

MASTER THESIS

Educational Sciences for Basic Education

May 2020

Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom

Teachers' and pupils' understanding and practice of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the English classroom

Jasmina Majcic

The logo for Oslo Metropolitan University, featuring the words "OSLO" and "MET" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are arranged in an arch, with "OSLO" on the left and "MET" on the right, both slanted upwards from left to right.

Oslo Metropolitan University

Faculty of Teacher Education and International Studies

Department of Teacher Educations

ABSTRACT

This master thesis (MA) examines the role of differentiation in the English classroom. Specifically, the main aims of this MA thesis is to analyse how the concept of differentiated instruction is understood and practiced in Norwegian EFL classrooms and in what ways the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is being enacted for the group of higher performing pupils and the group of lower performing pupils. The data was collected by using a qualitative approach consisting of nine semi-structured interviews, whereas three teachers and six pupils were interviewed. The collected data was analysed in light of Tomlinson's model "Differentiation of Instruction" (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20) which was used as a framework for the interview guides, analysis process and as a basis for discussing the results of this study.

The results showed that there were significant misconceptions related to the concept of differentiation by the teachers in this study. Some of the teachers participating in this study believed that differentiated instruction equalled a customized learning plan for each pupil, instead of understanding differentiation as offering pupils multiple opportunities to learning. Moreover, the findings showed that differentiation was mostly registered in connection to content differentiation, and more specifically in relation to ability grouping in the subject of English. Furthermore, there were few cases where differentiation was registered in terms of process, product and affect/environment differentiation.

Finally, it was found that the lower performing pupils were predominantly in focus in the few cases where instances of differentiation was registered. Additionally, the findings revealed that the current instruction did not provide the higher performing pupils with the appropriate instruction, tasks or homework that was suitable to their academic level. Evidently, as a result of the absence in terms of focus, information and knowledge regarding the concept of differentiated instruction in the participating schools, § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is not fully enacted for the higher performing pupils nor for the lower performing pupils participating in this study. Ultimately, my recommendations would be to increase the teachers competence in terms of differentiation by having teacher educators assist and educate teachers so that they can learn both how and why one should differentiate. Also, it could be beneficial to implement practice based training in relation to differentiated instruction in teacher education programs in Norway.

SAMMENDRAG

Denne masteroppgaven undersøker tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget. Hovedmålene med denne masteroppgaven å analysere hvordan begrepet tilpasset opplæring forstås og praktiseres i engelskfaget og på hvilke måter § 1-3 i Opplæringslova (1998) blir vedtatt for gruppen av høyere presterende elever og gruppen av lavere presterende elever. Dataene ble samlet inn ved å bruke en kvalitativ tilnærming bestående av ni semi-strukturerte intervjuer, derav hvor tre lærere og seks elever ble intervjuet. De innsamlede dataene ble i hovedsak analysert i lys av Tomlinson's modell "Differentiation of Instruction" (Tomlinson, 2014, s. 20). Mer spesifikt brukes modellen gjennom hele denne oppgaven som et rammeverk for blant annet intervjuguidene, analyseprosessen og som grunnlag for å diskutere resultatene fra denne studien.

For det første, ble det funnet betydelige misoppfatninger knyttet til begrepet tilpasset opplæring av lærerne i denne studien. Noen av lærerne som deltok i denne studien forstod tilpasset opplæring som en individuell tilpasset læringsplan for hver elev, i stedet for å tilby elevene flere muligheter til læring. For det andre, viste funnene at tilpasset opplæring ble i større grad registrert i forbindelse med innholds tilpasning, nærmere bestemt i forhold til evnegrupperinger i engelskfaget. Når det gjelder tilpasninger av prosess, produkt og påvirkning/miljø var det minimalt av tilfeller der det ble registrert tilpasset opplæring.

For det tredje, ble det funnet at lavere presterende elever hovedsakelig var i fokus i de få tilfellene hvor tilpasset opplæring ble registrert. I tillegg viste funnene at den gjeldende undervisningen ga de høyt presterende elevene minimalt med tilpasset opplæring. Som et resultat av fravær på fokus, informasjon og kunnskap angående begrepet tilpasset opplæring i de deltagende skolene, ble ikke § 1-3 i Opplæringslova (1998) fullstendig fulgt for verken de høyt presterende elevene eller for de lavere presterende elevene som deltok i denne studien. Avslutningsvis vil mine anbefalinger være å øke lærerkompetansen når det gjelder tilpasset opplæring ved å la lærerutdannere hjelpe og undervise lærere, slik at de kan lære både hvordan og hvorfor en skal tilpasse undervisningen. I tillegg, kan det også være en fordel å implementere praksisbasert opplæring i forhold til tilpasset undervisning i lærerutdanningene i Norge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The last year at OsloMet has been one of the most challenging yet most educational of them all. I decided to research the topic of ‘differentiated instruction’ as I believe it is one of the most important instructional strategies that should be implemented in teaching. This study has provided me with valuable insight into the field of differentiation in Norway, which has made me even more motivated by the topic. As a result, I believe that I have gained essential knowledge and research experience regarding differentiated instruction, that will be extremely important and beneficial for me as a future teacher and for my future pupils.

Most importantly, I want to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dina Tzagari, who has supported and helped me tremendously. Even though Prof. Tzagari has countless of projects she is engaged in, she has always found the time to send me e-mails, research articles and answer my very many questions, which is really appreciated. She has shown great interest in my MA and has spent a lot of time providing me with detailed feedback, comments and suggestions regarding my thesis. I am grateful for the support, help and time she has dedicated to my MA. Moreover, I want to thank my mentor, Dr Tom Muir, for providing me with essential comments and feedback regarding my writing in this thesis. Also, I want to thank my boyfriend, my friends and my family for supporting and encouraging me throughout the process of this research project. Lastly, I would like to thank the teacher and pupil participants for their time, contribution and interest in my research project.

Oslo

May, 2020

Jasmina Majcic

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	I
SAMMENDRAG	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	VIII
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Research questions	3
1.2 Definitions of terms.....	3
1.3 Outline	5
2. THEORETICAL FRAMING	7
2.1 Differentiated instruction in the classroom	7
2.1.1 General principles of differentiation	12
2.1.2 Key elements of differentiation	13
2.1.3 Pupils needs and variances	16
2.1.4 Sociocultural perspective on learning	18
2.2 Differentiated instruction tools	20
2.2.1 Bloom´s Taxonomy	20
2.3 Differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom	22
2.3.1 Second language acquisition hypotheses	23
2.4 Differentiated instruction in the Norwegian Educational System	24
2.4.1 Research on Differentiated Instruction in Norway.....	28
2.5 International research on Differentiated Instruction	32
3. METHODOLOGY	35
3.1 Research design	35
3.2 Data collection.....	37

3.2.1	Semi-structured interview	37
3.2.2	Interview guides	38
3.2.3	Interview questions for teachers.....	39
3.2.4	Informants	39
3.2.5	Teacher interviews	43
3.2.6	Pupil interviews.....	44
3.3	Data analysis.....	44
3.3.1	Step 1: Transcribing	45
3.3.2	Step 2: Coding.....	46
3.3.3	Step 3: Categorization and analyses	47
3.4	Reliability and validity	48
3.4.1	Reliability	48
3.4.2	Validity	50
3.4.3	Ethical considerations.....	52
4.	FINDINGS	54
4.1	Concept of differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom	54
4.1.1	Content	56
4.1.2	Process.....	58
4.1.3	Product.....	60
4.1.4	Affect/environment	62
4.2	Differentiation according to pupils, readiness, interest and learning profile	63
4.2.1	Pupils readiness	63
4.2.2	Pupils interests.....	65
4.2.3	Pupils learning profile	66
4.3	Challenges	68
4.3.1	Resources.....	68
4.3.2	Differentiation in relation to the HPP and LPP	70
4.3.3	Consequences	71
5.	DISCUSSION	74

5.1 How is the concept of differentiated instruction understood and practiced in Norwegian EFL classrooms?	74
5.2 How is § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act being enacted for the HPP and LPP in Norwegian EFL classrooms?.....	83
5.3 Contribution, limitations and further recommendations	89
6. CONCLUSION.....	93
7. REFERENCES	94
8. ATTACHMENTS	99
8.1 Appendix 1: NSD approval	99
8.2 Appendix 2: Interview guide: teachers.....	100
8.3 Appendix 3: Interview guide: pupils	103
8.4 Appendix 4: Consent form: teachers	105
8.5 Appendix 5: Consent form: pupils/parents.....	108

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2A: Differentiation of Instruction 11

Figure 2B. Model based on Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development. 19

Figure 2C. Bloom’s Taxonomy. 21

Figure 3A. Flowchart of informants and their relationship 42

Table 1. Table of the teachers’ English teaching experience. 44

Table 2. Table of the categorization and analysis process. 48

1. Introduction

“Educators should be champions of every student who enters the schoolhouse doors”

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 27)

Teachers today, perhaps more than ever, are aware that traditional teaching will most likely not meet the needs of all the different pupil groups that are to be found within the regular classroom. The principle of differentiated instruction is highly central in the Norwegian Educational system today. Furthermore, section §1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act states that education must be differentiated according to the pupils’ abilities and aptitudes (Opplæringslova, 1998, §1-3). Nonetheless, most pupils come from diverse backgrounds with different life experiences, motivation, abilities and learning techniques. That is to say that it is evident that the different individuals within a classroom will most likely need some form of differentiated instruction in order to truly succeed and develop their full potential in school. According to Tobin & McInnes (2008, p. 3), teachers seem to understand the necessity of differentiating pupils’ needs in the classroom, yet many teachers report that they are unsure of how to truly carry this out in practice. Moreover, teachers also report that differentiating teaching to different individual needs in the classroom is one of their greatest challenges as a teacher (Tobin & McInnes, 2008, p. 3-4).

Throughout my teacher education and practise periods I have experienced several times that there seems to be a greater focus on differentiating instruction for the group of lower performing pupils than there is for the group of higher performing pupils in various school subjects. As a future teacher, I firmly believe in the principle that each and every pupil should be welcomed and valued as they are. In other words, whether one is struggling or excelling in a particular subject at school, as a teacher one should always be able to provide efficient instruction, assessment and feedback in order for the pupils to continue to develop their own particular capacities as learners and as human beings. As Tomlinson mentions, one of the many goals that a teacher has is to ensure the pupils’ steady growth, whether it is towards or beyond the group goals (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 22).

Furthermore, as mentioned, the stressed importance of lower performing pupils throughout my teacher education and throughout the practice periods has led me to question where the focus on the higher performing pupils in school is. I have for instance observed several higher performing

pupils in the subject of English finishing the tasks given by the teacher quickly, which often resulted in the pupils waiting for the rest of the pupils to finish while staying idle, doing nothing in particular. The teachers' responses when the pupil or pupils had finished the given tasks were often based on encouragements like giving them the opportunity to go borrow a book at the library or to instruct them to do their homework. These similar observations during my practice periods have led me to reflect on differentiated instruction, particularly in the English language classroom. Moreover, research shows that differentiated instruction is highly effective for higher performing pupils as well as lower performing pupils (Weselby, 2014). Also, considering the Norwegian Education Act, Section §1-3, which states that education must be differentiated to pupils' abilities and aptitudes (Opplæringslova, 1998, §1-3), the topic of differentiated instruction in the English classroom seemed both interesting and necessary to research further.

This main purpose of this master thesis is therefore to investigate both teachers' and pupils' understanding and practice of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the English language classroom. This particular master thesis will have its focus on pupils and teachers in primary school, mainly grades 5-7. The reasoning for choosing to research differentiated instruction in the grades 5-7 is mainly due to the fact that there does not seem to be much focus on differentiated instruction in relation to primary schools in recent studies nor in our teacher education programme. Therefore, it seems interesting to take a closer look at how both pupils and teachers view differentiated instruction in the subject of English and in what ways differentiated instruction is being implemented in English teaching in Norwegian classrooms.

1.1 Research questions

Based on the discussion in the previous section in relation to differentiated instruction in the English classroom, two research questions were developed:

1. How is the concept of differentiated instruction understood and practiced in Norwegian EFL classrooms?
2. In what ways is §1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act being enacted for the group of higher performing pupils and the group of lower performing pupils in Norwegian EFL classrooms?

By analyzing research findings from the teachers as well as the higher performing pupils and the lower performing pupils, the research questions will be possible to answer.

1.2 Definitions of terms

In this section, the different terms used in this MA thesis are presented and defined. Considering the fact that there are multiple definitions of various terms to be found in the literature, it is important to clarify these in advance.

First, in a Norwegian context, the term ‘adapted education’ seems to dominate the Norwegian research field and practice. There seems to be no specific reasoning for the choice of a different term in Norwegian research and literature nor from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training than the one that is predominantly being used internationally. One possible reason may perhaps be that the term *tilpasset oppl ring* in Norwegian has directly been translated from Norwegian to English, resulting in the term being named ‘adapted education’ instead of ‘differentiated instruction’. Another possible reason may be that ‘differentiated instruction’ could be perceived in a more negative manner than adapted education, because of the term ‘differentiation’ which may indicate that someone is different. Yet, these are just speculations and they need to be further investigated. However, in this particular MA thesis, the term ‘differentiated instruction’ is used instead of ‘adapted education’. The main reasoning behind this is that the term ‘differentiated instruction’ has and is predominantly being used in international research and literature. Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstandings and confusion when presenting and

discussing existing research and literature, the term differentiated instruction is used throughout this research project.

For this current study, four definitions of ‘differentiation’ are discussed in detail. One key version of the term comes from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018), which describes ‘differentiation’ as the measures that the school initiates to ensure that every individual receives the best possible benefits from the ordinary education in the classroom. This version of differentiation is supported by the work of Weselby (2014), who states that it involves teaching the material to all pupils while using a variety of instructional strategies or delivering lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on the ability level of each pupil in the classroom. Furthermore, this seems to correspond well to Chapman and Gregory’s (2007) emphasis on the uniqueness of each pupil and their abilities. However, the most comprehensive work on differentiation comes from Tomlinson who focuses on teachers’ proactive responses to learners needs. Tomlinson sees differentiation taking place on the following dimensions (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20):

- Content: what pupils learn or how the pupils will access the information, skills and the ideas that are essential to understanding.
- Process: the variety of activities through which the pupils make sense of key ideas using essential knowledge and skills.
- Product: how pupils express what they know and understand.
- Affect/learning environment: the classroom conditions and interactions that set the tone and expectations of learning.

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 82)

In what follows, while all of the definitions of differentiation are useful, Tomlinson’s in particular is helpful in understanding the current research. The current study has been informed by her discussions.

Furthermore, according to the Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2016:14, p. 8), higher performing pupils tend to learn more quickly and acquire more complex knowledge compared to their peers. Moreover, they state that higher performing pupils are not necessarily high achievers. However, they have a large potential for learning in one or more subject areas. As stated by Tomlinson (2014,

p. 19), in order for the higher performing pupils to develop their full potential academically, they may need:

- To skip practice of previously mastered skills and understanding
- Activities and products that are more complex, open-ended, abstract and multifaceted, drawing on advanced
- A brisk pace of work – or perhaps a slower pace to allow for greater depth of exploration of a topic

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 19)

Lower performing pupils can be defined based on their low ability to perform in different subjects. According to Tomlinson (2014, p. 18), pupils vary in readiness, meaning that pupils with less developed readiness can often fall into the category of a lower performing pupil. However, Tomlinson (2014, p. 19) states that it is very important that we do not understand the term readiness as a synonym for ability. Tomlinson (2014, p. 18) states that pupils with less developed readiness may for example need:

- Someone to help them identify and make up gaps in past learning so they can move ahead
- More opportunities for direct instruction or practice
- Activities or products that are more structured or more concrete, with fewer steps, closer to their experiences, requiring simpler reading skills
- A more deliberate pace of learning

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 18)

1.3 Outline

This thesis has been organised into six different chapters. In addition to the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framing of this thesis. In Chapter 3, the research methods and design are elaborated and presented. Chapter 4 contains the findings of this research project, whereas the findings are analysed and discussed. Chapter 5 mainly discusses the research questions in light of the relevant findings and theory. Finally, in Chapter 6, the results of this study are

summarised and recommendations for further research are presented. Additionally, in Chapter 8, the appendixes include the NSD approval, the interview guides and the consent forms for both the teachers and pupils/parents.

2. Theoretical Framing

In this chapter, an overview of the theoretical framing in relation to differentiated instruction both in general and in relation to the subject of English is presented. Firstly, an overview of the concept of differentiated instruction is elaborated (2.1). Notably, Section 2.1 will greatly rely on Carol Ann Tomlinson's model regarding differentiated instruction. The reasoning for that is due to the fact that Tomlinson is known for her seminal work including curriculum and instruction for struggling and advanced learners, effective instruction in heterogeneous settings, and encouraging creative and critical thinking in the classroom. Not to mention, Tomlinson is the author of over 200 articles, book chapters, books and other professional development materials involving differentiated instruction (ASCD, n.d). Then, Bloom's Taxonomy is presented in relation to differentiation tools (2.2). Next, different language acquisition theories are explained (2.3). Followed by a section presenting the concept of differentiated instruction in a Norwegian context (2.4). Finally, a section based on prior international research regarding differentiated instruction is presented (2.5).

2.1 Differentiated instruction in the classroom

“There is no illusion that a single lesson plan will work effectively for every learner, no intent to offer a take it or leave it approach to learning”

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 16)

In order to understand what the concept of differentiated instruction entails, it is important to establish both how differentiated instruction works and what differentiated instruction is. Even though there is no specific image of what differentiated instruction should look like in a classroom, some characteristics seem to be common in the classrooms that focus on the potential of the individual learner (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 14). Furthermore, these common characteristics in some way reveal the nature of differentiation in the classroom. According to Tomlinson (2014, p. 15), the key to pupil's success in the classroom is the learning environment. Also, Tomlinson (2014, p. 15) states that teachers that are successful regarding differentiated instruction in their classroom help pupils understand that:

- They are welcomed and valued as they are.

- The teacher is confident of their capacity to learn what they need to learn and will support them vigorously as they do so.
- They will work together to enhance one another's growth.
- Both successes and failures are inevitable in the learning process, and this classroom is safe for both.
- Hard work will result in observable growth.
- Routines and processes in the classroom are designed to give all pupils access to whatever they may need for success.

(Tomlinson, 2014, p. 15).

In order to get a clearer view as to what differentiated instruction actually is, it could be beneficial to look at some commonly held misconceptions regarding the concept of differentiated instruction. Fox & Hoffman (2011) have researched and gathered the most common misconceptions in terms of differentiated instruction. One of the most commonly held misconceptions is that differentiation is a fad, which Fox & Hoffman strongly disagree with. The concept of differentiated instruction is not a new concept, yet, rather a time-tested hallmark of good teaching. Another common misconception is that differentiated instruction is only for the pupils that are struggling. The main idea behind differentiated instruction is that all pupils have different learning styles, readiness and interest, therefore instruction should be differentiated to fit the individuals in the classroom. Pupils with diagnosed learning disabilities and pupils with more advanced curriculum will benefit from differentiated instruction (Fox & Hoffman, 2011, p. 10).

Likewise, many teachers seem to believe that differentiated instruction equals a customized learning plan for each pupil in every lesson. However, according to Fox & Hoffman (2011) there are simple techniques that can be applied to the classroom to benefit the wide range of pupil groups that are to be found in the classroom. Moreover, many schools seem to think that the concept of differentiation is expensive. Differentiated instruction does not demand costly materials such as new textbooks or specialized technology, most teachers will only need to modify their presentation, the interactivity of the lesson and how pupils validate their achieved knowledge. Another important common misconception is that differentiated instruction is optional. Teachers need to acknowledge the fact that pupils are different individuals who will most likely need different types of

relationships and instruction to be able to succeed in school. Moreover, Fox & Hoffman state that teachers who are not embracing these instructional strategies, are basically not doing their job as a teacher (Fox & Hoffman, 2011, p. 10)

Additionally, another commonly held misconception regarding differentiated instruction is that it is something that a teacher does once every now and then, and then is finished with it. Fox & Hoffman argue that differentiated instruction is a philosophy of teaching that is the foundation of effective teaching, which is to be used meet the individual needs of the pupils. Also, many teachers seem to think that differentiated instruction is about giving more work to the pupils who finish tasks early. Fox & Hoffman claim that the message “more” is challenging, is wrong, besides they also stress that quality over quantity. Meaning that one should be able to provide optional challenging assignments and opportunities for those who seem to master the given tasks or topic early. The final commonly held misconception that Fox & Hoffman mention is that differentiated instruction is difficult. Yet, differentiated instruction entails just a new way of thinking and it takes planning. There are many strategies that are simple to work with, which allows the pupils to succeed (2011, p. 11). Ultimately, the reasoning for including both characteristics and misconceptions connected to differentiated instruction is to establish a framework that portrays how differentiated instruction works and what differentiation is and is not. Furthermore, by doing so, it allows for the findings of this study to be analysed and discussed in light the given framework.

Moreover, if we are to take a closer look at the core of differentiated instruction in the classroom, the modification of the four curriculum related elements: content, process, product and affect/environment seem to be highly relevant (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20). Furthermore, these four elements need to be based on three categories of pupils needs and variances: readiness, interest and learning profile (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2013, p. 15). Tomlinson illustrates these different principles and elements in her model titled “Differentiation of Instruction”. The model consists of three different levels, whereas the first level consists of the general principles of differentiation, the second level consists of key elements of differentiation while the third level is based on pupils needs and variances. The many components in Tomlinson’s model all affect each other and they should therefore be assessed in its entirety. Furthermore, considering the complexity of Tomlinson’s model, the model is analysed and presented in order to be able to present various

features that differentiation entails. Additionally, it is used heavily throughout this thesis to be able to analyse and discuss the findings of this study in an suitable manner. The following section examines the concept differentiated instruction in the classroom. The model “Differentiation of Instruction” which provides a concept map of the fundamental elements of differentiation is presented in figure 2A below.

