

# **Investigating the Teaching and Learning of British and American Culture in Norwegian Upper Secondary School**

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## Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of teachers' influence on pupils related to cultural knowledge in upper secondary. A semi-structured interview with three teachers provide data that is compared with a survey questionnaire among their pupils. The main emphasis has been on British and American culture because of the standing in Norway. An essential factor is that the Norwegian curriculum is in the process of implementation. This fact created a need to consider changes to the curriculum because these changes may influence teaching and findings. Therefore the cultural theme's position in the curriculum is presented with some historical developments. The research question for this essay is "What is the teachers' influence, and what do pupils experience related to British and American culture in Norwegian upper secondary"?

The theory presents a thorough explanation of important terminology. Following the terminology, an argument for the value of culture teaching is made. This part shows that cultural knowledge is a good foundation for pupils' self-development and a likely necessity for intercultural competence. The development related to culture's position in the curriculum provides information about the mandates and motifs for teaching culture. The presentations of the LK06 and LK20 provides information about what one can expect from the teachers and pupils. This part shows that culture has become a vital part of the English subject in recent years. However, it was interesting to see that just 15 years ago, culture was a peripheral element. It is just in recent curriculums that culture is devoted a significant amount of time and focus. An investigation of previous research justifies that the school is well suited to provide cultural education and that teachers may be inclined to shape culture teaching differently than other themes.

The methods applied are unconventional, and to compare pupils quantified and teachers unquantified responses proved valuable and demanding. The teachers' replies are investigated with a focus on semantic content, while the pupils' responses are presented as statistical data. Although the respondents are anonymised, it is rewarding to look at the matter from both sides. It will be difficult to prove direct correlations because influence is a matter of subjective opinions. However, looking for high degrees of similarities and dissimilarities will show where influence most likely has made an impact or not. The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the choice of methods, and at the time of data-gathering, the Norwegian government restricted access to respondents. Therefore it was necessary to collect data without meeting too many people.

This research indicates that teachers, first of all, have a good understanding of their pupils in general. However, in rare instances, teachers strongly believe that their pupils have perceived their interest, while the data indicates that this is not always the case. In addition, teachers sometimes are unaware of what they communicate. For example, although one teacher claimed to have not taught the pupils about sources, the attitude towards sources was very similar between teacher and class. This coincidence could imply that even though elements are not taught explicitly, the pupils may perceive attitudes and opinions from their teacher. One of the most important observations of this thesis is that culture is highly valued in the curriculum, by the teacher and by the pupils. Despite this, it is not obvious that cultural knowledge is all that important when it comes to exams. Even though the teachers had limited knowledge about the LK20 exams, one teacher argued that culture as an element seemed relatively insignificant for vocational studies. In fact, pupils respond that oral skills, grammar, and writing are all more important than culture and history in the English subject.

Three cases of study are too little to generalise on a large scale. However, the data indicates that teachers influence pupils intentionally and unintentionally. Pupils often perceive the opinions and attitudes of teachers. Some are adopted by pupils, and some are not. Different studies are needed to investigate the differences in manner and degree of transfer among different teachers and classes.

## Table of contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Aim.....	2
1.2 Assumptions .....	2
1.3 Scope .....	3
1.4 Material .....	4
1.5 Method.....	4
2.0 Theory .....	6
2.1 Defining Key Terms.....	6
2.1.1 Culture .....	6
2.1.2 Teaching and Learning .....	7
2.1.3 Knowledge Transfer .....	7
2.1.4 Communication .....	8
2.1.5 Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Competence.....	9
2.2 Why is Culture Teaching Important? .....	10
2.3 Development of Culture in English Foreign Language Subject in Norway .....	11
2.3.1 Before LK06.....	11
2.3.2 LK06.....	13
2.3.3 LK20.....	16
2.4 Previous Research .....	17
3.0 Methodology .....	19
3.1 About Research Methods .....	19
3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approach.....	19
3.3 The Interview .....	22
3.4 The Questionnaire .....	24
3.5 Reliability and Validity .....	25
4.0 Discussion of Findings .....	27
4.1 Interviews .....	27
4.1.1 Initial questions: .....	27
4.1.2 Motivational aspects:.....	28
4.1.3 Importance of Cultural Knowledge:.....	29
4.1.4 Didactical Approaches: .....	31
4.1.5 Evaluation:.....	32

4.2	Questionnaire.....	33
4.2.1	Initial information:.....	33
4.2.2	Motivational aspects.....	33
4.2.3	Importance of cultural knowledge:.....	34
4.2.4	Didactical Approaches: .....	35
4.2.5	Evaluation:.....	36
4.3	Comparison .....	36
4.3.1	Initial information:.....	36
4.3.2	Motivational Aspects:.....	37
4.3.3	Importance of cultural knowledge:.....	39
4.3.4	Didactical Approaches: .....	41
4.3.5	Evaluation:.....	43
5.0	Conclusion.....	44
5.1	Five Sub-Questions .....	45
5.2	The Research Question.....	47
5.3	Expectations .....	48
5.4	Relevance .....	49
	Bibliography.....	.
	Appendix: A Interview .....	.
1.	Initial information: .....	.
2.	Motivational aspects:.....	.
3.	Importance of cultural knowledge:.....	.
4.	Didactical Approaches: .....	.
5.	Evaluation:.....	.
	Appendix: B Questionnaire .....	.
1.	Initial information.....	.
2.	Motivational aspects.....	.
3.	Importance of cultural knowledge.....	.
4.	Didactical Approaches.....	.
5.	Evaluation.....	.

## Figures

Figure 1	Number of interesting elements per-pupil.....p.33
Figure 2	Number of cultural usages per-pupil.....p.35

## 1.0 Introduction

In modern-day society, we are more exposed to different cultures and people from other countries. Norway is connected to the UK and the USA, and they have both influenced Norwegian culture. Historically, this influence has varied, and at different times, architecture, art, and philosophy have been imported from other countries and cultures as well. Even though the influence comes from different countries and cultures today, it is safe to say that the UK and the USA are two of the most significant sources. They produce cultural elements that are very popular in Norway. Movies and music are two of these elements. However, culture is much more than just cultural expression. Traditions, beliefs and behaviour, are also part of a broader definition of the word culture. It seems the Internet has provided an arena where Norwegians are exposed to all aspects of culture and are inspired by these foreign impressions.

In Norwegian schools, all these factors and more are relevant to make teaching valuable and efficient. Teachers need to consider the subject curriculum and determine what they specifically want to teach their pupils. This freedom comes with great responsibility because it affects the pupils' lives and can open their eyes to new information and change their opinions. The teachers in Norway use the curriculum and their competence to make sure pupils gain the most out of each lesson. In Norway, the law requires every teacher to provide teaching on a suitable level for every pupil (Opplæringsloven, 2020, §1-3). This mandate means that teachers need to understand the individual pupil and the class collectively. Therefore, the challenge for Norwegian teachers is to accommodate each pupil's needs and operate within the framework set by a national government.

This research makes use of these elements to address an interesting subject. The teachers in Norway are individuals with independent opinions and beliefs. They need to understand the curriculum and their class to make sure their pupils benefit from the teaching they apply. This situation makes it relevant to examine teachers and provide insight into the dynamic relationship they exist in with their pupils. The curriculum is more or less static and applies to all teachers in Norway. However, each class is different, and the need for individually adapted teaching creates a more dynamic relationship where teachers must perceive their pupils and take appropriate steps to accommodate the needs and opinions of their pupils. How well teachers know their class is interesting to understand because it tells us something about the effectiveness of the Norwegian structure of education.



## 1.1 Aim

This MA wants to investigate the teaching and learning of British and American culture in Norwegian upper secondary classrooms. The most important aspect is the relationship between what goals and motifs the teachers have and to what degree pupils perceive these motifs and goals. This study wants to describe areas where teachers influence their pupils and how significant the differences between classes and teachers are. The research question for this thesis is: ‘‘What is the teachers’ influence, and what do pupils experience related to British and American culture in Norwegian upper secondary’’? To answer this research question is complicated. Therefore it is beneficial to make it more manageable by compartmentalising the research question down into simpler components. This study is directed towards discussing these questions:

- What motivations and thoughts does the teacher have about teaching culture to pupils in upper secondary?
- What attitudes do the pupils and teacher have towards cultural knowledge?
- What is the value of cultural knowledge in the eyes of pupils and teachers?
- What are the differences between teachers and their classes?
- Is the attitude of the teacher perceived by their pupils?

Discussing these questions will especially make teachers more aware of how important their role in the classroom is. It will show what importance culture teaching have and some of the benefits of teaching American and British culture. At the same time, it is possible to provide information about what challenges teachers may face and thoughts about how to overcome these challenges. The research will also offer some ideas as to how one may work with culture and experiences from teachers. It will also provide some tips for teachers on how to teach culture.

## 1.2 Assumptions

Before the start of the thesis, I had some assumptions about the matter. These assumptions were used to shape the research, and it is possible that, unintentionally, this has influenced the evaluation of the research. One assumption was that a teacher influences the pupils to a large degree. Although it is not an unconventional belief, it is a point that looking for information should be done from an objective position. By showing where research indicates certainty and uncertainty, the thesis provides an objective look at the matter. Another assumption was that cultural knowledge is important for all people. This is a huge

field that demands a lot more knowledge about human psychology and development than what I possess and is able to disclose in this thesis. Therefore it was necessary to make the informed assumption that, most likely cultural knowledge is a good foundation to develop oneself. Making this assumption opens up the possibility of reducing the value of the thesis if future research concludes that this assumption is incorrect. However, going into a large field like this is likely to depend on relying on other people's work and one's own research. These elements are presented to show what prejudices the creator has to make readers able to judge for themselves the quality of the research and conclusion independently. I had some expectations for the findings in the project as well, and those were as follows.

1. Before I began this research, I was expecting to find that teachers had different areas of interest within the English subject. Based on personal experience, I reckoned that this was easily recognised by their respective pupils because such topics are probably presented with more engagement and positive attitude than other topics. This proved to be partially true, however, not to the degree that was anticipated.
2. Also, I expected that culture was an imperative part of the English subject in upper secondary. Because it is mandated by the curriculum and because our society is exposed to international culture to a larger degree than ever before. A review of the data shows that this is the case. However, The exam is a different matter, and the comparison to other themes show that pupils value other parts of the English subject more.
3. The last assumption I had was that there would be large differences between the classes related to their interest in culture and contemporary news. I expected that a lot of pupils rarely or never would research information that they were exposed to by social media. This was not true at all. The pupils in this survey were interested in many cultural matters, and many of them checked sources sometimes.

### 1.3 Scope

The main area of this MA is the exchange between teachers and their pupils related to British and American culture. Therefore the investigation must provide information about the teacher, didactical approaches and goals, along with feedback from their pupils about their impressions and opinions. It is important to clarify that this MA is not evaluating didactical approaches to locate the best culture teaching. Instead, this study tries to investigate what the chosen teachers think and believe. By asking questions to their pupils, it is possible to evaluate to what degree the teachers' assumptions are correct. The study will investigate three

upper secondary English classes and three teachers. These datasets will provide enough data to indicate what may be happening elsewhere in Norwegian upper secondary classrooms. Although, more studies are necessary if one wants to generalise and know what influence teachers may have on their pupils.

#### 1.4 Material

This MA will put the main emphasis on responses from three selected teachers in upper secondary Norwegian schools. These responses will be in the form of semi-structured interviews where teachers may provide detailed information in response to structured questions and spontaneous conversation about interesting information that appears during the interview. In addition, there will be a relatively large focus on the questionnaires conducted among one class of each respective teacher. These responses are compared with the teacher's replies and the other classes to locate similarities and differences. In addition to these datasets, there will be a focus on cultural elements of the English curriculum in Norway. It is rewarding to include information about the developments of British and American culture in the English subject. This information makes it possible to understand the framework that has influenced the teachers. The main emphasis will be on the LK 20. However, some pupils in this research had only experienced the new curriculum for six months. Therefore it is impossible to say that LK06 does not influence the results.

#### 1.5 Method

Two types of research were chosen to provide valuable and new insight into the teaching and learning of American and British culture. A semi-structured interview with teachers provides valuable information about their motivation, ideas, and opinions. A questionnaire among their pupils delivers an impression of subjective opinions about their teacher and the English subject. These two datasets were gathered among a selected set of teachers. To investigate three cases out of the entire nation demand restraint when analysing the data. The data is indicative in the sense that it is realistic and contains information from a few classrooms. However, they are not decisive or exhausting as the number of respondents is too small, and the variation among pupils and teachers on a large scale is problematic to consider. However, increased awareness of the possibilities and pupils' reaction that comes with teaching culture may inspire teachers to take advantage of this topic.

The Covid-19 pandemic also influenced the choice of methods. Initially, it was desirable to observe culture teaching and measure the effect in the classrooms. Such an approach would have the possibility of providing more conclusive evidence related to the effect of certain didactical approaches. The limited access to respondents proved to be a problem. At the time of data-gathering, it was recommended to meet as few people as possible. Such recommendations are dependent on individuals acting responsibly, and I found a way of conducting research despite these surrounding factors. Even though the plans were changed, it was possible to explore an interesting subject. Examining teachers more closely than didactical results proved to be rewarding, and it seems like especially teachers can benefit from understanding how influential they are related to their pupils' experience and thoughts.

## 2.0 Theory

### 2.1 Defining Key Terms

#### 2.1.1 Culture

Culture is a broad term that is defined in numerous ways by different people. Munden states that there is no definition that will suffice for every purpose and that one has to define culture according to each specific situation (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017, p.357). Even if this is incorrect, there is a major benefit to defining any ambiguous term in a research study. Research studies are often referenced or used to shape behaviour or views. It is beneficial to give as clear and concise definitions as possible, to ensure that no one is misled or any content misunderstood. Knowing this allows us to spend time establishing an accurate description.

Culture in the Norwegian curriculum is one of four areas that make up the competence aims. These four areas are language learning, oral communication, written communication and culture, society and literature. The distinction between literature and society and culture seems to be connected to the difference between societal phenomena and artistic expressions. Munden distinguishes between Big C culture, which represents arts, architecture and other accomplishments, and little c culture, such as society, collective behaviour and understanding (Munden & Sandhaug, 2017, p.357). This distinction is helpful because inanimate objects such as buildings, books and arts are separate from society and behaviour that changes over time.

Culture in this MA is a term that includes behaviour, opinions, convictions, morality and ethics in British and American society, both contemporary and historically similar to the little c-culture. This means that laws, politics and traditions are all parts of culture. This MA does not argue which of these elements is most important, rather that they are all valuable as a collective. However, literature, movies and other artistic expressions are not the primary areas of investigation for this thesis. That is not to say that they are excluded, rather that they are not the most relevant. Cultural expression and art are not necessarily omitted by the respondents when they produce answers to questions. To know about behaviour, ethics and morality in a society is beneficial when developing a view of the world and understand different ways of thinking. American and British cultures are dynamic, complex and consist of sub-cultures (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p. 218). However, this MA argues that American and British culture should be taught without taking a stand on which culture or subculture is the more important one.

### 2.1.2 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning may be explained as two sides of a transaction. Most often, the teacher has the role of a seller. This person has knowledge and competence that would be beneficial for the pupil. The pupil is similar to a buyer who either has a desire to acquire what the teacher possesses or not. Either way, the teacher is instructed to teach the pupils particular skills and knowledge. Thus, the teacher must, similar to a seller, create or make use of the desire of their pupils. Teachers are expected to teach their pupils factual content as well as skills and proper behaviour. This mandate means that a lot of pedagogical and didactical decisions must be made to succeed. When the pupils get older and more mature, they will be more equipped to deal with complex questions because they have acquired more knowledge and competence.

The teaching and learning of cultural knowledge in this study are related to the traditional “Bildung” aspect of the English subject (Fenner and Skulstad, 2018, p.69-70). Cultural education is something more than accumulating factual knowledge about cultures. It is about making pupils equipped to consider and evaluate information. In addition, the ability to reasonably approach foreign cultures that not necessarily coincide with their own. The pupils may learn this from working with culture-related themes in the classroom. It is interesting to see how teachers influence their pupils in this regard. Pupils in upper secondary Norwegian school has accumulated knowledge through their ten years of previous education. They may already have formed opinions and view of the world. This study will just briefly look at fragments of what each pupil has learned and what they are capable of. More importantly, it will investigate pupils’ motif and attitude towards cultural education.

Teaching and learning are dynamic processes that are influenced by both teacher and pupils. Sometimes teachers make didactical and pedagogical decisions based on the characteristic of their class. The pupils have certain predispositions that require different strategies to ensure the highest learning outcome. By doing interviews and surveys, it is possible to get a superficial understanding of teaching and learning. However, observational data such as recording or classroom observation combined with tests and evaluation would be beneficial to provide an elaborate detail on this matter.

### 2.1.3 Knowledge Transfer

As with cultural knowledge, knowledge itself is a term that includes more than factual information. Skills, techniques, experience, ideas and data may all be comprised into the category knowledge. A knowledge transfer is when one individual has knowledge that is

transferred to another individual. Either at the request of the recipient or by the initiative of the provider. In a classroom, these situations are common and make up a significant amount of time. Knowledge sharing is also a part of every classroom. However, this is a process that is based on two individuals having limited knowledge. They share what they know at the same time as they request information from the other. Therefore, knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing are different and applied to different situations(Liyanage et al., 2009, p.172).

Because knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing are different, there is a need to distinguish between the two. This MA is concerned with the knowledge transfer from teacher to pupil. Because the Norwegian school consists of educated personnel mandated to teach pupils, this transfer is essential. However, teachers may apply knowledge sharing in their teaching to teach pupils a subject efficiently. This applies to matters of culture as well. Teachers have the freedom to choose teaching method in Norway. It seemed unlikely that teacher mostly or always created knowledge sharing situations in their teaching of culture. Thus, knowledge transfer was selected as the subject of interest. However, knowledge sharing would be an exciting field for future studies.

There are different methods of transferring knowledge. The agent, which is the individual that initiates the transfer of knowledge, has a lot of influence. A pupil could request knowledge in written or oral form and in an elaborative fashion or a binary response. The same is true for teachers as an agent. They could present knowledge in written or oral form as well as directly or indirectly. Because there are many different situations, it was necessary to narrow down the field of research. This MA is dedicated to investigating the transfer of knowledge from teachers to their pupils. Because this transfer is based on some form of communication, it is necessary to specify what type of communication we are dealing with as well.

#### 2.1.4 Communication

Communication is the interaction between a supplier and receiver. The job of a teacher is to communicate with pupils. The roles as supplier and receiver are not consistent, and sometimes pupils are the suppliers of content. However, for this research, the teacher has been assigned the role of supplier. The pupils are recipients that experience their teacher. This view is necessary to conform to the research question. Teachers communicate with pupils both orally and in written form. These forms of communication may contain explicit and implicit information. In addition, some communication is expressed by body language as well

(DeCapua & Wintergest, 2004, p.162-63). All of these elements influence pupils. Body language and actions in the classroom are treated superficially in this thesis. Because a study of those elements would require different sets of data, such a study would also be a complex subject demanding a different kind of expertise to analyse. This research will mainly interpret the semantic content provided by the teachers. Nevertheless, the teachers do provide some information that makes it possible to develop a limited understanding of their teaching.

It is possible that the pupils will be able to notice a mismatch between the teacher's words and actions. To orally communicate that something is imperative has no value unless the observer is convinced. What a teacher says is not necessarily representative of what the teacher actually believes. The pupils are ideally searching for essential information based on their personal situation. If a pupil's motivation is to get a good grade, it is probable that the pupil search for information about what is the most important to achieve this goal. If the teacher communicates consciously or unconsciously that culture is of little relevance, there is a chance that said pupil would discover this and choose to pay less attention to that theme.

Consciousness is the degree of awareness about one's actions and words. A teacher may be conscious by thinking about what information is important to convey. It is also possible to be conscious about the negative consequences of not including certain elements. It is also possible to teach the most important element without having that intention and avoid thinking about the consequences of teaching a specific segment. What is impossible is to be aware of all words and behaviour at all times. Teachers must make intuitive decisions throughout the entire class because of the uncontrollable factors which are represented by the pupils, equipment, and other factors. This means that teachers communicate both consciously and unconsciously. Both forms of communication have the likely possibility of being perceived by pupils. By being perceived, there is a chance of influencing the pupils as well. The data in this research do not provide detailed information about the communication. However, it is important to be aware that the teacher communicates in many different ways, and this is what the pupils' responses are addressing.

#### 2.1.5 Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Competence

Two terms that are important to distinguish is cultural knowledge and cultural competence. In some ways, these two expressions are similar. At the same time, they have important differences. Cultural knowledge is the amount of theoretical content acquired about one or more cultures. Factual information such as demography, history, traditions, laws and behaviour are all part of theoretical knowledge. Arts, accomplishments and architecture are



also parts of the cultural knowledge, although they do not receive very much attention in this MA. Culture is, as mentioned, changing and divided into subcultures. The accumulated knowledge about all these topics is cultural knowledge.

On the other hand, cultural competence is about the ability to apply knowledge and participate in culture. Cultural competence enables one to efficiently, appropriately, and spontaneously establish a common understanding, communicate with people from a culture, and recognise that they are individuals with different identities (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p.219). A variant of cultural competence is intercultural competence. Intercultural competence underlines the fact that one can communicate with a culture that is different from one's own (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p.219). Intracultural competence refers to communication inside one's own culture. The term cultural competence encompasses these two types of communication. In order to remain consistent, this MA will use the term cultural competence. This term is present in the curriculum in Norway and is inclusive toward pupils in Norway that may be part of the culture that is being taught.

When teaching cultural knowledge, one could choose to learn theoretically what a greeting is in different cultures. While teaching how actually to act would develop cultural competence. Cultural competence is also more dependant on language and communicational skills than cultural knowledge. This shows the difference between the two terms in a simple way. The relationship between them is yet to be fully understood, and there is opposing views about the importance of cultural knowledge to develop cultural competence (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2018, p.170). Brevik argues that: "knowledge, an obvious component of intercultural competence" (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p.220). For this essay, it will suffice to say that, most likely, a high level of knowledge about culture creates good conditions for developing cultural competence. It is beneficial to encounter alternative views and arguments, to develop and challenge one's own view.

## 2.2 Why is Culture Teaching Important?

English foreign language learning has developed over time, and so has the approach to culture teaching. Over time culture has evolved from being an unimportant part of the context to become a prominent part of language learning itself. Knowledge about how pupils draw on their cultural knowledge to learn foreign countries culture was an important factor for this development (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.68-69). The understanding that English language learners benefit from being taught culture is imperative when trying to justify culture teaching in the English subject. The students have social science and history subjects as well, which

could handle the responsibility for teaching culture. For English, it is important that there is a synergy between cultural teaching and language learning. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was an important contributor to this idea. They wanted to strengthen the cooperation and interaction between EU countries as well as create democratic individuals (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.68-69).

The Bildung aspect is another major reason why culture is important. The LK06 consisted of two parts, one general part for all subjects and one individual part specific to each subject. The general part provided views on what all subjects should aspire to and what principles should govern education. In this general part, there is a focus on different aspects of life. In the chapter about the meaning-seeking human, it becomes clear that pupils should learn about tradition, history, ethics and morality to develop their views and become good citizens with conscious behaviour. At the same time, they should be able to question and reflect upon society and behaviour (The Department of Education. 2006, p.3). This mandates what teachers in Norwegian school should try to accomplish. The general part is not limited to one subject, and one way to integrate these elements into the English subject may be culture teaching.

The English subject curriculum in Norway has culture listed as one of four elements of teaching. That Culture teaching should be a part of foreign language learning has reached a state of consensus throughout the world (Risager, 2007, p.4). The Council of Europe has played a role in developing English teaching in Norway through their Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.69). This means that to take the position that culture teaching should be a natural part of language teaching, not only is common in Europe but across the world. When looking at the competence aims in the LK06, it seems that culture is considered fairly important and valued equally to oral communication, written communication, and language learning skills (The Department of Education. 2006, p.10).

## 2.3 Development of Culture in English Foreign Language Subject in Norway

### 2.3.1 Before LK06

In order to understand the current situation, it is beneficial to take a look at what has happened in the past. The principle of this MA is that in order to develop cultural competence, it is advantageous to learn about historical and contemporary cultures. This part will show how attitudes towards culture teaching have changed along with different approaches to the

English subject in Norway. To better understand the present, it is helpful to say something about the pedagogical ideas that have influenced English didactics.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, foreign languages were taught mainly in towns and cities. The approach that was applied to teach all foreign languages was called the Grammar-Translation method. This method focused on exercising translation to and from a target language. Foreign language was a subject taught at lower secondary and could contain one of the following languages, depending on the school: French, German or English (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.23-24). Grammar translation was a method with a long tradition and basically held the opinion that languages could be learned by simply repeating the same action until it became internalised. The main focus was not on content at all, and as such, cultural elements were not a part of the teaching other than the language, which is a part of culture directly.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, things started to change. English was becoming more dominant internationally. New ideas were thought out, and the Direct Method started to influence Norwegian teaching at the beginning of the century. Oral skills became more integrated. Although, culture remained in the periphery. Oral activities were artificial and showed artificial constructs rather than genuine speech. The Audiolingual method followed at the end of WWII. People discovered during the war that communication was an important skill, and experience had led people to realise the benefits of genuine dialogue abilities. Young pupils started to learn something about how people live in other cultures. On the other hand, older students were still not taught culture (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.24-27). That a crucial event, such as the war, was not enough to change language teaching more dramatically speak to the resilience of Norwegian schools towards change.

