MASTER`S THESIS

The relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension in the ESL classroom

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Abstract

Reading is one of the five basic skills in the Norwegian Curriculum, and in the Core Curriculum as well as the English Curriculum, reading strategies are mentioned specifically as a tool students need to master in order to understand explicit and implicit information. The purpose of this Master`s thesis is to research how the practice of pre-reading strategies may impact the reading comprehension of texts in an ESL classroom in Norway. Two seventh grade classes were given the same reading texts and comprehension questions, but only one of the classes worked with pre-reading strategies prior to the reading. A mixed method was used, and data from comprehension task results were combined with data from student interviews to look at the relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension. The results indicate that using pre-reading strategies have a positive impact on reading comprehension. Tasks that required deep thinking and tasks that asked the students to justify their answer seem to have the most significant benefit from pre-reading activities. Further, the results indicate that pre-reading strategies seem to be particularly helpful for students who struggle with reading English. Altogether, the results suggest that there are valid reasons for spending time on deliberate pre-reading instruction in the ESL classroom.

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1. Introduction

Letters, words and sentences encircle us wherever we are, and as citizens of a modern society, we need to be effective readers in order to be successful. Most of us read all the time, long or short texts, easy or difficult texts, texts to entertain or inform, texts on screen or print (Grabe, 2009). Reading can be private or public, it can confuse and bore, engage and stimulate. It can open endless possibilities, and material available is so vast and varied it is almost impossible to grasp. Further, reading can be an enjoyable activity that may totally absorb the reader and give much pleasure (Alderson, 2000). Reading even has the ability to change an individual`s life or to change whole societies (McCulloch, 2007). By helping our students towards becoming fluent readers that can read both to learn and to be entertained, teachers and educators can give a gift "that lasts a lifetime and continues to enhance and expand the lives of your students" (Keene & Zimmermann, 2013, p. 605-606).

1.1. Background

Reading is one of the five basic skills in the National Curriculum, and it should be part of all subjects. Being a competent reader is seen as important for developing each student`s identity and social relations, and it is essential for the student`s ability to take part in education, work and societal life (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Hence, all teachers should be reading teachers in Norwegian schools. According to the English subject curriculum, developing students` competence of reading in English should prepare them for an education and a working life that requires English reading skills. Further, the curriculum specifically states that applying reading strategies is necessary to be able to understand explicit and implicit information when reading English (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, my translation). The use of strategies is also mentioned as an overall approach of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Language use comprises the actions performed by people who are able to activate "those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 29).

Reading strategies are often explained as planned and systematic reading adapted to the text, the purpose and the aim of reading (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001). It is further common to distinguish between pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading strategies. Pre-

reading strategies are used to prepare for the text (Horwitz, 2013), whereas while-reading strategies "primarily aid main-idea detection through inferences and cross-referencing" (Koda, 2004, p. 207). Post-reading strategies consist of activities for reviewing and reflecting on the contents of the text (Koda, 2004). Use of these strategies is thought to be of great help both at school and at home, and there are also reasons to believe that strategy instruction at school may contribute to individual and independent use of such strategies later in life (Paris, Wasik and Turner, 1991). However, many teachers express that they possess limited knowledge about reading strategies (Charboneau, 2016). Research indicates that many English as a second language-teachers rely heavily on the textbook (Kveset, 2015), but in the current textbooks available from the major publishing companies, little help is given regarding reading strategies (cf. Chapter 2.7). Consequently, there are reasons to believe that strategy instruction is given little attention in many English as a second language classrooms in Norway. This background knowledge made me want to look closer at reading strategies and how these could contribute to reading comprehension. As pre-reading is a reading strategy that, from my experience, has been given less attention than post-reading strategies in Norwegian schools, the current research project focuses on pre-reading strategies and the relationship between these and comprehension in the second language context.

1.2. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to research the relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension in the English as a second language classroom. A mixed method was used, and hence, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to examine the relationship between pre-reading and comprehension. Two seventh grade classes participated in this research project. One class was working with pre-reading strategies prior to reading texts and answering comprehension questions, the other was not. Focus group interviews were carried out in both classes. The aim is to identify possible differences between the two research groups, and look at what these differences are. The overarching question for the research project is this: What is the relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension in the English as a second language classroom? To be able to answer this, the main question is broken down into two research questions:

> *(i): To what degree can the use of pre-reading strategies affect students' reading comprehension?*

(ii): To what extent do the possible benefits of using pre-reading strategies vary according to the type of comprehension tasks?

1.3. Key terms

When describing Norwegian students who learn English in school, the term *second language* is often used. According to the webpage of the Cambridge journal "Studies in second language acquisition" (2020), a second language is a language that is non-native or heritage for the learner. In Norway, the term second language to some degree reflects the unique role and status English has in the Norwegian school system. Since 1997, English has been taught from first grade in Norwegian schools, and both the exposure to, and the status of, the language show its significance in the Norwegian society. There is also a separate curriculum for English, something which sets it apart from other languages taught from year eight, the *foreign languages*, for instance German, French and Spanish (Krulatz, Dahl & Flognfeldt, 2018), which have a common subject curriculum. Second language might be a misleading term though; for some students the English taught at school might be their third or even fourth language. Another term often used is *additional language*, indicating a language that is taught in addition to your first language. However, as *second language* is the term mostly used in the literature consulted for the current project, this is the chosen term throughout this thesis.

Another term often referred to in this thesis is *learning partner*. Students are put together in pairs in the classroom, and whenever they are asked to discuss a question or solve a task they work together with their learning partner.

1.4. Overview of the study

After the introductory chapter one, chapter two of this Master`s thesis, *Theoretical Framework*, will provide the theoretical background necessary for this research project. First, reading will be defined as it relates to this study, followed by a description of reading in a second language. Next, theory regarding reading comprehension, and reading skills and strategies will be presented before going deeper into the theories concerning pre-reading strategies. Norwegian research on the topic, official regulations and classroom material will

be described followed by the last theory part, assessing reading. The next chapter of the thesis, *Method and Materials*, starts with a description of the research method used, followed by an evaluation of its reliability and validity, before describing informants and materials used in collecting data. The fourth chapter, *Results and Discussion*, describes the different findings from the research and discusses these before considering limitations of the study. In part five, *Conclusion,* the research will be summed up before *Sources* and *Appendices* are listed.

2. Theoretical framework

The following chapter provides a theoretical framework relevant for the current research.

2.1. What is reading?

2.1.1. Defining reading

Reading is something most people do every day, more or less deliberately. It is a prerequisite for acquiring knowledge and information from written texts, and being a competent reader is of utmost importance no matter what profession or education you are part of (Roe, 2006). Moreover, reading is important for "interpersonal functions and for merely 'getting along' in any literate society" (Saville-Troike, 2012, p. 164). The Norwegian Curriculum acknowledges this importance by naming reading one of the five basic skills in Norwegian schools. Accordingly, reading should be part of all subjects. It is seen as important for developing each student`s identity and social relation, and it is essential for the student`s ability to take part in education, work and societal life (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

The original meaning of the word *reading* was interpretation, according to Smith (2012). He further claims that "reading is the most natural activity in the world" (p. 2) and that we read or interpret our experiences from the day we are born. Harris and Hodges (1995) point out that implications for reading instructions have changed over time, and so has, consequently, the definitions. In their literacy dictionary (1995), they list 20 different definitions of reading, one of the most recent being Durkin who in 1993 defined reading as "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader" (p. 207). This definition is in accordance with Aebersold and Field (1997), who claim that the terms *reader, text* and *interaction* all need to be part of a reading definition. Grabe (2009) points out that no single statement can describe the complexity of reading and the purposes and processes that are called into play. He does, however, think that it is important to describe reading as a complex combination of different processes. These processes will be further described in part 2.1.2, Reading as a skill.

Urquhart and Weir (1998) distinguish between glottographic symbols, which represent language like the word "bridge", and seismographic symbols, for instance a road sign with the symbol for bridge ahead, when they describe reading. They further claim that in the classroom, reading is mostly done on language texts, and message interpretation is therefore an important aspect of the reading process. Also, the reading ability must include interpretation of the text according to the reader`s knowledge of the world. This is in accordance with Bartlett`s (1932) schema theory, describing schema as "an active organisation of past reactions, or of past experiences" (p. 201). The schema theory, how our experiences of the world and our pre-existing knowledge influence how we read or process a text, still plays an important role in the understanding of factors that are important to reading. Good readers are able to make use of existing schemata and can modify these when reading texts with new information. Both comprehension, pre-existing knowledge and memory patterns contribute to a person`s schema, according to Roe (2006) and Saville-Troike (2012). All these components make it easier to understand what is being read. In other words, competent readers are able to use what they already know to understand what they read.

Another central term when defining reading is reading *comprehension*, or understanding. According to Koda (2004), this is what occurs when the reader "extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known" (p. 4). This is supported by Ørevik (2020), who points out that reading is a necessary tool for learning and understanding the subjects and that comprehending what you read therefore is essential if the goal is personal development and learning. Grabe (2009) emphasises that cognitive issues in reading provide the basis for how reading comprehension develops and works. Important concepts for understanding cognition`s central role in comprehension are implicit and explicit learning, frequency, attention, inferencing, the role of context and the role of background knowledge. Knowledge of these components is essential when understanding how students will develop their reading abilities, and therefore crucial if the goal is to help students with this development. According to Grabe, it is also important to understand that students differ in their cognitive style orientation and that recognising these differences and helping students adjust are important parts of the reading teacher`s job when working towards gained reading comprehension. This is further elaborated on in part 2.3., Reading comprehension.

