response. There was consensus regarding the challenges on rewriting or altering a text after feedback from their teacher. The main challenge was because of the time delay due to the teacher having to respond to the whole class. In the interview with Mark and Frank, they were asked directly what the difference between teacher response and peer response and their answers were:

Mark: When you receive feedback from the teacher you have to wait until the whole class have received and when you receive it from a peer you get it straight away

Frank: That was what I was going to say.

They agreed that it was best to receive an immediate response. Eva and Hanna agreed. This agreement indicates that the students prefer to receive the response immediately and that in the process they prefer to receive peer response because they understand that the teacher is just one person and it takes time to give the response to the whole class.

When the students were asked if they preferred peer response or teacher response, they all agreed that they wanted both. When I asked Mark and Frank what they preferred, they answered:

Me: What do you prefer? (follow up question after a talk about teacher response and peer response)

Frank: A bit of both. Because if you get help with the grammar then maybe you also learn it, but when you get help with the content it can make you texts even better.

Mark: It would probably be nice if we could receive one response from the peers where they talk about the content, and then the teacher can deal with the rest of the stuff.

In the interview with Eva and Hanna, they agreed with Mark and Frank:

Eva said: the teacher responds more to tenses and stuff, and maybe some spelling errors, while the students' comments more on content and stuff

Hanna: mhm (while nodding)

All four students agreed that they like peer response on content. Furthermore, they preferred feedback from the teacher on grammar, spelling and structure. This view indicates that the students rely more on the teacher response on grammar, spelling and structure than from their peers.

To summarize this section, I mention the main findings. The students were not familiar with peer response before this process, though all four students who were interviewed commented that peer response was constructive and helpful in their writing process. They preferred that it was done orally and that they got the immediate feedback as opposed to the teacher response where they had to wait for the teacher to assess all the students' work. The students also appreciated that they could talk together in groups and ask if they were unsure about the feedback they got. They liked that the peer response was oral compared to the teacher-written response. All four commented that they wanted peer response on content and teacher response on grammar, spelling and structure. They also talked about that they changed their texts on content after peer response and that they like this way of working with developing their writing skills in English.

## 4.2 Analysis of the students' texts and findings

When analysing the students' texts, I have chosen to focus on the three versions of the text and not the mind-map, they gave the response to in the first session of peer response. I made this choice because I wanted to focus on the finished product and examine which changes the students had done in these texts. Therefore, there will only be a focus on the two sessions between the first and second draft, and the second and third draft. This process produced three versions of the text for me to analyse. The coding was done by marking whether the changes were content (yellow) or grammar, spelling and structure (pink). The analyse is done with three versions of six students' texts. These texts were not produced only for this research, as they were also a part of the portfolio the students handed in at the end of the semester. In the examples from the students' texts, I have chosen to present the changes the students made in italics. In the first part of this chapter, I analyse the changes the students made between the first and the second draft of their text. The focus of the response was content. The students were told to look for sentences that could be improved by adding an adjective and how the students could make their texts more descriptive. They were to focus on how comprehensible the texts were and if there were something the student could add to make the text better and more alive. The second part of this chapter is about the



changes the students made between the second and the third draft. The focus of the peer response was grammar, structure and spelling.

#### 4.2.1 Changes from the first draft to the second

When the students gave a response to each other's first drafts, they were told to give the response to one paragraph at a time. This requirement was to make sure all students got a response to parts of their texts. They were told to focus on content and how to improve the texts by making the content more descriptive and graphic, for instance, and using adjectives and describe the weather, persons and places.

**Table 7: Changes made after peer response on content**

What	How many changed or added sentences					
	Text 1 Hanna	Text 2 Kari	Text 3 Mark	Text 4 Frank	Text 5 Eva	Text 6 Heidi
What can you say more about?	1,5 pages added.	35	12	5	25	6

As shown in Table 7, two students (Kari and Eva) made remarkable changes in their texts, three students made some changes (Mark, Frank and Heidi), and one student (Hanna) only continued to write without taking into consideration the response she got. Hanna was sick three days during the time the students had to write their first draft, and she was told to focus on writing the text rather than focus on the changes. She chose to only focus on developing her text rather than focus on the response she received from her peers.

Some of the sentences that were changed in Text 2 (Kari) were in the first paragraph. In her first draft, she wrote short sentences and only described what she was doing and not that many adjectives and descriptions.

This year I am going to celebrate Christmas in Australia. I went from Gardermoen to a airport in Canberra. Canberra is the capital in Australia. The journe was very long an took a very long time. When I come to Canberra I met a family I should be over. I met the family for the first time at a christmas party last year. The family consist of a mother named Rose and a father named Patrick. They have two children named Rebecka and Zoe. They take me to a restaurant and then to their house. They had already decorated the house with very mutch light, it was very cozy and nice.

After receiving peer response for three peers, she rewrote this paragraph to (changes marked with italic):

This year I am going to celebrate Christmas in Australia. I went from *Oslo to Canberra*. The journe was very long an took a very long time. When I come *out of the air was it very hot. It was a big difference between Oslo and Canberra. In Oslo was it cold and here is it sunny. I look forward to see how they celebrate Christmas here when they not have snow.* When I come to Canberra, I met a family that I should be *home* to. I met the family for the first time at a christmas

party last year. The family consists of a mother named Rose and a father named Patrick. They have two children named Rebecka and Zoe. *That is a nice family I've talked a lot to.* The family took me to a restaurant and then to their house. They had already decorated the house with very much light, it was very cozy and nice. *But in the house was it not decorated even.*

The changes Kari made involves adjectives, descriptions and feelings. In the first response sessions, the students were instructed to give a response to content, and the changes Kari made indicates that her response group managed to keep that focus. Kari used the feedback she received from her peers to make changes throughout the text. She had a total of 35 sentences she had changed in her text and added 355 words from her first draft to her second draft.

Another example is from text 5 (Eva), where she has changed the sentences based on the content. In her first draft, she wrote:

They said that we have to hurry up and clean the house. They have already started, but the last thing we have to do is decorate with lights.

In her second draft, she adds:

*We're decorating with lights because Lakshmi is going to visit them. We sat at the door wide open and had a gift exchange and dice games when we waited for the goddess.*

This change made it more comprehensible for the reader why they had these customs and decorated with lights. She clarified why, and the reader gains a better understanding of how they celebrate Christmas in India.

Kari made changes through the whole text while Hanna made no changes in her text. However, she added several paragraphs. She had not completed her first draft before the response session, and this can be a reason why she did not make any changes to her already written text. Frank and Heidi changed respectively 5 and 6 sentences, and these were all in the first two paragraphs of their texts. Their changes were all about making the text more descriptive and graphic than in their first draft. Eva had 25 sentences she had changed. She had added a whole paragraph based on the peer-response. She had also used the response she got throughout her text and made the content clearer and more descriptive.

#### 4.2.2 Changes from the second draft to the third draft

In the second round of peer response, the students were instructed to look at grammar, structure and spelling. Some students had made linguistic changes from the first to the second draft. Due to the focus of this response session, I have chosen to focus on the errors corrected from the second draft to the third draft.

**Table 8: Changes after peer response on grammar, spelling and structure**

Changes	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6
	Hanna	Kari	Mark	Frank	Eva	Heidi
Capital letters	0	11	1	0	0	0
Verbs	2	6	6	0	15	0
Spelling	2	0	1	0	0	0
Date	0	6	7	6	4	0
Structure/sentences	3	4	2	3	8	0
Total changes	7	27	17	9	27	0

In the second session with peer response, the students were told to focus on spelling, grammar, specifically verb tense, and structure. Table 8 presents how many changes the students made from their second draft to their third and final paper. Kari, Mark and Eva made quite a few changes, Hanna and Frank made some while Heidi made none. Heidi was sick the day of the peer response on spelling, grammar and structure, and that could be the reason why she made no changes. The students focused on the topics: capital letter, verbs (simple past), spelling, dates and structure of sentences. These are areas of the English language the student has been working with throughout this semester.

In Eva's text, there are mostly changes in the first two paragraphs which she got peer response to, although she also made some changes throughout the text. The changes she made throughout the text were the tense of the verb, while structural changes and date were only in the first two paragraphs. Examples of changes are that she in her second draft wrote "25/12/2019" and all of the dates were changed to the correct way of writing dates in English, "25<sup>th</sup> of December". She also changed her verbs from present to simple past and some structure changes like:

Second draft: "Today I am going to meet..."

Third draft: "This day I was going to meet..."