The resilience lies to some degree in that the decision to change Norwegian schools starts politically. Taking into account that locating and synthesising new research and theories is a demanding and time-consuming effort. On top of these factors comes the time-consuming implementation of new curriculums in schools. Also, changes have to be made in teachers' education and provide working teachers with the possibility or motivation to become familiar with the changes. These factors are beneficial to keep in mind because what current teachers believe may be related to what they were exposed to while growing up and educated. The experience of teachers are also individual and will also influence them. That all these factors shape teaching in Norway tells us that there will probably be differences in attitudes between teachers.

In 1974, 1987 and again in 1994, the government reformed the curriculum and still, culture had to wait for its major breakthrough. However, some cultural elements were

included in these curriculums (Dypedahl & Lund, 2020, p.58.). The curriculum of 94 was short-lived in the sense that the government substituted it in 2006. The renewed curriculum LK06 finally gave culture a prominent position within the English subject. Bildung and personal development were now mentioned in the general part and also addressed directly in the English subject curriculum (Fenner & Skulstad, 2018, p.30-35). Competence aims included specific goals related to culture, and as mentioned earlier, the culture element was viewed as one of four primary areas of the English subject. There are several reasons why this happened at this time, and we shall try to list some possible factors that also provides information about where we are today.

In 1994 internet and cell phones were developing at a rapid pace. It would have been impossible for educators and politicians to know what the influence of this technology would be in the long haul. A curriculum designed for a world without the Internet was bound to become insufficient Because the Internet became a part of everyday life. In addition, a significant development was that the Norwegian economy grew rapidly as the oil production provided high revenue. People started to travel more and longer. Communication between people from different cultures became more common. Refugees came to Norway from Bosnia and Iraq because of wars and terrible conditions. All these conditions challenged to some degree, the curriculum of 94. One would expect that LK06 addresses these issues to some degree, and one could argue that the recognition of culture is one of these steps.

### 2.3.2 LK06

To efficiently discuss what expectations are related to culture teaching in upper secondary, it seems beneficial to present the competence aims of LK06 related to culture in its entirety. They are as follows:

- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- present and discuss current news items from English language sources
- discuss and elaborate on the growth of English as a universal language
- discuss and elaborate on different types of English language literary texts from different parts of the world
- discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media
- discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

- select an in-depth study topic within one's education programme and present this (The Department of Education. 2006, p.10)

The last bullet point is not focused on culture itself. However, it is possible to connect it to culture should a pupil choose to do so. The other bullet points connect to culture in different ways. Number 1,2,3, and 6 could be characterised as connected to society. Number 4 connects to arts and accomplishments. As mentioned earlier, this MA does not want to put too much emphasis on art and similar cultural expression. However, it may be used to talk about how cultural expressions are related to society and traditions. That is a strength of these competence aims. To work with one of these aims will often result in working with several others. Point number 5 has a focus on indigenous people. This teaching may be done in many ways and is certainly important because it will provide different views and approaches to one's own culture.

The curriculum in LK06 consists of six categories, and all these categories influence and describe what the English subject should be. The most important parts of this MA is the purpose and competence aims. The purpose section is, as expected, a justification and an argument for the English subject. It deals with all parts of the subject, including culture. It is beneficial to investigate how culture is treated in the curriculum to gain more insight into what we may expect to find in the data.

“when using the language for communication we must also be able to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration” (The Department of Education. 2006, p.1). This section is a justification for culture teaching. If one cannot consider the culture of people that one communicates with, misunderstandings and unclarity may occur. In a work situation, this may lead to loss of income or clients, and on a personal level, it may result in loss of friendship or disappointment. When one sets up a business meeting or a date, it is beneficial to know how the client or person treats time. Spanish people are prone to treat time as flexible and may be late for a meeting if a previous action took longer than expected to complete. A conversation should be finished, even if this means that the Spaniard will be late for the following event (Lewis, 2014). This example illustrates one way in which culture may influence communication.

“the subject of English shall contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language. [...] provide insight into how English is used as an international means of communication. Learning about the English-speaking world and the increasing use of English in different international contexts will provide a good basis for understanding the world

around us and how English developed into a world language.” (The Department of Education. 2006, p.1)

This excerpt claims that learning about culture provides knowledge to form a world view and understand how English influence the world. We see that one part of this passage revolves around the Bildung idea. That culture and language knowledge is important for pupils to become educated and develop their own beliefs and understanding. How language contributes to Bildung is worthy of a thesis itself. However, in this MA, we will continue to investigate the cultural aspects. Another part of this passage deals with the development of societies. The passage describes how English has influenced societies and how it will influence the pupils in their future work and study situation. It provides valuable information for practical application. Knowing that culture is something one can use in one way or another is good for the pupils’ motivation.

“English as a school subject is both a tool and a way of gaining knowledge and personal insight. It will enable the pupils to communicate with others on personal, social, literary and interdisciplinary topics. [...] development of communicative language skills and cultural insight can promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, language and cultural competence promote the general education perspective and strengthen democratic involvement and co-citizenship”. (The Department of Education. 2006, p.1)

This final passage is almost a recipe in the sense that it describes what the English subject is, what it should accomplish and how to accomplish said goals. The fact that the English language is an important tool to acquire knowledge should not be underestimated. Norwegian people spend a lot of time online, both in their professional and personal life. To make pupils able to use English opens up possibilities for self-development. That knowledge about culture may be beneficial to increase understanding and acceptance of people is crucial for the reasoning behind culture teaching. To include people that one disagrees with and have positive attitudes towards differences is a positive attribute for a society. When a society experience influence and establishment of different cultures, it is important to provide freedom and the possibility to coexist even while disagreeing. This ambition seems to be the goal of this last passage.

To synthesise what the LK06 tells us about culture is simple and complex at the same time. Culture is devoted a lot of space, and thus it is obviously significant. The reasoning behind this decision is intricate and without references to data in the curriculum itself.

However, one must assume that the claims made in the curriculum is based on empirical evidence and supported by science. To have cultural knowledge is a strength for the pupils and society. This knowledge comes from studying a culture, reading literature or communicating with other people, and all these approaches have equal importance in the curriculum. Though, they do serve different purposes and has to some degree, different benefits related to them. The presentation of cultural elements in the LK 06 has given us an impression of what we can expect from the interviews and questionnaires. The curriculum was recently revised. Thus some students and teacher have experienced and implemented LK20 for a brief moment. Therefore, it is inappropriate to attribute all the findings to one or the other curriculum. However, the pupils that respond in this research are currently being educated within the LK20 framework. This fact makes it necessary to address the new curriculum as well.

### 2.3.3 LK20

One major difference between LK20 and LK06 is that while LK06 had common competence aims for vocational studies and first-year general studies, LK20 has individual competence aims for vocational English and general studies. Both competence aims are related to year one. Pupils in general studies may choose from a variety of English subjects in the second year. Vocational studies do not include English in the second and final year in school. As one would expect the vocational English is concerned with vocational subjects, general studies instead focus on academic content. Both subjects have in common that they should enable pupils to:

“explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English-speaking world based on historical contexts. Discuss and reflect on form, content and language features and literary devices in different cultural forms of expression from different media in the English-language world, including music, film and gaming” (The Department of Education. 2020).

Both subjects also have a competence aim related to using sources in a critical and verifiable way. These common elements are important and relate to culture in some way. An obvious part is that students should be aware of the diversity between different cultures within English speaking countries, with a focus on history. This aspiration is similar to the LK06, except that history is not mentioned directly in the older curriculum.

On the other hand, culture elements seem reduced in that it does not mention contemporary news or indigenous people. These are both parts of culture. However, not

specifically mentioning them may make teachers more likely to omit those elements and teach something else. “Different cultural forms of expression” (The Department of Education, 2020) is an ambiguous definition. The term could refer to anything from a status update on Facebook to King Lear by Shakespeare. When the mandates are unspecific, teachers become more autonomous. What to include is a decision that each teacher must make for themselves, and individual preferences will probably be an influential factor in their teaching. In the LK06, culture received a lot of focus and more clearly defined boundaries in the competence aims. The pupils instead receive more emphasis on vocational or academic content, depending on their choice of study.

In sum, there seems to be a reduced focus on cultural content in the competence aims. However, some of the cultural elements removed from the competence aims have received attention and inclusion in the core elements. “the pupils shall acquire language and knowledge of culture and society. Thus the pupils will develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. They shall build the foundation for seeing their own identity and others’ identities in a multilingual and multicultural context.” (The Department of Education, 2020). These formulations mean that there is still a substantial focus on culture in LK20.

## 2.4 Previous Research

The research question explores the teacher’s influence and pupils’ experience related to British and American culture in Norwegian upper secondary. To my knowledge, a similar comparison between teachers responses and pupils experience has not been conducted before. However, some research provides valuable information to this question. Cultural competence is a large term, and it is possible to locate an abundance of sources. However, cultural competence is an inclusive term that includes language proficiency, cultural knowledge, communication skills and the individual character of the pupil (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p.219). A few research findings will be presented to keep the focus on culture teaching and learning.

An interesting study among secondary school in Norway and Denmark explored the ability to apply cultural knowledge between female and male genders. They found that Females were likely to possess more intercultural empathy and awareness. However, both genders were equally capable of having intercultural relations, and this contradiction was designated to differences in relational behaviour among the genders. They also discovered that attending a diverse school probably contributed positively to the development of



intercultural competence (Solhaug & Kristensen, 2018). It is relevant for this thesis to know that genders are not a decisive factor related to the ability to have intercultural relations. This conclusion makes it possible to avoid the focus on genders which would have complicated the selection process. The results also indicated that the school setting is a good arena to develop intercultural competence. In Norway and elsewhere, there are variations among how diverse each school is. The research concluded that active encouragement and support from teachers and school leaders is an important factor (Solhaug & Kristensen, 2018).

Another study among two Norwegian 9<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms showed that most of the culture-related content taught in the classrooms were focused on conveying cultural knowledge and mainly connected to the big C culture, which means arts and accomplishments. The research also claimed that working with authentic text provided reflection and interpretation possibilities (Brevik & Rindal, 2020, p.223). This research provides us with information about what teachers actually do in a classroom. Suppose this research is representative of upper secondary as well. In that case, we may expect that the interview with teachers will support this claim by giving examples of working methods that deal with factual information rather than reflection and discussion.

Simon Ravneberg Bilstad researched how American culture is taught in Norwegian lower secondary school. His research provided insight into how teachers tend to favour the role of organiser instead of a lecturer. This research provides a lot of data about the teachers' methods and their consequence on language learning. His MA also shows that teachers differ a lot when it comes to definitions of culture and views on culture's importance (Bilstad, 2019 p.43-44). The results in his MA was interesting and explores the teachers approach thoroughly. Some of the content in Bilstad's thesis has inspired the development of this thesis. This MA complements his thesis in that it deals with similar content, and it will bring new elements that were not within the scope of that research.

Motivation among pupils is vital to learning. Research tells us that individuals will respond better to inner motivation than outer motivation. Outer motivation can even harm the inner motivation (Imsen, 2017, p.301). If Maslov is correct and human being are searching for meaning (Imsen, 2017, p.304), the motivation to understand the world is inherent in every human being. This theory means that pupils in the upper secondary have the potential to make use of inner motivation to engage in the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the development of cultural competence. If teachers can make use of internal motivation, pupils will be more inclined to learn. The pupils may need guidance in order to locate said motivation. This is where making sure that pupils are aware of the benefits becomes essential.

Cultural knowledge is not only important to achieve a good grade in English. It is also essential to understand the world, communicate with other people and develop one's self.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 About Research Methods

A research method is a tool that a researcher utilises to gather data. All research must have a method. In our daily lives, we do not think too much about it. However, we gather data that we utilise all the time unconsciously. An example of this is that when you sit down on a chair. You trust that the chair will support your weight. Every time the chair successfully supports you strengthens your confidence in that chair's ability to function properly. The method that we unconsciously apply could be defined as a form of Popper's trial and error approach (Ringdal, 2013, p.45). It is possible to complicate matters by choosing a different approach to obtain similar results. One could research if someone else has experience with the chair, or it would be possible to examine the chair and calculate how much weight it is able to support. The example illustrates another important point. If one chooses to calculate, it is not only possible to estimate if the chair would support one person but also how much weight the chair could potentially support. This example shows that research is something that we all do at times. When doing academic or scientific research, it is essential to consider our approach and goal to yield valuable results.

Research methods will vary a lot according to what the researcher has chosen to examine. Careful deliberation must be done in order to ensure the quality of the research. Should one choose to do research in physics, that would mean you would examine material or processes which are relatively consistent. Researching an educational field is an entirely different matter (Wellington, 2015, p.4). Examining people individually or in groups collectively has different challenges than examining objects. Ethical and moral issues must be considered when working with people. The research could end up stigmatising individuals or groups of people, leading to negative consequences for those involved. That is not to say that one should not touch complex matters; instead, that there may arise issues that need thorough consideration.

### 3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approach

It is possible to divide the method into smaller components to provide an overview of research methods within the educational field. To some degree, research may be either qualitative or quantitative. These methods are different from each other in many ways.

However, they have the same intention, to provide as informative and accurate data as possible for the researcher. This ideal result is only possible to achieve when the researcher carefully chooses the method according to the goal and accessible information. Within the two categories, there are several different manners of gathering data. The following model illustrates key differences.

<u>Qualitative</u>	<u>Quantitative</u>
Explanation of purpose	Explanation of the cause
Small selection of case	Large representative selection
Close to object of study	Distance to object of study
Natural environment	Artificial environment
Flexible	Structured
Text data	Number data
Informal analysis	Structured analysis

(Translated Ringdal, 2013, p.104). The model shows that there is a great distance between the two. What is important to keep in mind is that it is often not the one or the other, rather, a spectrum where a study leans towards the one or the other. Within this spectrum, it is possible to create numerous different research methods. Examples of some ways are interview, observation, survey, inspection and many more. What approach one chooses to take will depend on the research question and aim of each research project.

Qualitative research has strengths and weaknesses. Qualitative is, as the name implies, connected to the quality of the responses. Opposed to qualitative, we have quantitative, where quantity is the most closely related term. Quality does not only refer to the preciseness and level of honesty in the data. It also refers to the thoroughness and detail of the research. Such a study should provide responses that not only answer questions but also elaborates on the details, provide an overview or explain reasons for the provided responses. This approach functions well to examine a purpose, as listed in the model. Cause and effect is an explanation of an action. The actor initiates an action that leads to some result, and qualitative research is well structured to investigate details about the actor's purpose and the reasoning behind an action. The production of qualitative data is a more dynamic process where one can be flexible and change perspective or area of focus in the process. Should there come up something interesting during an observation or interview, it is possible to direct attention to that specific element. In turn, the data most often comes out as text. To analyse these texts and locate important data may lead to the development of deep knowledge.

On the other hand, a qualitative approach is an extensive study of a small number of cases or objects. This vulnerability has some issues related to how certain the result could be replicated in other cases. When working with people, it is impossible to consider all surrounding factors. This means that research needs to define which parameters are being observed and recognise that other parameters may influence the result. Therefore, the result may not be directly transferable to other settings. With a low number of respondents, there are possibilities of questions being misinterpreted or replies being misunderstood by the researcher. The low number of respondents leaves each individual answer with a lot of influence. In turn, this may lead to the study being inaccurate or even misleading. The investigation is also vulnerable to elaborating on irrelevant material. The amount of content may leave the analyst unable to see the forest for the trees, as the saying goes. It is possible not to get a good overview because one is too occupied with a few elements.

A quantitative approach is when the number of respondents is more beneficial than thorough elaborations. It is relatively common to participate in such research in our daily lives. When you are being asked to share your level of satisfaction with a product or company, you are taking part in a quantitative research project. Such a study has the advantage of generating a great number of responses more quickly than its counterpart. The responses are also relatively bound to the questions asked. These reasons mean that well-directed and well-formulated question will likely yield valuable responses. They will probably be honest and accurate without extensive information about the reason for the responses. Also, the data is often quantified, which makes it easier to create statistics and comparisons. By gathering large amounts of data, it becomes more likely that the result will remain relatively consistent if one chooses to include more respondents. Of course, given that the parameters and conditions remain similar.

One of the impediments with the quantitative research approach is that it provides limited information with little additional knowledge. This makes it necessary to have an understanding of precisely what one wants to know. The respondents are also, to a large degree, unable to explain what they exactly mean. To investigate details and nuances is therefore difficult. It is also a potential problem that one has little control over who participates and their honesty. In some cases, people may respond to obtain some reward, and sometimes people will abstain from participating because they are unmotivated. The lack of control could lead the research to be influenced by participants that should not have responded.

### 3.3 The Interview

The decision to do interviews with teachers was founded upon a thorough consideration of different factors. The research question, in its formulation, suggests that there are two sides to the issue. It would have been impossible to claim that the teacher influence pupils with credibility unless both sides were examined. To gain an understanding of a teacher, one is dependent on a lot of information. This information should be able almost to provide a visual impression of what the teacher does in the classroom. There is, of course, nothing that beats an observation if one wants to know what the teacher does in a classroom. However, It was also necessary to know what teachers think related to culture. In order to gain an impression of the thoughts of someone, it is necessary to communicate with them. Ideally, it would have been possible to do observation, interview with teachers, and interview with students. I reckoned that this would consume too much time, and the research would deal with too many elements. The Covid 19 pandemic complicated the matter by limiting access to information and respondents. These factors were considered and led to the chosen methods.

In order to do the elements justice, I prioritised what information I needed to acquire. What I needed to obtain was information about the teachers' motivation, approaches and beliefs. These elements were crucial because they directly connected to the possible influence of teachers. The beliefs were probably more important due to the possibility of discovering correlation with their respective pupils. Based on this evaluation, I saw no other option than actually interviewing teachers through either written or oral communication. I decided that an oral Interview would be more appropriate because it would be possible to elaborate on important subjects spontaneously. In addition, it was necessary to ensure similar questions to each teacher to facilitate comparison.

A semi-structured interview was able to accommodate both of these needs. A semi-structured interview provides a lot of control to the interviewer. It is also flexible and not predetermined (Wellington, 2015, p.142). This means that the interviewer has to pay attention and make sure that important content is being addressed and ambiguity is clarified. At the same time, it is inclusive of elements that may broaden the understanding of a subject. The teachers were handed the questions ahead of the actual interview. This action provided the teachers with an opportunity to include content that they thought were relevant. Their preparation ensured clear and rapid responses to questions, which in turn provided well formulated and concise transcripts.

The questions were categorised and consisted of some open-ended questions and some closed questions. Follow up questions were created to accompany most of the closed

questions. The categories were as follows: initial information, motivational aspects, importance of cultural knowledge, didactical approaches, and evaluation. Each of these categories consisted of at least three questions, although the didactical approaches section received a lot of attention. The questions were constructed with a probing mentality, as explained by Wellington. I tried to avoid his examples of undesirable questions (Wellington, 2015, p.146-147). However, the need to investigate specific subjects and ask for teachers' subjective opinions made the questions unable to reach their full potential of the open-ended and un-leading character. Instead, the questions provided relevant and comparable responses.

All teachers agreed to be recorded, which made the interview easier to conduct. A recording situation allows the interviewer to concentrate and maintain eye contact with the interviewee, the transcript preserves the actual language, and some people may even be flattered. On the other side, the amount of data may be troublesome to deal with, and the transcription process is time-consuming. Some may also experience anxiety by the recording situation (Wellington, 2015, p.153). Nevertheless, the teachers responded well to the recording situation. The equipment was professional, and this was probably motivating for the interviewee. There were no problems with the equipment, and the conversation progressed at a steady pace. Some teacher had more to say than other which is only natural. This variation is recognisable in the transcripts. When teachers were unsure what the questions were, they got explained in more detail. This variation is visible in the transcripts.

An issue with an interview is the worry of self-representation. It is likely that professionally, people prefer to present themselves in the best way possible. People are especially self-conscious when they are examined. Because an interview is an examination, there is a possibility that the interviewee present best practice instead of representative content. An example of this may be if one ask someone to disclose what they do before asking them what they think is best to do. If the two answers do not align in any way, there is a possibility that the respondent will provide an answer to the second question that is more in line with the first. Such an action will make the interviewee look good instead of indirectly admitting that one does not actually do what one believes is the best.

The questions are categorised according to what they address. Following each explanation comes the responses from teachers. Any follow-up questions were presented within the answer of each teacher. This ensured that the responses are as accurate as possible. The treatment of the interview is based on content analysis. This approach deals with the nature of spoken language and is concerned with the content of words, phrases and themes

(Keats, 1999, p.80). This approach will treat replies in an orderly fashion as well as present differences between responses.

### 3.4 The Questionnaire

There were also several possibilities on how to investigate the pupils' perceptions. An interview with all the pupils could have been conducted. This would have demanded a significant amount of time, and it would probably influence the analysis negatively. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic limited the access to meet too many people. Even interviewing a small group of students would have to be conducted online to be in line with the government's recommendation. These elements made it necessary to find better ways of accessing information. A secure and effective way to gather a lot of data was doing a survey among the student through Survey X-act. This would be possible to do even if the students were home schooled at the time of data-gathering. This was a major upside because one did not have to fear any restriction in the future.

A survey is a form of quantitative research. As mentioned earlier, this has some distinct advantages and disadvantages connected to it. In this instance, the benefit is that it is possible to obtain information from most pupils in a class. Each individual pupil will probably experience the teacher differently, and in order to gain the most accurate impression, it is beneficial to get several responses. On the other hand, it is only possible to obtain a superficial understanding of the subjective opinions through a questionnaire. A more qualitative approach would have been able to elaborate in much greater detail what each response entailed. The construction of the questionnaire is of vital importance in order to acquire the necessary information. It is possible to create a great number of different questionnaires. What information one seeks will determine what decisions to make.

This MA investigates the influence of teachers, and in order to show any influence, there must be similarities among the content investigated. That is the reason that the interview topics align with the questions in the questionnaire. Some questions may be connected to more than one topic. Because it is plausible that a pupil may hold an opinion based on more than one justification, it is difficult to single out responses that perfectly align with interview questions. Each question was revised and evaluated in order to make sure that they remain within the boundaries of the MA.

Several factors were considered in the development of the questionnaire. A questionnaire is able to answer questions concerned with what, how, where and when. It is not equally capable of dealing with why something happens (Bell, 1993, p.9). Taking this into consideration, it makes sense to conduct a questionnaire. It is necessary to know what and

how students experience their teachers to understand what influence the teacher has. The sampling consisted of entire classes, which mandated that the questions had to be understandable for all levels of English proficiency. To account for this, teachers conducted the interview in school. Pupils were able to ask for help during the questionnaire, and all pupils were able to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was created on a multiple-choice approach. The multiple-choice allows for pupils to support more than one claim and enables the possibility of providing more than one justification. A more binary or closed questionnaire would possibly create less diversity or ambiguity. However, some questions would struggle to show the complexity and multitude of factors that justify the pupils' opinions. A multiple-choice allows for the uncertainty of pupils to manifest as somewhere between this and that response. This provides additional information to the researcher as to what degree pupils are certain with their response. If one has more answers between two responses than there are students, there is uncertainty around the pupils' decision. This would mean that the average response would probably place itself between these two. If most pupils tend toward one or the other, it is likely that this will be more visible in a multiple-choice than a binary questionnaire.

The questionnaire responses will be presented in the same categories as the interviews. Each question will be explained further in order to provide a better understanding of what is examined. The responses are coded with letters according to their respective teacher. This means that teacher A is responsible for class A.

### 3.5 Reliability and Validity

The research provided in this thesis was conducted at three different schools in the southern part of Norway. These classes are distributed between vocational and general studies at the upper secondary level. There is little reason to suspect that the results, in general, will vary significantly with an increased number of cases. The results show that there are relatively consistent responses from pupils and teachers. However, the selection of three classes is small compared to the total number of classes and teachers in Norway. This fact means that the results must be considered accordingly. It is not possible to claim that the results are generally certain at any level. The data provide insight into the three cases examined and have some factors that may vary. Such factors are the teacher's interest and belief about cultural teaching and importance, The pupils' motivation and preferences, as well as the conduct of teachers in the classroom.