2.1.2. Reading as a skill

According to Baker and Wright (2017), we can divide the language skills into four: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Speaking and writing are productive skills, whereas listening and reading are receptive skills (Saville-Troike, 2012). The word receptive is defined as the ability to understand rather than produce language in the Cambridge Dictionary (2020). According to The British Council (2020), the receptive skills are sometimes called passive skills. Still, we know that a reader needs to be actively involved in order to work the meaning out (Nuttall, 1996), and according to Carrell (1988), reading is an active, even an interactive, process. She claims that the reader is an active participant, the one who makes and confirms predictions in the reading process. Alderson (2000) states that there is a distinction between the process of reading and the product, i.e. what is being understood. Both of these will be varied, dynamic and different as readers bring with them knowledge and experiences that influence their understanding of a text.

Several definitions of different reading skills and subskills exist, but there is an ongoing debate to what extent it is possible to separate and classify skills. The complexity of the reading process might be easier to understand and explain if broken into a set of component skills, Grabe (1991) declares. He proposes a list containing six elements that are part of and give useful insights into the fluent reading process (p. 379):

- Automatic recognition skills
- Vocabulary and structural knowledge
- Formal discourse structure knowledge
- Content/world background knowledge
- Synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies
- Metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring

With all the elements above put together, reading skills can be described as a combination of identification and interpretation skills (Grabe, 1991). Further, Grabe describes the reading process as rapid, comprehending, efficient, strategic, evaluative, purposeful, interactive, learning, linguistic, flexible, and something that develops gradually (2009). He also describes reading as a complex skill that takes a considerable amount of time and resources to develop. In order to develop this skill, students need to be able to use metacognitive skills effectively. Numerous studies have identified how good readers do this more effectively than less fluent readers do. These findings are supported by Baker (2008) and Mokhtari and Reichard (2008).

Mokhtari and Reichard describe how, in the context of reading, metacognitive knowledge and awareness refer to what readers know about themselves and their task, how they are constantly aware of whether they understand the text or not. They also consciously and deliberately apply relevant strategies.

According to Alderson (2000), we are engaged in mental activity when we read, some of it conscious, some of it automatic. Berardo (2006) points out that reading always has a purpose: we read for survival, to learn or for pleasure. The type of reading mostly associated with the classroom is reading to learn, where reading is goal oriented. Grabe (2009) points out that the way we read depends on the context and goal, and lists six academic purposes for reading: reading to search for information, reading for quick understanding, reading to learn, reading to integrate information, reading to evaluate, critique and use information, and reading for general comprehension. In reading theory, it is further common to distinguish between different levels of understanding or comprehension. According to Gray (1960), there are three main types of reading comprehension: a student can read the lines of the text and understand the literal meaning, read between the lines and understand inferred meanings, or read beyond the lines and have the ability to evaluate a text critically.

2.1.3. The reading process

There are two ways to process reading; top-down, where background knowledge is applied and the reader focuses on understanding the text as a whole, or bottom-up, where reading is done through individually processing every word and sound (Horwitz, 2013). Both of these are necessary for thoroughly processing a text (Berardo, 2006). Neither the bottom-up nor the top-down model do, however, offer an adequate description of the reading process, according to Alderson (2000). He claims that the interactive model is more adequate, as it describes how different components in the reading process interact with each other and offer a more dynamic model. This is supported by Grabe (1991), who underlines that reading is interactive in the sense that "many skills work together simultaneously in the process" (p. 378) and that both information from the student`s background knowledge and information from the written text is being used.

Good readers share many characteristic features, according to Roe (2017). They are strategic and active participants in the process of reading. They are also conscious of their own cognitive processes and what is going on when they read. Further, they have a wide

repertoire of reading strategies that they make use of according to text type and the purpose of reading. Good readers are aware of why they are reading, to learn or to be entertained, and they adjust the speed and strategies according to the text. They make use of previous knowledge and use their knowledge about text structure to read effectively and continuously monitor their own understanding. Good readers are also familiar with different reading strategies, and they know which strategy to apply according to the text and purpose of reading. They may use scanning, quickly looking through a text searching for specific information, or skimming, quickly reading through a text to get the gist of it. They may also use sampling, where the first sentence of each paragraph is read to get a quick overview of the content (Aebersold & Field, 1997), expeditious reading, where they read quickly, selectively and efficiently, or careful reading where close attention to detail is paid and the aim is to fully understand the material (Green, 2014).

When reading at school, it is common to distinguish between intensive and extensive reading. The type of reading students most frequently are asked to do when learning English as a second language in Norwegian classrooms is intensive reading (Charboneau, 2016), also called reading for accuracy (Nuttall, 1996). The aim when reading intensively is to get a detailed and profound understanding of the text. Extensive reading on the other hand, is the term used to describe reading done with the purpose of a general understanding of the content (Horwitz, 2013). This kind of reading can contain materials that we would read for pleasure, and it plays an important part in the reading to learn-process. Extensive reading, apart from its impact on language and reading ability, can be a key to unlocking the all-important taste for foreign language reading among students (Day & Bamford, 2002). This is supported by Grabe (2001), who points out that students learn to read by reading, and that spending time on reading extensively can promote both confidence and motivation in the second language classroom.

2.2. Reading in a second language

In an increasingly international world, being able to read in a second language is widely thought to enable the student to navigate and enjoy a multicultural environment. Reading in a second language allows the student to learn new words and phrases, get access to cultural expressions and read facts and fiction in the target language. Being able to read and comprehend texts in a second language is also likely to "give a wider view of the world, more

windows on the world, a more colourful and diverse view of human history and customs, and a less narrow view of science and society" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 309). In addition, learning to read in a second language allows the student to communicate with others, be entertained, study, travel, gain access to information and be more cross-culturally aware (Grabe, 2009).

Reading in a second language differs from reading in the first language in many ways (Horwitz, 2013). However, when learning to read and write in a second or third language, reading skills you have acquired in your first language are transferrable, according to Saville-Troike (2012), Charboneau (2016) and Krulatz et al. (2018). Thus, second language readers will usually draw on their prior reading experience from learning to read in their first language (Koda, 2004). Another difference between learning to read in a first or second language is the ability to process information. In the first language, it occurs in one language; in second language reading, dual-language involvement is needed. Grabe and Stoller (2002) also point out that second language knowledge such as discourse, grammar and vocabulary must be sufficient if second language learners should be able to make effective use of the strategies and skills they have acquired in their first language reading.

According to Cummins (1979, 1991, in Alderson, 2000), the ability to read in the second or subsequent languages is easier once it has been acquired in the first. There are, however, different constraints that apply to second language learners depending on, among other things, where they come from and which language they speak and write. Both the cultural and linguistic relationship between the two languages will have an impact on second language learners. Further, the script of the first and second language is a variable that needs to be kept in mind when teaching a second language (Urquhart & Weir, 1998; Saville-Troike, 2012). Norwegian learners of English have the benefit of using a known alphabet, but they may still struggle with vocabulary, poor word recognition, limited language awareness and cultural references (Nuttall, 1996; Davidsen-Nielsen & Harder, 2006). It is important to consider these constraints when teaching English as a second language to Norwegian students. It is also crucial to remember that learning a second language requires intentional effort and that it takes time. The benefit of learning to read in a second language is that there is a significant transfer of ability and knowledge from one language to another (Saville-Troike, 2012). In addition, reading gives the second-language learner a lot more time to explore and comprehend the text than is possible through aural channels (Bernhardt, 2011). This extra time is an advantage language teachers need to consider and point out to their

students. It is also important to remember that for students` development of academic competence in their second language, reading offers the most important area of activity (Saville-Troike, 2012).

2.3. Reading comprehension

The reading study group report, RAND (Snow, 2002), defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (p. 38). Words such as *understanding* or *making sense of* could easily be used instead, Smith (2012) claims. In contrast, Krulatz et al. (2018) add that comprehension of a text includes "(…) identifying the main idea, anticipating events, identifying story sequence, summarizing and paraphrasing" (p. 112). This comprehension, or extracting meaning from the printed page, is the ultimate goal of reading, Williams (2008) claims.

According to Mokhtari and Reichard (2008), research indicates that three main variables affect the reading comprehension: the text, the context and the reader. The text refers to everything read, both digital, printed and symbolic. The context refers to contextual variables such as prior knowledge, purpose and interest. The last and most central element, the reader, refers to the schemata, the knowledge, experiences and abilities that the reader brings into the reading. Parents and siblings at home, and teachers, classroom climate and interaction with classmates at school also play an important part in what a student comprehend when reading (Paris et al., 1991).

