

## Abstract

In-depth studies in English is a subject in lower secondary school which has been reported to struggle with low status. The subject has also struggled due to the fact that very many of the students have low proficiency in English, an aspect which collides with the ambition level in the national curriculum (LK06). To learn more about in-depth studies in English I wanted to research how English teachers reported teaching this subject, and how these ways of teaching cohered with the intentions for the subject set by The Ministry of Education and Research. I also wanted to learn how LK06 came into play when teachers planned their lessons, and what challenges teachers reported facing when teaching in-depth studies in English.

Conducting qualitative interviews stood out as the most suitable method for answering these research questions, and I therefore interviewed five teachers of in-depth studies in English. All five teachers worked in different schools, and the data was therefore based on five different perspectives on how in-depth studies in English is being taught. The analysis of the data was based on grounded theory.

The most central finding from the research was how school administrations in many schools often consistently prioritized other subjects before in-depth studies in English, and how this made teachers down-prioritize in-depth studies, as well. The school's policy regarding students' possibilities to change from foreign languages to in-depth studies in English during the year, as well as the size of the classes, was central for the status of the subject. These aspects also seem to affect the students' motivation toward in-depth studies.

Teachers of in-depth studies in English reported to be working much as intended by The Ministry of Education and Research (as described in the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter*). The challenge, however, was the paradox of how the ambition level of the competence aims in LK06 collided with the possibilities of the students of in-depth studies in English to experience mastery of the English language. The teachers therefore reported using the aims in LK06 only in little degree, consequently making in-depth studies in English a subject which varied from school to school. I suggest that to overcome this challenge, LK06 needs to be revised. The intentions for the subject, as set by The Ministry of Education and Research through LK06, need to fit the group of students who choose in-depth studies in English better than they do today.



## Sammendrag

Engelsk fordypning er et språkfag i ungdomsskolen som strever med lav status. Faget utfordres også av at mange elever som velger engelsk fordypning er faglig svake i engelsk. Dette faktum står i stor kontrast til Kunnskapsløftet (LK06) som legger opp til et høyt kunnskapsnivå hos de som velger fordypningsfaget. For å lære mer om engelsk fordypning som fag ønsket jeg å undersøke hvordan lærere oppgir at de underviser engelsk fordypning, og hvordan disse undervisningsmetodene samsvarer med Kunnskapsdepartementets intensjoner for faget. Jeg ville også se nærmere på hvilken rolle LK06 spiller i undervisningen, og hvilke utfordringer lærerne oppgir at de møter når de underviser engelsk fordypning.

For å lære mer om hvordan engelskfordypningslærere underviser, ble det naturlig å velge kvalitativt intervju som metode. Jeg endte derfor opp med å intervju fem engelskfordypningslærere som alle jobbet på forskjellige skoler. På den måten fikk jeg fem forskjellige perspektiv på det å undervise engelsk fordypning. Analysen av dataene ble utført basert på grounded theory.

Det mest sentrale funnet i masterprosjektet var knyttet til den rollen skolens ledelse har for engelsk fordypning. Mange lærere kunne rapportere om en administrasjon som konsekvent nedprioriterer engelsk fordypning til fordel for andre fag, og at disse holdningene igjen fører til at lærere også nedprioriterer engelsk fordypning. Skoleledelsens policy i forhold til muligheten til å bytte fra fremmedspråk til engelsk fordypning i løpet av skoleåret, og i hvilken grad lærertetthet og klassestørrelse blir prioritert fra skolens side, påvirker også fordypningsfagets status. Disse faktorene spiller videre inn på elevenes motivasjon for engelsk fordypning.

Når det kom til hvordan lærere underviser engelsk fordypning, så fortalte respondentene at de i stor grad jobbet etter Kunnskapsdepartementets intensjoner for undervisning i ungdomsskolen som beskrevet i *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter*. Utfordringen for lærerne, derimot, var hvordan det høye ambisjonsnivået i LK06 kom i veien for at elevene skulle kunne oppleve mestring i fordypningsfaget. Konsekvensen av dette ble at lærerne brukte LK06 i relativt liten grad, og at engelsk fordypning derfor ble et fag med store faglige forskjeller fra skole til skole. For å forhindre dette i framtiden foreslår jeg at LK06 revideres slik at målene passer den elevgruppen som erfaringsmessig velger engelsk fordypning. Målene må ikke lenger virker uoppnåelige, slik de gjør for mange i dag.



## Preface

The journey towards this Master's thesis has been a slow but steady one, starting out in 2010 and ending now in 2016. Working full time as a teacher in lower secondary school, and going from a family of two to a family of four, has slowed down the process. I have always known that I would cross the finish line, and now that day has come.

I want to thank all my professors along the way for being inspirational and engaging, and for giving me challenging, interesting and educational lectures and seminar. I have enjoyed my studies, and it has been very motivating to be able to implement what I have learned directly into my practice as an English teacher.

I also want to especially thank my supervisor Anita Normann for advising me throughout the process. Our sessions have been meaningful, and the advices and guidance you have provided have always been very useful and valuable to my work. Thank you so much for your patience, for your constructive criticism and for all your encouragement and friendliness. I highly appreciate it.

The respondents, without whom there would be no research, also deserve acknowledgement. Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts and experiences with me. The work you do is impressive and important.

Lastly I want to thank my family, friends and colleagues for all the support throughout my studies. Especially thanks to Sigrid and Knut for helping out as baby-sitters whenever I had seminars, exams or needed time to study. This has meant a lot to me.

The biggest thank of all goes to my husband: Thank you, Lars, for supporting me in my choice to go back to university, for taking care of our children and our home while I was occupied with studies, and for letting studying be a priority throughout the years. Thank you for reading through all my papers and exams, and for listening to me in times of frustration. None of this would have been possible without your love and support, and I cannot thank you enough.



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## Vignette

*It is Tuesday and the teacher is late for her class; in-depth studies in English in ninth grade. Two minutes before class she was stopped by the student counselor who informed her that yet another student had transferred to in-depth studies this week. On top of this she had been further delayed by 15-year old Nina who wanted to make sure that she did not have to present her paper today. The agreement with Nina was that she does not have to speak English in front of the rest of the class, but Nina always has to double-check this...As she does every Tuesday and Thursday before class.*

*In the classroom, a few minutes late, the teacher takes a quick look at class attendance. Six of the 18 students in her class are absent today. This means that those six have to make up their presentations on Thursday. The teacher makes a mental note to herself; she has to leave a message for the students that they have to be prepared on Thursday. If not, she knows what she will get: “How was I supposed to know that I was to bring my presentation today?” The teacher has heard it times and times before.*

*«Good day, everyone! It’s time to present your projects...» The door opens and three of the absent students enter. “I’m NOT presenting! I’m NOT finished and you can’t make me!” The student is not afraid to speak his mind. “We’ll talk about this later, Elias”, the teacher says. “Take your seat, please.”*

*15 minutes later, and after a lot of fuss, the first student starts presenting. A few sentences into the presentation and someone open the door carefully. An apologetic teacher enters: “I’m sorry, but Maria is supposed to be with me right now. Maybe you have forgotten, Maria?” Maria gets up and leaves the room. “Ok,” the teacher thinks, disheartened, “we’ll do Maria’s presentation on Thursday, as well, then...”*



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In my experience, the scene portrayed in the vignette could very well be a scene taken directly from a typical class of in-depth study in English. In 2006 *The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training* (LK06)<sup>1</sup> (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training [UDIR]<sup>2</sup>) was implemented, and this curriculum made studying a foreign language or an in-depth alternative mandatory in lower secondary school in Norway. Ever since, in-depth studies in English has met some unforeseen challenges. Earlier, studying foreign languages such as French, German or Spanish was elective, and students who believed they had enough academic challenges as it was, chose to study practical subjects<sup>3</sup> instead of a foreign language. From 2006 all students needed a third language<sup>4</sup>, but as an alternative to the traditional languages, The Ministry of Education and Research also introduced in-depth studies in either Norwegian, Sami or English<sup>5</sup> as an alternative ‘third language’ (Bakke and Dæhlen, 2011, p. 14). In the case of in-depth studies in English, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR, 2006) presented a curricula that was quite different from the mandatory English<sup>6</sup> subject’s curricula. When the subject was first introduced in schools, it was understood by many as a subject that was meant for students who wanted to go beyond the challenges of the mandatory English subject, students who wanted to get in the depth of the English language. The only problem, however, was that the students who chose in-depth studies in English were rarely interested in getting into the depth of the English language, and teachers who had been visioning teaching classes full of highly motivated students, soon had to scrap their original plans and think differently when planning their lessons (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 112). Teaching in-depth studies in English did not seem to go as smoothly as many perhaps had anticipated.

This project aims to look at how teachers of in-depth studies in English teach their classes, and how these ways of teaching cohere with the intentions of the subject as set by The Ministry of Education and Research. During my ten years as an English teacher, I have every

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforward being referred to as LK06.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforward being referred to in citations as UDIR (Utdanningsdirektoratet).

<sup>3</sup> For example music, physical education, or driver’s permit.

<sup>4</sup> Norwegian or Sami being the first, mandatory English being the second.

<sup>5</sup> In 2009 they also introduced “arbeidslivsfag” and in 2015 they introduced in-depth studies in mathematics as alternatives to the foreign languages (UDIR, 2015). 5 % of the students studied “arbeidslivsfag” in 2013, while there are no statistics for in-depth studies in mathematics as it is a new trial subject this school year (UDIR).

<sup>6</sup> I have chosen to call the English subject that all students have to attend throughout primary and secondary school in Norway for ‘mandatory English’.

now and then taught in-depth studies in English, and every time I have felt that the in-depth class has challenged me in ways the mandatory English class does not. I have discussed in-depth studies with colleagues, from my own school as well as from other schools, and found that their experiences are much the same. Colleagues tell me that because the classes often consist of students that for different reasons struggle with school, teaching in-depth studies in English can be tough. In my experience it is not unusual to have classes combining students who struggle with behavior with students who struggle with different learning disabilities, and/or students who have physiological or psychological problems. It is not unusual, either, that students who have chosen in-depth studies in English already struggle with mandatory English; in-depth studies being their only alternative as they feel unable to take on yet another language. I have been told several times from my own in-depth students that they ‘hate English’, and I have also experienced that students who deliberately have been put in separate homeroom classes, have ended up together in the in-depth study class. For these reasons, and others, experienced teachers, school leaders, students and parents have expressed, and still express, concerns for the development of in-depth studies in English (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 14). It is not unusual for new subjects to take some time to become well-functioning subjects, simply because it takes time to develop local curricula, writing teacher manuals and textbooks, and finding the subject’s right form. It is interesting to note, however, that in-depth studies in English still remains somewhat problematic almost ten years after it was first introduced.

Trygve Bakken and Marianne Dæhlen, who in 2011 wrote a report on the in-depth alternatives in lower secondary school, show that in-depth classes sometimes consist of a very diverse group of students who often demand extra attention<sup>7</sup>. They also showed that in-depth studies in English is based on a curriculum that many characterize as ambitious and challenging, at least to the type of students who usually choose in-depth studies. In LK06’s (UDIR, 2006) introduction to in-depth studies in English, for example, it is stated that the subject aims to develop the students’ critical thinking and aesthetic skills, that students should gain insight into their own language, that the subject should contribute to greater motivation and self-confidence, and that the subject should encourage critical assessment of one’s own language development (UDIR, 2006). Getting students who struggle with the English language, or students who have low motivation for going to school in the first place, to gain new insight into their own language, or to develop their aesthetic skills, can be demanding.

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2.3 for a fuller description of Bakken and Dæhlen’s (2011) report.

For these reasons, and others, several of my colleagues have expressed that they feel unsuccessful when teaching in-depth studies in English; they feel they are unable to meet the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), and few are happy about having to teach the subject. I find it strange that there are highly skilled and experienced teachers who express that they do not believe they master teaching a subject in our schools. That is why I am interested in taking a closer look at what is going on in the in-depth classrooms, and how well teachers' ways of teaching in-depth studies in English cohere with The Ministry's intentions for the subject.

## 1.2 Earlier research

In 2009, three years after the in-depth studies were introduced into the Norwegian school system, The Ministry of Education and Research ordered a report that would investigate if there were any systematic differences between foreign language students and in-depth students. The Ministry had received concerns from students, parents, teachers and school leaders, many whom called the in-depth studies problematic, and The Ministry wanted to learn more (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 90). NOVA<sup>8</sup> (Norwegian Social Research) was responsible for the study, and in 2011 they published the report *Valgmuligheter i ungdomsskolen. Erfaringer med de språklige fordypningsalternativene og forsøk med arbeidslivsfag (6/11)*. This report was able to point to typical characteristics of an average in-depth student, and it was also able to give a description of the status of the in-depth studies among students, teachers and school leaders<sup>9</sup>.

In the aftermath of the NOVA report, Stortinget<sup>10</sup> sent out a report saying that they would “pay close attention to the development of the in-depth alternatives”<sup>11</sup> (The Ministry of Education and Research [KD]<sup>12</sup>, 2011). The general message, however, was that the politicians were pleased with how the in-depth studies functioned, and The Ministry has therefore not followed up the NOVA report with any more research.

Apart from the NOVA report, I have not been able to find much research on the in-depth studies in Norway. In 2014 The Norwegian National Center for Foreign Languages in Education (The Foreign Language Center)<sup>13</sup> published the article *På djupt vatn i engelsk fordjuping* (Sutton, 2014) which discussed the findings of Bakken and Dæhlen (2011). The

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<sup>8</sup> Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 2.3 for a fuller description of the NOVA report.

<sup>10</sup> I choose to use the Norwegian name of the parliament in Norway throughout the thesis

<sup>11</sup> My translation from Norwegian

<sup>12</sup> Henceforward being referred to in citations as KD (Kunnskapsdepartementet)

<sup>13</sup> Norsk Nasjonalt Senter for Fremmedspråk i Opplæringen (Fremmedspråksenteret)

Foreign Language Center also published several lesson plans for teachers to download and use in their in-depth classes. What is interesting in this article is that Sutton (2014) defines the expression in-depth study to mean simply learning something new; what the students learn do not necessarily have to be directly connected to the aims for in-depth studies in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) (p. 46). Sutton (2014) does stress that it is concerning that students of in-depth studies in English generally show a low degree of competence when compared to the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), but she expresses that this must not stand in the way of trying to provide the students with confidence, motivation and accomplishments when it comes to the English language (p. 46). The article continues with emphasizing the importance of following central principals for teaching such as the autonomy of the students, the opportunity to learn through collaboration, to focus on aim oriented lessons, and the role of a safe learning environment when teaching in-depth studies in English (Sutton, 2014, p. 46). There is also an emphasis on the importance of giving each student emotional, as well as instrumental support (see chapter 2.5 for further explanation). Sutton's points are important ones, and I will therefore discuss how the respondents follow these principals for teaching, as well as how they describe the role of LK06 (UDIR, 2006) in their lesson planning (see chapter 5).

### **1.3 The purpose of the research and the research questions**

The NOVA report has been able to tell us who the typical students of in-depth studies in English are. Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) looked at the results from National Tests<sup>14</sup> and the final grades after tenth grade<sup>15</sup> as well as attendance records and registered socio-demographic information<sup>16</sup> for all students of two years of graduates<sup>17</sup> (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 63). By combining all this information, Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) were able to present a generalized idea of who the typical students of in-depth studies in English are. There are big variations within this group, as in all classrooms, but the findings of the NOVA report give us a generalized picture which I want to use (see chapter 2.3 for more information).

LK06 (UDIR, 2006) has often been characterized as an ambitious and extensive curriculum<sup>18</sup>. In-depth studies in English is no exception, as the competence aims for in-depth studies in English go further than the mandatory English subject when it comes to both skills and knowledge (see Table 1).

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<sup>14</sup> "Nasjonale prøver" in reading, numeracy and English.

<sup>15</sup> "Standpunktkarakterer"

<sup>16</sup> Examples of such information could be ethnic background, family size and so on.

<sup>17</sup> Students graduating from lower secondary school spring 2009 and 2010 (Bakken and Dæhlen, 2011, p. 72)

<sup>18</sup> In April 2016 The Ministry of Education and Research published a report calling for revisions of LK06 due to the extensiveness of the curriculum (KD, 2016).



**Table 1 Comparison of aims after 10<sup>th</sup> grade for in-depth studies in English and English (LK06)**

IN-DEPTH STUDIES IN ENGLISH	ENGLISH
Document and assess his or her own development in exploring language and text.	Comment on own work in learning English.
Explore and assess how digital media influence and change language and communication.	Select different digital resources and other aids and use them in an independent manner in own language learning.
Compare and critically assess various types of English-language sources when it comes to content, copyright and protection of personal privacy	Be familiar with protection of personal privacy and copyright and chose and use content from different sources in a verifiable way.
Produce written and in-depth study projects he or she has selected and present them orally.	Understand the main content and details of texts one has chosen.

(UDIR, 2006; UDIR, 2013)

When the aims for mandatory English consist of verbs such as comment, select, use, be familiar with, and understand, the aims for in-depth studies in English consist of verbs such as critically assess, explore, compare, and produce (UDIR, 2006; UDIR, 2013). To critically assess types of sources is more demanding than to be familiar with how to use different sources; to document and assess your own language development is more demanding than to comment on your own work, and so on. Knowing who the typical student of in-depth studies is, and knowing the ambition level in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), I am interested in finding out how this comes together in the classroom. I want to take a closer look at what teachers report as their ways of teaching in-depth studies in English and compare this to what The Ministry of Education and Research, through LK06 (2006) and the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter. Ungdomstrinnet*<sup>19</sup>. (2011), state are the intentions for in-depth studies in English. Moreover, I want to learn how teachers use the competence aims and how they view the intentions for in-depth studies in English, as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006). My material will be based on interviews with teachers of in-depth studies in English, as well as data from the NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011). The research question for this thesis is:

*How is in-depth studies in English taught, as reported by the teachers, and how does this cohere with the intentions for the subject, set by The Ministry of Education and Research?*

<sup>19</sup> Henceforward being referred to as *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter*.

My sub-questions are:

*How does LK06 come into play when teachers plan their lessons for in-depth studies in English, and, according to the teachers of the subject, what are the challenges of teaching in-depth studies in English?*

LK06 (UDIR, 2006) does not have any directions on what methods or activities to use when working towards the competence aims for each subject, but the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) gives some guidelines on how to work in lower secondary school and these guidelines will be part of the discussions (see chapters 2.1 and 2.2 for further explanations).

To answer the research questions I have chosen to conduct qualitative interviews with five teachers of in-depth studies in English. These statements will be discussed in light of the intentions of The Ministry of Education and Research as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) and in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011). The findings will furthermore be discussed in light of what social constructivism theories and motivational theories emphasize as central to teaching (see chapter 2.4 and 2.5). Factors such as who the typical student of in-depth studies are, the status of the subject, and the students' general motivation for in-depth studies, will also be discussed, as these factors affect the way a subject is being taught. I have chosen to use grounded theory as the basis for the analysis (see chapter 3.2).

#### **1.4 My position as researcher**

For this project I have chosen to conduct five in-depth interviews, which is a qualitative research method (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Both Vivi Nilssen (2012) and Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that the quality of a qualitative research project lies on the integrity of the researcher. When conducting interviews, the researcher is an integral part of the data, and Nilssen (2012) says that “Knowledge is constructed in the meeting between researcher and research participant”<sup>20</sup> (p. 25). This is something I have kept in mind during my interviews. I have focused on trying to avoid asking leading questions, or questions that are loaded with my own opinion. I have also strived to face my data with an open mind, something which also is an integral part of grounded theory (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 201) (see chapter 3 for further information).

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<sup>20</sup> My translation from Norwegian

When conducting interviews it is important that the respondents feel comfortable. If they feel comfortable with the interview situation, there is a bigger chance that they will speak freely. Kvale and Brinkmann says that: “The knowledge that comes out of [qualitative] research is dependent on the relationship between the researcher and the respondent. This relationship depends on the researcher’s ability to create a space where the respondent can speak freely and safely” (2009, p. 35). To create such safety it is important to be friendly and pleasant, without becoming their friend (Sennett, 2004 in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 35). All my respondents are my colleagues, in the sense that we are English teachers who work in lower secondary school, and that we have much the same academic background. I am in this sense part of what I am researching; I have my own experiences on the topic for this thesis. Thus, it has been important for me to try to distinguish between my role as researcher and my role as a teacher of in-depth studies in English. When conducting my interviews I have been friendly and respectful towards my peers, trying to create a safe atmosphere where the respondents can be open and speak freely, while at the same time I have tried to step out of the role as colleague and act as a researcher. Some of my respondents are teachers that I have gotten to know during my career, and others are teachers that I have never met before<sup>21</sup>. Either way, I have focused on my professionalism and integrity as researcher in all steps of this project (see chapter 3.3 for further discussion).

Before looking at the theory which makes out the base for this thesis, I want to clarify some of the definitions that are used throughout the report.

## **1.5 Clarifications and definitions**

### **1.5.1 Students and pupils**

Whenever I quote LK06 (UDIR, 2006), the noun pupil is used about the learners who attend lower secondary school. In my vocabulary it is natural to refer to these learner as students, and that is why the reader will meet both characteristics. The noun pupil and the noun student are used interchangeably about the same group of people.

### **1.5.2 Curriculum**

Whenever the word curriculum is used it is a reference to LK06 (UDIR, 2006). Kitt Lyngsnes and Marit Rismark (2015) say that there is a difference in how the Nordic countries define their curricula and how the curricula are defined in British and American tradition. The Nordic countries refer to the curriculum as the actual document which defines aims and

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<sup>21</sup> This is something I will discuss further in chapter 3.1

intentions for school subjects, whereas the British and American tradition refer to the curriculum as both the document and the actual activities that are taking place within the schools (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 154). In this thesis, I use the Nordic interpretation of the term curriculum.