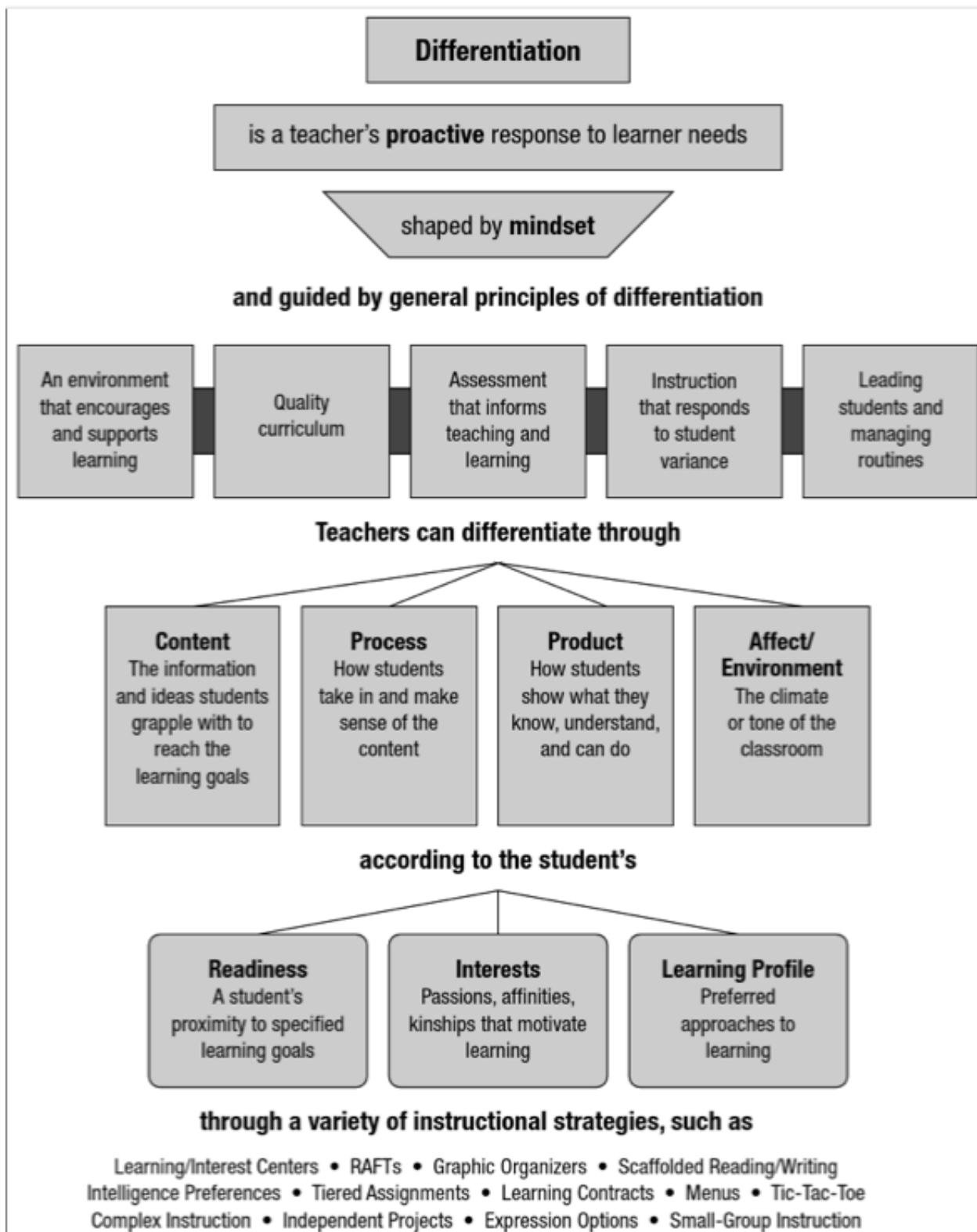


Figure 2A: Differentiation of Instruction (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20)

2.1.1 General principles of differentiation

The first level of Tomlinson's model (2014, p. 20) presents five general principles of differentiation. The first principle involves an environment that encourages and supports learning. This principle may imply that in order for differentiation to be successful within a classroom, a positive and including learning environment must be in place prior. Furthermore, the principle may perhaps be considered essential in terms of creating a learning environment in the classroom where the pupils feel appreciated and welcomed as they are. Also, making the classroom a safe place for pupils to make mistakes, learn, develop educationally and to secure personal growth is crucial in relation to the first principle of differentiation.

The second principle is called quality curriculum, which basically focuses on the subject's curriculum and the importance of a curriculum that emphasizes the diversity of the pupil groups that are to be found in the classroom. Furthermore, the importance of the curriculum being organized in a way that supports learning is fundamental here (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 18). Additionally, Tomlinson argues that no one can learn everything that is in a textbook, therefore teachers have to express what the most essential parts for learners to know and understand are (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 16). Clarity regarding the curriculum and the defined curriculum goals, increases the probability of introducing it in a way that each pupil finds meaningful and appropriate (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 17).

The third principle called assessment that informs teaching and learning, focuses on the importance of assessment in relation to differentiated instruction. Tomlinson claims that assessment is diagnostic and ongoing in terms of differentiation. Also, assessment provides teachers with new data everyday regarding their pupils' readiness, skills, interests, ideas and their approaches to learning (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 17). Assessment is considered highly important in terms of the teacher learning about their pupils existing knowledge and their potential to acquire more knowledge. This can be seen in light of Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" (1978).

From here on now, the "Zone of Proximal Development" will be referred to as ZPD. Vygotsky's ZPD is further discussed in Section 2.2.4. The fourth principle is called instruction that responds to student variance. This particular principle focuses on the variance of pupils and the different instructional activities that should be used accordingly. The teacher should be aware and know

their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, by doing so, the election of appropriate activities will be easier to manage in the classroom.

The fifth and final principle, leading students and managing routines, underlines the significance of the teachers' role as a classroom leader. The teachers' role is to be a clear and understanding resource for the pupils. The teacher should be able to determine clear classroom routines regarding for example unwanted behaviour and peer-collaborations.

2.1.2 Key elements of differentiation

The second level on Tomlinson's (2014, p. 20) model focuses on four different elements of differentiation. The first element is content, which entails the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils need to acquire (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2010). Content can be viewed upon as the "input" of teaching and learning. According to Tomlinson (2017, p. 124), there are two ways of to consider content differentiation. The first way is to adapt what we teach or what we want the pupils to learn, while the second way is to adapt the way we give pupils access to what we teach or want the pupils to learn. Additionally, in terms of content differentiation, methods that pupils can use to acquire knowledge are emphasized here.

Examples on different methods could be independent reading, partner reading, text on tape, text with images, listening comprehension, online research, communication with experts, group demonstrations, small group instruction etc. (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2010, p. 15). However, there are occasions where lower performing pupils will need to go back to prerequisite content in order to be able to move forward, while perhaps higher performing pupils will need to move ahead before their peers because they acquire knowledge faster (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2010, p. 15). More specifically, the content will have to match the learner's readiness, interest and learning profile as the main goal of content differentiation is to offer approaches to input that meet the individual pupil where they are and support them and their learning process (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 132).

The second element is based on process, which describes sense-making activities designed to ensure that pupils use key skills to make sense of, apply and transfer essential knowledge and understandings (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 18). Imbeau & Tomlinson (2010, p. 15) state that process can

be related to the term real learning, meaning learning that enables pupils to retain, apply and transfer content has to happen within the pupils, not to them (National Research Council, 2000; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Moreover, according to Tomlinson, pupils process and make sense of ideas and information in a more effective and sensible manner when the teacher manages to ensure that the activities given are interesting, makes pupils think at a higher level and that they require a use of key knowledge, skills and understandings (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 133). However, the mentioned characteristics of process above are primarily the description of good activities in the classroom. In order to make good differentiated activities, Tomlinson states that the teacher should offer more than one way for the pupil's to make sense of the given content. Firstly, a good differentiated activity should be in given several different modes at varied degrees of sophistication and in varying time extents. Secondly, a good differentiated activity should be given with varied amount of teacher or peer support, using skills and essential information in order for the pupils to understand, extend or apply a vital idea or principle or to answer fundamental questions (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 134).

The third element is called product, which basically are ways for the pupils to express what they have come to know, understand and what they are able to do after an extended period of learning. According to Imbeau & Tomlinson, a product cannot be generated through a singular activity. A product is a rich culminating assessment that makes pupils apply and extend what they have learned (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2010, p. 15-16). Differentiating product assignments for the wide variety of pupils that are to be found within a classroom is beneficial for numerous of reasons. If the teacher offers different variations of products with the same core commonalities, the pupils will most likely be encouraged to draw on to their individual interests, skills and strengths. Ultimately, by doing so, all of the pupils can grow from appropriate challenges while the teacher can maintain focus on the essential curricular components (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 156).

Besides, according to Tomlinson (2017, p. 144) there are six important factors one has to consider when developing high-quality product assignments. The first factor involves the importance of identifying the key knowledge, understandings and skills the product will incorporate. This factor includes creating a product assignment with thought and care which directly relates to the knowledge, understandings and skills pupils work to acquire. The second factor involves deciding

on the different formats to the product. Different product formats are often given based on the curriculum, like for instance writing an essay, creating a play etc. However, according to Tomlinson, the greatest product formats are usually those that include the pupils' interests or particular skills. For example, if you have pupils in your class that are very interested and/or talented in terms of computer gaming, they can design a game or simulation based on information and understandings regarding the second world war. The third factor is based on determining the baseline expectations for quality. Meaning that it is very important for the teacher to clarify what the pupils are expected to focus on in terms of content and quality in their products based on their readiness (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 145).

The fourth factor regarding developing high-quality product assignments is based on determining support structures. This entails figuring out how to support the pupils in a way that their effort leads them to success instead of confusion and uncertainty (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 146). The fifth factor involves presenting the assignment, which is where the teacher shares the knowledge, understandings and skills and the baseline expectations for quality. Tomlinson (2017) states that it is important for the teachers to balance the structure needed to focus and guide the pupils with the freedom necessary to support their innovation and thought. Lastly, the sixth and final factor is differentiating the product assignment, which is where the teacher presents the options that the pupils have in terms of acquiring the product's requirements according to the pupils readiness, interest and learning profile. Furthermore, Tomlinson states that products are very effective in terms of balancing the teachers ideas for differentiation with the pupils ideas regarding what will be most essential in terms of providing the right level of challenge and support for the learner (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 147).

The fourth and final element is of differentiation is affect/environment. This element covers the pupils' emotions and feelings regarding their learning. Personal feelings and emotions based on past experiences will most likely influence our self-concept and our motivation to learn and to collaborate with others. All in all, these factors are highly important in terms of pupils' learning process (ASCD, 2011, p 13). By differentiating one should modify the learning environment to the degree that it meets the individual pupil's emotional needs. Since pupils vary to the extent that they do, modification of the learning environment is both needed and necessary in order for effective

learning to take place. For instance, there are some pupils who struggle with sitting still for a long period of time, therefore as instructors, one should create options for them to move around in the classroom or school more. Furthermore, there are some pupils who struggle with loud sounds in the classroom, which can easily be fixed by allowing them have ear plugs when working with tasks. These are only some examples on how the element of affect and environment can contribute to successful differentiation in the classroom. This is relevant to this study due to the fact that it is essential for pupils to feel safe and assured in a classroom where they are to learn English (ASCD, 2011, p. 14).

2.1.3 Pupils needs and variances

The mentioned key elements of differentiation are elements that help form classroom instruction. However, in order to modify these elements, teachers need to assess their pupils in terms of three essential characteristics, readiness, interest and learning profile. These characteristics are based on pupils needs and variances in the classroom.

The first characteristic is readiness. Tomlinson (2014, p. 20) describes readiness as a pupil's proximity to specified learning goals. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2014, p. 18) claims that readiness is a pupil's entry point relative to particular knowledge, understanding or skills. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that readiness is not a synonym for ability. The main goal of readiness is to create tasks that are slightly above their current knowledge level, then to provide them with the support they need to succeed (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 83). Differentiation by readiness can be seen in correlation with Vygotsky's ZDP considering that the idea of ZDP is that pupils learn the best when they start at their current understanding and are challenged with support and guidance, slightly beyond the level that they are comfortable doing on their own. Vygotsky's ZDP is further discussed in Section 2.2.4.

The second characteristic is interest. Interest refers to a learner's affinity, curiosity or passion for a particular topic or skill (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 19). Naturally, when a person is interested in something in particular, their motivation increases, which as a result enhances the pupils learning outcomes. The main aim of interest differentiation is to help pupils engage with new understanding and skills while making connections to elements which they already find interesting, intriguing and

relevant (ASCD, 2011, p. 15). Furthermore, Tomlinson (2017, p. 95) mentions that engagement is a non-negotiable of teaching and learning. By including choice of topics, work that is personally meaningful and the feeling of ownership of tasks the pupils' motivation will increase. Additionally, including tasks that focuses on the strengths and skills of the pupil will help build their competence and confidence as well.

The third and final characteristic is learning profile, meaning in what way the pupils learn. This may be shaped by intelligence preferences, gender, culture or learning style (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 19). Intelligence preference could be connected to Gardner's intelligences (Gardner, 2012) verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical-rhythmic, spatial or naturalist preference for learning or thinking. There are many different learning styles, such as there are different pupils. Some ways of learning may work effective for some, while it slows down others or makes their learning process feel awkward. According to Tomlinson (2017, p. 110) common sense, experience and research suggests that when teachers can create methods that promote effective and efficient learning for their pupils, their results enhance.

Moreover, the ultimate goal of learning profile differentiation is to help pupils understand what approaches of learning that works most efficiently for them and to offer different options so that every individual in the classroom finds a good approach to learning. Some pupils work better alone, while some learn better if they work in pairs or even in groups. Some pupils need to be more creative while learning, while some can learn by reading the textbook. Some pupils need to discuss with their peers in order to acquire knowledge, while some learn better by visualizing the content. All in all, the main aim of learning profile differentiation is to teach in the ways that the pupils learn the most (ASCD, 2011, p. 15).

Altogether, Tomlinson's model "Differentiation of Instruction" has been heavily elaborated in this Section. As a seminal researcher in the field of differentiated instruction, Tomlinson has constructed a complex model presenting the various features that differentiation entails. Due to the complexity of Tomlinson's model the choice was made to include her model "Differentiation of Instruction" to great lengths in this thesis. More specifically, the model is used throughout this thesis as a framework for amongst other things, for instance, the interview guides, analysis process

and as a basis for discussing the results of this study. However, since differentiation in the English classroom focuses on how the individual pupils can develop language skills both on their own and with others, the following section includes theory regarding the sociocultural perspective on learning.

2.1.4 Sociocultural perspective on learning

In Lev Vygotsky's (1896-1934) sociocultural theory regarding learning perspectives, Vygotsky focuses on the use of social interaction and participation in order for knowledge to be developed (Dysthe, 1999, p. 3). Vygotsky developed a concept amongst others called the "Zone of Proximal Development". Vygotsky defined the ZPD as: "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective and theory regarding learning and knowledge development seems to be highly relevant in terms of this thesis considering the fact that pupils are in a classroom learning situation with teachers and their peers. Moreover, since differentiated instruction is related to the teacher and the measures the teacher takes so that individual pupils develop with guidance and or in collaboration with their peers, Vygotsky's perspective on learning and development seems to be appropriate to include in this thesis. Also, considering the fact that social interaction is essential in terms of language learning, sociocultural theory seems necessary to mention.

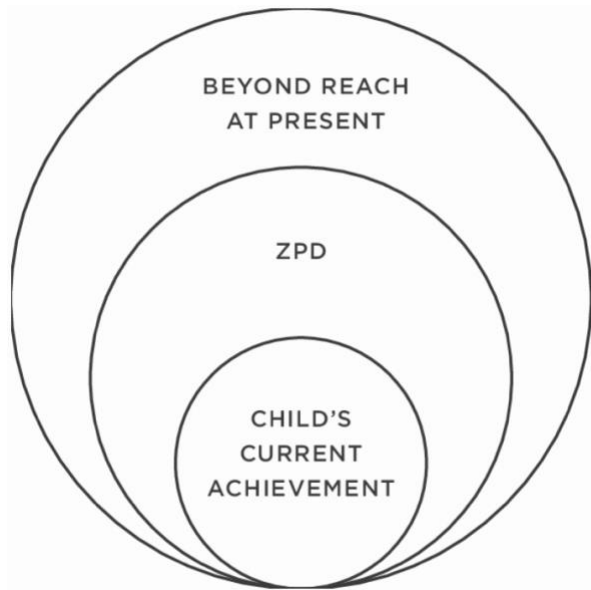


Figure 2B. Model based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Equally important, according to Polly, Allman, Casto & Norwood (2017), the concept of the ZPD seems to contribute to an essentially different view of the teacher. In light of the ZPD, the teacher serves more as a facilitator of learning rather than a source of knowledge. Also, the pupils are considered more active than passive, taking on more responsibilities such as determining their learning goals, becoming a resource of knowledge for peers, and actively collaborating in the learning process. This particular shift in roles between the teacher and pupil seems to promote individualized, differentiated and learner-centred types of classroom instruction (Polly et al., 2017). Figure 2B exemplifies the gap between a child's current achievement and the child's potential development (ZPD), which is illustrated in the middle circle. The child's potential development is what they can understand and learn with help and assistance from their teachers and their fellow classmates. Furthermore, according to McLeod (2019), there are three important components which teachers are encouraged to focus on in order to assist a pupil to move through the zone of proximal development:

- The presence of someone with knowledge and skills beyond that of the learner (a more knowledgeable other).
- Social interactions with a skilful tutor that allow the learner to observe and practice their skills.

- Scaffolding, or supportive activities provided by the educator, or more competent peer, to support the student as he or she is led through the ZPD.

(McLeod, 2019)

Likewise, Dysthe (1999) claims that given instruction should always be on a higher level than the pupils' current level of understanding. Furthermore, Dysthe also states that the ZPD shows us that there is an actual limit that portrays how much an individual pupil can develop without further help. On the other side, when the pupil receives assistance from a teacher or another pupil to understand for example a task or a text, the pupil's ZPD can be expanded. In other words, the pupils can use both their teachers and their peers to develop their current understanding. In light of the above, it seems that differentiated instruction reflects Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory in relation to the social interactional relationship between the teacher and pupil. Therefore, the theory of the ZPD will be used in order to identify if and how English teachers differentiate in a manner that helps the pupils understand more than they would manage to understand on their own.

2.2 Differentiated instruction tools

As much as differentiating instruction for all pupils within a classroom may seem overwhelming for many teachers, there are some essential tools that one can use in order to differentiate in a more efficient matter. Therefore, in the following subsection, a tool regarding how one can differentiate instruction will be presented and elaborated. As mentioned in chapter 1, teachers seem to understand the necessity of differentiating instruction to meet pupils' needs in the classroom, however, many teachers report that they are unsure of how to truly carry this out in practice (Tobin & McInnes, 2008, p. 3). Hence, it seems necessary to elaborate on possible tools of differentiated instruction that teachers can take into use in their classroom.

2.2.1 Bloom's Taxonomy

Nordlund (2003, p. 7) claims that Bloom's taxonomy is one of the most important "tools" in terms of differentiating instruction in the classroom. In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed a taxonomy which utilized different levels of instruction based on person's cognitive ability. In Figure 2C below, the hierarchy of Bloom's taxonomy is presented.

Level	Definition	Questions
Knowledge	Recall Regurgitation of facts	Tell List Memorize Give the definition
Comprehension	Repeat in own words	Give an example Explain Retell
Application	Apply to a new situation	Build Demonstrate Make Develop
Analysis	Study parts	Compare Analyze Categorize Contrast
Evaluation	Give opinion backed by facts	Evaluate Judge Critique
Synthesis	Create a new concept from learned material	Design Create Construct Develop

Figure 2C. Bloom's Taxonomy. (Nordlund, 2003, p. 8).

The different levels in Figure 2C are presented in a hierarchy which ranges from the simplest to the most challenging level. According to Nordlund (2003, p. 8), one of the ways to differentiate instruction is to apply this specific theory in the classroom. Bloom's taxonomy allows for the teacher to categorize activities and tasks by the level of complexity. Also, the taxonomy's higher levels of thinking strengthens the average levelled activities and task, while ensuring that pupils that need more time than others to develop knowledge are given more time (PDST, p. 11). An example provided by the Primary Professional Development Service (PDST, p. 11) is to ask the pupils to identify a problem in a story and then to create an alternate solution (analysis and evaluation). This entails for the pupils to rethink the story and recall the primary solution of the story (knowledge and comprehension). This specific example provides more time for the pupils who need it, while at the same time it provides appropriate challenges for the ones who need it, which is the key to differentiated instruction.

When using Bloom's taxonomy, teachers can differentiate according to the pupils' readiness. As stated by Fox & Hoffman (2011, p. 48), if a pupil has not mastered the most basic levels of Bloom's

taxonomy, the pupil will most likely be discouraged if asked to advance to more complex levels. Equally, if a pupil has mastered the lower levels of the taxonomy, the pupil will perhaps lose both interest and motivation if they are not given the opportunity to advance to more complex levels. Fox & Hoffman (2011, p. 49) have developed a list of tips when using Bloom's taxonomy to differentiate instruction, where among other things, they mention that teachers should memorize the taxonomy and refer to it when planning lessons. They state when the taxonomy has become an integral part of thinking of lesson planning, it will improve their teaching significantly. Furthermore, they also mention that one should use the taxonomy when creating work-groups in the classroom, so that the pupils can work with the same content, however, at different levels.

Also, one could use the taxonomy to diagnose lack of ability to perform. Pupils who do not seem to understand the current curriculum may perhaps have skipped a level according to Fox and Hoffman (2011, p. 49). As shown above, it seems clear that Bloom's taxonomy could be essential in terms of both planning lessons and assessing pupils in light of differentiated instruction. Considering that understanding Bloom's Taxonomy will help teachers focus on moving their pupils toward higher levels of thinking, processing, and questioning it seems essential to include Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework regarding parts of the analysis and of the interviews in this study.

2.3 Differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom

This particular section will focus on English as a foreign language in relation to the concept of differentiated instruction. Firstly, considering the fact that it is crucial for teachers to engage pupils in activities that promote both output and input, it seems only essential to elaborate on different language acquisition hypotheses in this thesis. Since the differentiated instruction identified in this study is connected to writing, speaking, reading and listening, the following subsection presents Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis. These hypotheses are used as a framework for parts of the interview guides and the analysis section of this thesis. Therefore, it is important to see whether there are occurrences of differentiation in these features, as it is essential for learners of the English language to use both input and output in their learning process.

2.3.1 Second language acquisition hypotheses

In this section different language acquisition hypotheses are presented and elaborated. The first hypothesis is the input hypothesis by Stephen Krashen (1982). The input hypothesis states that learners can only acquire knowledge of a language when they receive and are exposed to comprehensible input. Krashen (1982) uses *i* to illustrate knowledge already acquired in a language. Furthermore, he claims that learners go from *i* to *i+1* when understanding new input.

The input hypothesis can naturally be connected to activities such as reading and listening in the second language classroom. Furthermore, Krashen (1982) also states that if the input includes forms and structures that are slightly above the language learner's current of proficiency in the target language, both comprehension and acquisition will occur (Lightbown & Spada, 2001, p. 39).

The meaning of comprehensible input can be described as words and language that learners can understand the main meaning of, yet words and language that are somewhat above the learners own production level. Additionally, the input hypothesis also focuses on the language that learners acquire subconsciously. Krashen (1982) claimed that the language that learners acquired subconsciously is language that learners can easily use in spontaneous conversations because it is instantly available when needed (Harmer, 2015, p. 42).

On the other hand, Swain's "comprehensible output" hypothesis is based on "pushing" language learners to process language more deeply and with more mental effort by speaking the language. Moreover, the actual act of communicating is a cognitive learning experience (Harmer, 2015, p. 47). The output hypothesis can be connected to activities such as writing and speaking in the second language classroom. Swain (2000, p. 99) states that with output the learner is in control by stretching their interlanguage to meet communicative goals. In order to be able to produce something, learners have to create linguistic form and meaning. When producing output, the learner will become more aware of his or hers weaknesses regarding the language learning process (Swain, 2000, p. 99). By doing so, learners will more easily know what they need to focus on in order to improve their language skills in the language in question. Swain (2000, p. 102) also argues that teachers should engage their pupils in collaborative dialogues, meaning that teachers should inspire pupils to do activities that encourages them to both speak and reflect regarding the language that they use. In a collaborative dialogue, the focus is on the meaning of what is being said, not on the grammatical structures. Besides, collaborative dialogues are dialogues where learners are engaged

in problem solving and knowledge building, because they reflect on what has been said in a conversation and then new knowledge is created.