This is an example of the students receiving peer response and making the changes in their texts according to the response they got, although she did not use all the peer response she got on her first two paragraphs in the rest of the text.

Kari and Mark were able to use peer-response throughout the texts. They both changed how they wrote the dates, changes the tense of verbs, changes to capital letters and made structural changes. Kari changes the structure of some sentences.

Second draft: "When I was 11 years old moved she and her family to Sydney."

Third draft: "When I was 11 years old she and her family *moved* to Sydney."

Kari changed the position of the verb to make the sentence better after she got a peer response. Another change she made was to write "Christmas" with a capital letter and countries with capital letters. Mark used the peer-response on how to write dates throughout the text; however, he did not change the verbs in other paragraphs than the one in which he got a response from his peers. Frank did only changes in the way he

wrote the dates throughout the text; however, he had three structure changes in the paragraphs on which he had response. Overall, five of the six students had made changes after the peer response session, and they used the peer-response to make their texts better.

I noticed when analysing the texts that some of the students had made changes in the first paragraphs of the text; however, there were not so many changes done in the rest of the paragraphs. See table 9.

**Table 9: Changes made by the students after peer response**

	First to second	Second to third
<b>Hanna</b>	Few changes from the first draft to the second draft. Non made in the written text, but she has written three new paragraphs.	Only changes in the first two paragraphs. None in the rest of the text.
<b>Kari</b>	A lot of changes regarding content. Changes throughout the text, not only the parts where she received peer response.	Changes throughout the text, not only the first two paragraphs where she received peer response.
<b>Mark</b>	Some changes regarding content. Most changes in the beginning (first two paragraphs) but also some changes in the last paragraphs	Changes throughout the text.
<b>Frank</b>	Some changes regarding content. Only changes in the three first paragraphs (the one his peers gave response to).	Few changes (only date and three more) Changes throughout the text.
<b>Eva</b>	A lot of changes throughout the text on content.	Most changes done in the first three paragraphs (the one her peers gave response to). Few changes in the last paragraphs but these are only verb tense mistakes.
<b>Heidi</b>	Some changes on content in the first three paragraphs (the one her peer gave response to). Only one change made in the rest of the text.	No changes from the second draft to the third draft.

As illustrated in table 9, Eva and Kari used the peer response in their first paragraphs and made changes throughout the text in the first response session while Frank, Heidi and Mark made changes in the paragraphs on which they received peer response and not so many changes throughout the texts. Hanna made no changes in the first text she had written; however, she wrote a longer text. This analysis illustrates the difference between the level of using the response they received into self-assessment. This difference is probably due to the case that the students used considerable time to give feedback to

each other, and most of the groups did not have time to work through the whole texts. This situation indicates that the parts of the texts that the students got peer response to having a higher number of changes than the paragraphs they had to correct themselves.

### 4.3 Analysis and findings of the survey

The survey was conducted after the students had handed in their finished paper and were done anonymously and in Norwegian. 19 out of 20 students answered all the questions and completed the survey. The survey was done to see if other students agreed with the students I interviewed and what I could read from the 18 texts (3 versions from 6 random students). The survey contained 11 questions, both short answer questions and multiple-choice questions. The questions were based on "Christmas Around the World" and focused on the students' perception of peer response in developing their English writing skills through this project. In this chapter, the question and answer will be explained according to students' perception of the process of peer response and their perception of their learning outcome.

#### 4.3.1 Students' perceptions of peer response

94,7 % of the students said that they liked to work with English as they did in "Christmas Around the World". Moreover, when they were asked why they liked it or did not like it and if they want to do this type of work again, there were answers like the following:

"I want to do it again because it was a little bit fun and it was nice to see how others had solved the assignment"

"I want to do it again because it was fun, and you learned a great deal"

"Because it is a super learning method which I learned a lot from"

"I thought it was good, but it took a long time"

**Table 10 Students perception of giving peer response**

Question	Easy	Partly easy	Both easy and difficult	A bit difficult	Difficult
What is your perception of giving response to other peers' texts?	15,8 %	26,3 %	47,4 %	5,3 %	5,3 %

As displayed in table 10, half of the students felt it was both easy and challenging; however, only two students found in a bit challenging or challenging to give the response. 42,1 % found it partly easy or easy to give a response. This finding shows that the students had a good experience in giving response and that they found something to give the response to in most of their peers' texts.

**Table 11: How pleased were you with the response you got from your peers?**

	Very pleased	Partly pleased	Not pleased at all
How pleased were you with the response you got from your peers?	47,4 %	52,6 %	0 %

One of the questions was how pleased they were with the peer-response (Table 11). The answers they could choose from were very pleased, partly pleased and not pleased at all. 47,4 % were very pleased with the feedback, and 52,6% were partly pleased. None of the students was dissatisfied with the feedback they got from their peers. Comments about what they were pleased with were:

“The feedback told me what I had to write more about.”

“I was pleased that my peers had the same country as I. So, I got a lot of ideas and input.”

“I was pleased with the feedback I received because it helped me to the text better and more grammatically correct.”

#### 4.3.2 Students perception of learning outcome in writing English through the use of peer response

When the students were asked what was easy and what was difficult topics in peer response, 66,7 % answered content as the easiest to assess, and 80 % thought structure, grammar and spelling were the most difficult to give a response to as illustrated in table 12.

**Table 12 the students´ perception of peer response**

Question	Idea	Content	Structure	Grammar	Spelling	The ending
Easiest to give response to	5,3%	63,2 %	5,3 %	5,3 %	15,8 %	5,3 %
Most difficult to give response to	15,8 %	10,5 %	26,3 %	26,3 %	21,1 %	0 %

This table shows that the students thought it was easiest to give a response to content, while they were almost equally divided between structure, grammar and spelling in their perception of what was most challenging to assess.

When asked about their perceptions of peer-response, 36,8% of the students answered that there were several responses that they could use to improve their text. 57,9 % answered that there were some responses they could use to improve their text, and 5,3% answered that they did not receive that much response. No students answered that

the response they got was neither good nor bad or that they did not receive any responses.

**Table 13: Question about what the students learned from giving peer response**

	Yes, a lot	A little bit	Some	Nothing
Did you learn something from giving peer response?	26,3%	68,4 %	5,3 %	0 %

Another question in the survey was whether the student felt they learned something from giving feedback to other peers (table 13). As shown in table 14, 94,7 % felt they learned a lot or little bit, and 5,3 % said that they learned something. No students in this survey felt they did not learn anything from giving response to their peers. Comments on what they learned from giving feedback were:

- "I learned what I could do better myself."
- "I learned that I should write more in each paragraph."
- "I learned from the mistakes others in my group made."
- "How to be direct and explain more what you want to say."
- "It helped me to think about what I could do better."
- "How to structure a text."
- "I learned how to look for my own mistakes."
- "I did not receive that much response on my text, so I do not know"

As a final question in the survey, the students were asked if peer response was a method; they wanted to do again in developing their writing competence in English. 84,2 % of the students said that they wanted to have peer response again, and 15,8 % said I do not know. No students said that they did not want to do it again. They were asked to elaborate on why they wanted to do it again or not. Some of the comments were:

- "Because it was not so hard as anticipated."
- "I would do it again because it was fun, and I learned a lot."
- "Because it is a super learning method which I learned a lot from."
- "Because it was educational."
- "I thought it was good, but it took a lot of time."
- "I did not like it that much because I feel I can develop my texts more when the teacher give response."

The students' answers in this study indicate that all the students participating in this survey learned something from working with peer response and that the students' perception of peer response was that it is something most of them want to do more often and that they learn from both giving and receiving peer response.

## 5 Findings across the different datasets

Through my analyses, I chose to divide analysis and the presentation of findings of the three data sets collected in separate chapters and sections. The main findings based on these analyses are: 1) the students found peer response to be constructive, 2) peer response is a preferred method of working with development of their writing competence in English as a second language, 3) they preferred oral peer response to written teacher response during the writing process, and 4) they preferred peer response to content and teacher response to grammar, structure and spelling. Finding three and four will be presented together. The findings will be presented using three main categories: students' perceptions of peer response as a tool in giving and receiving the response, students writing skills and development of writing skills through peer response and students perceptions of peer response versus teacher response. I have chosen to focus on these three areas, both in my findings and my discussion.