Gathering and analysing data have been done with a desire to remain as objective and neutral as possible. This intention means that inquiries were presented similarly to all respondents. Processing the data has been done to derive valuable information without criticising the respondents unnecessarily. The informants were anonymised to enable them to provide an honest reply rather than create a good impression. These factors attest to the reliability of the research. There are reasons to suspect that details in the research would be different if one had increased the number of cases. However, the results are reliable for the cases included and meant to show teachers that they influence pupils. The degree and manner of influence may certainly vary, but the phenomenon is probably present in all classes. As such, it is impossible to claim that the same inquiries would not yield different responses in other cases. However, the conclusion that teachers influence pupils will almost certainly remain consistent.

The results represent three cases of many. This context means that any generalisation must consider factors that could influence the results. There are some differences between each teacher in this research, and one must assume that new and different thoughts would be included on a larger scale. However, the research and conclusion are intended to show that teachers should be aware of their class's characteristic. Such an attitude would benefit the pupils because one can make use of interest as well as make sure to convey what one desires. This thought is valid for all teachers in Norway. The research provides detailed information about the teachers' thoughts and motifs. Unfortunately, the research failed to provide a control group to the element of teacher's special interest. The impact this has on the pupils remains unknown as all teachers in this research had a similar interest in this particular subject.

There is no reason to believe that teachers would lie during the interview because they are anonymised in the research. The pupils had no incentive to lie because they were anonymised throughout the survey. In fact, the pupils were presented with the notion that their honest response could benefit their learning. These two factors mean that the data should be considered an accurate depiction of subjective opinions. It is important to be aware that the semantic interpretations and the evaluations of responses may be disputed. This insecurity means that there could be elements of the analysis that are more or less certain.

## 4.0 Discussion of Findings

This chapter uses data from interviews and questionnaires in their respective sections to present findings systematically and orderly. The three teachers will be treated collectively in order to locate similarities and differences more easily. The structure of the presentation is based on the categories of the interview. All of these deal with areas of influence in some way. The questionnaire will be presented under the same headings as the interviews, although the questions do not always perfectly relate to the same category. The questions in the questionnaire may correlate to several categories simultaneously. However, the different elements have been included where they relate the most. First of all, Initially, I want to present three surprises that the research showed.

1. The first unexpected discovery was that the terms culture and cultural competence should prove quite difficult to define (check Appendix A.1.). The fact that the teacher found this difficult was recognisable by the replies from their pupils (check Appendix B.1.). This may have many different causes. However, some may be connected to the way culture is being taught in the classroom. This observation caught me by surprise because it is an important part of understanding the curriculum.
2. I was surprised to find that the pupils, in general, seemed to have some doubt and misconceptions in which areas their teacher was interested (check Appendix B.1.). I believe this is a recognition for the teachers, that all of them are able to treat all parts of English with a similar engagement and enthusiasm.
3. The third surprise was that all pupils were more aware of the value of cultural knowledge than what was expected (check Appendix B.1.). They appreciated cultural education and recognised that the need for a critical approach to information was relatively important (check Appendix B.3.). This was a relief because it means that the teachers have a great potential that they can utilize in their pupils' best interest.

### 4.1 Interviews

4.1.1 Initial questions: The interviews started with general questions about the teachers. The size of their classes and which other subjects they teach is relevant because it provides different possibilities related to cross-curricular activities (check Appendix A.1.). The size of their class will also provide benefits and challenges related to didactical decisions. These elements are worth keeping in mind. For now, it is enough to note that two out of three

were teaching additional language subjects. The following question was aimed at terminology.

All teacher attempted to provide an explanation of the two terms: culture and cultural competence. The culture term was defined in different ways, and they all pointed towards society and history. Teacher A provided a simple explanation that includes both little c and big c culture by suggesting that culture is man-made (check Appendix A.1.). This explanation is probably easy for pupils to remember. The other teachers were a bit vague in their response, and they did not mention elements within the big c category (check Appendix A.1.). The fact that this term is hard to define in an interview is not surprising, and it is possible that, given time, teachers would be able to formulate a clearer and more concise definition of this term.

Cultural competence proved even more difficult to define. None of the teachers pointed directly towards the practical aspect of cultural competence. Instead, teacher A and B seemed to draw on cultural knowledge characteristics. Teacher C initially provided little explanation of the term. However, immediately afterwards, the teacher started to talk about practical aspects, explaining that pupils should understand differences between cultures and position themselves in an objective position (check Appendix A.1.). This shows that teacher C works with culture with a focus on cultural competence. When looking back at our definition of cultural competence, there is a great difference from the respondents' answers. However, teacher C is probably closest to having a similar understanding.

The differences between cultural competence and cultural knowledge have been explained in the theory section, and it is interesting to see that teacher A focus more on cultural knowledge and is convinced that the pupils are aware of the interest in culture. In comparison, teacher B wants to develop cultural competence but is unsure whether pupils have noticed that this is a point of particular interest. On the other hand, teacher C is fairly confident that students have noticed that culture is an interest and want the students to develop cultural competence (check Appendix A.1.). Before looking at what the questionnaire show, we can suspect that interests are not necessarily something that pupils notice. Equally interesting is the relationship between the conscious and unconscious influence of teachers. It seems like teacher A and C has an intent to show increased interest to cultural elements. Teacher B, it seems, has a more unconscious approach to culture teaching.

**4.1.2 Motivational aspects:** The teachers were then asked about their personal area of interest. Teacher A and C mentioned that they have a passion for literature. They also seemed to agree that reading was something that pupils had to make time for outside of school as

well. Teacher B was interested in vocational subjects related to healthcare, childhood and youth development in upper secondary (check Appendix A.2.).

All teachers mentioned that they are interested in culture in some way. Teacher A has an interest in the UK in general because of relations and previous visits. Teacher B stated an interest in culture on a national level and claimed that this was important for understanding contemporary issues. Teacher C was interested in social issues in general and contemporary issues especially. There are some significant differences between all of these. This was followed up by asking if the teachers were confident that their pupils had noticed the interest. Teacher A and C were fairly confident, while teacher B was unsure if the pupils had noticed the interest in culture. This must be viewed along with the goals of each teacher. Teacher A claims to focus on typical British and typical American and how that is reflected in their respective societies. This may be viewed as more stereotypical culture teaching than what teacher B and C presented. Teacher B and C have more focus on cultural competence by comparing and contrasting cultures and evaluate different opinions (check Appendix A.2.).

Another question addresses if the teachers believe that their students appreciate the ability to understand British and American culture. This told us something about how well they knew their classes and how perceptive they were to pupils perception. All teachers were a little insecure. Teacher C was fairly confident and claimed that it was rare to come across pupils with overt reluctance towards culture. Teacher C, and to some degree B, brings attention to the level of language proficiency required to learn about complex issues. It is also stressed by teacher C that pupils do not lack interest. Rather they realise that the complexity is hard to handle with the level of language proficiency they possess. Teacher B provides another interesting aspect which is that the level of maturity may influence how serious the pupils will treat the subject (check Appendix A.2.). Language proficiency is, of course, a major factor in the learning of cultural knowledge. Maturity is an important aspect as well, and this is something that has been considered in the development of the competence aims, as we have discussed earlier.

**4.1.3 Importance of Cultural Knowledge:** The teachers support much of the argument for teaching culture. They recognise that it is used to understand foreign cultures, people and points of view. They also point towards personal development, and teacher C provides examples of pupils that take positions based on superficial knowledge about issues. There seems to be no lack of reasons to teach culture among the three teachers, and it will be interesting to see if this is something that the students are aware of. If students are motivated,

they are more inclined to engage in the learning process. Being aware of the positive consequences of having a high level of cultural knowledge may be one way to motivate pupils. Teacher C provided a rich and informative response to the question, and it seems like this teacher has given the question a lot of thought. There may be a possibility that the pupils in class C are more aware of what benefits cultural knowledge may have (check Appendix A.2.).

All teachers work with contemporary issues (check Appendix A.3.). However, teacher B admits that it could have been given more emphasis. Issues that this teacher faces is that it would take time to do and that this is difficult to prioritise within the framework of LK20. According to this teacher, culture has lost focus compared to LK06. As we have seen, there are some minor differences in the curriculum. However, in the competence aims, there has been a relatively major decrease in cultural elements. Because the curriculum is currently being implemented, they are new and unfamiliar. Teacher B is fairly new to the profession and was being educated to teach the LK06. By just looking at the competence aims, one would agree that culture has suffered in the new curriculum. This may explain some of the perceptions of this teacher. Teacher A exemplifies a dedicated culture assignment while teacher C presents a cross-curricular assignment that goes on for a couple of weeks. Whether this has an impact on pupils' perceptions about the prominence of culture teaching, will be interesting to see.

The last questions within this category were related to fake news and sources (check Appendix A.3.). Teacher A admits that teaching culture is important but not necessarily more important. This teacher has earlier stated that sources have not received too much focus. Regarding what is being taught about sources (check Appendix A.3.), it becomes clear that the pupils have learned about sources that have different agendas. Teacher A has not mentioned Wikipedia explicitly. However, the assumption is that the students have understood that Wikipedia is a more serious actor than before and that it is usable, but they should try to locate other sources as well. Teacher B and C have similar answers that cultural education has become more important. Both have worked extensively with sources. However, there is a great distance between them related to Wikipedia. Teacher B argues that this site should be a last resort based on the fact that everyone can add content. Teacher C teaches the pupils that Wikipedia, sometimes contrary to their belief, is okay to use and that the site has become more trustworthy over time. Due to moderators and flagging of disputed information. The fact that the teachers have different views related to Wikipedia is probably visible in the

questionnaire data. If this is the case, this is a testament to the conscious transfer of knowledge.

4.1.4 **Didactical Approaches:** Naturally, all teachers were a bit unfamiliar with LK20, and they were currently working to become accustomed to it (check Appendix A.4.). Teacher B seemed to be the least confident of the three because of few years of experience as a teacher. With this in mind, it is important to note that impression changes over time and with experience. Thus, it is possible that the teacher will have a different view of the curriculum after becoming more acquainted with it. The teachers disagree on whether the focus on culture should be increased or not. Teacher A thinks that the current level is satisfactory. Teacher C agrees to this and claims that the LK20 is freer, and the teacher is more able to decide what to teach. Teacher B claims that there should be more focus on culture. It is likely that this teacher is referring to the competence aims, which certainly has reduced the cultural aspects. The different parts of the curriculum exist not in a vacuum, rather as a collective entity that must be treated as a whole. Teacher B addresses an important issue in that it is a danger that the competence aims govern too much, making the culture part less important.

The teachers also differ when it comes to didactical decisions (check Appendix A.4.). The main area of interest of this section is to gain an impression of what each teacher does in the classroom. There is a possibility that their pupils have different perceptions. If this is the case, it is valuable to know about it in order to reflect on whether an activity or work form has been used too much or too little. It is hard to make any definite claims without having exact data on teaching over time, but it will be interesting to see if what the teachers brought into the conversation is recognisable in the questionnaire among pupils.

All teachers differ a bit in what they do in the classroom (check Appendix A.4.). All of them seem to focus on engaging the pupils. Teacher A refers to the development conversation with pupils and believes that they appreciate not being lectured too much. The individual differences between pupils are also brought up. It seems like Teacher A has a strong correlation between exercises and beliefs about what is most beneficial for the class. Teacher B tells us that watching movies, answering questions and writing a discussion are examples of this person's teaching. There seems to be some distance between these examples and what the teacher believes the pupils benefit the most from. Teacher C also seems to have a strong connection between practice and conviction about pupils benefit. It is important to note that the teachers were asked to provide examples and not a full description. There are almost certainly more activities in a class than what the teacher was able to provide on the spot.

Without implying relevance for any of the teachers in this interview, it is important to remember that there may be a worry of self-representation when asking questions like these.

The responses to what is most challenging when it comes to culture teaching were also interesting (check Appendix A.4.). Teacher A admits that it is challenging to stay up to date and find relevant sources and material. Teacher B thinks that it is difficult to motivate pupils in addition to a varying degree of maturity in the class. Teacher C Believes it is a challenge with different level of maturity is the most challenging. That multiculturalism is able to create some challenge was also mentioned by this teacher. It is obviously true that having pupils being part of a culture that one investigate may have complications. However, The role of the teacher is not to form pupils opinions, rather to help pupils form their own opinions.

**4.1.5 Evaluation:** All teachers agree that English is a language subject, and as such, language should be integrated to test and measurement (check Appendix A.5.). Teacher A and C claim that it is possible to test cultural knowledge independently. Although, they stress that there should be a language component, either to make the most of the exercise or to comply with the mandate of the subject curriculum. Teacher B believes that the English subject should contain a language element as well, but suggest that it would be easier to conduct such a test in social science. When looking at the competence aims, these positions seem appropriate. The aims are not connected to cultural knowledge alone, rather a composition of knowledge, general language proficiency and communication skills.

The teachers all operate on an overall assessment which may include elements such as structure, language and content (check Appendix A.5.). The content factor would include cultural knowledge and other content. This is possible to apply in both written and oral work. In relation to feedback, there is also similar attitudes. All teachers provide written and oral feedback depending on the situation. What is interesting about this is that the teachers generally claims that cultural knowledge is probably less important related to a written exam. Teacher B is unsure because of little experience. The two other teacher claims that in an oral exam, cultural knowledge would be important. Teachers are influencing the oral exam more so than the written exam. This is to make sure that pupils do not receive questions that they have not been taught. The written exam has been presented with some examples to teacher C, and these seem to suggest that vocational subjects have even less focus on culture than general studies. This is an interesting discussion that should be had in another arena. If culture is recognised as an important element in the English subject, should it not be an important part of an exam?

## 4.2 Questionnaire

**4.2.1 Initial information:** The questionnaires are dealing with content that not necessarily is connected solely to one interview questions. However, they have been placed in the categories where they have a strong connection. There is no time to go through all questions in detail. Thus, some responses will receive more attention than others. First of all, we have the number of respondents (check Appendix B.1.). Class A has 23 respondents in total. Class B has 14 respondents, and class C has 25 respondents. This means that class B is a bit more dependant on each individual answer. However, almost every pupil decided to participate, which makes it likely that we should get a fairly accurate description of the pupils subjective opinions. The first question was directed towards cultural knowledge. The answer that is mostly connected to culture in the definition of this thesis is point number 1, 4 and 7. The other possible answer is more connected to cultural competence. Knowledge about history is being recognised by the students as a part of cultural knowledge. Over 60 per cent of all pupils make this claim. Another important thing to notice is that pupils do not separate between cultural knowledge and competence aim as much as one probably would expect.

Directly connected to the special interest of teachers, a question was asked to the pupils (check Appendix B.1.). A lot of interesting trends can be read from this data. Teacher A and B are characterised as being very interested in grammar, while only one pupil answered that teacher C was especially interested in grammar. Teacher B was not perceived to be particularly interested in culture, while teacher A and C was perceived as being interested in both culture and history. As history is a part of culture, this makes sense.

**4.2.2 Motivational aspects:** The first question in this category is related to what contemporary issues pupils are interested in (check Appendix B.2.). Especially class B was interested in fewer items per pupil.

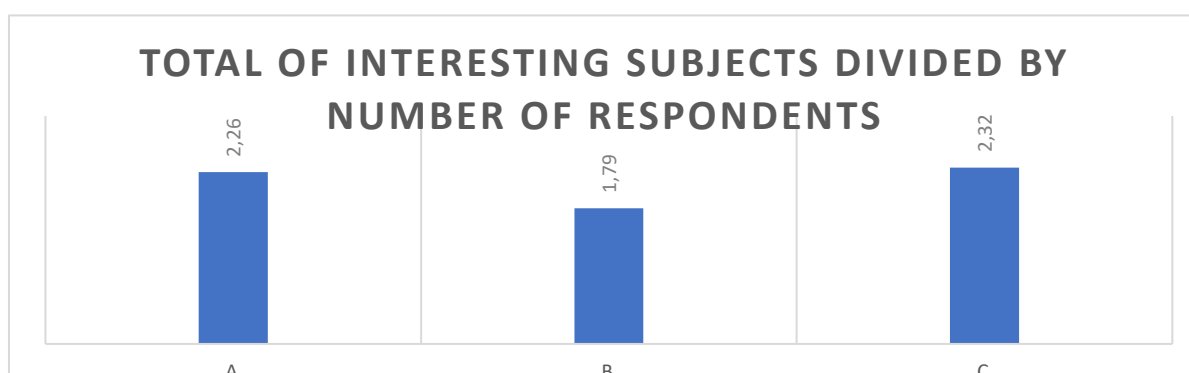


Figure 1: ‘Number of interesting elements per-pupil’



This means that across the class, there is less interest in contemporary issues in class B. This includes covid 19 and climate change that are two issues that pupils clearly care about. These items are more or less international issues that are not solely connected to British and American culture. Even if these elements are removed, there are still interests in many cultural issues in all of the classes.

Investigation of information at school was another area where there were different results (check Appendix B.2.). Class A and B have roughly similar approaches to checking sources at school. Class C, on the other hand, seems to check information in fewer ways than the other two. 20 per cent even claims that they do not check sources as long as they find what they are looking for.

Pupils were also asked which part of the English subject they liked the best (check Appendix B.2.). Culture and history were the most frequent responses in all classes. Class A and C holds oral skills in a clear third place. In class B, Oral skills are actually in the last place. There may be a number of reasons why there is such a difference. Each class is individual, and the dynamics may be that pupils in class B may not like to speak out loud. The pupils may be unconfident in their ability to speak. Pupils may even be afraid of making a fool of themselves. There is also a possibility that the pupils experience oral activities as stressful. Either from evaluation or expectational situations. What the reason is impossible to conclude on with the limited information of this research. However, it seems like pupils of class B do not associate oral skills with fun or pleasure.

**4.2.3 Importance of cultural knowledge:** All classes basically agree that the current focus on culture, that they experience is satisfactory (check Appendix B.3.). However, they have different appreciations of cultural knowledge. Class A trends toward culture being a little important. Class B is basically settled that culture is important, While class C clearly trend towards culture being very important. Why there is a relatively large difference between the classes is not explainable by looking at how many different applications of cultural knowledge each class provides because those numbers are quite similar. If anything, class C is less aware of the practical application of cultural knowledge. In other words, how many

different ways do the pupils investigate information in school-related activities?

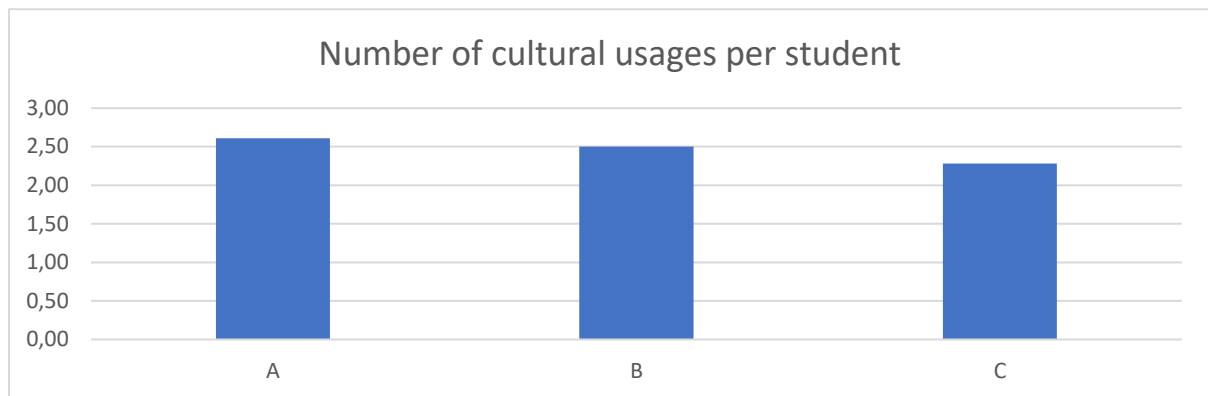


Figure 2: ‘Number of cultural usages per-pupil’

When looking at how much the pupils research information on social media (check Appendix B.3.), there seem to be no significant differences between the classes. The typical answer was that the pupils sometimes engage in this activity, and only one claimed not to read any news, headlines or factual information on social media. Together with the fact that people spend more time on the internet, an argument can be made that social media is becoming a large supplier of information. Fake news is a challenge in modern society, and the pupils were able to distinguish between fake news and biased information in all classes (check Appendix B.1.). That the pupils are able to distinguish these elements is important, and it seems like pupils have understood that some news is created to mislead people.

The Question about Wikipedia was created as a response to the interviews (check Appendix B.1.). Class A and B have very similarly dissenting responses, while class C has a very clear impression.

**4.2.4 Didactical Approaches:** What actually goes on in the classrooms was examined by asking the pupils how they work with culture (check Appendix B.4.). Class A answered reading most frequently, otherwise very balanced among the possible answers. Class B has pretty much the same pattern but is even more settled on reading as being the most prominent way of working with British and American culture. Class C is very different from the two other classes and seems to be balanced between lecture, reading, writing and movies. The following question provides context to the previous result because it shows that pupils in class B think that reading is the activity that they learn third-best from (check Appendix B.4.). If one neglects movies in this category, it seems relatively desirable to read in class A and B. If pupils learn as much as they claim from watching movies, there is a great potential for

teaching culture with the use of movies. Class C also value lecture significantly higher than the other two other classes.

**4.2.5 Evaluation:** The students were also asked to provide their opinion on what they believed to be the most important (check Appendix B.5.). These answers were quite interesting. There are some differences between the classes. The way a pupil decides what is important is most likely by evaluating what the teacher is most concerned with, what they spend the most time on, what do they comment most and similar factors. There is another way for the pupils to make a decision about this. They could evaluate the curriculum and come to a conclusion. However, it is doubtful that this is what the responses are primarily based upon. First, all classes have a relatively even distribution of replies between the different categories. Class A has one category that is not deemed very important, which is literature. They also believe that oral skills are by far the most important for English. Class B replies that grammar is the most important, however not by too much, and both writing and history follows quite close. Class C has rated oral skills quite high, followed closely by writing and grammar. Literature is also placed quite high, compared to the other classes. However, all of the classes agree that literature is the least important part of English.

### 4.3 Comparison

Now that we have an overview of what the research tells us, it is time to look at what the two sets of data tell us about the teachers' influence. We will use the same categories as a framework. However, sometimes there is a need to bring in data from other categories to complement the comparison. Influence is an abstract phenomenon and hard to pin down to a cause and effect relationship. However, this comparison will suggest and argue that there is reason to suspect relations between two items.

**4.3.1 Initial information:** First of all, although it is not directly connected to the influence of teachers, it is important to note that the number of pupils in a class may have an influence on the class environment. A large class like A and C has some advantages and disadvantages compared to a smaller class like class B (check Appendix A.1.). The interaction between the teacher and each individual pupil is obviously easier to facilitate with fewer students. On the other hand, some pupils may prefer to be able to have a relatively peaceful surrounding without too much interference from the teacher or other classmates. When the pupils reply that they do not appreciate presentations very much (check Appendix B.4.), this may have a number of reasons. For one, there could be a fear of classmates. In a small class,

there could be a negative consequence of feeling very visible. In a large class, there could be fear connected to the big audience. Secondly, there could be a fear of being evaluated in an uncomfortable position. The teacher is responsible for creating a safe and good learning environment for all. However, a class consist of individuals whom the data tells us too little about. It is important to keep in mind that we do not have enough insight to make any definite claims as to why the pupils respond as they do. What we are talking about in this essay is signs of influence by the teacher on pupils, not a verdict on what each teacher is doing correct or wrong.

When asking the pupils to define the term culture (check Appendix B.1.), the main goal was to look at similarities in the responses of each class and their respective teachers. However, an issue with finding similarities is that the teachers of this study had a relatively vague definition of the term culture (check Appendix A.2.). Having pupils select some propositions to create a definition may have caused elements that the pupils not necessarily would have come up with by themselves to be included in their reply. However, teachers A and C seem to have a broader definition of the term culture and have classes that coincide with this view. Class B has a more narrow definition of the term culture in that it doesn't include all of the possible replies. Teacher B does also have a more narrow definition in that it seems to be concerned with contemporary situation and not history. Nevertheless, that all teachers find it difficult to provide an exact definition may be the reason why pupils seem to find it difficult as well. Terminology is a matter that may be taught explicitly. This may be a good idea to do in order to make sure that pupils know more exactly what they are working with.

**4.3.2 Motivational Aspects:** When a person decides to become a teacher, there may be different factors that are considered. Some may become a teacher because they want to work with something they find interesting. This research shows that it is likely that teachers in English have at least one field of interest within the subject (check Appendix A.1.). This interest may be expressed explicitly, and it may be perceived by implicit behaviour. This study shows that teachers have an accurate perception of how they are perceived by their students (check Appendix B.1.). Teacher B was doubtful towards her interest being perceived which proved to be justified. A factor that is necessary to consider is that there may be a different distribution of themes throughout the school year among the classes. It is considerably more difficult to perceive someone's interest if one has not experienced how the person deals with that particular subject.