In sum, Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis have many differences. In essence, Krashen sees input as incredibly dependable in terms of language acquisition, while Swain on the other hand, considers output such as language production to be highly important. Then again, Krashen states that language production is something that should not be forced, rather, it will develop naturally as a result of given comprehensible input. Yet, I believe that successful language acquisition entails more than just listening or reading the language in question. Furthermore, as a language learner one needs learn how to use the language to be able to form a solid basis and self-confidence in speaking the language. For this reason, I believe that a mixture of Krashen's input hypothesis and Swain's output hypothesis is essential for a learner to truly acquire a second language. In essence, considering that the differentiated instruction identified in this study is connected to writing, speaking, reading and listening, the inclusion of these language hypothesises seemed inevitable. Moreover, these hypothesises are included to be used as a framework for different sections of this thesis.

2.4 Differentiated instruction in the Norwegian Educational System

Traditionally, the English language in Norway has been marked with a foreign-language status. Moreover, the English language is taught at scheduled hours in Norwegian classrooms and is acknowledged for its significance to education, business and mobility in Norway. However, the English language is not officially considered a second language in Norway, despite its increase in English language access and domain use (Rindal, 2014, p. 8). Moreover, even though Norway has bilingual and trilingual speakers, Vattøy (2018) claims that some pupils will still acquire English as their second language, instead of as a foreign language. Still, as the English language does not have an official status as a second language in Norway, the English language is described as a foreign language in this thesis (EFL).

As in many countries, Norway has experienced an increase of the use of the English language. Also, through social media, audio, media and travelling, young Norwegians experience a massive exposure to the English language (Rindal, 2014, p. 9). However, considering the massive variation

of input that the different individuals in Norwegian schools receive, one can arguably claim that differentiation can be both more challenging and necessary in the subject of English in Norwegian classrooms. Socio-economic factors can be considered important here. For instance, some families will have the opportunity to go abroad, where they will most likely need to use the English language as a form of communication. While other families do not have the ability to go on vacation due to financial factors, consequently, socio-economic factors can arguably be considered as a reason for Norwegian pupils having different knowledge level in terms of the English language.

Over the past decades, the principle of differentiated instruction has become highly central in the Norwegian Educational system. In the Norwegian Education Act (§ 1-3, 1998), differentiated instruction is mandatory by law. The legislation states the following: “Education must be differentiated to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice, candidate for certificate of practice and training candidate (Opplæringslova, § 1-3, 1998). Moreover, according to The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir, 2018), differentiated instruction is the measures that the school takes to ensure that every individual pupil receives the best possible benefits from the ordinary education. This includes measures regarding the organization of the instruction, educational/pedagogical methods and focus on the learning environment. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir, 2018) also point to the fact that differentiated instruction is about utilizing the room for action in the curriculum and in relation to assessment and by doing so pupils can reach the same competence goals in different ways.

Furthermore, the curriculum in different subjects provides possibilities for teachers to choose differentiated content by using multiple teaching material, different learning strategies, different learning methods and lastly different ways of organizing the instruction (Udir, 2018). Also, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training highly recommend that the pupils should be given an active role in terms of the planning, implementation and assessment of the instruction. They state that the pupils' participation and their learning outcome is crucial to whether the instruction is differentiated. Therefore, amongst other things, it is essential to consider the pupils in terms of the instruction and their different needs in terms of inclusion, variety, experiences, complicity, relevance, context and valuation. Given these points, differentiated instruction is

considered one of the most central and essential principle that applies to Norwegian schools (Udir, 2018).

However, elements of differentiated instruction seem not to be specifically mentioned in the English subject curriculum in the LK06 (Udir, 2013). Yet, if we are to take a look at the new curriculum that applies from 01.08.2020 (Udir, 2020), the concept of differentiated instruction seems to have received a significant role in the subject of English. When looking at the competence and assessment goals that are mentioned in the new English subject curriculum (Udir, 2020), it seems clear that essential parts of the concept of differentiated instruction have been incorporated in it:

- The teacher should facilitate pupil participation and stimulate learning preferences by employing varied strategies and learning resources that develop the pupils' reading, oral and written skills.
- The teacher and pupils should be in dialogue about the pupils' development in English.
- Based on the competence the pupils show, the pupils should be given the opportunity to put into words what they feel regarding their own professional development.
- The teacher should provide guidance regarding further learning and differentiate so that the pupils can use the given guidance to develop reading, writing, and oral and digital skills in the subject.
- The teacher should plan and facilitate so that the pupils are given the opportunity to show their competence in various ways, that include understanding, reflection and critical thinking, in various contexts.

(Translated from Norwegian, Udir, 2020).

Given these points, the English subject curriculum in the LK06 (Udir, 2013) compared to the new English subject curriculum (Udir, 2020) seem to differ significantly. What is interesting here is that all of the competence and assessment goals mentioned above seem to be in correlation with parts of Tomlinson's (2014, p. 20) model "Differentiation of Instruction". More specifically, the mentioned goals above relate to elements such as content, process, product, affect/environment, readiness and learning profile. The fact that the new English subject curriculum has included some

essential parts of the concept of differentiation may most likely suggest that the concept of differentiated instruction is only receiving a more significant and essential part in Norwegian Primary Education. In essence, this and other similar studies may contribute to show how differentiated instruction is implemented in the English classroom according to the current subject curriculum, which in turn will be very interesting to see in what ways the new subject curriculum will impact teachers and their implementation of differentiated instruction in the English classroom and in general.

Yet, if we are to take a look at the current General Part of the Curriculum (LK06), a separate Section is dedicated to the topic of differentiated instruction:

The school shall have room for everybody and teachers must therefore have an eye for each individual learner. The mode of teaching must not only be adapted to subject and content, but also to age and maturity, the individual learner and the mixed abilities of the entire class. The pedagogical design must be pliable enough to permit the teacher to meet the pupils' differences in ability and rhythm of development with kindness and ease. (Udir, 2015, p. 16)

On the other hand, when looking at the new core curriculum, Values and Principles for Primary and Secondary Education, which is to take effect in Norwegian schools 01.08.2020, it seems that differentiated instruction has received an even more significant and extensive part in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Actually, a whole chapter named "Teaching and differentiated instruction" has been dedicated to the concept of differentiated instruction in the new core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 19). The new chapter regarding differentiated instruction seems to include important topics such as the needs of the individual pupil, warm relations between the teacher and pupil, professional judgement, ambitious expectations, constructive measures, suitable assessment, mapping of pupils, learning progression and the importance of differentiated instruction for both struggling and excelling pupils (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 19-20).

Considering the fact that this new Core Curriculum is yet to be implemented in Norwegian schools, it may be both challenging and conflicting to discuss the current Norwegian school situation regarding differentiated instruction in its light. Though, when observing the development from the General Part of the Curriculum (LK06) to the new core curriculum that is yet to be implemented, it seems evident that differentiated instruction is to receive a greater and more important role in the Norwegian school system. Still, what impact the core curriculum will have on the teachers practice is yet to be seen.

2.4.1 Research on Differentiated Instruction in Norway

This section aims to present results and findings regarding the topic of differentiated instruction in Norway. Even though there does not seem to have been conducted a huge amount of research in terms of differentiated instruction in relation to Norwegian classrooms, this section presents some of the more elaborate research conducted this far.

In 2016, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2016:14) published a report which focuses on differentiated instruction in relation to the higher performing pupils or, in other words, pupils with higher learning potential in school. The Committee of The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research claim that if the Norwegian Educational system had succeeded in terms of differentiating instruction for the diverse pupil groups, then an Official Norwegian Report regarding pupils with higher learning potential would be considered highly unnecessary. According to the NOU report (2016:14), there seems to be a long tradition in Norway of understanding differentiated instruction as society's responsibility for taking care of pupils who are struggling academically and socially.

On the contrary, arguments in favour of differentiating for pupils with higher learning potential has been viewed upon as undermining the equality principle. Moreover, a common attitude regarding the pupils with higher learning potential is that they can manage on their own (NOU 2016:14, p. 8). According to the research summary from the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education, there are several serious consequences that could occur if the pupils are not being understood or if they are not being challenged academically, for instance, non-completion, underachieving, social stigmatisation, bullying, sadness or depression (NOU 2016:14, p. 9).

The findings of the NOU report (2016:14) illustrates that a relatively large share of the pupils' experience that their current learning environment does not provide them with the opportunity to realise their full potential academically. According to The Committee, the failure to acknowledge ones' abilities may imply a significant loss for both the pupil and the society (NOU 2016:14, p. 8). With this in mind, the findings of this report suggest three crucial and systemic acknowledgements that must be focused on in order for pupils to receive improved learning conditions both in primary and secondary education:

1. Primary and secondary education and training does not provide pupils with higher learning potential the differentiated instruction that would make it possible for them to realise their learning potential.
2. Schools do not exploit the options they have in relation to educational and organisational differentiation.
3. The national and local education system needs a common knowledge base from which to initiate improvement measures in the short and long term. (NOU 2016:14, p. 8)

For this reason, it seems that the Committee particularly recommends that the level of knowledge for teachers needs to be raised. The Committee also believes that a higher level of knowledge will influence both the attitude and culture in Norwegian schools (NOU 2016:14, p. 100). Yet, the most important element seems to be that teachers need to receive the competence necessary in order to differentiate instruction and to base their planning, implementation and evaluation of the teaching sessions based on their pupils learning potential. (NOU 2016:14, p. 101).

Correspondingly, Damsgaard & Eftedal (2015) published a research article regarding the topic of differentiated instruction where they interviewed several teachers regarding their differentiation practice. The main findings in this research show that teachers are often told to differentiate more and to focus on differentiation in the classroom, however, nobody is telling them how to actually do it in practice. The teachers stated that they wished that somebody would concretise and defuse the term differentiation instruction. All in all, the concluding findings lead to a lack of knowledge in relation to the topic of differentiated instruction amongst teachers. Likewise, Brevik &

Gunnulfsen (2016) also stress the importance of the teachers knowledge in relation to differentiated instruction in their study. They conducted a study based on 322 student teachers, where the students teachers had to reflect on pupils they have taught for twelve weeks at their practice school. The focus in this study was higher performing pupils and their needs. The results suggest that teacher students need increased competence on differentiation for this specific group of pupils. Moreover, Brevik and Gunnulfsen (2016) also argue that guided training regarding the topic of differentiated instruction should be implemented in teacher education programs in Norway.

Moreover, a research article by Thomas Nordahl (2012) found that differentiated instruction in Norway appears to be both imprecise and not action oriented ideologically. Furthermore, the researcher claims that the ideology does not provide clear qualitative nor normative guidelines for what is appropriate differentiation in relation to pupils' learning. This may be one of the reasons why there is such great variation between Norwegian schools and classes, both in educational practice and in pupils' learning outcomes. Nordahl's (2012, p. 11) findings also show that it seems that it is the individualized or narrow understanding of differentiated instruction that currently stands strong both in terms of perception and realization of teaching in Norwegian classrooms.

Additionally, Nordahl (2012) states that this type of understanding contributes to a one-sided focus on the individual pupil and to a lesser extent a focus on the whole class and the actual teaching. The consequence seems to be that the pupils work too much alone and that many pupils struggle with this form of individualized teaching. The researcher concludes his findings with encouraging changes in educational practice, which will primarily require teachers to focus on themselves and less on pupils (2012, p. 13). Besides, he states that if we do not get teachers to reflect and re-consider their teaching practice and to apply scientific knowledge to their teaching practice, it will probably still be performed less satisfactory teaching and less appropriate teaching.

Moreover, Mina Trygg Solberg, Lisbeth M. Brevik & Jennifer Luoto (2017) conducted a research project regarding differentiated instruction in the subject of English based on random and ability grouping. The findings from this study showed that by separating the class into random groups does not contribute to increased differentiation. However, by separating the pupils into groups based on ability, differentiation was successful and clear. Moreover, the pupils participating in the

study expressed satisfaction with the lessons that were based on ability grouping. Solberg et al. (2017) also mention that they are aware of that the Norwegian school debate has for a long time been in opposition to differentiate in terms of grouping based on ability. Additionally, in Norway, it is legislated that the organization of teaching should usually not be based on the pupil's academic level, gender or ethnic origin. Pupils are to be divided into classes that meet their social needs (Opplæringslova, 1998, § 8-2). However, being aware of this, Solberg et al. argue with the fact that all pupils have the right to differentiated instruction based on both their skills and need for development.

Overall, there seems to be a minimal of Norwegian research conducted in terms of differentiated instruction in the English classroom. Also, there seems to be a limited amount of Norwegian research conducted in relation to the concept of differentiation in general. To the best of my knowledge, there seems to be no prior research in Norway that investigates the concept of differentiation in the English classroom in relation to the higher performing and lower performing pupils. However, this section presented some of the Norwegian research projects and articles that focus on differentiation in general and in the subject of English.

All things considered, the results from these different Norwegian studies seem to have one particular factor in common, which is teachers misconceptions and confusion regarding the concept of differentiated instruction. Moreover, another recurring factor seems to be the lack of a common knowledge base both in the national and local education system. The teachers in these studies seem to request a common definition of the concept of differentiated instruction and an action plan in terms of how to differentiate in their classrooms. Lastly, by including Norwegian research in this thesis, it allows for the research to be used as a framework in parts of the discussion section of this thesis. More specifically, similarities and contrasts between the results of prior Norwegian research and the results of this study can be reviewed and discussed. Additionally, unlike the majority of the studies mentioned above, this study has included the pupils perspective in relation to differentiated instruction as well in order to receive a more detailed picture as to what is happening in the English classroom.

2.5 International research on Differentiated Instruction

Overall, there seems to be a fair amount of international research conducted in terms of differentiated instruction both in general and in the subject of English. This section includes the findings and conclusions of international research that mainly focuses on differentiated instruction in the English classroom, however some general research regarding differentiated instruction are also included.

First, according to a study by Baecher, Artigliere, Patterson, & Spatzers (2012, p. 20), teachers' skills in relation to differentiated instruction need to increase. Moreover, Baecher et al. also state that teachers should consider differentiated instruction as "variations on a theme", rather than individualized learning plans for every individual pupil. These results seemed to be in accordance Hilary Dack's (2019) results from her study which aimed to understand teachers' misconceptions and concerns regarding differentiated instruction. The findings of this study showed that differentiation is a complex matter and that there is no standardized practice. Moreover, the findings showed that teachers need to be provided with opportunities where they can make meaning of practical and conceptual tools of differentiation. Teachers need to learn both how and why one should differentiate and teacher educators can be of help here (Dack, 2019). Both studies above seem to mention teachers' skills regarding differentiated instruction as key findings.

Likewise, a study conducted in Greece by Tzanni (2018) aimed to explore differentiated instruction of teachers' of English as a foreign language (EFL). While the findings suggested that the EFL teacher had positive beliefs towards differentiated instruction, in practice they differentiated less than expected considering their beliefs. In essence, Tzanni (2018, p. 163) concluded that it might be useful to have teacher training programmes in order to develop teaching strategies that enable teachers to approach differentiation reactively. By doing so, it would perhaps strengthen teachers' positive attitudes towards differentiation and would encourage them to be more proactive in their teaching lessons.

Moreover, if we are to take a look at a mixed method study that included over 4000 teachers of grades 7 through 12 in Canada, the findings seem to be more comprehensive than the other studies mentioned above. Findings revealed that there was a great number of misconceptions and

conflicting views regarding differentiated instruction (Whitley, 2019). Notably, the misconceptions regarding differentiated instruction were held by participants who believed that differentiated instruction was only necessary for pupils with special needs or for those who were struggling (Whitley, 2019). Additionally, the majority of teachers further identified differentiated instruction as only being practiced by those teachers who are willing to go above and beyond to help their pupils succeed. However, most participants managed to describe some elements of differentiated instruction that they were using in their classroom, yet, they also expressed concerns regarding their understanding and their ability to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom.

In essence, the international research regarding differentiated instruction seem to remark several issues. Moreover, the main and repeating factor in these studies seem to be that there is a lack of understanding and ability to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom. Also, the reasons for this seem to be a mixture of teachers lack of skills and knowledge in terms of differentiated instruction, the fact that there are no standardized practice in terms of differentiation and also due to the misconceptions regarding differentiation caused by its complex matter. Based on the findings, some of the studies concluded that teachers need to learn both how and why one should differentiate instruction in the classroom. Additionally, some believed that teacher educators could be of help in terms of increasing teachers knowledge in terms of differentiated instruction.

Overall, the literature and findings presented in chapter 2 has provided information regarding models, trends, tools and research in light of differentiated instruction. First, what was identified was that there are many misconceptions concerning differentiation that teachers should be aware of (Fox & Hoffman, 2011). Also, there are complex and detailed models of instruction regarding differentiation that teachers can implement to their instruction, such as Tomlinson's model "Differentiation of Instruction" (2014, p. 20). Furthermore, in terms of differentiating the English classroom according to pupils abilities, the ZDP and Bloom's Taxonomy have been portrayed as essential in terms of both how teachers should plan and consider differentiated instruction.

Additionally, a section has been dedicated to elaborate on differentiated instruction in relation to the Norwegian Educational System. What was identified in this section was how the new core

curriculum (Udir, 2020) has included the concept of differentiation to great lengths as opposed to the current core curriculum (LK06). Hence, this may indicate that the concept of differentiation is receiving a more important and significant role in the Norwegian educational system. Lastly, national and international research was included. Norwegian research on differentiation proved to be very minimal, however, the findings did show that there is a lack of a common knowledge base for teachers regarding differentiation. Additionally, Norwegian teachers requested a common definition and action plan in relation to differentiation. Similarly, international studies showed that there is a lack of understanding and ability to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom.

In short, the mentioned literature and findings presented in chapter 2 is used as a basis for answering the research questions identified in Section 1.2. By including models, trends, tools and relevant research, this thesis attempts to identify how and if the concept of differentiated instruction is understood and practiced accordingly for the group of higher and lower performing pupils in Norwegian EFL classrooms. The following chapter will focus on the methodology of this thesis, where amongst other things the choices regarding research design, data collection and data analysis of this thesis are presented and discussed.

3. Methodology

As this MA thesis aims to investigate both teachers' and pupils' understanding and practice of the term differentiated instruction and its implementation in the EFL classroom in Norwegian primary schools, a qualitative approach was assessed to be the most appropriate in order to investigate the matter. This particular chapter will firstly take a closer look at the design of the current research project (3.1). Next, information regarding data collection is presented (3.2), followed by a section on how the data was analysed (3.3). Finally, the reliability and validity of the data collected is elaborated and discussed as well as some ethical considerations concerning this study (3.4).

3.1 Research design

Considering that the purpose of this particular study was to retrieve in-depth data material regarding both teachers and pupils understanding and practice concerning differentiated instruction and its implementation in the EFL classroom, a qualitative approach seemed more appropriate than a quantitative or a mixed methods approach. Moreover, as qualitative research is an approach that intends to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, as this study aims to do, it seemed like the most evident choice for this study (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). However, the reasoning for not choosing a quantitative approach is mostly due to the fact that a quantitative approach often shows us data of what is happening, while a qualitative approach focuses on why and how certain things are happening, which is what this particular study focuses on. Furthermore, Krumsvik (2019, p. 152) mentions that the distinctiveness of a qualitative approach is an extremely important contribution to the research field as it tends to fill in the gaps that a quantitative approach lack. Also, some disadvantages regarding quantitative research have been included in this section to illustrate the reasoning for not choosing a quantitative approach in this particular study. According to Krumsvik (2019, p. 152), a qualitative approach has its strengths in the three mentioned disadvantages regarding quantitative approach below:

- May grossly oversimplify the complexity of human nature
- May fail to recognise or be explicit about the subjective nature of social science research
- May fail to recognise the individuality and autonomous nature of human beings

(Langdrige & Hagger-Johnson, 2009, p. 14)

Furthermore, this particular study is based on the phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is used when the researcher wants to understand the world through the informants responses and experiences. Moreover, to explore and to describe informants experiences and understanding of a phenomenon is what the phenomenological approach is about (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 107). The ultimate goal when using the phenomenological approach is to obtain increased understanding and insight in the world of others, which is what this current study aims to achieve (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 99). The purpose of this study is what the phenomenological paradigm entails, the aim to understand a phenomenon which in this case is differentiated instruction, through informants experiences and understandings.

Furthermore, according to Creswell & Poth (2018, p. 78) there are some crucial steps within the phenomenological approach. The first step is to determine if the research problem is best examined by using a phenomenological approach. As mentioned above, considering that the aim of this study is to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences regarding a phenomenon, the phenomenological approach seems suitable to the study's purpose. The second step is to identify a phenomenon of interest to study, which in this study is teachers' and pupils' understanding and implementation of the term differentiated instruction and its concept in the English classroom. The third step is to collect data from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon using in-depth and multiple interviews. Also, It is recommended by Polkinghorne (1989) that researchers interview from five to twenty-five individuals who all have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 79). In this current study there are nine informants in total, three teachers and six pupils. More on informants and data collection is discussed and presented in Section 3.2.

The fourth step is to develop textural and structural descriptions, which is based on statements and themes from the data material used to write a description of the informants experiences and thoughts. The process of this is presented in Section 3.3. The fifth and final step is to present the understanding of the essence of the experience in written form, which entails a report of how the phenomenon was experienced with significant statements and a conclusion with a composite description of the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 80). The fifth step is presented and discussed throughout chapter 4, 5 and 6.

3.2 Data collection

This section will present and give reasons for the different choices that were made prior and during the data collection period. Prior to collecting the data needed, the research project needed to be approved by the NSD (Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata). Once the project was approved, the process of getting the appropriate informants and planning the data collection begun. The approval from NSD is presented in Appendix 1. Furthermore, prior to collecting the data, methods of data collection had to be considered. As qualitative research is most commonly connected to sources of data from observations, interviews or documents, this section presents reasons for choosing semi-structured interviews as a suitable and beneficial data collection method.

3.2.1 Semi-structured interview

“We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time”

(Patton, 2002, p. 340-341)

This particular study is based on a number of semi-structured interviews. An interview can be defined as a flexible tool for data collection because it enables multi-sensory channels to be used such as verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. Also, interviews can be controlled while being spontaneous, which can lead to complete answers regarding complicated and profound matters (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 409). There are different types of interviews with different types of functions. More specifically, Postholm & Jacobsen (2018, p. 120) outline three different types of interviews: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and open-ended/person centred interview. As mentioned above, the type of interview that is being used in this research paper is the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is based on the fact that all the informants are asked the same questions, yet, with the opportunity for follow-up questions or clarification if needed.

Moreover, considering the research questions and purpose of this particular thesis, the semi-structured interview seemed like the most appropriate and beneficial choice. The reason for choosing the semi-structured interview was because the intention of the interviews was to use the same set of questions with all the informants, however, with the ability to converse, clarify and

elaborate if necessary in the interview situation (Avineri, 2017, p. 102). The semi-structured interview type has both its strengths and its weaknesses. Some possible strengths could be that the outline or interview guide makes the data collection somewhat systematic for each informant, increasing the comparability of the responses in the data collection (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 413). Some possible weaknesses could be that this type of interview allows for interviewer flexibility regarding wording questions, which can result in substantially different responses from the informants and therefore reducing the comparability of responses.

In order to increase the comparability of the responses, my focus was to ask the informants the same questions, however, with the opportunity for follow-up questions or clarification if needed. By taking great use of the interview guide during the interviews, hopefully the comparability of the responses increases, facilitating both the organisation and analysis of the data. Furthermore, Avineri (2017, p. 103) claims that even though one has an interview guide, there are no interviews that are alike, which is what makes them interesting both to do and to analyse.