### 5.1 Students' perception of peer response

Through the interviews, texts analyses and the survey, the students found peer response to be constructive working with developing their English writing skills through using peer response in a portfolio assignment. In the survey, 94,7 % of the students found peer response to be useful and, in the interviews, the four students said that they were positive to use peer response in developing their writing skills in English. Both in the interviews and the survey the students had answered that they learned both from giving and receiving response however they commented that it was easier to give a response on content and most difficult to give on grammar, structure and spelling. This finding is also evident in the changes in their texts. There are more changes within the area of content versus grammar, spelling and structure. Since working with peer response was a new way of working with development of English writing skills, the students found it useful, and they wanted to do this again because they felt they learned considerably from it.

### 5.2 Students' development of writing skills through peer response

Through the analyses of the texts, I found that that two of the students made several changes in the content while two only made five or six changes, and one made 12 changes. The last student only added more paragraphs she had not made any changes in her written text. In the interviews, the students said that they had made changes after peer response and that they felt they developed their English writing skills through both giving and receiving the response. They also commented that it was easier to develop their texts after talking with their peers and that working with peer response made them better at developing their texts, especially within developing the content of the texts. Through the texts, I could see that only one student made changes throughout the text regarding the peer response in the first three paragraphs. Within changes from the first to the second draft, one more student did changes throughout the text while three students only did changes in the paragraphs to which they received a response. One student did no changes. However, she wrote three new paragraphs. From the second to the third draft, three students made changes throughout the text while two students



made changes only in the paragraphs to which they got peer response. One student made no changes from second to the third draft.

In the interview, the students said that they had developed their writing skills through peer response and that they felt they learned both from giving and receiving peer response. One of the students said that through reading other peers' texts, she could see mistakes she had done in her text and change it. They all agreed that they learned both from giving and receiving the response. This agreement corresponds with the survey where 100% of the students said that they learned something, a little bit or a lot from working with peer response. They felt they learned something on how to structure a text, look for their mistakes, how to explain more what they could do better both in content, grammar, structure and spelling. This perception corresponds with my analyses of the texts and what the students said in the interviews.

### 5.3 Students' perception of peer response versus teacher response

In the interviews, the students commented that they preferred peer response on content and teacher response on grammar, structure and spelling. They preferred oral peer response because then they did not have to wait for the teacher to give a response to all the students. One of the students also commented that she made changes when she got peer response. However, she did not make changes when she got a response from her teacher. The students said that it was difficult to make changes when they had to wait for a response from the teachers. On the other hand, it was easier when they got an oral response from their peers because then they were in the process of working with a text. One student commented in the survey that he or she preferred teacher response.

### 5.4 Students negative perception of peer response

Even though most of the comments from the students about peer response were positive, there were some negative comments in the survey. The findings of negative students were few, but there were some comments about peer response being time-consuming, that they did not receive enough and adequate response from their peers and that one of the students preferred teacher response. During analysing the text one student did no changes from her first draft to her second draft, even though she attended the peer response session, and one student did no changes from the second draft to the third draft.

## 6 Discussion

This research project has unveiled that students found peer response to be constructive in the process of developing their writing skills in English as a second language. In my analyses of the interviews, texts and survey (chapter 4) the findings show that the students felt they had developed their writing competence throughout the process. They also expressed some relevant reflections towards the use of peer response versus teacher response as they preferred to receive the response immediately and orally.

In this section, I discuss my research in light of relevant theories and previous research presented in chapter 2. I have divided the discussion into four categories based on my findings in the collected data material:

- Modelling peer response in the classroom
- Students perception of peer response
- Students writing process and development of writing skills through peer response
- Students' perception of teacher response versus peer response

### 6.1 Modelling peer response in the classroom

One main finding of this study is that the students were positive towards the use of peer response in developing their writing competence in English as a second language. The benefits of working with peer response are plentiful. According to Topping (2009), it has cognitive gains, improves students' ability to work in groups and economizes the teacher's time. In the process of working with peer response, the teacher plays an important part in guiding and teaching the students in developing skills to give a quality response to their peers (Coté, 2014; Edwards & Liu, 2018; Savignon & Ho, 2007).

Working with peer response in developing English writing competence was not something the students had much experience in before working with "Christmas Around the World". Therefore, their teacher and I decided to model the response process before each response session. We did this in two different ways – by using a model text and by using role-play to model a peer response sequence. Using a text model made the students aware of the different stages in the response process, and according to Edwards & Liu (2018), the teacher's influence is influential at this stage. It was important for us that the students knew what to do when and that they through proper training would be capable of giving quality response to their peers' texts (Coté, 2014; Savignon & Ho, 2007) and give a relevant response in order for their peers to use in their development of a text (Choi, 2014; Hyland, 2000; Rahimi, 2013). Based on this, we made a model text, which we developed throughout the project. The process of peer response was based on Hillocks' (1987) plan and processes in composing. Hillocks' model consists of different levels to consider in the writing process where the writing process is a stop-review-start again process where the teacher is a guide for the students. The response sessions were divided into three sessions. The process began with a mind map, and according to the modified model of Hillocks' plan and processes in composing (figure 2), it was based on purpose and constraints. The second peer response session was based on discourse knowledge and content knowledge and the third on gist, semantic, verbatim and graphemic units. At the beginning of each peer response sessions, their teacher and used

the example text and modelled how the students could give the response to each other. We chose to develop a model text to make it more visual for the students how they could give the response to each other and to give them an insight into how they could develop their texts through peer response. Through the use of the model texts, the teacher and I modelled how the students could give feedback to each other in their peer response.

In the students' texts, I saw a development in both content and grammar/spelling/structure. This finding indicates that the students responded well to the modelling of peer response and used it in their response to their peers. In the survey, the students were asked about their perception of peer response. According to my findings, 42,1 % of the students found it easy or partly easy, while 47,4% said it was both easy and difficult. This finding might be because this was the first time the students gave a response to each other. However, this shows that the students were aware of their involvement in giving peer response. It can also indicate that because of the teachers modelling, the students knew which part of the process they were expected to give a response to, and how to give quality response for their peers to improve their texts. Through modelling the process for the students, we gave them the tools to give quality feedback to their peers, and this had an impact on the students' perception of peer response and their ability to give a relevant response to their peers (Choi, 2014; Hyland, 2000; Rahimi, 2013). Also, in the interview, the students mentioned that they knew what to give the response to when and thought the process of giving and receiving response was educational and relevant. In a sociocultural perspective, one could say that the teacher and I used the language as a mediation tool to give the students the tools to enhance each other texts through scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978).

## 6.2 Students perception of peer response

Through my analyses of the survey and the interviews, I discovered that the students were mainly positive toward working with peer response and particularly working in groups receiving oral peer response. Since their prior experiences with peer response were limited, the only reference they had to this method was the work on "Christmas Around the World". Previous research indicates that students are mainly positive towards peer response (Bratkovich, 2014; Jacobs et al., 1998), and the finding in this research enhance these findings. Throughout the interviews, there were several comments from the students that they found peer response to be constructive and that they enjoyed this way of working with English writing. Eva and Hanna began the interview with comments about how they liked this way of working with English writing and that they thought it was better than what they were accustomed. Mark and Frank thought that working with this kind of project was interesting and educational and that they liked to be seated in groups to give each other oral feedback. This perception indicates that the students liked to talk to their peers about their texts and that they had a positive experience working with peer response. According to Vygotsky, this is an example of cultural embeddedness where the students prefer to work in social interaction with his or her peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In the survey, 94,7 % of the students answered that they liked this method. Comments like "...you learned a great deal", "I want to do it again because it was a quite fun and it was nice to see how others had solved the assignment" and "Because it is a super learning method and you learn a great deal" are statements that substantiate the students' affirmative perception of using peer response as a tool in developing their writing competence in English. Since the students were at different proficiency levels and it seemed that they interacted well, they took the teacher role as assessors, and according to Bijiemi et al. (2013) this can have a beneficiary effect on the students'

understanding of the subject with which they are working. An example of this was represented in the interview with Frank and Mark. They talked about how much they have learned about the country and about how interesting and educational it was to work with topics when using this method.