### **1.5.3 The Ministry of Education and Research**

In this paper there is a reference to The Ministry that oversees lower secondary education from as early as 1993 and up to 2016. During this period of time, this Ministry has operated under many different names. For simplicity's sake, I have consistently used the name The Ministry of Education and Research for all ministries through these decades.

### **1.5.4 The use of Norwegian in quotes**

The aim of any thesis is to present the truth as discovered throughout the research. When my respondents, or respondents used in any of my sources, have expressed their opinion in Norwegian, it has been important to me to avoid subjecting these expressions to any more interpretation than necessary. I have therefore chosen to mainly write down quotes in Norwegian when they originally have been spoken in Norwegian. Some places, for example when I use Norwegian sources in the methods- or analysis chapter, I have translated the sources. These translations are marked with footnotes. Furthermore, the transcription of the interviews are as true to how the respondents spoke as possible, but in the quotes I have chosen to write the statements in more a correct written form of the language. I have done this to make the text easier to read.

### **1.5.5 The NOVA report and my findings**

Some of the questions I have used in my interviews are related to information the NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011) has already dealt with, and on a much larger scale than my limited research. I have chosen to look into topics such as social and academic descriptions of the students, student motivation, and the status of in-depth studies in English, despite the fact that these topics have already been covered by Bakken and Dæhlen (2011). The reason for this is to see if my respondents describe a similar situation to that in the NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011), or if there has been a change as to who the students of in-depth studies in English are or the way teachers and students view the status of in-depth studies in English in the five years since the report was published.

## **1.6 The structure of the thesis**

Chapter one has described the background for this thesis as well as the research questions and what I aim to learn more about. There has also been a discussion on earlier research on in-depth studies in English, as well as my role when collecting data.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framing for the thesis. LK06 and other relevant White Papers and reports concerning in-depth studies in English will be presented, as well as social constructivism theory and motivation theory. These theories are relevant for the discussions on how teachers describe their way of teaching in-depth study in English.

Chapter three presents and discusses the methods used for collecting the data, as well as a presentation of the process of analyzing the data.

Chapter four presents the findings.

Chapter five discusses the findings in light of the theory presented in chapter two.

Chapter six presents the conclusion, as well as a summary of implications and thoughts on further research.



## 2 Theoretical perspectives

The first part of this chapter presents background reports and White Papers that are important to understand the nature of in-depth studies in English and who the students of in-depth studies of English are. The second part presents what is traditionally understood as theory for a research project; didactical and pedagogical theories used in the discussions on ways of teaching in-depth studies in English.

### 2.1 The National Curriculum of Knowledge Promotion (LK06)

The Ministry of Education and Research proposed a new national curriculum in Norway in White Paper number 030 (2003-2004)<sup>22</sup> from Stortinget. Part of the recommendations in this report was that a third language was to be made mandatory in lower secondary schools in Norway. The report also recommended that there would be in-depth studies as alternatives to the foreign languages (see further background information in chapter 1.1). The propositions in the White Paper was adopted by Stortinget in June 2004, and in 2006 a new curricula, The National Curriculum of Knowledge Promotion (UDIR, 2006), was introduced.

To determine what the intentions of The Ministry of Education and Research are for in-depth studies in English, LK06 (2006) and more precisely at the curriculum for the subject, is the first place to start. Each subject curriculum in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) is organized by the objectives of the subject, followed by the main subject areas, then a description of how the work with the basic skills are to be understood, and finally with a listing of competence aims for the subject (UDIR, 2006).

Already in the first sentence of the main objectives for in-depth studied in English in LK06 it is stated that in-depth studies in English is intended to go deeper into the English language than mandatory English: “In-depth studies in English... shall open for deeper studies in the subject and development of linguistic and cultural competence in English...” (UDIR, 2006). When reading the main objectives for in-depth studies in English, LK06 (UDIR, 2006) states that students of in-depth studies shall, compared with students who only study mandatory English, gain more self-confidence in the use of English, gain more insight into how to use language creatively, learn how to navigate and assess different texts in today’s globalized world, gain insight into how to assess their own linguistic development, develop critical thinking, learn how to present their own opinions, and, in sum, gain a broader linguistic and

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<sup>22</sup> Stortingsmelding 030 (2003-2004): *Kultur for læring*

cultural competence<sup>23</sup> than their fellow students. In-depth studies in English is in other words to provide students with broader knowledge and more skills in the English language than the mandatory English (also see Table 1 in chapter 1.1).

The two main subject areas for in-depth studies in English are Exploring language and text and Text and meaning (UDIR, 2006). This section of the curriculum describes how students are to be exposed to a variety of texts through in-depth studies in English. Books, songs, films, newspapers, music videos and digital texts are explicitly mentioned, but the wording implies that this is not a conclusive list. The purpose of in-depth studies in English, as described in this part of LK06 (UDIR, 2006), is that the students are to be able to understand, assess, reflect upon, create and present a variety of texts. The use of verbs in the wording of the main subject area signals that the students are to work with texts in an advanced way; reading and reproducing is not enough for in-depth studies in English.

All subjects in LK06 are to focus on five basic skills: writing, speaking, reading, skills in mathematics<sup>24</sup> and using digital tools (UDIR, 2006). The basic skills are seen as tools students need to use in order to reach competence aims for the subject. In this way, basic skills are integral parts of a subject. To reach the competence aims of a subject, students need to use all five skills, and the more developed the students' skills are, the easier it will be to reach the competence aims. To train students' basic skills, teachers have to give tasks and activities which cover these skills at the same time as the students are working towards the competence aims of the subject. This applies to in-depth studies as for all other subjects. When comparing the description of basic skills for mandatory English with the description of basic skills for in-depth studies in English, it seems that basic skills for in-depth studies in English are to be understood as a further development of the basic skills of mandatory English (see Table 2). Basic skills for mandatory English are more detailed and the wording on what the students need to master to be able to learn English is clearer. Basic skills for in-depth studies in English are more general, and can be understood to imply that students of in-depth studies are expected to master, or at least be on their way to master, the skills as described through the mandatory English curriculum. As seen in Table 2, basic skills for in-depth studies in English are more advanced than those of mandatory English.

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<sup>23</sup> This is not a conclusive list

<sup>24</sup> In the curriculum for in-depth studies in English the expression 'skills in mathematics' is used (UDIR, 2006). The basic skill involving different aspects of mathematics is usually referred to as 'numeracy', but when referring to the English version of the curriculum for in-depth studies in English I have chosen to use the same expression as LK06.



**Table 2 Comparison of basic skills in in-depth studies in English and English (LK06)**

IN-DEPTH STUDIES IN ENGLISH	ENGLISH
<p><i>Being able to express oneself in writing and orally</i> in the in-depth English subject is a key part of developing linguistic competence. These skills are important tools in working on understanding and using English in increasingly varied and demanding contexts across cultures and subject fields. Having oral skills means being able to both listen and speak</p>	<p><i>Oral skills</i> in English means being able to listen, speak and interact using the English language. (...) The development of oral skills in English involves using oral language in gradually using more precise and nuanced language in conversation and in other kinds of oral communication. (...)</p> <p><i>Being able to express oneself in writing</i> in English means being able to express ideas and opinions in an understandable and purposeful manner using written English... Writing is also a tool for language learning. The development of writing proficiency in English involves learning orthography and developing a more extensive repertoire of English words and linguistic structures.</p>
<p><i>Being able to use digital tools</i> in the in-depth English subject enables authentic use of the language and opens for additional learning arenas in the subject. Linguistic competence is in many cases a requirement for using digital tools, and using such tools may also help the development of English linguistic competence. Important features of the English subject in digital contexts include being critical of sources and aware of copyright issues and protection of personal privacy.</p>	<p><i>Digital skills</i> in English means being able to use a varied selection of digital tools, media and resources to assist in language learning, to communicate in English and to acquire relevant knowledge in the subject of English... The development of digital skills involves gathering and processing information to create different kinds of text. Formal requirements in digital texts means that effects, images, tables, headlines and bullet points are compiled to emphasis and communicate a message... Digital skills involve developing knowledge about copyright and protection of personal privacy through verifiable references to sources</p>

(UDIR, 2006; UDIR, 2013)

In-depth studies in English has 17 competence aims (UDIR, 2006). These competence aims use verbs such as present, compare, experiment, explore, assess, impart own experience, reflect, produce, and document<sup>25</sup> (UDIR, 2006). Most of these verbs signal that The Ministry of Education and Research wants students to reach high on Bloom's taxonomy (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). Again it is clear that the aims express that students have to do more than simply reproducing facts and thoughts; for example, the aims express that students have to

<sup>25</sup> This is not a conclusive list

reflect, discuss, assess, and create their own opinions based on reliable sources. The wording of the competence aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) states that students of in-depth studies in English are to develop complex skills; skills which are beyond those of mandatory English (see also Table 1 in chapter 1.1).

To sum up, the intention set by The Ministry of Education and Research for in-depth studies in English, as expressed in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), is that the in-depth subject opens for deeper studies in English than mandatory English does. The students of in-depth studies in English are to be exposed to a great variety of texts, they have to master the basic skills for the mandatory English subject and take these skills further. For the students to be able to reach the competence aims of in-depth studies they have to master skills such as critical assessment, reflection, experimentation and the ability to compare. In-depth studies in English is clearly meant to be a subject that goes in depth of the English language, and it is meant to go beyond the scopes of the mandatory English subject.

## **2.2 Motivation – Mastery – Possibilities in lower secondary school<sup>26</sup>**

LK06 (UDIR, 2006), however, is not the only document where the intentions for education in lower secondary school set by The Ministry of Education and Research are found. In 2011 The Ministry published the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter. Ungdomstrinnet*. (2011). The background for this report was a concern in Norway that too many students graduated from secondary school with low competence in basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy, and that a high number of students dropped out from upper secondary school (KD, 2011). Studies have shown that motivation for school in Norway drops as students grow older; it is at its lowest in tenth grade and this is a concern to The Ministry (KD, 2011). The report conveys a concern that there is a link between social background and the risk of dropping out from upper secondary school in Norway, and that one of the objectives of the Norwegian school system must be to reduce such social differences (KD, 2011). *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011) is an extensive report, but I want to take a closer look at the parts describing what The Ministry of Education and Research wants with education in lower secondary school.

First of all the report states that motivation is key to learning, and that lower secondary schools in Norway have to motivate students more than they presently are doing<sup>27</sup> (KD, 2011, p. 11). To increase motivation, classes need to be more practical, more varied and the students

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<sup>26</sup> My translation of 'Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter. Ungdomstrinnet.'

<sup>27</sup> One in three students in lower secondary school does not like school work (KD, 2011, p 13)

have to experience relevancy in what they learn (KD, 2011, p. 15). The Ministry's definition of practical work is "aktiviteter der elevene får være fysisk aktive som i rollespill eller eksperiment. Det kan også være andre former for arbeidsmåte... som prosjektarbeid eller gruppearbeid» (2011, p. 15). Teachers need to use varied and enjoyable activities, they need to give the students opportunities to work in pairs or groups, and they need to give students some freedom of choice when it comes to methods or tasks. All this should be done in accordance with the aims of LK06 (UDIR, 2006); making it clear to the students why they are doing what they are doing (KD, 2011, p. 16). The aims that students are presented with must feel attainable, and the students need to feel that they are able master the tasks they are given (KD, 2011, p. 17). The experience of mastering what you are doing is an important component to motivation for school work. Another component is to get relevant and continuous feedback on your work. The last thing the report mentions is the importance of a good learning environment in all classes; students need to be able to have good relationships with teachers as well as their own peers to be able to learn and thrive in school (KD, 2011, p. 17). It is the responsibility of teachers and school administrators that students are included at their schools.

What *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011) shows is that it is important to keep in mind the focus The Ministry of Education and Research has on motivation, mastery and feedback when understanding what intentions The Ministry has for subjects, including their intentions for in-depth studies in English. The rest of the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011) goes on to describe what The Ministry wants to do to change lower secondary school in Norway, and what implications this is likely to have for the curricula, teachers, school leaders, school owners and so on. I will not go into further detail on this part, as it is not relevant for this thesis, but it is worth mentioning that The Ministry of Education and Research in 2012 adopted the recommendations of *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) by introducing the strategy document *Motivation and Mastery for better Learning* (KD, 2012). This White Paper implemented a four year long focus on school based development called The National Strategy for School based development<sup>28</sup>. Over a period of four years, lower secondary schools in Norway will have the chance to work on developing better practices, much as described in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011; KD, 2012). The project started in 2013 and will end in 2017, and participating schools are involved for three semesters each (KD, 2012).

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<sup>28</sup> 'Skolebasert kompetanseutvikling' (SKU).

Before looking into the NOVA-report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011), where the status of in-depth studies in English is described, I want to refer to one last section in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) which specifically refers to the in-depth language alternative in lower secondary schools. In *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011) The Ministry acknowledges the results of the NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011) which shows that students of in-depth studies in English score lower than students of foreign languages at the end of lower secondary school. The Ministry goes on saying, however:

Fordypningsalternativene skal være reell fordypning i et kjent språk, og de skal være like krevende som det andre fremmedspråket. Departementet registrerer at de er blitt oppfattet som mindre krevende, og at elevene som velger disse alternativene, i stor grad oppfattes av lærerne og skolelederne som mindre motiverte enn de som velger fremmedspråk (...) Departementet vil følge nøye med på utviklingen av de språklige fordypningsalternativene, andelen elever som velger dem og resultatene etter endt grunnskole (KD, 2011, p. 31).

It must not be mistaken that The Ministry has any other intention with the in-depth alternatives than for them to be just as demanding as foreign languages, and that the in-depth alternatives are to go in-depth of languages.

To sum up the intentions with in-depth studies in English as seen in light of the White Paper *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011), teachers need to focus on:

- developing good relations to the students, creating good learning environment in their classes
- giving the students enjoyable, varied activities that have elements of freedom of choice
- making tasks and activities meaningful by relating them to aims in LK06, and making sure that the aims are reachable for the students
- giving relevant feedback with a focus on further learning (KD, 2011, p. 19).

The next section focuses on the NOVA report *Valgmuligheter i ungdomsskolen* (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011), and particularly on who the students of in-depth studies are.

### **2.3 NOVA: Valgmuligheter i ungdomsskolen**

In 2008 The Ministry of Education and Research ordered a report investigating if there were any differences between the in-depth alternatives and the foreign language alternatives in lower secondary schools in Norway. NOVA did the research, and in 2011 Anders Bakken and Marianne Dæhlen published the report *Valgmuligheter i ungdomsskolen. Erfaringer med de*

*språklige fordypningsalternativene og forsøke med arbeidslivs-fag (06)*. Based on interviews with school principals and data from results of National Tests, results after tenth grade, and registered information on social background, Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) were able to give a general picture of who the students of in-depth studies are, and how the in-depth studies differ from the foreign languages (pp. 7-11).

The NOVA report is detailed and Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) have made many interesting findings about in-depth studies in general<sup>29</sup> and specifically about in-depth studies in English. It would go beyond the scope of this thesis to present everything from this report, but I will present some of the main conclusions, as these give a good picture of the status of in-depth studies in English in schools in 2011:

- 25 percent of students in eighth grade in Norway choose in-depth studies instead of a foreign language, and most of them choose in-depth studies in English<sup>30</sup> (2011). Most of these students have lower academic results<sup>31</sup> than students who choose a foreign language and many have relatively low motivation for going to school (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 9). Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) say: "...[det er] rimelig å konkludere at fordypningsfagene er språkfag for de som ikke vil lære språk." (p. 9).
- It is relatively common that students change subjects from a foreign language to one of the in-depth alternatives during the three years at lower secondary school. The report shows that the number of students attending in-depth studies in English increases with 50 percent from eighth grade until tenth grade (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 69).
- The report shows that the gap between the grades of a foreign language student and an in-depth student increases during the three years at lower secondary school. However, in-depth students get relatively good grades in in-depth studies in English compared to their other subjects (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011).
- Based on interviews with school administrators Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) found that teachers adapt the aims in LK06 to fit the group of students they are teaching (p. 10). Consequently in-depth studies in English becomes a less ambitious subject compared to the aims in LK06.

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<sup>29</sup> There are, as mentioned earlier, four in-depth study alternatives in Norwegian schools: English, Norwegian, Saami and Mathematics.

<sup>30</sup> 5 percent choose in-depth Studies in Norwegian or Sami (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 11).

<sup>31</sup> Their average grade is lower than that of a foreign language student, and National Tests show that they are less proficient in basic skills such as reading, calculating and English (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 90).

- Interviews with school leaders show that teachers chosen to teach in-depth studies are usually highly qualified. What is interesting, though, is that teachers tend to be less motivated to teach in-depth studies in English and less interested in this subject than other mandatory subjects (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 11).

In addition to the conclusions presented above, it is interesting to note that in-depth studies in English is only beaten by Spanish in recruiting students<sup>32</sup>; Spanish has 28 percent of the students, German 23 percent, French 14 percent and in-depth studies in English has 24 percent (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 69). Being the second largest language alternative should give in-depth studies in English a higher status among students and teachers than what is the case, as almost one in four students choose this language alternative.

Further on, Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) was able to point to how well LK06 (UDIR 2006) worked for in-depth studies in English. Their finding was that: "...undervisningen...i hovedsak går ut på å forenkle de alt for ambisiøse målene i den sentrale læreplanen." (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 103). A principal said:

Vi har prøvd å tilrettelegge – men dette er helt i grenseland av loven. Vi har vært ute i naturen og elevene har etterpå skrevet om dette. Dette har vi gjort for at elevene skal overleve, og det har vært positivt, men i grenseland (av loven). Vi har måtte tilpasse til elever som sliter. (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 103).

Schools are in other words reporting on adapting and changing in-depth studies in English to make the subject work for the students. Furthermore, the NOVA report reveals that few students actually reach the aims for the in-depth studies as set by LK06 (UDIR, 2006) (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 104).

In conclusion, Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) have discovered that students of in-depth in English in general are less proficient when it comes to basic skills in English and they have lower average grades than foreign language students. In-depth in English has a low status in schools and the subject mainly recruits students who find learning languages difficult. Many in-depth students have low motivation for school in general, as well as for learning languages, and due to this, in-depth studies in English also becomes a subject with low status among teachers. School administrators admit that teachers adapt the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) to fit better with the group of students who generally choose in-depth studies in English, as many teachers view LK06 (UDIR, 2006) as too ambitious and too comprehensive for the in-

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<sup>32</sup> When looking at the number of students attending the different language alternatives in tenth grade.

depth students (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011, p. 113). Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) also conclude that in-depth studies in English have become simplified studies rather than in-depth studies (p. 113). Comparing the conclusion of Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) with the statements of the respondents, will give a good picture of who the students of in-depth studies in English are and what status the subject has today. Knowing who the students are, opens up for discussions on what kind of methods and activities to use in the in-depth studies classroom.

The next parts of the theory chapter will focus on social constructivism theory, with an emphasis on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, as well as theory on students' motivation.

## **2.4 Social constructivism theory**

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian literary critic, philosopher and psychologist who is best known as one of the theorists behind social constructivism theory (Egeberg, Halse, Jonassen, Ringsted, & Wedel-Brandt, 1998, p. 282). His theories were developed in the context of living in a Marxist society, where the emphasis was on the collective, and Vygotsky's theories are also centered on the thought that all intellectual development happens in a social context (Imsen, 1999, p. 156). Students' knowledge, skills and values are developed through interaction with others, and the use of language is central in this process (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 67). Vygotsky describes two zones of development; the actual level of development and the potential or proximal level of development. The actual level of development is what the students already master; what the students are able to do on their own without any help. The potential or proximal level of development is what the students manage to do with the guidance and assistance of others (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 68). When working with tasks in the zone of proximal development, learning will only happen if the students have the chance to ask questions and are given good explanations or demonstrations (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 68). It is also central that the tasks lie within the proximal zone of development. Tasks in the actual zone of development will not lead to new skills or knowledge, and tasks beyond the proximal zone of development will be too demanding. The tasks have to point forward, but not too far ahead (Egeberg, Halse, Jonassen, Ringsted, & Wedel-Brandt, 1998, p. 289).

The core of social constructivism theory is that learning happens through interaction with others (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 70). It is important to understand, however, that the

success of learning rests on how the students and the teacher<sup>33</sup> interact. For students to develop, they have to be given hints on how to solve a task or a problem, and not be given the full answer. This way of working is called scaffolding, a concept which was introduced by Jeromy Bruner during the 1950s (Imsen, 1999, p. 177; Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 70). The idea is that the teacher gives the students a cognitive scaffold when he or she is working on a task within the zone of proximal development, and that the scaffold gradually will be taken away as the students master the new task or problem (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 70). Summed up, the idea of scaffolding is that the students cannot reach towards new development without a scaffold to support them on the way (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 71).

Roland G. Tharp and Ronald Gallimore (1988 in Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015) have described how social constructivism theory can be applied to classroom practice. They call the use of scaffolding within the students' zone of proximal development for assisted performance (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). This is a process where the students go from being assisted in their performance, to performing on their own, and then to internalizing and automatizing the new skill or knowledge<sup>34</sup> (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 72). Examples of assisted performance in the classroom can be model teaching, where the students are given the opportunity to imitate a model; contingency management, where one uses positive (or negative) reinforcement to enhance motivation and excitement for the work; feedback, where the students' performances is compared to that of the model; instruction and questioning, verbal forms of assistance where the teacher aims to create cognitive activity within the students; and cognitive structuring, also a verbal form of assistance where the aim is for the students to develop strategies for gaining new knowledge (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 73; Dunphy & Dunphy, 2003, p. 51). Teachers need to use all these strategies in their assisted performance teaching, and many of the strategies are naturally used at the same time as some of them are linked to each other (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 74).