The teachers believe that teaching culture is important (check Appendix A.2.). When looking at the semantic content of the replies, it is possible to argue that teacher A and C believes that culture is a bit more important than teacher B. The pupils were asked to value cultural knowledge for them at the moment and in the future (check Appendix B.2.). Replies from class B and C seem to follow this pattern. Teacher A seems to value culture more than the respective pupils do. Why this is the case is hard to conclude. A subjective opinion is established by each pupil, and this is what we see in their response. What they use to form this opinion may be both implicit and explicit. The data provided in this research is not enough to provide a definite answer. What is interesting is that the pupils in class B think that the teacher has a special interest in culture (check Appendix A.1.). However, this is apparently not interpreted to mean that culture is important for the English subject. This means that the pupils not necessarily perceive and internalise their teacher's opinions related to the subject. However, it seems to be the case with the other two classes.

There may have been an explicit and implicit transfer of this view in the classroom. The amount of time spent on the matter may be one such implicit exchange. The teacher may also have expressed their view explicitly. It is wise to show restraint when trying to explain the results because the data is limited. It is not clear exactly how each teacher has handled cultural teaching in their classroom. However, there seem to be similarities between teachers and pupils in their responses. Therefore it is probable that teacher has influenced and informed their pupils. Some to a larger degree than others. Why class A to a less degree, value culture knowledge is difficult to say. However, when everything a teacher say and do in a classroom is being perceived, it is hard to control what each pupil observe and internalise.

Fake news and conspiracy are not a phenomenon of contemporary society. However, the exchange of information has increased the risk of being exposed to said content. The study shows that pupils in general, have a correct and precise terminology of fake news (check Appendix B.1.). The teachers were not asked to provide an explanation for this term. However, all teacher agreed that cultural education was important in order to face the challenges posed by fake news and conspiracy theories (check Appendix A.2.). It seems like teacher C was more engaged in this particular matter, compared to teacher B and C. These differences is possibly visible in the pupils' response to how often they investigate information that they are exposed to on social media. There seems to be some difference between class A and the other two. Teacher C explains that when pupils bring information to a discussion, they are asked about where this was located, what data it is built upon and so on. Related to the Bildung aspect of English, this is certainly important. The pupils will

eventually become independent and responsible for their own opinion. Therefore it is crucial to be aware of what one uses to create one's own view and positions. The pupils seem to agree that cultural knowledge is important for them now and in the future, which means that they are to some degree motivated (check Appendix B.2.).

**4.3.3 Importance of cultural knowledge:** There seems to be a correlation between the teachers view on the importance of culture teaching and the subjective attitudes of pupils (check Appendix A.2. and B.3). The semantic content in the words of teacher A is, in my opinion, the most restrained appreciation of cultural knowledge. This may be one factor that explains why the pupils in this class appreciate cultural knowledge a bit less than the other classes. Simultaneously it is arguably the case that teacher C is the most supportive of cultural knowledge as a crucial element in each pupils life. Teacher B is semantically somewhere in between the two others, as is the pupils in class B as well. Although one must assume that more factors influence these result, there seems to be a correlation between the two responses. This is worth mentioning because it provides justification to the research question of this thesis. If teachers believe that culture is important, then pupils will likely experience culture teaching as valuable. This shows that it is likely that teacher in some way influence the pupils' perception. However, more extensive research should be done in order to make the claim that this is the case throughout the entire school system. However, we have an indication that provides grounds for an investigation of the phenomenon.

For something to be perceived as subjectively important, it must be relevant or influential to the person experiencing the matter at hand. The data shows that the pupils are interested in cultural matters in the UK and USA (check Appendix B.2.). All classes claim to be interested in issues like BLM and climate change, as well as politics and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. All teachers do, to some degree, recognise that their pupils are engaged in these matters (check Appendix A.2.). Teacher C has made the observation that some pupils take a position based on limited and one-sided information that they are presented on social media and similar sites. This is an argument to the importance of culture teaching in general and an important one as such. The data clearly shows that pupils are not living in a vacuum. They are exposed to information that they do not all possess enough skills to deal with in a responsible and critical way (check Appendix B.2 and B.3.). However, the variation between pupils and teacher seems to be a bit random and dependant on individual differences between the pupils more than the views of their teachers (check Appendix A.3.). By the semantic content, one should assume that the pupils in class C were more engaged in contemporary

issues. However, the distribution of interest within each class does not reflect this to a degree of significance.

All pupils seem to be content with the focus on culture in their respective classes (check Appendix B.3.). Although teacher B admits that there should be more focus on culture, the class disagrees to some extent (check Appendix A.4.). Teacher A and C seem content with the focus on culture in their teaching and is thus in line with their classes. More data would have been desirable to evaluate how different the culture teaching is in each class. Regardless, one can make a few observations from the data. It seems like all pupils, to a large degree, are satisfied with the teacher's practice. This level of satisfaction shows that the teachers balance their teaching in a way that makes pupils satisfied. This means that all the teachers have a good intuition about how to conduct their teaching.

The investigation of approaches and beliefs about fake news and sources was added to the investigation based on the first interview that made this seem like an interesting aspect. Because the teaching on the use of sources is prone to be explicit, there is probably a strong correlation between what the teacher believes and the pupils' perception. The teachers have different approaches to the teaching of sources (check Appendix A.3.). Teacher A admits that Wikipedia has not been dealt with explicitly (check Appendix A.3.). Therefore it is hard to analyse why the teacher is more favourable towards Wikipedia than the respective pupils of class A (check Appendix B.1.). Teacher B has a restrictive attitude towards the use of Wikipedia. The pupils seem to have perceived this attitude. However, they are relatively scattered between avoiding and using with caution. A possible explanation for this is that explicit teaching alone is not the only factor that pupils perceive. It is also possible that explicit teaching is interpreted in different ways. Teacher C has a liberal view of Wikipedia and argues that the site has improved over time to become more reliable. The pupils in this class seem to have a very accurate perception of the teacher's view. The data seem to support the claim that explicit teaching has the potential of creating less varied perception among pupils. However, explicit teaching does not seem to be the only factor when establishing unanimous attitudes.

When it comes to fake news, the teachers agreed that this is a part of the justification for culture teaching (check Appendix A.3.). The pupils showed a great understanding of what the term includes and that it is different from biased information (check Appendix B.1.). This result is very far from the results that we found on the definition of culture (check Appendix A.1. and B.1.), which may not be all that significant because the term culture may include more elements than fake news. In retrospect, it is easy to see that this is something one could

have investigated more closely. However, we get an impression that especially teacher B and C has worked with fake news in some detail. This effort seems to have yielded a common understanding across the class. A major reason that fake news and culture have a varying degree of understanding is possibly the development of definitions over time. An unfamiliar word needs to be understood in order to be processed and integrated into one's language. Over time, an internalised word may change. A narrow definition may be broadened, and a broad definition may become more narrow. As this is a relatively new term, there is probably a narrow definition that most students have encountered. Because they have had the culture term in their vocabulary for a long time, they may have independently changed their understanding based on personal experience. The data do not provide enough material to make definite claims. The teachers may have explained more clearly what fake news is than culture because one assumes that the pupils have the word culture in their internal vocabulary. This explanation seems likely. However, more research is needed to make definite claims about this.

**4.3.4 Didactical Approaches:** The teachers provided some information on what they do in a classroom (check Appendix A.4.). This is not an accurate or complete representation. In order to get the whole picture, one would have to gather a large amount of data, which could not be dealt with properly in this thesis. However, by getting an impression about teachers' didactical decisions, one can understand why pupils experience culture teaching the way they do. The teachers do all try to engage their pupils in cultural parts of English. The data provides evidence that most pupils in the classes like culture and history the best (check Appendix B.3.). This result may come from the work that the teachers do and the personal preference of pupils. However, there is a significant difference between the classes when it comes to oral skills. Class A and C like this very much, while only one pupil in class B claim to like this. Why there is such a vast difference is probably due to a multitude of factors. Teacher A and C claim to use oral activity more frequently when teaching culture. Teacher B claims to deal with all parts of English in a varied and similar manner. Suppose one assumes that teacher B, based on the replies, use oral activity less than the other two teachers when teaching culture. In that case, it is possible that having oral activity connected to culture may positively affect the pupils' experience. However, the evidence is inconclusive and depends on more data. Probably other factors influence this as well.

The teachers respond similarly to enquiry about group work, which is more frequently applied in class A and C when working with culture (check Appendix A.4.). Teacher B claims



to use group work at the same frequency as any other part of English. The pupils in all classes experience cultural teaching as balanced between individual, pair and group work (check Appendix B.4.). However, collective teaching seems to have a less prominent role in culture teaching. This result supports the claim from Bilstad that teachers prefer to organise rather than lecture when teaching culture (Bilstad, 2019, p.43-44). It would have been interesting to know how the pupils experience other parts of the subject, based on teachers' responses compared to pupils' experience. If the pupils experience culture teaching as well balanced, they may experience other parts as too structured in individual or pair work. However, because all classes like culture and history (check Appendix B.2.), it is arguably the case that teachers adapt their culture teaching according to their individual classes in a satisfying manner. Therefore, it would be wrong to say that the teachers should change their culture teaching.

When it comes to the other areas of English, it would be interesting to know if something could be done to increase the enthusiasm related to these elements. Why oral activity is less appreciated in class B is difficult to prove with the current data sets. The teacher seems to understand the class well, and the pupils experience the teaching from which they claim to learn the most (check Appendix B.4.). The individual differences in the learning environment of each classroom have not been studied in this research. There is a chance that the pupils in class B do not desire to communicate in a foreign language as much as the other two classes. It is also possible that the pupils experience more anxiety in such a situation due to the individual classroom environment. Whatever the reason is, it is an interesting finding that could be researched more extensively in the future, especially since there is such a unanimous preference for culture teaching.

The didactical decisions of the teacher seem to be appreciated by their pupils. Teacher C spoke about roleplay when asked about examples of teaching (check Appendix A.4.). Teacher A spoke about a tea session which could also be characterised as a roleplay. However, none of the classes claimed to experience a lot of roleplay (check Appendix B.4.). They do not claim that they learn particularly much from it either, and it is possible that the teacher had not done such exercises in their classes by the time of the survey. Nevertheless, this form of teaching is being researched and discussed contemporarily and could yield interesting findings to influence future teaching.

The last element of didactical approaches is that all classes claim to experience movies as a part of their cultural education (check Appendix B.4.). Class A and C more so than class B. All classes claim that movies are something from which they learn a lot. However, A and C make this claim a bit more strongly than class B. Teacher A does not mention movies as an

example of teaching that is applied to the class (check Appendix A.4.). This mismatch may simply be an example of the teacher forgetting to mention it during the interview. This explanation seems probable because it seems like all classes experience movies according to their preferences. That the pupils claim to learn a lot from movies is interesting. If this truly is the case, there may be a potential of increasing learning outcome by increasing the use of movies.

It seems like the didactical decisions, in general, is a part of a dynamic relationship with the class. The class certainly influence the teaching they experience by responding well to certain teaching. However, it also seems like teacher influences their class as well. By making the tasks engaging and meaningful, teachers at least support pupils' positive attitude towards culture. It may be a coincidence, but it may be the case that most pupils like culture and history regardless of what teacher they have. All teachers had a special interest in culture. However, teacher A and C also had a fondness for literature (check Appendix A.2.). The pupils do not seem to adopt the attitude towards literature, which indicates that more pupils probably tend to like culture than literature and other English subject parts.

It is worth mentioning that even though teachers have a good understanding of their classes, there are a few contradicting experiences. Teacher A claims that there is less reading and writing when teaching culture (check Appendix A.4.). However, the class seems to think that reading and writing are the two most prominent ways of working with culture in their class (check Appendix B.4.). Teacher B claims to make the pupils engaged when teaching culture (check Appendix A.4.). However, the class claims to work with culture by reading more than anything else (check Appendix B.4.). Class A claims to be writing quite a lot (check Appendix B.4.), while the teacher does not seem to mention this as a prominent way of teaching culture (check Appendix A.4.). The intentions of bringing these elements up are not to criticise teachers but rather to show that even though teachers generally have a good understanding of their class, there may be elements that go unnoticed. Therefore teachers need to evaluate what the best didactical approach is constantly. Looking for improvements is an important part of the teacher's work and will benefit the pupils. Their decisions influence their pupils, which in turn form opinions based on their experience. Individual differences may also create different impressions among pupils in the same class.

**4.3.5 Evaluation:** The teachers do not measure cultural knowledge independently (check Appendix A.5.). Instead, cultural knowledge is a part of evaluation when it is relevant. As English has written and oral language as a part of the subject, several different elements

are included. Sometimes cultural content is a major part, and sometimes it is left out, depending on the task. All teachers do provide feedback on cultural work, both orally and in written form. Teacher C argues that it would not be satisfactory to possess knowledge about cultural elements. It is necessary to be able to convey the knowledge in English because of the language subject nature. This seems to be in line with the curriculum, which is concerned with practical skills rather than theoretical static knowledge. By theoretical static knowledge, I mean specific elements such as the line of Monarchs in the UK in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The pupils seem satisfied with the focus on culture in English for the most part (check Appendix B.3.). When responding to what they think is most important, they do not value culture very high (check Appendix B.5.). When taking into consideration that the pupils like culture teaching very much, it becomes that the pupils have a relatively high level of maturity. They like culture a lot. However, they recognise that it is not that important for their grade and therefore feel satisfied with the amount of culture teaching experienced. The teachers support this understanding by stating that what they know so far is that culture is a minor part of the exam (check Appendix A.5.). Almost non-existent for vocational pupils, but more relevant for general pupils. The curriculum holds the Bildung aspect as an imperative part of English along with language competence. The teachers also claim that the pupils benefit a lot from being taught culture. All of this suggests that the competence aims and exam outlines negatively impact the standing of cultural knowledge and competence.

If the teachers explicitly tell the pupils that culture is not an important part of their exam, it is only natural that the pupils believe that culture is less important than other parts of English. However, everything a teacher does in a classroom is interpreted by the pupils. These unknown variables make it hard to pin down exactly what the influence of the teacher is. However, the effect in this case, is clearly visible in that the pupils agree that culture is very important for them now and in the future, even though it is not regarded as especially important in the English subject. Unfortunately, there is no data in this research that attest to what the teacher has said and done related to these matters in the classroom. By making an educated guess, one could suspect that the pupils have asked their teacher about the exam because it is of significant importance to them.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This thesis has investigated how teachers influence pupils in upper secondary Norwegian schools by looking at the teaching of British and American culture. The interviews

with three teachers and the questionnaires in their respective classes have provided data for this investigation. These sets of data have been analysed with an emphasis on showing either similarity or dissimilarity. Because the qualitative data consist of unquantified data, a semantic interpretation and evaluation have been made to accurately understand the responses and make use of them in the thesis. The following paragraphs will provide a conclusion to questions raised in this thesis. First, we look at the five sub-questions and show what has been discovered. Secondly, the research question will be addressed based on the data and theory of this MA. Lastly, the expectations will be considered.

### 5.1 Five Sub-Questions

The teachers had many thoughts about the reasons to teach culture. They were motivated by an understanding of society where pupils do not exist only in a national environment but also in an international arena with communication across borders. Beyond this view, the teachers were convinced that cultural knowledge is an important part of developing an understanding of the world. All teachers in this essay were favourable towards the cultural elements in the English subject. Because of this coincidence, it was hard to control what impact this fact had on the pupils. All of the motivation and beliefs shape the teaching, and it seems like the effect is that pupils mostly like culture teaching. The teachers also believed that differences in the pupils' level of competence could pose a challenge. At the same time, the teachers believed that cultural teaching could be a motivating subject for all competency levels. On the one hand, pupils may struggle to follow complex issues. On the other, many pupils are interested in contemporary issues and desire to acquire more knowledge related to this.

The pupils and teachers were very similar in their attitude towards cultural knowledge. The terminology itself was difficult for both groups to define. However, both approached culture with the belief that it is important now and in the future. The teachers believe that pupils have an interest in cultural elements such as contemporary issues. This belief seems to be supported by the pupils' opinions and tells us that to what degree a teacher influence this perception is unknown. However, teachers seem to have a relatively accurate understanding of their pupils. The teachers were unsure. However, generally convinced that culture had limited value on written exams, especially for vocational studies. This belief seems to coincide with the perception among pupils in that it does not seem to be the most crucial part of the English subject.

The teachers agreed that the value of culture teaching is connected to the Bildung aspect. The pupils responded differently, and it is not obvious why there were differences between the classes. The pupils recognised the practical aspects when being presented with them. However, initially, they connected cultural knowledge with knowledge about history. It seems like the practical applications is a bit abstract and hard for pupils to realise. The data suggest that the pupils know a lot about the value of cultural knowledge and that teachers create practical tasks that involve applying cultural knowledge. However, it seems like the awareness around the unconscious process in which the pupils apply this knowledge is an area of potential growth.

There are many differences between the teachers and their classes. Some of the more important ones are: The term culture was defined differently in each classroom. The teachers were relatively abstract in their definition, and the pupils responded in various ways. The teachers also disagreed on whether cultural education is becoming more important when pupils are more frequently exposed to fake news and conspiracy theories. This is a political position, and the teachers are entitled to their opinions. However, one would expect that this affects their teaching and, ultimately, their pupils. This expectation seems to be the case related to the opinion about cultural knowledge importance, and this finding may be one of the more important ones in this thesis. The teachers differ a lot when it comes to their opinion about what is the biggest challenge when it comes to teaching culture. However, the classes vary as well. One teacher found it challenging to make pupils engaged in oral activities, to which the respective pupils responded that they do not like oral activity very much. This data suggest that there is no single element that challenges all classes. Instead, that teachers must locate and work with their individual challenge.

The teachers are the primary object of study in this thesis. They are also the supplier of teaching in their respective classroom. To what degree the pupils perceive the attitudes of the teacher are difficult to determine. First of all, the question about the teachers' special interest showed that pupils in two out of three classes have a suspicion or conviction about which part of English their teacher has a special interest in. This data shows that it is not obvious that pupils perceive this kind of information. However, it seems like the teachers' thoughts about the importance of cultural education have been influential in making the pupils value this teaching. Why the pupils seem to notice and adapt this is probably connected to both implicit and explicit communication, as well as conscious and unconscious behaviour.

## 5.2 The Research Question

How teachers influence upper secondary Norwegian pupils in their British and American culture learning has been addressed throughout this thesis. The history of the English subject in Norway has left teachers with an English subject where culture is an important part. The Norwegian culture is undoubtedly influenced by British and American culture. The data supports this claim, and it is clear that many pupils in this research have an interest in international issues and American and British contemporary issues. It is difficult to exactly say what is influenced by teachers and what is a result of other factors. However, influence consists of not only changing an opinion but also supporting and reaffirming previously established opinions. That is the reason we have been looking at differences and similarities. The data suggest that the teachers influence their pupils in different ways.

Teachers seem to influence pupils to view the importance of cultural knowledge as useful for the present and the future (check Appendix B.1.). The teachers also seem to influence the pupils' view of the importance of cultural knowledge as a part of the English subject (check Appendix B.5.). The influence is probably exercised by explicit and implicit communication as well as consciously and unconsciously behaviour. Furthermore, it seems like views about sources among teachers are similar (check Appendix A.3.). However, the data suggests that pupils have different inclination to adopt these attitudes, especially one class responded that they applied fewer strategies per pupil than the other two (check Appendix B.3.). This result indicates that trying to make pupils do more work independently is a challenge and that the attitude of the teacher is not enough.

An area where teachers seem to influence the pupils is the terminology of culture (check Appendix A.1. and B.1.). The teachers vaguely defined the term culture, as was also the case with their pupils. The pupils were unsure what cultural knowledge specifically was. This is an area where explicit teaching is a factor. If one recognised this as an area of possible influence by simple explicit teaching, it is possible to claim that influence does not only apply to the uncomplex matters. Looking at the opinion about the focus on culture in the curriculum, the teachers and pupils agree that the curriculum's focus on culture is satisfactory (check Appendix A.3. and B.3.). This similarity indicates that the pupils are possibly influenced to a large degree by their teacher. Evaluating the priorities of the curriculum is more complex in that it entails experienced teaching, individual preference and understanding of the curriculum rather than defining a word.

All in all, The study suggests that teachers have a major influence on their pupils in relation to the teaching of American and British culture. The interest of the pupils in this

research is a great advantage for their teacher (check Appendix B.2.). The teachers may be strengthening this interest through their teaching by creating tasks that are more engaging and interesting than other parts of the English subject in upper secondary. Many pupils have thoughts and attitudes that are similar to those of their teacher. This similarity implies that teachers should be aware that how they teach and what they communicate can change or reaffirm a pupils mindset towards different parts of the English subject. Even though a teacher appreciates a certain part of the English subject, it seems like the pupils not necessarily adopt the same attitude. It is more probable that the pupils will interpret what the teacher says and do to create their own independent opinion.

### 5.3 Expectations

The first expectation was that teachers had individual fields of interest in the English subject and that their pupils would recognise this. Based on the data, it is possible to conclude that teachers probably have one or more special interests related to the subject (check Appendix A.2.). However, the pupils do not necessarily perceive this attitude (check Appendix B.1.). The most useful observation related to these matters is that teachers are capable of showing enthusiasm towards other elements than their individual preference. Because of similar interests among teachers and pupils, it is not possible to control how big the influence actually is. It would have been interesting to examine a case where a teacher was not particularly interested in culture.

The second expectation was that culture is an imperative part of the English subject. The theory sections presented an argument for this claim. The data strongly supports this view, with the exception of the exam. There seems to be uncertainty among teacher when it comes to the exam outline (check Appendix A.5.), and the pupils do not seem to value culture especially high compared to other parts of the subject (check Appendix B.5.). This thesis has brought attention to the question of what significance cultural competence should have in the exam and overall assessment in the English subject. The takeaway from the research is that there may be an unbalance between the appreciation of cultural content among government, teachers and pupils and the position of culture related to evaluation.

The third and final expectation was that classes differ a lot from each other related to the interest in international cultural matters. The cases studied in this thesis shows that, on the contrary, all classes have an interest in several different matters, from climate change to Boris Johnson (check Appendix B.2.). The teachers also recognise that pupils are exposed to international contents and communities (check Appendix A.2.). Based on the findings in this

research, it is probable that pupils at other schools as well have similar interests. This observation means that teacher across Norway could possibly make use of these interests to create motivating and beneficial teaching to increase the learning outcome.

#### 5.4 Relevance

This research has provided valuable insight for future teachers, current teachers and people interested in the English subject in Norway. The comparison between teachers claims and their pupils' experience has shown that a teacher may influence their pupils in many ways. Although teachers seem to understand their class and relatively accurately picture the pupil's perception and attitudes, it is not always the case. The pupils do not seem to notice all of the different attitudes and opinions from their teacher (check Appendix A.2. and B.1.). This finding means that teachers have to be aware of how they address their class, especially with very important content.

This research has been important because it avoids some serious issues with a singular research method. This research does not only show what teachers do, think, and believe. It also shows what the pupils' experience is. By making such a comparison, it is possible to provide insight about teachers in Norway and the dynamic relationship in a class. To compare content from two sides provides a more nuanced picture than one singular approach. For further research, it could be interesting to see the development over time or study the impact of teaching a single theme such as American politics. By understanding the teacher's role better, one may reflect and become more aware of one's own teaching.

This research has argued that cultural teaching is important. Especially British and American culture has a significant value because of the influence on Norwegians. There is a close to unanimous opinion from the government to teachers that culture is an important part of the pupils' development. It is possible that there are dissenting views, and it is probable that some teacher put less emphasis on culture than what has been the case with the teachers of this research. However, if the pupils have an interest in cultural issues in other countries such as the UK or the USA, it provides a great opportunity to make use of inner motivation to make learning more interesting and rewarding for the pupils. Ultimately the most important question in the Norwegian English subject should always be. What should pupils learn, and how does each individual teacher best teach each individual pupil? This research has focused on the first part of this question by showing what is mandated by the government and what the teacher believes and what the pupils desire and think. The curriculum leaves the teacher with much freedom, and it is important that this freedom benefits the pupils.





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## Appendix: A Interview

### 1. Initial information:

#### - **Which subjects do you teach?**

Teacher A: I teach English and Norwegian. I have also taught religion a few years ago in another school.

Teacher B: English and social science.

Teacher C: English and French

#### - **How large is your English class?**

Teacher A: I have two English classes. One of them is a sports class in general studies, and they are 30 students now because one student recently quit. The other one is in vocational studies, and it is a combined class of agriculture and horse and farriers, and they are 15 students.

Teacher B: 15

Teacher C: I have several English classes this year. So it ranges from 6 to 25.

#### - **How do you define the terms culture and cultural competence?**

Teacher A: I try to teach my students that culture is everything that is not nature, opposed to nature. It is man-made, so it's a broader definition. Cultural competence is learning about society, everything that's important for people, what shapes people as a group and what connects them and combines them.