In this research, the students emphasised that they preferred face to face over written response. This perception confirms the result of Ho's (2015) research, where she found that students prefer face to face response because it is given immediately and helps the students in the writing process. An example of this came in the interview with Eva and Hanna when they explained that it was better to receive an oral response from their peer because they felt they could explain more. In this statement, the two students were eager to share their thought about how it was educational to receive an immediate response from their peers and that they preferred oral response over written response. The four students interviewed also commented on the effectiveness of oral peer response with more than one peer. According to Edwards and Liu (2018), this is a traditional mode of peer response where the students have face to face interaction when they give the response to each other. In the interview, the students commented that they found working with oral peer response educational and effective. They appreciated that they could sit together and talk about the peer-response, and they could discuss how they could improve their texts together with their peers. Edwards and Liu (2018) found in their study that this benefits the students' learning outcome when they could have a conversation about the response given and give the writer a chance to think and address what he/she thought when he/she wrote it. This finding is highlighted in my research through comments in the interviews with comments like "I thought it was better to hear what others thought and when the teachers do it, they just write. Moreover, to hear it from more than one person and stuff." This comment emphasises that oral response could be used to develop students writing skills and that the students prefer to talk about the text being able to ask questions and to have a conversation about the changes they could make (Zheng, 2012).

The students also mentioned that they learned from both giving and receiving the response, and this confirms the findings of Bijami, Kashef and Nejad (2013). They found that peer response had a pivotal role in the process of developing students writing skills and that the student learned from both giving and receiving the response. Both in the interview and the survey, the students' perception of peer response was that it was an enjoyable way of learning English and that they learned a lot from working with this project. As Hanna answered to my question about if she had learned something from reading her peers texts and giving response: "Yes, because in a way you could see more your own mistakes when looking at others and then maybe think that I have the same mistakes". This answer indicates that she had learned to find mistakes in her text through helping others and that she can use this in her further development of English written texts. According to Lundstrom and Baker (2009), students learn more by giving than receiving peer response and that students whom both gave and received peer response developed their texts more than those who only received. In my interview with Eva and Hanna, they disagreed on whether they learned more from giving or receiving peer response. Hanna meant she learned more from giving response while Eva thought she learned more from receiving the response. These statements represent the reflections the two students had made about their process in giving and receiving peer response and that they had learned something from working with peer response. Also, in the survey, the findings were that the students felt they learned something from both giving and receiving peer response. The students had used each other in social

interaction and used each other as scaffolders to expand their zone of proximal development (Hyland, 2019).

To motivate students for learning the teacher must involve the students in the learning process (Smith, 2009). According to Smith, the motivation increases if they feel they can be accountable for both their own and peers' development in learning and in this case, develop writing competence in English as a second language. In the interviews and the survey, most of the students seemed motivated and thought peer response was a usable method to develop their writing competence. Though in the survey, there were some comments regarding not receiving any response, and that it was too time-consuming. According to Hattie (in Smith, 2009), the students should feel responsible for both their own and other peers' development to produce quality feedback. The answers in the survey can indicate that the students did not receive a response from someone who felt this responsibility. Though on the other hand, it could be that these students were in groups where the students did not scaffold each other or had different competence levels and that they did not give each other proper response within their zone of proximal development (Watanabe, 2008).

### 6.3 Students writing process and development of English writing competence through peer response

Peer response is a process where the students work together in a social context and adopt from each other as experts. According to Liu and Hansen (2018), peer response is a valuable method of giving the students tools to develop their writing competence, both through giving and receiving. Through the analyses of the students' first drafts, I found that 5 of the students had made changes from their first draft to their second draft, the last one only added text. The students used each other to reach a higher level of knowledge of how they could improve their written texts. Seen through the lenses of socio-cultural theory, they worked in the zone of proximal development and used the language as a mediating tool to internalize the knowledge (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019).

In the survey, 94,7 % of the students felt they had learned something from giving peer response, and 94,7 % felt they received a response they could use to improve their text. These numbers indicate that the students had worked together in their peer response sessions and developed their writing competence through the use of peer response. Lundstrom and Baker (2009) found in their research that students gained a higher level of knowledge from *giving* peer response rather than just receiving peer response. One might assume that the reason why most of the students preferred to give rather than only receive peer response is that they increased their learning outcome correlated to their activity level. When giving a response, they claimed a more active role than when only receiving the response. In this research, I did not have a control group of students that did not receive or give peer response. Nevertheless, my findings indicate that the process of giving peer response lead the students to a higher level of knowledge in the process of developing writing skills in English as a second language.

On the other hand, 97,4 % of the students answered that they *received* responses from their peers that improved their texts. This finding can be related to comments from the interview when Hanna answered that she could see more of her mistakes by giving response to her peers. This perception indicates that the process of working with peer response made the students more aware of their errors by helping their peers. This perception also indicated that Hanna's peer response group were able to discuss how to

improve each other texts within the students' zone of proximal development and developed each other's level of knowledge through scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978).

However, the students did not have enough time in one session to give a response to every paragraph in the other students' texts. They were told to focus on one paragraph at the time so that all the students received some response to their text. Then they were told to use this response to improve the rest of the text as homework. According to Vygotsky, this is a step in the process from other-regulation to self-regulation (Villamil & Guerrero, 2019). In developing English writing, other-regulation is where the students are dependent on others to do changes and self-regulation is when the students manage to correct their errors (Vygotsky, 1978). Only one of the students, Kari, could use the peer response she received to improve the rest of the text after both sessions. Eva and Mark made changes throughout their texts, while the others only made changes in the paragraphs to which they received peer response. This perception indicates that there is a difference in how students use other-regulation and self-regulation. It could be natural to think that the students can transfer what they received in peer response to other parts of their texts or other texts though this is not the case for every eighth-grader in this group of students. Most of the students need other-regulation to see what to change in their texts and cannot automatically convert this knowledge to other parts of their texts. The process of transferring from other-regulation to self-regulation is different among students in a class, and my finding emphasizes this as the students in my research utilize the feedback they received differently following their level of competence. Some of them transfer the response they received in the first three paragraphs to other parts of their texts, and some only changed the parts to which they received a response. The students reached different stages of internalisation of the knowledge and were at different developmental stages before, during and after this project (Vygotsky, 1978).

By using oral peer response as a tool to develop the students writing skills, the students received the response rapidly and used the language as a mediation tool to scaffold knowledge within the zone of proximal development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Both in the survey and the interviews the students mentioned that they felt they learned something from using oral peer response and that they felt their text was better after having given and received peer response. Through using their first language, Norwegian, as the spoken language in the peer response, the students could give better responses at an academic level (Savignon & Ho, 2007; Yu & Lee, 2016; Zhao, 2010). The students also felt they could develop their texts more effortlessly when they received the immediate response, and this shows the positive effect of peer response as to the amount of work it is for a teacher to give a response to all the students compared to time spent when using the students as responders (Topping, 2009).

During the process of writing texts in the project "Christmas Around the World", the students developed their text throughout the different drafts. When only considering the amount of words changes from the first draft to the second draft (table 1), all six students had a remarkable development. In average they had added 208 words between the first draft and the second draft. When analysing what they had changed or added in content, I found that the main focus in the responses was related to making changes to describe different element better, to make the text more graphic and to raise the amount of adjective used. According to Hillock (1987), this is an important aspect of giving students the tools to acquire the knowledge to become a better writer. To develop writing competence, the students have to acquire the skills not only to write correctly but also withhold the ability to recall and transform the content after receiving a response

(Hillocks, 1987). In Hillocks' (1987) plan and process in composing; the focus of writing is mainly on content and grammar, spelling and structure come second. Hillocks' plan and process in composing is mainly focusing on teacher response but applies to peer response by looking at the students as guides. In my research, the first focus in the peer response was to give a response to the content. In both the interviews and the survey, the students answered that it was easier to give a response on content rather than grammar, spelling and structure. This process was a stop-review-start again process, and the peers were guiding each other. According to Hillocks (1987), this is the best way for the teacher to plan a writing process for the student in order for them to have an optimal learning outcome.

When analysing the students' process of developing their text in "Christmas Around the World," the focus was on three versions of the text. The first step in my modified version of Hillock's plan and processes in *composing* is purpose and constraints, see figure 2. This step will not be discussed in depth because, in this project, I focused on the development the students had made through three versions of the text and not the mind map. The first step for the students was to give the response to purpose and constraint, and this was done after they had made a mind map. According to Hillocks (1987) this is the most important step for the students. This is where the students planned and set the foundation for the text they wrote. The second level in my modified version of Hillocks' plan and processes for response is discourse knowledge and content knowledge. For the students, this is the peer response sessions on the first draft and the changes they did after they received the response. This is the level where the student gives a response to content and how the text should be (Hillocks, 1987). Hillocks studied writing in the students' first language; however, it is relevance can be transferred both to writing in a second language and peer response in second language writing through using the steps to guide the students through the writing process. In my analyses of the students' first drafts, I found that Kari made 35 changes in her text and Eva made 25 changes. As presented in the analysis (chapter 4.1.2), the changes in Kari's first paragraph was where she made the paragraph more graphic and descriptive and added adjectives. Eva also made her text more graphic when she changed from

"They said we have to hurry up and clean the house. They have already started, but the last thing we have to do is decorate with lights" to "We're decorating with lights because Lakshmi is going to visit them. We sat at the door wide open and had a gift exchange and dice games when we waited for the goddess."