For teachers of in-depth studies in English, it is important, as when teaching all subjects, to keep the social constructivism theories in mind when planning and executing lessons. Teachers must ask themselves: Where are my students now? How can I describe their actual

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<sup>33</sup> This does not have to be an actual teacher, but could also be a fellow student that has come further in his or her development. The idea is that the learner interacts with someone that already masters the skill or knowledge in question.

<sup>34</sup> This theory also explain that students regress or go through de-automatization (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 72). This stage is not relevant for the discussions and will not be described any further.



levels of development, and where are their levels of proximal development? By answering these questions the teacher has the responsibility to try to adapt the lessons to each student. Lyngnes and Rismark (2015) go on to say that to be able to accomplish this it is important to consider the interaction in the classroom as the best starting point for learning (p. 74).

Students need to function as scaffolds for each other, meaning that the students need to trust and rely on one another, and everyone needs to be included in the social context of the class. Jeane Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991 in Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015) say that how successful the process of learning is for a student, equals the opportunity of being part of an inclusive learning community (p. 76). For learning to happen in a social context, the community has to be inviting, in this case the in-depth studies class, while each student has to be responsible for taking initiative and showing interest in learning (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015, p. 77).

How inviting the learning community is in the context of in-depth studies in English, and how much initiative the students of in-depth studies in English have towards the subject, is something my respondents have reflected upon. They have also reflected on the level of motivation that students bring to the in-depth studies classroom.

## **2.5 Motivation theory**

Motivation for learning is closely related to how well students master the tasks, activities and aims they are working on. Einar M. Skaalvik and Sidsel Skaalvik (2015) refer to Albert Bandura's use of self-efficacy or mastery expectations when they speak of what is central to a student's motivation for learning (1977 in Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 17). Self-efficacy is a reference to what extent a student believes he or she will master the task that is given. This belief in own ability has been learned through earlier experiences; if students' experiences tell them that they do not understand English poems, the students will believe that they never will understand English poems (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 19). High self-efficacy means higher effort, more involvement and more endurance towards school work, and it also means that these students value learning more than students with low self-efficacy. In other words; high self-efficacy leads to better results in school (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 19). This is why it is important for teachers to plan lessons where students experience mastering what they are doing; teachers need to plan lessons where the students' learned self-efficacy becomes positive. Focus on assisted learning within the students' zone of proximal development (see chapter 2.4) and focus on the principal of adapted education that is implemented in The Norwegian Act of Education (KD, 2010), is therefore essential to the

students' development of self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 28). This should be a focus for teachers of in-depth studies in English, as for all other subjects.

Motivation for school work is not only influenced by self-efficacy, it is also influenced by how much students value the subject itself. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) refer to Jacquelynne S. Eccles' (1983) expectancy-value theory which focuses on students' expectations towards subjects (in Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 56). This theory emphasizes how students' beliefs in their own skills correlate to the expectations for success in a subject. It also describes that how much students value a subject plays an important part to the success of the students (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72). There are four ways in which a student can experience a subject as valuable; intrinsic value, incentive value, utility value, and cost (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72). Intrinsic value refers to the enjoyment students experience when they do tasks they enjoy, for example games and playful activities. This value can be a powerful source for motivation, and if subjects in school are intrinsically valued this will lead to positive consequences for the students' work (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 57). Incentive value, or attainment value, refers to a student's self-image and how important it is for the student to do well in the subject (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72). If students define themselves as proficient in a subject, this subject becomes important to them, and they are motivated to do an effort to get good results (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 58). Utility value, or usefulness, refers to in what extent the students believe the subject is valuable for their future (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72). If doing well in a subject makes it easier to reach goals that lie ahead, the students will be increasingly motivated to work in the subject (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 58). The last value, cost, refers to several factors. One factor is how much working with school subjects, for example doing homework, limits time to do more enjoyable activities, such as being with friends (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 72). It also refers to how much effort it takes to understand and finish school work, and the amount of emotional strain it costs the students to finish. Cost as value is often related to negative consequences for motivation; if the cost is high students often lose motivation and start to develop low self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 59). Research shows that motivation for school is increasingly affected by these values as students become teenagers and older, and that particularly the utility value becomes more and more important for students' motivation for school as the students start lower and higher secondary school (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 60). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) go on to say that it is especially important for students to see the utility value for subjects and tasks they have no intrinsic

interest for, and that this is the teacher's responsibility (p. 65). For teachers of in-depth studies in English, it is important to organize the subject in such way that students experience low cost and high levels of intrinsic, incentive and utility value. If not, the students may lose motivation for the subject.

The values described above are often referred to as central parts of students' internal<sup>35</sup> motivation. Activities which evoke internal motivation are characterized as interesting and rewarding for the students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 66). Internal motivation is self-determined and research show that such motivation is one of the strongest forces for doing school work (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56). At the other end of the motivation scale is external<sup>36</sup> motivation, which is based on getting different forms of rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 60). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) refer to Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci (2009) who distinguish between two types of external motivation; controlled<sup>37</sup> motivation and autonomous<sup>38</sup> motivation (2009 in Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 67). Examples of controlled external motivation are to get a reward for finishing a task or to try to avoid punishment for not finishing. (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 67). Autonomous external motivation means that students have internalized and integrated the schools' view on subjects as valuable in themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 60; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 67). It is no longer the promise of rewards or the fear of punishment that drive the students' work; it is the internalization of the value of education that drives the students forward. This form of motivation is still an external motivation; the schools' way of valuing education has been assimilated within the students (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 62; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 68). The strongest form of motivation is internal motivation. It is, however, impossible for students to be internally motivated for all subjects at all time. The alternative then, is external motivation. Controlled external motivation is difficult to maintain for teachers since it demands a constant promise of rewards or a close follow-up of punishment. It is therefore important to work towards autonomous external motivation for the students, and this goes for

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<sup>35</sup> The expression intrinsic motivation is also used as collective expression for factors within the person that leads to motivation. I choose to use the expression internal motivation to avoid any confusion for the reader as the expression 'intrinsic' already is used as reference to a specific value (see chapter 2.5)

<sup>36</sup> Also called extrinsic motivation, but I choose to use external motivation as it pairs with the expression 'internal' (see footnote 35)

<sup>37</sup> Controlled motivation can be divided into categories external regulation and introjection (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). I will not explain these categories separately, but use the definitions as presented by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015).

<sup>38</sup> Autonomous motivation can be divided into categories identification and integration (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). I will not explain these categories separately, but use the definitions as presented by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015).

students of in-depth studies in English, as well (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 68). To accomplish this, it is important that the students get a sense of belonging in school.

The learning environment in a class or at a school is central to students' motivation for school work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 68). There are three basic needs the learning environment has to provide for students to be motivated: autonomy, the feeling of competence, and the feeling of belonging or relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 67). A good learning environment allows students to be listened to, it allows them to express their own thoughts, and it commands the student in little degree (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 69). Furthermore, motivation is related to the students' development of self-efficacy and how the schools support this development, as well as to what degree the students are developing trusting relationships to their teachers and peers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 69). Safety is central to a good learning environment. Students need to sense that the teachers support them, either emotionally by showing care and respect towards the students, or instrumentally by providing the students with professional guidance and constructive feedback, or both (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 96). Students also need to have a good relationship to their fellow students, and the teachers must facilitate for this. Friendship and positive attitudes towards education should be the basis of every classroom, giving the students opportunity to learn and work together (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015, p. 104). Students' motivation and the nature of the learning environment are closely related. Teachers of in-depth studies in English studies must therefore focus on creating good learning environments where the students' needs are met, as this could lead to better motivation and better learning for students of in-depth studies.

## **2.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have presented the theoretical perspectives for this thesis. First the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training (UDIR, 2006) was presented, as well as the White Paper *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) and the report *Valgmuligheter i ungdomsskolen* (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011). The first two documents expressed the intentions The Ministry of Education and Research has for in-depth studies in English, and the last document presented earlier research on in-depth studies.

Secondly in this chapter, Vygotsky's social constructivism theory on zones of development was presented, as well as a brief presentation of Bruner's theory on scaffolding. Furthermore,

motivational theories were presented, with a focus on the central concepts of self-efficacy, expectancy-value theory, internal motivation, external motivation and how the learning environment affects motivation.



### 3 Methods and material

The data in this research was collected through five qualitative interviews based on a semi structured interview guide (see Appendix I), while the analysis of the data was done inductively with grounded theory as the basis. This chapter describes how the data was collected, as well as a presentation of the analyzing process.

#### 3.1 Data collection

The aim with the thesis was to see how in-depth studies in English is taught and how the way of teaching coheres with the intentions for the subject as set by The Ministry of Education and Research. I also wanted to look at the role of LK06 (UDIR, 2006) and what challenges teachers of in-depth studies in English meet. To be able to learn more about this I had to talk to actual teachers, and interviewing stood out as the natural method for collecting data. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say that the qualitative research interview aims at understanding the world the way the respondents do, and to create new knowledge by seeing the world through the respondents' eyes (p. 20). This was also the aim for me. By talking to in-depth studies teachers I wanted to learn how they viewed teaching in-depth studies in English, and I wanted to learn how they used the aims and intentions in LK06 (UDIR, 2006). Interviewing is a method where the data is based on self-reporting by the respondents. This means that it is important to keep in mind that the findings in this research are based on the truth as seen from the respondents' perspectives, a truth which is subjective and which may differ from person to person (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is, however, this perspective I am interested in researching.

Finding respondents that are interested in being interviewed and who have time to meet you, can be a challenge. I therefore decided early on to focus on using the network I have developed after more than ten years as an English teacher, as well as my years as an English didactics student, to find respondents that would be willing to participate in my project. In collaboration with my supervisor at NTNU I decided that five respondents should be sufficient. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) make a point of no number of respondents being right or wrong: "Interview as many people as you need to find out what you need to know"<sup>39</sup> (p. 148), they say. The assessment I made was that by choosing five respondents, I would get to learn about five different teachers' views on my topic, all the while it would be a manageable amount of work in transcribing and analyzing, compared to the timeframe of my project. It is always difficult to know how few or how many respondents to choose, but after conducting

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<sup>39</sup> My translation from Norwegian

my interviews I was confident that my five respondents had given me interesting perspectives to my thesis, at the same time as I also started to detect certain patterns.

My respondents were a mix of people I knew of through work and studies, along with people I came into contact with through friends that are teachers, through my supervisor at NTNU, and through fellow students. The main priority when contacting respondents was to get teachers who were willing to participate, and I therefore only demanded one qualification: they were teachers of in-depth studies in English this school year. I ended up with a majority of respondents who were in their 30s or 40s, but I did manage to get some variation in the types of schools the respondents work in (see chapter 3.1.1 for a closer presentation of the respondents). This research is not representative with regards to gender, age, geographical variation or academic background, but this was neither the aim of the study. The aim is to learn how five teachers of in-depth studies in English plan and work with their students, and by learning this, trying to say something about how these ways of teaching coheres with the intentions set by The Ministry of Education and Research.

Before interviewing my respondents I developed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix I). The guide originally consisted of 37 questions which I had organized under five different headings. After each interview, the guide changed a bit, as I discovered new questions I wanted to add. In this respect, there are questions I asked respondent E, that I did not ask respondent A. This can perhaps be a bit unfortunate, but it is also evidence of the reflections I started to have throughout the interview process, as well as the dynamic that appeared between me as the interviewer and my respondents. A qualitative interview is a construct between the person doing the interview and the person being interviewed, and it is only natural that the interview guide is affected by this (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 22).

When I first contacted potential respondents I e-mailed them information on the purpose of my research as well as my research questions. I also informed the respondents that participation was based on informed consent, that all information would be confidential, as all respondents would be anonymized, and that the respondents would be able to back out at any stage of the process. Before contacting potential interviewees I had used the homepage of The Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) to see if I had to report my project. The result was that my project was not going to contain any sensitive information, and I could therefore continue on without any further registration. A few days before I was going to conduct the actual interviews, my respondents received both my interview guide (see Appendix I) and a



consent form (see Appendix II) per e-mail<sup>40</sup>. All respondents consented either in writing or orally per telephone<sup>41</sup> after reading through the form. Giving the respondents full confidentiality and an informed consent is central to the ethical standard of any project. It also adds to the reliability of a study as respondents who are sure of confidentiality are more likely to be honest and open (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 105-106).

Due to some geographical challenges, two of my interviews were conducted by telephone. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say that the fact that one can interview people living geographically far away is the main pro for using telephone interviews (p. 178). The fact that the researcher is unable to see gestures, facial expressions and the body language of the respondents, are negative consequences of telephone interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 179). This was something I also experienced when speaking to respondents on the telephone. After interviewing respondents face-to-face, I had been able to make small notes on when they marked the use of quotation marks using their fingers, when they smiled before answering, and so on. During the telephone interviews I had no possibility of doing the same. When listening through the recordings, I have no trouble understanding what the respondents were saying, but I could not be as sure of the full meaning of what was said as if we had talked face-to-face. Another challenge was that one of my respondents lives in a place with poor mobile coverage, and there was a risk we would lose connection during the interview. Fortunately, this was not a big problem, and the few times we did lose sound, I was able to instantly ask for my respondent to repeat the words that were lost, so no sentences became impossible to understand when I listened to the recording afterwards.

The last three of my interviews were conducted face-to-face, and all three interviews took place at the respondents' work place during working hours. All respondents had reserved rooms at their schools that we could use without interruption for the 55-65 minutes the interviews lasted. At one school, however, we were unfortunately interrupted a couple of times by a teacher who was going to use the room after us, making both my respondent and me a bit stressed towards the end of the interview. Being stressed might have influenced both the way I asked my questions, and the way my respondent answered. I did, however, get through my interview guide before we had to leave the room, so all questions were answered. I believe that using private rooms during the interview was a big advantage; the respondents

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<sup>40</sup> This is true for except one interview which was appointed only a few hours before the actual interview, and the consent form was therefore sent only a few hours before.

<sup>41</sup> Two interviews were per telephone, something I will get back to.

felt they could speak freely without anyone listening to what was said. Also, avoiding background noises improved the quality of the recordings.

As mentioned, all of the interviews were recorded. To do this I used a recording app on my mobile phone, as well as a digital voice recorder. These devices worked well, and I was very pleased with the recording quality of all five interviews, including those conducted by telephone. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) points out that there are many factors playing a role when interviewing a person; the room, the environment, body positions, clothing, and the furniture to mention some (p. 129). The same goes for recording devices, and I did notice how many of my respondents became more relaxed and more casual once these devices had been turned off. During the interviews I had tried to stay neutral to my topics, not asking leading or loaded questions. Once the interview was over, however, most respondents wanted to know what the situation for in-depth studies in English was like at the school I work. They also wanted to hear my take on the topics we had discussed, and so on. I must admit that it was liberating to be able to answer my respondents' questions once the interview was officially over. The aim for my interview was to let my respondents' voices be heard, and I believe I managed to do this for a large part, but it was interesting to experience how both my respondents and I were somewhat relieved in going from a situation where only one part could share their thoughts and experiences, to a situation where we could be equal participants in the conversation again<sup>42</sup>. The recordings have been saved on a password encrypted private computer located at my house, and all recordings will be deleted once the research has been finalized.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) say that a researcher needs to conduct his or her interviews with “a qualified naiveté”<sup>43</sup> (p. 49). By this they mean that every interviewer has to have a sufficient amount of knowledge on the topic he or she is working on, while at the same time remaining open and free of hypotheses in the meeting with a respondent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 49). In qualitative studies this is often referred to as bracketing; laying aside all previous beliefs and knowledge, trying to look for what the data is telling you, rather than letting your own experience color the data (Merriam, 2002). Bracketing is central to the validity of any research. Being 100 percent free and open when conducting research is however a utopian idea, as qualitative interviews never are completely objective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 199). Knowledge and facts produced in qualitative interviews are always

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<sup>42</sup> See also chapter 1.4 and 3.3 for more on my position as researcher.

<sup>43</sup> My translation from Norwegian.

products of the interaction between two subjects, the researcher and the respondent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 49). Early in my first interview, I became aware that I had made some assumptions as to how my respondents would answer certain questions. To my surprise, however, most of my respondents had other answers. This experience early on in the interviewing process made me very aware of the fact that I had to put aside my own ideas, and truly listen to what my respondents were telling me. I had to be aware of my own assumptions and let my respondents' experiences talk to me; I had to follow the concept of bracketing as best as I could.

During the interviews it became clear that all five respondents used the same textbook in their in-depth studies in English classes. Because many of the teachers referred to tasks and topics in these books, I decided to take a look at them, simply to be able to understand what the teachers were referring to. I have not conducted any analysis on the tasks and texts in these books, but I will refer briefly to some of the tasks in my discussions. The books are called *On the Move 1, 2 or 3* and they are published by Cappelen Damm. As far as I have been able to see, *On the Move 1, 2 and 3* are the only text books that have been made specifically for in-depth studies in English, and therefore hold a big part of the market.

### 3.1.1 Portraits of the respondents

Before explaining how I analyzed the interviews, I want to give a brief presentation of the respondents. All five respondents have been given fictional names to ensure anonymity, but the rest of the information is based on what the respondents have told me in the interviews. I have chosen to include these portraits for the reader to get to know the respondents better, and because the background information is relevant to some of the discussions.

In interview A I interviewed "Anna" who is in her mid-30s. She has worked as a teacher for about 12 years, both in elementary and secondary school. Anna's academic background is from a teacher training college where she has 30 credits<sup>44</sup> English. During her career she has taught in-depth studies in English for approximately five years, at two different schools. Today she is working at a school with about 530 students, from eight to tenth grade, in what I would characterize as a large city in Norway. Anna teaches mandatory English in addition to in-depth studies in English at her school.

In interview B I interviewed "Brit" who is in her late 40s. She has worked as a teacher for about 18 years, and she has taught in-depth studies in English on and off six times since 2006.

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<sup>44</sup> My translation of 'studiepoeng'.

Brit works at a school with about 480 students from first to tenth grade in a small town in Norway. Brit has taught mandatory English parallel with teaching in-depth studies in English at her school, but most times she has taught a different grade of in-depth studies than of mandatory English. Brit's academic background is from a teacher training college, where she studied 60 credits English, and she has in recent years studied an additional 60 credits English at university.

In interview C I interviewed "Christopher" who is in his late 30s. He has worked at his current school for five years, and has taught in-depth English for four of those years. Christopher's academic background is from university where he has studied 60 credits of English, and then later on studied didactics as part of his teaching degree<sup>45</sup>. Today Christopher teaches mandatory English in addition to in-depth studies in English, and he is working at a school of about 530 students, from eight to tenth grade, in a large city in Norway.

In interview D I interviewed "Diana" who is in her late 20s. She has worked as a teacher for two and a half years, at two different schools. Her background comes from a teacher training college where she studied 60 credits English. Diana has taught mandatory English, but right now she teaches Norwegian as well as in-depth studies in English. She has had a relatively short career, but has experienced teaching all three levels of in-depth studies so far. The school she works at today has about 450 students, from eight to tenth grade, and it is situated in a large city in Norway.

In interview E I interview "Elisabeth" who is in her late 30s. She has worked as teacher for at least ten years, and has taught in-depth studies in English the last seven years. Her academic background is from different universities, and she has 60 credits of English in her degree. Today she teaches both mandatory English as well as in-depth studies in English at a school with about 300 students from first to tenth grade in a rural town in Norway. Elisabeth teaches grades eight to ten at her school.

When all interviews were finished, something which was done over a period of four weeks, the analysis of the data started.

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<sup>45</sup> PPU

### 3.2 Methods for the analysis

This section of the methods chapter will give an insight to how the data material was analyzed. The basis for the analysis was grounded theory.

The first step of the analysis was to transcribe the interviews. Due to practical reasons, I had help by a proficient typist to do most of the transcribing. It is often claimed that it is very valuable to do the transcribing yourself, seeing that the process of analyzing starts with the transcribing, and patterns and codes begin to emerge as you are transferring the recorded conversations into written texts (Nilssen, 2012). Since I had help with the transcription, it was extra important for me to control the quality of the transcriptions and to double check that everything in the interviews had been correctly transcribed. I did this by listening to the interviews as I read the transcripts. This process became very valuable to me as it brought me back into the interviewing situations and made me remember thoughts and ideas that had emerged as I was interviewing the respondents.

The recordings of the interviews were all of very good quality, and it was easy to hear and understand all that was said, and I am therefore confident that nothing of what was actually said was lost in the transcription process. Things that were lost, however, were facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice, et cetera. Losing the non-verbal aspect of communication also means losing some of the meaning (Nilssen, 2012, p. 47). I therefore chose to include notes in the transcripts of some of the non-verbal aspects, for example when there was uncertainty in the voices, and I also included pauses, laughter and sounds such as “uh” and “m-m” as this could be relevant in my understanding of the meaning of what was said. Another choice I made was to use the standard variant of Norwegian instead of the respondents’ dialects when the interviews were being transcribed. Since dialects are not important to this research, it was natural to use a written standard rather than an oral form in the transcripts. There are many aspects to consider when working on transcribing, but Kvale and Brinkmann say that there is no true way of transcribing; what is important to ask is what type of transcription will work best, and do the transcribing accordingly (2009, p. 121). That is what I believe I have done.

As mentioned above, one of the first steps of the analysis was to read through the transcripts as I listened to the recordings of the interviews. Whenever I recognized a new topic that my respondents were talking about, I noted it down as a code in the left hand side of my table, and interesting thoughts or ideas that appeared, were noted in the right hand of the same table

(see Table 3). In this way, a rather large number of codes started to emerge from my data, at the same time as I started to reflect on the answers my respondents had given in the interviews. This way of analyzing interviews is based on Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss' grounded theory that emerged in the 1960s (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The main idea of grounded theory is to approach the interviews, or the data, inductively. This means that instead of testing existing theories, you work on creating your own theory based on what the data is telling you (Nilssen, 2012). By using open coding, or databased coding, you try to look at the interviews with an open mind, and the codes are developed as you discover new information in the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Nilssen, 2012). This stands in contrast to concept based coding where codes are developed before you start analyzing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The aim of the coding should be to develop saturated categories that embrace all the experiences and thoughts that the respondents express during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

As the interviews were done in Norwegian, and Norwegian is my native language, the analysis was also initially done in Norwegian. I found that codes emerged more easily when I used my native language. After listening through the first interview, I translated all the codes into English, but still chose to keep on analyzing the rest of the interviews using Norwegian terms. Table 3 is an excerpt from one of the interviews, giving an example of how I worked when I coded the material<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Not to confuse the reader, the codes in this excerpt have been translated into English.