Baker (2008) states that "metacognition interacts with other reading processes to affect comprehension" (p. 74). He further adds that students need to learn how to monitor their comprehension. This way, the students not only evaluate the reading process to realise that they do not understand; they also know what to do about it. To achieve this, teachers need to pay attention to the parts of a text with which the students struggle. Further, they need to teach strategies that will help students overcome the comprehension obstacles. These strategies could be rereading parts of the text, making inferences and include prior knowledge. It is also important to make sure the students get enough practice in choosing the correct strategy depending on the type of text and purpose for reading. Deliberate instruction is necessary if the goal is to achieve this, Baker (2008) claims. She further emphasises that

research shows that students on all ability levels benefit from strategy instruction, and that studies demonstrate long-term advantages for students who had received meta-cognitive reading instruction. It is, however, important to remember that the development of skills and strategies requires time and practice, and especially young children need a continual reinstatement of the strategies learned. These thoughts are supported by Duke and Martin (2008), who emphasise how important it is that comprehension instruction in school includes strategy instruction. Teachers should help students develop the habit of "integrating prior knowledge and material in the text, asking themselves questions as they read and attending to the structure of the text" (p. 242). These strategies may help students comprehend increasingly demanding texts. Block and Duffy (2008) list nine strategies based on recent research and shown to be highly successful:

- Predict – students should try to foresee what is to come by looking at the titles, pictures, captions, sections and text features
- Monitor – activate several comprehension strategies before, while, and after reading the text
- Question – stop and reread if the meaning is unclear
- Image – generate mental pictures to construct meanings
- Look back, reread and fix it – reflect on the text before, during, and after the reading
- Infer – connect information in the text to previous experiences, texts and knowledge
- Sum up – find main ideas, summarise, and draw conclusions
- Evaluate – does what I have found make sense?
- Synthesise – make meaning through combining textual features, information, sequence of detail and conclusions

Many of these elements are highly relevant when teaching English as a second language in Norway. Further, we need to remember that there is a difference between comprehension of fictional and non-fictional texts (Block & Duffy, 2008). Also, certain types of texts, for instance science texts, are particularly difficult for students to comprehend due to several factors. The text might have an unfamiliar structure or contain a large amount of unfamiliar words, students might lack or have inaccurate prior knowledge, or the abstract nature of the topic can make it hard to comprehend (Smolkin, McTigue & Donovan, 2008). It is therefore important that teachers are collectors of methods and learning strategies and that they know their students well enough to know what will work according to their level and interest (Duffy & Hoffmann, 1999). Duffy and Hoffmann claim that there is no perfect method when

teaching reading to children. The answer is in the teachers who use the methods thoughtfully, not in the methods themselves. These views are supported by Block and Duffy (2008), who emphasise that comprehension strategies need to be taught continuously and in context, not in isolation. Further, teachers need to continue motivating their students to predict, monitor and re-predict every time they read.

2.4. Reading skills and strategies

Reading strategies are defined by Stangeland and Forsth (2001) as planned and systematic reading adapted to the text, the purpose and the aim of reading. Harris and Hodges (1995) add that this systematic plan is consciously adapted and that the aim is to improve one`s performance in learning.

In the future, more people than ever before will have the ability to read, according to Towheed, Crone and Halsey (2011). Reading material will be accessed through an increasing array of digital and printed sources. Technological development has changed the act of reading, and different strategies are needed to comprehend what is being read. The technological development has clear implications for how reading instruction should be given in school in order to help readers become more strategic, Towheed et al. (2011) point out. Roe (2017) claims that in addition to teaching children how to read, it is also the school`s responsibility to teach the children to read to learn. Good reading strategies are crucial if we should reach this aim, she points out. According to Grabe (2009), a strategic reader "automatically and routinely applies combinations of effective and appropriate strategies depending on reader goals, reader tasks and strategic processing abilities. The strategic reader [...] applies sets of strategies appropriately to enhance comprehension of difficult texts" (p. 220). A novice reader, on the other hand, spends time decoding word by word, fails to adjust the reading to fit the purpose of texts and seldom looks back in the text to monitor comprehension, according to Grabe. Often, especially for older students, novice readers have low expectation of success, are anxious about reading and unwilling to persevere when the texts are difficult (Paris et al., 1991). These findings are supported by Roe (2017), who also adds that novice readers lack knowledge about why they read and often start reading without any preparation.

Knowledge about the characteristics of strategic and novice readers is useful if the goal in the second language classroom is to help the students towards becoming successful readers. Before even starting to teach, however, teachers need knowledge about effective reading strategies (Charboneau, 2016), and according to Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris (2008), they also need knowledge about the difference between skills and strategies. Consistent use of these terms is important, they claim, and add that the terms must be used in predictable, regular ways. In their view, reading skills are "automatic actions that result in the decoding and comprehension of texts with speed, efficiency, and fluency, usually without the reader`s deliberate control or conscious awareness" (p. 15). This description is in accordance with Koda (2004), who claims that skills are subconscious and strategies are deliberate. Reading skills have become a habit and function automatically, Afflerbach et al. (2008) state. The automaticity of the reading process has important consequences for the readers, as less working memory is used when reading work is done automatically, meaning more resources are available for more complex reading. Afflerbach et al. (2008) further describe reading strategies as "deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader`s efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings out of text" (p. 15). A strategy is defined by the reader`s awareness, they claim, the deliberate control of work and the goal of the work. The goal for teachers should be to provide practice that will enable strategies to transform into skills that the students will make use of later in life. This way they will be better prepared for the different texts they will come across when reading, both for learning, work, everyday life and leisure (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001).

Often, reading strategies are divided into pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001). For the last 15 years, the trend has been to teach fewer rather than more reading strategies, and to teach these thoroughly and in combination. Such teaching can be done from an early age, and it should be done regularly (Block & Duffy, 2008). The goal of all reading strategies should be that readers become more interactive, and thereby more efficient, Neville-Lynch (2005) claims. When reading interactively, you comprehend the text through reflecting, responding, reacting and anticipating events while you read. This development is fostered by practice, instruction and cognitive development, according to Paris et al. (1991). These claims are supported by Koda (2004), who adds that knowledge about metacognitive processes will enhance the reading comprehension.

Spending time on reading strategies in the second language classroom will hopefully lead to lifelong learning. Or, in Paris et al.`s (1991) words: "As students learn to regulate their

own reading and to use strategies for different purposes, they become independent learners who read with confidence and enjoyment. Thus, strategic reading contributes directly to lifelong education and personal satisfaction" (p. 635).

Reading strategies can be divided into two main stages: planning and execution (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001). This thesis will mainly focus on the planning stage, the pre-reading strategies.

2.5. Pre-reading strategies

The main reason for having students work with pre-reading strategies is to enhance the ability to understand the text they are going to read. Pre-reading strategies are also important when it comes to building students` confidence that they can make sense of the text they are about to read (Wallace, 1988). Ellis (2008) uses the term *pre-task planning* to describe all planning that students do before they start a task, whereas Roe (2017) uses the term *preparing the reading* as an overarching name of the pre-reading strategies. The very first thing students need to know, she claims, is what kind of text they have in front of themselves and the purpose of reading this text. These ideas are supported by Stangeland and Forsth (2001) and Headley (2008). According to Headley, this cognitive support is crucial in helping the students understand the text.

There are three main reasons for focusing on pre-reading strategies, according to Aebersold and Field (1997): establishing a purpose for reading a text, activating existing knowledge to enable the student to get more out of the reading, and establishing realistic expectations about the content of the text in order to read more effectively. The first of these, establishing a purpose, includes the consideration necessary to match the reader with the text in terms of content and language. The teacher needs to consider and be clear about the purpose of reading an actual text. Sometimes the purpose can be to get a general knowledge about the content of the text; other times students are asked for a thorough understanding. These two purposes require different strategies. Another reason for preparing students to read is the way existing knowledge may have a positive impact on the reading comprehension. Pre-reading strategies can also include pre-teaching relevant vocabulary for the text the students are about to read. In addition to the content schema pre-reading strategies can help build, it is also important to raise awareness around the formal schema, the structural and

formal writing patterns used in a text. Knowledge about how the text is organized helps readers to understand and anticipate the information they read. Finally, previewing a text before reading it is another useful pre-reading strategy. Features such as titles and subtitles, pictures and illustrations may aid the readers in predicting what the text is about and give them an orientation and a framework to understand the text better.

Which pre-reading strategies to use with which texts depends on the text itself, the students and the purpose of reading. It is therefore important that the reading teachers are familiar with a wide range of pre-reading activities that are part of this strategy and that they are conscious of the choices they make. A variety of pre-reading activities should be a key feature when teaching pre-reading strategies to cater for different learning styles and learning orientations among the students. In addition, it is important to remember that "strategic readers are not characterized by the volume of tactics that they use but rather by the selection of appropriate strategies that fit the particular text, purpose, and occasion" (Paris et al., 1991, p. 611). It is therefore important to teach many different reading strategies and to guide the students in making use of a wide variety of reading strategies. Such strategy instruction is essential to provide (Shih, 1992), and done correctly, may lead to a transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". One important goal in order to achieve this transition is to promote learner independence and a transfer of strategies. For this to happen, strategies that enable students to learn from text must be practiced regularly and for a sustained time. Variations of strategies for different types of texts and tasks must be modelled to strengthen students` metacognitive awareness. Ideally, this should be done not just in the language lessons, but in all lessons that require reading, something which is also emphasised in the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Students need to be guided to develop repertoires of strategies, both cognitive and metacognitive, for optimal learning from text (Shih, 1992).