This change can indicate that she used the response she received from her peers to transform her sentence into a more graphic and describing sentence and that the response given from her peers was in the second trapezoid of my modified version of Hillocks' plan and processes in composing.

When the students gave the response to their peers' second drafts, they were told to focus on grammar structure and spelling, trapezoid three in the modified version of Hillocks' figure. Five of the students made changes from the second to the third draft. This finding can be interpreted as they used the response that they received from their peers to improve their texts according to Hillocks' plan and processes in composing writing. One example of this is from Eva. In her second draft she wrote: "Today I am going to meet..." and in her third draft she wrote, "This day I was going to meet..." This change indicates that the students understood what to give the response to, and it is concerning Hillocks' plan and processes in composing.

In my analysis of the texts, I found that the students had done more changes in content and semantics than grammar, structure and spelling. According to Hillocks (1987), this is because the focus of the response to content with purpose and constraints is easier for the students to understand and is the core of the students writing process. In my analyses, I further found that the students found it easier to give a response to content rather than grammar structure and spelling. This finding was reflected both in the interview and in the survey. In the survey, 63,2 % of the students answered that it was easiest to give a response to content, and 80 % of the students found it was the most difficult to respond to grammar, structure and spelling. In the text analyses, the students made more changes in content than in grammar, spelling and structure. This shows that my findings correlate to Hillocks' plan and process in composing and that the peer response sessions were related to the modified figure.

According to Lee (2017), peer response can enhance the students writing skills development in English as a second language. Through working with peer response in the project "Christmas Around the World" the students have improved their writing competence and used the response, they received from their peers to improve their texts. Some students also managed to utilize the peer response in other parts of the texts as well. According to Vygotsky, students learn in two situations: first in social interaction before they internalise the knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Through working together in social interaction, the students were, to an extent, able to internalize the knowledge they embedded through peer response. The students used the peer response session to learn from each other through cultural embeddedness using each other as mediators to internalise new knowledge (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b).

Although most of the students in this research project made changes after receiving peer response, Hanna only made her text longer after the first assessment session and Heidi made no changes from the second to the third draft. Oral peer response is a process where the students have to be present in the classroom and especially in this project due to the limited time. Since both these students were sick during this process, they missed essential components of the process, and this can be a factor in why they did not change their text. This implies that when a teacher plans oral peer response, he or she has to take into consideration the impact of students' absence.

## 6.4 Students' perception of peer response versus teacher response

During the interviews, the students commented on the difference between peer response and teacher response. In the interviews, there were two main findings:

- The students preferred oral peer response because it was given immediately
- The students preferred peer response on content and teacher response on grammar, structure and spelling.

One teacher alone in a class has limited time to follow up student writing in the classroom. That is why peer response optimizes the total of classroom resources as the students are many and can work in pairs or groups. According to Topping (2009), one of the benefits of using peer response is that it saves time for the teacher because the students give the response to each other. Furthermore, peer response obliges the students to participate more actively, and it increases the level of responsibility for each of the students. This causes it to be more difficult to hide or disappear in the crowd, and



it might appeal to the student's sense of not wanting to be looked upon as a "free rider" by his or her peer if not focusing on giving and receiving the response. In the interview, the students stated that they preferred peer response over teacher response because they received it immediately. This finding supports Topping (2009) in his statement that peer response can be used in the classroom to save the teacher time. This can also illustrate how the students used each other as mediators in the writing process instead of having to wait for the teacher to respond. The students also confirmed that it is easier to keep a continuance in writing a text if they receive the response directly instead of having to wait for everybody to receive the response from the teacher in the classroom. They preferred to receive a response during the writing process.

According to Zhao (2010,2014) and Zheng (2012), peer response can be easier to understand than teacher response. Hanna's statement might indicate that her understanding of the peer response made her change her text in a way that she would not have done if it came from her teacher. It also indicates that she made the changes because the response was given during the writing process and that she did not have to wait a long time for teacher response. According to Jacobs et al. (1998), peer response can be less threatening than teacher response, and since Hanna made changes after peer response and not teacher response, it supports Jacobs et al. (1998) findings.

The students did not want one or the other, however rather a bit of both peer response and teacher response. According to Bratkovich (2014) and Paulus (1999), peers tend to focus more on content in their response and teachers tend to focus more on grammatical concerns. This statement is supported by the students in the interviews. All four students interviewed agreed, and Mark pointed it out when he said that he wanted two rounds of response, one from peers about content and one from the teacher about grammar, structure and spelling. Both peer response and teacher response are valuable to a learner. Peer response often tends to focus more on meaning and content, while teacher response tends to focus more on structure and grammar (Yang et al., 2006; Yangin Eksi, 2012). The students' response to whether they preferred peer response or teacher response supports this statement. As Frank said: "*A bit of both*". All four students I interviewed agreed that they preferred to receive a response from their peers on content and receive a response from their teacher on grammar, structure and spelling. An example was when Mark said: "It would probably be nice if we could receive one response from peers where they talk about the content, and then the teacher can deal with rest of the stuff". Later in the interview, he also commented that he thought it was easier to comment on content because he was unsure about the grammar, spelling and structure. These comments highlight the finding in previous research and enhance that students want both teacher response and peer response. In the survey, one student wrote that he/she wanted teacher response instead of peer response because the student meant that he/she could improve the text after the response from the teacher. This perception could indicate that this student does not trust the response he or she received from his or her peers and only trust the teacher.

"Christmas around the world" was a portfolio assessment project where the result was a part of the grading in English as a second language. The students did not have that much experience with using peer response as a tool in developing their writing skills. In one of the interviews, Hanna commented that she did not change much when she received responses from her teachers, on the other hand in this process of using peer response, she had made the changes her peers had suggested. According to Wang (2014), peer

response can sometimes be more valuable than teacher response, and Hanna states the same in the interview. My findings of this topic indicated that peer response for some students is more valuable than teacher response. This finding might, as previously mentioned, be because they could discuss the response immediately and receive an immediate response during the writing process. Another reason might be an effect within the aspect of social psychology, claiming that students might care more about their peers' potential emotional reactions if they do not take the feedback they receive into account. This aspect is, however, not covered in this research, so I leave the thought as it will only be speculations.

## 7 Conclusion

In this research, the main goal was to investigate how peer response can have an impact on students' development of writing competence in a lower secondary school in English as a second language. I also focused on the students' perception of peer response and how students developed their ESL writing skills through peer response. The research was conducted in a Norwegian eight-grade class with 66 students. Twenty of these students participated in my research over five weeks. In this chapter, I draw some conclusions on my research question and comment on the limitations and implications of this research.

Overall, the students found peer response to be useful when developing their writing competence in English as a second language. They preferred to receive immediate oral peer response compared to written teacher response. This perception indicates that peer response can be used to relieve the teacher from giving formative response to all the students and that students prefer to receive a response during the writing process and not a long time after. My findings also implicate that the students preferred peer response to content and teacher response to grammar, structure and spelling. This finding corresponds with the students' expressed perceptions, both in the interviews and the survey, that it was simpler to give a response to content than grammar, structure and spelling. These findings are supported by prior research.

The changes the students made in their texts demonstrated that peer response could be used to improve the students writing competence. All the students had made changes after receiving peer response, though to different extends. One student also expressed that she made changes after peer response, something she did not do after teacher response. Peer response can also be used to give the students the tools to transfer from other-regulation to self-regulation, though the students are at different levels within this ability. The students learn from both giving and receiving peer response, and this can indicate that peer response is a valuable method of developing writing competence in English as a second language.

This research has provided me material to indicate that peer response can be used as a tool in the students' development of writing competence in English as a second language and that students perceive peer response to be a developmental and positive work method to improve their writing competence. Although most of my findings in this research project are that peer response is positive, some findings were negative, especially regarding time and absence of students.