3.2.2 Interview guides

In this research project, two different interview guides were created, one for the teacher informants and one for the pupil informants (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). Naturally, this was done because the teachers and the pupils have different positions and responsibilities in the classroom. However, both interview guides were divided into the same thematic categories: concept, content, process, product, affect/learning environment, pupils' readiness, pupils' interests, pupils' learning profile and challenges, yet, the questions were different for the teacher informants and the pupil informants. Tomlinson's model "Differentiation of Instruction" (Tomlinson, 2014) was used as a framework when creating the thematic categories in the interview guides. The thematic categories are further elaborated on in Section 3.3.3. By dividing the different questions into predefined categories, the data-analysis becomes much less time-consuming and easier in terms of coding and analysing the collected data (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 79). Also, the interview guide for the pupils was conducted in Norwegian, while the teachers' interview guide was conducted in English. Again, this was done to make sure that the pupils' answers were not restrained by a lack of knowledge of the English language.

When creating the interview guides and questions for the pupils, there were several aspects that had to be considered and reflected upon. Considering that the pupils that were interviewed were primary school pupils, I found it essential to create more age appropriate questions, meaning that the interview guide for the pupils was more simplified and the questions were shorter than the questions in the teachers interview guide. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2018, p. 175), many interviews with children prove to be difficult to conduct because the interviewer often asks complex and long questions. Additionally, it was important to formulate the questions in a non-leading manner to make sure that the children did not feel like they had to answer a certain way. Moreover, Eder and Fingerson (2002) also specify that it is very important in an interview situation between an adult and a child, that the interviewer does not make the child believe that there is only one correct answer to the questions asked. Therefore, before every interview, I made it clear to the pupils that this interview is not to test them in any shape or form, that there are no right or wrong answers and that the only thing needed from them was for them to be honest and share their experiences and perceptions regarding the topic of differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom.

3.2.3 Interview questions for teachers

In the interview guide for the teachers, some general statements were included for the teachers to comment and reflect upon (see Appendix 2). There are two statements included in the interview guide which are taken from The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (NOU, 2016:14) report regarding differentiated instruction. What was aimed at by including these statements was for the teachers to deliberate and reflect on the statements in relation to their everyday reality and their perception regarding Norwegian schools and differentiation in general.

3.2.4 Informants

The aim for this thesis in terms of informants was to have at least three teachers and at least six pupils participating in this study. However, the recruiting process proved to be much more challenging than anticipated. Despite the numerous email invitations for participations sent to schools/teachers, there were a lot of schools and teachers who responded negatively. A large number of teachers said that they did not have the time to be interviewed and a lot of schools simply did not answer the invitation to participate in this study. Also, considering the fact that higher performing pupils and lower performing pupils were needed in this research project, there

were some parents that were hesitant to allow their children to participate due to the fact that they did want them to be portrayed as weak pupils in the project. That led to a huge amount of time being invested on visiting schools and trying to recruit informants. Eventually, three teachers and six pupils agreed to take part in the interviews, which was more than welcomed.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2018, p. 148), one should base the number of informants on how many informants are needed in order to answer the questions being asked. Furthermore, they claim that in qualitative interviews, the number of informants has had a tendency of either being too small or too large. If the number of informants is too small, then it could be difficult to generalize the findings and to test hypotheses. On the other side, if the number of informants is too large, one will most likely struggle to conduct an in-depth analysis of the interviews. The number of informants should depend on the purpose of the research. Kvale & Brinkmann (2018, p. 148) claim that in regular qualitative based research, the number of interviews are usually around 15 +/- 10. This is usually based on how much time and resources are available for the researcher. Furthermore, Kvale & Brinkmann (2018, p. 148) use the term “the law of falling dividends”, which refers to a point where the knowledge exchange falls for each new informant. Therefore, Kvale & Brinkmann (2018) believe that it would be more appropriate and useful to dedicate more time in the analysis of the data material, than in further interviews.

In this particular study, there are nine informants in total, three teachers and six pupils. The main reason for the particular number of informants is that an analysis of a few cases makes it possible for the researcher to be much more thorough. A great advantage in terms of qualitative research is that it is possible to make thorough interpretations with few informants. Also, taking into account Kvale & Brinkmann’s “law of falling dividends”, the amount of informants in this particular study seems to be reasonable, especially within the limitations of time allowed for the fulfilment of this research project. Kvale & Brinkmann (2018, p. 149) also claim that by having fewer informants, the research process will be more manageable in relation to both time and resources. Considering the limited scope of this study, one will have to make justifiable and reasonable limitations and decisions in terms of the number of informants. It is also possible to uncover interesting things regarding culture or society in general based on an analysis of a few cases, even though this often seems to be in conflict with general prejudice regarding science (Kvale & Brinkmann (2018, p.

149). Findings of a few interviews could be very interesting and relevant, even if the researcher claims not to overgeneralize the findings.

The participating higher performing pupils in this particular MA thesis were chosen by their teachers participating due to the Norwegian Personal Data Act (Personopplysningsloven, 2018). The teachers received detailed information regarding what defines a higher performing pupil and based on the information they receive, the participants were selected and interviewed. Considering the fact that this MA study is based on participants from primary schools, there are no grades to define the pupils. Therefore, I will have to trust that the teacher participants chose the pupils they think are the most suited for this study.

Likewise, for the same reasons as above, the lower performing pupils participating in this study were chosen by their teachers based on the characterization of a lower performing pupil. That said, it is important to acknowledge that there may be various reasons as to why the pupil or pupils are not excelling or mastering aspects of the subject of English. Such reasons could be reading or writing disabilities, diverse diagnoses, mild or severe disabilities etc. However, considering the fact that the main focus of this research paper is differentiated instruction in terms of higher and lower performing pupils in the English classroom, different diagnoses and disabilities will not be elaborated nor discussed in this MA thesis. In Figure 3A below, the informant recruitment approach and the relationship between them is presented.

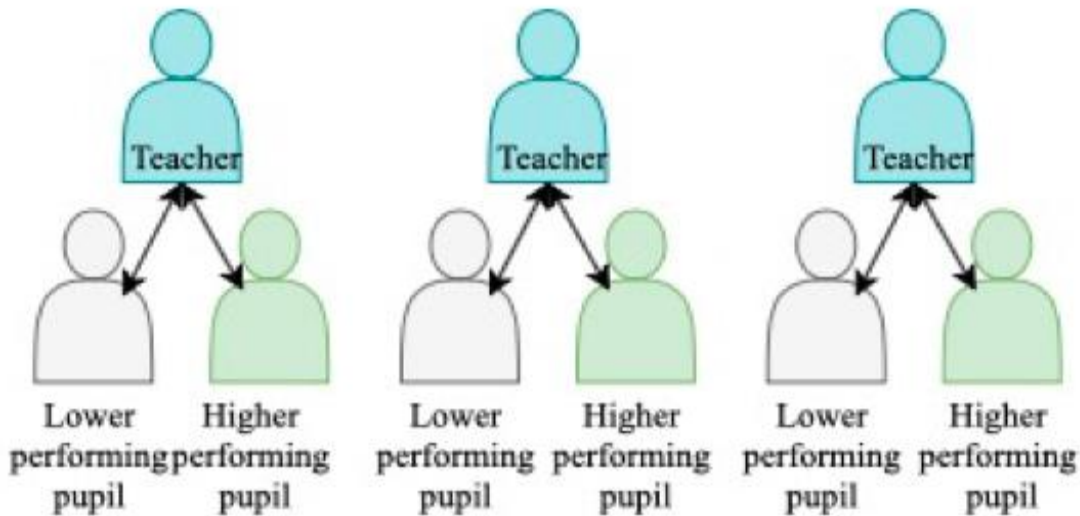


Figure 3A. Flowchart of informants and their relationship.

Considering the research questions and the aims of this study, it was important that the pupils who participated in this study actually were pupils of the teachers participating in this study as well. In other words, by the pupils and teachers having a relationship it allows for this study to examine the implementation of differentiation in the different classrooms from both a pupils' perspective and a teachers' perspective. Moreover, the teacher informants in this particular study were chosen to be included based on convenience sampling. Meaning that the teachers included in this study were chosen because they were the teachers that were available and accessible at the time (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 155). According to Cohen et al. (2011, p. 156), researchers tend to choose samples from those whom he or she has easy access to. However, in terms of the pupil informants, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is based on the researcher choosing informants based on their typicality or possession of particular characteristics. Furthermore, purposive sampling is used for several kinds of research including: to enable comparisons, to focus on specific or unique cases or to achieve representativeness (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156).

In addition to this, purposive sampling is often used in order to access knowledgeable people, i.e., people who have in-depth knowledge regarding some specific issues based on either expertise or experience (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 157). In terms of this study, the pupils were selected based on their knowledge level in the English school subject. One lower performing pupil and one higher performing pupil was chosen by each teacher in order to be able to draw comparisons concerning

their experience and feelings regarding the topic of differentiated instruction. In essence, the main concern of purposive sampling is to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it, which is what was needed from the pupil informants (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 157).

3.2.5 Teacher interviews

Since the topic of this study is both based on teachers' and pupils' understanding and practice of the term differentiated instruction and its concept in the EFL classroom, the inclusion of teacher interviews was inevitable. One of the aims of interviewing teachers was to make the teachers both reflect and assess on the way they teach English to young English learners. Moreover, gathering information regarding the teachers' and the schools' relationship to the concept of differentiated instruction was also essential in terms of examining how the teacher both understand and practice differentiation in Norwegian EFL classrooms. Additionally, getting the informants to both describe and elaborate on topics related to differentiated instruction such as content, process, product and assessment was extremely beneficial and important in terms of further discussing differentiated instruction in the English classroom in Norway. As described by Avineri (2017, p. 102), "interviews allow researchers to explore the full range of the what, how and why of an individual's experience". Having the informants reflect in depth on and give reasons for their choices regarding teaching in the English classroom was what was needed from the interviews.

The table below displays the teacher informants teaching experience, including their age, level of teaching, years in experience teaching English and their academic qualifications regarding the subject of English. Demographic data was collected to see whether there are any connections between them and the concept of differentiated instruction. However, it is important to mention that the results of this study are not generalisable due to the small sample of informants. Yet, the results of this study can perhaps contribute with insights into the teachers role in relation to the concept of differentiated instruction in the English classroom.

Teacher	Gender	Age	Level of teaching	Years of experience teaching English	Academic points in the subject of English
Teacher 1	Female	38 years old	Primary school	11 years	160 points
Teacher 2	Female	44 years old	Primary school	19 years	80 points
Teacher 3	Female	26 years old	Primary school	½ year	60 points

Table 1. Table of the teachers' English teaching experience.

3.2.6 Pupil interviews

The reasoning for including pupils in the research process was mainly to get a more detailed picture regarding their learning experience in the English classroom. As mentioned in Section 3.2.2, considering the fact that the informants in this study are pupils from primary school, grades 5-7, the interview guide was created and conducted in Norwegian. This was done to make sure that the pupils' answers were not restrained by a possible lack of knowledge in the English language. One of the main aims by including pupils as informants was to have them share and reflect on their individual experience of either being a lower performing pupil or a higher performing pupil in the English classroom. Furthermore, by having them share and describe their learning situation in the English classroom, their responses could lead to possible answers regarding how the concept of differentiated instruction is practiced and understood in their classrooms and how the § 1 – 3 in the Norwegian Education Act is being enacted.

3.3 Data analysis

When conducting a qualitative research project, the data collected can often be quite extensive. Once the data is collected, an extensive part of the analysis process is to decide what data to include and what data to exclude, meaning that there probably is a great amount of data that is collected that will not be used at all in the study. (Anker, 2020, p. 17). Moreover, according to Cohen, Mansion & Morrison (2018, p. 668) a key element of qualitative data analysis is the data management and analysis. As mentioned above, qualitative data are often extensive, therefore careful data reduction is key. This section therefore addresses the different steps of the data analysis process of this research project. Firstly, the transcribing process is presented. Secondly, coding

process is described. And finally, the categorization and analysis process is explained and presented.

3.3.1 Step 1: Transcribing

There are several ways of recording interviews in relation to later documentation and analysis, for instance, using voice recordings, video recordings, taking notes and using your memory. However, the most common method of recording interviews is to use a voice or tape recorder, which was done in this study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). By using a digital voice recorder I was able to focus on the topic of the interview and the participants, rather than being occupied with taking notes etc. Moreover, by using a digital voice recorder, it allowed me as an interviewer to be more present and interact with the informants. In most interview studies there is usually a secretary or a scientific assistant who transcribes the interviews. However, as I did not have the resources provided to do so, I both conducted the interviews and transcribed them. However, according to Postholm (2010, p. 104) the transcription process should be done by the researcher due to the fact that features that were not remarked during the interview process, may be discovered during the analysis of the transcriptions.

In terms of the transcription process, there are no standard rules as to how one should do it, however, rather there are choices one has to take into account before transcribing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 207). Considering the fact that the aim of this study is to gather teachers' and pupils' views and experiences regarding the topic of differentiated instruction, a detailed language focused analysis or a conversation analysis is not necessary. I have chosen to include and register every word said by the participants. However, I have not included pauses, voice pitch, overlaps, etc in the transcripts I created, as analysis of discourse features was not the aim of the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 208). In terms of the consistency of the transcription process there are some factors that are important to reflect upon. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015, p. 211), the interviewer's reliability is often questioned in interview research. One of the reasons is that they claim that there truly is no true objective translation from oral to written form (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 212). So, in order to secure consistency in the transcriptions, I was very careful when transcribing and after transcribing each interview to represent carefully and meticulously the participants' exact words. Therefore, I listened to the recordings from the interview several times

while reading my transcriptions to make sure that I had transcribed exactly what the informants have said (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 211).

However, as mentioned in Section 3.2.2, due to the reliability of the transcripts, it is important to clarify that the pupil interviews were conducted in Norwegian and then translated into English for the use of their answers in this thesis. Also, there was one teacher informant who requested to conduct the interview in Norwegian because she felt like her answers would be more satisfactory in Norwegian. Therefore, the interview was conducted in Norwegian and I had to translate her interview from Norwegian to English.

3.3.2 Step 2: Coding

In order to get an overview of the extensive data material that was collected during this research project, I started the coding process by writing the main content or findings from the material in a condensed text form (Anker, 2020, p. 73). I wrote summaries that were based on the interviews. More specifically, one summary was written based on the teachers interviews, while two summaries were written based on the interviews of the higher performing pupils and the lower performing pupils. By doing so, it became more efficient to divide the findings according to themes. The next step was to start the actual coding process. I decided to theoretically code the data material collected, by using relevant theory to divide the findings into different themes (Anker, 2020, p. 79).

The coding process involves making sense of the text that was collected from the interviews. Furthermore, coding involves aggregating the collected data into smaller themes or categories of information and assigning a label to the codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 190). The different theoretical coding themes in this study were inspired by Tomlinson's model regarding differentiation of instruction (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20). The reasoning for including Tomlinson's model (2014) as inspiration for the themes was so that the findings could be discussed and analysed in relation to the concept of differentiated instruction more directly. By doing so the coding process became much more effective and efficient in terms of the categorization and analysis process. By theoretically coding the data material, the different themes identified were: Concept of differentiated instruction, content, process, product and affect/environment, pupils needs and

variances: readiness, interests and learning profile. Additionally, throughout the coding process, one additional theme was detected and created: challenges in terms of differentiated instruction.

3.3.3 Step 3: Categorization and analyses

The next step after coding is to form the categories and describe and interpret the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 189). After creating themes from the coding process, the different themes were separated into categories which were used in the analysis process. As mentioned in Section 3.2.2, Tomlinson's model of "Differentiation of Instruction" was used as a framework to create the different categories in the interview guides and as thematic categories used in the analysis process. For this reason, the categorization and analysis process became more orderly and systematic. The different categories were punched into three different spreadsheets, one spreadsheet for the teacher responses, one spreadsheet for the lower performing pupils responses and one spreadsheet for the higher performing pupils responses. By doing so, the participants answers became easier to compare and analyse in relation to a specific category. Also, it became more efficient to compare the findings not only within a group, but also cross-check the findings between the three different participant groups. The different categories that emerged from the findings were:

Category 1: Concept of DI

Category 2: Content of DI

Category 3: Process of DI

Category 4: Product of DI

Category 5: Affect/environment of DI

Category 6: Pupils readiness

Category 7: Pupils interests

Category 8: Pupils learning profile

Category 9: Challenges of DI

The categorization and analysis process is exemplified below (see Table 2). This was included to give an image as to how the data material was systematically organized. Furthermore, on the basis

of this the analysis was carried out in side-columns next to the participants responses. The different categories mentioned above are analysed and discussed in chapter 4.

	PARTICIPANT 1	PARTICIPANT 2	PARTICIPANT 3
CATEGORY 1	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>
CATEGORY 2	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>
CATEGORY 3	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>	<i>Their response</i>

Table 2. Table of the categorization and analysis process.

3.4 Reliability and validity

This section will present and discuss the both the reliability and the validity of this research project. By doing so, the research total credibility can be enhanced (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 223). Also, some ethical considerations in relation to this research process are discussed in Section 3.5.3.

3.4.1 Reliability

The fundamental question in all research is how reliable the data actually is. Reliability is connected to the preciseness of the research data. In other words, reliability is connected to what data is being used, how the data is collected and how the data is processed (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 23). Reliability can be guaranteed only if the researcher can reflect over the possible issues in relation to the study (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2011, p. 129). However, there is an ultimate test in relation to reliability is called “test-retest”, which is to repeat a research process that has been conducted and see if the results prove to be the same (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 223). However, since this particular research has a qualitative approach, reproducibility may be difficult. This is due to the fact that the meeting between the researcher, the research field and the individuals that are participating will not be identical, because different researchers bring their own subjective, individual theory into the research project. Also, considering the fact that all individuals are in constant development, both the participating informants and the researcher, qualitative studies will be much more difficult to reproduce (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 224).

Moreover, Merriam (2002) points to several factors that researchers should reflect upon in order to enhance the reliability of the study. Firstly, one should include details regarding the way the data is collected, processed and analysed. As seen in Section 3.3 and 3.4, the decision was made to

include sections where it is in detail described how the data was both collected and analysed. Especially in Section 3.3, the different stages in terms of the data analysis process are described in detail, in order to provide more insight into how the data collected was both processed and analysed. Additionally, the interview guides used in this study are presented in Appendix 2 and 3. This was done in order to share with the readers how the topic of differentiated instruction was investigated and approached in this research project. Also, by attaching the interview guides it allows for others to conduct similar research studies. Merriam (2002) also mention that is important to discuss ethical principles in relation to the study in order to enhance the reliability of the study. In Section 3.4.3, ethical issues and considerations regarding this research project are reviewed and discussed.

Considering the fact that the method for data-collection in this particular study was interviews, there are some possible weaknesses that may affect the reliability of research based on qualitative interviews. In some cases, the informants may feel threatened by a lack of knowledge regarding the topic in question. This may lead to the informants providing answers that they believe the researcher wants to hear, in fear that their answer might not be correct. Therefore, it is important as a researcher to be attentive when conducting interviews because the informants may be providing misinformation, telling lies, evading issues and in some cases putting on a front. In particular, when interviewing children as I have done in this study, research indicates that children will in most cases tend to say anything rather than not answering the questions at all. This means that the answers given by the children informants may not be taken as truthful. Which again, may limit the possible reliability of the research project (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 422). These are important factors one has to consider when interviewing informants, both children and adults, for research purposes.

Additionally, as mentioned in Section 3.2.2, in terms of the reliability of this study it seems important to emphasize that the pupil interviews and one teacher interview were conducted in Norwegian and then translated into English for the use of their answers in this thesis. Which consequently may create a possibility for the initial meaning to differ from the transcription and perhaps weaken the reliability of this study.

3.4.2 Validity

The term validity is usually distinguished between internal and external validity. Internal validity is the term used to refer to the extent to which research findings are a true reflection or representation of reality. External validity addresses the extent to which such representations of reality are legitimately applicable across groups (Brink, 1993, p. 35). In order to enhance the validity of a research project, it is important to be aware of the different factors that could contribute to either strengthen or weaken the validity of the study (Krumsvik, 2013, p. 80). One important factor in terms of the validity is the planning of the research project itself, meaning that if the appropriate research design and methods in relation to the research questions in the study has been chosen (Krumsvik, 2013, p. 81). That is why Section 3.1 and 3.2 has been dedicated to elaborating and discussing both the choice of the research design and research methods in relation to the research questions.

Another key factor regarding the validity of the study is the interview process. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) state that validity has something to do with both the credibility of the informants and the quality of the interview itself. Therefore, it could be essential to quality check the interview guides by for instance having pilot interviews beforehand (Krumsvik, 2013, p. 81). So, before the interviews, I conducted several pilot interviews with both family members and fellow students. By doing so, I was able to quality check the interview questions and make important changes before the actual interviews. For instance, by conducting pilot interviews I noticed that several of my questions gave equivalent answers, meaning that I could exclude some of the questions from my original interview guide and avoid collecting unnecessary amount of data. Another key factor in terms of validity is the transcribing process. Krumsvik (2013, p. 81) states that it is crucial that one is very careful when transcribing and that it is important to repeat exactly what and how the informants answered in their interviews. Therefore, after transcribing each interview, I listened to the recordings from the interview several times while reading my transcription to make sure that I had transcribed exactly what the informants said.

Also, Maxwell (2012, p. 124) mentions two specific factors that may affect the validity in terms of qualitative research interviews, researcher bias and reactivity. In order to achieve validity it is important to minimize the amount of bias and reactivity as much as possible. According to Cohen

et al. (2011, p. 204) different sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondents and the substantive content of the questions. More specifically, these include:

- The attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer
- A tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her/his own image
- A tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her/his preconceived notions
- Misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying
- Misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked

(Cohen et al., 2011, p. 204)

As I am researching a topic that genuinely interests me, it seems inevitable that I do not have any opinions or preconceptions regarding the topic of differentiated instruction. As stated by Denscombe (1995), interviewer neutrality is a chimera (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 272). However, being aware of researcher bias and how to avoid it, I have taken some steps towards minimizing the amount of bias as much as possible. For instance, by carefully creating interview guides that do not ask any leading questions and by having an open dialogue with the respondents regarding their answers both during the interviews and after, the internal validity of this study enhances. Also, by giving the informants the interview guides beforehand and by clarifying the questions during the interviews for the respondents, misunderstandings regarding the questions will be reduced.

Maxwell (2012) also mentions reactivity as an important factor that may affect the validity in terms of qualitative research interviews. Reactivity can be defined as the influence of the researcher on the setting or on the individuals studied (Maxwell, 2012, p. 124-125). Again, eliminating all influence from the researcher is considered impossible, however, that is why it is important to know how one actually is influencing the interview situation. Therefore, it was important for me as a researcher to make sure that the informants were aware that there are no wrong answers and that the interview is not in any shape or form a test. Also, during the interviews, I tried to remain as objective to their responses as possible. I was very hesitant to smiling, nodding, laughing or using my body language in a way that could affect how the informant chose to answer the questions. The point of doing so was to minimize the effect that I as a researcher have on the informant's responses.