Teacher B: Cultural competence is probably the amount of knowledge acquired, while culture is a term that describes what characterise a society or group of a population

Teacher C: Cultural competence is a term mainly used by teachers. We don't talk about cultural competence with pupils. I often ask my pupils: what is culture? Of course, we get a very complex answer to that question. It's just understanding why there are differences between two cultures and the history behind it. Why has it become like this? But also, to understand that just because our culture is different doesn't mean that it is better or correct. So that is what we talk about.

Interviewer: So in culture, there is history and characteristics, while in cultural competence, we talk about the ability to locate differences and remain objective?

Yes, or at least try to be as objective as possible.

2. Motivational aspects:

- **Do you have any personal areas of interest within the English subject?**

Teacher A: I like literature a lot, so I try to motivate my students to read more. I'm not sure if they follow that or if they understand that that. But it is especially literature that I'm fond of. I also like working with lyrics, as we did this year. We had a two-week project, working with lyrics. That is also something I have enjoyed, and everything that has got to do with the UK in general.

Interviewer: Why are you fond of the UK?

I've been there quite a lot. I attended a bible school, and I have been to a language course when I was 16 and I have family there as well.

Teacher B: culture and vocational oriented themes related to health care, childhood and youth development in upper secondary. I find it important to be aware of what it is and know the differences between countries. To then be better equipped when it comes to understanding contemporary issues and the reason behind it. For the first because I teach in the vocational course and due to the competence aims we are supposed to direct the content towards the vocational subject. Secondly, I personally find health-related issues interesting and important to know in daily life.

Teacher C: Of course, literature is a passion of mine. But right now, literature is not a huge focus in the curriculum. And we rarely read literature unless it is something that we can relate to what is happening today or something like that. But also social issues so things like class differences, poverty, sexism, racism. All these things and we talk a lot about what is happening now in the UK or whatever it is, and that is something that I enjoy talking about. I like to keep it as current as possible.

- **Do you think your students know that this is your area of special interest?**

Teacher A: I think they know that I am a huge fan of Queen Elisabeth. I told them that a couple of times. And I have a tin box that I bring along for special purposes with sweets. I

think they know that I am fond of the queen. I think they know that I am fond of literature as well.

Teacher B: I think that my health care childhood and youth development students have gotten an impression that I enjoy their vocational course due to the projects that I apply in my teaching. When it comes to culture, I believe there might be a difference among students on what they have noticed. However, we have had lessons focusing on general facts and life in America and the UK.

Interviewer: So, do you think that some students will have noticed that culture may be one of your favourite areas?

Maybe, because those lessons have contained more creating and fun activities in contrast to other themes.

Teacher C: I hope so. Of course, the students I have had in literature and culture, they know that literature is a passion of mine. The other classes, I think they know that I am interested in for example: typically, in the first term, we talk about America. Especially this year, we did it as the presidential election was going on. And we talked about Black Lives Matter, election and all of these things, and made it a major theme even though I didn't have to. But I don't know. I haven't really given it too much thought.

- **How valuable is it for students to possess cultural knowledge, in your opinion?**

Teacher A: I think it is very valuable because we have so much in common and through working with culture we can see what we have in common as human beings and that we have a lot that unites us. I think it is very important in order to understand one another.

Teacher B: I think it's quite valuable when it comes to understanding history and contemporary issues, but also when it comes to travels and daily encounters with foreigners.

Interviewer: Why do you find that understanding history and contemporary issues important?

To be able to see the representatives point of view in any contemporary issue and be able to apply critical thinking. Which then might make it easier for students to make up their own mind.

Teacher C: Very, extremely, I mean it is just becoming more and more important that the students understand the wider world. They are not living in a Norwegian bubble. They are living online and in this very multicultural space. So for example, with Black lives matter, I

see a lot of people who, This is going to sound mean but, I see especially young people, people that go to our school, who seem very passionate about it and they feel like they know a lot about it, but they really don't understand it. They don't understand the history, the grey area and apply a very black and white view on the world, which is typical when you are a teenager. You learn something, and you think you know everything about it, so being able to think critically and don't make up your mind and stick to it for the rest of your life, look at what other people are saying. Look at what people who disagree with you. What are they saying, and have you given them a chance? We talk a lot about that. And now that they are in upper secondary, we can ask them to think about these things in a much more complex way.

Interviewer: Do you think students sympathise with BLM and really does not understand what the content is?

Yes. First of all, they are always very surprised when I tell them that when it comes to police brutality, most victims are white. And then they get all confused, and we have to look at the statistics and how big is the percentage and compare it to the population. And also, we look at how many privately owned firearms there are in America. The police never know if anyone is armed and very often end up in dangerous situations. Sometimes it is justified. And sometimes, like with George Floyd where the police clearly did not act appropriately. Why are black people seen as more dangerous, and how has it become like that? Is not black on black crime a bigger issue because that s the number one reason why black people are killed? And then you work with that subject, and then you get to poverty, and it goes on and on, and you really have to work on this. You can't say the police is racist. Finished. you will not get a good grade by answering a question like that. The point is not to reach an answer. The point is to create a good discussion. And on your own, you can make up your own mind and decide what you think. Because I don't really care what you think, that is not the point of this exercise.

- **What goals do you have for your culture teaching?**

Teacher A: I try to focus on what's typical British and typical American. And how that reflect their society, their belief and behaviour. And how it also is reflected in factual texts and literature.

Interviewer: When they are done with school, do you hope that they have obtained certain skills? Such as reflecting on social media posts, news and how they go about finding information.

Yes. I haven't really focused that much on sources. We did that when they were working with news, and they were comparing two sources. I know that they deal quite thoroughly with this issue in their Norwegian class as well. So when I'm teaching culture, I haven't really taught that much about sources.

Teacher B: To help students understand terminology, and to learn and accept and respect different cultures. And as I mentioned, the ability to understand contemporary issues and self reflect.

Teacher C: It varies whether we have a written assessment or an oral assessment. However, culture is always a part of that. So, for example, with a written assessment, we ask the students to discuss. So they have to be able to see both sides of an issue, and again, I do not care what you think about it privately. That's not the task. So that is typically the main focus of a written assessment. Oral assessment is more about explaining an issue. That is typically where we go.

Interviewer: Can you give me some examples?

Things like that. And we typically look more for their own opinions in an oral assessment because its more about just getting them talking. And very often, they become very unsure of themselves and respond with: I don't know. So, we try to push them to speak their mind and not focus on correct and incorrect. So, having them evaluate their opinions.

### 3. Importance of cultural knowledge:

#### - **What are the benefits of cultural knowledge?**

Teacher A: I think they learn much more about a nation, why they think differently and how it influences us, the way we are brought up.

Teacher B: The ability to deal with contemporary issues and apply critical thinking. To understand how the society is functioning and to meet societal issues with knowledge in order to solve problems.

Interviewer: Are there any more benefits, maybe trivial?



To better understand what is important related to social encounters with different people from different cultures. For instance, norms and rules. Travel and working abroad. Maybe, if one is in a hiring position.

Interviewer: Do you think cultural knowledge is important to experience personal growth?

Yes definitely. When it comes to maturity and recognition of different mindsets, I find cultural knowledge to be especially important

Teacher C: The world is becoming more globalized and borders are becoming less important. This is something we talk about because English is the world language. It is very likely that no matter what you end up doing, you are going to work with people or communicating with people from other cultures and religions etc. Of course, it is not my job to stop someone from being racist or anything like that, but opening their minds to all the differences that we do have out there in the world. And I think a lot of people, they feel like they know America. Especially because they watch so much television and youtube clips that originate or deal with America in some way. And make them able to think critically about it. Nowadays you see that some young people are very interested in politics and social issues. They hear a lot. We just saw the BLM protest here in Kristiansand, that many people showed up, and I think a lot of young people have a superficial knowledge about these things. We are seeing that the us vs them mentality is increasing all around the world, and we see this in our students as well. So I believe it is very important to learn as much as you can about other cultures.

- **Do you work with contemporary issues?**

Teacher A

Yes, we have had a project about news. And we try to work with what is most relevant at the moment. We have had a small project about making a small photostory or PechaKucha. PechaKucha is a photostory of 20 slides with a 20-second display of each slide, and we did a different variation with ten slides and 10-seconds of display. The students worked together, and they had to choose their words and slide with care. They got practice in being precise and on point. For that project, we focused on the UK and we had different challenges that the UK faces today like the Corona pandemic, Scottish independence, Brexit and the Northern Ireland issue and typical teen issues. For that project, we had seven gloomy challenges they face and

seven positive sides of the UK. And we focused on culture and how culture has influenced the rest of the world, and us, and what's worth seeing in different nations, and London and possibilities of studying. They worked with their PechaKucha and presented in class.

Interviewer: Do you experience that students become more engaged when teaching contemporary issues compared to a historical event? Is there another type of engagement?

Yes. I experience that when they get to do some investigation on their own, they are much more engaged. When they can partly choose what to study and focus on and what angle they want to present, they become much more engaged. My class this year is not too fond of reading directly from a book. So they like to do it in a much more active way, but it can vary a lot between classes and usually classes within the general study like to read a lot more. I know that they have a reading project in the other general study classes, but that would not work for my sports class.

Teacher B: I could have done more. I try to implement some cultural issues like BLM. However, I find the time limit constraining. Therefore one has to choose which contemporary issue to focus on to be able to get through the curriculum. In addition, the curriculum does not, in my opinion, have much focus on culture as it did before. But we watch Movies, read factual texts, have discussions and pursue critical thinking related to content accompanied by individual written work or oral activity.

Interviewer: Why do you choose this form of teaching?

Do you have any thoughts about that? To help them become independent, but also to learn from each other through groupwork. To give them the opportunity of self reflection.

Teacher C: What have I done? Let see. With some classes I have a roleplay scenario based on class differences, and I think if someone is allowed to roleplay and experience that they are living that life for a week or a day or whatever it is, I have seen that students often remember it much more because it made a real impact. You would have to be careful, though. I would never do it with BLM because I can not ask my students to pretend to be racists because I don't think that is something we should be doing. However, with class differences, you have to be careful mostly with the poverty element because you may have students that are living in poverty, but I felt it worked well because the division was randomly executed and everybody was aware that this had nothing to do with them personally. Depending on the size of the class, I divide them into three or six families distributed in upper-middle or working

class. The teacher represents society and acts in an unfair fashion throughout the period. Being incredibly favourable towards the upper class families and bring them treats and being nice to them and give them a lot of privilege such as ability to use phones and such in class. The middle class is treated as I normally would treat them, and the working-class families, I am quite mean to them, calling them lazy and stupid. I am less patient with them and they are not allowed to use computers because they can not afford them. And we do various tasks. The main task is to create a monthly budget, but then there are all these side tasks. Such as all the dads are arrested for tax fraud. Typically over and middle class can afford a decent lawyer while the working class usually end up in prison, and then we look at statistics of why is the incarceration rate so high in the working class. Is it because they are more likely to become criminals, or are they just worse people or is there something else behind it? The same with the kids. I do a geography test with them, and of course, the working class fail miserably because they do not have access to computers. Then we look at the results, and then we look at stereotypes about working-class people being less intelligent, why they don't go to university as much, etc. So we do these exercises and look at statistics and see if we can explain the statistics in some way.

Interviewer: So you include a lot of skills into this project?

Yes, the final product is that they present their family, their budget and talk about how it felt and what they experienced over the two weeks that this project goes on.

- **Do you think students appreciate the ability to understand British and American culture?**

Teacher A: Yes. I mean, at least I hope so. And that's maybe why I believe it as well, but yes, I think so.

Teacher B: Maybe the strong ones and those who have reached a level of maturity and competence where they are able to see the importance of cultural knowledge on their own. These are the ones that are more able to receive input on cultural matters.

Teacher C: I think so. I rarely come across students that are overtly reluctant to learn about these cultures and especially American culture is something that they are very interested in it. Because of Trump and all of these things, and for this generation, it is seen as quite cool to be passionate about politics, and it is seen as a great thing. It was not like that when I was at

school. But now you're seen as smart and cool if you have an opinion about these matters. Typically, they want to learn more about this even though it is difficult to understand everything. Sometimes I have students who can barely write their name and age, and for them, it is very difficult to understand the concept. There are a lot of big words and complex relationships. For some, you realise early on, that the focus is to make them able to pass. And for those students, you have to make them able to write sentences and have a satisfactory vocabulary instead of focusing on everything else. So for some students, it is hard and demotivating to work with these issues, and others feel anticipation towards it. So, there are different attitudes towards it. If your goal is that all should understand what you work with you may need to switch between Norwegian and English. It is not for everyone, not because they lack interest, but they realize that there is no way they are going to understand it.

- **With fake news and conspiracy theories circulating, do you think that the need for cultural education is becoming more important?**

Teacher A: I think it has always been important but, so I'm not quite sure if it is correct to say more important. It's important to know facts and to know about a society, and then you can more easily see what is fake news and what is not.

Interviewer: Would you say that ten years ago, when you looked something up on the internet? Do you have to be more critical to what information that pops up now than what was the case 10 years ago?

Yes, or at least you must know where to search and the sources you choose to use. And I try to teach my students that there are differences, and you need to be aware of where you search for information and which newspaper and broadcasting company you use. That's important. That's how the story is told.

Teacher B: The importance of critical thinking has increased over the last years, And I do believe there is a correlation between cultural knowledge and the ability to think critically.

Interviewer: would you care to elaborate on that?

Because if you have background knowledge on any matter, it is easier to recognise fake news and be better equipped to make arguments as to why something is untrue or why something is true.

Teacher C: Yes, absolutely. You see so many stupid arguments being used online, especially, for example, as I mentioned earlier: Most police brutality victims are white! I think a lot of people and not just young people, are going to look at that go: wow! Why are Black Lives Matter complaining so much then? And I think nowadays, in particular, a lot of people have this superiority complex that it is fun to call the other side stupid. You see it with BLM and feminism. There is this us vs them mentality, and the interest to learn seems absent. They just want to troll and make fun of the other side. It is always fun to throw statistics at students that go against them and see how they react. This was actually worse about five years ago when Trump was a nominee for President. We had a rough period at school, and a lot of people made claims that were evidently not true, and this has decreased over the last years. But of course, with fake news and the amount of time students spend on the internet regularly, it is very easy to be sucked into silly stuff and conspiracy theories and all these things. So, it is probably more important for the students of today to understand these things than what it was for us when we were growing up.

Interviewer: Do you think that students adapt and believe headlines uncritically when they visit the internet and Facebook and so on?

Yes, Facebook is not cool anymore, so typically, they do get news somewhere else. Places like Reddit and 9gag are popular places as well as youtube. Some students check the news, but typically they scroll through the headlines, and unless the article has an obvious clickbait, they do not read the article. Sometimes when I have said something, a student may say something like: I read something somewhere? When I then ask them about why, what or where, they have no idea about what they are talking about because they have just noticed a glimpse of the information through a headline.

- **What do you teach your students about sources?**

Teacher A:

Interviewer: You mentioned already that you want your students to be aware of what newspapers they use. Do you give them any other advice like, for instance, Wikipedia? Do you mention anything about using that for schoolwork or personal reasons?

I haven't really mentioned Wikipedia. But it's mostly about choosing an informative site and to be aware that some sites are biased or more connected to a political party than others. So we looked into FOX News concerning the election.

Interviewer: Related to Wikipedia do you think that your students have already formed an opinion about Wikipedia, that they don't use Wikipedia for schoolwork?

I think it used to be that way, but I think Wikipedia is a much more serious actor than it used to be. So now they use it as well, but they try to use other sources. I also teach Norwegian, and there I try to make them visit the public lexicon first.

Teacher B: We have worked with different internet pages that are known to be satire. On these websites, they searched for clues as to why something is untrue, for instance, the Onion website. In addition, we have gone through an infographic on seven types of misinformation and disinformation. We have done an internet game called bad news, where the purpose is to make a public website and twitter-account to create fake news and acquire followers and credibility. I guess you could say that I teach my students to discover these kinds of content and devices on their own.

Interviewer: Do you teach students anything that is directed towards their private use of sources?

Yes. We have talked about the consequences of the use of social media. That, you should note who has published content and do some background research on the purpose or the organisation and then make a decision or not.

Interviewer: When it comes to scholarly work, I recon you apply the same tactics. Do you have any further criteria for the use of sources in this regard?

I encourage them to put one source up against another to compare and verify the information.

Interviewer: How do you treat Wikipedia?

I am very critical to the use of Wikipedia due to my previous teachers' opinions and the fact that anyone who chooses, are able to add and edit content the page. And my experience is that students use the information on Wikipedia without looking at the references at all. Therefore,

I encourage them to use other sources or at least show that they have been critical of content found on Wikipedia.

Teacher C: I teach them how important it is to use sources in general. I think a lot of people have this idea that if they write a text and include, say, ten sources, that this looks bad and testifies to their lack of independent knowledge. That they had to look up all this information. So, I must sometimes turn this attitude around and let them know that the more sources, the better. It shows me that you have done your research and opened yourself to other peoples opinions etc. So, that is the first thing I teach them. Then we work on the layout and footnotes and the formal integration of sources. Then we do like which sources can you trust and which should you not trust. Students mostly know that they can not trust everything online because they have been taught this since kindergarten. What I often see is, first of all, if someone like BBC say something, that doesn't mean that they are correct just because it is a major news network. You have to take everything with a grain of salt. And another thing that a lot of students do is that they start with the argument and then go looking for sources. They start looking for information with a biased outset. They may search google for: reasons why BLM is rubbish? And use those sources instead of using sources more objectively. Apart from that, they are often scared of using sources that are too ridiculous. They are quite scared of using, Wikipedia for instance, while I usually tell them that Wikipedia is fine and it has become a great site.

Interviewer: That is rather interesting because ten years ago, we were taught that to stay away from Wikipedia was the correct way to go.

I know because I was taught that as well, and you cant trust wikipedia and so on and so on. Why not because Wikipedia has all of their sources, and you can go and check. And if something is disputed, it will get a mark that this may not be correct. But you see a lot of sensors, well, especially older people who don't like Wikipedia because they have made up their mind that it is not good. But that is just rubbish.

#### 4. Didactical Approaches:

- **Do you feel that you have a good overview of the National Curriculum?**

Teacher A: Yes, in general. Some of the new competence aims, that I am not sure about what the content is.

Teacher B: To some degree, but I look forward to the upcoming subject forums to check if I have interpreted the curriculum in similar ways as the other teachers. Due to few years in the profession, I can not say that I am very experienced in either of the two curriculums.

Teacher C: I feel like I know it pretty well. You use it when you decide your term grade and final grade because that is what you refer to. And one could be in a lot of trouble if one doesn't refer to the curriculum. I normally do a little check two or three times a year just to make sure that I am on the right path and sometimes I discover that what I did last week was really not relevant, but I think now, you know I have been working for nearly seven years, so I think it has stuck to my brain pretty well. I probably wouldn't be able to site it, but I could provide information on what the content is to a large extent. The new curriculum is, for the moment, rather new and I am working on getting familiar with the content but ill hopefully get used to it sometime.

- **Do you think the curriculum should put more emphasis on culture?**

Teacher A: I think there was enough focus on culture in the lk06 and especially in the book we are using. It focuses almost too much on culture.

Teacher B: To some extent, yes. Because the word culture is only mentioned one time in the curriculum and only when it comes to cultural forms of expression from different media in the English speaking world. However, there might be a way to implement cultural teaching in the other aims, but here I need more input. Therefore I find the new competence aims are more up to the teacher's decision on what to emphasise. A result of this may be that students from different schools will possess different levels of cultural knowledge depending on their teacher's priority.

Teacher C: Well, in the new curriculum, there is just one occurrence of the word culture, but the new curriculum is much more free, and you can pretty much do whatever you want to do. I think that today when things are changing all the time, it is important that teachers do have that freedom to focus on current issue and that was the whole point of the new curriculum. To make it more relevant for today and stay as current as possible. My impression is that there are not that many changes between the old and the new curriculum. The one major change is



indigenous people are not mentioned in the new. However that does not mean that we can not talk about them. In the new one with the interdisciplinary topics is supposed to make all subjects more entwined and we collaborate a lot more than what we used to. We actually have to know what the students are learning in the other classes. I think that is a good thing. The freedom that we have today is nice, but it feels like there are great similarities between the old and the new curriculum, but we kind of did what we wanted to do with the old one as well. But I have to admit that I don't see a major change when it comes to culture and these things.

- **Does your school have any local conditions that influence your teaching?**

Teacher A: We have had a huge problem with the internet connection. It has been on and off, so you can not rely on it too heavily. And you must sometimes change to a plan b, and the lack of group rooms is an issue. The room we have currently is a brilliant room because we have an independent group room directly connected to the classroom.

Interviewer: And even though you have 30 students, you feel that your classroom is big enough?

Yes, I believe I have the best classroom at the school. So we are lucky in that regard. However, the light conditions are challenging when it is sunny, and you want to show media on the projector.

Interviewer: Do you have to cooperate with other teachers in order to make sure that you teach the same?

We are three teachers in English, and we try to cooperate, especially when it comes to the overall schedule and the large tests at the end of each semester. But the two other classes differ a bit from mine because they are general studies, while I have a sports-class. The two of them have closer cooperation than what I have. However, we are free to choose what we want to practise, and I try to include more sports-related content in order to make use of the students' interests.

Teacher B: No.

Interviewer: Do you work in teams?

We are a small school with only three teachers. We do not have planned collaboration meetings, but we do have a discussion area on teams where we share thoughts, ideas, plans

and resources. However, this forum is very new, and that might be the reason why some teachers do not use these platforms actively, and I find it difficult to get constructive responses.

Teacher C: We do cooperate with other teachers as a part of a strategy to increase learning outcome and relevance. So when we plan a year, we decide that in that week we work on a project related to this theme and as many subjects as possible try to make relevant content for that week. When it comes to equipment, I must say that we have what we need, and I can't really say that in my years of teaching, I have been missing something, so I am satisfied with the equipment that I have. The books to the new curriculum came really late, so we had to make use of content from elsewhere for a long period of time, which was rather troublesome in a vocational class where I had no experience within their field at all. However, this was not the school's fault, but that was a challenge

- **When it comes to British and American culture, how do you prefer to teach?**  
(Why?)

Teacher A: I try to use songs. We usually have music playing in the background. We have a list of elected artist that we play. I try to show them what is important for that nation. Like we had a tea session. They got some proper English tea, and I pushed them all to take milk in it.

Interviewer: So you make use of objects in order to make the students remember more easily?  
I have several items that I bring along and show to the students depending on what is being taught.

Interviewer: When working with American and British culture, are you more inclined to make them work in groups or on a project?

Yes. The book we are using now is outdated, and we are currently looking for a new book. So we still have the old book, and we try to add relevant material from other sources. I think that I try to be more practical, and often they get small things to focus on and that they work together in pairs and present. Often they are presenting in front of a peer or another pair, so they don't have to present in front of the whole class.

Interviewer: So I reckon that would be more suitable for teaching culture than, for instance, literature?

Yes. There is often less reading and writing independently when teaching culture.

Teacher B: Through activities, films, clips, youtube, and in-depth studies are preferred, depending on the timeframe. Because these methods make the teaching more interesting and fun, especially for those who attend vocational studies, due to motivation for the English subject in general.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the motivation towards English among students in vocational studies?

In my experience, English is a subject that they are tired of, and they struggle to see the importance of the subject. However, I have experienced that this varies between different vocational studies and between students who aspire to attend universities and higher education.

Teacher C: I have some ideas related to roleplay and simulations that I really would like to use, but they demand more than one teacher in order to pull them off. But, normally watching films, especially documentaries, in order to see what it is actually like, not just the Hollywood version of it. We do that a lot, and they remember films more so than me lecturing on the subject or reading a text. Most students are visual learners, and of course, statistics are a big part of the subject. Understanding and knowing how to read statistics is important. Often we have discussions where I will force them to be a part of one side regardless of their preference, and we discuss different subjects. If I can make them participating in the teaching, I feel that they learn more. I can, for example, have a PowerPoint but make it incomplete so that they have to aid in filling out missing content. With this strategy, I make them more active and also challenging them when we speak about stuff that they are unfamiliar with. But luckily, with Trump and these things, they have a lot to say

- **Do you use oral activities more frequently when teaching culture?**

Teacher A: Yes, I think so.

Teacher B: No, I try to implement oral activities in all parts of the English subject.

Teacher C: Probably yes.

- Do you use group work more frequently when teaching culture than what is the case with other parts of the English subject? (Grammar, Writing, literature)

Teacher A: Yes. The plan is that they are going to be put into groups, and they choose one English speaking country that they are going to present the challenges and cultural expression of that country. Then they will be in a bigger group and have a formal grade.

Teacher B: I do not believe that I treat culture any different than other parts of the subject, and I try to vary my teaching in every part of the subject.

Teacher C: I think so, yes.

- **Can you exemplify a couple of assignments that you could or are using?**

Teacher A: I mentioned the PechKucha earlier. And we have been working on what is typical, where they research what is typical about countries related to clothing, sports and other elements. Often I try to focus on sport with this group?