### 7.1 limitations and implications

#### 7.1.1 Limitations

In this research, I limited my focus on the students' perceptions of peer response, the students' development of writing competence in English as a second language through peer response and the students' perception of peer response versus teacher response. Some of the limitations of the reliability of my finding are that this research was done in a limited group in only one class in a Norwegian school and that I only focused on six students' texts and four students in my interview. To be more reliable, I would have had

to do this research on a much larger scale and with more than one class. I could also have surveyed more students and had a quantitative study where the numbers would be more valid. In this survey, I have only a limited number of students, and I would do it at a larger scale. Only 20 of 66 students who wanted to participate in my research. This can be a challenge when researching youths because one has to rely on compliance from their parents or guardians. Another matter was that my findings were mainly positive. This could be because I had a limited number of students and the result might be more diverse if I had a higher number of students participating in my research.

When I began this project, I search for previous research about peer response using different terms. Most of the previous research I found were from Asian schools, and it was difficult to find earlier research that was related to the Norwegian school system, or at least a school system that was similar to ours. These findings made me reflect on whether or not peer response is used in Norway in the second language classes, but I found some studies done in Nordic schools through the help of my supervisor.

Another limitation of my research project was the time limit I had to conduct my research. In the response sessions, the students only gave a response to the first three paragraphs, and this can relate to why not all the students made changes throughout the text. If I were to do this research again, I would have had one group of students who got one session for peer response and one group of students who got the time they needed to finish giving peer response to the whole text. This revision would research the students' capability to transfer their knowledge from other-regulation to self-regulation more reliable.

### 7.1.2 Methodical limitations

Qualitative research involves studying the participants in their environment through different methods of data collection. I chose to collect data through interviews, text analyses and a survey in multiple method research. I thought that these three methods were the best way of figuring out whether peer response had an impact on students' development of writing competence in English as a second language. In retrospect and after I have conducted the research, I see that if I were to change my method of data collection, I would focus on the students' comments in peer response through observation in the classroom, and then do text analysis. This focus would visualise better what kind of comments from their peers on which the students based their changes.

Another factor in this research project is that I did not have a control group and did not use my observations of the peer response sessions in my analysis. If I were to do this project again, I would observe the peer response sessions and compare them with the students' written work and the survey, and also have done a study where some students only received peer response and did not give peer response where another group did both to see whether there was a difference of the learning outcome.

If I were to do this project again, I would not have an interview but rather have an observation in the response sessions and analyse the students' texts. This project could be conducted on a bigger scale with more students, and it would be interesting to see if the changes would have been the same if I had conducted in on older or younger students. In the new Norwegian curriculum, peer response is not mentioned directly, but students should participate in their evaluation and other evaluation (UDIR, 2015).

### 7.1.3 Implications

During this research, I have discovered several questions into which it would be interesting to look further. As Burner (2016) recognised in his research, teachers are not that familiar with the use of peer response as a tool in assessing the students. I wonder if it would have had an impact if the students had begun with peer response earlier than lower secondary school. There has been limited research in Norway about the effect of peer response, and it would be interesting to see if the results would be the same if I researched a bigger scale with more students. It would also be interesting to investigate the teachers' perception of peer response and see if it correlates with the students' perception. There are conducted many studies in Asia, but I could not find that many that had the main focus on peer response in Norway. Mainly peer response is part of studies and not the focus of that many studies. It would be interesting to research what the new curriculum states about the involvement of the students and how this can implement peer response in developing students writing competence in English as a second language.

The element of the use of digital tools in peer response is an aspect I found some previous research about, but that I have eliminated in my research. The students are more and more digital, and through observing one of my co-workers this year, I see that he uses both oral and written response through digital media. "Christmas Around the World" was written in google docs, and the students in this research are familiar with different apps through using Chrome Books at school. In this digital world, it would be interesting to see if peer response is more effective face to face or if the digital version is just as good. Peer response can be implemented in all subjects and different ages, and through this research project, I had difficulty narrowing it down, and digital peer response needs more research in my opinion.

### 7.1.4 Implications for practice

The findings of this research are implications of how peer response can be used in teaching English as a second language. The students responded positively to oral peer response as a part of the formative assessment. This paper can be used as a tool to enable more teacher to try peer response in their teaching and researchers to investigate further. According to the new curriculum, peer-response can be used as a method to make the students work together and be involved in each other's development of writing competence (UDIR, 2020). My research project is based on the current curriculum, but it would be interesting to research how this peer response can be implemented in second language teaching in light of the new curriculum. In this research, I have found that students have a positive perception of peer response, and this research could be an inspiration for further research on peer response in light of the new curriculum.

In this project, I chose to focus on oral peer response in one project, though it can easily be transferred into other sections of learning English as a second language. In my opinion, peer response can help the students in their development of both written and oral competence in English through collaboration and social interaction. "When peer feedback is integrated into the language classroom to optimize opportunities for student learning, it is no longer an impediment to but a catalyst of learning" (Lee, 2017, p. 95). Through using the students as guides, the teacher can allow students to use each other in the formative assessment. Working with this research project, I have become more aware of the importance of involving the students in the assessment process. The students were very engaged during this process, and the comments were mainly

positive. In the future, I will regularly use peer response as a tool to develop students writing competence in English, and I hope this will give the students an opportunity to feel responsible for not only their development but also their peers. I see the benefits of peer response and it helps both the students and me as their teacher. If I train the students to be qualitative peer responders early, they can benefit from this process both for their own gain and be able to help their peers to be better writers.

My experience as both as a teacher and a parent considering the process of developing writing competence in English as a second language is divided. There has been an extreme focus on teaching grammar instead of giving the students the opportunity to learn by writing. This project has made me realize that I have to change the focus when I teach English and give the students the opportunity to learn from each other and by experience. The students today are exposed to English in a different arena, and the methods of teaching English should change with the development of society. Though the new curriculum focuses more on students' involvement, the teacher must expand their didactic focus to allow the students to learn by collaboration. I know that my own teaching will be based more on student involvement and development of writing competence through experience and peer response.

# References

- Baker, K. M. (2016). Peer review as a strategy for improving students' writing process. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 17*(3), 179-192.
- Berg, E. C. (1999). The effects of trained peer response on ESL students revision types and writing quality. *Journal of second language writing, 8*(3), 215-241.
- Berggren, J. (2015). Learning from giving feedback: a study of secondary-level students. *ELT journal, 69*(1), 58-70. doi:10.1093/elt/ccu036
- Bijami, M., Kashef, S. H., & Nejad, M. S. (2013). Peer feedback in learning English writing: Advantages and disadvantages. *Journal of Studies in Education, 3*(4), 91-97.
- Bratkovich, M. O. (2014). Assessment and Feedback: Examining the Relationship Between Self-assessment and Blind Peer-and Teacher-assessment in TOEFL Writing. *14*(2).
- Burner, T. (2014). The potential formative benefits of portfolio assessment in second and foreign language writing contexts: A review of the literature. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 43*, 139-149.
- Burner, T. (2019). PhD revisited: Formative assessment of writing in English. A school-based study of perceptions, practices and transformations. In U. Rindal & L. M. Brevik (Eds.), *English Didactics in Norway - 30 years of doctoral research* (pp. 78-97). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Choi, J. (2014). Online Peer Discourse in a Writing Classroom. *International Journal of Teaching Learning in Higher Education, 26*(2), 217-231.
- Coté, R. A. (2014). Peer Feedback in Anonymous Peer Review in an EFL Writing Class in Spain. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, 9*, 67-87.
- De Guerrero, M. C., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 84*(1), 51-68.
- Drew, I. (1998). Future teachers of English : a study of competence in the teaching of writing. In (Vol. no. 4). Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.
- Dyer, B. (1996). L1 and L2 composition theories: Hillocks'environmental mode 'and task-based language teaching. *ELT journal, 50*(4), 312-317.
- Edwards, J. H., & Liu, J. (2018). *Peer response in second language writing classrooms*: University of Michigan Press.
- Ellis, R. (1999). *Learning a second language through interaction* (Vol. 17): John Benjamins Publishing.
- Evensen, L. S. (2007). 'With a little help from my friends'? Theory of learning in applied linguistics and SLA. *Journal of Applied Linguistics, 4*(3).
- Fejes, A., & Thornberg, R. (2015). *Handbok i kvalitativ analys* (2. utök. uppl. ed.). Stockholm: Liber.
- Fjørtoft, H., & Sandvik, L. V. (2016). *Vurderingskompetanse i skolen : praksis, læring og utvikling*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of educational research, 77*(1), 81-112.
- Hillocks, G., Jr. (1987). Synthesis of research on teaching writing. (includes related article on highlights of research). *Educational Leadership, 44*(8), 71.