All in all, it is important to consider the fact that the intention of this study is not to generalize the results to a population. This qualitative study is based on a smaller amount of informants, meaning that the external validity of this thesis can be considered as rather low. Also, considering the fact that the purposive sampling approach has been used, it is not possible to generalize the results from this study to a population, because the purposive sampling approach does only seek to represent itself or instances of itself in similar population (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 218). Even though the results and findings in this thesis cannot legitimately be applied to other teachers and pupil groups without further research, my findings and results still have contributed with a partial insight regarding the research on the concept of differentiated instruction in the English classroom.

3.4.3 Ethical considerations

Every researcher has a responsibility in terms of ethical concerns and in terms of making sure that the correct guidelines for ethical concerns are being followed. The researcher has to maintain high ethical standards in relation to the participants' autonomy and self-determination. Additionally, it is the researcher's responsibility to respect the participants' personal life and to avoid any possible scenarios which may influence the participants life in a negative manner (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 47). This is supported by The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) guidelines regarding research ethical principles. The guidelines can be summarized in three different categories and considerations that a researcher needs to consider:

- Participants' right to self-determination and autonomy
- The researchers' responsibility to respect the participants privacy
- The researchers' responsibility to avoid damage

(Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 41).

However, even though there are these guidelines that researchers should follow, Christoffersen & Johannessen (2012, p. 42) state that it is the researcher and their institution that are eventually responsible for making sure that the research is being conducted in a manner that is appropriate and respectful. Considering the fact that this MA thesis is connected to an educational institution, the research project had to be approved by the NSD prior collecting data (Christoffersen &

Johannessen, 2012, p. 47). As mentioned previously, the data collected in this research project was based on interviews with both teachers and pupils. In order to secure the participants privacy, all the collected data was anonymised and made untraceable to the participants. Also, during the interviews, tape recorders were used, so that the data could be transcribed. The only sensitive information on these tape recorders were the participants voices, as I did not ask for any names, hometown details, etc. that could risk the anonymity of the participants further. The recordings from the interviews were stored on an external hard disk in a locked locker at Oslo Metropolitan University in order to secure participants privacy.

The Norwegian Personal Data Act demands voluntary consent in order to be able to participate in research. The consent form should include that the participant consents, what the consent from the participant entails and who the consent is for (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 45). I created two different consent forms, one for the teachers and for the pupils. Both consent forms are presented in Appendix 4 and 5. Also, considering that the pupil participants are of very young age, consent from their parents was necessary due to the sensitivity of the topic in this research. At the end of this project, all data will be deleted in agreement with NSD, to ensure the participants their privacy and make sure that the data never will be leaked or abused by others.

4. Findings

In this chapter, the findings from this research project are presented. Throughout the analysis different significant findings were identified. Firstly, what was found was how the three teachers differed remarkably in their answers in terms of concept, content, process, product and affect/environment and also in the way they considered pupils readiness, pupils interests and pupils learning profile in terms of differentiation in their English lessons. Secondly, another interesting finding was how the group of lower performing pupils were emphasised throughout many of the sections below. Thirdly, what was found was that all the teachers stated that time and a lack of competence in terms of differentiation is the most challenging aspect of differentiated instruction for teachers. Lastly, findings altogether showed that there is a clear absence in terms of implementation, focus, support, knowledge regarding differentiated instruction.

The three teacher informants will be referred to as T1, T2 and T3 in this chapter in order to make the analysis more clear and straightforward. Also, considering the fact that there are six pupils to refer to in this chapter, the higher performing pupils will be referred to as HPP1, HPP2 and HPP3. While the lower performing pupils will be referred to as LPP1, LPP2 and LPP3. This is done to avoid confusion and make the analysis chapter more orderly. In addition, as mentioned in Section 3.2.2, it is important to clarify that the pupils' quotes and one out of the three teachers (T3) interviews were translated from Norwegian to English in order to be used in this thesis. Moreover, it is also important to clarify that T1 and T2's interviews were conducted in English, meaning that the extracted statements included in the following section are from the transcriptions without alterations.

4.1 Concept of differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom

Surprisingly, the three teachers that participated in this study seem to all understand the concept of differentiated instruction in different ways. T1 described the concept of differentiation as: "You have to prepare your students for the topic that you are going to teach them and try to make it more easy". On the other hand, T2 defined differentiated instruction as: "Differentiated instruction is you know making the lesson available to all the students, so I have to meet them where they are in the learning situation, so that everyone has got something to work on". While T3 stated that she finds the concept of differentiation very difficult to define, however, she claimed that differentiation is

one of the most important things in school in order to include all pupils and motivate them. Furthermore, T3 also stated: “I often find it difficult to differentiate the lessons well. And I do not know the students yet, so I really do not know specifically what levels all my pupils are at”. Clearly, being in a new class as a new teacher makes it more challenging to differentiate as well. Evidently, the three teachers have very different definitions, approaches and relationships to the concept of differentiation.

If we are to examine the teachers answers regarding the concept of differentiation while taking into account the school-leaders focus and information to the teachers regarding differentiation, their answers are perhaps expected. T1 and T3 reported that they usually do not receive any help nor extra competence from the school or school-leaders in term of differentiated instruction. While T2 reported: “The headmaster is good at sending us to courses and things like that and there is always guest speakers coming and talking about how we need to differentiate learning for the different pupils”. Considering the fact that both T1 and T3 struggled to define differentiation in a correct manner, while T2 had less issues with defining the term, one could debatably relate T1 and T3’s lack of competence to the lack of focus on differentiation at their schools. In essence, the absence of focus and information regarding differentiated instruction may be considered as a relevant factor in terms of the reasoning for their lack of knowledge in relation to differentiated instruction.

Moreover, when the pupils participating in this research project were asked what they think differentiated instruction means, almost all of them except for one pupil answered that did not know or do not remember what the term means. However, it was not expected at all for primary school pupils to know what the term entails. Yet, the purpose of the question was to prepare them for the topic of the interview. What was interesting here was that the HPP3 answered that differentiated instruction means to differentiate in relation to how the majority of the class is doing in the subject. Yet, later in the interview HPP3 stated: “English teachers should try to differentiate instruction based of all the pupils, but also consider the stronger pupils and give them more challenging tasks”. Based on HPP3 statements and answers, it seems like the HPP3 is indicating that he understands differentiated instruction as the teachers taking into account how the majority of the class is doing, while wishing that the teacher was to focus on the HPP as well. This may perhaps indicate that the

HPP3 is not receiving differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom even though it is a request by the pupil.

In essence, the findings in this subsection may suggest that there is an absence of focus and information regarding the topic of differentiated instruction in some of the schools. Two out the three teachers reported that they do not receive help or the opportunity to gain more knowledge concerning the topic of differentiated instruction at their schools, which may indicate the notable lack of both focus and information that was found at these schools.

4.1.1 Content

In terms of content differentiation, the teachers seemed to have diverse strategies. The most interesting aspect in the teachers' answers regarding content was that all the teachers, as a way of differentiating, preferred separating the pupils into groups based on ability. T1 stated: "We split whole classes, both A and B into levels 1 and 2, so it was much more easier to differentiate". Similarly, T2 answered: "Yeah, we divide into groups based on ability. We are not really allowed to divide into groups". When T3 was asked if they divide their pupils into groups and why T3 answered:

Often, it is based on ability. Because it is often that the weaker pupils need more time and help, while the stronger ones have the need to work and get on with the different tasks. I often see if they get the opportunity to work alone, the gaps between the ones that have managed to do one task and the one who has done ten tasks becomes significant.

While the three teachers were all aware that it is legislated by law that the organization of teaching should usually not be based on the pupil's academic level, T1, T2 and T3 all stated that differentiation in ability grouping is more manageable and doable in the EFL classroom.

T3 also stated that she tries to differentiate content through using digital tools and different group activities, such as iPads, where they have many different English teaching apps, where they can rehearse both reading and speaking the English language. However, what was interesting here was that T3 later in the interview stated the opposite: "I personally like lessons where the pupils are

quiet and they are working with tasks alone. So, that is what I want. So that is what I often plan to do in my lessons. However, I think it is important to vary the lessons”. It may seem like T3 has answered in relation to what may seem like the correct answer, yet, T3 clearly stated that the lessons are often planned based on how T3 prefers the lessons, quiet and individual work from the pupils. It seems like T3 is well aware of the importance of variation in the lessons, however, for some reason that does not seem to be a priority.

In terms of content differentiation, the majority of the pupil informants mentioned that there is minimal of variation in terms of content in their English lessons. With regard to content both LPP2 and LPP3 claimed that the English lessons are usually very similar from lesson to lesson, they usually write a lot and read from the textbook. LPP1 stated that there are a lot of individual tasks regularly in the English lessons. Furthermore, LPP1 mentioned that they sometimes are divided into groups based on ability. Likewise, HPP1, HPP2 and HPP3 all stated that there is little variation in terms of content. More specifically, HPP2 mentioned that a typical English lesson is based on individual reading and writing. However, HPP3 also claimed that they sometimes do different things in the lessons. These statements from the pupils can perhaps be seen in correlation with the fact that all of the teachers mentioned that ability grouping makes differentiation manageable and that differentiating in the classroom does not seem to be implemented fully by the teachers yet.

The teachers also differed in terms of their focus on speaking English in the lessons. T1 and T2 reported that they do not speak any Norwegian at all. T2 stated: “I need them to hear English, I don’t know how much English they are exposed to. And we got two hours the whole week. So, for some pupils, that is the only English they hear”. On the contrary, when T3 was asked if the Norwegian language was being used in the English lessons, T3 answered: “Very much. I had a goal that in my English classes, we are solely using English. But I have a very very weak class, and by using English, I loose so many pupils. I know I am not supposed to do so, but I have to do it like that as for now”. This means that T3’s pupils are most likely not exposed to any English input, only the Norwegian language in the English lessons.

LPP1 stated that the teacher only speaks English in the English lessons, which the pupil is satisfied with due to the fact that the pupil feels like the learning increases. Moreover, what was interesting

was when HPP1 was asked what language was preferred that the teacher used in the English lessons, HPP1 claimed: “I don’t think that would be of any significance in my case”. Furthermore, HPP1 also stated that the work they do in the English lessons is not that meaningful for the pupil. Arguably, based on HPP1’s answers it may seem like the pupil feels like the level on the English teaching is so below his level that the instruction feels meaningless. Which again can be connected to the lack of content differentiation or differentiation in general in this classroom. On the other hand, LPP3 stated that the teacher mostly speaks Norwegian in the English lessons. LPP3 noted: “I want her to speak English, then translate to Norwegian”. Likewise, HPP3 mentioned that the teacher speaks mostly Norwegian, however the pupil believed that the English learning would increase if the teacher only spoke English in the lessons.

In sum, what was notable in this section was how much all of the teachers relied on dividing the pupils into groups based on ability in order to be able to content differentiate, even though they were aware of the legislation stated that the organization of teaching should usually not be based on the pupil’s academic level. Another notable and outstanding finding was that T3 often planned her lessons based on how she prefers the lessons and not based on what is in the best interest of her pupils. Furthermore, while T3 stated that she had to use the Norwegian language because her pupils were at a low level in English, both LPP3 and HPP3 expressed a request for their teacher to speak English instead of Norwegian.

4.1.2 Process

What was interesting in terms of process differentiation was that the teachers had very different approaches and strategies here as well. What was very notable was when T1 was asked how she considers process differentiation when planning her lessons, T1 said: “Even though, it’s maybe boring for the one that can do it easily in five minutes, the strong ones are so cooperative with the weak ones”. Based on T1 statement it may look like her focus is solely on the LPP in terms of process differentiation as well. What is very remarkable here is that T1 states that she is aware that by focusing on the LPP, the HPP might get bored in class, yet, T1 does not seem to understand the seriousness of the matter. Additionally, as mentioned in 4.1.1, T1 also stated that dividing the class into groups is often beneficial in terms of process differentiation for the pupils even though they do not always have the opportunity to do so. When T2 was asked she considers process in terms of

differentiation she answered: “I am the wrong person to talk about planning. But, yes, I do have that in mind. I am not an expert in differentiating. I am not. I think that is a hard part”. Based on T2 answers it seems like the teacher struggles with knowing how to differentiate in the classroom without having to divide the class into groups based on ability, as mentioned in Section 4.1.1.

T3 claims that she is aware that pupils learn in different manners and that they need variation, however, she prefers lessons that are quiet and individual as mentioned in Section 4.1.1. Yet, when asked how she considers process in terms of differentiation she answered:

I am often alone, and I think it is often difficult because the pupils are very noisy. So what I usually do, I give them different tasks and I give them 15 minutes for each task and they can choose the order themselves. There are some tasks in the book, some on the iPad, some on a game, yeah a bit of variety. So that the pupils feel like they are deciding themselves.

Based on T3 answers it may seem that even though the teacher prefers quiet and individual lessons, she allows the pupils to be a part of the learning process and lets them choose learning activities based on their own preferred learning style and how the pupils best believe that they can make sense of the given content. However, because of the contradictory statements from T3, it becomes somewhat challenging to actually conclude in terms of how T3 differentiates process in the EFL classroom.

On the other hand, LPP1, LPP2 and LPP3 all stated they do not feel like the teachers ask nor include the methods or activities that the pupils believe they can make sense of regarding content. When LPP2 was asked how she makes sense of the given content in the best way, she answered: “I feel like I learn English the most by speaking. Because if you speak, you can rehearse the words you already know, but in sentences. And then you can understand what they mean in a way”. However, LPP2 stated that they usually write and read from the textbook. On the other side, HPP1, HPP2 and HPP3 seemed not to be that reliant on the English lessons in school in order to learn English. HPP1 stated that he does not tell the teacher if the tasks are too easy, because then he will just have to do more work.

HPP1 claims that he learns majority of English by watching and creating YouTube videos and not at school. Moreover, HPP3 stated he learned content the best when listening and watching English videos. Also, HPP3 stated that he speaks a lot of English at home and by doing so his English skills increases. Based on the informants answers it may seem that LPP and HPP do not experience meaningful process differentiation. While the HPP did not seem to be effected by the lack of process differentiation because they seemed to rely on other sources than school to learn English, the LPP did not feel like the learning activities are sense-making in terms of content.

To summarize, this section provided very interesting findings related to T1 and her teaching practice. T1 distinctive on the LPP in terms of process differentiation, while openly neglecting the HPP and their learning potential, was rather shocking. Moreover, the fact that none of LPP or HPP experienced that they were given sense-making activities in terms of content was also very notable in this section.

4.1.3 Product

In terms of product differentiation, the findings proved to be very noteworthy. The three teachers seemed to have very different perceptions and approaches regarding product differentiation. What was interesting here was that T1, T2 and T3's understanding of product differentiation was solely based on assessment. Their answers were not related to differentiating product assignments, rather, their answers were solely based on the different manners they assess their pupils. T1 stated that her focus is especially on the LPP in terms of product in the classroom. When T1 was asked how her pupils show that they have acquired the knowledge that was intended, she answered: "I ask, especially the weak ones". Also, T1 stated that she uses both formative and summative assessment at least once a week. When asked in what ways the pupils can demonstrate what they have learned, she answered:

It could be a short dictate in writing skills, it can be just like a short conversation. It can be: what did we learn last week? Just writing elementary things on the board. It can be: make an acting play from the words that we have one the board and to see how they put them in real life, not only making the sentence and I'm done. So you see, it's a lot of things, it depends on the terms that we are learning also.

T1 seems to use a variation of assessment methods but her main focus seems to be on the LPP in terms of product differentiation. Moreover, when asked if she finds assessment useful for planning her lessons, T1 answered: “Yes, because then I know what I have to do more. And I can just make a group with an assistant her in the group room, to repeat them again and again”. Again, this supports her statements regarding focusing on the LPP in terms of product differentiation. On the other hand, T2 seemed to have a different view of product differentiation. T2 stated that she does not use summative assessment, however, her lessons are based on formative assessment. When T2 was asked in what ways her pupils demonstrate what they have learned, T2 answered: “By being class teacher, you know your students. I will always have follow-up questions, exercises. There are many different ways where I try to see if they have learned what they were supposed to learn”. Additionally, when asked how often the pupils are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learn, T2 answered:

Constantly, it’s happening all the time. Always that feedback, what is going on, what do you need etc. I can have different agreements with different pupils, if I see that some of them are bored or frustrated, OK then, let’s do something else. Some I have probably forgotten.

What is interesting here is that T2 states that she is aware of the fact that she might have forgotten some pupils in terms of product differentiation. This could perhaps mean that there are some pupils that are not given the possibility to show what they have come to learn or any feedback from the teacher. On the other hand, T3 stated that there is not much assessment in her class. Mostly, it is formative oral assessment if the pupils get any feedback.

Similar to the teachers answers, the LPP answers regarding product differentiation differed as well. LPP1 stated that they do not have any formal tests. However, LPP1 claimed that she receives satisfying feedback which enables LPP1 to know what she has to work further on and what she has mastered. LPP2 on the other hand, claimed that she rarely gets feedback in terms of what she need to work on and what she already has mastered. When LPP3 was asked how he shows the teacher what he has learned, he stated that it is usually through his homework, while HPP3 stated that they rarely get to show what they have learned. Interestingly, some of the answers from the HPP seemed

to differ from the LPP answers even though they shared the same teacher. When HPP1 was asked if he receives feedback in terms of his progress in the subject of English, HPP1 answered: “I want to answer yes, but I do not know. The teacher who knows me well, knows and lets me know. But the other teachers do not”.

If we are to compare HPP1 answer with the LPP1 answer, it may seem like the pupils receive different attention and support from their English teachers. However, as T1 stated, her focus in terms of product differentiation is especially on the LPP, meaning that the different answers from HPP1 and LPP1 are not unexpected. While LPP2 claimed that she rarely receives any feedback, HPP2 stated that she usually receives oral feedback and that the feedback given is very helpful. The reasoning for the notable difference between LPP2 and HPP2 answers is yet unclear, however, this matter is further discussed in 4.2.1.

Altogether, the findings in this section showed us that the teachers seemed to lack knowledge in terms of product differentiation. T1, T2 and T3 statements were all related to assessment, not to differentiating product assignments. Additionally, what was notable was T1 explicit focus on the LPP in terms of product differentiation. Lastly, the fact that T2 stated that she probably has forgotten some pupils in terms of product differentiation seemed to be clear in LPP2 answers stating that she rarely receives any feedback.

4.1.4 Affect/environment

An interesting finding concerning differentiation through affect/environment was that all the teachers seemed to mention what is needed within a classroom for learning to be able to happen, such as safety, respect, no bullying etc. However, the teachers did not mention anything regarding differentiating through modifying the learning environment except for T3. The most notable finding regarding affect/environment was when T3 was asked how and if she modifies the learning environment to the degree that it meets the individual pupil’s needs. T3 stated that she tries to think about it. Yet, as mentioned in Section 4.1.1, she continues with stating that she personally prefers lessons where the pupils are quiet and where they are working individually with tasks. Therefore, it seems somewhat fair to assume that T3 personal preferences in the classroom seem to outweigh differentiating the learning environment to the degree that it meets the pupils needs.

T3 answers regarding affect/environment seemed to be in accordance with LPP3 and HPP3 answers. When LPP3 was asked if he feels that his emotional and personal needs are being attended by his teacher, LPP3 answered: “No, when there is a lot of noise I just have to continue working. I would like to work in place that is quiet, in a group room or in the hallway. But I just have to sit in my place and work there”. LPP3 struggles to concentrate when there is a lot of noise, however, his emotional and personal needs does not seem to be a priority. Likewise, HPP3 stated that only when one is sick or in some kind of pain that the teacher allows for modification of the learning environment. Debatably, this can perhaps indicate that differentiation through affect/environment is not a priority or of importance to T3.

Given these points, it seems evident that there is minimal affect/environment differentiation in T1, T2 and T3’s classrooms. The fact that neither T1 nor T2 mentioned differentiating through modifying the learning environment may perhaps indicate that there is a lack of focus and/or knowledge concerning affect/environment differentiation. Furthermore, given the statements by the LPP3 and HPP3, it does not seem like differentiating through affect/environment is of priority for T3 neither.

4.2 Differentiation according to pupils, readiness, interest and learning profile

This section aims to present the findings of how T1, T2 and T3 differentiate according to the pupils’ readiness, interests and learning profile. Furthermore, the findings regarding the LPP and HPP groups will also be presented and analysed in light of T1, T2 and T3 answers.

4.2.1 Pupils readiness

T1, T2 and T3 seemed to have different approaches and experiences in terms of differentiating according to the pupils readiness. T1 stated that when she plans her lessons, it is mostly based on the pupils readiness and skills. While T2 claimed that she feels like she is not reaching out to the different pupil groups needs in the classroom. Furthermore, T2 stated: “But it is very easy for me to see the high ones, I think me being a native speaker it’s easier for me to have a conversation and forget”. It may seem like T2 finds it difficult to plan her lessons according to the wide variation of pupils readiness that are to be found within in the classroom. As T2 stated, the fact that she is a

native English speaker may influence what pupil groups that are receiving differentiated instruction based on readiness.

When T3 was asked how she differentiates her lessons in relation to the pupils readiness, she stated that it is important to vary the English lessons by basing a lesson on different elements such as reading, grammar, games, group work and some individual work. When considering T3 answers in Section 4.1.1, her answers seem fairly conflicting. It seems like T3 is well aware of some different instructional strategies she can use to differentiate in terms of the pupils readiness, however, due to her personal preferences mentioned in Section 4.1.1, it may look like they are not being taken into use. Nonetheless, if we are to compare these answers with the LPP and HPP answers, a more clear picture regarding differentiation in relation to pupils readiness might be portrayed.

HPP1, HPP2 and HPP3 all stated that they feel like the English lessons are sometimes or always too easy for them. When HPP1 was asked if he is motivated to do good in the English lessons, he answered: “I want to do good, but I can’t. I do not know why”. However, when asked if he feels like he is contributing in a positive manner in the English lessons, he stated: “Yes yes yes, I think I am one of the best in English. Which makes me able to help the others”. Based on his answers, it may seem like HPP1 motivation could be low because he finds the content too easy, however, he seems to get some sense of achievement by being able to help the other pupils in his class. This can be seen in correlation to T1 statements in Section 4.1.2, where T1 stated that she is aware that the HPP can easily get bored in class, however, the HPP are so cooperative with the LPP, meaning that HPP get to help the LPP with tasks in class.

In terms of readiness, HPP2 experiences that the tasks and content in the English lessons are too easy sometimes. However, unlike HPP1, HPP2 is motivated and feels like she can contribute to the lessons. Still, HPP2 states that she wishes for more challenging tasks in the English lessons. HPP3 also found the tasks and content somewhat too easy, however, he is motivated because he enjoys the subject and wants to be able to speak another language. Based on the HPP answers it may seem like differentiation according to the HPP readiness may not be of focus for T1, T2 and T3, even though T2 stated that her focus tends to shift to the HPP due to T2 being a native speaker.

The LPP answers varied notably in terms of differentiating according to the pupils readiness. LPP1 stated that she feels like she is able to contribute in the English lessons and is motivated to do better and progress. Moreover, LPP1 also feels like she is being challenged and that the tasks given are at a suitable level. LPP2 on the other hand, finds the tasks and content in the English lessons somewhat difficult. When LPP2 was asked if he is motivated to do better in the subject of English, LPP2 stated: “No. I don’t know, I don’t feel like I need it. But I know that I need it.” Also, when asked if LPP2 feels like he is contributing with something in the English lessons, LPP2 stated: “Hmm no. Ehm I do not understand everything when my teacher is speaking”. The LPP2 answers can perhaps be seen in correlation with T2 answers in this section, stating that it is easy for T2 to see the HPP in the classroom because she is a native speaker, however, meaning that her focus tends to not be as much on the LPP as the HPP in her English lessons. Finally, LPP3 stated that the degree of difficulty in the English lessons is average and that he is somewhat motivated to do better in the subject of English.