Duke and Martin (2008) emphasise that students need strategies that can help them comprehend increasingly demanding texts and that they need to practice flexibility in the reading. This way, they are able to change strategies while reading and monitoring their own comprehension. Many students do, however, find it time-consuming and unnecessary to spend so much time before even beginning to read the text (Carrell, 1988). According to Aebersold and Field (1997), research indicates that teacher-centred pre-reading exercises showed better comprehension levels than student-centred exercises. On the other hand, interactive student-centred activities seemed to better prepare students for future reading tasks, thus providing

better long-term effects. It may therefore be a good idea to start with teacher-led pre-reading sessions if pre-reading strategies are new to the students and the goal is increased reading comprehension for specific texts. Consequently, for the current research project, the pre-reading will therefore be teacher-led. Further, the emphasis will be put on three specific pre-reading components; pre-teaching vocabulary, previewing the text and motivating students. These pre-reading strategies are thought to be of help for the students at a certain, teacher-led point reading specific texts. However, it is also a goal that the strategies should be transferrable to later, independent use by the students.

2.5.1. Pre-teaching vocabulary

According to Koda (2004), vocabulary knowledge is essential to comprehension. In fact, vocabulary knowledge "correlates more highly with reading comprehension than other factors" (p. 49). Koda further emphasises that vocabulary learning also depends on comprehension, not just the other way around. This, she explains, means that a word`s precise meaning depends on the context in which it appears. According to Flognfeldt and Lund (2016), Koda`s claims indicate that when working on vocabulary development, there are good arguments for learning and teaching multi-word units, or collocations. It is not enough, they claim, to know a word`s meaning and form; students also need to be familiar with the company words keep. Flognfelt and Lund (2016) describe collocations as combinations of words that regularly occur together. English has a large number of these lexical chunks, and learning them is the key to fluency, according to Hill (1999). Knowing collocations allows for quicker comprehension as the reader is able to constantly recognise chunks of language, he claims. O`Dell and McCarthy (2017) point out that learning collocations will have a positive impact on students` writing and enable them to choose a word or phrase that "fits the context better and has a more precise meaning" (p. 4). Szudarski (2017) also points out that formulaic language, such as collocations, helps students write fluently. Orally, learning collocations can make students sound more like a native speaker and more natural and accurate (Marks & Wooder, 2007). Further, O`Dell and McCarthy (2017) emphasise that having a thorough understanding of the language patterns will help students understand ads, newspaper articles, comedies and poetry that purposefully play with fixed patterns to create various effects. Students will also to a larger extent be able to vary their language, avoid misunderstandings and make the language more precise (Howarth, 1996).

Nation (2001) describes that there are different levels of knowing a word, and makes a distinction between receptive and productive, or passive and active vocabulary. It is important that language teachers make an informed decision about which words are useful for productive use and which can be left for receptive understanding (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). Some of the key features of a receptive knowledge are that the student can recognise a word, understand the meaning of it and know the meaning in a particular context. A productive knowledge of a word, on the other hand, means that a student is able to use the word both in written and oral form, with correct spelling, intonation and use according to context (Nation, 2001). When the goal is deep learning of a word, i.e. words that will be stored in the long-term memory, it is necessary to use the word, involving the cognitive dimension of word learning. Deeper processing can also be secured by making the vocabulary learning feel meaningful and relevant for the student, thereby including the affective dimension of learning (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016).

Vocabulary knowledge facilitates reading acquisition, and vocabulary learning tasks will therefore probably lead to better comprehension. Also, word learning and reading are interdependent, and each feeds the other. Reading will, in other words, expand the vocabulary (Nation, 2001). This is in accordance with Grabe (2009), who explains that attending to words in the text and learning new words before reading also have proven to promote vocabulary learning. Bernhardt (2011) points out that learning new vocabulary prior to reading a text is a pre-reading task that can be done at home, as part of the homework. It is also important to show students how they can use this pre-reading strategy independently. By previewing the text through reading the headings, subheadings and captions, the student can guide his or her attention towards central words and phrases used in a context. Words they do not understand should be looked up in a dictionary (Mihara, 2011; Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). Individual use of an analogue or electronic dictionary helps the students towards becoming autonomous learners (Kim, 2017), and it is one of the learning strategies that will enable students to expand their vocabulary outside of the school context. By introducing the students to useful strategies at school, we can help facilitate independent vocabulary learning. Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) list use of dictionaries or reference tools, vocabulary notebook and word analysis as examples of useful strategies. They also mention context clues as an effective strategy, and this is closely connected to another pre-reading strategy: previewing the text.

2.5.2. Previewing the text

According to Paris et al. (1991), research has shown that pre-reading strategies such as, for instance, previewing the text, significantly improved students` comprehension of both explicit and implicit information. When previewing a text, one component is activating previous knowledge; another is recalling personal memories. Both of these are important when you want to remember what you read as you connect what you learn with things you already know (Dehn, 2011). If students are able to recall the knowledge they already have about a topic, also known as content schema, their opportunities to make sense of the text will increase. Cultural factors of a text might also be brought to mind, and learning about these in advance might enhance comprehension.

Students should be encouraged to preview a text every time they are about to start reading a new text. If this is done on a regular basis, it can help form a good habit that students can use independently (Witter, 2013). When previewing a text, the students should look at the structures of the text and read the headings, subheadings, captions, graphs and maps. Doing this, the students will get preliminary information of the content of the text and an understanding of the type of text they are about to read. This previewing strategy is particularly useful when it comes to reading texts independently at a later stage in life. It gives useful insight for short as well as long texts and for different types of texts, and students should be encouraged to also use this strategy when they start reading books about a topic.

2.5.3. Motivating before reading

Different aspects of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, attitude and interest are all central to reading motivation and engagement, according to Guthrie and Knowles (2001). They further claim that comprehension is affected by motivational variables. It is this network of variables that work towards the long-term motivation required to become engaged readers. One way of promoting reading motivation is through the choice of text. Teachers and educators need to bear in mind that students are different. They also need to make sure that a variety of texts with different topics and a wide range of difficulty are available. Getting to know your students will also make it easier to pick texts that are likely to catch the students` attention. Other elements, such as the use of conceptual themes, real-world interactions and self-direction, cognitive strategies, social collaboration and self-expression, are suggested enhancing reading motivation. Self-expression will most likely help students feel that their

opinion is valued, something which again may lead to more creativity and confidence when expressing opinions about a text being read (Guthrie & Knowles, 2001).

Building motivation before reading is primarily a pre-reading strategy suitable for lessons at school. However, suppose the teacher is able to pique the students` curiosity about the topic before they read a text. In that case, this might also contribute to the motivation for reading outside of school. Also, the feeling of mastering a task can help build motivation. According to Afflerbach et al. (2008), reading skills and strategies complement one another and together help motivate the student. Being skilful is motivating and it gives the students a high level of performance when they are able to perform a reading task efficiently and thoroughly. This also encourages the appreciation of the value of reading.

Students` attitude towards reading also plays a significant role in motivation for reading tasks. "Reading is caught, not taught", according to Nuttall (1996, p. 229). To make this happen, it is important to spend time both on intensive and extensive reading, according to Day and Bamford (2002). They emphasise how extensive reading can unlock the taste for a foreign language, in addition to having an impact on reading ability and language. Reading is an experience in itself, and it is this experience that is at the centre when reading extensively. Extensive reading may furthermore have a positive impact on students` reading speed, and this will most likely lead to more reading and better understanding, something which in turn may make the students enjoy reading and read more (Day & Bamford, 2002). Nuttall calls this "the virtuous circle of the good reader" or the "cycle of growth" (2005, p. 127). She further notes that "speed, enjoyment and comprehension are closely linked with one another" (p. 128), and that enjoyment and quantity are key factors in extensive reading.

2.6. Norwegian research on the topic

Research within the field of reading in a second language in Norway is rather meagre, but Charboneau`s PhD (2016) offers some recent, interesting finds. She claims that there has been a greater focus on English teaching in Norwegian primary school over the past decades. Further, she concludes that there is a predominance of textbook use when teaching English in Norwegian schools. She also claims that intensive reading in whole class appears to be the most common practice in English lessons. Charboneau further points out that nearly half of the Norwegian primary school teachers in her research did not have the 30 credit points of English teaching qualification considered the minimum to be qualified to teach the subject.

Moreover, many teachers report that they lack confidence and knowledge about effective practices. They also report that they know too little about official regulations such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Much responsibility is placed on the teacher when it comes to planning and performing the English lessons, according to Charboneau (2016). Based on her PhD research, which looked at reading instruction in fourth and fifth grades, Charboneau suggests that a greater focus on reading skills, purpose and strategies within the English reading instruction is needed. It is also necessary to focus on this in teacher training. In addition, it will be useful to see the reading development in the Norwegian and English subjects as complementary so that the students will master to transfer the reading skills and strategies taught in the Norwegian lessons as support in their English reading development.