- Ho, M.-c. (2015). The effects of face-to-face and computer-mediated peer review on EFL writers' comments and revisions. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 31(1).
- Hoel, T. L. (2000). *Skrive og samtale : responsgrupper som læringsfelleskap*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk forlag.
- Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: Giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research*, 4(1), 33-54.
- Hyland, K. (2019). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2019a). Contexts and Issues in Feedback on L2 Writing. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in second language writing : contexts and issues* (pp. 1-22). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2019b). *Feedback in second language writing : contexts and issues*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobs, G. M., Curtis, A., Braine, G., & Huang, S.-Y. (1998). Feedback on student writing: Taking the middle path. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7(3), 307-317.
- Kronholm-Cederberg, A. (2009). Skolans responskultur som skriftpraktik: gymnasisters berättelser om lärarens skriftliga respons på uppsatsen.
- Langseth, I. (2009). Elevvurdering i Fremmedspråk. In K. Smith, A. Eggen, & S. Dobson (Eds.), *Vurdering, prinsipper og praksis. Nye perspektiver på elev- og læringsvurdering* (pp. 256-279). Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- Langseth, I. (2016). Elevinvolvering i engelskfaget? In H. Fjørtoft & L. V. Sandvik (Eds.), *Vurderingskompetanse i skolen* (pp. 139-154). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, I. (2017). *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*. Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Leitch, R., Odena, O., Gardner, J., Lundy, L., Mitchell, S., Galanouli, D., & Clough, P. (2007). Consulting secondary school students on increasing participation in their own assessment in Northern Ireland.
- Lundstrom, K., & Baker, W. (2009). To give is better than to receive: The benefits of peer review to the reviewer's own writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18(1), 30-43. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2008.06.002
- NESH. (2016). Forskningsetiske retningslinjer for samfunnsvitenskap, humaniora, juss og teologi. Retrieved from <https://www.etikkom.no/forskningsetiske-retningslinjer/Samfunnsvitenskap-jus-og-humaniora/>
- OECD. (2003). *Language Education Policy. Norway*. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/language-education-policy-profile-norway/16807b3c33>
- Paulus, T. M. (1999). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(3), 265-289.
- Postholm, M. B. (2010). *Kvalitativ metode : en innføring med fokus på fenomenologi, etnografi og kasusstudier* (2. utg. ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Rahimi, M. (2013). Is training student reviewers worth its while? A study of how training influences the quality of students' feedback and writing. *Language Teaching Research*, 17(1), 67-89.
- Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *ELT journal*, 59(1), 23-30.
- Sandvik, L. V. (2011). Via mål til mening: En studie av skriving og vurderingskultur i grunnskolens tyskundervisning.



- Sandvik, L. V. (2012). Skrivekompetanse i fremmedspråk – hva innebærer det? *Norsk pedagogisk tidsskrift*, 96(2), 154-165.
- Sandvik, L. V., & Buland, T. (2016). Involverte elever og relevante vurderingsoppgaver. In H. Fjørtoft & L. V. Sandvik (Eds.), *Vurderingskompetanse i skolen* (pp. 211-229). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Savignon, S. J., & Ho, M. C. (2007). Face-to-face and Computer-mediated Peer Review in EFL Writing. *CALICO Journal*, 24(2), 269-290. doi:10.1558/cj.v24i2.269-290
- Smith, K. (2009). Samspillet mellom vurdering og motivasjon. In S. Dobson, A. B. Eggen, & K. Smith (Eds.), *Vurdering, prinsipper og praksis. Nye perspektiver på elev- og læringsvurdering* (pp. 23-38). Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Solberg, K., & Solberg, T. (2011). Epilog. In D. S, E. A, & S. K (Eds.), *Vurdering, prinsipper og praksis. Nytt perspektiv på elev- og læringsvurdering* (pp. 294-307). Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Tjora, A. H. (2017). *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis* (3. utg. ed.). Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- Topping, K. J. (2009). Peer assessment. *Theory into practice*, 48(1), 20-27.
- UDIR. (2015). *Egenvurdering, elevinvolvering og involvering av lærlinger*. Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/undervisvurdering/involvering/>
- UDIR. (2020). *Sosial læring og utvikling* Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/prinsipper-for-laring-utvikling-og-danning/sosial-laring-og-utvikling/>
- UDIRa. (2006). *English subject curriculum. Main subject areas*. (ENG 1-03). Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Hovedomraader?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng>
- UDIRb. (2006). *English subject curriculum. Basic skills*. . (ENG1-03). Retrieved from [https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Grunnleggende\\_ferdigheter?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng](https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Grunnleggende_ferdigheter?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng)
- UDIRc. (2006). *English subject curriculum. Competence aims after Year 10*. (ENG1-03). Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03/Hele/Kompetansemaal/competence-aims-after-year-10?lplang=http://data.udir.no/kl06/eng>
- UDIRd. (2006). *Vurderingspraksis - vurdering for læring*. Retrieved from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/>
- Villamil, O. S., & Guerrero, M. C. M. (2007). Sociocultural Theory. A Framework for Understanding the Socio-Cognitive Dimensions of Peer Feedback. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in Second Language Writing. Contexts and Issues* (Vol. 2, pp. 25-44). Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Villamil, O. S., & Guerrero, M. C. M. (2019). Sociocultural Theory. A Framework for Understanding the Socio-Cognitive Dimensions of Peer Feedback. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.), *Feedback in Second Language Writing Contexts and Issues* (pp. 25-44). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society : the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1980). *Mind in society*: United States: Harvard University Press.
- Wang, Z.-Q. (2014). The application of process writing in Chinese EFL classrooms in higher education. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 4(3), 88.
- Watanabe, Y. (2008). Peer-peer interaction between L2 learners of different proficiency levels: Their interactions and reflections. *Canadian modern language review*, 64(4), 605-635.

- Weigle, S. C. (2011). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge ;,New York ;,Melbourne etc: Cambridge University Press.
- Yang, M., Badger, R., & Yu, Z. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 15*(3), 179-200.
- Yangin Eksi, G. (2012). Peer review versus teacher feedback in process writing: how effective? *International Journal of Applied Educational Studies, 13*(1), 33.
- Yu, S., & Lee, I. (2014). An analysis of Chinese EFL students' use of first and second language in peer feedback of L2 writing. *System, 47*, 28-38.
- Yu, S., & Lee, I. (2016). Understanding the role of learners with low English language proficiency in peer feedback of second language writing. *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(2), 483-494.
- Zhao, H. (2010). Investigating learners' use and understanding of peer and teacher feedback on writing: A comparative study in a Chinese English writing classroom. *Assessing Writing, 15*(1), 3-17. doi:10.1016/j.asw.2010.01.002
- Zhao, H. (2014). Investigating teacher-supported peer assessment for EFL writing. *ELT journal, 68*(2), 155-168.
- Zheng, C. (2012). Understanding the learning process of peer feedback activity: An ethnographic study of exploratory practice. *Language Teaching Research, 16*(1), 109-126.

# Appendix

**Appendix 1:** Goals from The English Subject Curriculum

**Appendix 2:** Goals Christmas Around the World

**Appendix 3:** Consent form

**Appendix 4:** Christmas Around the World – Descriptions (Students)

**Appendix 5:** Interview guide

**Appendix 6:** Questions in the Survey

## **Appendix 1**

### **Goals from English subject curriculum:**

#### **Language learning:**

- use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to develop one's English-language skills
- comment on own work in learning English

#### **Oral communication:**

- choose and use different listening and speaking strategies that are suitable for the purpose
- understand and use different numerical expressions and other kinds of data in communication

#### **Written communication:**

- choose and use different reading and writing strategies that are suitable for the purpose
- understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics
- understand the main content and details of texts one has chosen
- read, understand and evaluate different types of texts of varying length about different topics
- use own notes and different sources as a basis for writing
- write different types of texts with structure and coherence
- use central patterns for orthography, word inflection, sentence and text construction to produce texts
- use digital tools and formal requirements for information processing, text production and communication
- be familiar with protection of personal privacy and copyright and choose and use content from different sources in a verifiable way