In essence, what was found regarding readiness differentiation was that T2, being a native speaker, tends to focus on the HPP, while the LPP are not receiving differentiation according to their readiness. Yet, interestingly, all of the HPP stated that the English lessons are often or always too easy for them. Another interesting finding was how T3 described the necessity of readiness differentiation, yet, based on both her statements in subsection 4.1.1 and the HPP3 and LPP3 answers in this section, T3’s answer seem somewhat conflicting.

4.2.2 Pupils interests

T1, T2 and T3 seemed to all differentiate according to their pupils’ interests to different extents. When T1 was asked how she considers pupils interests when planning her English lessons, T1 answered that she mostly considered pupils skills when planning her lessons. However, T1 stated that they do have something called a subject day, where topics such as soccer, music, favourite artists are included. Based on T1 answers it may seem like the pupils interests are not a priority in terms of differentiating the English lessons, only on special days such as the subject day. T2 on the other hand stated that: “We live in an area where there are a lot of actors, singers and people that are in the media, so I try to put this area forward”. However, T2 did not mention whether the actors, singers and famous people are of interests to the pupils, T2 only mentions that she includes them

because they live in an area where there are a lot of them. Meaning it becomes somewhat challenging to actually determine to what extent T2 actually considers her pupils interests in terms of differentiating her lessons.

Finally, when T3 was asked how she considered her pupils interests in terms of differentiating her lessons, T3 stated: “I think that sometimes they are very childish, however, I try to think of their interests, so that the weaker pupils can contribute to the lessons”. In terms of T3 answers, it may seem like she does in some cases differentiate in terms of the pupils interest with the intention of the LPP being able to participate in the lessons. All in all, it looks like T1, T2 and T3 all prioritize the importance of differentiating according to the pupils interests in different manners and extents.

In terms of the pupils’ interests, both the LPP and HPP proved to have very similar answers. All of the pupil informants, except for LPP3 and HPP3, claimed that their teacher does not ask nor include their interests in the subject of English. LPP3 stated that sometimes they get to read about different interesting topics such as soccer, which LPP3 finds very motivating. This can be seen in accordance with T3 answers above regarding differentiating in terms of pupils interests. Considering T3 answers, HPP3 answers stating that he experiences that the teachers sometimes includes his interests in the English lessons, are not surprising. Both the LPP and the HPP answers seems to be in accordance with their teachers answers, meaning that the LPP1, LPP2 and HPP1 and HPP2 do not receive or very seldom receive differentiated instruction in terms of their interests.

Altogether, it seems clear that interest differentiation is not a priority for the teachers participating in this study. Consequently, the majority of the findings from the LPP and HPP answers showed that there was a minimal of differentiation in terms of interest. However, T3 did state that she tries to differentiate based on interest, yet, this was done so that the LPP were able to participate in the lessons. Be that as it may, both LPP3 and HPP3 reported that the teacher sometimes includes their interests in the English lessons.

4.2.3 Pupils learning profile

In terms of differentiating according to the pupils learning profile, T1, T2 and T3 all acknowledged that it is important and that they try to do it, however to different extents. T1 stated that she is aware

that her pupils love to act, play games and to write sentences on the blackboard, so T1 tries to incorporate those elements in the learning activities. T2 seemed to elaborate more on the topic, when T2 was asked how and if she considers the pupils learning profile when planning her English lessons, T2 stated:

Yes, cause it has a lot to do with their motivation. Because if we sit and just do exercises from the book, I am not gonna get that much from them. The homework has been like that: do this chapter and this exercises. But then in the classroom, it's like let's talk, let's dance, let's make a project, let's do some sketches and so on.

T2 seems to have great focus on differentiating according to the pupils learning profile. T2 seems to acknowledge the fact that not all pupils will learn English through reading and doing exercises from the textbook and that by differentiating based on pupils learning profile, pupils motivation might increase. Moreover, variation and the pupils being active seems to be of importance for T2. T3, on the other hand, stated: "I do try to consider the pupils learning profile. But they think it is the most fun if they can sit together and just talk or scroll on the iPad. Ehm, so sometimes I have to decide, whether they like it or not". Based on T3 answers it may seem like she does not know her pupils nor their learning profile well enough to be able to differentiate based on their learning profile. This can perhaps be supported by T3 statement in Section 4.1 claiming that she often finds it difficult to differentiate because of the fact she does not know her pupils yet and she does not know what level specifically all her pupils are at.

When the LPP and the HPP were asked if they feel like the lessons are differentiated according to their learning profile, all of the LPP and the HPP answered that they did not feel like their learning profile was taken into consideration in the English lessons by the teacher. More specifically, LPP2 stated that she learns English the best if she speaks and uses the language, however, she states that in the English lessons they usually read and write English. What was interesting here was that LPP2 statements seem to be the opposite of T2 statements above regarding differentiating according to the pupils learning profile. The fact that their answers differ in such remarkable and conflicting manner, makes further research necessary to clarify these particular statements.

In essence, while T1, T2 and T3 all claimed to differentiate according to the pupils' learning profile to different extents, the LPP and HPP answered that their learning profile was not being taken into consideration by their teachers. Furthermore, the fact that some of the statements between the teachers and pupils were so contradicting, makes it difficult to conclude to what extent the teachers in this study actually differentiate according to their pupils' learning profile.

4.3 Challenges

This section aims to analyse and discuss the different challenges that both the teachers and pupils experienced in terms of differentiating in the English classroom. The challenges have been divided into three separate sections: resources (4.3.1), differentiation in relation to HPP and LPP (4.3.2) and consequences (4.3.3).

4.3.1 Resources

What was interesting here was that T1, T2 and T3 all claimed that time was the most challenging aspect in terms of differentiation. When T1 was asked what she found the most challenging in terms of differentiation she answered:

Time is the most challenging. This was not a problem in Europe. Because you get the target and the lesson plan and everything in advance, so you know what you have to teach them. But here you have to make the targets separately, week by week. It's a lot of time, wasting time. Where you can use that time on making lesson plans targeting each pupil in the classroom. So, basically, Utdanningsetaten should do those things for the teachers and they should be equal in each school. I love that system better than this one.

T1 used to teach English in Macedonia where they received a target- and lesson plan in advance. In Norway, the teachers create lesson plans individually, meaning it takes time for the teachers to create them. It may seem like T1 struggles to make time to make lesson plans which targets the different pupil groups in the classroom, because her time is spent creating target and lesson plans in general. Arguably, it could possibly look like T1 misunderstands how to differentiate to some extent. Differentiation is not about creating individual lesson plans for the different pupils,

however, it is about offering multiple avenues to learning. Meaning, it might not be as time-consuming as creating individual lesson plans targeting each pupil in the classroom would be.

Likewise, when T2 was asked what the challenges are in terms of resources and differentiation, she stated: “It takes a lot of time. And also, the know-how, how am I going to do it? Because being in one classroom and having to give different tasks is not something that I have mastered. It is not something I know how to do really”. Based on the teachers statements, it seems like both T1 and T2 struggle with the same challenges in terms of resources. When looking at T2 statement regarding challenges and resources, it seems clear that T2 also appears to misunderstand the concept of how to differentiate in a classroom by stating that differentiation is about creating different tasks and lesson plans for the different pupils. Considering their misunderstandings regarding the concept, it seems fairly understandable that both T1 and T2 state that time is the most challenging aspect in terms of differentiation.

T3 mentioned also mentioned time as being the main challenge, however, she added:

Perhaps it is because I am a new teacher, but I have to create lesson material from scratch, I don't have anything to pick up from last year. We also have limited resources, we have some books and some online websites we can use. But time and other resources are the most challenging in terms of differentiated instruction.

Unlike, T1 and T2, T3 is a newly educated teacher. T3 feels like time is a challenge because she does not have any prior material she can use, she often has to create lesson material from scratch. Arguably, meaning that as time progresses T3 will have lesson material available and then it will perhaps become less challenging to vary the lessons and offer multiple avenues to learning for the different pupils in the classroom.

Additionally, T1, T2 and T3 all mentioned lack of competence and the lack of information regarding differentiated instruction in relation to resources and challenges. T1 and T2 pointed out that teachers need to have enough competence to use, speak and teach the English language as well

as extra competence in terms of the concept of differentiated instruction in order for differentiated instruction to be successful in the English classroom. Moreover, T3 stated:

If we had the opportunity to learn about differentiated instruction at our workplace, for instance teachers going together and creating extra resource folders within certain subjects, so if needed one could go and just print out what is wanted. That would have been great.

Based on T3 statement it may appear that there is a lack of focus and information regarding differentiated instruction in T3's school. This seems to be in accordance with what T3 reported in Section 4.1, stating that they usually do not receive any help nor any extra competence from the school or school-leaders in term of differentiated instruction.

Altogether, it appears like some of the teachers in this study believe that differentiated instruction equals a customized learning plan for each pupil in every lesson and for that reason they state that differentiated instruction is very time-consuming. Also, the three teachers expressed a request for more focus on knowledge, focus and information regarding differentiated instruction at their schools.

4.3.2 Differentiation in relation to the HPP and LPP

Throughout the sections above in chapter 4, a somewhat image of T1, T2 and T3 and their understanding and concept of differentiation has been portrayed. When the teachers were asked what their perception and experiences are in relation to what pupil groups are being prioritized in terms of differentiated instruction, the answers proved to be very interesting. T1 stated that she feels like the HPP are often being overlooked in school by the teachers. Furthermore, she added:

I think that is a really really bad thing that we do here in Norway. It's a really bad thing. Because they (*teachers*) always focus on parents that always complain about their student, about their kids. I think that the Norwegian system have made it so much easy for the parents to yell at the teacher and the teacher to swallow everything and to do everything for that kid and not really focusing on the kids that really can do something.

Interestingly, T1 points out the lack of focus on the HPP as a very unfortunate and negative thing that teachers tend to do in Norway. However, as seen throughout the sections in chapter 4, T1's focus in terms of differentiated instruction has predominantly been on the LPP in the classroom. T2 on the other hand, states that since she is a native speaker, her focus in terms of differentiation tends to be on the HPP, while she sometimes forgets about the LPP. However, when speaking for teachers in general, T2 stated that she thinks that it is easier for teachers to focus on the LPP because they are both easier to spot and to help.

When T3 was asked what her experiences are in relation to what pupil groups are being prioritized in terms of differentiated instruction, she stated that the focus seems to be more on the LPP. Furthermore, T3 stated that this is due to the LPP often are easier to help, that the LPP often are extroverts and they act more out. Ultimately, this results in the LPP receiving a lot extra attention. In terms of the HPP, T3 stated: "The HPP are often very quiet and hardly noticeable. While actually they are bored and experiencing very little achievement". All in all, the three teachers all seem to believe that the LPP are being prioritized in terms of differentiated instruction in Norwegian schools. Yet, it is important to clarify that these are only T1, T2 and T3 perceptions and experiences, meaning that these findings cannot be applied to other schools or teachers without further research. However, these findings can perhaps contribute with a slight insight regarding the topic of differentiated instruction in the English classroom in Norway.

As presented above, the findings showed that all of the teachers stated that they feel that the LPP are being prioritized in Norwegian classroom in terms of differentiation. Moreover, they stated amongst other things that the LPP are often easier to both spot and help than the HPP. However, what was the most remarkable finding in this section was how T1 stated how bad it is that teachers in Norway tend to overlook the HPP, in order to help the LPP. Yet, as seen throughout chapter 4, T1's focus has been none other than on the LPP.

4.3.3 Consequences

This section aims to present the HPP and the LPP feelings and thoughts regarding their own learning situation in terms of differentiated instruction the subject of English. When the HPP were asked if they feel like the instruction, tasks and homework in the subject of English are at a level

where they are able to perform and grow, their answers differed remarkably. There were no significant results in terms of whether the HPP or the LPP were satisfied with their own learning situation. HPP1 claimed that he feels stuck and feels like he is not progressing in terms of his English skills. Furthermore, HPP1 stated: “It (*English lessons*) becomes too easy. It could get boring, but I can also get the feeling that I am better than everybody else when I have finished first”. Based on HPP1 answers it may seem like the only sense of accomplishment or satisfaction HPP1 receives in the English lessons comes from the knowing that he is better than the rest of his class by finishing his tasks first. This can perhaps be seen in correlation with T1 lack of focus on the HPP throughout chapter 4.

HPP2 on the other hand claimed: “Sometimes it could be more difficult. But I am satisfied”. This seems also to be in accordance with T2 statements, that she tends to focus on the HPP in her English lessons. When HPP3 was asked if he feels that the instruction, tasks and homework in the subject of English is at a level where he is able to perform and grow, HPP3 stated: “Sometimes”. HPP3 also stated:

Teachers should try to differentiate the difficulty level to the majority of the pupils, but they should also look at the ones that are doing better and the ones that are doing bad, and give them either more challenging or more easy tasks.

Based on HPP3 answers it seems clear the HPP3 is very aware of his own learning situation and is aware that he lacks instruction and tasks that are both more challenging and at an appropriate level. However, when looking at T3 answers regarding the HPP and LPP in Section 4.3.2, HPP3 request for instruction at his level is not a surprising finding. Moreover, when the LPP were asked if they feel like the instruction, tasks and homework in the subject of English are at a level where they are able to perform and grow, their answers seemed to somewhat resemble. LPP1 stated that she feels like she can grow and develop in the subject of English as things are now, which seems to in correlation with T1 answers throughout chapter 4. Likewise, LPP2 stated that she is somewhat satisfied with the English instruction, even though it is difficult at times. LPP3, on the other hand, when asked if the instruction in the English lessons is at a level where he is able to perform and grow, LPP3 answered: “So so”. This can perhaps be seen in correlation with LPP3 answers in

Section 4.1.4, where he felt like his personal and emotional needs regarding his own learning situation are not being fulfilled. Which may perhaps make it more challenging for the LPP3 to both perform and grow in the subject of English.

In essence, the findings in this section seem to portray that the HPP participating in this study are not receiving appropriate instruction in the subject of English. Based on their answers, it does not seem like the HPP are receiving instruction, tasks and homework that are suitable to their academic level. On the other hand, while LPP1 seemed to be satisfied with her own learning situation, LPP2 and LPP3 expressed dissatisfaction connected to their current learning situation.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings are discussed in light of the literature review in order to be able to answer the research questions in a suitable manner. Meaning that, this chapter will discuss what typically characterizes differentiation in the EFL classroom and how the §1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is being enacted for the HPP and LPP in the EFL classroom in Norway. More specifically, this section will discuss the findings in terms of the given research questions.

In order to answer the research questions in an orderly manner, this chapter includes two main sections. Section 5.1 discusses how the concept of differentiated instruction is understood and how it is practiced by the participating teachers in the EFL classroom. While Section 5.2 focuses on and discusses to what degree the §1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is being enacted for the HPP and LPP in the EFL classroom.

5.1 How is the concept of differentiated instruction understood and practiced in Norwegian EFL classrooms?

The present study has used Tomlinson's model "Differentiation of Instruction" (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 20) throughout this study as a framework to answer the research questions in an appropriate manner. By using Tomlinson's model (2014), a representation of how teachers understand and practice differentiated instruction in the EFL classroom has been identified. Altogether, the findings in this study show that there were serious misconceptions in relation to understanding the term differentiated instruction. Furthermore, the findings proved that the teachers understand the concept of differentiation in very different ways, whereas T1 understanding of the concept was the most noteworthy due to her distinct focus on the LPP.

In terms of how the teachers practiced differentiated instruction the findings showed that differentiation occurred mostly in terms of content differentiation. Furthermore, in terms of process and affect/environment differentiation there seemed to be barely any instances of differentiation registered. Also, what was found through product differentiation was how the focus on the LPP was very notable and significant. Lastly, the findings regarding teachers differentiation practice based on pupils' readiness, interests and learning profile indicated that there was a minimal of differentiation related to these aspects as well.

First, the teachers' understanding of the concept of differentiated instruction is discussed. Next, the teachers practice of differentiated instruction is discussed in light of relevant theory and research. Lastly, teachers differentiation practice according to pupils' readiness, interests and learning profile is discussed and analysed.

- TEACHERS UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

There seems to be great consensus between the findings of this study and the previous research that has been conducted. Furthermore, in order for teachers to be able to differentiate successfully to the different pupil groups that are to be found in the EFL classroom and in general, it seems like there is a great need for a specification of the term differentiation. Moreover, in light of the findings presented in Chapter 4, it seems somewhat clear that the teachers are in need of consistent information, input and competence regarding the concept of differentiation. As seen in Section 4.1, majority of the teachers struggled to define differentiation correctly.

What was fascinating in terms of these findings, was how clear the variation was in terms of the teachers understanding and educational practice regarding differentiating the instruction in the EFL classroom (see Section 4.1) Moreover, this can perhaps be seen in correlation with the fact that the concept of differentiation appears to be both imprecise and that there are no official standards related to differentiated instruction in Norway that teachers can apply to their instruction (Nordahl, 2012). Besides, the fact that there are no clear guidelines in terms of how to differentiate appropriately in Norway, may perhaps be the reason for the teachers' individualized or narrow understanding of the concept of differentiated instruction (Nordahl, 2012).

Another interesting finding was one of the teachers' distinctive focus on the LPP in terms of differentiated instruction (see Section 4.1). The particular belief that differentiated instruction is solely for the LPP is one of the many common misconceptions that teachers seem to have (Fox & Hoffman, 2011, p. 10). Additionally, this finding seems to be in accordance with the findings from NOU (2016:14), stating that there seems to be a long tradition in Norway of understanding differentiated instruction as society's responsibility to take care of pupils that are struggling. Furthermore, the fact that the teacher acknowledged that she is aware that the focus on the LPP in

the classroom, may be uninteresting and boring for the HPP, gives the impression that the teacher believes that the HPP can manage on their own in the classroom (see Section 4.1.2). Interestingly, there seems to be great agreement between these findings and the findings from the Official Norwegian Report (NOU, 2016:14), stating that there seems to be a common attitude in Norway that the HPP can manage on their own in the classroom. Based on the results from the NOU (2016:14), the findings that this study presents may not be as surprising as they seemed earlier.

Throughout chapter 4, (see Section 4.1, 4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.3.1) the teachers mentioned that the know-how of differentiation seemed to be a factor some of the teachers felt like they have yet mastered. Therefore, as a result, the instruction in the EFL classroom is not optimized in terms of differentiation. In terms of understanding the concept of differentiation, some of the teachers seemed to misunderstand both the term and the concept. Some of the teachers appeared to believe that differentiated instruction is about creating individual lesson plans for the different pupils, instead of offering pupils multiple opportunities to learning (see Section 4.3.1). This can be seen in light of Damsgaard & Eftedal's (2015) research article stating that there is a need for concretization and to defuse the term differentiated instruction. Teachers are often told that differentiation is important and that they have to focus on differentiating the instruction in the classroom, yet, there are no official guidelines in Norway stating how one should actually do it in practice (Damsgaard & Eftedal, 2015). Arguably, this seems to be what is happening in the participating teachers case as well.

Moreover, in order for the teachers to understand the concept of differentiation in a more precise and beneficial matter, the teachers mentioned that the lack of competence and lack of information in terms of differentiated instruction is critical and it needs to be raised (see Section 4.3.1). If we are to examine these findings in light of the findings from Norwegian research included in Section 2.4.1, all of the prior national research point to the fact that teachers knowledge in relation to the topic of differentiation needs to be raised (NOU, 2014:16; Nordahl, 2012; Damsgaard & Eftedal, 2015; Brevik & Gunnulfsen, 2016). Based on the findings from this study and the studies mentioned above, there seems to be a great agreement regarding the need for a common knowledge base in terms of differentiation, both on a national and local level (NOU, 2016:14). Furthermore,

several of the studies mentioned that the teachers' pedagogical and academical level needs to be raised as well (NOU, 2016:14; Nordahl, 2012).

- TEACHERS PRACTICE OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

The teachers practice of differentiation has been presented through content, process, product and affect/environment throughout Chapter 4. Yet, as we have seen, the teachers in this study varied significantly in terms of both how they differentiate and what pupil groups they seemed to prioritize. The findings indicated that there were few cases of differentiation registered altogether, whereas the group of the LPP seemed to be in focus in those cases. Furthermore, it seemed like the teachers did understand the necessity of differentiating instruction to meet pupils' needs in the classroom. Yet, the teachers were unsure regarding how to truly carry this out in practice due to their lack of knowledge and information regarding differentiation. This seems to be in similarity to what other studies have reported as well (Tobin & McInnes, 2008, p. 3). Consequently, based on the findings altogether, it could be beneficial and important to develop some common national guidelines for teachers on how and why one should differentiate towards the different pupils that are to be found within a classroom.

Moreover, the findings indicated that differentiation occurred mostly in terms of content differentiation. What was found in terms of content differentiation was that all the teachers preferred to separate their pupils into groups based on ability to be able to differentiate, which is a recommended method in terms of content differentiation (Imbeau & Tomlinson, 2010, p. 15). Based on research conducted by Solberg et al. (2017), differentiation increased when separating the pupils in groups based on ability as opposed to random grouping. The teachers in this study did mention that they are aware that differentiating by dividing the pupils into ability groups has not been accepted through the Norwegian school debate throughout the years. Furthermore, it is also legislated that the organization of teaching should usually not be based on the pupil's academic level in Norwegian schools. Moreover, pupils are to be divided into classes that meet their social needs (Opplæringslova, 1998, § 8-2). However, the teachers claim that by dividing the pupils into groups based on ability, differentiation becomes more manageable and doable in the EFL classroom. Solberg et al. (2017) justifies ability grouping by claiming that all pupils are entitled to differentiated instruction based on both their skills and needs for development.

In terms of input/output differentiation, the findings showed that the teachers differentiated in very different manners. Furthermore, majority of the teachers did not use any Norwegian their English lessons despite the different levels of knowledge in the pupil group. This particular use of input can be connected to Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis stating that learners can only acquire knowledge of a language when they receive and are exposed to comprehensible input. Moreover, if the input includes forms and structures that are slightly above the language learner's current proficiency in the target language, both comprehension and acquisition will occur (Lightbown & Spada, 2001, p. 39). Accordingly, some of the pupils reported that they feel that their English skills increases by listening to English and that they preferred that their teacher used the English language instead of Norwegian (see Section 4.1.1).

On the other hand, one of teachers stated that she uses the Norwegian language predominantly in her English lessons. However, her pupils stated that they wished for their teacher to both use and speak the English language on the basis that they believed that their English skills would increase (see Section 4.1.1). This finding seems to be in opposition to Krashen's (1982) views that all teachers should be able to provide comprehensible input to their pupils. In light of Krashen's input hypothesis, it seems fair to question how the pupils will be able to advance to higher level of language acquisition if they are not exposed to any comprehensible input by their teacher. Still, we must take into consideration that the teacher in question stated that she does not know her pupils well enough yet, since she started teaching them half a year ago (see Section 4.1). Which again, can make it difficult for the teacher to differentiate input in the classroom.