Teacher B: I have shown a movie, and then the students answered questions on the content, and I got them to write paragraphs containing discussions on a number of contemporary issues related to the movie. I have planned an activity where students are to dive into tradition and cultural elements in Britain and the USA, where I want them to find examples to present with visual aids.

Teacher C: It is pretty basic, really. Projects, presentations, classrooms debate or smaller hand-ins. Typically we have a written test about four times a year, and then we have a written assessment. But these topics, I believe, naturally spark a discussion. It is natural to talk about them rather than just individually write about it because they would never get to know what other people are thinking about it.

- **What type of teaching do you think your students benefit the most from?**

Teacher A: They are all so different. I've had the development conversation with each of them, and they are all very different and have their own preferences. They mostly like to have small assignments in pair and investigate on their own. They do not want me to talk too much,

and some like to learn more about grammar while others feel they know more than enough. So next week we are going to have a written assignment. Before this, we are going to have five hours of what we call grammar inspiration. The basic idea is that I explain five common grammar rules each lesson in Norwegian and English, and they write them down and apply these rules on a series of tasks. We use about ten minutes of each class for this exercise. Some find this rewarding, while others think it is meaningless. This is often connected to the students' proficiency in oral English and lack of proficiency in the written form. Some of them struggle with grammar, and that is why we chose to focus on that before this written assignment.

Interviewer: Do you think that the differences in the level of competence in English have a negative impact on culture teaching. Is it hard for students with low competence to reflect on English culture issues? Are they more focused on their own development in grammar and oral pronunciation so that they are not able to focus on the content of the English subject?

I think culture is a much better way to teach them no matter what grade they have in the subject. I think that they all have a relationship to it and they know something about it. So it is much easier than other subjects that we are working with. With the PechaKucha I experienced that students that differed as much as a couple of grades worked really well together, and they both contributed to the work. Of course, the number of grammar mistakes in the presentation was varying between them but they were all able to communicate. So I think culture is a good way of engaging all the students.

Teacher B: Teaching that includes a variety of methods where they must be engaged and active throughout.

Teacher C: Whatever can make them feel like they understand something or whenever they get to the point that they understand that this is far more complicated than what I thought. Then I have won, then I have done it. They are also very different and what works for 60 per cent does maybe nothing for the other 40 per cent, so it is tricky.

- **What is the most challenging when it comes to teaching culture?**

Teacher A: I think it is to locate and make use of relevant sources. To know what sources you can recommend and to stay up to date yourself. It has been a bit hard with the whole Brexit. There has been so much back and forth.

Teacher B: Making those who are not motivated. Engage student in active participation and oral activities and finding creative and good lesson plans. The variation in maturity among students creates challenges when it comes to engaging all students in a class

Teacher C: Probably the differences in the level of competence among the students in class. Also, it can be difficult with multiculturalism in the classroom. For example, if we end up talking about gay rights, there are probably gone be a couple of students with firm beliefs about the subject that can be a challenge to make them listen to an argument opposing their own view. Sometimes people say things just to trigger people without actually knowing a lot about the subject or even really believe what they themselves are saying. But the differences in the level of competence is probably the most challenging factor.

#### 5. Evaluation:

##### - **Do you measure cultural knowledge?**

Teacher A: It is combined in an oral grade or written grade. So there will be some cultural topics on the written assignments next week. And then, they will have a separate oral project on an English speaking country of their own choice. And the small things we do in class does not get a grade rather a small comment in my notes each lesson.

Teacher B: When working with cultural aspects within an assignment, then it will be graded. If the student is able to show a high level of competence, then this will be a part of the overall assessment each semester which is also given a grade. I give written feedback on cultural content when appropriate such as the assignment with the movie. The students are given time in the subject to look at the feedback. The individual factors in the students' argument were important, along with their reflections and ability to think about consequences. And, of course, I give oral feedback during the work process.

Teacher C: In English, we can not really ignore the language aspect, so it is typically in written test 10 per cent structure 45 per cent language and 45 per cent content. So if your grammar is poor, that does not mean you are going to get a bad grade, but it does mean that you do not get a five or a six, probably. So I don't think it is right to say: let us just ignore the grammar rules and pronunciation rules, because I don't want to give them the impression that this is ok.

- Is it possible to test only cultural knowledge?

Teacher A: I guess if you had a multiple-choice, But I would rather combine it with written and/or oral skills. In order to make the most of the exercise.

Teacher B: No. I find that difficult because it has to be understandable, and the nature of language subject must contain some focus on language features. Social science would be a different matter.

Teacher C: It is possible, but it would not be beneficial for the English subject. Let say you are able to answer a task in Norwegian. Then we would need to get that answer into English before it is satisfactory for the English subject.

- **Do you think cultural knowledge is an important part of preparing for an exam in upper secondary English?**

Teacher A: Mostly for the oral exam, the written exam is more connected to the preparation material. I think it is more indirectly relevant for the written exam.

Interviewer: On the written exam. Do they get an excerpt that they have to read and answer questions about it?

There will be a new exam, so the whole system will be totally different. Indirectly the topics will be connected to culture, at least some of them. But it is not that much about skills. So teaching culture is more about enjoying working with language and the more fun part of learning about nations.

Teacher B: I am not sure because I have not had students up for exams yet.

Teacher C: We do not know how the exam is going to look like, and we do not at the moment know even if they are going to take place. It varies a lot between general and vocational studies. The examples that we have been shown seems to provide the impression that vocational exams are very focused on vocational subjects while general studies are more leaning towards culture, but also the interdisciplinary topics seem to be a big part of the exam. The impression that I and my colleagues are getting is that it is becoming less important, but

then again, you have the oral exams where we make the tasks, and we decide what to ask. It is going to be interesting to see.

- **What form of feedback do the students get on cultural work?**

Teacher A: Oral feedback during the work process and written as well as oral feedback on completed task depending on what the task was.

Teacher B: Written, Oral, and grade when it is a part of an assignment.

Teacher C: It depends on the task, but I provide both written and oral feedback and try to look at, are you able to explain something. That I get the feeling that they understand this, and are they able to look at both sides of an issue, are you able to provide examples, are you able to refer to what other people are saying, which would probably be a step up.

- **Is this different from other parts of the English subject?**

Teacher A: When it comes to culture, it is more what they have chosen to focus on. So it is more like: That was interesting, and I am interested in this as well, and this can be related to Norwegian and so on. It is a different kind of feedback. It is more that they can choose what they want to work on, and you try to motivate them to do their best rather than making them find a correct answer.

Teacher B: If they have a presentation I often take the time to give oral feedback. But there will always be some written feedback when looking back at previous assignment on the schools learning platform.

Teacher C: Grammar, of course, is more black and white. Either it is correct, or it is incorrect. Same way with pronunciation and text structure. But cultural competence can be compared to analysing a movie or text. There is no right and wrong answer.

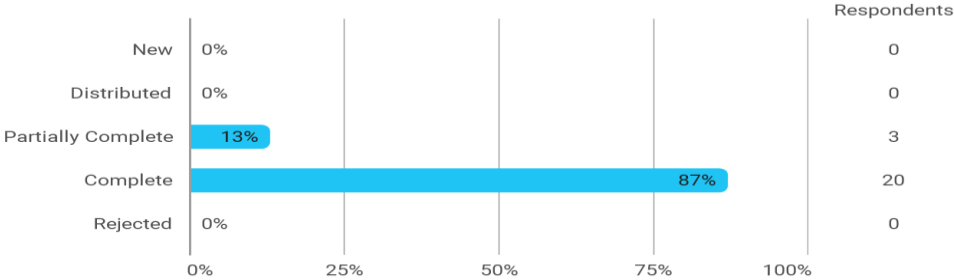


# Appendix: B Questionnaire

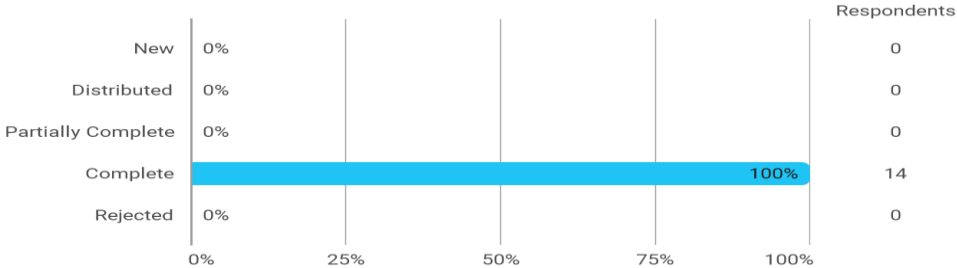
## 1. Initial information

### How many respondents?

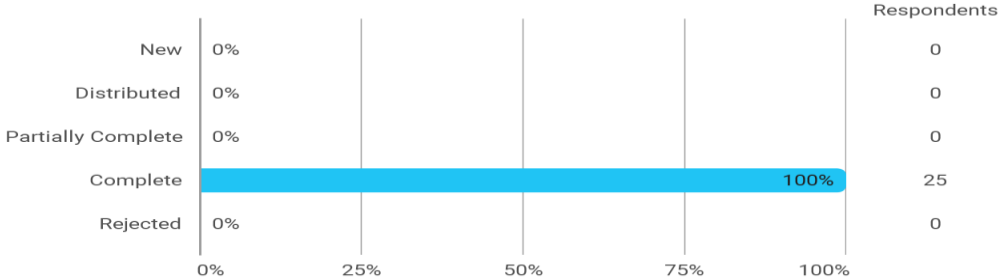
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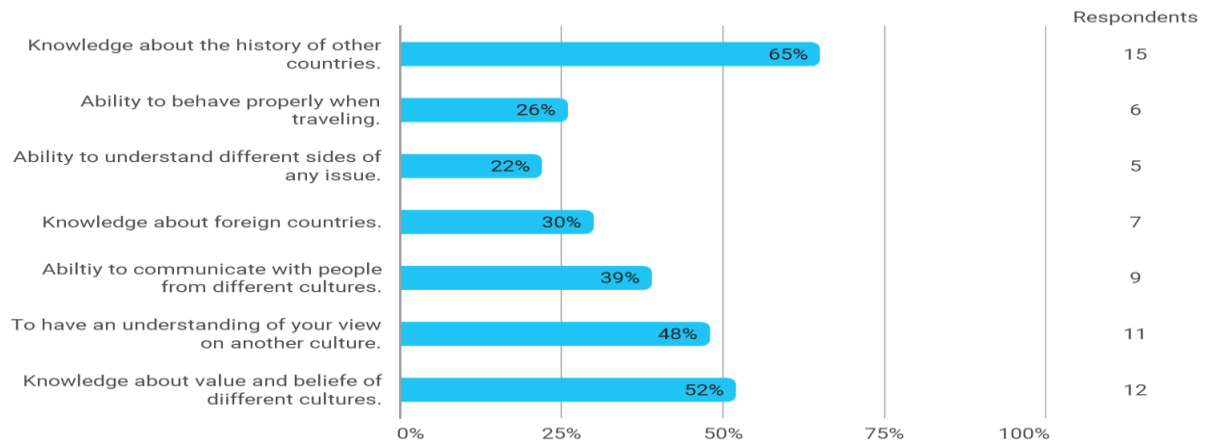


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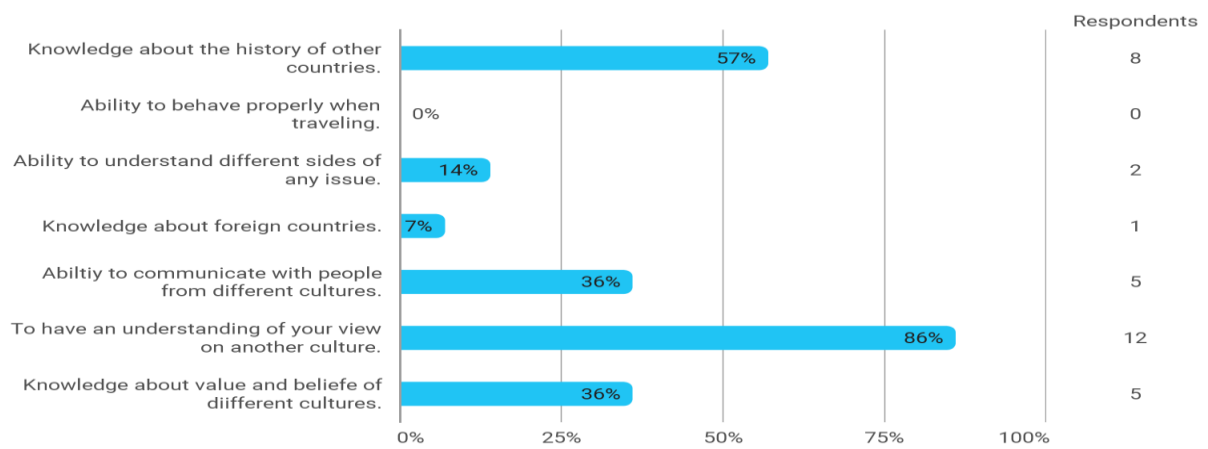


### What is culture knowledge for you?

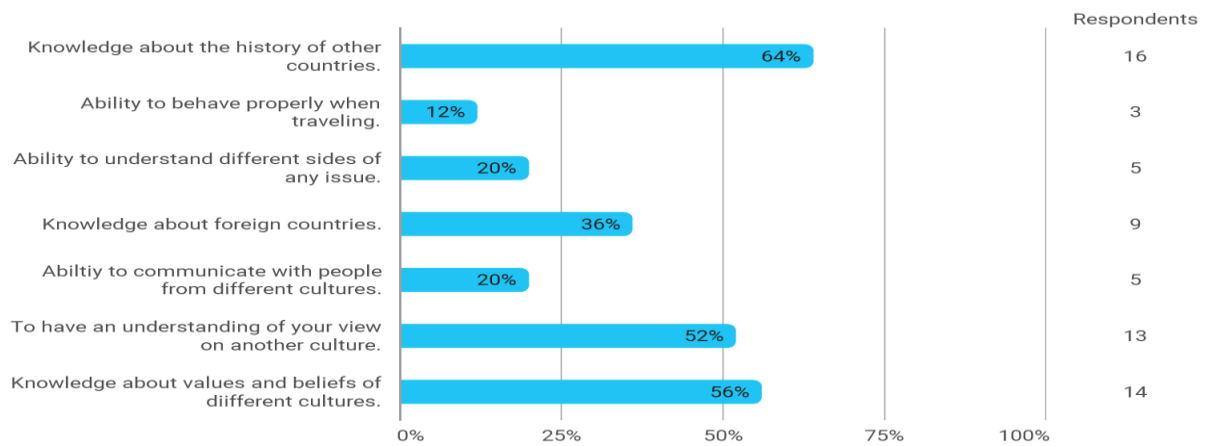
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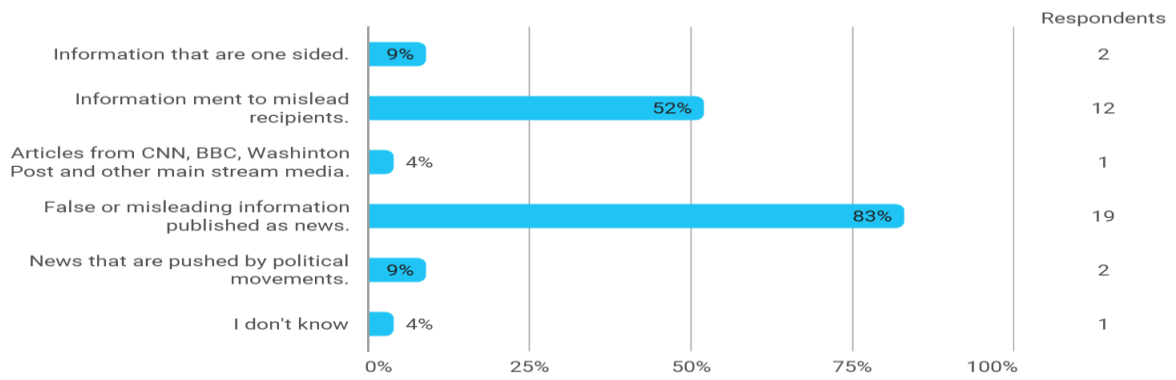


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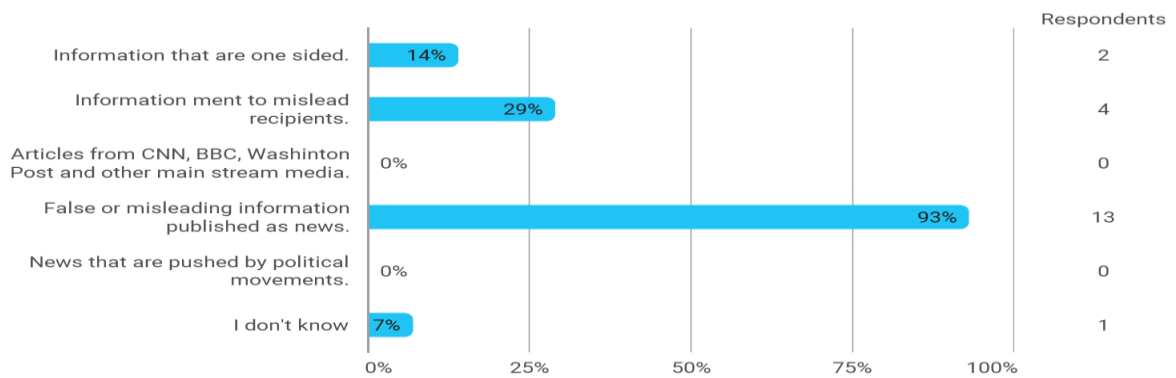


**What is fake news?**

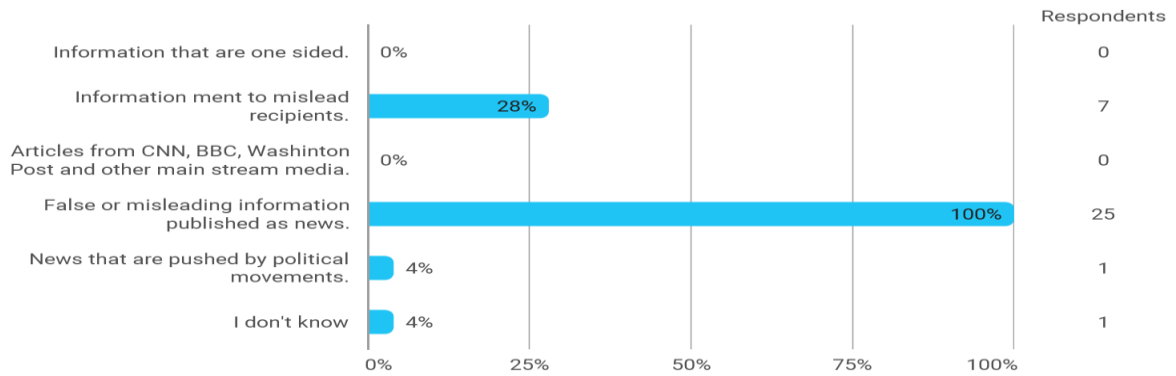
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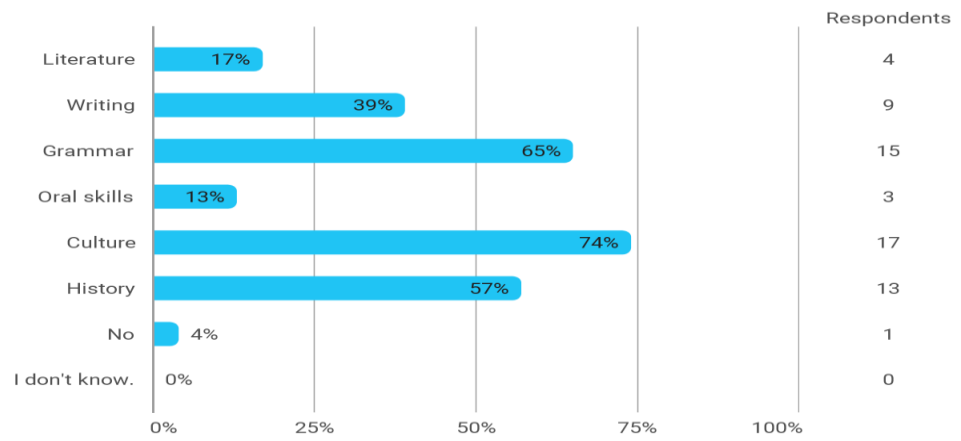


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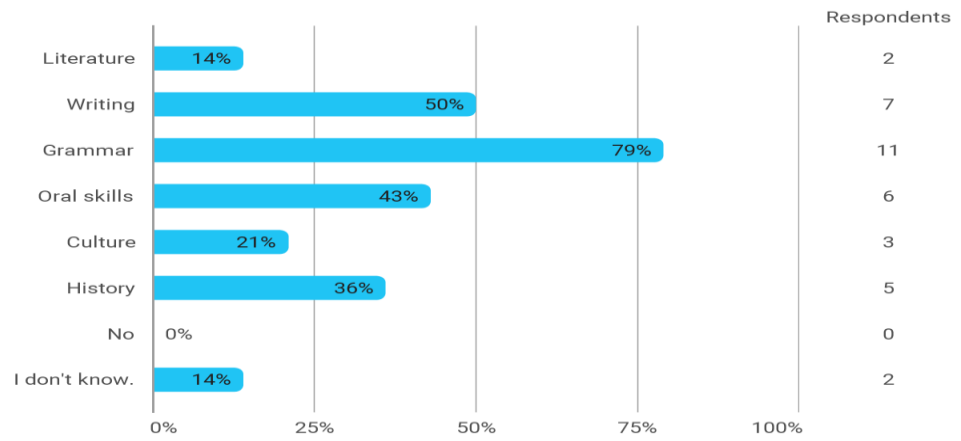


**Do you think your teacher has a special interest in one field of the English subject?**

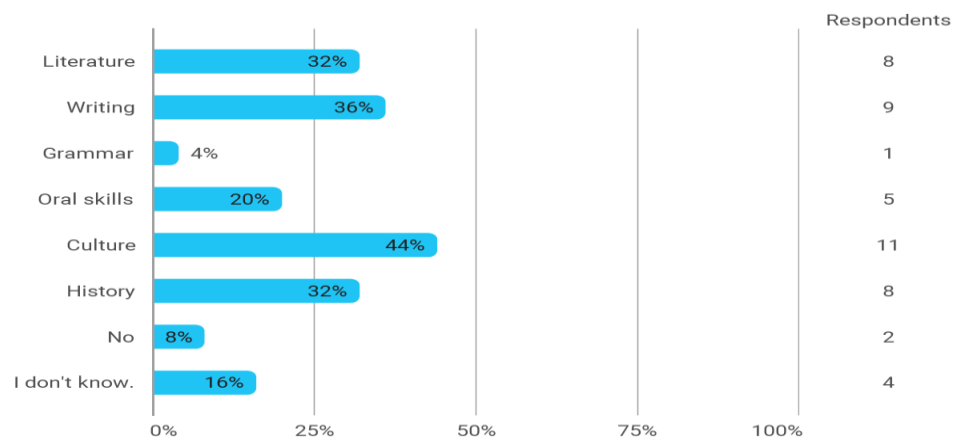
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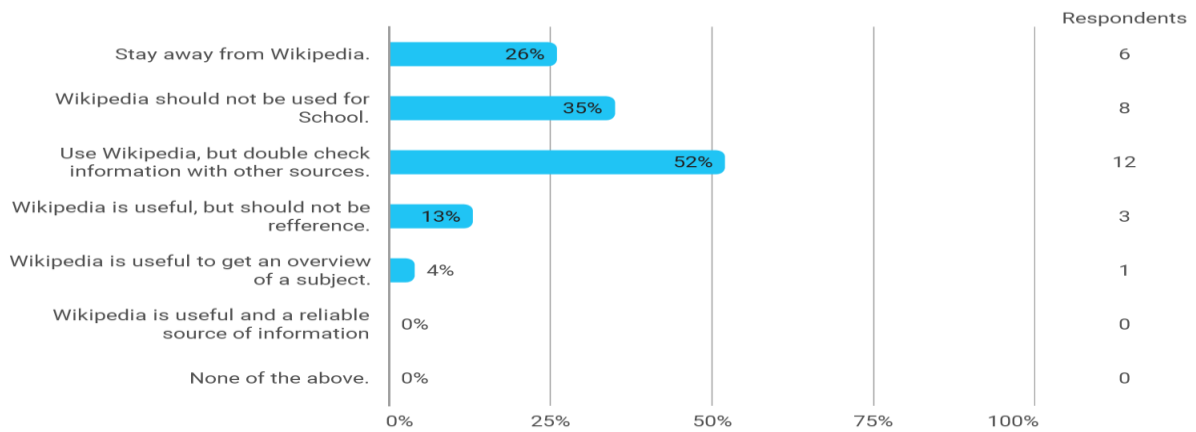