#### **Culture, society and literature**

- discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway

**Appendix 2**

## **Goals Christmas Around the World**

	<b>High</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Content</b>	<p>-Thorough information about the country. Has information about the climate, people who lives there, nature and so on.</p> <p>- Describes Christmas traditions thoroughly.</p> <p>- Thorough description about what you can see and experience in December in your country.</p>	<p>- Some information about the country (some information about the climate, people who lives there, nature and so on)</p> <p>- Describes some Christmas traditions.</p> <p>- Some descriptions about what you can see and experience in December in your country.</p>	<p>- Partly inform about the country.</p> <p>- Partly inform about the culture and Christmas traditions</p> <p>- Partly describe what you can see and experience in December in your country.</p>
<b>Language</b>	Has well written sentences in English and correct use of the grammar (see checklist)	Writes ok English with party correct use of the grammar (see checklist)	Writes in English with some use of the grammar. (see checklist)
<b>Formal</b>	Follows all the formal demands (see checklist)	Follows several of the formal demands (se checklist)	Follows some of the formal demands (see checklist)

## **Checklist language:**

- The sentences have English structure
- Grammar:
  - a/an
  - Third persons -s
  - adjectives
  - verb tense
  - irregular verbs
  - correct use of prepositions
  - plural -s
- Write "I" with a capital "I"
- Use linking words like:
  - because
  - and
  - though
  - therefor
  - and others

## **Formal demands:**

- Correct length of the texts (look at which level you are at)
- The text is written in 12 and arial
- 1,5 spacing
- Headlines and dates and sub headlines
- Sources
- Name of the document as top text
- Your name in the document

### **Appendix 3: Consent form:**

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

## **«Medelevvurdering i utvikling av engelsk skriftlig»**

**Dette er et spørsmål til deg om ditt barn kan delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvor stort utbytte elevene har av å gi hverandre vurdering i engelsk som andre språk. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for ditt barn.**

### **Formål**

Jeg skal dette året skrive en masteroppgave i faget master i fag og yrkesdidaktikk med fokus på engelsk didaktikk. Jeg har valgt å skrive om medelevvurdering og hvordan denne arbeidsmetoden har innvirkning på elevenes utvikling i engelsk skriftlig på 8. trinn. Forskningsspørsmålet mitt vil omhandle hvorvidt elevene utvikler sine egne skriftlige ferdigheter i engelsk på en positiv eller negativ måte når de gir hverandre underveisvurdering på skriftlig arbeid. Prosjektet skal omhandle en skriveprosess som vil foregå over 8 uker i november og desember. Jeg vil observere i klasserommet, ta lydopptak av enkelte vurderingssituasjoner i grupper av elever som har godkjent å delta i prosjektet i eget undervisningsareal, samt intervju et utvalg av elever både underveis og i etterkant. Jeg kommer også til å se på et utvalg av elevarbeid både underveis og sluttprodukt. Elevene vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven.

### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Institutt for lærerutdanningen ved NTNU er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Min veileder er Lise Vikan Sandvik (lise.sandvik@ntnu.no).

### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Alle elever ved 8. trinn på Sjetne er med i prosjektet på bakgrunn av at dette er den målgruppen jeg har valgt å fokusere på.

### **Hva innebærer det for ditt barn å delta?**

Alle elever på trinnet vil gjennomføre opplegget uavhengig av om du/dere velger å la dem delta i prosjektet, men kun de som godtar at ditt barn deltar blir deltakende i min studie. Det vil si at alle elevene gjennomfører opplegget, men mine observasjoner, lydopptak og intervju vil kun være med de elevene som har fått tillatelse til å delta i prosjektet. De metodene jeg kommer til å bruke i innsamling av data er observasjon og intervju av et utvalg av elevene, hvor det vil bli benyttet både notater og lydopptak. Jeg kommer også til å samle inn oppgavene til de elevene som blir valgt ut både underveis og sluttproduktet.

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

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

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om ditt barn til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. De som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene som blir samlet inn vil være meg og min veileder. Jeg vil erstattet elevens navn med andre navn i oppgaven og lagre alle opplysninger på en ekstern harddisk.

### **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 1. juni 2020. Da vil alle observasjoner og intervju bli slettet. I selve oppgaven vil alt være anonymt.

### **Dine rettigheter**

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

innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,

å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,

få slettet personopplysninger om deg,

få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og

å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

### **Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?**

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med kontaktlærer på meldeboka, eller send mail til meg på [hild-rakstang.betten@ou.trondheim.kommune.no](mailto:hild-rakstang.betten@ou.trondheim.kommune.no), eller NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17. Dere kan også ta kontakt med NTNUs personvernombud Thomas Helgesen ([thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no](mailto:thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no))

Med vennlig hilsen

Hild Rakstang Betten

(94128680)



-----  
-----

# Samtykkeerklæring

Samtykkeerklæring fra elev og foresatte til at  
..... deltar i forskningsprosjektet  
«medelevurdering i engelsk skriftlig».

VI har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet og er villig til at .....  
deltar i studiet.

Sted/dato.....

Underskrift fra elev og foresatte:

.....  
.....

## Appendix 4:

# Christmas Around the World - Description (students)

This assignment is in parts and you have to go through every step to get the best paper as possible. If you are not at school one day, you can easily see what the others have done, and do it yourself at home. It is important to do what you need to do at the right time to get help with improving your text. The goal is to make a **travel letter** from your chosen country. The length of the text should be about two pages.

### Part 1 (week 46):

1. Get to know your country
2. Thinkwrite about what you already know about this country
3. Find information about your country (use a mind map (mindomo), write keywords and key sentences, or another writing strategy)
4. Talk to someone else who has the same country as you and compare notes

**Homework: Work with the mindmap about your country. It has to be done by Thursday.**

### Part 2 (week 47-48):

1. Write the first draft of your travel journal (Step 1: about 1 page long. Step 2 and 3: About 1,5 pages long)
2. Read your first draft to someone who has the same country as yourself and compare the information you have found. Have you forgotten something, or have you found some information that others have forgotten? Write down what you can write more about.

**Homework week 47: Work with your text at home. Focus on the content, not if it is written correctly.**

**Homework week 48: Finish your first draft. It has to be done by Thursday.**

### Part 3 (week 49):

1. Write a second draft. This should be a bit longer than your first draft. Focus not only on content (innhold) but also about spelling, grammar and sentences (remember adjectives)
2. Sit in groups with someone who writes about the same country as yourself. Go through every text and look at spelling, grammar and sentences.

**Homework (week 49): Finish your 2nd draft by Thursday.**

### Part 4 (Week 50):

1. See if you got some feedback that can do your text better and finish your text.
2. Hand it in on Google Classroom Monday

## **Appentix 5: Interview guide (My translation)**

### Interview guide (My translation)

- Introduction of the students → name
- We have now worked with a text called «Christmas Around the World». What do you think about working with English this way?
- How to you in general it is to work with English?
- What do you normally do when starting a writing task in English? (mind map, keywords, write in Norwegian and translate or other)
- Which part of writing English do you consider to be easy?
- Which part of writing English do you consider to be hard?
- What is your perception of giving response to your peers?
- Is there are difference on response from you peers and your teacher? If there are, what is the difference?
- What was best about the response you got from your peers? (content, language, grammar or other)
- What is your perception of giving peer response?
- What have you learned from your peers during this process?
- What did you do with the response you got from your peers?
- Did you know what was expected of you in each peer response session?
- How did you like working with peer response? Positive and negative
- Is there anything else you want to say?

## Appendix 6:

### Questions in the survey

1. What did you think about working with English in the way we did in Christmas Around the World?
  - a. I liked it a lot
  - b. I liked some of it
  - c. I did not like it
  - d. I have no opinion
2. What was it easiest to give response to?
  - a. Idea
  - b. Content
  - c. Structure
  - d. Grammar
  - e. Spelling
3. What was it most difficult to give response to?
  - a. Idea
  - b. Content
  - c. Structure
  - d. Grammar
  - e. Spelling
4. How pleased were you with the response you got?
  - a. Very pleased
  - b. Partly pleased
  - c. Not pleased
5. What were pleased/not pleased with in the response you got?
6. What did you think about giving response to other peers' texts?
  - a. Easy
  - b. Some of it was easy
  - c. A bit of both easy and difficult
  - d. Some of it was difficult
  - e. Difficult
7. What did you think about receiving response from your peers?
  - a. There were several good feedbacks I could use to improve my text
  - b. There were some good feedbacks I could use to improve my text
  - c. The feedback was not good nor bad
  - d. I did not get that much response
  - e. I did not get any response from my peers
8. Did you learn something from giving response to your peers' texts?
  - a. Yes, a lot
  - b. Some
  - c. A little bit
  - d. Nothing
9. Give examples of what you learned from giving response to your peers' texts.
10. Would you like to work with this method in English again?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
11. Why/why not?