2.7. Official regulations and classroom material

According to the principles for education in the Core Curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), reading is one of five basic skills which should be part of the competence in all subjects. Reading is important for "developing the identity and social relations of each pupil, and for the ability to participate in education, work and societal life" (p. 12). It is also important that reading is connected with the other basic skills, writing, numeracy, oral skills and digital skills, and that these are considered across subjects. Another basic principle the school shall help students towards is learning to learn. "Understanding their own learning processes and their development in subjects will contribute to the pupils' independence and sense of mastering" (p. 12). It is further important that the pupils` motivation is fuelled through the teaching, that good attitudes and learning strategies are promoted and that this together lead towards lifelong learning. In 2020, the renewal of the National curriculum, referred to as LK20 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), was implemented in Norwegian schools. According to the new competence aims of English after the seventh school year stated here, students are supposed to, among other things, be able to read and convey the content from different kinds of texts, included texts they have chosen themselves. Further, they are supposed to read and listen to English factual and fictional literature for children and young adults and write and discuss the content.

Another important document that provides valuable input about the expected reading level is the CEFR (2018). In this framework, the overall reading comprehension is described in different levels. According to The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2020), many students reach level B1 during their eighth to tenth school year, what is often referred to as lower secondary school. Still, when reading the descriptions of a B1 reader, most of the students that take part in the current research project can be described to be on level B1, and it therefore these descriptions that will be included here. The typical characteristic of a B1 reader`s reception is a reader that "can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to their field of interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 54). The overall reading comprehension is divided into five elements, the first being *Reading correspondence*, where B1 readers are expected to understand personal letters, e-mails and formal correspondence. The second element is named *Reading for orientation* and B1 readers are described as able to scan longer texts to find information, find and understand relevant information from everyday texts such as brochures and letters, and "gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task" (p. 59). The third component, *Reading for information and argument* explains how readers at level B1 should manage to identify conclusions in argumentative texts and recognise important points in straightforward newspaper articles if the subject is familiar. The fourth element, *Reading instructions*, states that students on the B1 level should be capable of understanding "instructions and procedures in the form of a continuous text, for example in a manual, provided that he/she is familiar with the type of process or product concerned" (p. 58). The last element listed, *Reading as a leisure activity*, states that students should be able to read and understand the main points of texts such as newspapers, magazines, song lyrics, poems and travel diaries. In addition, they should manage to follow the plot of a story and understand descriptions of places, events, feelings and perspectives in narratives. To be able to reach all these aims, students need to know about and make use of learning strategies (CEFR, 2018).

The Council of Europe has, in addition to the CEFR, also published the European Language Portfolio (ELP). The purpose of this portfolio is to help learners monitor their language learning. Further, the aim is to "support the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence" (Council of Europe, 2020).

As textbooks are Norwegian English teachers` predominant text source (Kveset, 2015; Charboneau, 2016), there are reasons to believe that these also serve as a sort of guiding

document in the ESL classroom. Both the trust and use of textbooks are high in the English lessons in Norwegian primary schools, according to Kveset (2015), and most English teachers use a textbook from one of the main publishers, Aschehoug (*Quest*), Gyldendal (*Steps* and *Explore*), Fagbokforlaget (*Scoop* and *Link*) or Cappelen Damm (*Stairs* and *Engelsk 1-7*). In the teacher`s guide published alongside these textbooks, reading strategies are mentioned, but only briefly. *Stairs 7* Teachers` guide (Solberg & Unnerud, 2015) lists a few pre-reading ideas such as use of illustrations and previous knowledge recall. The textbook *Quest 7* (Tømmerbakke, Bade & Pettersen, 2016) has "Before reading"-tasks connected to many of the texts, but the Teachers` guide (Bade, Pettersen & Tømmerbakke, 2016) does not explain how and why it is a good idea to spend time on such tasks. *Explore 7* (Edwards, Omland, Royer & Solli, 2017) also has "Before you read"-tasks, and according to the Teachers` guide, students should be encouraged to make use of what they already know. The authors of *Explore 7* also encourages teachers to spend time on different learning strategies, and the aim is for students to know which strategies they need to use in order to reach their learning goals.

2.8. Assessing reading

Assessment can be described as the process of gathering information that enables teachers to understand what students know and how well they know it (Caccamise, Snyder & Kintsch, 2008). Assessing a student`s ability to read is complex, as this is a skill that cannot be observed directly. Evidence of language learners` receptive processing has to be found through other means, such as writing, drawing and speaking (Green, 2014). Thus, assessing the ability to read in a second language is even more complex than in the first, according to Alderson, Haapakangas, Huhta, Nieminen and Ullakonoja (2015). It is therefore important to treat reading assessment in a second language with respect, care and attention, Grabe (2009) underlines. His view is supported by McNamara (2000), who adds that testing reading involves a number of steps, all of which need to be taken seriously. If we think of the usefulness of a test as Bachman and Palmer defined it, "Usefulness = Reliability + Construct Validity + Authenticity + Interactiveness + Impact + Practicality" (1996, p. 18), we realise that both knowledge and time need to be invested when making good and useful language tests. When carried out in a fair, honest and appropriate way, assessment can be of great help for students to learn effectively (Grabe, 2009), and it can give teachers valuable feedback on whether the teaching prior to a test leads to the desired result (McAllister & Guidice, 2012).

National tests in English were implemented in Norway in 2004, and the format was revised in 2007 (Charboneau, 2016). The tests are held for all students in the fifth and eighth school year, and a range of competence aims from the school curriculum, for the end of fourth and seventh grade respectively, are tested (Hasselgreen, 2010). The tests are electronic and mostly assess the students` reading comprehension. In the fifth grade National test of English, questions are made to test the ability to read for detailed information and overall understanding. In eighth grade, they also test for reflection of the content. The 2014 guidelines also specify that the students should be able to use reading strategies such as understanding main points, finding information and connecting information from different parts of the text (Charboneau, 2016). The National test has questions on a lower, middle and higher level, and the students` scores are graded from one to three in fifth grade and one to five in eighth grade. The different levels are related to the CEFR levels (Hasselgreen, 2010), thus underlining the connection between the competence aims in the Norwegian curriculum and the European language standard.

"There is no "best method" for testing reading. No single method can fulfil all the varied purposes for which we might test", Alderson (2000, p. 203) claims. He further adds that it is important to keep in mind that a method is not necessarily valid just because it is frequently used, and that we should seek to use multiple techniques and methods to get the best possible view of reading comprehension. There are many techniques one can use when testing reading comprehension, and according to Weir (1997), three major methods have dominated the last part of the 20th century: the cloze procedure, the multiple choice questions and the short answer questions. In addition to these, Alderson (2000) also mentions matching lists, matching phrases, classifications, dichotomous items, identifying attitudes, summary and choosing the correct heading. According to Elley and Mangubhai (1992), there are benefits and disadvantages with all task types used to test reading, and it is important to consider these when deciding which tasks to use. Some task types, like multiple choice questions, can lead to guessing and are less valid than open-ended questions, the authors claim. However, these kind of questions are less time demanding and give a more objective and accurate scoring than open-ended questions (Bailey, 1998). Also, more items can be checked in shorter time, something which will lead to greater test reliability, according to Hughes (1989). It is, however, a drawback that the alternatives given may mislead or influence the test-takers` result. Further, it is also a disadvantage that it is possible to get the answer right by eliminating the wrong options. This is an efficient strategy, but not really what we want to test. *Matching tasks* may, like multiple choice tasks, distract the students by giving them

options they would otherwise not consider. This type of task also enables the students to use the elimination strategy, which does not check the understanding. Thus, avoiding the danger of this pitfall, we must create a task that contains more alternatives than the answer requires (Alderson, 2000). One advantage with matching tasks is that a large amount of content can be covered, and that this type of task provides less chance of guessing. The *short answer questions* have the disadvantage of testing writing in addition to reading, and they can also be more time-consuming to correct. However, the advantage of such questions is that getting the answer correct shows that the student has understood the text. These questions can also be made more or less difficult, hence testing different comprehension levels. *Dichotomous items* such as true/false tasks are very well suited to sample many and diverse test items (Burton, 2001). The problem with such tasks is that it is possible to get the answer right by guessing. To counteract this, a large number of such statements are necessary (Alderson, 2000).

3. Method and Materials

The following chapter will explain the research method used in this project and describe the validity and reliability of the study. As a mixed method is chosen, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. These will be presented in separate chapters. Further, the informants that took part in the research and the information given to the participants` parents and caretakers will be described. The choice of comprehension material, texts, reading strategies, comprehension questions and pre-reading material, will be presented and justified.

3.1. Research method

The research for this thesis makes use of a mixed method where the quantitative data collected through comprehension answers are combined with qualitative data collected through interviews. One of the advantages of such a design in educational research is that the quantitative data may provide for detail and the qualitative data offers more general information about the opinions and context. A convergent parallel design was chosen believing that a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected at the same time can provide more comprehensive and reliable data. The interviews provide information that can extend and elaborate on the first data, and, hence, the collected data may complement one another and lead to a better understanding of the research questions (Creswell, 2014).

3.1.1 Quantitative data collection

For the quantitative data collection, students in the two research classes were asked to read two texts and give a written answer to 50 comprehension questions in six different tasks. The two classes were given the same texts and the same comprehension tasks, but only one class used pre-reading strategies prior to reading. The students were all given 35 minutes to read each text and answer the questions. Data collected were summarised and registered electronically using numerical indices (McKay, 2006). One point was awarded for each correct answer. Some students skipped or did not have time to answer all the questions. This was registered as a U for *unanswered* in the computer program. Questions where personal opinions were asked for were awarded with one point if the answer was justified.