C

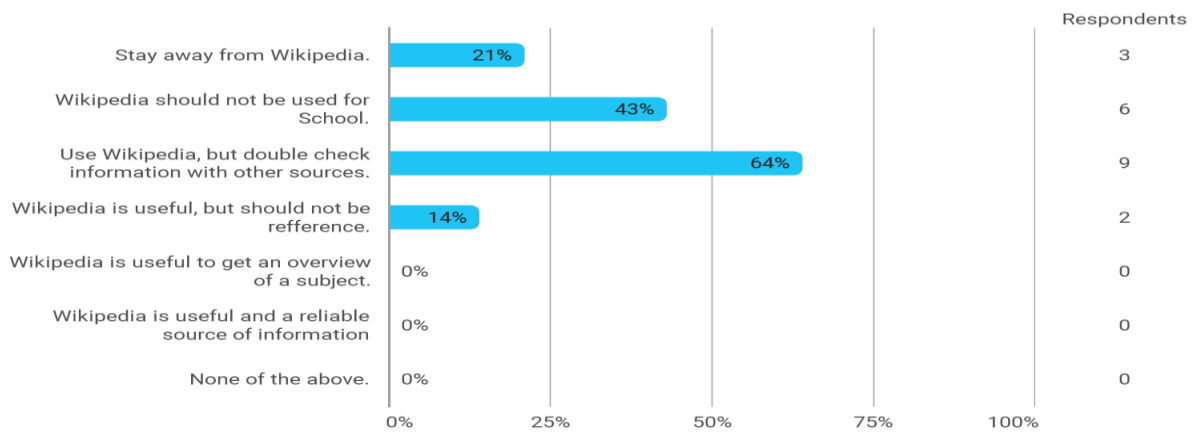


**What do your teacher say about Wikipedia?**

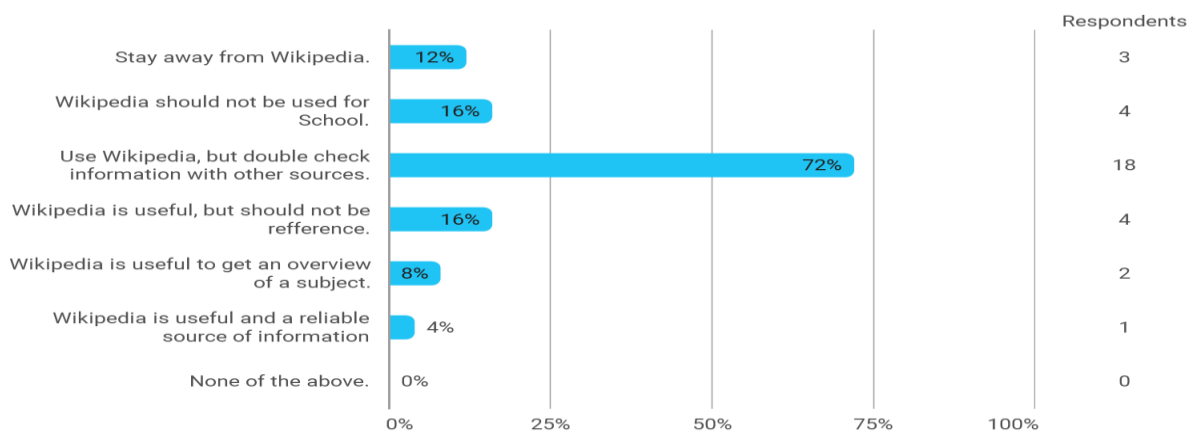
A



B



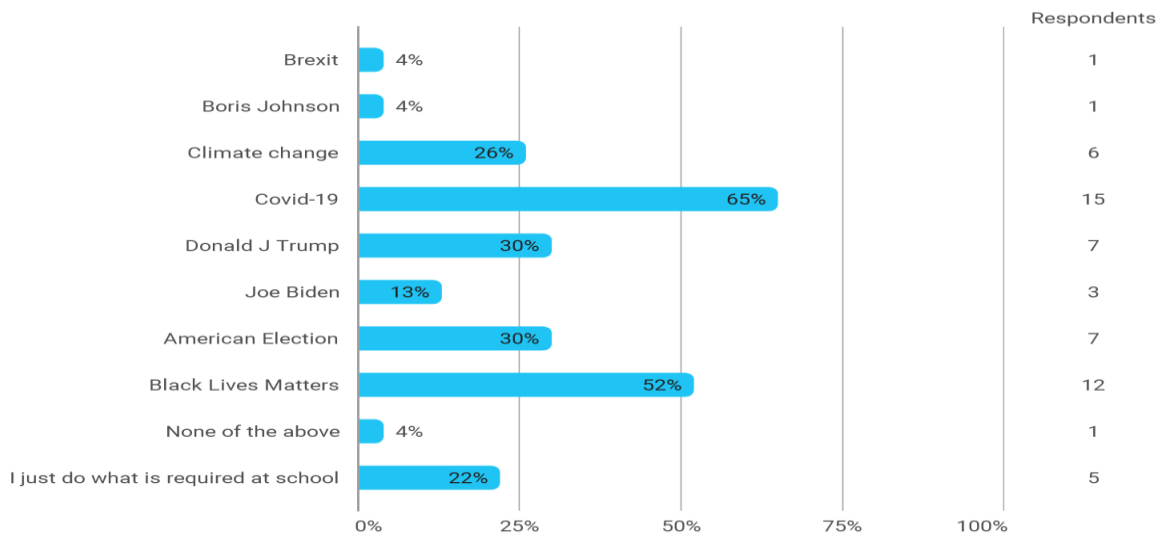
C



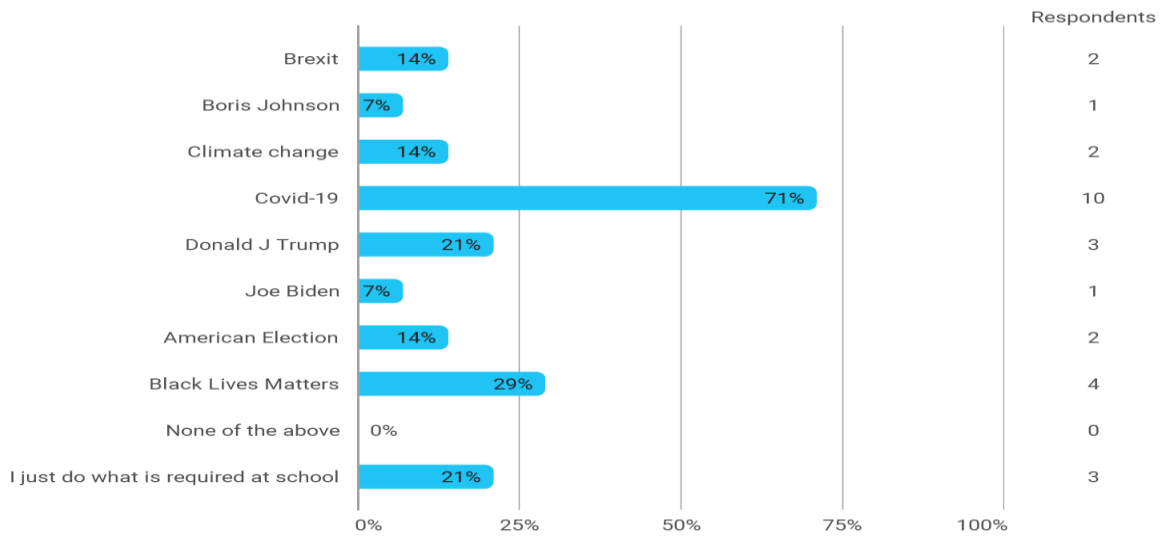
## 2. Motivational aspects

**Are you interested in contemporary issues?**

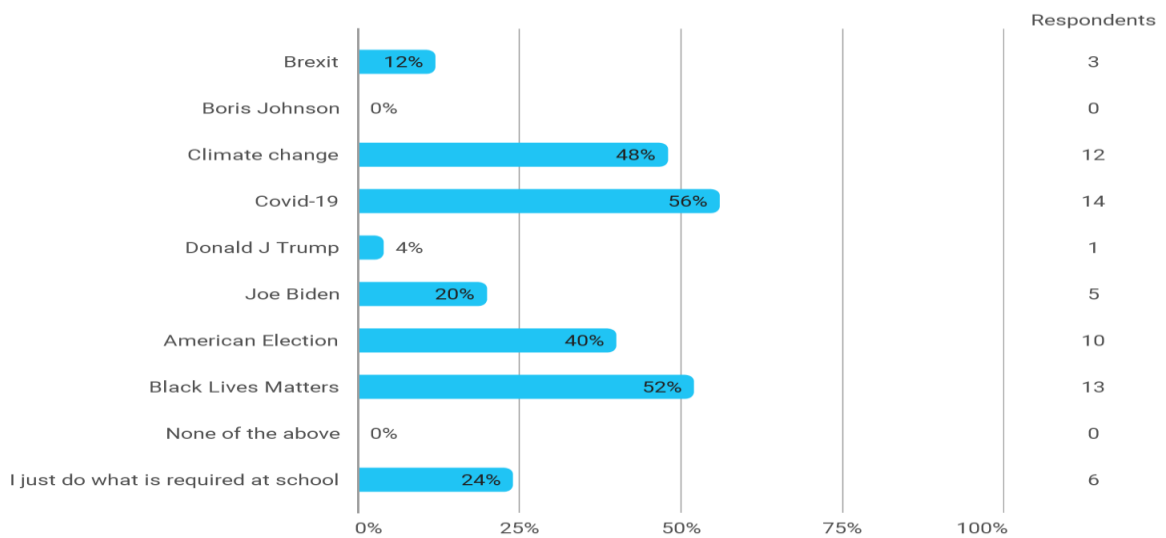
A



B

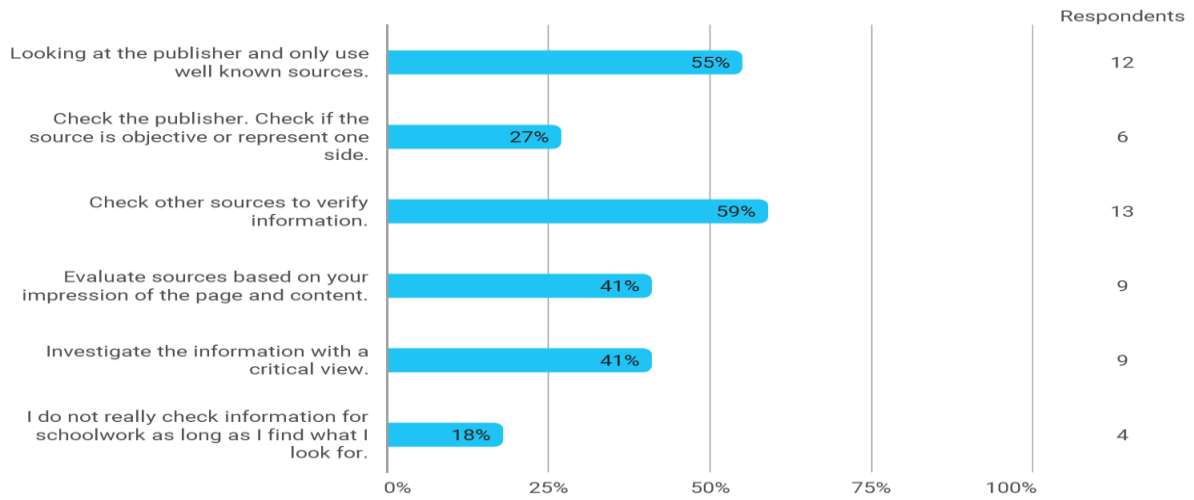


C

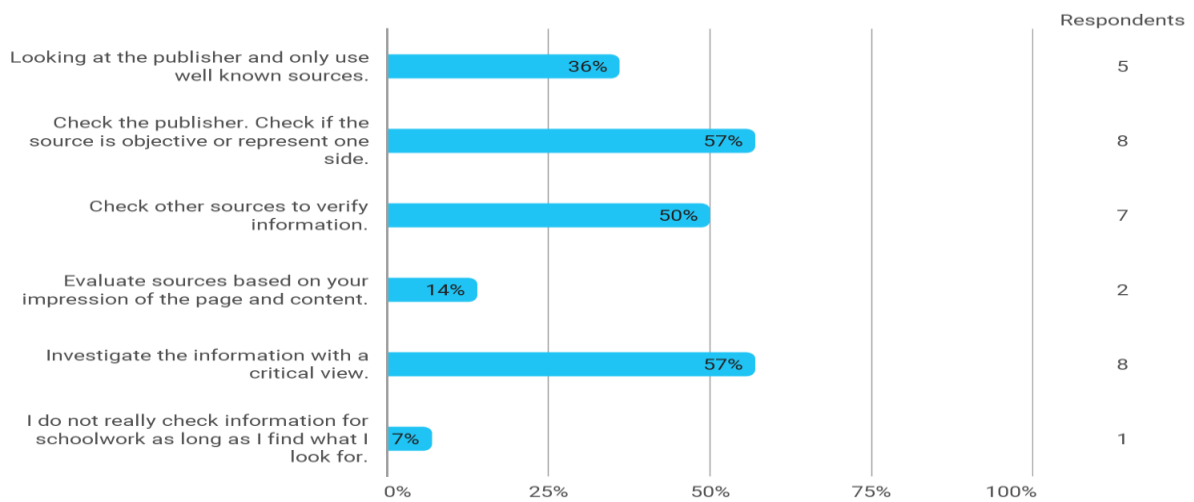


## How do you investigate information at school?

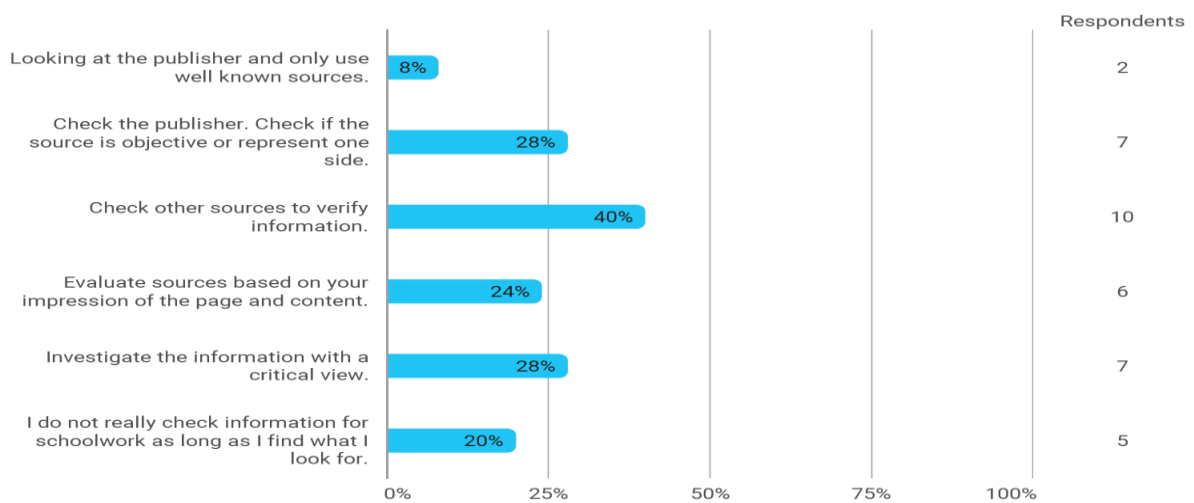
A



B



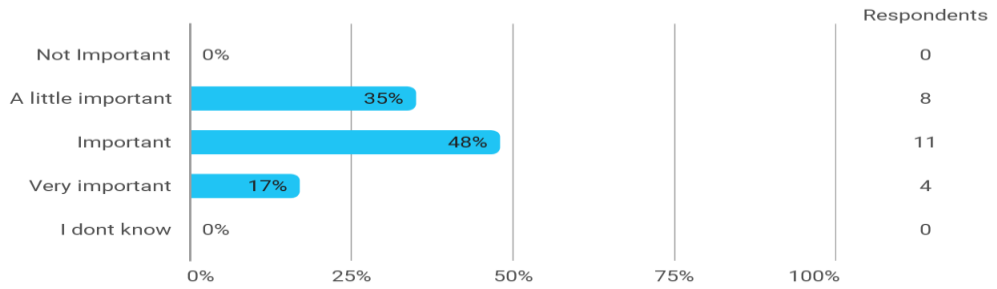
C



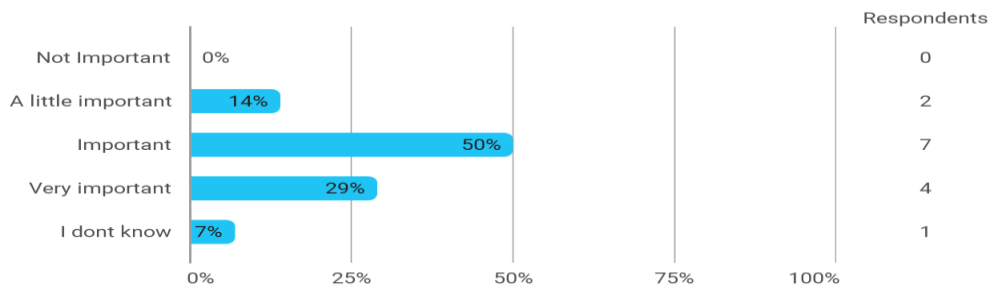
### 3. Importance of cultural knowledge

**Is it important for you to have cultural knowledge now and in the future?**

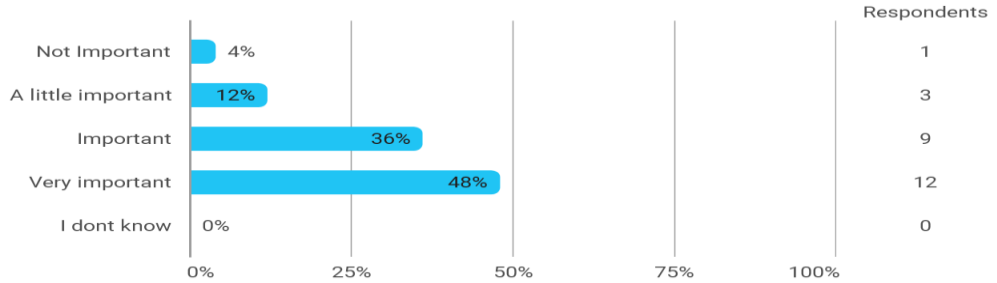
A



B

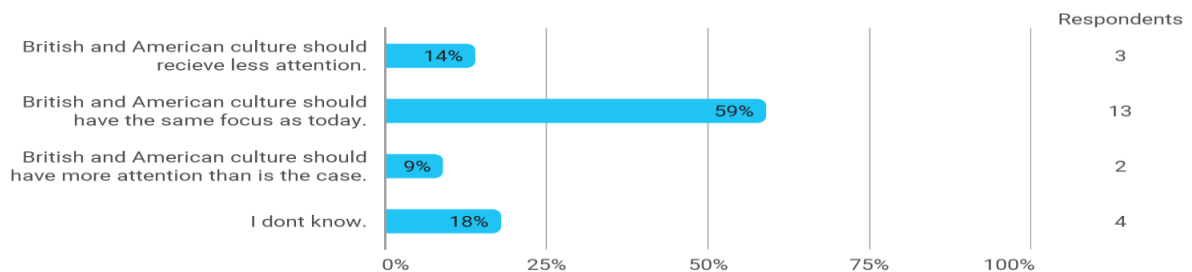


C



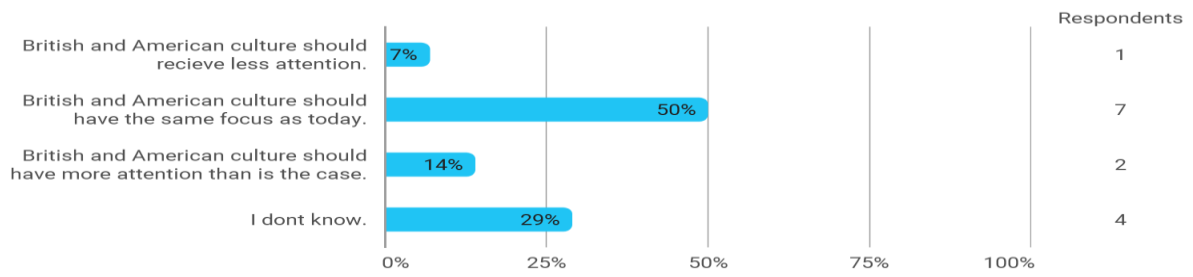
**What is your opinion about the focus on British and American culture?**