**Table 3: Initial analysis of the interviews shown through an excerpt from the transcripts**

CODE <sup>47</sup>	TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW A	COMMENTS
Differentiation	Det er vel fordi det er et språk de allerede kan litt, og vil på en måte ha mulighet til å få en vurdering i... når man... ja... kanskje derfor et annet fremmedspråk vil bli altfor vanskelig å mestre at... og det er jo det vi vil også, vi vil jo at de skal ha en mestringsfølelse i fagene sine her. Sette dem inn i noe som bare blir uforståelig... ja... for dem. Det ville vært litt hardt.	<i>Eng.fo – permanent nivådeling av elevene??</i>
Motivation	<b>Mm-m. Ja... Motivasjonen hos elevene dine, da? Kan du beskrive den? Motivasjonen for engelsk fordypning.</b>	
Methods and activities	For fordypning, ja... jeg synes det er... mitt inntrykk er veldig godt... de er... det er veldig lite fravær i gruppen, synes jeg. De er pliktoppfyllende, de... de liker faget, som sagt, og... vi har... ja... det kommer tilbake igjen det der med at vi har kanskje litt annet type opplegg.. at det er litt mer spennende... ja... ting kan være litt mer visuelt... vi har tid til å... ja... vise litt... kanskje litt flere filmer, lese bøker, litt sånn andre ting som... ja... artigere	<i>Mulig å få vurdering her... annet språk ikke sikkert de ville fått vurdering (høyre enn kar I?)  Mer visuelt. Mer film. Mer bøker. Artigere...Kos</i>

From the first interview 35 codes emerged. These were then narrowed down to 20 codes, as some of them were closely related and could be merged (see Table 4). I tried to use these codes as I analyzed the other the interviews and I found that few new codes appeared. As mentioned earlier, I used a semi-structured interview guide when conducting the interviews, and all my respondents were therefore discussing many of the same topics. My own comments and reflections on their answers, however, could be quite different from interview to interview. Table 4 briefly explains how to understand the codes.

<sup>47</sup> See Table 4 for explanation of the codes.

**Table 4: Short explanation of the codes**

	<b>CODES</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
1	<b>Student-teacher ratio</b>	Reflections on and descriptions of the number of students per teacher.
2	<b>The Knowledge Promotion (LK06)</b>	Discussions and reflections on the objectives and intentions for the subject (as they are presented in LK06).
3	<b>Methods and activities</b>	Description of methods and activities that are used in the classes.
4	<b>Motivation</b>	Description of and reflections on motivation for the students.
5	<b>Variation</b>	Reflections on the level of variation in the lessons.
6	<b>Feedback and assessment</b>	Reflections on feedback and assessment in the subject
7	<b>Differentiation</b>	Descriptions on how the subject is differentiated.
8	<b>Mastery</b>	Reflections on the level of mastery in the subject, and the importance of mastery for the students.
9	<b>Modelling</b>	Descriptions of how modelling is used in the classroom.
10	<b>Learning environment</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on the learning environment and relationships in the classes.
11	<b>Learner characteristics</b>	Generalized descriptions of the type of the typical student in the subject and reflections on their academic preconditions.
12	<b>The status of the subject</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on the status of the subject (among students, teachers and administrators).
13	<b>Basic skills</b>	Descriptions of the work with basic skills in the subject, and reflections on this work.
14	<b>Lesson planning</b>	Descriptions of how the teachers work (alone or in cooperation with others) when they plan their lessons in the subject.
15	<b>Language choice</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on how English and Norwegian are used in the lessons.
16	<b>Learner participation</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on how the students participate in the planning and execution of the lessons.
17	<b>Expectations and attitudes</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on teachers' expectations towards the students, and the students' own expectations and attitudes.
18	<b>Teaching material</b>	Descriptions of and reflections on the use of different types of teaching material (for example text-books).
19	<b>Teacher characteristics</b>	Descriptions of the teachers who teach the subject (the informants) and their level of competence.
20	<b>Elective tasks</b>	Description of and reflections on the use of elective tasks in the subject.

My next step was to divide the 20 topics into broader categories. I was then left with four main categories; Teaching contexts, Aims, Content, and Learning conditions. These categories are found again in chapter five as subheadings in the discussion part.



The codes were divided into categories as shown in Table 5. Some of the codes were easy to place in a category, while others were relevant for the discussion of more than one category, and ended therefore up being put into two categories (see Table 5).

**Table 5: The categories and corresponding codes**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>CODES</b>
<b>Teaching contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning environment</li> <li>- Learner characteristics</li> <li>- The status of the subject</li> <li>- Expectations and attitudes</li> <li>- Teacher characteristics*</li> <li>- Student-teacher ratio</li> </ul>
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LK06</li> <li>- Basic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Methods and activities</li> <li>- Variation</li> <li>- Differentiation</li> <li>- Feedback and assessment*</li> <li>- Modelling</li> <li>- Lesson planning</li> <li>- Language choice*</li> <li>- Learner participation</li> <li>- Elective tasks</li> <li>- Teaching material</li> </ul>
<b>Learning conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Motivation</li> <li>- Mastery</li> <li>- Learning environment</li> <li>- Learner participation</li> </ul>

\* Codes that are not being further discussed due to irrelevance and/or going outside the scope of this thesis

As mentioned above, these four categories are the basis for the discussions in chapter five where I relate the findings in the data to the theory presented in chapter two:

In the discussion on the category Teaching contexts it will be relevant to look at the findings and compare them to the NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011) (see chapter 2.3). The discussions will look at how the respondents describe the status of in-depth studies at their schools, and how they describe the students of in-depth studies, and compare this to the findings of Bakken and Dæhlen (2011).

For the category Aims discussions will look at how the respondents interpret and use the aims for in-depth studies in English in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) and how this corresponds with the

intentions for the subject as set by The Ministry of Education and Research in LK06. A central question is whether the respondents believe the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) function well for in-depth studies in English.

When it comes to the Content category, it will be relevant to discuss how the respondents' ways of teaching correspond to what social constructivism describe as the best ways for students to learn. It will also be interesting to see how the teachers' ways of teaching correspond to the guidelines set by The Ministry of Education and Research (2011) in the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter*.

The discussion on the category Learning conditions will be based on what the respondents report on motivation in their in-depth in English classes, and how this relate to theories on motivation, as presented in chapter 2.5. The discussions will focus on in what ways the respondents are successful on motivating the students of in-depth studies in English, and what can be done to improve the students' motivation. The report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) includes guidelines for how to motivate students, and it will be interesting to see if these guidelines are being followed by teachers of in-depth studies.

After organizing the interviews into codes and categories, I went back to the transcripts to highlight the information the data was providing. I read through the transcripts using different colors for each category. Teaching contexts was marked blue, Aims was green, Content was yellow and Learning conditions was marked pink. By doing this it was easier to navigate in the data when I went on to organize and describe my findings. Table 6 shows an example of how I worked with the analysis of the interviews.

**Table 6: Excerpt of highlighted analysis of a transcript**

Code <sup>48</sup>	Transcript interview C	Comments
Learning environment	Når du planlegger... ja... hva er det du tar hensyn til, hva er det du tenker på i engelsk fordypning som kanskje... ja, som er spesielt for det faget, da?  Ja... egentlig så... egentlig så... med unntak av at de ikke er like trygg på hverandre, fordi de ikke kjenner... ikke... ikke elevene heller har en tett relasjon seg imellom, det er ulikt hvor godt de kjenner hverandre. Det er det jeg må ta hensyn til. Men ut... utenom det, så er det som å planlegge en hvilken som helst annen time.	<i>Andre hensyn ifht relasjon enn ellers.</i>
Methods and activities	Mm-m  Annen engelsktime, hva jeg skal ta hensyn til, både i forhold til fagnivå, og få med alle og... sikre god aktivitet og... hvor... mål... at vi er... styrt etter.... Altså, at de vet hvor de skal hen og, ja, alt det her. Det som du gjør til enhver tid, det... det ligger nå der.	<i>I utgangspunktet likt å planlegge eng.fo, men...</i>
Lesson planning	Mm-m	
LK06	Ja. Så... det... det er egentlig... men det er klart at... det.. det at... [nøler] det at du ikke har... gode nok læreverk, egentlig, og egentlig ikke har kompetansemålene så tett innpå deg.	<i>...skiller seg pga læreverk og distanse til kompetansemål</i>

By applying this method for analysis, I went from having codes and categories, to seeing the answers to my research questions appearing on the page in the form of different colors. Some new questions also started to form, which were beyond the scope of this thesis. Some of these questions will be mentioned in chapter 6.3 as possible questions for further research.

### 3.3 The reliability of the thesis

As explained in chapter 3.1 I am researching a field which I am a part of. Nilssen (2012) emphasizes how closeness to the field you are investigating can strengthen qualitative research: “To gain inside-knowledge the researcher tries to minimize the distance between her and the respondents. Many qualitative researchers have inside knowledge by taking on a dual role, as they often study their own context<sup>49</sup>.” (pp. 137-138). Knowing the field and understanding the respondents is an advantage when conducting qualitative research. The danger, however, is that your subjectivity may interfere with the research process. Nilssen

<sup>48</sup> See Table 4 for explanation of the codes

<sup>49</sup> My translation from Norwegian

(2012) goes on to say that by being aware of your subjectivity, and by making sure there is a balance in the closeness and the distance between the researcher and the data, the quality of the project will be enhanced (p. 139). Reflexivity plays an important part in all qualitative research; the researcher needs to acknowledge that the data can be loaded with the person's own values and theories. One therefore needs to try to identify and be aware of this throughout the entire process (Nilssen, 2012, p. 140). By explaining and discussing both the process of data collection and the analyzing process (see chapters 3.1 and 3.2), I have tried to create transparency and to show that reflexivity has been present throughout this research project. Postholm (2010) refers to Merriam (2002 in Postholm, 2010) who expresses a set of criteria that qualitative research needs to be evaluated on. This thesis has been produced in accordance with these criteria: I have developed questions which are suitable for qualitative research; I have explained the purpose of the project; I have given a theoretical framing; I have presented the method, the selection of respondents, the data collecting and the data analysis; I have discussed my role as researcher; I have supported my findings with reference to the data; I have discussed implications; and I have discussed possibilities for further research<sup>50</sup> (Merriam in Postholm, 2010, p. 135). By doing this I believe I that have contributed to the reliability of this thesis, as all aspects of the research has been both presented and discussed accordingly.

### **3.4 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have presented how I collected the data by conducting five qualitative interviews with teachers of in-depth studies in English. The first part of the chapter explained the process of finding respondents and conducting the interviews, followed with methodical reflections on the way this was done. The second part of the chapter explained the process of the analysis of the data, which was done inductively on the basis of grounded theory. The aim of this chapter was to make the processes of data collection and data analysis as transparent as possible, ensuring the thesis' reliability.

The analysis of the thesis' data revealed a number of interesting aspects on teaching in-depth studies in English. In the next chapters I will present and discuss these findings.

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<sup>50</sup> See chapters 4 and 5 for findings and discussions.

## 4 Findings

In this chapter I will present the findings from the analysis of the interviews. As mentioned in chapter 3.1, it is important to keep in mind that the findings are based on self-reporting from five respondents. Other teachers, school administrators, students or parents may have different views on what the respondents have reported. The findings are, however, based on the reported reality as described by the five in-depth studies in English teachers who have participated in the study.

### 4.1 Challenges of teaching in-depth studies in English: The students

I will start by looking at how the respondents perceived and described the students of in-depth studies in English. This is important to understand why the teachers choose to teach in-depth studies in English the way they do.

As seen in the NOVA report, Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) discovered that students of in-depth studies in English were less motivated for both school work and for learning languages than other students, and they had poorer basic skills and poorer grades than other students (see chapter 2.3). The respondents were also asked to give a general description of their students of in-depth studies in English, as well as a description of the status of the in-depth studies in English in their school (see Appendix I). All of the five teachers interviewed were cautious in how they worded the description of the students, and they all emphasized that the descriptions were based on generalizations. Expressions such as less motivated<sup>51</sup>, academically weak, already struggles at school, and challenging behavior, came up with all respondents (Interview A, 2016; Interview B, 2016; Interview C, 2016; Interview D, 2016; Interview E, 2016). Christopher described the students in this way:

...så får [engelsk fordypning] alle de som dropper ut av andre fremmedspråk, som ofte sliter med språk. Og de som er minst motivert (...) Ser jeg klassen min eller trinnet som helhet, så er prosentvis andel som sliter med å holde fokus og sliter med å sitte i ro, så har jeg større andel av dem i gruppen min. (...) Nei, det er jo en utfordring med mye høylytte gutter, da. (Interview C, 2016)

Christopher experiences many disorderly students who struggle with motivation. Diana described her students in this way:

De er gjerne litt svake i engelsk, i den vanlige engelsken. Så de trenger litt styrk, da. De ser det litt mer som engelsk styrk kanskje enn fordypning (...) Mange av elevene

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<sup>51</sup> All references to the interviews are my translation from Norwegian to English. Quotes are kept in Norwegian (as described in 1.5.4).

på tiende akkurat nå som jeg har... det er mange skolevegrere (...) Det er elever som sliter både sosialt og faglig på skolen ("Diana", 2016).

Diana experienced that students of in-depth studies in English struggled both academically and socially, and that her students needed help to develop basic English skills. Elisabeth gave a general description of the differences between the boys and the girls who typically choose in-depth studies in English in her interview:

Jeg har jo alle typer elever. Noen er jo svake, kreative, flinke, altså æres-kjære jenter... Men så har du guttene som ikke bryr seg om noe som helst. De bryr seg jo ikke heller om engelsk fordypning. Men jeg ser jo det at guttene (...) er jo flinkere, egentlig, enn de svake jentene (Interview E, 2016).

Elisabeth described how she often sees girls who work hard but struggle academically, and boys who lack in motivation and do not take the subject seriously. In-depth classes are often, in Elisabeth's experience, a mix of students who struggle because they find languages hard, and students who struggle because they lack motivation.

When summed up, the respondents in this study described the students of in-depth studies in English much in the same way as Bakken and Dælen (2011). The students are not motivated for school, they struggle academically and they often have social and/or behavioral issues to deal with. There are, however, some nuances. Brit said in her interview: "Du kan si det sånn jevnt over så er [elevene] veldig motivert for engelsk fordypning. De synes det er ok å ha det faget. De har ikke sånn høye ambisjoner..." (Interview B, 2016), and Anna explained how she perceived her students: "De elevene som i hvert fall jeg har i faget mitt nå, de virker veldig pliktoppfyllende og 'på'. Jeg tror de ser på det som en måte til å bli enda bedre i engelsk på..." (Interview A, 2016). Even if all the respondents described the students of in-depth studies in English in general as academically weaker than other students, had some teachers experienced teaching in-depth students who were motivated to learn English. The question is whether these students are motivated to work towards the aims set by The Ministry of Education and Research for in-depth studies in English, or if their ambitions are lower. This is something I will get back to in the discussions chapter.

## **4.2 Challenges of teaching in-depth studies in English: Status**

Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) discovered that in-depth studies in English had a lower status in schools than other subject (see 2.3). The respondents confirmed this:

"[Engelskfordypningsfaget] har en mye lavere status... Ja, både lærere og ledelsen... Det er

ikke liksom ansett som like viktig (...) Enkelte år så blir den engelske fordypningen litt sånn ‘engelsk spes-ped’, føler jeg” (Interview E, 2016). Elisabeth then goes on saying:

Jeg opplever vel kanskje at engelsk fordypning er litt sånn stebarn, egentlig. Jeg gjør det, altså. Og det er alltid viktigere med de andre fagene. Det er bestandig engelsk fordypning det går på bekostning av hvis det er noe store prøver eller innleveringer. [Er det] noe de skal gjøre i andre fag, så er det alltid engelsk fordypning som må vike, da. For å gjøre plass til de andre, mer viktige fagene (Interview E, 2016).

Elisabeth experienced that in-depth studies in English is a subject with very low status at her school. For example, if we use teaching hours as a reference as to how The Ministry of Education and Research view for example mandatory English versus in-depth studies in English, one sees that both subjects have the same teaching frame of 222 units of 60 minutes in lower secondary school (UDIR, 2006; UDIR, 2013). In this sense, in-depth studies in English is supposed to be equal to mandatory English, but the respondents did not experience this equality in their schools:

Altså, det er et fag som har altfor lav status, og de andre fremmedspråkene fremheves ofte som bedre valg og viktigere valg... Engelsk fordypning er bare for de som ikke takler [fremmedspråk] (...) Både på skolen her og uansett hvor jeg går hen og hører med andre lærere på andre skoler, så er jo engelsk fordypning et sånn fag som den som trekker det korteste strået får (...) Vi har ingen lokal læreplan for faget... Alle fag har årsplan, ikke [engelsk] fordypning... Og heller ingen seksjon. Ingen har ansvar for faget. Du har spansk-ansvarlig, men ikke engelsk fordypning... [Engelsk fordypning] havner mellom alle stoler (Interview C, 2016).

Christopher experienced that neither the school owner nor the administration at his school focused on in-depth studies in English in the same way they did with other subjects. There were no one responsible for organizing cooperation between the teachers of in-depth studies in English at his school, and the in-depth subject was also the only subject where there was no demand by the administration for a plan for the semesters. Elisabeth had experienced something similar. She explained how her school had focused on developing local curricula for the subjects the last few years, and how in-depth studies in English had not been prioritized:

[Fagplanen for engelsk fordypning] har vi vel kommet til midt i niende nå, tror jeg. Så den er ikke ferdig fordi at igjen da, så blir den ordinære engelsken ferdig først. Og matte og norsk og naturfag, samfunnsfag, ikke sant?! ... Og så kommer engelsk fordypning liksom sist... Det blir prioritert fra ledelsen også, som mindre viktig, selv om det har like mange timer (Interview E, 2016).

Brit gave us another example from her school of how in-depth studies in English had been given less priority. She described how the seventh graders who were about to make their elective language choice were informed about the language alternatives at her school:

Spansklæreren er tilstede, tysklæreren er tilstede av og til. Og engelskfordypningslærerne er minimalt eller ikke tilstede... Jeg er ikke invitert inn, men jeg tar ordet<sup>52</sup> og sier ting om engelsk fordypning (...) Og så er spansklæreren veldig nøye på å fortelle om at det stilles store krav og at man virkelige må jobbe og sånn og sånn og sånn (...) Og jeg synes som engelsklærer da, at det er litt urettferdig, fordi at spansklærerne eller fremmedspråklærerne, hvis jeg kan si det sånn: 'Dere må passe på at ikke hvem som helst begynner i mitt fag', liksom. De har høyere status, akkurat som de skal bare ha de beste elevene, hvis du skjønner. Og det her synes jeg er veldig provoserende (...) Så det er helt klart høyere status med spansk og tysk (Interview B, 2016).

Brit experienced that in-depth studies in English was excluded from the information that was given to the new eighth graders, and that the foreign languages had first priority. She was provoked by a school culture where the foreign languages had first pick at the students, and where the signal was clear; academically weak students were not welcome in the foreign language classrooms (Interview B, 2016).

Summed up, the respondents reported that the status of in-depth studies in English was low at their schools. Many teachers reported on little priority from the schools' administrations when it came to giving teachers time to collaborate or to create local curricula. The teachers experienced that in-depth studies in English had to step aside when other subjects needed resources, and there seemed to be a culture in some schools where it was understood that academically weak students were not to choose foreign languages.

Another aspect which tells us something about the status of in-depth studies in English in schools is how easy it is to change from a foreign language over to the in-depth alternatives. The opportunity to change language normally ends after the first semester of eight grade, unless there are special circumstances, but many administrators give students the opportunity to change from a foreign language and over to in-depth studies in English much later. Diana described the practice at her school:

Det har jeg sett på tiende i alle fall, at de som har valgt et annet fremmedspråk... kan ofte gå over til engelsk fordypning i løpet av niende eller tiende (...) Rett etter jul nå så har det blitt gjort bytter, noe som jeg ikke nødvendigvis opplever som positivt, med tanke på at vi er på det siste semesteret på tiende trinn. Men det er det rektor og kontaktlærer og eventuelt rådgiver som tar avgjørelsen om (...) Jeg tror det gjør at statusen faller litt ned,

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<sup>52</sup> Brit is counsellor at her school and therefore present at the presentation for the seventh graders.



ja, både for elever og lærere. Det virker som om engelskfordypningsfaget blir tatt litt mindre seriøst (Interview D, 2016).

Some schools allowed students to change language as late as the last semester of tenth grade. Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) also noticed this fact; there was almost a 50 percent increase in students attending in-depth studies in English from eighth grade until tenth grade, and not all of these changed after the first semester of eighth grade (p. 69). Not all schools, however, were as liberal as Diana's school. Christopher described the situation at his school:

Altså, vi har jo stor pågang nå i niende [fra elever som vil bytte språk], for det er jo nå elevene i fremmedspråk virkelig kjenner smellen... Og da har vel jeg sagt [til administrasjonen] at nå er engelskfordypningsklassen i utgangspunktet full (...) Jeg har tilkjempet meg en posisjon til å kunne si det: 'Det er nok' (Interview C, 2016).