3.1.2. Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data was collected through two separate interview sessions, one for each class, carried out the same day as the reading sessions. A focus group interview was chosen to get views from specific students in addition to hearing the group`s shared understanding (Creswell, 2014). Five students from each class participated in each interview. The students were selected by the classes` English teacher, who chose students that were thought to represent different reading levels. In preparation for the interviews, an interview guide was designed (Appendix A). When deciding which questions to ask and how to ask these questions, the aim was to formulate truly open-ended questions to enable the participants to "best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher" (Creswell, 2014, p. 216). Further, it was important to avoid yes/no-questions as these do not encourage elaboration from the participants. It was also important to avoid questions that deal with more than one idea (McKay, 2006). To make sure the students were able to say everything they wanted and were not prevented by lack of English proficiency, the interviews were held in Norwegian. In addition, it was important to bear in mind that the interviews were held by a person that did not know the students well, because this may have influenced the responses. The students may, for instance, easily have given answers according to what they thought the interviewer expected (Creswell, 2014). It was also crucial to encourage all the participants to take part in the interview avoiding that one or more participant dominate and risk that some voices were not heard (McKay, 2006). Before starting the interview, it was therefore explained to the students that there were no right or wrong answers to these questions and that it was the students` thoughts, reflections and opinions that should be phrased.

3.2. Validity and reliability

Both validity and reliability are essential for sound research. Validity can be described as "evidence to demonstrate that the intended test interpretation […] matches the proposed purpose of the test" (Creswell, 2014, p. 624). According to McKay (2006), there are three types of validity relevant for researching second language classrooms. The construct validity refers to the relationship between the instrument used in a study and the construct that is being examined. In this sense, the current research project has a high degree of construct validity. As the research was carried out in existing classes and not in a randomly selected sample of a

representative group, the external validity is low, and the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population. The internal validity is also most likely low as variables that could influence the outcome of the study are not controlled for and that existing classes were used. Hence, the possible differences in reading comprehension in this research project could be caused by differences in prior teaching rather than the use of pre-reading strategies.

The internal reliability of a research refers to how likely it is that someone else analysing the data will come to the same conclusions. Quantitative data from the current research project has only been analysed by one researcher, but given the fact that the data consists of numerical scores, there are reasons to believe that a second researcher would find the same results. In other words, the quantitative part of the study does most likely have internal reliability. The external reliability, whether researchers undertaking a similar study would come to the same conclusions (McKay, 2006), has not been tested. This would, however, have been interesting to see.

The results in the research are not applicable and transferable to other contexts, and they can therefore not be generalised (Creswell, 2014).

3.3. Informants and information about the research project

Pupils from two seventh grade classes at a primary school were asked to participate in the research project. Advice concerning the need to have parents` and caretakers` consent was conferred with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, the NSD. As only anonymous data, "data where individual persons are not/no longer identifiable; not directly, indirectly or via email/IP address or scrambling key" (NSD, 2020) will be processed in this project, there is no need for notification (Appendix B). The NSD suggests that an information letter should be sent to the students` parents and caretakers. In this letter, the goal of the research is clearly outlined and the anonymity of the participants is described (Appendix C). The letter was sent electronically to all parents and caretakers in the two participating classes two weeks prior to the lessons the students would take part in as part of the research project. There were no questions from any of the parents or caretakers, but a few responded by e-mail to say they thought the research project sounded exciting.

According to the overall reading comprehension list from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the majority of the students fit the descriptions of

reading level B1. Some fit the descriptions of level B2, and a few, level A2 (Council of Europe, 2018). Some of the students are bilingual and a few have English as their first language. In their latest National test of English, which was in September 2018, the two participating classes had an almost equal average score (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2018). The two classes have the same English teacher, who describes them as positive, eager to learn and approximately at the same overall reading level.

3.4. Material used for collecting data

3.4.1. Texts

Many criteria need to be considered when choosing texts for a reading test. The text should be bias-free and non-confronting, and it should preferably have a gender neutral topic. Further, the content, vocabulary and grammar need to be age-appropriate. It is also important that the text is self-contained and that none of the students have read it before. It is a large benefit if the topic is of interest to the students, and the word range should be appropriate to the students` reading level (Bachman & Palmer, 1996), in this case B1. Based on the CEFR levels (Council of Europe, 2018) and the aims from the English subject curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), texts from several sources were considered. In the end, texts from the British Council`s text archive were chosen. This is also one of the resources recommended by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in their teacher`s guide to National tests of English (2017). The texts and comprehension tasks from the British Council are created according to the CEFR levels, and from their website (British Council, 2020), four texts, two at level B1, two at level B2, were chosen. All the chosen texts covered topics which were most likely to be of interest to the age group.

By having a comprehension task tried out by a group representative for the student group that will take part in a research project, it is possible get useful information about how well the task works. If necessary, changes can be made, and these changes will probably lead to a more reliable task, according to Fulcher and Davidson (2007). Based on this advice, two pilot classes from seventh grade in a different primary school were asked to read the four texts and answer comprehension questions. No pre-reading activities were given for these students. When going through their answers it quickly became apparent that the two texts at level B2 were too difficult for the seventh grade students and that texts at level B1, what is often

referred to as intermediate level, would be best for this project. The texts *Travel guide* and *The noticeboard* (Appendix D) were therefore chosen. These texts also fit the competence aims outlined in the English subject curriculum: "The students should be able to read and convey content from different types of texts […], read English factual texts […], use elementary strategies and […] understand words and phrases in adapted and authentic texts" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, my translation).

When using authentic texts or texts from secondary sources, it is important to consider the copyright of the material. According to the British Council`s terms of use, it is illegal to "modify, delete, interfere with or misuse data contained on British Council Digital Services" (2020, paragraph 5). Still, an enquiry was sent to the British Council asking whether the chosen texts could be used legally, and the answer was that "The content of our LearnEnglish website is free to be used for educational purposes" (Appendix E).

3.4.2. Pre-reading material and reading strategies

Pre-reading material was created according to the plan of providing pre-reading strategies for vocabulary, motivation and previewing the text. Some of the tasks were inspired by Fremmedspråksenteret and their publication "Det er verdt å lese" (Blå & Pettersen, 2012). Material and activities that have previously proven to be motivating for this age group was chosen. Some tasks required the students to work with their learning partner, some required whole class discussions.

For the *Travel guide* text, the first task was a guessing-task that was chosen to contribute to the pre-reading strategies motivation and previewing the text. The students were shown a PowerPoint with several pictures and maps of California (Appendix F). Then they were asked what they knew about California and travel guides, thereby activating previous knowledge about both the topic and the genre. Further, the actual text was shown to the students, and the heading, sub-headings, pictures and a map were pointed out. This was an essential part of the pre-reading strategy called previewing the text. Next, the students were supposed to work together with their learning partner to complete a sorting task (Appendix G), which was part of the pre-reading strategy chosen to enhance vocabulary. Both words and collocations from the text were chosen. Finally, the comprehension tasks were shown and the different elements were pointed out to the students.

For the second text, *The noticeboard*, the first PowerPoint slide (Appendix F) presented the students with a picture of a Christmas sweater and the text "You want to sell this sweater. What can you do? Talk to your learning partner for two minutes." This task was chosen to motivate the students, but also as part of the pre-reading strategy previewing the text. The students were further asked to discuss online sites for selling used goods. This oral task was also chosen to be motivational and to provide previewing. Previewing the text was also the main goal with the next task, where pictures of noticeboards from the students` neighbourhood were shown and the students were asked to discuss what could be put up on such a board. The next task, a game, was part of the pre-reading strategy chosen to motivate the students. Here, different notices were handed out (Appendix H) and the students should either sit or stand depending on the statement they heard. After the game, the students were asked to complete a matching task together with their learning partner (Appendix I). This was chosen as a pre-reading strategy to enhance the vocabulary, and English sentences and collocations should be matched with Norwegian. Finally, the last thing that was done before the students started reading the texts and answering questions, was to show the text and the tasks to the students and point out the different elements. All the material was put together in two PowerPoint presentations, one for each text (Appendix F).

3.4.3. Comprehension tasks

When choosing comprehension tasks suitable for assessing reading of a specific text, it is important to consider the benefits and disadvantages of all types of tasks (Elley & Mangubhai, 1992). There are benefits and problems with all task types, they claim, and Alderson`s (2000) advice on using multiple techniques and methods was therefore used as a guidance. Hence, four different question types were chosen for this research; multiple choice-questions, matching, open-ended questions and dichotomous tasks. These are question types that the students are familiar with from the National test of English and from their English lessons. In addition, the comprehension tasks for this research have been chosen to require use of different reading strategies. Further, there is a progression of increasingly demanding tasks to ensure that the students have a positive start and to give them confidence and motivate the further work. In addition, it has also been a goal to keep the language of the questions easier than that of the text, as it is not the language of the questions we should test. As Green points out, it is "essential that all instructions are easy for assessees to grasp" (2014, p. 97).