A

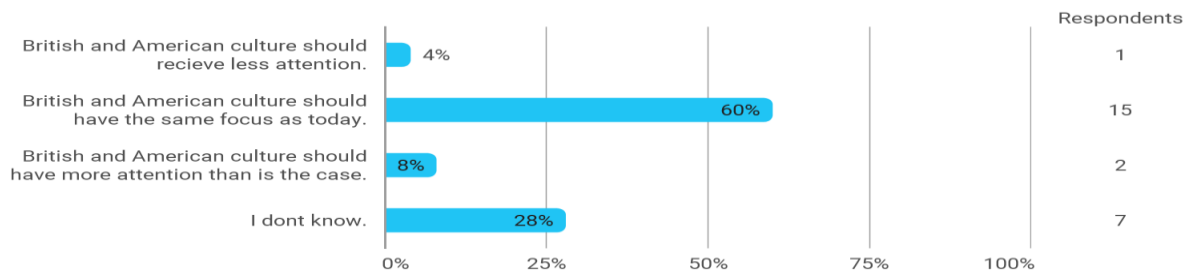




**B**

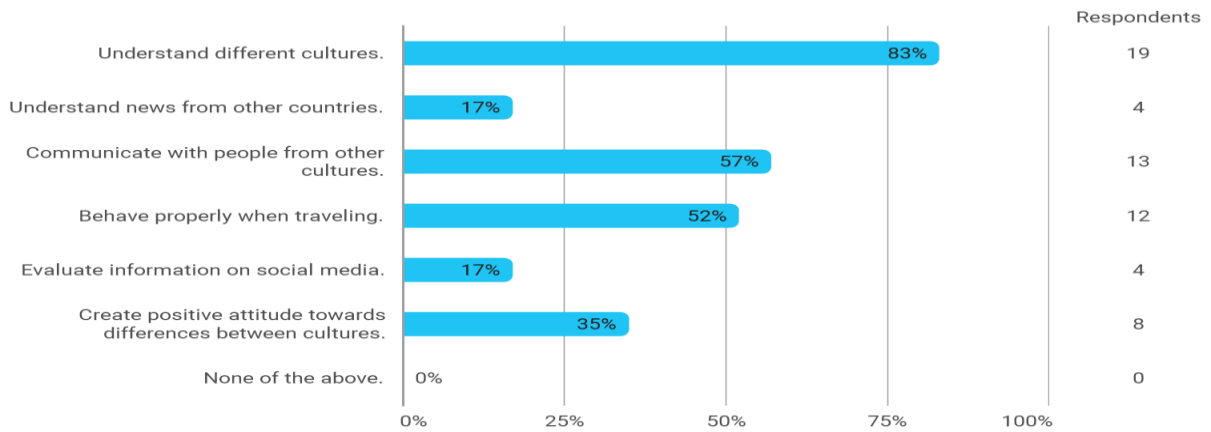


**C**

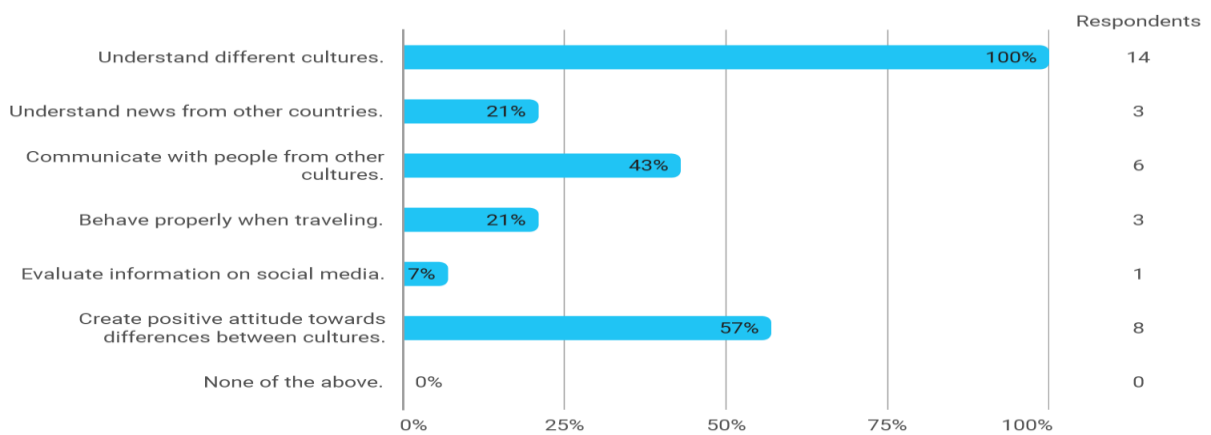


### What do you use cultural knowledge for?

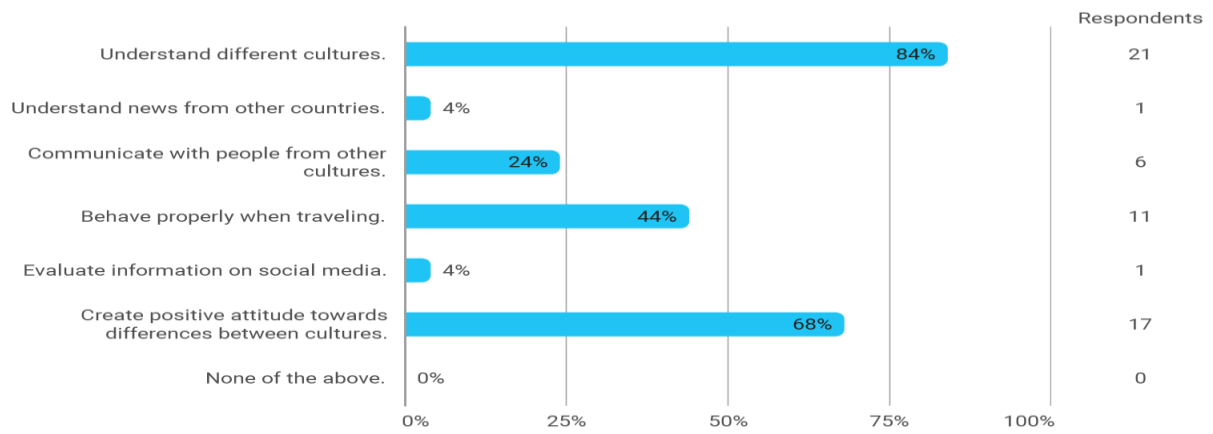
**A**



**B**

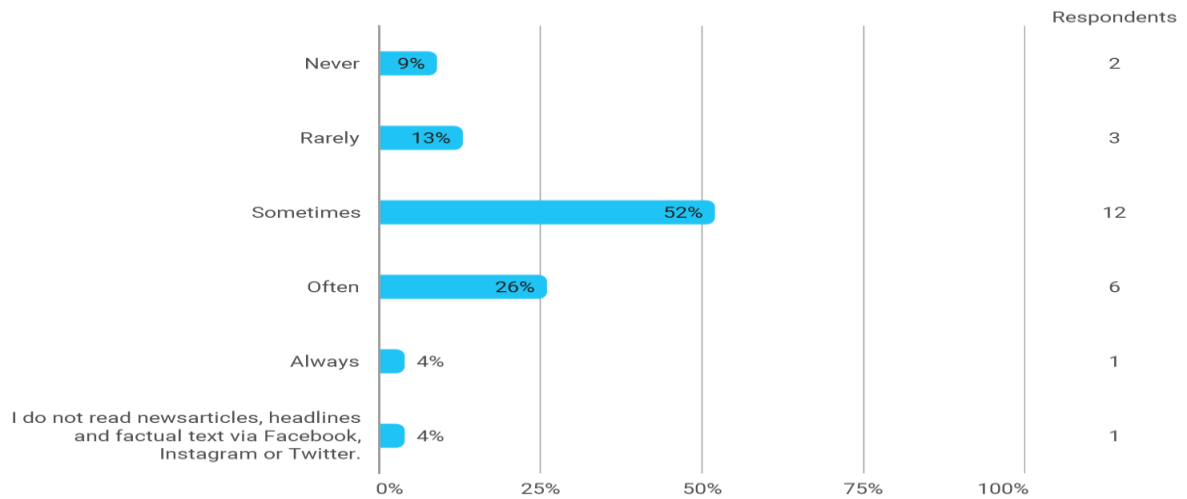


C

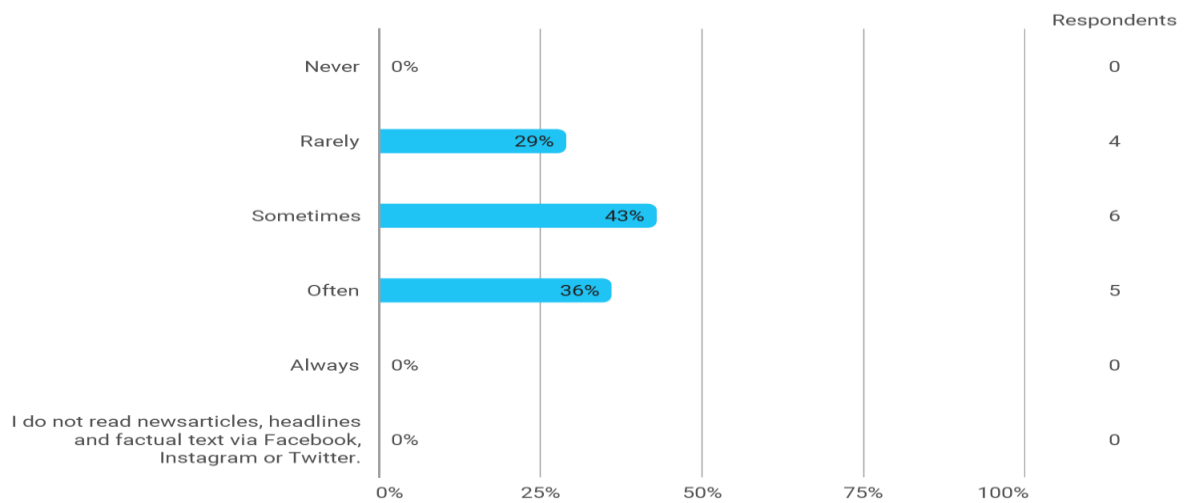


**Do you investigate information that you find on social media?**

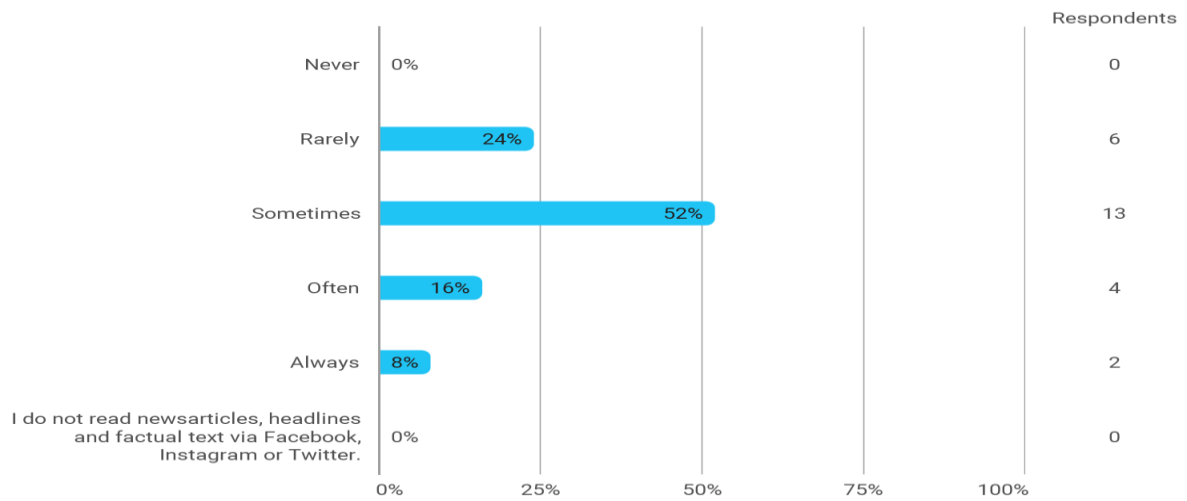
A



B

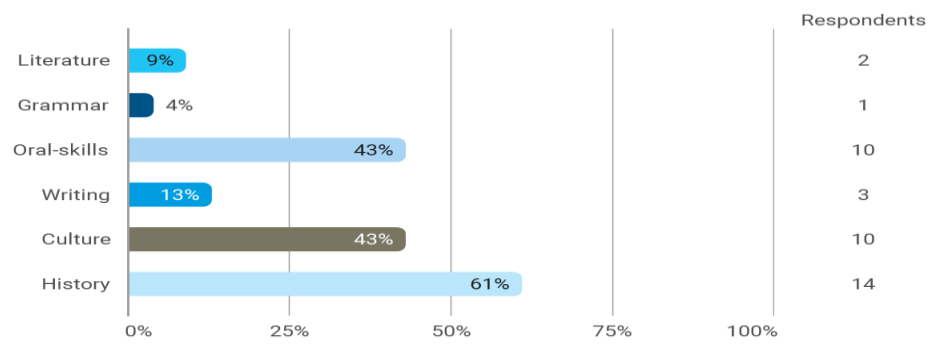


C

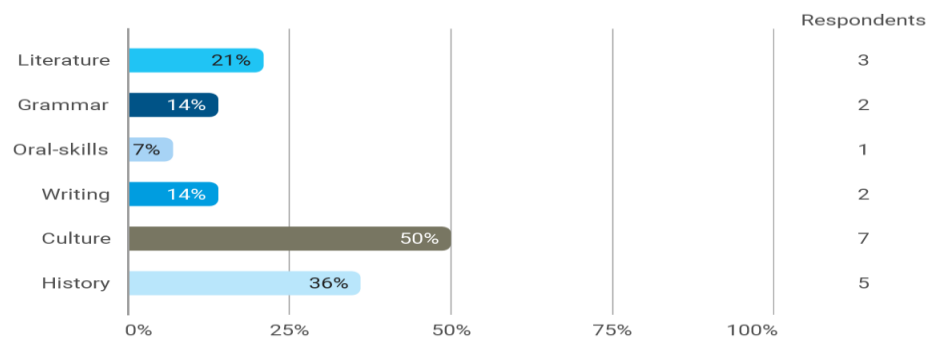


What part of the English subject do you like the best?

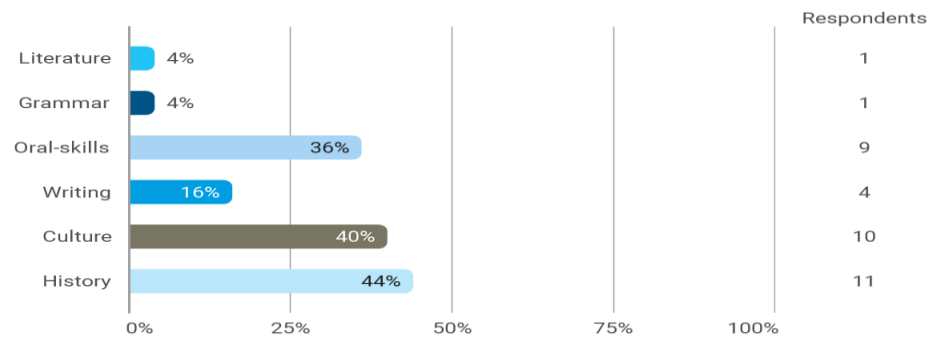
A



B



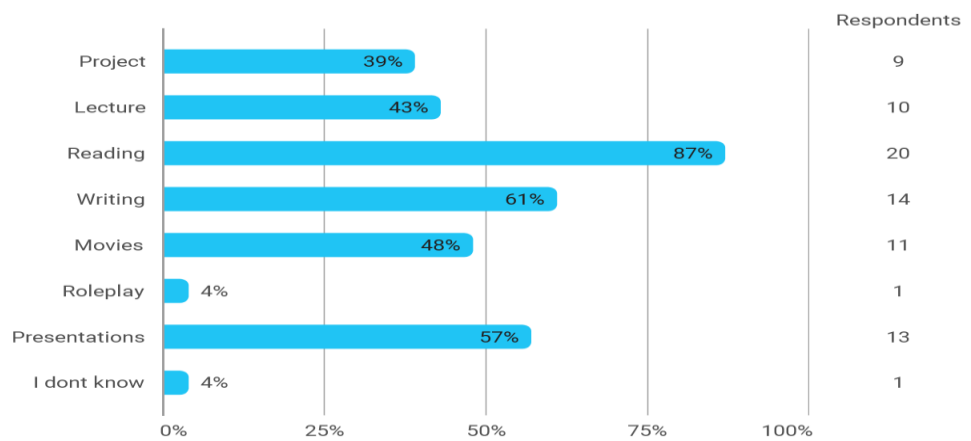
C



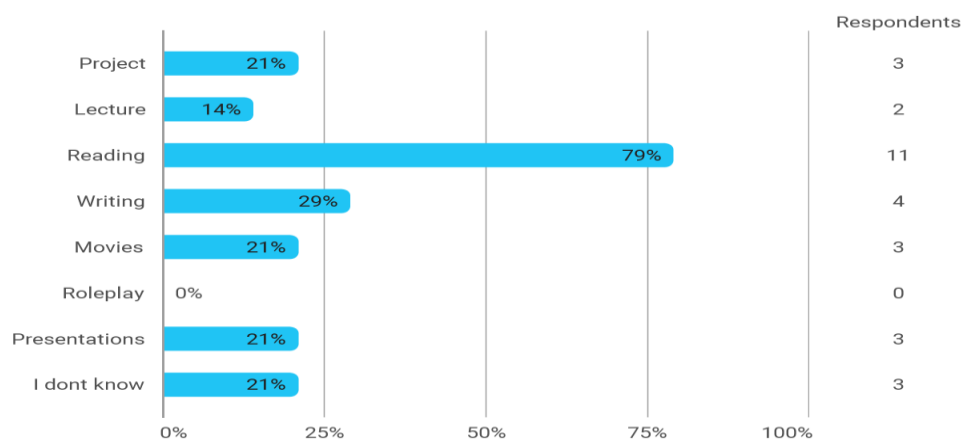
#### 4. Didactical Approaches

**How do you work with British and American culture at school?**

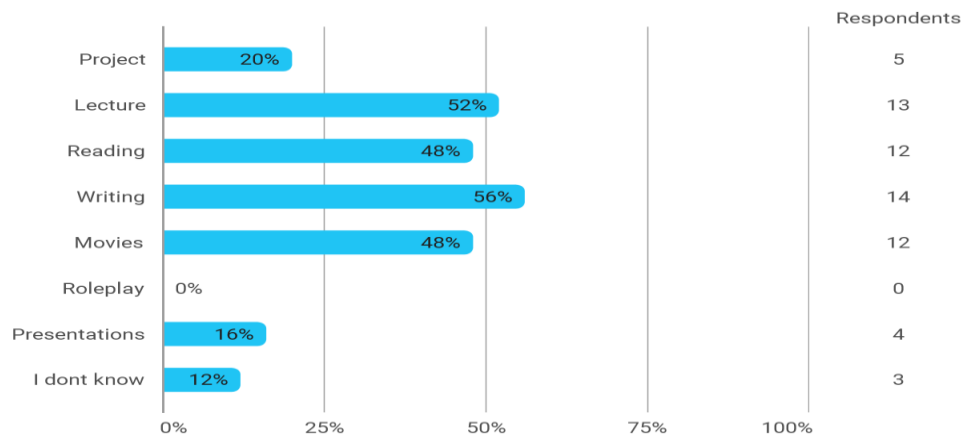
A



B

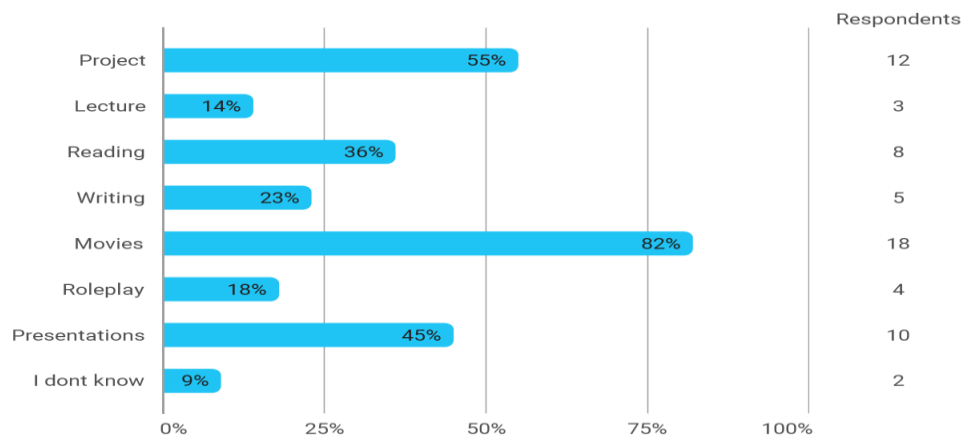


C

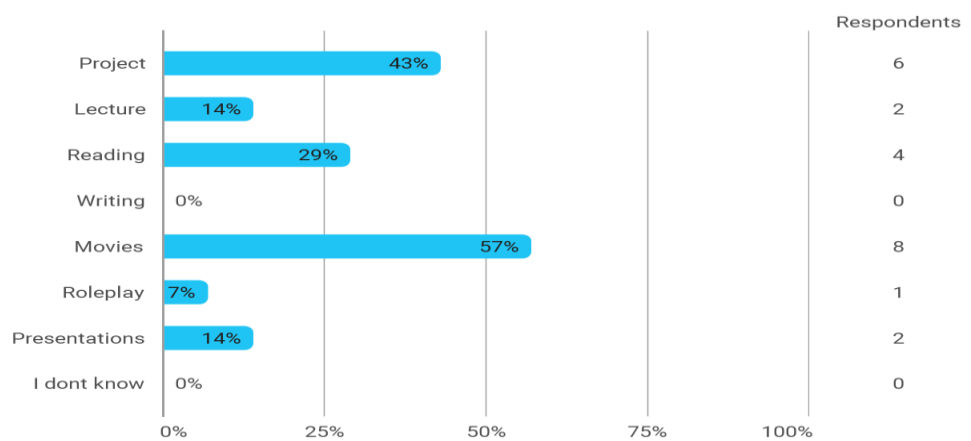


**What type of work do you learn the most from when it comes to British and American culture?**

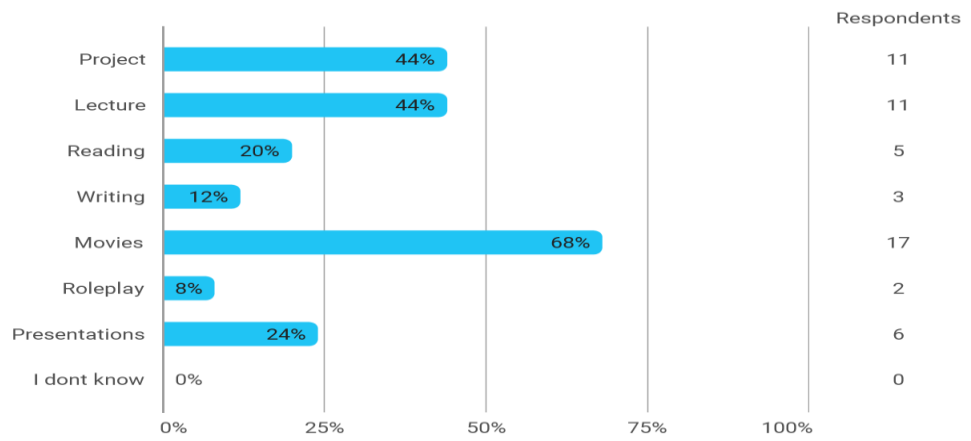
A



B

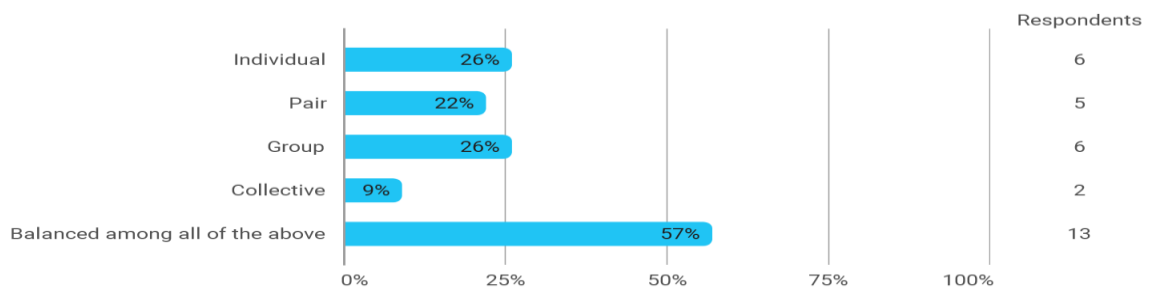


C

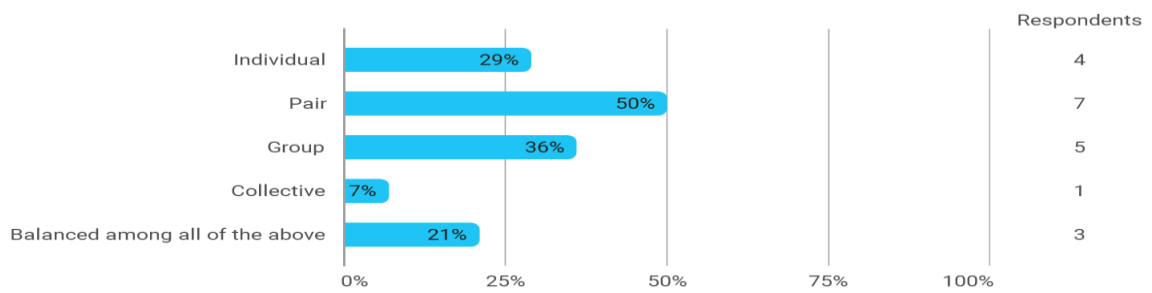


### How is the learning of British and American mostly structured?

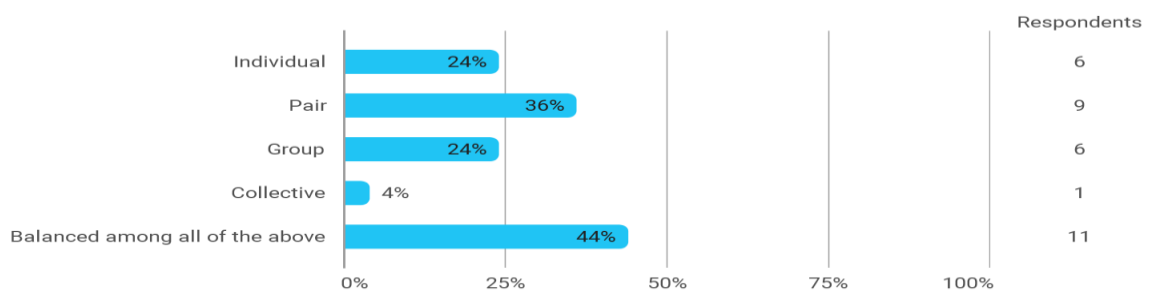
A



B



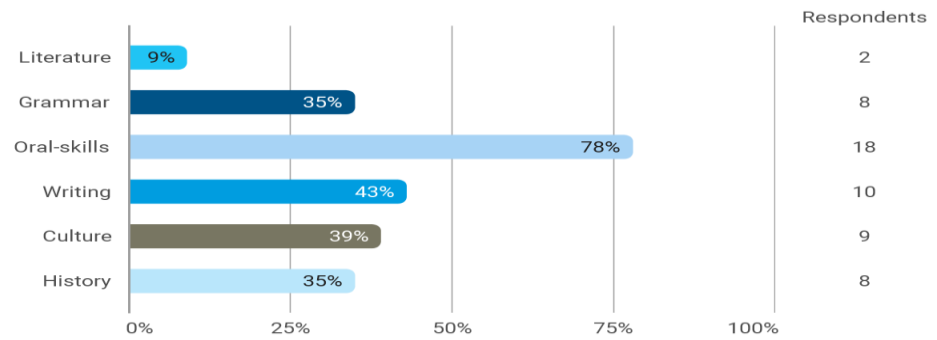
C



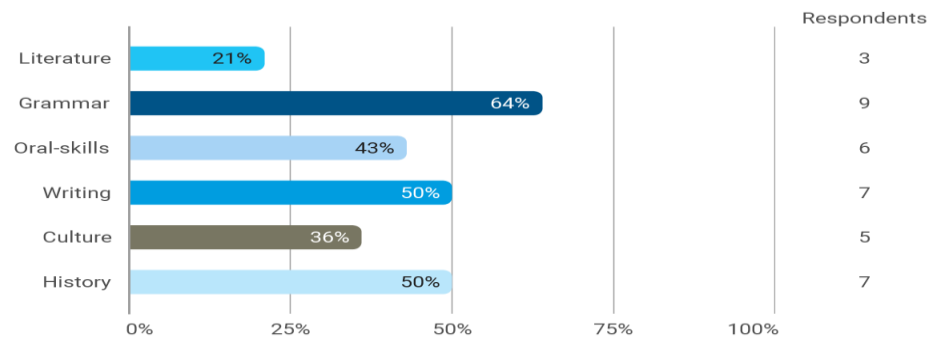
## 5. Evaluation

### What part of English is most Important?

A



B



C