Christopher was able to tell his administration that he could not take on any more students. Anna also experienced that there were few students who changed to in-depth studies in English at her school. Anna stressed that the strict policy when it came to changing languages at her school had led to stability in the in-depth study classes at (Interview A, 2016). This is interesting, because besides working at a school with a strict policy towards changing subjects; Anna was also the only teacher in this research who expressed that teachers at her school in general were positive towards teaching in-depth studies in English:

Det er vel kanskje sånn blant lærerne, så er engelsk fordypning kanskje et sånn fag man synes er ok å ha fordi trykket der er litt mindre enn det er i vanlig engelsk. Også fordi man jobber litt annerledes, litt mer lystbetont kanskje... Så jeg tror nok at lærerne stort sett har et positivt syn på faget (Interview A, 2016).

Teachers at Anna's school viewed in-depth studies in English as an enjoyable subject, and teachers were therefore positive to in-depth studies.

Some of the teachers, who worked in schools with administrations who were less strict towards changing subjects, did not share Anna's description of the status of in-depth studies in English. Diana worked in a school where the policy towards changing languages in the ninth or tenth grade was quite liberal. She reflected on how this affected teachers and students: "...når skolen eller ledelsen driver og bytter om på så mye og tillater bytter... smittes det over på oss lærere også" (Interview D, 2016). She continued by describing how she and her colleagues chose to prioritize other subjects over in-depth studies in English:

...jeg merker at den engelske fordypningen faller litt bakpå. For jeg merker at det er ikke den jeg bruker mest tid på. Så det kan godt hende at lærere kjenner litt på at det dette litt oppå alt annet (...) Nei, det er veldig rart. Jeg er ikke helt sikker på hvorfor vi har kommet dit, jeg. For jeg merker jo at de som har spansk prioriterer dét. Samme

med fransk. Men det kan jo ha noe med den der arbeidsviljen til elevene du har i tillegg (Interview D, 2016).

Spanish teachers were prioritizing Spanish at Diana's school, but teachers of in-depth studies in English were not prioritizing in-depth studies, and Diana thought there was a link between the attitudes of the school's administration towards language change and the way the teachers prioritized.

In-depth studies in English being a subject with low priority was something other respondents also reported on. Elisabeth spoke on what priority in-depth English had at her school: "Vi har en god del sånn fagseksjon på den ordinære engelsken, men engelsk fordypning er det veldig sjelden vi har noe samarbeid om (...) Det er bare sånn 'i gangen-snakk'" (Interview E, 2016). Christopher also explained how he experienced little priority at his school: "Vi har egentlig aldri avsatt fellestid til fordypning engelsk. Nei, så dét er jeg solo på å holde på med... Det er håpløst (...) For du prioriterer andre fag. Og det kjenner jeg selv også; jeg prioriterer andre fag hvis jeg får velge." (Interview C, 2016). Christopher admitted that since there was no priority for in-depth studies at his school, he also chose not to prioritize in-depth studies in English. There was a correlation between the attitude towards in-depth studies in English set by the school administrators and the priority in-depth studies in English held with teachers of in-depth studies.

This research has shown that many schools allowed students to change language to in-depth studies in English during ninth or tenth grade, something which affected the status of in-depth studies in English. The respondents also explained how the low priority towards in-depth studies in English within schools affected how teachers prioritized in-depth studies. One of the five teachers in this research could report on in-depth studies in English as a subject with a positive status at her school. This teacher also reported on working in a school with a strict policy towards changing languages after the first semester of eighth grade.

#### **4.3 How LK06 comes into play when teachers plan their lessons**

The intentions for in-depth studies in English, as set by The Ministry of Education and Research in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), is that students who choose in-depth studies in English should gain further competence into the English language than students who only study mandatory English (see chapter 2.1). I wanted to learn how the respondents viewed the intentions for in-depth studies in English and how LK06 (UDIR, 2006) came into play when teachers planned and executed their lessons for in-depth studies in English.

When asked about LK06 (UDIR, 2006) and the intentions for in-depth studies in English, the respondents were in unison:

- “Vi vet vel kanskje med fordypning også at det ikke er alle kompetansemål vi kommer til å oppnå eller kanskje være innom...” (Interview A, 2016).
- “Det er for avanserte mål til den elevgruppen som er her... De er ikke på den planeten.” (Interview B, 2016).
- “Egentlig skal du jo fordype deg i engelsk. Altså, det er kompetansemål der du skal jobbe ganske godt for å nå høyt, men så får [engelskfordypningsfaget] alle de som dropper ut av andre fremmedspråk...” (Interview C, 2016).
- “Kunnskapsmålene i engelsk fordypning er det jo helt usannsynlige at de [svakeste elevene] skal klare å nå.” (Interview E, 2016).
- “[Det] skulle vært en bedre tanke om hva som er formålet med [engelsk fordypning]. Nå så er [faget] ikke nødvendigvis til de som ønsker å fordype seg i engelsk (...) Det kan godt hende at [Kunnskapsdepartementet] ikke tenker så nøye over hvem det er som... ender opp med å velge engelsk fordypning. Målene i Kunnskapsløftet er en god tanke, men kanskje ikke helt i kontakt med det som er realiteten rundt om i de ulike engelsk fordypningsgruppene rundt om på skolene, tenker jeg.” (Interview D, 2016).

As this shows, the respondents experienced that the competence aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) were too ambitious for the group of students who normally chose in-depth studies in English. The respondents also experienced a gap between the academic level of their students and the ambitions in LK06 (UDIR, 2006); a notion also shared by respondents in the report by Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) (see chapter 2.3). In other words, there is discrepancy between the intentions in LK06 and the reality of the in-depth studies in English classrooms.

If teachers of in-depth studies in English experience the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) as too ambitious for their students, what do they do to solve this dilemma? What is the focus of in-depth studies in English if teachers are not basing the lessons on the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006)? Christopher gave an honest answer when I asked what role LK06 (UDIR, 2006) has in his in-depth studies in English lessons: “I fordypning spiller den ikke så mye rolle. Nei, jeg ser ikke så mye på den læreplanen. Jeg ser kanskje på den i starten av året, og så setter vi i gang, og så hører jeg på elevene.” (Interview C, 2016). For him it was more important to work on basic skills which the students of in-depth studies in English needed as a foundation for learning English: “Så det er klart at vi har fokus på grunnleggende ferdigheter. Og kanskje enda mer i engelsk fordypning enn i ordinær engelsk, i og med at vi har en del [elever] som er veldig svake.” (Interview C, 2016). This focus was shared by Anna, who also admitted not to work towards all the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006):

Jeg tror vi går inn med en intensjon og mål alle sammen, om at her skal det snakkes mest mulig engelsk, og vi skal gjøre det faget her til en god opplevelse for de som er her

(...) Vi vet vel kanskje med fordypning også, at det ikke er alle kompetansemål vi kommer til å oppnå eller kanskje være innom... Du skal kunne uttrykke deg digitalt, muntlig, skriftlig, sånn type, og selv om det er veldig 'basic', så er det dét som er det viktigste, synes jeg (Interview A, 2016).

For Christopher and Anna the focus of lessons was on basic skills such as written or oral communication, skills the students need to master to be able to learn more English. Elisabeth described how in-depth studies in English gave her an opportunity to provide the students with repetition in subject areas that had already been covered by the mandatory English:

Enkelte år har blitt litt sånn 'spes.ped-undervisning'. Sånn at du kan drive med helt andre ting som ikke har noe med boka eller pensum eller kompetansemål... Vi har for eksempel kjørt noen sånne grammatikk-kurs over en fem-seks uker. Sånn helt basis-kunnskap, altså. Samme med ordforråd også... (Interview E, 2016).

Instead of working towards aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), Elisabeth gave the students of in-depth studies in English tailored courses of basic, English grammar and vocabulary. In other words, most of the respondents chose to focus on the basis for learning English, for example grammar, vocabulary, and being able to communicate, in their lessons for in-depth studies in English.

Brit spoke about her way of relating to LK06, and how she believed in-depth studies in English had become a subject that was more the result of what the teachers chose to focus on, rather than the focus of the aims in LK06:

Jeg... gidder ikke bry meg om [at] jeg ikke klarer å innfri alle målene (...) Jeg bruker målene, men det er ikke alle målene i lærerplanen som jeg er innom. Og noen velger jeg å ha mer fokus på enn andre. Sånn at du kan si at jeg styrer det litt, dessverre (...) Det er litt læreravhengig og litt elevavhengig... (Interview B, 2016)

When the aims in LK06 are experienced as unattainable, the teachers reported that they were trying to focus the lessons more on their students' needs than on ambitious aims. In-depth studies in English hence seemed to be a subject where the content was a result of who the teachers and the students were, rather than on what LK06 (UDIR, 2006) said.

All of the respondents were fully aware of the fact that LK06 (UDIR, 2006) is supposed to be the basis for the subject, and most of the respondents had a local curriculum<sup>53</sup> where the aims from LK06 (UDIR, 2006) were presented. Even if most teachers admitted to not using these aims actively, nevertheless, LK06 (UDIR, 2006) was at least formally present in the local curriculum. Christopher was the only respondent who did not have a local curriculum for in-

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<sup>53</sup> Årsplaner

depth studies in English at his school, and he was also the respondent who most openly admitted to not using LK06 (UDIR, 2006) very actively:

Hver gang jeg tar opp de målene så tenker jeg at her står det masse fine greier. Og så veit jeg at jeg får en gruppe som ikke nødvendigvis, som jeg er usikker på hvor havner hen. I og med at jeg ikke har noen krav fra andre enn departementet, og du kan si ‘andre enn’ for de står ikke så nær meg. Men fra min sjef så har jeg lite krav på det å vise at jeg bruker LK06, så forsvinner [målene] bare ut. De ligger ikke der i ryggmargen [som i andre fag] (Interview C, 2016).

Not only did Christopher experience the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) as too ambitious for his students, he also felt that since his school’s administrators did not request to see to what degree Christopher based his teachings of in-depth of English on LK06 (UDIR, 2006), there were not many reasons for working with implementing the aims into his lessons.

Some of the teachers in this research had developed practices in which they tried to implement the competence aims from LK06 (UDIR, 2006) into their lessons by rephrasing the wording in LK06 (UDIR, 2006). Anna explained: “I forhold til målene så må vi være litt lure... sånn at de passer best inn til de [elevene] vi har...” (Interview A, 2016). Anna rewrote the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) in ways for them to fit her students. Diana did something similar: “Jeg prøver jo å lage mål som er så oppnåelige som mulig, og ikke ta målene ut ifra kompetansemålene, fordi de kan virke litt uoppnåelig for alle.” (Interview D, 2016). Diana did not use the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), but she phrased aims which better fit her students’ academic level, based on her interpretations of LK06 (UDIR, 2006).

Since the respondents expressed that the intentions for in-depth studies in English did not work in real life classrooms, the respondents were asked to express what changes they would like to see be made to the subject:

- “Jeg ser potensialet til å gå enda mer i dybden i de temaene som man underviser i vanlig engelsk... at de elevene som velger engelsk fordypning skal få mulighet til det (...) Både når det gjelder grammatikk og få enda mer øving i skriving... så det har jo utrolig stort potensiale! (...) Det er mye som fungerer [i dag], men så er det den tanken bak at det skal være en fordypning... Vi har mistet det litt.” (Interview D, 2016).
- “At faget heter engelsk fordypning, det mener jeg er helt feil. For det er jo ikke fordypning... Jeg kunne tenkt meg at det hadde på en måte være litt sånn basis-engelsk, jeg. Som en slags støtteundervisning til det ordinære engelsktilbudet.” (Interview E, 2016).
- “Da tror jeg det er superviktig å få samlet [lærerne] som skal ha faget, og faktisk få spikret en god lokal læreplan... Hvilke mål er det jeg skal oppnå i løpet av året? Og i løpet av de tre årene? Slik at det ikke faller på individet hvor [faget] havner (...) Jeg

ville sikret at faget var samfunnsrettet. Jeg ville sett mot hva [som] skjer i verden i dag... Og bruke engelsk som verktøy for å øke forståelsen.” (Interview C, 2016).

- “Jeg føler jo at vi står ganske fritt [i dag]... [Det er bra] at man ikke skal bli for læreplanstyrt... at det må være krav og forventninger om ‘sånn og sånn’. At det kanskje er lurt at det er litt spillerom og litt friere sånn at man har respekt for de elevene som man vet velger faget.” (Interview A, 2016).
- “Nei, jeg tenker at, hvis jeg skal være helt ærlig, så hva er vitsen med engelsk fordyping? Kan vi ikke bare ha en ekstra time eller to i uka i det ordinære engelsk?” (Interview B, 2016).

Many of the respondents wanted to make in-depth studies in English feel more useful to the students. They also wanted to be realistic and introduce in-depth studies in English as a subject where you get extra help to learn English, rather than a subject where you go more in depth into the English language. The respondents wanted to focus more on the need of the students, and they wanted to utilize the potential they saw that in-depth studies in English could have. With the right focus and the right resources, in-depth studies in English could potentially be a great arena for learning more English.

To sum up, the respondents in this study viewed the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) as too ambitious for their students. Some teachers reported on ignoring many of the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), while others reported on rewriting the aims to fit their students, and most of the respondents chose to focus their lessons of in-depth studies in English on working on basic skills in English. If given the chance, the respondents would change both the name and the aims for in-depth study in English, and they would focus more on teaching the students basic skills, as this is what the respondents believed most students of in-depth studies in English needed. The respondents in this study wanted the potential of in-depth studies in English to be utilized in a better way than what is the case today.

#### **4.4 How in-depth studies in English is being taught: Methods and activities**

LK06 (UDIR, 2006) does not specify which methods to use when teaching in-depth studies in English. There are, however, some guidelines as to how to work towards the aims for lower secondary school in the White Paper *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) (see chapter 2.2). This report expresses that teachers need to use enjoyable and varied tasks with a certain degree of freedom of choice, and they need to make the classes meaningful. This should be done to evoke motivation and mastery within the students (KD, 2011).

In this research the respondents described some of the tasks and methods they used in their in-depth of English classes. It was interesting to see in what ways the respondents worked, and to see whether these methods and activities followed the didactic principals of social

constructivism theories (as described in chapter 2.2), as well as the guidelines from *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011).

One of the first things the respondents spoke on when asked about how they taught in-depth studies in English, was how they used textbooks in in-depth studies in English. All five respondents had access to the same textbook series, “On the Move 1/2/3” (Bromseth & Mydland, 2010), and there was a wide range of opinions among the respondents on how good the textbooks were. On the one hand there were Christopher and Diana who barely used the books and found them to be monotone, uninteresting and childish, and on the other hand there were Elisabeth and Anna who used them more systematically as a basis for many of their lessons. Brit stood somewhere in between as she sometimes used the books, but just as often found teaching material elsewhere. Elisabeth explained why she thought the textbooks worked well with her students:

Hvis du har veldig svake elever som bruker lang tid på å forstå gangen i [lære-]boka, så er det ofte tryggest for dem å bare holde seg til det samme opplegget. Vi går igjennom teksten, vi snakker om den, vi går igjennom ord, vi jobber med begrep. De vil ofte ha «The five quick ones<sup>54</sup>» i lekse (Interview E, 2016).

Elisabeth described a situation where students who struggle with English experienced comfort when the classes and homework followed a known pattern. Few teachers only use textbooks in their teaching, and this also applied to Elisabeth: “Vi tilpasser undervisningen i løpet av timen også... Hvis jeg for eksempel har funnet kryssord som går på ordforråd, så kan den ene eleven få et mye lettere kryssord enn de andre” (Interview E, 2016). Elisabeth believed that “On the Move” (Bromseth & Mydland, 2010) fit her students well, but she was unsure of how well the textbooks fit the intentions in LK06 (UDIR, 2006): “Jeg vil si at [On the Move] heller ikke er – det er jo ikke så veldig avansert engelsk i de bøkene. Så hvis [faget] skulle vært engelsk *fordypning*, så skulle [lærerverket] jo ha vært noe annet” (Interview E, 2016). Elisabeth thought the textbooks in general fit her students’ level of English competence, but she expressed that she was unsure of how the textbooks fit the intentions of in-depth studies in English as a subject.

The respondents, who did not use the textbook as much, described their teaching as more project or topic based. One activity many of the respondents described using was to give the students a topic which they were familiar with, for example a song or artist you like, an idol,

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<sup>54</sup> These are five tasks at the end of each text in «On the Move». Examples of these questions can be: “1. What is Simon’s job? 2. How did he get the job? 3. Why does he like it?” (Bromseth & Mydland, 2010, p. 46)

or topics related to sports. The students then orally presented what they had found for a group or for the class, and they also might hand in something in writing to the teacher. Christopher, Anna and Diana reflected on why they wanted the students to work on these types of topics: “I en startperiode hvor jeg ikke kjenner dem er det jo kjekt å jobbe rundt en hobby eller å velge en låt... Det er jo noe som er nære dem.” (Interview C, 2016); “[Når] de får et tema som er kjent trenger de ikke å tenke at ‘Oi, dette her kan jeg ingenting om’, men faktisk [er dette] noe de har erfaringer fra” (Interview A, 2016); “[Jeg har] veldig gode erfaringer med at elever kan bruke egne erfaringer og trekke det inn i fag. Fordi da få de en slags mestningsfølelse av det” (Interview D, 2016). What the teachers described was work with topics where the students were within their actual level of development, and where most students experienced a high degree of mastery. Christopher believed, though, that simply presenting something familiar was not enough: “Jeg liker oppgaver der man enten ser noe, hører noe eller leser noe først. Hvor de får oppgaver der de skal tolke... Så skal de skrive en del med refleksjon, og så presentere til slutt.” (Interview C, 2016). Christopher wanted his students to reach further, beyond their actual level of competence.

The respondents all explained how they used different types of support when the students were working on tasks. For example, a key factor of how to succeed with topic based tasks in in-depth studies in English was to give the students clear task descriptions, clear frameworks and clear deadlines throughout the process (Interview C, 2016; Interview D, 2016). What the respondents described was the importance of scaffolds to support the students in their work (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). Without clear descriptions, guidance and instructions from the teacher, and without objectives along the way, the teachers experienced that projects for in-depth studies in English failed: “[Elevene] trenger å vite klart og tydelig hvor de skal og hva jeg forventer. Og gjerne dele det opp i etapper... Da fungerer det.” (Interview C, 2016). Deadlines along the way during a project was essential for Christopher’s students.

Another type of scaffolding that many of the respondents used successfully, was to let the students work in small groups or pairs: “Når de samtaler med andre og hører hvordan de snakker og uttrykker seg, så lærer de av hverandre samtidig også (...) [Elevene] prøver å hjelpe hverandre. For de sitter aldri alene og jobber; de sitter sammen med noen.” (Interview A, 2016). Letting the students work as scaffolds for each other, was in other words a much used method. Anna also gave an example of how she, by grouping up the students, could work within the zone of proximal development with her students. She described how the students often read out loud in small groups and what she could do when she heard a student



pronouncing something incorrectly: “Jeg kan si: ‘Her trenger vi å jobbe med intonasjonen. Hvorfor det? Er utsagnet et spørsmål? Er det et svar? Er det direkte tale? Hva er det som skjer her?’ Og så får alle ta del i uttalen rett og slett.” (Interview A, 2016). Anna’s example showed how a text that is too challenging for the student to read on his or her own could be manageable when students were reading together, at least with the right guidance from a teacher. Scaffolding through clear task descriptions and instructions, as well as working in pairs or groups, were reported as commonly used in in-depth studies in English.

Diana, who had a relatively large in-depth class of 17 students, explained how she supported the students when they were writing texts: “Det som virkelig har fungert godt for de som strever litt med skriving, så er det dét med skriveramme. Gi dem setningsstartere, gi dem setningsbindere... De får en skriveramme, og så skriver de inn det på pc, så har de nesten et ferdig essay.” (Interview D, 2016). Diana was one teacher trying to support 17 students, many of whom struggled with writing English, and giving the students writing frames had been central for her students to be able to produce any text. Diana saw that students of in-depth studies were very much in the need of instrumental support, and she reflected on why she chose to give her students limited choices and clear directions for all tasks:

Hvordan skal jeg si det, da? Det er mange av de elevene som er veldig lite selvstendig. Det ble ikke like stor grad av selvvalgt, da, for å si det sånn. For det er mange av [elevene] som trenger rammer. Som trengte mye støtte, som ikke visste hvordan de skulle begynne en gang. Det er jo et kompetansemål [at de skal velge tema og tekster selv], vet jeg... Men det er mange som sliter med det (Interview D, 2016) .

Diana described how she supported the students that were not able to make their own choices when it came to topics or texts. This is something all respondents agreed on. Elisabeth’s experience summed up what many of the respondents expressed: “Veldig åpne oppgaver til engelsk fordypningselever, det fungerer veldig dårlig... De må være veldig konkret og ikke for vanskelige.” (Interview E, 2016). In other words, writing frames and other forms of task support is essential to the typical in-depth studies in English student.

In addition to using scaffolds when teaching and in addition to adapting the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) to fit the students, the respondents also described how they used different teaching methods to give the students feelings of accomplishment and motivation; a focus shared by The Ministry of Education and Research (2011). One approach all five respondents mentioned, without being directly asked, was the use of games and playfulness in their in-depth studies of English classes:

- “Vi prøver å gjøre faget attraktivt for dem som er der, at det ikke bare er vanlig engelsk (...) Ja, det er nesten stygt å si – vi prøver å gjøre det litt morsommere (...) Litt sånn kos, spill...” (Interview A, 2016).
- “De har litt sperring for å snakke [engelsk], og når det er i form av en lek, en aktivitet, så er det mye enklere. Det blir god stemning og de får litt motivasjon og de går ut med et smil. Og det har jeg lyst til at de skal gjøre!” (Interview D, 2016).
- “Det blir mye mer lek i engelsk fordypning enn hva det blir i vanlig engelsk (...) For jeg ser jo det at hvis vi leker så er det lettere [for de svake elevene].” (Interview E, 2016).
- “[Det er] mye sånne leker hvor du bruker engelsk (...) Man sitter med ryggen til hverandre, og den ene tegner og så skal du forklare til den andre, for eksempel. Eller å bygge Lego og gjøre det samme... Jeg ser at de liker når det er litt fysisk, skape noe i rommet som de så bruker videre.” (Interview C, 2016).