The principles behind different question levels in the National test of English have been used when planning the questions for the research project. The questions are designed according to three levels of difficulty in the National tests, each meant to test different levels of reading comprehension. The easiest are the *find-questions* where the students are asked to find the correct answer in the text. The next level is called *interpretation questions*, and here the students need to interpret the information they read. The most difficult questions are the *reflective questions*. Here students are asked to combine different reading strategies to get an overview of the text and reflect upon the content (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). This last, most advanced level, may also be referred to as deep comprehension questions. LaRusso et al. (2016) explain deep comprehension as an ability to evaluate texts, use textual evidence to state a position and integrate information from different texts. Deep comprehension is a complex skill to test and it has therefore traditionally not been incorporated into reading tests. Still, it is important to allow the students to show their level of deep comprehension, and according to the CEFR levels, students are also expected to show some degree of deep understanding at the B1 level.

For the *Travel guide* text, the two comprehension tasks available on The British Council`s web page, *true or false* and *matching*, were included as part of the research material (Appendix J). The true or false tasks mostly require students to find the correct information, whereas the matching task in addition to finding also require interpretation and reorganising information. In addition, an open-ended question task was made (Appendix K). This task included questions such as "How long is Golden Gate Bridge?" and "How can a travel guide be useful for travellers?" Reading to find information is considered the least difficult reading function (Saville-Troike, 2012), and the plan was therefore to place this task first in the comprehension material for the research project. However, to match the different levels of difficulty from the National tests, several of the questions were made to require deep thinking, and the task was therefore placed at the end of the material. Four of the open-ended questions are straight forward questions on literal comprehension, three questions involve reorganising or reinterpreting the information to find the answer and three questions require inferencing. Here, the answer cannot be found in the text (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). The last six questions are considered more difficult than the first four, and these questions require deep thinking. As this is not a writing test, the students were told that spelling errors do not affect the result. To complete the comprehension tasks, the students need to make use of scanning strategy, quickly looking through a text searching for specific

information. They need to apply careful reading to pay close attention to detail and to understand the material well enough to decide on answers that involve reinterpreting and inferencing of the text content. To solve the dichotomous item task, the students need to use the strategy of going back in the text, finding the correct sentence(s) and reread this to be sure about the statement. To be able to find evidence from the text to confirm if the sentence is true or false will also be a strategy that is useful in this task (British Council, 2020). The matching task has similarities with the task "who could say", which is frequently used in the National tests of English (Moe & Helness, 2019). For this task, scanning is useful to find the correct part of the text. It is also important to read the sentences in the task carefully as these contain some new and some rewritten information.

The second text in the research material, *The noticeboard*, originally has three comprehension tasks connected to it: *true or false, multiple choice* and *short answer questions*. These were all included in the research material (Appendix L). Multiple choice tasks are widely used in the National test of English. In 2020, more than one third of the tasks were multiple choice tasks. To be able to answer these questions correctly, the students have to use the reading strategy of scanning the text in order to locate the correct information and decide which of the three alternatives that is correct. Regarding the level of reading comprehension described in the National test of English, this is a finding-task. The true or false-task also require the students to find the correct information, whereas the last task with open-ended questions has elements of the two difficulty categories find and interpret. To include the most advanced comprehension level, deep comprehension, four questions were added (Appendix M). These questions, for instance "Do you think a noticeboard is a good way of reaching out to people? Why? Why not?" require the students to reflect on the content of the text. To be able to answer these questions correctly, the students have to combine different reading strategies to get an overview of the text and reflect upon the content and integrate information from different parts of the text. The table underneath gives an overview of the different task numbers and types.

Text	Task number	Type of task (number of questions)
Travel guide	1	True or false (8)
	2	Matching (6)
	3	Open-ended questions (10)
The noticeboard	1	True or false (8)
	2	Multiple choice (6)
	3	Open-ended questions (12)

Table 1: Overview of the comprehension tasks

4. Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the key findings of the research project will be described and discussed in different subchapters according to the initial research questions. Some results will be visualised as figures and tables. A mixed method was chosen for this research project, and quantitative data from comprehension answers are integrated with qualitative data from student interviews when analysing, interpreting and discussing the data. Combined, the quantitative and qualitative data will complement one another and provide a better understanding of the research questions (Creswell, 2014). As the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, all quotes from the interviews are my translations. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the limitations of the research project.

4.1. Research question 1

In the following part the aim is to discuss and answer the first of the two research questions:

(i): To what degree can the use of pre-reading strategies affect students' reading comprehension?

To answer this question, all the answers given to the comprehension questions were first registered numerically in Excel. One point was awarded for each correct answer. Questions that asked for personal opinions, were awarded one point if the answer was justified. When justification was clearly expected, zero points were given if the student had not been able to justify his or her opinion. Unanswered questions were marked U to be able to distinguish between unanswered and incorrect questions. Data was also collected through two group interviews, one for each class. *Class One* did not use any pre-reading strategies prior to reading and answering comprehension questions. There are 19 students in this class, and they all participated in the study. In *Class Two,* which worked with pre-reading strategies, there are 18 students. Two were absent on the day of the research, and hence 16 students participated in the research project. The students were asked to read two texts (Appendix D) and answer six comprehension tasks, three for each text (Appendices J, K, L and M). In the comprehension tasks, there were altogether 50 questions.

When combining the comprehension result data with data from the interviews, several interesting results appear. In analysing the comprehension answers, we see that there is little difference between the two classes in some of the tasks, such as *Travel guide* task 1 and *The noticeboard* task 2, see Figure 1 and Figure 2 below. These figures show that both classes have a high percentage of correct answers in both of these tasks. It is interesting to notice that *Class One* showed better comprehension results than *Class Two* in some of the questions in both *Travel guide* task 1 (Appendix J), which was a true or false-task, and *The noticeboard* task 2 (Appendix L), which was a multiple choice-tasks. These were also the tasks with the highest scores, which is in accordance with the answers given in the student interviews. When asked which of the tasks they found to be the easiest, the true or false-tasks and the multiple choice task were mentioned by students in both classes: "The multiple choice task was the easiest as there were only three options in each question," was an explanation heard from students in both classes. One student from *Class Two* said: "The true or false tasks were fun and quite easy," and a student from *Class One* expressed that: "The true or false tasks were really easy, and I remembered a lot from the text so I didn`t have to go back. Or actually I did go back just to double check, but I really didn`t have to because I remembered a lot." When comparing the interview answers to the results, it is worth noticing that the tasks mentioned to be the easiest ones are the tasks where both classes overall have the highest scores. The difference between the two classes is hardly noticeable in these tasks.
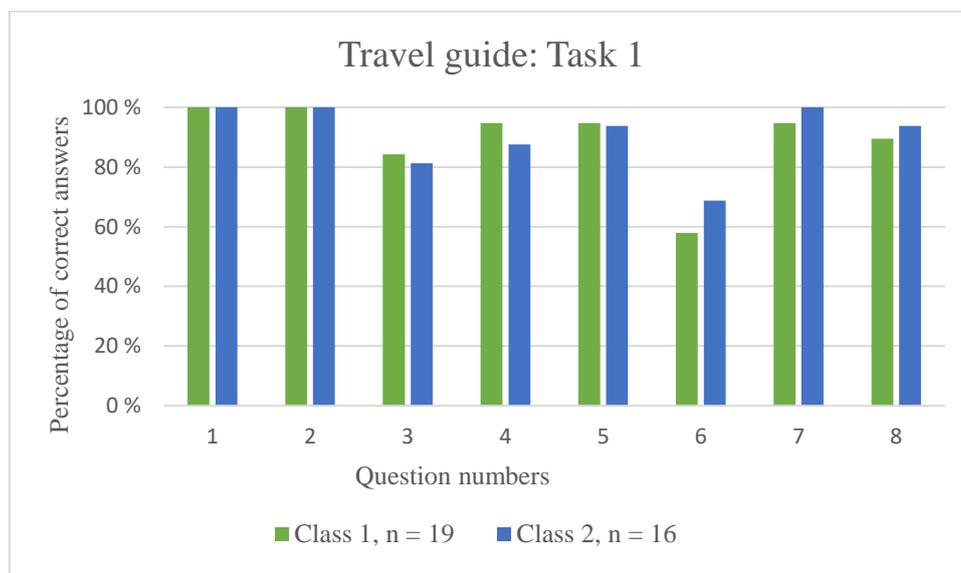