In terms of output differentiation, the findings presented somewhat contradicting statements between the teachers and pupils. Moreover, the teachers reported that their focus in the classroom is related to speaking, having conversations and acting in terms of output (see Section 4.1.3 and 4.2.3), which Swain (2000, p. 102) strongly encourages teachers to do so that the pupils experience meaning and reflection regarding their language learning process. Furthermore, some of the pupils expressed a desire for more output based lessons, because then new words can be put into functioning sentences and by doing so one can develop a greater understanding of the words meaning (see Section 4.1.2). This can be viewed in light of Swain's output hypothesis, which states that output pushes language learners to process language more deeply and with more mental effort

than input does (Harmer, 2015, p. 47). Yet, since we do not know the actual reality of what is happening in these classrooms, more research is needed before drawing any definite conclusions.

Next, the findings showed that there seemed to be barely any differentiation in terms of process. The teachers seemed to struggle with several aspects of process differentiation and some of the teachers showed a notable focus on the LPP in terms of process differentiation, while openly neglecting the HPP (see Section 4.1.2). Consequently, this form of teaching practice does not seem to comply with what the Norwegian Core Curriculum requires (The General Part of the Curriculum, LK06), which is that the school shall have room for everybody, place attention on each individual learner and that the mode of teaching should be adapted to subject, content, age and maturity (Udir, 2015, p. 16). Also, when looking at the new Core Curriculum that is to be implemented in Norwegian schools from the fall semester 2020 onwards, the importance of differentiated instruction for both struggling and excelling pupils is emphasized (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 19-20). When comparing the teachers teaching practice in relation to differentiated instruction and the Norwegian Primary Education legal documents, it seems evident that there is a huge gap between them. This seems to be in accordance with the majority of studies in Section 2.4.1, stating that teachers knowledge in relation to differentiated instruction needs to be raised in order for differentiated instruction to be successful in the classroom.

Furthermore, in relation to process differentiation, some of the teachers reported that they struggled with the know-how of differentiating process and differentiation in general in the EFL classroom (see Section 4.1.2). Again, it may seem like the teachers in this study do not understand the practical and conceptual meaning of differentiated instruction and they seem to lack the knowledge that is necessary to be able to differentiate instruction in the classroom. As a suitable differentiated activity should be in given several different modes at varied degrees of sophistication and in varying time extents, it seems like the teachers fall short in this aspect as well (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 134). Accordingly, these particular findings resemble the results in Dack's (2019) study, stating that teachers need to learn both 'how' and 'why' one should differentiate in the classroom to be able to make meaning of the complex matter of differentiated instruction and to be able to implement it successfully in the classroom.

In terms of the teachers' product differentiation, the findings showed that the teachers teaching practice does not provide some pupil groups the opportunity to express what they have learned and what they have come to understand (see Section 4.1.3). If pupils are not able to express what they have learned, the teachers will probably struggle with determining what level their pupils currently are at, which again will most likely weaken the process of differentiation for the different pupil groups in the classroom (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 156). In light of Tomlinson's (2017) theory regarding product differentiation, it may look like the teachers fail to both develop high quality assignments for the different pupil groups and fall short in terms of including different product formats for their pupils. For this reason, it seems evident that the teachers are in need of improving their understanding and practice regarding product differentiation in the EFL classroom.

However, if we are to consider the new Core Curriculum that takes effect from 01.08.2020 in light of product differentiation, the future of differentiated instruction in Norwegian schools is to receive a much more significant and essential role which, according to the present results, is heavily needed. The new Core Curriculum includes important topics such as ambitious expectations, constructive measures, suitable assessment, professional judgement, mapping of pupils and leaning progression for every individual pupil that is to be found in Norwegian classrooms (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019, p. 19-20). Since the new Core Curriculum has dedicated a whole chapter to the concept of differentiated instruction, teachers will hopefully be required to both learn and embrace instructional strategies regarding differentiation to a greater extent than they are today. However, these are only speculations, which means that solid and extensive research once the new Core Curriculum has been set in effect will be highly necessary.

Lastly, in terms of affect/environment, it did not seem like any of the teachers had considered differentiation through affect/environment as an element of differentiation (see Section 4.1.4). As modifying the learning environment to the degree that it meets the individual pupil's emotional needs is both necessary and essential in order for effective learning to take place, it is unclear whether the teachers do not see the importance or necessity of it or if it has to do with the lack of information or knowledge regarding the concept of differentiated instruction (ASCD, 2011, p. 13). Consequently, due to the lack of affect/environment differentiation, it may seem like the pupils are not being able to explore their full learning potential (ASCD, 2011, p. 14).

- TEACHERS' DIFFERENTIATION PRACTICE ACCORDING TO PUPILS' READINESS, INTERESTS AND LEARNING PROFILE

The findings regarding teachers differentiation practice based on pupils' readiness, interests and learning profile indicated that there was minimal of differentiation in terms of these aspects. First, when examining the teachers teaching practice regarding pupils' readiness differentiation, the findings showed that the teachers barely differentiated according to the pupils readiness. Considering the fact that the main goal of readiness differentiation is to create tasks that are slightly above the pupils current knowledge level and to provide them with the essential support needed, it may seem like the teachers are not successful in this area (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 83). Furthermore, it may seem like the teachers fall short in terms of scaffolding or creating supportive activities that allows pupils to move through the zone of proximal development (McLeod, 2019). When analyzing these findings in light of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory on learning, it seems evident that the HPP and the majority of the LPP are not given the opportunity to develop their current understanding and knowledge in the subject of English due to the lack of essential support from the teachers.

Based on the lack of readiness differentiation, the teachers' misconceptions regarding the understanding of the term differentiation and the teachers experience regarding the difficulties related to the know-how of differentiation (see Section 4.1 and 4.3.1), it seems reasonable to suggest that the teachers would benefit from being introduced to basic differentiated instruction tools. According to Nordlund (2003, p. 7), Bloom's taxonomy is one of the most important "tools" in terms of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Bloom's taxonomy allows for the teacher to categorize activities and tasks by the level of complexity, instead of creating individual tasks and individual lesson plans as some of the teachers believed that differentiated instruction entailed (see Section 4.3.1). Furthermore, by using Bloom's taxonomy, teachers can differentiate instruction according to the levels of readiness of their pupils (Nordlund, 2003). Yet, in order for teachers to be able to apply such tools to their planning and instruction successfully, teachers will have to be educated and instructed. Moreover, perhaps teacher educators could be of help or assistance to teachers in this area.

Furthermore, as seen in Section 4.3.1, some of the LPP found the teaching in the subject of English too difficult, meaning that the pupils have probably not mastered the basic levels of the taxonomy. As a result, the pupils struggled to understand and move to more complex levels (Fox & Hoffman, 2011, p. 48). In similar manner, all of the HPP experienced the teaching of English too easy. Meaning that they possibly have mastered the lower levels of the taxonomy and that they would benefit from moving to more complex levels. If not given the opportunity to move to more complex levels, pupils might lose both interest and motivation, which seems to be the case already for some of the HPP (Fox & Hoffman, 2011; see Section 4.2.1). To conclude, it seems that by informing and training teachers about basic differentiated instruction tools, both their understanding and practice could possibly improve.

In terms of interest differentiation, the majority of the teachers proved to have a minimal of focus related to this aspect of differentiation. Moreover, only one teacher stated that she sometimes tends to focus on interest differentiation. As a result, the pupils found the teaching very motivating and interesting in those circumstances (see Section 4.2.2). This seems to be in accordance with Tomlinson's (2014, p. 19) theory that states when a person is interested in something in particular, their motivation increases, which will likely enhance the pupils' learning outcomes. As the aim of interest differentiation is to enhance pupils' engagement and motivation with new understandings while including elements that the pupils find interesting, it seems evident that the majority of the teachers are not realizing the importance and the benefits of interest differentiation (ASCD, 2011, p. 15). By not focusing on interest differentiation in their lessons, the teachers are arguably most likely not maximizing their pupils' motivation, which again may result in the pupils not developing their full learning potential in the EFL classroom.

The final aspect is differentiating according to the pupils' learning profile. Based on the overall findings, teachers did not seem to differentiate according to the pupils learning profile (see Section 4.2.3). Meaning that the most efficient way pupils learn new material is arguably not taken into consideration by their teachers, which may result in the pupils perhaps not being able to utilize their full learning potential (ASCD, 2011, p. 15). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that different individuals have different learning styles. By not differentiating according to learning profile, it may slow down some pupils learning process or make the learning process feel awkward

(Tomlinson, 2017, p. 110). However, due to the fact that there were some very contradicting and conflicting answers between some of the teachers and the pupils, it becomes somewhat difficult to discuss the findings in Section 4.2.3 without further research (see Section 4.2.3).

5.2 How is § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act being enacted for the HPP and LPP in Norwegian EFL classrooms?

This section focuses on the legislation § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act and how it is being enacted for the specific pupil groups that involve HPP and LPP in Norwegian EFL classrooms. Considering that the legislation states the following: “Education must be differentiated to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice, candidate for certificate of practice and training candidate” (§1-3, 1998), it is of great interest to see how or if the legislation is being enacted for the different pupil groups mentioned above. Altogether the findings showed that the LPP were predominantly in focus in the few cases where differentiated instruction was registered. Additionally, the findings revealed that the current teaching provides the HPP minimal opportunities of differentiated instruction. Furthermore, the HPP expressed the need for more challenging instruction as some of them felt unmotivated due to the lack of differentiated instruction. Lastly, the findings indicated that there was remarkable absence in terms of focus, information and knowledge regarding the concept of differentiated instruction in the participating schools.

Firstly, possible reasons as to why the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is not being enacted as it is legislated is discussed from a teachers perspective. Secondly, the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is discussed in light of the group of HPP. Lastly, the legislation is discussed in light of the findings regarding the group of LPP.

- ABSENCE IN TERMS OF FOCUS, SUPPORT, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE REGARDING DIFFERENTIATION

Altogether, it appears as the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act not being enacted as it legislated, is not a new phenomenon, rather an ongoing concern over the last decades in Norway. Evidently, it seems as there is remarkable absence in terms of focus, support, information and knowledge regarding differentiation at Norwegian schools and by Norwegian school-leaders and teachers.

Overall, deliberating the findings and discussion in chapter 4 and 5, it seems evident that the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is not fully being enacted for the HPP nor for the LPP. Furthermore, teachers seem to have a minimal of focus, knowledge and information regarding the topic of differentiation. Therefore, this subsection focuses on the possible reasons as to why the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is not being enacted as it is legislated, however, from a teachers perspective.

Interestingly, all of the teachers reported that time is one of the biggest challenges in terms of being able to differentiate instruction in an appropriate manner. However, considering that some of the teachers in this study believed that differentiated instruction equalled a customized learning plan for each pupil, it is understandable that time was the most challenging aspect in terms of differentiation (see Section 4.3.1). This finding can be seen in correlation with Fox & Hoffman's (2011) list of the commonly held misconceptions regarding the concept of differentiated instruction, where one of the misconceptions is that many teachers believe that differentiation entails creating individual learning plans for the different pupils in the classroom. For this reason, it seems evident that the teachers participating in this study need to acquire a clearer view as to what differentiated instruction actually entails to be able to differentiate appropriately according to the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act.

Additionally, the teachers expressed that there is a need for more knowledge and information regarding differentiation in order to be able to differentiate appropriately. Relatedly, the lack of focus and information regarding differentiation from their school-leaders and at their schools in general was also found (see Section 4.3.1). Consequently, the absence of knowledge, focus and information was evident throughout chapter 4 and 5 in this study. The fact that all of the teachers participating in this study fell short in majority of the aspects of differentiation is not that unforeseen when bearing in mind the prior research regarding differentiation presented in Section 2.4.1. More specifically, Norwegian research by NOU (2016), Damsgaard & Eftedal (2015), Brevik & Gunnulfsen (2016), Nordahl (2012), all showed that there is a notable lack of knowledge in relation to the topic of differentiated instruction amongst teachers in Norway.

Likewise to the results of the present study, prior research showed amongst other things that there is a need for a common knowledge base and a concretization concerning the topic of differentiated instruction (Damsgaard & Eftedal, 2015; NOU 2016:14, p. 8) Also, teachers need to receive the competence necessary in order to differentiate appropriately (Brevik & Gunnulfsen, 2016; Nordahl, 2012; NOU 2016:14, p. 101). Lastly, that it seems that individualized or narrow understanding of differentiated instruction currently stands strong both in terms of perception and realization of teaching in Norwegian classrooms (Nordahl, 2012, p. 11). Nevertheless, the fact that research results regarding differentiation in Norwegian classrooms from year 2012 till 2020 show somewhat the same results is quite noteworthy and it may perhaps indicate that minimal or no measures have been sat in place to improve the differentiation practice in Norwegian classrooms. Still, it is important to clarify that this study has not included all studies regarding differentiation in Norway from year 2012-2020, however, the ones that have been included have notably shared the same results.

Yet, bearing in mind the new core curriculum that is to be implemented in Norwegian schools from 01.08.2020, the concept of differentiation is to receive a greater and more significant role in the general part of the curriculum and in the subject of English (Udir, 2020). Furthermore, as the new English subject curriculum has included several essential parts of differentiation, it will be interesting to see in what ways the new core curriculum will impact teachers practice and implementation of differentiated instruction in the English classroom. Additionally, it will be highly relevant to see in what ways the new core curriculum affects schools and school-leaders focus on differentiation considering the significant role differentiation has received in the new core curriculum (Udir, 2020). Altogether, perhaps the new core curriculum and its implementation is the measure needed to be able to improve the teachers focus on differentiation in Norwegian classrooms. Yet, to be able to successfully implement the many aspects of differentiation, teachers will most likely need to be trained, assisted and educated.

- THE § 1-3 IS NOT BEING ENACTED FOR THE HPP IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

In essence, deliberating the findings in chapter 4 and the discussions in chapter 5, it seems fair to assume that the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is not being enacted in favor of the HPP. Even though the HPP are entitled to instruction that enables them to realise their full potential

academically due to the legislation, the teachers do not seem to understand the importance of it for unknown reasons. While all the teachers did acknowledge that it is unfortunate and negative that LPP often are being prioritized in terms of differentiation, these reflections do not seem to affect their teaching practice (see Section 4.3.2).

As presented above, the findings indicate that the current instruction provided does not offer the HPP differentiation that is in aligned with the legislation § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998). First, it seems reasonable to conclude that the group of HPP in especially T1's classroom are not receiving differentiated instruction that they are entitled to by law. The most compelling evidence is T1's surprising and startling responses regarding purposely overlooking the HPP groups' needs in terms of differentiation, while openly being aware of some of the negative consequences, is quite serious and unfortunate (see Section 4.1.2). Moreover, the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education state that there are several serious consequences that could occur if the pupils are not being understood or if they are not being challenged academically, for instance, non-completion, underachieving, social stigmatisation, bullying, sadness or depression. Considering these serious consequences, it seems quite alarming that the teacher deliberately plans her lessons based on the HPP assisting the LPP in their learning process, resulting in the HPP not being challenged, being bored and possibly even more serious consequences.

Moreover, even though the teachers' teaching practice are dissimilar, the outcome of their teaching practice has proven to be relatively similar. Additionally, none of the teachers seem to fulfill any of the requirements from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018) in terms of differentiated instruction. Significantly, The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018) mention amongst other things that teachers are to choose differentiated content by using multiple teaching material, different learning strategies, different learning methods and different ways of organizing the instruction. Still, even though the teachers seemed to be aware of these important instructional factors, one teacher gave the impression that the importance of a quiet and controlled classroom arguably is of more importance than the pupils needs (see Section 4.1.1).

Based on the results, it may seem like the teachers believes that the HPP can manage on their own, which interestingly seems to resemble the findings from the NOU (2016:14, p. 8), indicating that

there is a common attitude in Norway amongst teachers that the higher performing pupils can manage on their own in the classroom. Besides, these findings are in contrast to what is legislated in § 1-3 and of what is required by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018) in terms of differentiated instruction. More specifically, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018) mention that concept of differentiated instruction is implemented in Norwegian schools to make sure that every individual receives the best possible benefits from regular education. Be that as it may, in reality, this does not seem to be the case for the HPP in these classrooms.

- THE § 1-3 IN THE NORWEGIAN EDUCATION ACT IS NOT BEING FULLY ENACTED IN FAVOR OF THE LPP

As has been noted, considering the findings in chapter 4 and the discussions so far in chapter 5, it seems reasonable to state that the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is not being fully enacted in favor of the LPP neither. Even though the findings from T1's classroom showed that the English instruction for the LPP was somewhat in correlation with the legislation § 1-3, the teaching practice of the other teachers showed otherwise. Bearing in mind the fact that findings showed that the teachers' teaching practice in most cases were not in accordance with the legislation § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act nor with the requirements from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir, 2018), it may indicate that the reason for the remarkable lack of differentiation could be due to the absence in terms of focus, information and knowledge regarding the concept of differentiated instruction in the participating schools.

As presented in chapter 4 and 5, altogether the findings showed that the LPP were predominantly in focus in the few cases where differentiated instruction was registered. Since differentiation was registered in more cases for the LPP than the HPP, it seems the outmost important to examine to what extent the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is being enacted for the LPP in the EFL classroom. First, it seems evident that T1 considers differentiated instruction only for the pupils that are struggling (see Section 4.1), which is a common misconception regarding differentiated instruction that is to be found amongst teachers (Fox & Hoffman, 2011). As seen in Section 4.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3 and 4.2.1, T1 solely focused on the LPP in terms of differentiating the instruction.

Even though there were many aspects of differentiation that T1 did not implement in her instruction, the LPP were solely in focus in the few cases where differentiation was registered. Which unfortunately confirms the findings from the NOU report (2016:14), that there seems to be a long tradition in Norway of understanding differentiated instruction as society's responsibility for taking care of pupils who are struggling academically and socially. Based on this it seems clear that there is a need for teachers to receive more competence regarding their understanding and meaning of the concept of differentiated instruction. Additionally, as found in previous research, teachers have expressed a request to concretise the term differentiation instruction (Damsgaard & Eftedal, 2015). Ultimately, this may indicate that the term and concept of differentiation is too elaborate and defuse for teachers to understand without further guidance, assistance and knowledge.

In contrast, T2 seemed to be well aware of the concept of differentiation and its definition (see Section 4.1). Yet, throughout chapter 4, it was evident that the teacher struggled with knowing how to differentiate instruction based on the different pupil groups that are to be found within a classroom. Which seems to resemble previous research conducted, both on a national and international basis. More specifically, Whitley (2019), Dack (2019), Damsgaard & Eftedal (2015), Nordahl (2012) and Tobin & McInnes (2008) all mention that many teachers seem to lack understanding and the ability to implement differentiated instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, it seems to be a reoccurring finding in prior research that teachers are often told to differentiate more and to focus on differentiation in the classroom, yet, there is nobody assisting or guiding the teachers on how to differentiate in practice. Therefore, this can indicate there is a great need for teaching training in terms of differentiated instruction in Norwegian classrooms. Evidently, T2's teaching practice does not seem to be accordance with the § 1-3 legislation nor the requirements from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, which include that the schools are to take measures to ensure that every individual pupil receives the best possible benefits from the ordinary education (Udir, 2018).

Lastly, when examining T3's teaching practice in relation to the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act, it seems fair to assume that T3's teaching practice does not fulfill what the legislation § 1-3

in the Norwegian Education Act entails nor the requirements from The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2018). Even though the teacher was aware of important instructional factors that are emphasized and required by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir, 2018), such as using multiple teaching material, different learning strategies, different learning methods and different ways of organizing the instruction, it seemed like the importance of a quiet and orderly classroom exceeded the pupils needs. This may indicate the teacher is not aware of the serious consequences that could follow if pupils are not being challenged academically or understood by their teacher. Ultimately, this points to the fact the level of knowledge for teachers should to be raised, both pedagogically and in terms of differentiated instruction, so that teachers can base their planning, implementation and evaluation of the teaching sessions based on their pupils learning potential appropriately (NOU, 2016:14, p. 100-101).

To summarize, the present section has explored how the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is being enacted for the groups of HPP and LPP in Norwegian EFL classrooms. Evidently, there is noteworthy absence in terms of focus, support, information and knowledge regarding differentiated instruction at Norwegian schools. Moreover, considering the findings and discussion in chapter 4 and 5, it seems apparent that the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act (1998) is not being enacted as it is legislated for the group of the HPP nor for the LPP. Consequently, there is a need for urgent and drastic measures to change the current situation regarding differentiation in Norwegian classrooms. Yet, as mentioned above, possibly the new core curriculum and its implementation in Norwegian schools is the measure needed to be able to improve the teachers focus on differentiation. Moreover, further suggestions and recommendations are presented and elaborated in the following section.

5.3 Contribution, limitations and further recommendations

- CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

Firstly, as mentioned in Section 2.4.1, there seems to be a limited amount of research conducted in relation to the concept of differentiation in Norway in general. Hopefully, this study has contributed with insights regarding differentiated instruction in the English classroom. This study has so far confirmed results from prior Norwegian studies that have shown that there is a great need for teachers to gain more competence in order to be able to differentiate instruction appropriately for

every individual pupil. Also, there is a need for teachers to build the competence necessary to be able to successfully carry out planning, implementation and evaluation of the instruction in light of their pupils learning potential. Yet, unlike prior Norwegian research included in Section 2.4.1, this study has included pupils' perspective on differentiation by involving two distinctive pupil groups that are to be found in every classroom. By including the HPP and LPP reflections regarding their own learning situation in light of differentiation, this study has contributed with insight that has proven to be noteworthy. Moreover, the findings have shown that differentiated instruction is not being practiced appropriately for neither the HPP nor for the majority of the LPP groups, which is quite remarkable. More specifically, the study has shown that the § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act is not being fully enacted as legislated for the HPP and the LPP groups.

- LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Secondly, it is important to clarify some limitations of this study. The first and obvious limitation is related to the limited scope of the thesis, given the restrictions of time and space in this thesis. On the basis of these, I had to make reasonable and pragmatic decisions in terms of the number of informants, which has consequently limited the generalizability of the results of the study. However, even though this study was based on a small sample population, it allowed for in-depth analysis of the data collected. Additionally, as the choice was made to include both teachers and pupils, it was possible to examine the concept of differentiation from different relevant perspectives. Another limitation of this study is that teachers' and pupils' self-report methods are used, e.g. interviews to gain insights into their understanding, implementation and experience regarding differentiated instruction.

As mentioned in Section 3.4.1, informants may in some cases feel threatened by the current researcher asking questions about a topic that they lacked knowledge of, which may lead to misinformation or in some cases participants being influenced by the halo effect. This can especially be the case when interviewing children. Consequently, the above restrictions and limitations might pose a threat on the reliability of this study. For instance there were several instances of contradictory responses between the teachers and pupils, making it challenging to come to any conclusive results without further research (see Chapter 4). Yet, if the study had not included the pupils' perspective, we would not have been able to see the dissimilarities between

the teachers and the pupils perceptions of the implementation of differentiation in their classroom. Consequently, future research should integrate classroom observations in addition to informants' self-reports.

- FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study examines both teachers' and pupils' perspective regarding the understanding and practice of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the English classroom, there still seems to be a need to know more as to why differentiation is not being implemented as it is legislated in § 1-3 in the Norwegian Education Act. Further recommendations for research in the field of differentiated instruction would be to include school-leaders as well as teachers and pupils in a large scale study. Such research would help examine to what extent the school-leaders and schools contribute to the focus and support of teachers in relation to differentiated instruction. By doing so, one will perhaps obtain a clearer picture as to why differentiation is not being implemented in Norwegian classrooms as it is legislated.