The teachers tried to motivate their students by doing pleasurable activities. They wanted the students to enjoy in-depth studies in English, and the respondents experienced that students were more prone to use the English language when they participated in playful situations. Games are situations where the students can work as scaffolds for each other, and playful situations open for settings where everyone experience inclusion. This is central for the students’ abilities to grow and learn (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). The respondents reported that they were aware of this, and playful activities therefore seemed to be central for in-depth studies in English.

The report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) asked for more varied and more practical lessons in lower secondary school. All respondents in this study said they considered their in-depth studies in English classes to be varied, as well as partly practical. Throughout the interviews the respondents listed numerous types of tasks and methods they used: oral presentations in groups or in full class; discussions in pairs or full class; PowerPoint-presentations; Prezi-presentations; short writing tasks; longer writing tasks; collaborative writing tasks; grammar tasks; making animations; making brochures; making manuals; glossary tests; reading texts and talking about them; reading books or chapters from books; listening tasks; working with music; watching short film clips on YouTube; watching feature films; making films; writing scripts; writing and performing roleplays; dramatization of classic plays; in-depth projects that open for freedom of choice; self-assessment tasks; making food in the school kitchen; arts and crafts projects; e-Twinning; and playful games<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, most respondents were focused on including both oral and written tasks in all their lessons, and they also focused on variation:

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<sup>55</sup> This is not a conclusive list

Jeg prøver å ha en oppdelt time, fordi det jeg ser med den gjengen her er at de mister fokus lett. Så hvis vi har en oppgave vi skal jobbe med, så jobber vi kanskje med den halve timen, og så gjør vi en aktivitet resten... Jeg er nødt til å være flinkt til å kjøre litt forskjellige aktiviteter (Interview D, 2016).

The respondents did, in other words, describe variation as a central part of their teaching.

When it came to practical activities, the respondents said they used different practical approaches to learning English, but they reported on having different experiences in the success of such activities:

- “Det med film, sånn jeg opplever det, at ofte så er det mange som elsker å få den inputen visuelt og auditivt. Og så er det noen som sovner bare med en gang det kommer på... Så ser jeg at det er noen som ikke responderer på det i det hele tatt.” (Interview D, 2016).
- “Men det er klart, når de er på kjøkkenet, så står de ikke og snakker engelsk, så språkutbyttet er vel heller litt i bakhånd.” (Interview B, 2016).
- “Fordelen [med praktiske oppgaver] er jo at du ser at de blir motivert. Ulempene er jo at det kan lett blir sånn at det sklir ut.” (Interview E, 2016).
- “Rollespill er ofte litt verre å få til, for når de er litt usikre på noe, så er det i hvert fall utrygt å skulle gå inn med et språk du er usikker på og så skal du være i en rolle. Vi har sett at det kanskje ikke er de mest vel gjennomførte timene, føler vi selv (...) Det krever veldig mye av deg som lærer å følge opp [praktisk arbeid] og til å være positiv og oppmuntre. Det kommer an på elevmassen og hvor mange elever du har som... (Interview A, 2016).

The respondents described how they in fact used many of the teaching methods The Ministry of Education and Research (2011) mentions in their report (see chapter 2.2). As described in the quotes above, the respondents also stated that it could be challenging to work practically in in-depth studies in English. Several of the respondents referred to practical tasks they had done once, but never again, because the activities cost too much energy compared to what the teachers experienced the students gained from them. As Brit said when she talked about practical tasks in in-depth studies in English:

“Det er sånn jeg har lagt meg bak øret og tenkt at ‘det kan jeg gjøre neste gang’. Men så er det noe med plasseringen av faget på timeplanen (...) Og det er klart at det [engelsk fordypning] skal være litt mer praktisk, skape mer motivasjon. Så tenker jeg at det bør tilføres noe mer ressurser eller prioriteres fra skolen sin del, da.” (Interview E, 2016).

To be able to be more practical when teaching in-depth studies in English, there was a request for better teaching contexts.

What was interesting to learn was how the respondents emphasized the importance of having small groups and/or having enough teacher resources as a key to the success of in-depth

studies in English. In fact, the respondents explicitly said that small groups were one of the few advantages of in-depth studies in English:

[Engelsk fordypning] er mer praktisk [enn ordinær engelsk]. Det går jo på at du har mindre gruppe, så det er mye lettere å tilrettelegge enn når du har 30 [elever] (...) Det er derfor jeg synes det er viktig [å sette et tak på antall elever]. For ellers så mister [engelsk fordypning] sin egenart på dét også. På en måte sitter man igjen med bare utfordringene og ikke styrkene (Interview C, 2016).

Christopher emphasized that being able to have smaller groups in in-depth studies in English was a condition for doing practical tasks. If school administrators prioritized smaller groups for the in-depth studies, it would be easier for teachers to plan practical tasks. Anna and Elisabeth also mentioned the same in their interviews. Anna said: “Vi har mulighet til å bruke de kreative sidene ved oss lærerne. Har vi noe ekstra på lur så kan vi ta det fram i fordypningen (...) Ja, det fortsatt høy lærertetthet er veldig lurt.” (Interview A, 2016). Elisabeth was clear: “Fordelen er jo at det er mye mindre grupper. Så du kommer jo mye tettere på elevene og du kan jo følge opp dem på en helt annen måte enn hva du gjør i en klasse på 30” (Interview E, 2016). In other words, the student-teacher ratio is central to what activities the teachers are able to carry out with their classes.

Summed up, teachers of in-depth studies in English reported on using varied and practical activities in their lessons, much as described by The Ministry of Education and Research (2011). A small class, and a low student-teacher ratio, was central for teachers to be able to use practical methods in their lessons.

#### **4.5 How in-depth studies in English is being taught: Motivation**

As shown in chapter 2.5, motivation is central to academic success. It is therefore interesting to see what teachers of in-depth studies in English report on doing to motivate their students.

Although some of the students who choose in-depth studies in English are motivated for learning English, the respondents in this study described their students in general as less motivated than the average student (see chapter 4.1). The students were also described, both by Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) and by the respondents, as students with generally low proficiency in English. Low proficiency in a subject, especially after trying to master the subject over many years, can lead to negative learned self-efficacy (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). It is therefore very likely that many of the students of in-depth studies in English come to class with a negative self-efficacy when it comes to learning English. The respondents in

this study were all very aware of the importance of working with the students' motivation for learning English:

For det er mange som strever med [motivasjon]. Og [elevene] strever veldig med press i andre fag. Da har ikke jeg lyst til å presse dem alt for mye i det faget her. Jeg vil at de skal få litt glede for engelsk i stedet for å knekke de ned (Interview D, 2016).

The teachers in this study reported to aim at motivating their student by using many play-like activities. Games and other types of enjoyable activities speak to the intrinsic motivation within the students, as the students are experiencing enjoyment in what they are doing. Intrinsic motivation is part of internal motivation, and it is a strong form of motivation (see chapter 2.5). The respondents confirmed this, as they reported on seeing how students worked harder when they did something they enjoyed: "Jeg hadde en oppgave der de i grupper laget film (...) Det syntes [elevene] var et artig opplegg. Der var det mange som blomstret, da." (Interview C, 2016). The respondents reported on the students thriving when they got practical tasks which they found pleasure in doing.

In addition to doing enjoyable tasks, several of the respondents were also aware of the importance of making in-depth studies in English feel useful to the students. The teachers were therefore trying to work in ways to make the in-depth students see how English could be relevant to them: "Det var et år jeg var med på et prosjekt... da hadde vi kontakt med en skole i utlandet (...) Det burde vi hatt [i år også]. Vi burde vært penpals med noen." (Interview B, 2016). Brit believed communication with native speakers could make in-depth studies more relevant. Elisabeth had experienced how students responded when she showed film clips which were directly related to texts the class was reading: "Og det er litt artig, fordi da ser du at det lyser opp til de som er litt svake. Liksom: 'Oj, ja, men det var jo akkurat det vi leste om nå!'" (Interview E, 2016). The respondents explained that they knew relating what was going on in the classroom to something that was going on in real life as central to motivation. The respondents were clear, though, that it could be challenging to manage to create such relevance.

Another aspect of motivation which affected in-depth studies in English was the cost of the subject. According to the respondents, it seemed as if the cost of in-depth studies in English was high for many students. Diana spoke of her experience of giving the students of in-depth studies in English homework: "Når de var 15 elever og de skulle levere inn oppgave, så var det tre som leverte inn. Av 15! Det er dårlig arbeid hjemme... Veldig dårlig. Det er nedprioritert blant elevene." (Interview D, 2016). As a result of experiencing students who

rarely did their homework, many of the respondents chose to cut down on homework for in-depth studies in English: “Jeg har fått beskjed om at vi bruker ikke å gi hjemmelektur i fordypning. Jeg tenker nok kanskje at... det skal ikke bli for tungt for dem å prestere i faget.” (Interview A, 2016); “...vi gir kanskje mindre lekse i engelsk fordypning enn jeg gjøre i vanlig engelsk. Jeg stiller ikke så store krav...” (Interview B, 2016). The respondents seemed to have settled with the fact that the students had other priorities than in-depth studies in English. Many of the teachers did not expect the students to do their homework for the in-depth subject, and few were therefore assigning much work for outside class.

Central to motivation for school is the feeling of relatedness. The respondents in this study all focused on developing good relationships to their students and creating safe learning environments in their classes. Elisabeth gave reasons for why she believed it was extra important to develop good relationships with the students of in-depth studies in English:

Jeg tror det er viktig å innarbeide et godt miljø i gruppen, sånn at læringsmiljøet blir trygt og godt. Det tror jeg er veldig viktig, fordi disse elevene her er ofte elever som kan være litt skolelei, litt umotiverte, som ikke er så veldig opptatt av skolearbeid... [Det er viktig] at du klarer å få til et godt miljø i gruppen der det er greit å prate og der det er greit å vise at du kan noe (Interview E, 2016).

One of the factors the respondents again highlighted as central for in-depth studies in English was the size of the classes. Teaching groups of few students could often be an advantage when the teachers were trying to develop a good learning environment and close relationships to the students:

Jeg har veldig god relasjon til de i fordypningen (...) fordi vi snakker veldig ofte med dem i timene, vi har tid til å rekke over [alle]. Spesielt i [gruppen] som er 14<sup>56</sup>, så har du tid til å snakke med alle hver time. Og det er godt for da gir dem også mye av seg selv etter hvert. Jeg tror de føler at de kjenner oss, er trygge og kan si litt om hvordan de har det både utenfor skolen og på skolen (Interview A, 2016).

Anna works at a school where the student-teacher ratio of in-depth studies in English has been prioritized. Some of the respondents, however, had rather large groups, and they expressed a different reality than Anna's. Diana's in-depth studies in English class had 17 students:

“[Læringsmiljøet] blir veldig hanglende. Det blir dårlig motivasjon... til tider kan det være vanskelig å få de til å forstå at... vi skal prøve å ha en fin tilnærming...” (Interview D, 2016).

She struggled to create a safe learning environment for her students. Christopher spoke of an especially challenging class he had earlier: “Det var vel et av de røffere trinnene vi har hatt på

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<sup>56</sup> Anna shares this group with another teacher. They are two teachers on 14 students (Interview A, 2016).

mange år... [Da hadde jeg] et helt annet faglig nivå og alt det sosiale spillet og sånn; vi hadde en annen problematikk. Så vi bruket ekstremt mye tid på alt det andre enn det faglige for å få det til å fungere.” (Interview C, 2016). If a class has a poor learning environment this will take away the focus on learning. The challenge of creating good relationships and safe environments for in-depth studies in English could be seen in connection to how often the teachers met the students. Diana explained:

Når du er kontaktlærer i en klasse, så kan det jo godt hende at du har ett, to og både tre fag i samme klasse, kontra å bare møte mange fra tre ulike klasser to ganger i uken. Det skaper jo en ganske svakere relasjon, og det er jo noe læreren må jobbe med, jobbe med å få en god relasjon, for når det er en god relasjon, så får du også litt mer motivasjon, du får mer arbeidsvilje (Interview D, 2016).

By rarely meeting the students, it takes a long time to create good relationships and a safe learning environment. It is not only the teacher-student relationship that can be weak due to this fact; it also makes it harder for the students to develop relationships with each other. Christopher confirmed this through how he experienced the student-student relationships in his classes: “[Elevene] er ikke like trygge på hverandre fordi de ikke kjenner [hverandre]. Elevene har heller ikke en tett relasjon seg imellom.” (Interview C, 2016). Elisabeth who works in a smaller school reported on a different situation:

[Relasjonen] tror jeg er bra for det er jo de samme elevene som jeg har i den ordinære engelsken også, og i samfunnsfag. Jeg er jo kontaktlærer også for dem, så jeg har jo en god relasjon (...) Fordelen [i engelsk fordypning] er jo at det er mye mindre gruppe, da. Så du kommer jo mye tettere på elevene, og du kan jo følge dem opp på en helt annen måte... (Interview E, 2016).

In other words, there are differences between the respondents when it comes to how successful they believed they were in creating a well-functioning learning environment and a close relationship with their students. Diana went on to reflect on how she believed the learning environment and relationships in the classes were affected by the way the subject was treated at the different schools (see chapter 4.2):

[Elevene] får ikke en skikkelig relasjon hvis du bytter så ofte lærere<sup>57</sup>... Fordi at det er prioritert at [den ordinære] engelsken er kontinuerlig med en fast lærer, og gjerne en lærer som kanskje er kontaktlærer i tillegg. Det er prioritert, men engelsk fordypningen er ikke det (Interview D, 2016).

Factors such as continuity of teachers and the arrival of new students affect the possibility to develop good relationships. Respondents who worked in schools where there was more

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<sup>57</sup> Diana has experienced that in-depth studies in English at her school changes teachers more often than other subjects (Interview D, 2016)

continuity, reported of better learning environments than those who worked in schools with less continuity. And furthermore, teachers in schools where there was a low student-teacher ratio in the in-depth studies in English classes, reported better relationships with their students than those in schools where there were only one teacher in each in-depth studies class. In other words, the way the school administrators prioritized in-depth studies in English, and how strict policy the schools had for changing languages, also affected teachers' opportunities to develop close relationships and safe learning environments in their in-depth studies classes.

The respondents reported on a certain level of autonomy in their in-depth studies in English classes. As mentioned in chapter 4.4, teachers reported that they had good experiences using tasks with a level of self-choice for their students. Christopher said: "Hvis vi har en oppgave som er spikret, men der de selv kan gjøre noen valg i forhold til tematikk eller valg av hvem de snakker med eller hvem de jobber med og så videre, så er det uten tvil noe de liker." (Interview C, 2016). Brit shared a similar experience: "Vi har hatt litt sånn selvvalgte oppgaver. Vi hadde blant annet en artig oppgave i forhold til noe sang... og tekst og musikkvideo. Det var veldig vellykket, og da er de kjempeivrige og jobber veldig bra og, ja, selvstendig..." (Interview B, 2016). Diana spoke on the ambitions she had for her class: "...det er det jeg har lyst til: At de skal velge et tema selv, og at 'det her synes jeg er interessant', for da blir det automatisk mye mer engasjerende for meg å lese også." (Interview D, 2016). The respondents confirmed that they were aware of the importance of autonomy, and they also reported on seeing how motivating it could be for students to be given choices in what to do or what methods to use. Christopher also described how his students not only got choices related to tasks; they also got to influence what they did in the classes: "Den siste måneden har vært litt for lite praktisk. Det har [klassen] snakket sammen om senest nå på onsdag, at vi skal ha litt mer praktisk (...) Det er flere i klassen som etterspurte om 'kan vi ikke få jobbe med særemne? Og ordentlig fordype oss i det?'" (Interview C, 2016). The aspect of autonomy is present within in-depth studies in English classes, but probably in different degrees from class to class and from teacher to teacher.

Summed up, teachers of in-depth studies in English seem to be aware of the importance of motivation for the students. The respondents in this study reported on using enjoyable tasks to evoke motivation. This was done by trying to relate lessons to the real world and thereby giving the students a feeling of relevance, and the teachers worked hard on developing relationships and creating safe learning environments in their classes. Keys to good learning environments were stability in who the teacher was and how many new students who were



added to the groups throughout the years, as well as keeping the groups relatively small. Teachers with smaller groups reported on better learning environments and closer relationships with their students than those with larger groups. Furthermore, the respondents in this study reported on a high level of autonomy in their classes, and most of the teachers explained how they had cut down on homework for in-depth studies in English to reduce the cost for the students.

#### **4.6 Summary of findings**

Based on interviews with five teachers of in-depth studies in English this study has showed that:

- Students of in-depth studies in English in general are described by teachers as academically weak and lacking in motivation, in addition to often struggling with school in general.
- In-depth studies in English has a low status in many schools, and the teachers reported on experiencing school administrators who prioritized other subjects over in-depth studies in English. The respondents also reported that teachers chose not to prioritize in-depth studies in English, as well, due to the fact that this subject had low priority at their schools.
- One of the respondents reported a positive status for in-depth studies among the teachers at her school. This school had an administration which prioritized in-depth studies in English by keeping the classes small and by having a low student-teacher ratio in the in-depth studies in English classes.
- Many respondents reported of students being able to change from a foreign language over to in-depth studies in English during both ninth and tenth grade. This lead to instability in the classes and lower status for the subject. Teachers working in schools where the policy for changing subjects was stricter, reported on better learning environments in their classes.
- All respondents experienced the competence aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) as too ambitious for the students of in-depth studies in English. As a consequence, none of the teachers used LK06 (UDIR, 2006) very actively, and all admitted to not working towards all the aims. The teachers focused more on developing the students' basic skills, and on working in ways which took into account the academic level of the students. Several of the respondents expressed that it was unfortunate that it was up to the individual teacher to decide what to teach in in-depth studies in English. A

consequence of this, must be assumed, is that in-depth studies in English varies from school to school, more so than other subjects.

- The teachers reported using a great variety of tasks and methods in their lessons. Lessons were also at times practical, but factors such as group size and access to teaching areas and other resources were important to how much practical work the teachers used in their classes. The respondents were also unsure of how much English the students learned while doing practical tasks, but the teachers acknowledged how important such activities were for motivating the students.
- There was a significant difference in how actively the respondents used the textbooks for in-depth studies in English; the more experienced teachers used the text-book more than the less experienced teachers, who chose to work more topic-based.
- The respondents had a strong focus on supporting the students in their activities. Using writing frames and group work, where the students could work as scaffolds to each other, were two examples of instrumental support in in-depth studies in English. The teachers stated that the students often struggled if tasks were too open, as they needed clear instructions from the teacher. Many tasks were reported to have elements of freedom of choice and autonomy, but often within a set frame.
- All respondents reported using games and other enjoyable activities in their in-depth lessons. Such activities often motivated the students, encouraging them to use the English language and giving the students a feeling of inclusion.
- The respondents explained that they tried to make in-depth studies of English feel relevant to the students, although they acknowledged that this was difficult to accomplish, and something they needed to work more towards.
- Few of the respondents used homework in their in-depth studies in English classes. Many had poor experiences using homework, as there seemed to be a too high cost for many students when it came to doing homework for this subject.
- Creating a safe learning environment and developing good relationships with their students was important to all the respondents. Again, classes that had a constant influx of new students and frequent changes in teaching staff, reported poorer learning environments in their groups than those who had more stable classes. Teachers working with small groups of students or in classes with a low student-teacher ratio, reported on developing closer relationships with their students.

There were also some findings in the data that I will not discuss further, as they are not relevant to the research questions, but I want nevertheless to mention them:

- There seems to be a greater focus on digital competence and the use of a variety of digital tools among the younger teachers than the more experienced teachers.
- Some of the teachers described in-depth studies in English as an oral subject, describing how there was little emphasis on developing written skills, and that most of the assessment was based on oral accomplishments.
- All respondents felt it was unproblematic to assess students of in-depth studies in English, even if the teachers admitted that they could not base the term grades on the level of competence as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006).
- None of the respondents had ever heard of in-depth studies being chosen for an oral exam at their schools, even though the foreign languages were often chosen for these exams.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

The basis for the findings presented in this chapter was qualitative interviews with teachers of in-depth studies in English. To contribute to the transparency of the thesis I have chosen to present much of the findings through quotations from the respondents. Using quotations brings the voices of the respondents onto the paper, and enables the reader to see how the findings correlate to what the respondents have reported.

In the next chapter I will discuss the central findings presented in chapter four, and look at what they tell us about the way in-depth studies in English is being taught.



## 5 Discussions

In this chapter, the findings will be discussed in light of the central White Papers and reports presented in chapter 2, as well as in reference to social constructivism theory and motivation theory presented in the same chapter. The findings will be discussed according to what category the information originated from during the data analysis (see chapter 3.2).

### 5.1 Teaching contexts

The five respondents in this study have reported on a low status for in-depth studies in English at their schools. The only exception was Anna, who described how most teachers were positive towards in-depth studies in English, and that her school's administration had prioritized resources towards in-depth studies in English. Anna shared her two in-depth studies in English classes with one or two colleagues, making the student-teacher ratio between seven and nine students per teacher. It also meant that she had colleagues to collaborate with when planning her lessons and making plans. Anna also described an administration with a strict policy towards changing language after the first semester of eighth grade, making the in-depth classes stable and predictable (Interview A, 2016). The students in Anna's school were described in much the same way as students in the four other schools, so there was not much difference in the type of students who chose in-depth studies in English at her school compared to the other schools. The difference was in how in-depth studies in English was being treated by the schools' administrations.

Elisabeth referred to in-depth studies in English as the step-child at her school (see chapter 4.2). This is interesting. Bakken and Dæhlen (2011) described how principals at times struggled to motivate teachers to teach in-depth studies in English, and how in-depth studies had a low status in schools due to the type of students the subject recruited (pp. 93, 10). The NOVA report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011) did not, however, describe what role school administrators played when it came to the status of in-depth studies in English. The respondents in this study, on the other hand, were able to describe a situation where the school administrators played a central role to the status of in-depth studies in English. Examples given were how no time was set aside for work on local curricula or other collaboration for in-depth studies teachers; how the new eighth graders were not properly informed of what in-depth studies in English is; and how students were allowed to change to in-depth studies in English in the middle of a school year. The administration at Elisabeth's school never said that in-depth studies in English had a low priority. The signal the school was sending to students, parents and teachers, though, by allowing the local curricula for in-depth studies in

English to be the only incomplete curricula at the school, was that in-depth studies in English is not a priority at this school, and in fact that it is a less important subject (Interview E, 2016). This is true for the administrations at Britt's, Diana's and Christopher's schools. None of the schools were directly stating that in-depth studies in English had any less value than other subjects, but they were sending out signals through their actions. Examples of this were that in-depth studies in English was not important enough to be presented alongside the foreign languages, or that in-depth studies in English was an easy subject to master, seeing as you can join this class at any time and still get an overall grade at the end of tenth grade. I find this is concerning.

The respondents explained how they believed it was important for students who struggle at school to have alternatives to learning a foreign language, but the teachers also saw the negative effects of having many such students ending up in the same classes<sup>58</sup>. In-depth studies in English has become the language alternative for those who do not want to learn a language, and this lowers the status of the subject (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011). Diana said that in-depth studies in English was a subject where schools will put those students who do not fit in elsewhere (Interview D, 2016). This is an administrative issue which needs to be discussed. There needs to be a renewed awareness in schools concerning how in-depth studies in English is viewed, and it is important for school administrators to evaluate their own practices and their own school codes, and to ask what they can do to change the status of in-depth studies in English (Jenssen & Roald, 2012).

The general students of in-depth studies in English have been described as having low motivation towards in-depth studies in English, not caring for school work, and struggling at school (see chapter 4.1). This is something Bakken and Dælen (2011) confirm; in-depth studies in English mainly attracts students who get lower results than other students, and this is an contributing factor to the low status of in-depth studies in English (p. 10). The respondents could add to the explanation of the low status of in-depth studies in English by describing how school administrators and consequently teachers, contributed to and reinforced the low status of in-depth studies in English by giving the subject a low priority in schools. This is a challenge that needs to be dealt with.

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<sup>58</sup> Diana says: «[Engelsk fordypning] har jo utrolig stort potensiale. Men det blir ofte brukt som en samleklasse for de vi ikke kan plassere et annet sted. Noe som ødelegger gjerne, eller som kan ødelegge litt, for de som faktisk vil fordype seg i faget" (Interview D, 2016).

## 5.2 Aims

The research has so far shown that the status of in-depth studies in English is a challenge for schools. Another challenge is the role of LK06 (UDIR, 2006) and how the competence aims for in-depth studies in English function.

As seen in chapter 4.3, the respondents in this study admitted that they used LK06 (UDIR, 2006) less when planning in-depth studies in English than for other subjects. The teachers expressed that their focus was more on teaching basic skills than teaching in English the competence aims. It is defined in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) what is meant by basic skills for all subjects, as well as for in-depth studies in English. When reading LK06 (UDIR, 2006) there is a difference between the basic skills for mandatory English and for in-depth studies in English (see chapter 2.1). The respondents, however, did not seem to be aware of this difference. The focus in most in-depth studies in English classes seemed to be on working on building a foundation of skills in English which the students could use to work towards the aims for the mandatory English subject, rather than developing basic skills as defined for in-depth studies in English. There is, in other words, a discrepancy between the teachers' definition of basic skills and the definition of basic skills as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006). Teachers defined what skills they wanted to work on based on who their students were, rather than what is defined by the authorities. Consequently, this means that the focus of in-depth studies and what is actually being taught differs from class to class and from school to school. Big differences in what is being taught in a subject goes against the intention of the Norwegian school system, as the aim for lower and secondary education, as defined in The Education Act (KD, 2010), is for students in all parts of the country to get the same education. This research has shown that teachers have a very central role in in-depth studies in English, and that the quality of what is taught in in-depth studies in English relies much on the individual teacher.

When LK06 (UDIR, 2006) does not function as the compass for a subject, students, parents and school owners have to put great trust in the teachers and the job they do. Knowing that in-depth studies in English often has a low priority in schools, I believe it is relevant to ask whether it is acceptable that a subject should rely so heavily on the individual teacher. Not only did the respondents admit to using LK06 (UDIR, 2006) less, they also admitted that in-depth studies in English was less of a priority when it came to lesson planning and collaboration (see chapter 4.2 and 4.3). Developing a national curriculum for in-depth studies in English that teachers regard as fitting their students is therefore central to ensuring the quality of in-depth studies in English in the future. The respondents try to do a good job

teaching in-depth studies in English, I get no other signal from the interviews, but they seem to be on their own, not getting much support from their administrators or from the government. Teachers of in-depth studies in English, as well as the students, deserve better working conditions.

The respondents differed on what direction in-depth studies in English should take, if there was to be a change (see chapter 4.3). There seems to be a shared opinion, however, on shifting the subject towards being an extra support for students struggling in mandatory English, rather than more advanced supplement to mandatory English. The respondents expressed that they thought the name in-depth studies in English was misleading, and that the subject should be called what it is: Basic English or Strengthened English. The respondents showed through their answers that the focus of teachers of in-depth studies in English often was on the students and what could be done to give them positive experiences with learning and using English, rather than to focus on the curriculum. The fact that LK06 (UDIR, 2006) is not a well-functioning curriculum for in-depth studies in English must not be overlooked, and the curriculum should be adjusted to ensure the quality of the subject. This change must come from the authorities. This research has shown that teachers are trying their best to make in-depth studies in English a well-functioning subject, but a curriculum that does not fit the students is definitely not helping.

### **5.3 Content**

In chapter 4.4 the respondents reported on using varied and enjoyable activities, and they also reported on trying to use practical tasks if they were able to. This chapter will look at how these methods cohere with the intentions set by The Ministry of Education and Research.

The responses of the respondents in this thesis demonstrated large variations in how textbooks for in-depth studies in English were used. Elisabeth was the respondent who used the books most actively, and she felt the tasks in the books were varied and that the students felt safe when they got predictable and familiar tasks (Interview E, 2016). Anna also reported on using the textbooks a lot, while Brit used them at times (Interview A, 2016; Interview B, 2016). One challenge with using textbooks is that tasks in a textbook may well fit one student's level of development, and at the same time be either below or beyond another student's level. This is a challenge for all teachers in all subjects, and also for in-depth studies in English. Elisabeth's argument that textbooks provided the students with a certain level of security, because the tasks were predictable, is a valid one. The question one must ask, however, is if this way of



working challenges the students sufficiently; are the students forced to reach beyond their actual level of development or are they simply working within their actual zone of development (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015) (see chapter 2.4)? It can be comfortable for students to work on tasks they know they will master, but unless they are assisted in working on tasks within their proximal zone of development, they will not make any progress in their skills (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). Teachers using textbooks a lot rely on textbooks having been developed in such a way that there is a progression in both texts and tasks which will give the students challenges outside their actual level of development. If teachers are to be sure that they are pushing their students' development further, they often need to bring in other material and tasks in addition to the textbooks. This is something teachers need to be aware of.

Another approach to teaching in-depth studies in English besides relying on textbooks was to work topic-based. All respondents reported on using familiar topics as starting points for text production, both written and oral, but Christopher was perhaps the teacher who reported being most focused on this type of work (Interview C, 2016). Again, the teachers experienced that it was easier to get the students to master a task when the topic was familiar, and when the students had a certain level of freedom of choice. For such tasks to develop students' skills it is important that the tasks not only ask students to reproduce facts, but also that they interpret and reflect on the topics. Reflection and interpretation will make the students reach higher on Bloom's taxonomy, something that will lead the students towards new learning (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). In other words, for students to develop their English skills from topic-based tasks it is important that they do something more than presenting fact-based information; they need to be supported in order to work in ways which are within their zone of proximal development (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015).

The respondents reported on many ways in which they supported or scaffolded their students. Some examples were: providing clear task descriptions; pronouncing words and reading together with the students; giving out writing frames; or letting the students work in pairs or small groups where they could support each other. These methods are central in all subjects, and especially for in-depth studies in English as a higher number of students in these classes are academically weak (see chapter 2.3 and 4.1 for student descriptions). As a relatively high number of students in in-depth studies in English struggle to learn English, it is very important that even the simplest tasks are given scaffolds. Therefore, it is essential for teachers of in-depth studies in English to be able to work closely with students, for example in

small groups (Dunphy & Dunphy, 2003). A low student-teacher ratio is a good starting point for making the teachers able to provide their students with enough support.

When asked, the respondents were honest on not using LK06 (UDIR, 2006) to a great degree. Not following LK06 (UDIR, 2006) goes against The Ministry of Education and Research. In this context, however, it is important to remember that working in ways which evokes feelings of accomplishment and mastery for the students is also part of The Ministry's intentions for lower secondary school. The Ministry of Education and Research (2011) wants teachers of in-depth studies in English to find the right balance between giving their students aims that are too easy and aims that are unrealistic. This reveals a paradox in the intentions of The Ministry of Education and Research for in-depth studies in English. On the one hand they want teachers to work towards more motivation and mastery for the students, as described in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011). On the other hand, The Ministry wants teachers to teach on basis of the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), aims which are so ambitious that many of the students of in-depth studies in English never will master them. It is therefore important that The Ministry of Education and Research examines its own role in the work on improving motivation and mastery in lower secondary school, at least when it comes to in-depth studies in English. It is understood that giving students aims which they easily reach will not develop the students' English skills, but giving the students aims which are impossible to reach will kill the students' confidence and motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015; Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). Therefore, the aims for in-depth studies in English need to be more set towards the proximal zone of development for the typical student of in-depth studies in English than what is the case today. The respondents are therefore on the right path when they choose to overlook parts of LK06 (UDIR, 2006) when teaching in-depth studies in English, even if this means going against the intentions of The Ministry of Education and Research (2006).

Another aspect of teaching, which *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) focuses on, is to use enjoyable methods. The respondents have experienced that students who are afraid of speaking English, often forget this when they are participating in games. Well-thought-through games can therefore be effective in teaching language, especially if the activity is able to get the students to leave their actual zone of development and make them work within their proximal zone of development (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). For classes to be practically oriented, however, the school needs to facilitate such teaching. Organizing practical activities within the frame of a set school schedule, and often with limited access to

equipment and other resources, is demanding. It is therefore clear, as one of the respondents directly stated, if in-depth studies in English is to be more practical than it already is, more resources need to be added and there needs to be new focus on how to organize the classes (Interview E, 2016). Another recurring aspect, is once more the size of the classes. The student-teacher ratio in the in-depth classes referred to in this study, range from six to 19 students per teacher. According to the respondents, if school administrators want to meet the requirements of more practical teaching in the future, as described in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011), it is important that schools focus on a low student-teacher ratio in classes of in-depth studies in English, and that the in-depth studies in English classes are kept fairly small (see chapter 4.4).

In their interviews, all respondents described in-depth studies in English as being more enjoyable, more practical and more motivational than mandatory English (see chapter 4.4). It is worrying that mandatory English classes seem to be less enjoyable and less adapted to the academically weaker students, as this lessens the chance these students have of mastering mandatory English. It is not within the scope of this thesis to explain why there seems to be less use of enjoyable and practical activities in mandatory English than in in-depth studies in English, but it is important to make a note of this. For students who struggle with English, in-depth studies in English could actually be a unique possibility for them to develop their English skills. Attending 222 extra English lessons over a period of three years could improve a students' proficiency level in English greatly. It is therefore important that the full potential of in-depth studies in English is utilized; something this research has shown is not the case in all schools at the present.

#### **5.4 Learning conditions**

The respondents in this study believed that they used activities in their in-depth study lessons that should motivate the students. Examples of such activities were games, working with familiar topics, and getting a certain freedom of choice within the tasks. Despite being exposed such activities, the students were still described as not motivated for in-depth studies in English. Furthermore, all of the respondents understood the importance of creating safe learning environments and good relationships with their students, but they also reported that this is a challenge for in-depth studies (see chapter 4.4 and 4.5). By looking at what the respondents have reported on motivation in their in-depth study classes, and comparing this to motivational theory (see chapter 2.5), it might be possible to point to reasons why there still is a challenge in motivate studenting of in-depth studies in English.

Using games and other enjoyable activities in lessons relate to the intrinsic value of a subject; students will be motivated for school work when they enjoy what they are doing. As seen in chapter 2.5, this is a strong form of motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). The only problem, however, is that for students to be intrinsically motivated for in-depth studies in English, they need to perceive the entire subject as over-all enjoyable and not just enjoyable when they are doing the activities the students define as fun (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Given that students of in-depth studies in English are described as having little motivation for working with in-depth studies, it is likely to assume that the students are not being intrinsically motivated for the subject, at least not in its present form. If this is the case, teachers need to work on other ways to motivate the students. Intrinsic value is part of internal motivation, a type of motivation which also can be developed by focusing on incentive value; the importance of doing well, utility value; the usefulness of the subject, or cost; how much effort and time it takes to work on the subject (see chapter 2.5) (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). What motivational theory has shown, however, is that it can be challenging to develop internal motivation for in-depth studies in English for the students, as the students often join this class with negative preconditions concerning learning English (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Firstly, how a student views the incentive value of a subject is largely connected to how proficient he or she is in the subject in question (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The students of in-depth studies in English are often characterized as poor English speakers and they therefore do not value English highly. Some students, however, experience going from being an average/ below average English speakers in mandatory English, to being the best speaker in in-depth studies in English. These students are likely to value in-depth studies higher than mandatory English, and they are also more likely to be motivated for in-depth studies in English<sup>59</sup> (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Being motivated for a subject can lead to better results, and it is important that teachers of in-depth studies in English are aware of the potential these students inhabit (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). For students who believe they are unable to master English and who struggle with learning English, however, the incentive value is no source of motivation.

One of the aspects of internal motivation, which is especially strong with students of lower secondary school, is the utility aspect of a subject, or how useful the subject feels for the students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Again, students of in-depth studies in English struggle

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<sup>59</sup> Christopher was one of the respondents who spoke of this phenomenon: "...det er flere som har bedre karakter i fordypning engelsk enn de har i vanlig engelsk." (Interview C, 2016).

more than other students to see the value of learning more English, as it is a subject they struggle to master. The respondents reported that they were trying to relate in-depth studies in English to real life situations, as they saw how motivating such work could be. Unfortunately, many of the respondents also admitted that this was something they struggled to incorporate often enough. The teachers often felt that such activities demanded extra resources and extra effort on their part, and such activities were therefore relatively infrequent. To make the students see the value of learning English, it is important to make the subject feel more relevant than it does today. To be able to do this, teachers reported on the need for more time to plan such lessons, perhaps in collaboration with others, and they also reported on the need for more access to resources for carrying out such lessons.

The last aspect of internal motivation which comes in to play in school, is the cost of a subject. When students are not motivated for a subject, it can be assumed that the cost of the subject also is regarded as high (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). This research has shown how the practice of homework differs for in-depth studies in English, compared to the foreign languages<sup>60</sup>; most in-depth studies in English give little or no homework. Diana had experienced how very few of her students did their homework (Interview D, 2016). The reason for this could be that the students felt doing homework for in-depth studies in English cost too much. This homework, perhaps took time away from doing other homework or from other activities, such as being with friends or doing sports. To be motivated to do homework, it is important that students master the tasks given, and that it is rewarding to have done the homework when the students come to class (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). If the cost of the homework is too big, compared to the reward, and if there is little consequence for not doing your homework, most students will not prioritize such work (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). It is therefore important for teachers of in-depth studies in English to make conscious decisions, as to what type of homework they assign, what rewards or consequences there are, and what signals the teachers are sending when they do not assign any homework, as well as what expectations they meet their students with. It is important for teachers to balance the pedagogical reasons for not giving homework with the signal of having low expectations towards the students, as low expectations from teachers can become self-fulfilling prophecies (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Low cost of a subject can be motivating, but low expectations are not.

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<sup>60</sup> The respondents reported on the foreign languages as having homework regularly, for example in the form of reading texts and learning new glossary (Interview C, 2016; Interview D, 2016).

As explained in chapter 2.5, students' experiences teach them what expectations to have to their own ability to master a subject (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Students who experience low expectancy from their teachers may in the long run develop negative self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). It is therefore important to be aware of this when working with students with low motivation. It is important for teachers of in-depth studies in English to have clear and realistic expectations toward their students, and it is important to show the students that the teachers in fact expect certain accomplishments. Giving the students achievable tasks, and clearly stating that the teacher expects the students to follow through, can lead to a more positive self-efficacy and more motivation for the students (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). From what the respondents reported, it may seem as teachers of in-depth studies in English are not fully aware of how low expectations may lead to low motivation. There might be a need to raise the awareness among in-depth studies in English teachers on how realistic expectations can lead to positive self-efficacy. Prioritized and scheduled time for reflection for teachers of in-depth studies in English would be one step towards such work.

Ryan and Deci's (2000) theory on how motivation is connected to the learning environment in schools was presented in chapter 2.5. This theory described three components that needed to be present to motivate students for school work; autonomy, the feeling of competence, and the feeling of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For students to be motivated for school, they need to be listened to, they need to be able to develop their learned efficacy, and they need to experience that they belong in school (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The respondents reported on a certain degree of autonomy in their classes; there was usually freedom of choice when it came to many tasks, and one of the respondents also described how his students were active in deciding topics and activities for the class (Interview C, 2016). However, teachers reporting on autonomy do not necessarily mean that the students experience autonomy. There can be a discrepancy between the teachers' and the students' experienced reality, and what teachers define as students being heard, might not be what the students define as being listened to. Based on the information from this research, however, one can say that in-depth studies in English is a subject where teachers try to focus on autonomy.

Teachers focusing on autonomy should be a good basis for increasing the motivation of students of in-depth studies in English, and more specifically, for increasing the autonomous external motivation within the students, as described by Ryan and Deci (2000). There are, however, two factors working against this. First of all, many students of in-depth studies in English are reported to have low competence in English. Secondly, teachers reported on

struggling to create safe learning environments and close relationships to their students. To be able to develop autonomous external motivation, to be able to internalize the school's way of valuing a subject, the students need autonomy, the feeling of competence and the feeling of relatedness present (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Unfortunately, many students of in-depth studies in English are reported to lack two of these factors; the feeling of competence and the feeling of relatedness.

The respondents reported on working much according to the guidelines in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) on how to motivate students, as they reportedly use enjoyable, varied and, at times, practical tasks. The problem is that the students are still not being motivated. The answer to the lack of motivation could be that in-depth studies in English struggles to develop autonomous external motivation. As shown in chapter 2.5, students cannot be expected to be internally motivated at all times, and the autonomous external motivation is therefore central for students to be motivated for working with school subjects (Lyngnes & Rismark, 2015). Students who have internalized and assimilated the value of school work will work harder and get better results than students who lack this internalization of fundamental school values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The challenge for school administrators and for teachers of in-depth studies in English is therefore to work on developing the missing factors of autonomous external motivation; a positive learned self-efficacy and positive learning environments in classes of in-depth studies in English. It is important that the authorities, as well as school administrators and teachers, ask what can be done to increase the motivation of students of in-depth studies in English. It is now five years since the NOVA-report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011) was published, and there has not been made any changes to the subject from the authorities. For teachers to be able to tap into the potential which in-depth studies in English inhabits for the students, it will be essential that schools collectively take charge in the work of focusing on how to increase motivation for students of in-depth studies in English.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed reasons for some of the challenges connected to in-depth studies in English in Norwegian schools, and what role The Ministry of Education and Research, as well as each school's administration, has in dealing with these challenges. Teachers are reporting on working in ways which are supported by The Ministry's report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011), and also by social constructivism theories (see chapter 2.4). These ways of working, however, often lack foundation in the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006).

The low motivation of students of in-depth studies in English is a challenge for the subject. Several factors connected to creating motivation, such as relatedness, the feeling of competence and teachers' expectations towards the students, are missing for students of in-depth studies in English. School administrations and teachers should therefore spend time discussing and reflecting on how to increase the motivation of the in-depth students at their schools. In-depth studies in English hold a great potential for its students, a potential that presently is not being realized.



## 6 Final comments

This chapter will sum up the results of the research and what implications this has for how to teach in-depth studies in English. The chapter will end by pointing to discoveries that could be interesting to look further into.

### 6.1 Research questions revisited

This research has been able to give an insight into how five teachers of in-depth studies in English report teaching the subject. The thesis has also shown how these ways of teaching cohere with the intentions for in-depth studies in English, as described by The Ministry of Education and Research. To be able to discuss these initial questions, I also asked what role LK06 (UDIR, 2006) plays for teachers when they are planning their lessons, as well as what challenges teachers report on when it comes to teaching in-depth studies in English.

#### 6.1.1 How in-depth studies in English is being taught, as reported by the teachers

The first part of the research question read: *How is in-depth studies in English taught, as reported by the teachers?* To be able to answer this question, factors affecting the ways the subject is being taught, had to be researched. Such factors were who the students of in-depth studies were, how the subject was being organized, the status of the subject, and students' motivation for the subject.