Furthermore, another recommendation would be to research differentiated instruction in the subject of English that focuses on instruction in smaller groups based on ability. Considering the fact that the findings showed that most differentiation occurred in terms of content differentiation, more specifically, in terms of group lessons based on ability, it would be useful to conduct a large scale study that examines how ability grouping contributes to differentiation and how it affects pupils learning process. Even though it is legislated in Norway that the organization of teaching should usually not be based on the pupil's academic level, gender or ethnic origin, it would be interesting to see in what ways ability grouping differentiation would affect pupils learning effect and feelings regarding their own learning situation (Opplæringslova, 1998, § 8-2).

Finally, perhaps the most intriguing recommendation for further research would be to conduct a large-scale study concerning differentiation after the new core curriculum has been implemented in Norwegian schools. Considering the significant and extensive role differentiated instruction has received in the new general part of the core curriculum and in the new English subject curriculum, it would be of great value to examine in what ways or if the new core curriculum will affect both schools and teachers practice in terms of differentiation in contrast to the current curriculum (Udir,

2020). However, giving teachers a new curriculum does not guarantee that the teachers will implement the new requirements fully. Therefore, there will most likely be a need of teacher training to help teachers implement differentiated instruction effectively. Perhaps, teachers educators could be of help here to assist and educate teachers on how to successfully implement the new requirements from the new curriculum (Udir, 2020).

Additionally, some further recommendations regarding improving teachers differentiation practice would be to increase teachers competence by having teacher educators assist and educate teachers so that they can learn both how and why one should differentiate properly. Based on prior research and the results of the present study, it seems highly necessary for teachers to receive professional input occasionally. Moreover, perhaps it could be helpful to develop a structured teacher teaching programme for current teachers that provides them with a meaningful understanding of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the classroom. However, considering that the present study showed that there was a lack of focus and support amongst the school-leaders as well, it could be useful to implement some sort of competent training for school-leaders that is conducted by professionals. By doing so, school-leaders will perhaps be able to provide their teachers with the right support and information they need to succeed in terms of differentiation. Lastly, as Brevik and Gunnulfson (2016) also suggested, it would be very beneficial to implement practice based training in relation to differentiation in teacher education programs in Norway.

6. Conclusion

The present study explored teachers' and pupils' understanding and practice of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the English classroom. Despite its limitations, the outcomes of this study did confirm results from prior Norwegian research regarding differentiation in general and in the subject of English, confirming that there is a need to raise teachers' competence in terms of differentiation and its classroom implementation for English language teachers. Interestingly, the findings revealed that differentiated instruction is not being practiced appropriately for the majority of the lower performing pupils and the higher performing pupils, which was both a surprising and important finding. Evidently, the data analysis confirmed that there seems to be notable absence of focus, information and knowledge in terms of differentiation amongst the English language teachers and their institutions.

Furthermore, based on the results of the present study, there seems to be a need for a common knowledgebase regarding differentiation for English language teachers in Norway. Ultimately, the lack of knowledge and focus in terms of differentiated instruction and its limited implementation in Norwegian English language classrooms seem to be a matter that requires urgent measures. Nevertheless, considering the extensive focus differentiated instruction has received in the new general part of the core curriculum and in the new English subject curriculum (Udir, 2020), imaginably, its future implementation will hopefully contribute to the increased focus and knowledge of school-leaders and teachers regarding differentiated instruction. However, as mentioned in Section 5.3, giving teachers a new curriculum will not guarantee that the teachers will implement the new requirements fully and successfully. Some form of assistance, guidance or teaching training will need to be implemented as well.

7. References

- Anker, T. (2020). *Analyse i praksis: en håndbok for masterstudenter*. Cappelen Damm, Oslo.
- ASCD (n.d). *Faculty bio, Carol Ann Tomlinson*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ascd.org/professionaldevelopment/oscb/faculty/Tomlinson-C.aspx>
- ASCD (2011). *Key elements of differentiated instruction*. Retrieved from:
https://pdo.ascd.org/LMSCourses/PD11OC115M/media/DI-Intro_M4_Reading_Key_Elements.pdf
- Avineri, N. (2017). Interpretive Analysis of Qualitative Data. In *Research Methods for Language Teaching* (pp. 161-181). Macmillan Education UK.
- Baecher, L., Artigliere, M., Patterson, D. K., & Spatzer, A. (2012). *Differentiated instruction for English language learners as “variations on a theme” teachers can differentiate instruction to support English language learners*. *Middle School Journal*, 43(3), 14-21.
- Benjamin, A. (2013). *Differentiated instruction: A guide for elementary school teachers*. Routledge.
- Brevik, L. M., & Gunnulfsen, A. E. (2016). *Differensiert undervisning for høyt presterende elever med stort læringspotensial*. *Acta Didactica Norge*, 10(2), 212-234.
- Brink, H. I. (1993). *Validity and reliability in qualitative research*. *Curationis*, 16(2), 35-38.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing interviews* (Vol. 2). Sage
- Christoffersen, L., & Johannessen, A. (2012). *Forskningsmetode for lærerutdanningene*. Abstrakt.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. (Seventh edition). Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (Eight edition). Abingdon, Oxon.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications, Inc
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (pp. 181-223) Thousand Oaks.
- Dack, H. (2019). The role of teacher preparation program coherence in supporting candidate appropriation of the pedagogical tools of differentiated instruction. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies*, 78(1), 125-140.

- Damsgaard, H. L., & Eftedal, C. I. (2015). Når intensjon møter virkelighet-læreres erfaring med å tilpasse opplæringen. *Bedre Skole*, 1, 16-21.
- Dysthe, O. (1999). Ulike teoriperspektiv på kunnskap og læring. *Bedre skole*, 3, 4-10.
- Eder, D. Fingerson, L. (2002) 'Interviewing Children and Adolescents'. *Handbook of Interview Research*, 181-201.
- Fox, J., & Hoffman, W. (2011). *The differentiated instruction book of lists* (Vol. 6). John Wiley & Sons.
- Gardner, H. (2012). The theory of multiple intelligences. *Early Professional Development for Teachers*, 133.
- Gregory, G. H., & Chapman, C. (2012). *Differentiated instructional strategies: One size doesn't fit all*. Corwin press.
- Harmer, J. (2001) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Third Edition. Pearson Longman
- Harmer, J. (2015). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Fifth Edition. Pearson Longman
- Imbeau, M. B., & Tomlinson, C. A. (2013). Managing a differentiated classroom. *Breaking the Mold of Classroom Management: What Educators Should Know and Do to Enable Student Success*, 5(11).
- Jøsendal, J. S. (2016). Mer å hente-Bedre læring for elever med stort læringspotensial. (NOU 2016: 14). Oslo: Departementenes sikkerhets-og serviceorganisasjon. Informasjonsforvaltning.
- Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- Kvale, S., Brinkmann, S., Anderssen, T. M., & Rygge, J. (2015). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju* (3. utg., 2. oppl. ed.). Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk, 18-20.
- Krumsvik., R.J. (2019). *Kvalitativ metode i lærerutdanninga*. Fagbokforlaget.
- Krumsvik, R. J. (2013). *Innføring i forskningsdesign og kvalitativ metode*. Fagbokforlaget.
- Kunnskapsdepartementet (2019). *Core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education*. Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/53d21ea2bc3a4202b86b83cfe82da93e/core-curriculum.pdf>

- Langdridge, Darren and Hagger-Johnson, Gareth (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology, 2nd Edition*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2001). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford University Press.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford University Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage publications.
- McLeod, S. A. (2019). *What Is the Zone of Proximal Development?* Retrieved from: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Zone-of-Proximal-Development.html>
- Nordahl, T. (2012). *Tilpasset opplæring – et ideologisk mistak i norsk skole?* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. Retrieved from: <https://www.tidliginnsats.no/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2016/04/Artikkel-Tilpasset-opplæring-2.pdf>
- Nordlund, M. (2003). *Differentiated instruction: Meeting the needs of all students in your classroom*. R&L Education.
- Opplæringslova (1998). *Kapittel 8. Organisering av undervisninga*. (LOV-1998-21-06-2019). Retrieved from: https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61#KAPITTEL_8
- Opplæringslova (1998). *Kapittel 1. Formål, verkeområde og tilpassa opplæring m.m.* (LOV-1998-20-06-2008). Retrieved from: https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61#KAPITTEL_1
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Primary Professional Development Service (n.d). *Differentiation in action!* Retrieved from: https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Session%202020-%20Differentiation%20Resource%20_0_0.pdf
- Personopplysningsloven (2018). Retrieved from: <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2018-06-15-38>
- Postholm, M. B. (2010). *Kvalitativ metode: en innføring med fokus på fenomenologi, etnografi og kausstudier*. Universitetsforl..
- Postholm, M. B., & Jacobsen, D. I. (2011). *Læreren med forskerblick: innføring i vitenskapelig metode for lærerstudenter*. Høyskoleforlaget.

- Postholm, M. B., & Jacobsen, D. I. (2013). *Intervju: I dialog muntlig og skriftlig Læreren med forskerblick*.
- Postholm, M. B., & Jacobsen, D. I. (2018). *Forskningsmetode for masterstudenter i lærerutdanning*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS.
- Polly, D., Allman, B., Casto, A., & Norwood, J. (2017). Sociocultural Perspectives of Learning. *Foundations of Learning and Instructional Design Technology*.
- Rindal, U. (2014). *What is English?*. Acta Didactica Norge, 8(2), Art. 14, 17 sider.
<https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.1137>
- Solberg, M. T., Brevik, L. M & Luoto, J. (2017). Om å differensiere engelskundervisningen. Retrieved from: <https://utdanningsforskning.no/artikler/om-a-differensiere-engelskundervisningen/>
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp. 97-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Imbeau, M. B. (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. ASCD.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms*. ASCD.
- Tobin, R., & McInnes, A. (2008). *Accommodating differences: Variations in differentiated literacy instruction in grade 2/3 classrooms*. Literacy, 42(1), 3-9.
- Tzanni, V. (2018). Exploring Differentiated Instruction in TESOL: The Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Greece. *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*, 9(1), 149-165.
- Utdanningsdirektoratet (2013). *Læreplan i engelsk (ENG1-03)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/finnlareplan/lareplan/?kode=ENG1-03>
- Utdanningsdirektoratet (2015). *Generell del av læreplanen*. Retrieved from: <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/generell-del-av-lareplanen/>
- Utdanningsdirektoratet (2017). *Engelsk: kjennetegn på måloppnåelse*. Retrieved from: <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/vurdering/sluttvurdering/Engelsk-kjenneteikn-pa-maloppnaing/>

- Utdanningsdirektoratet (2018). *Hva er tilpasset opplæring?*. Retrieved from: <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/tilpasset-opplaring/hva-er-tilpasset-opplaring/>
- Utdanningsdirektoratet (2020) *Kompetansemål og vurdering. Engelsk (ENG01-04)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/kompetansemaal-og-vurdering/kv4>
- Vattøy, K.-D. (2017). Learning English in Norway. *Language Issues: The ESOL Journal*, 28(2), 51-53.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.).
- Weselby, C. (2014). What is differentiated instruction? Examples of how to differentiate instruction in the classroom. *Teaching Strategies*.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). What is backward design. *Understanding by design*, 1, 7-19.
- Whitley, J., Gooderham, S., Duquette, C., Orders, S., & Cousins, J. B. (2019). Implementing differentiated instruction: a mixed-methods exploration of teacher beliefs and practices. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1-19.

8. Attachments

8.1 Appendix 1: NSD approval

NSD sin vurdering

 Skriv ut

Prosjekttittel

Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom

Referansenummer

144393

Registrert

20.07.2019 av Jasmina Majcic - s330561@oslomet.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Oslomet - storbyuniversitetet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier / Institutt for grunnskole- og faglærerutdanning

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Dina Tsagari , dina.tsagari@oslomet.no, tlf: 67235378

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Jasmina Majcic, Jasmina.majcic@hotmail.com, tlf: 90848614

Prosjektperiode

12.08.2019 - 01.06.2020

Status

19.11.2019 - Vurdert

Vurdering (3)

19.11.2019 - Vurdert

NSD har vurdert endringene registrert 13.11.2019, 14.11.2019 og 19.11.2019.

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 19.11.2019. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

Endringene gjelder oppdaterte intervjuguider. Ettersom elvene nå vil omtale sin lærer, er informasjonsskrivet til lærer oppdatert slik at han/hun kan samtykke til dette.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Jørgen Wincentsen

Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

8.2 Appendix 2: Interview guide: teachers

BIO

1. Male/female?
2. Age?
3. How many years have you been teaching English?
4. What grades do you teach?
5. How many points do you have in English academically?

CONCEPT OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

1. How do you understand the term differentiated instruction?
- 2a. Do your school-leaders encourage and inform the teachers regarding differentiated instruction?
- 2b. If yes, how do they do this? And how often?
- 3a. How important do you find the concept of differentiation?
- 3b. Why and in what ways?
- 4a. Do you think it is harder to differentiate in the subject of English, than it is in other subjects?
- 4b. Why/why not?

PUPILS NEEDS AND VARIANCES

- 1a. Do you think your pupils are receiving enough differentiated instruction to improve and grow in the subject of English?
- 1b. How and why?
- 2a. What pupil groups do you think are usually being prioritized in terms of differentiated instruction in general?
- 2b. How and why?
3. What do you think is important when planning lessons in terms of pupils' readiness? *Provide example/definition.*
4. How do you consider your pupils' interests when planning your lessons?
5. How do you consider your pupils' preferred learning styles when planning tasks or activities in your lessons?

CONTENT

1. Do you allow any Norwegian in your English lessons? In what cases?
2. How much English do you speak in your English lessons? Why is that?
3. In terms of content, how do you differentiate your English lessons for your pupils? *Provide example/definition.*
4. When presenting a new topic for your pupils, how do you consider content in terms of differentiating for the different pupil groups?

PROCESS

1. How do you consider process when planning your English lessons? *Provide example/definition.*
- 2a. Do you give your pupils alternatives in terms of learning activities in the classroom?
- 2b. Why and how often?
3. Do you find pupils preferred learning styles important when planning activities for your lessons?
- 4a. Do you ever divide your English class into groups?
- 4b. If yes, based on ability, interest or learning profile grouping?
- 4c. Why is that?

PRODUCT

1. How do your pupils demonstrate what they have learned?
- 2a. Do you differentiate your assessment practice?
- 2b. Why is that? And how do you do that?
- 3a. Do you use formative or summative assessment? *Provide example/definition.*
- 3b. Why is that?

AFFECT/ENVIRONMENT

1. What kind of learning environment do you think is needed in terms of successful differentiation? *Provide example/definition.*
2. How do you consider your pupils' emotions and feelings regarding their own learning when creating tasks?

3. Do you modify the learning environment to the degree that it meets the individual pupil's emotional needs? *For example: if a pupil struggles with sitting still for a long period of time, one could create options for them to move around in the classroom more.*

CHALLENGES

1. In terms of differentiation, what do you feel are the challenges in relation to: time, competence, available resources and support from school-leaders?

2. What are the biggest challenges when planning a lesson to facilitate the different groups in the classroom? *(Lower performing and higher performing pupils)*

3. Do you think that the teachers could benefit from receiving extra competence in terms of differentiated instruction at school?

GENERAL STATEMENTS

- Higher performing pupils are often being overlooked by teachers in schools because of the assumption that they are more likely to manage on their own.
- Lower performing pupils are often being prioritized because they are easier to help.

8.3 Appendix 3: Interview guide: pupils

CONCEPT

1. Har du hørt begrepet ”tilpasset opplæring” før?
2. Hva tror du begrepet tilpasset opplæring betyr? *Forklar begrepet.*

PUPILS NEEDS AND VARIANCES

1. Trives du på skolen?
2. Hvordan syns du vanskelighetsgraden er på undervisningen i engelskfaget?
3. Hvordan syns du vanskelighetsgraden på lekser og oppgaver i timen er?
4. Hvordan er motivasjonen din i engelskfaget?
5. Har du lyst å bli flinkere i engelskfaget? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
6. Spør læreren deg om hva slags aktiviteter du føler du lærer best av?
7. Føler du at dine personlige interesser blir knyttet inn i engelskfaget på noe vis av læreren?

CONTENT

- 1a. Bruker du engelsk i hverdagen utenom skolen?
- 1b. I hvilke tilfeller og hvor ofte?
2. Hvilket språk pleier læreren å bruke i engelsktimene?
- 3a. Får elevene lov å snakke norsk i engelsktimene?
- 3b. I hvilke tilfeller?
4. Føler du at du lærer engelsk best av å høre læreren snakke kun engelsk, kun norsk eller en blanding?
5. Føler du at læreren varierer måten dere jobber på i engelskfaget? *Kom med eksempler.*

PROCESS

- 1a. Hva slags aktiviteter/metoder føler du at du lærer engelsk best på?
- 1b. Føler du læreren tar hensyn til de måtene du lærer engelsk best på?
2. Lærer du engelsk bedre ved å jobbe med elever som er:
 - a. på et høyere faglig nivå enn deg?
 - b. eller med elever som er på likt faglig nivå som deg?

c. eller med elever som er på et faglig lavere nivå enn deg?

3a. Blir dere noen gang delt i grupper i engelsken? (ut av klasserommet)

3b. Kommer du på gruppe som er på likt nivå som deg eller ulikt nivå?

3c. Lærer du bedre eller dårligere av å være i grupper?

PRODUCT

1. Hvordan viser du til læreren hvor mye du har lært i engelsken? *Kom med eksempler.*

2. Hvor ofte har dere vurderinger i engelskfaget?

3. Pleier du å få tilbakemeldinger på hva du kan jobbe videre med for å bli bedre?

4. Føler du selv at tilbakemeldinger fra læreren hjelper deg med å vite hva du må gjøre for å forbedre deg selv i engelsk?

AFFECT/ENVIROMENT

1. Hvordan er klassemiljøet deres?

2. Føler du at klasserommet er et trygt sted for å lære og gjøre feil?

3. Føler du at dine personlige behov når det gjelder læring blir lyttet til av læreren?

CHALLENGES

1. Føler du at oppgaver, lekser og undervisning i engelskfaget er tilpasset til et nivå hvor du føler du klarer å prestere og vokse?

2a. Føler du at læreren din varierer og tilpasser undervisningen til sånn at det skal gjelde alle elevene i klassen eller er det kun noen det gjelder?

2b. Isåfall, hvilke elever føler du at typisk får tilpasset undervisning?

3. Hva tror du skjer med elever eller med deg dersom dere ikke får undervisning/oppgaver/lekser tilpasset et nivå hvor dere kan prestere og vokse?

4. Har du noen råd eller tips til engelsklærere som skal undervise en klasse i engelsk?

8.4 Appendix 4: Consent form: teachers

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet
”Tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se nærmere begrepet tilpasset opplæring i praksis og hvordan begrepet blir brukt mot de ulike elevgruppene i skolen. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette er et forskningsprosjekt som baserer seg på en masteroppgave som skal leveres våren 2020. Dette forskningsprosjektet vil spesielt se nærmere på faglig sterke mot faglig svake elever i engelskfaget i henhold til begrepet tilpasset opplæring.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Ulike osloskoler vil få muligheten til å delta, uavhengig av område. Tilfeldig utvalg.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Metoden som vil bli brukt er intervju. Opplysningene vil bli registrert via lydopptak i intervjudelen.
- Intervjuene til lærerne vil vare omtrent 15-30 min.
- Intervjuene til skoleelevene vil vare omtrent 15-30 min.
- Intervjuguider til både lærere og elever vil bli sendt ut på forhånd, slik at både foreldre og lærere vet hva det innebærer å delta i et slikt forskningsprosjekt.
- Intervjuguiden til lærerne vil basere seg på spørsmål som reflekterer rundt begrepet tilpasset opplæring i skolen og om begrepet er like gyldig for både faglig sterke og faglig svake elever.

- Lærerne skal snakke om elevene i generelle termer når det gjelder faglig sterke og faglig svake elever.

Det er frivillig å delta

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

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er kun meg og veilederen min ved OsloMet som vil ha tilgang til den innsamlede dataen.

Den innsamlede dataen vil være anonymisert og datamateriale vil bli lagret på en innelåst harddisk med passord. Ingen kontaktopplysninger vil bli etterspurt eller lagret.

Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon da ingen sensitive opplysninger vil bli publisert.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes mai 2020. Ved prosjektets slutt slettes alle opplysningene og innsamlet data som relateres til prosjektet.

Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Jasmina Majcic (student) (jasmina.majcic@hotmail.com)

Dina Tzagari (veileder ved OsloMet) 67 23 53 78 (dina.tsagari@oslomet.no)

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Personverneombud ved OsloMet: Ingrid S. Jacobsen (personvernombud@oslomet.no) eller (67 23 55 34)

Med vennlig hilsen

Jasmina Majcic

Prosjektansvarlig

(Forsker/veileder)

Eventuelt student

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at elever kan gi opplysninger om meg til prosjektet

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. Mai 2020

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

8.5 Appendix 5: Consent form: pupils/parents

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet
”Tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å se nærmere på begrepet tilpasset opplæring i praksis og hvordan begrepet blir brukt mot de ulike elevgruppene i skolen. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette er et forskningsprosjekt som baserer seg på en masteroppgave som skal leveres våren 2020. Formålet er å se nærmere på begrepet tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget og hvordan begrepet blir brukt mot ulike elever. Dette forskningsprosjektet vil spesielt se nærmere på faglig sterke mot faglig svake elever i engelskfaget i henhold til begrepet tilpasset opplæring.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Ulike osloskoler vil få muligheten til å delta. Selve målet med forskningsprosjektet er å forske på tilpasset opplæring på ulike sider av karakterskalaen og hvis du har fått spørsmål om å delta er det fordi du som elev faller innenfor en av de nevnte kategoriene.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Metoden som vil bli brukt er intervju. Opplysningene vil bli registrert via lydopptak i intervjudelen.
- Intervjuene til skoleelevene vil vare omtrent 15-30 min på skolen.
- Elevenes foreldre kan få tilsendt intervjuguide på forhånd.
- Spørsmålene vil bli stilt på norsk slik at elevene muligens føler at de klarer å svare utfyllende nok.

- Spørsmålene vil hovedsakelig dreie seg om engelskfaget og tilpasset opplæring: motivasjonen til elevene i engelskfaget og på skolen generelt, vanskelighetsgrad på oppgaver/lekser gitt av skolen og læreren.

Det er frivillig å delta

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

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er kun meg og veilederen min ved OsloMet som vil ha tilgang til den innsamlede dataen. Den innsamlede dataen vil være anonymisert og datamateriale vil bli lagret på en innelåst harddisk med passord. Ingen kontaktopplysninger vil bli lagret eller etterspurt fra elevene. Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon da ingen sensitive opplysninger vil bli publisert.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes mai 2020. Ved prosjektets slutt slettes alle opplysningene som relateres til prosjektet.

Dine rettigheter

- Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

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

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Jasmina Majcic (student) (jasmina.majcic@hotmail.com)

Dina Tzagari (veileder ved OsloMet) 67 23 53 78 (dina.tzagari@oslomet.no)

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Personverneombud ved OsloMet: Ingrid S. Jacobsen (personvernombud@oslomet.no) eller (67 23 55 34)

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig

(Forsker/veileder)

Jasmina Majcic

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Tilpasset opplæring i engelskfaget*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. Mai 2020