All the respondents in this study gave a general description of in-depth studies of English students as being academically weak, with low proficiency in English, and a majority of the respondents also described the students as having low motivation for learning English. Some of the respondents struggled to create good learning environments in their classes. This was due to turnover in which teachers taught in-depth studies from year to year and from getting new students throughout the school year, as well as having large groups of students. Other respondents described schools where the rules for changing language were relatively strict, leading to few students changing language after eight grade, and schools where the student-teacher ratio of in-depth studies in English led to small groups per teacher. This latter group of respondents could report on close relationships with their students and relatively safe learning environments in their in-depth classes. This thesis has shown that there seems to be much the same types of students who generally choose in-depth studies in English at the respondents' schools, but there is a difference as to how well the in-depth classes function from school to school. This difference is directly related to group size and how many teachers are teaching each in-depth studies class. Teachers with large groups and few colleagues are those who report to struggle more with relationships and the learning environment in their in-depth

studies in English classes. John Hattie (2009) has emphasized that reducing class size does not lead to better learning, but he also expresses that for example student-teacher interaction and the amount of feedback increases when class size is reduced (pp. 86, 88). In-depth studies in English is not an average subject, as a high percentage struggle with motivation for school work (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011). To enhance motivation it is a great advantage to work in smaller groups (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). It is therefore recommended that school administrators consider the sizes of their classes of in-depth studies in English if they want to develop a better setting for learning in the future.

The fact that in-depth studies in English classes are made up of students with relatively low proficiency in English and/or a high degree of students with individual evaluations<sup>61</sup>, challenge the teachers when they are planning their lessons. The respondents described how they used a great variety of activities and methods in their classes, and that they focused on enjoyable, playful activities with a degree of freedom of choice and practicality in their lessons. How many practical activities, and in what degree the lessons were related to real life situations, however, depended on access to resources and the size of the groups. All respondents agreed that practical tasks and authentic use of the language was motivating for the students. They also agreed that such activities could be difficult to organize.

All respondents tried to mix written and oral activities in their lessons, but often with an emphasis on the spoken language. Variation in the teaching and giving the students choices in their work were, according to the respondents, keys to motivate the students for working with English. Another key was to give the students tasks and aims which were reachable. Due to this, the teachers reported that they used the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) less than what can be expected. The teachers found the aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006) to be unattainable to many of their students, and the teachers therefore chose to define their own, more suitable aims to the classes. Defining reachable aims was part of what the teachers reported as ways of supporting their students in their work. Providing the students with instrumental, as well as emotional, support was important to the teachers, but the size of the groups and the student-teacher ratio were in many cases decisive to how successful the teachers were in providing this (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). Most teachers organized their classes in small groups or in pairs, for the students to work as scaffolds for each other, and the teachers also reported that clear task descriptions, structured writing frames, and clear progress plans were essential to

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<sup>61</sup> *Sakkyndig vurdering.*

get the students to finish tasks and projects. The way the teachers reported on teaching in-depth studies in English was to focus on how to develop the students' basic skills in English at the same time as the lessons were to be enjoyable and motivating. Achieving motivation, however, was reported as a challenge for the in-depth studies in English teachers.

The respondents in this study reported that students of in-depth studies in English often lacked motivation for learning English or even for school in general. The respondents explained that they tried to motivate their students in many ways: they used enjoyable, varied and practical activities; they tried to create good learning environments and to give attainable aims; and they used different types of scaffolds and support to provide the students with positive and meaningful experiences in the classroom. Schools and teachers were, despite all this, still failing to provide most students of in-depth studies in English with internal or autonomous external motivation. The impression the respondents gave was that there might be a too large emphasis on the intrinsic value of in-depth studies in English; teachers were trying too hard to make the subject an enjoyable subject rather than focusing on for example the utility aspect of the subject, or the students' feeling of competence. A consequence of too much focus on enjoyment is that students will expect the lessons to be enjoyable every week, and if they consider an activity as boring they might lose all motivation for working with the subject<sup>62</sup>. Enjoyment cannot be the only value students see in in-depth studies in English.

Another aspect of motivation that the respondents revealed was how most teachers met their students with low expectations. Being met with low expectations may nurture the students' own low expectations, or negative self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015). It is therefore important that teachers meet their students with higher, yet realistic expectations in in-depth studies in English. To get the subject to function better in schools, there needs to be a focus on making teachers of in-depth studies more aware of how to motivate their students in a way to develop autonomous external motivation. A place to start could be to give teachers room and time for reflections and discussions on how to nurture students' autonomous forms of motivation. This priority needs to come from authorities such as school owners or the school's administrations. Raising the motivation of students of in-depth studies in English needs to be a joint effort.

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<sup>62</sup> Christopher gives a good example of this when he describes how his students often want to watch movies, but the same students dislike doing tasks related to the movie. Watching a movie is motivating because it is enjoyable, working with tasks is not.

When asked, all respondents were under the impression that in-depth studies in English had a low status at their schools, and that one of the factors affecting the status was the fact that the subject largely attracted academically weak students with low motivation. It was important to note, however, that the respondents also emphasized other factors when they spoke on status of in-depth studies in English. One important factor was that the respondents could report that administrators at their schools usually prioritized other subjects when making decisions. Examples were how administrators did not demand teachers to make local curriculums or plans for in-depth studies in English, or that they did not present in-depth studies in English as an alternative to next years' eight graders. Other teachers reported on schools that did not focus on stability in whom the teachers of in-depth studies were from year to year, or who allowed students to change to in-depth studies in English during ninth or tenth grade. Other schools did not make space for teachers of in-depth studies in English to collaborate with other teachers, even if all other subjects had such designated time. The statements from the respondents were clear: When school administrators do not prioritize in-depth studies in English, teachers do not prioritize in-depth studies in English, and how can we then expect students to prioritize this subject? What we see is an endless circle of the in-depth subject drawing the short straw. For the status of the subject to be improved there needs to be a change in the priorities of the school owners and school administrators. Unless something changes, in-depth studies in English will continue being a subject full of wasted potential for many students in years to come.

### **6.1.2 Coherence with the intentions for the subject set by The Ministry of Education and Research.**

The other part of the research question was: *How does this cohere with the intentions for the subject, set by The Ministry of Education and Research?*<sup>63</sup> The focus was to interpret the intentions of The Ministry as read in LK06 (2006) and the report *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011).

The respondents reported on different ways of relating lessons to LK06 (UDIR, 2006). Some of the respondents explained how they barely used the competence aims; others used the aims at times by rephrasing into more realistic aims for the students. This research has shown that teachers of in-depth studies in English usually chose to focus more on working towards basic skills in English than providing the students with deeper studies into English. The reason for

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<sup>63</sup> The first part of the research question was: *How is in-depth studies in English being taught, as reported by the teachers?*

this was that the teachers believed that their students need basic skills more than in-depth knowledge of the English language. What the respondents were saying was that LK06 (UDIR, 2006) was not working as a leading document for what to teach in in-depth studies in English. Teachers were therefore not using LK06 (UDIR, 2006) in a large degree when planning their lessons. Teachers reported that they were trying to make in-depth studies in English into a subject that worked for the group of students who chose the subject, rather than focusing on the guidelines set by LK06 (UDIR, 2006). The teachers also reported that the content and the direction of the in-depth study class largely were depending on them as individuals, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their students. The implication of this is that in-depth studies in English has become a subject where there are as many practices as there are schools, or even classes, in Norway. This was never the intention of The Ministry of Education and Research when the subject was introduced in 2006. LK06 (UDIR, 2006) clearly states that in-depth studies in English is to go deeper into the English subject than mandatory English, and the subject is to challenge the students more (see chapter 2.1). These intentions are, as shown through this research, not being met in the present.

As pointed out in the discussion part, there is a paradox in the intentions for in-depth studies in English (see chapter 5.2). On the one hand there is LK06 (UDIR, 2006) with its ambitious competence aims and clear guidelines for the subject to go beyond the mandatory English subject. On the other hand there is the White Paper *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011) which emphasize the importance of reachable aims, mastery and motivation for the students. The conclusion is therefore that The Ministry of Education and Research needs to look into how they can make the intentions for in-depth studies in English clearer and easier to interpret. *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011) states, in an own paragraph regarding the in-depth alternatives for foreign languages, that in-depth studies in English is to be just as demanding as the other languages. We must not be mistaken in this. In the current situation, however, the competence aims for in-depth studies in English appear to be more demanding than they have to be for the type of students who choose in-depth studies. This research has shown that teachers in a large degree teach in-depth studies in line with the intentions set by The Ministry as described in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (2011), These teachings, however, are less in line with the intentions for in-depth studies in English as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006). My recommendation is therefore to revise the curriculum for in-depth studies in English. One direction to go would be to look at the curriculum for in-depth studies in Mathematics where there is an emphasis on taking the students proficiency

level into consideration when teaching (UDIR, 2015)<sup>64</sup>. It will be interesting to follow the development of in-depth studies in English and to see if the strategy for revising LK06 (UDIR, 2006), as described in the report *Fag – Fordypning – Forståelse – En fornyelse av Kunnskapsløftet* (KD, 2016), will include the much needed revisions for in-depth studies in English.

## 6.2 Conclusions and implications

To sum up, this research has shown that:

- Teachers of in-depth studies in English report to use varied, enjoyable and at times practical activities and methods in their lessons. Even if practical tasks are something teachers see is motivating for the students, few manage to organize such activities very often. Lessons are, furthermore, reported to be a combination of written and oral activities, and often with tasks which involves a certain freedom of choice for the students.
- If The Ministry of Education and Research wants in-depth studies in English to be more practical and more motivating, as described in *Motivasjon – Mestring – Muligheter* (KD, 2011), teachers in this report call for more resources. In-depth studies in English is challenging to teach, and teachers report that smaller groups would improve the possibilities to do practical activities. Smaller groups would also help the work towards developing safe learning environments and closer relationships for the in-depth students.
- To motivate students of in-depth studies in English, teachers report on focusing on giving the students enjoyable activities in class; they are in other words focusing on the intrinsic value of the subject. If teachers of in-depth studies in English want to increase students' motivation there needs to be other focuses, as well, for example on the role of expectations or on self-efficacy. Time for reflection and discussions, and the opportunity to raise teachers' awareness on how to motivate students, is central.
- The respondents report on a correlation between how school administrators prioritize in-depth studies in English, and how well the subject functions in schools. Teachers working in schools with strict rules concerning the opportunity to change language during the school years, and where the administration prioritizes resources on a low student-teacher density, report on higher status and better learning environments for

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<sup>64</sup> "Opplæringen må bygge på elevens faglige forutsetninger slik at eleven får utfordringer som de mestrer..." (UDIR, 2015).

the in-depth subject. Consequently, school owners and school administrations need to take some of the responsibility for the low status of in-depth studies in English. School administrators need to facilitate for more collaboration among teachers of in-depth studies in English, and they need to start prioritizing in-depth studies in line with other subjects.

- Due to the demanding competence aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), teachers of in-depth studies in English are reporting on having developed their own interpretations of how to teach the subject, based on the needs of their students. The focus of the subject has shifted from the intention of going in depth of the English language, to being a subject with focus on basic skills in English. This was not intended by The Ministry of Education and Research in 2006. Based what teachers are reporting, the conclusion is that The Ministry of Education and Research has not been successful with their intentions for in-depth studies in English.
- To ensure the quality of in-depth studies in English for the future, LK06 (UDIR, 2006) needs to be revised in such way that the curriculum becomes a guideline teachers can use. This revision should adapt the competence aims to the group of students who usually choose in-depth studies in English, and it should also consider changing the name of the subject, as teachers find the current name to be misleading.

### 6.3 Further research

During this research I have discovered several questions it would be interesting to look further into. First of all, the role of school administrations when it comes to the status and the challenges of in-depth studies in English are interesting. Jenssen and Roald (2012) emphasize how factors such as the size of classes or which students are placed in what classes, can affect teachers' ways of teaching. In other words, administrative choices affect what is going on in the classroom, and it would be interesting to learn more about how aware schools are of this, especially when it comes to elective subjects. It would also be interesting to further investigate why in-depth studies in English has such low priority as it has in many schools, and how this low priority has become an implemented part of many schools' school-code<sup>65</sup>.

Another question to look further into would be if students of in-depth studies in English experience the subject the way the teachers do. It would be interesting to learn if the teachers

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<sup>65</sup> The Norwegian expression 'skolekode' which stands for the values, norms and distribution of power at a school (Jenssen & Roald, 2012, p. 119).

are actually practicing in-depth studies in English the way they have reported, or if there is a difference in what they are saying and what they are doing.

Finally, there are some questions concerning the organization and the assessment of students of in-depth studies in English which have emerged. Based on this research, as well as the NOVA-report (Bakken & Dæhlen, 2011), it is relevant to ask if in-depth studies in English has become a permanently differentiated class within schools. Some of the respondents explained how foreign language teachers wanted students attending their classes to have a certain level of language proficiency, and how students who got poor grades in foreign languages almost automatically transferred to in-depth studies in English. A question that rises is if this way of dividing students into ‘those who can learn languages’ and those ‘who cannot learn languages’ goes against the Norwegian Education Act (KD, 2010). It would also be interesting to see what teachers of in-depth studies in English base their grades on. Are the grades based on the students’ level of competence as described in LK06 (UDIR, 2006), or are they based on something else? From what this thesis has uncovered, I suspect the assessment is based on something besides the competence aims in LK06 (UDIR, 2006).

I want to end this thesis by saying that it has been interesting to meet and speak to different teachers of in-depth studies in English, and that it has been inspiring to learn how these teachers try to make the best out of the challenges of this subject. The teachers have shown me that they care for their students and that they are truly interested in doing what is best for them. The journey of learning how teachers of in-depth studies in English teach their classes has been an inspiring and encouraging one, and I do hope that there will be a change for the better for in-depth studies in English in the years to come. After ten years as a language alternative, it is about time for this “step-child” of school subjects to be fully included and equally treated in all schools.



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## **Appendices**

Appendix I: Interview guide /Intervjuguide

Appendix II: Consent form / Samtykkeskjema

## Appendix I: Interview guide

### INTERVJUGUIDE

(semistrukturert)

#### Respondentens bakgrunn

- Utdannelsesbakgrunn (+ ant år i jobb/ant år som eng.fo-lærer)
- Hva slags kursing/innføring har du fått i engelsk fordypning (i utdannelsesløpet eller i etterkant)? Hva tenker du om dette?
- Har du noen tanker om hvilke lærer som vanligvis underviser i engelsk fordypning?
- Underviser du i «ordinær» engelsk (på samme trinn)?

#### Informasjon om engelsk fordypning på skolen (organisering)

- Cirka hvor mange elever er det i hver engelsk fordypningsklasse (antall elever pr lærer)?
- Kan du si noe om hva som blir sagt om engelsk fordypning til elever/foreldre før valget av språk i 8.klasse? Hvordan «profilerer» skolen engelsk fordypning?
- I hvor stor grad opplever du at elever bytter til/fra faget?
- I hvilken grad bruker dere tid til engelsk fordypning i engelsk fagseksjon (eventuelt fremmedspråkseksjonen)? Hva tenker du om dette?
- I hvilken grad har du noen å samarbeide med om opplegg/innhold? (Hvordan foregår samarbeidet?)
- Kan du fortelle om hvilken status engelsk fordypning har på skolen din (både blant elever og lærere)?

#### Erfaringer med engelsk fordypning og elevene

- Hvordan vil du beskrive elevene som tar engelsk fordypning? (både faglig og sosialt)
- Hvordan opplever du motivasjonen for faget hos elevene?
- Hvordan vil du beskrive læringsmiljøet i engelsk fordypningsklassene?
- Hvis du underviser i «ordinær engelsk», kan du si noe om hva som eventuelt skiller «ordinær» engelsk fra engelsk fordypning?
- Kan du beskrive hvordan du gir lekser/hvilken rolle lekser spiller i engelsk fordypning?

- Kan du eventuelt si noe om din relasjon til elevene i engelsk fordypning, sammenliknet med «ordinær» engelsk/«ordinære» fag?
- Hvilket potensiale ser du at engelsk fordypning har som fag, som man kanskje ikke finner i «ordinær» engelsk?
- Hvilke utfordringer ser du at engelsk fordypning har, som man kanskje ikke møter i like stor grad i «ordinær» engelsk?
- Hvordan opplever du vurderingsarbeidet i engelsk fordypning? Hvordan er det å sette halvårlig/sluttvurdering?
- Hvordan vil du (oppsummert) beskrive engelsk fordypning som fag – hvilke tanker gjør du deg om faget? (Hvorfor har det blitt slik? Har du sett noen endringer i faget gjennom årene?)
- Hvordan vil du beskrive hvilke forventninger du har/stiller til engelsk fordypningselevne?

### **Arbeidsmåter og metoder i engelsk fordypning**

- Hvordan jobber du når du skal lage undervisningsopplegg for engelsk fordypning? (Hvordan tenker du? Hvilke hensyn tar du?)
- Hvordan/hvor finner du materiell til undervisningsoppleggene (har dere noe læreverk)?  
-> Evt: Hvilke erfaringer gjør du deg med læreverket?
- Kan du beskrive/fortelle om noen typiske arbeidsmåter/oppgavetyper du bruker i engelsk fordypnings-undervisningen?
- Har du eksempel på oppgavetyper/metoder som du har hatt god erfaring med?  
-> Hvorfor tror du disse fungerte?
- Har du eksempel på oppgavetyper/metoder du har mindre god erfaring med?  
-> Hvorfor tror du disse ikke fungerte så godt?
- I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk fordypning er variert? Kan du gi noen eksempler?
- I hvilken grad vil du si at undervisningen i engelsk fordypning er praktisk? Har du eksempler fra praktisk arbeid? Hvilke erfaringer gjorde du deg med denne typen arbeidsmåter?

- Noen av kompetansemålene i Kunnskapsløftet sier spesifikt at elevene skal jobbe med selvvalgte tema/tekster i engelsk fordypning. Kan du si noe om din erfaring med selvvalgte oppgaver i faget?
- Hvilke erfaringer har du med at elevene skal dele egne erfaringer og meninger i engelsk fordypning (kompetansemål)? Kan du fortelle?
- Hvilke erfaringer har du med engelskfordypningselevens evne til å vurdere egen språkutvikling og språkkompetanse (kompetansemål)?
- Kan du si noe om i hvilken grad det snakkes engelsk i engelskfordypningstimene (både lærer og elevene)? Hva tenker du om dette?
- Kan du fortelle om hvordan/i hvilken grad dere skriver tekster (som i ordinær engelsk) i engelsk fordypning?

### **Erfaring og tanker rundt Kunnskapsløftet og engelsk fordypning**

- Hvilken rolle spiller læreplanen (Kunnskapsløftet) i din planlegging av undervisning for eng.fo? (Hvorfor har det blitt slik?)
- Har du gjort deg noen tanker om læreplanmålene/intensjonen for faget for engelsk fordypning? (Har du gjort deg noen tanker om målformuleringene i LK06 (UDIR, 2006)?)
- Kan du fortelle om hvordan du opplever arbeidet med å bryte ned målene for engelsk fordypning?
- Kan du si noe om i hvor stor grad dere jobber med alle grunnleggende ferdigheter i engelsk fordypning (lesing – snakking – skriving – regning – digitale ferdigheter)? Har du noen tanker rundt dette?
- Har du noen tanker rundt om engelsk fordypning er et «muntlig» eller «skriftlig» fag?
- Hvilke erfaringer har du rundt muntlig eksamen og engelsk fordypning? Gjør du deg noen tanker rundt dette?
- Hvilke tanker gjør du deg i forhold til at engelsk fordypning skal være sidestilt med andre fremmedspråk? Opplever du at de er sidestilt?

### **Tanker om veien videre for engelsk fordypning**

- Hva mener du er viktigst for eng.fo elevene; hva er det de trenger i undervisningen? Hvordan motivere eng.fo-elever?  
-> I hvilken grad tenker du at lærerplanen fanger opp dette?

- Hva er ditt ønske for faget? Har du noen tanker om hva som er nøkkelen til å lykkes med undervisning i engelsk fordypning?
- Har du noen tanker om hvordan man bør/kan videreutvikle faget?  
(Kunnskapsdepartementet (2012): «... undervisningen [skal] oppleves både relevant og utfordrende.» -> hvordan oppnå dette i engelsk fordypning?)



## Appendix II: Consent form

# Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

## ” Methods in in-depth Studies in English and their coherence with The Ministry of Education's intentions for the subject”

### Bakgrunn og formål

I forbindelse med masterstudier i engelsk- og fremmedspråksdidaktikk ved PLU ved NTNU ønsker jeg å undersøke hvilke metoder som blir benyttet i undervisningen i engelsk fordypning, og å se på disse metodene i lys av intensjonene med faget. Min foreløpige arbeidstitel er "Methods in In-depth Studies in English and their coherence with The Ministry of Education's intentions for the subject".

### Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Jeg ønsker å intervju et utvalg lærere om hvilke metoder de bruker i sin undervisning. Intervjuet vil bli registrert på lydopptak, og spørsmålene vil omhandle metodevalg i undervisningen, planlegging av undervisning, tanker rundt læreplanen og generelle tanker rundt engelsk fordypning som fag.

### Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det er kun prosjektleder som vet hvem respondentene er, og ingen personopplysninger kommer til å bli registrert i forbindelse med datainnsamlingen. Alle respondenter vil bli totalt anonymisert, både i forhold til personopplysninger og arbeidssted.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes mai 2016.

### Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt Anne Mari Skogan på telefon: 971 23 672, eller e-post: [anne-mari.skogan@trondheim.kommune.no](mailto:anne-mari.skogan@trondheim.kommune.no). Det er også mulig å ta kontakt med veilederen for prosjektet ved NTNU, universitetslektor Anita Normann ([anita.normann@plu.ntnu.no](mailto:anita.normann@plu.ntnu.no)).

## Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)