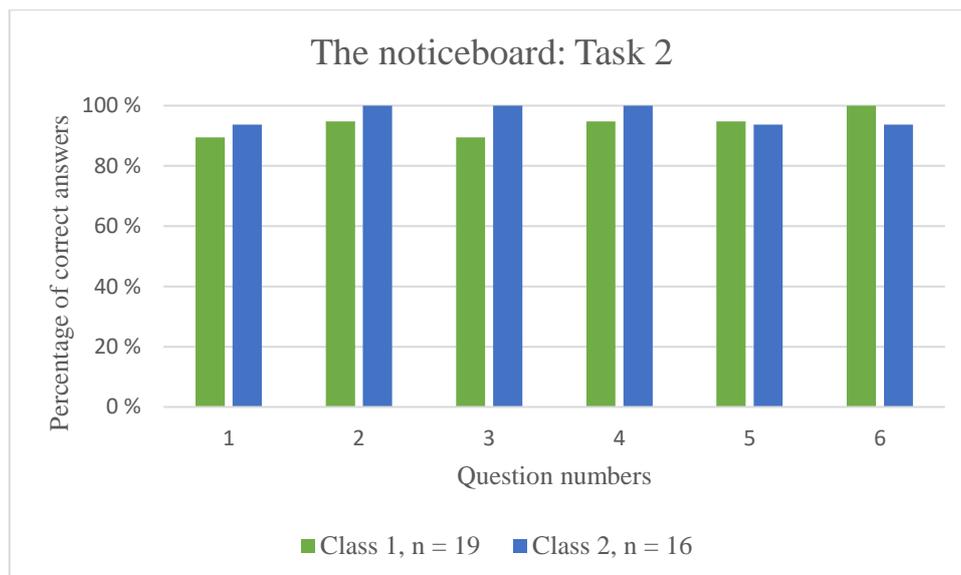*Figure 1: Percentage of correct answers in Travel guide task 1*

Figure 2: Percentage of correct answers in The noticeboard task 2

It is further interesting to note that the type of tasks mentioned to be the easiest by both interview groups are tasks where it is possible to get the answer right by guessing. This was also pointed out by several students: "In some of the true or false tasks I just guessed because I was not sure about the answer," one of the students said. The possibility of guessing an answer is something that makes such tasks less valid than, for instance, open-ended questions when assessing reading comprehension (Elley & Mangubhai, 1992). Further, true or false tasks, which were part of comprehension tasks for both texts (Appendices J and L) might also have given alternatives that could have mislead the students and, thereby, influencing their result. For the multiple choice task (Appendix L), eliminating the wrong options was a strategy that several students reported to have made use of: "This task was really easy, because it was easy to see which alternative it could not be," one of the students commented. Use of an elimination strategy is efficient, but it is not what we want to test (Hughes, 1989). As there is not a large difference between the two classes in the tasks mentioned above, the results indicate that the use of pre-reading strategies have had limited impact on the comprehension results.

Other tasks, such as *The noticeboard* task 3 (Appendices L and M) and *Travel guide* task 3 (Appendix K), which were both tasks that required the students to write their own answer, show a more marked difference in the results between the two classes, see Figure 3 and Figure 4 below. These tasks were also described as the most difficult by the students in both classes. In both tasks, questions that require deep thinking are considered the most

difficult and these are placed towards the end of the comprehension material. A question from the *Travel guide* text, "Why would music lovers choose the Los Angeles area over the Bay area?" required the students to integrate information from different parts of the text. *Class Two* managed to answer this question to a much larger extent than *Class One*. In fact, all interview students from *Class One* said that they had overlooked the map in the text. Noticing the map and the geographical places marked on this was necessary to be able to answer the question. This is an example that illustrates the impact of the pre-reading strategy previewing the text.

For the text *The noticeboard*, a question such as "Which age group do you think most of the notices in the picture aim for? Why?" required a thorough understanding of the text. Further, to be able to answer the deep comprehension questions from *The noticeboard* (Appendix M), students needed to read interactively. When doing so, readers comprehend the text through reflecting, responding, reacting and anticipating events while they read, and combine different parts of the text (Neville-Lynch, 2005). Results from comprehension answers indicate that *Class Two* to a larger degree than *Class One* managed to read interactively. This might be caused by use of pre-reading strategies such as previewing the text. By pointing out different elements of the text to the students and help activating their previous knowledge, the students` content schema was activated. This increases students` opportunities to comprehend both explicit and implicit information (Paris et al, 1991; Dehn, 2011). It appears that *Class Two* were able to take on an interactive way of reading and that this had a positive impact on their comprehension.

Comprehension results from both *Travel guide* task 3 and *The noticeboard* task 3, see Figure 3 and Figure 4 below, show that students from *Class Two* managed to answer more questions correctly than did students from *Class One*. The results from *The noticeboard* task 3 (Appendix M) are of particular interest as the students from *Class Two* managed the difficult questions, the last five questions, much better than students from *Class One*. The last five questions in this task are where the biggest differences between the two classes can be observed, see Figure 4.
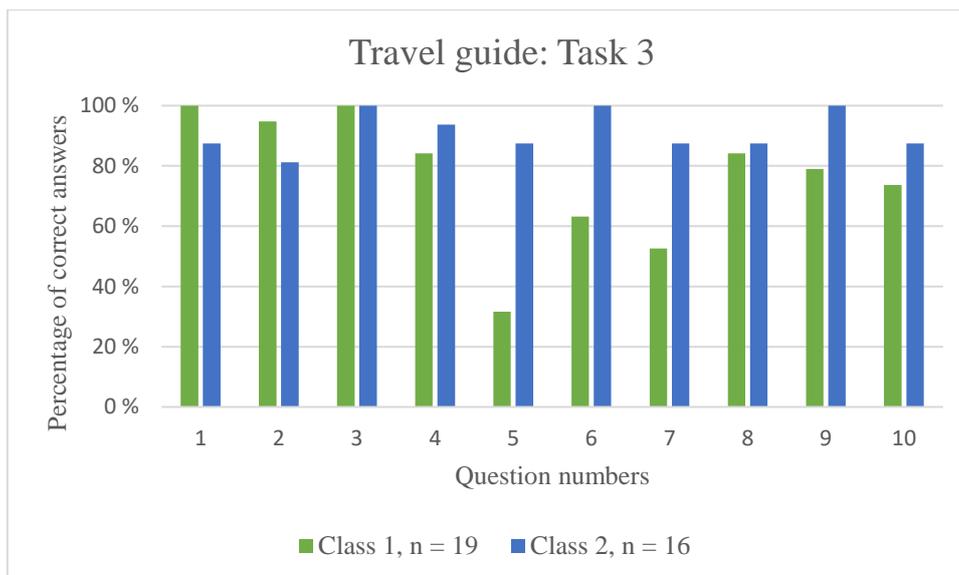
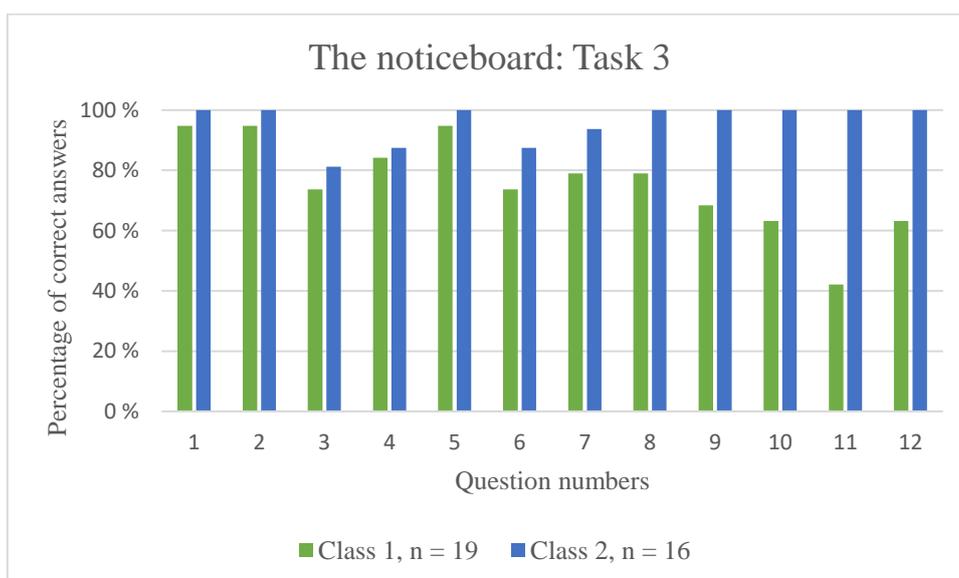*Figure 3: Percentage of correct answers in Travel guide task 3*

Figure 4: Percentage of correct answers in The noticeboard task 3

The results described above indicate that pre-reading strategies are helpful for students who are about to read a text and answer comprehension questions. This corresponds with the answers given in the student interviews. *Class Two* used pre-reading strategies that pre-viewed the text, enhanced vocabulary and motivated for reading. The students from this class who took part in the interview were asked if they thought the pre-reading strategies made a difference to their understanding of the text. All five students agreed that it became easier to read the texts and answer the questions after having used the pre-reading strategies. One

student said: "In a way it is very smart to do these tasks before we start reading. We are sort of warming up and then it is not straight into the text like it normally is." Several of the students in *Class Two* used the words *preparation* or *prepared* to describe the pre-reading strategies they used. Preparing the reading is also the term used by Roe (2017) as an overarching name of pre-reading strategies. Two of the students in *Class Two* described the activities that were done as part of previewing the texts as particularly useful: "It was a very good idea to get us to talk about the topic and to hear what our classmates knew about California and noticeboards. This way, I felt better prepared for what I was going to read," one student pointed out. Another student expressed: "Because we talked about California before we read the text, it was easier to understand and remember the text." Activating previous knowledge and recalling personal memories are important as this enable the students to connect new things with what they already know (Dehn, 2011). Further, research indicates that comprehension of both explicit and implicit information is significantly improved by use of previewing the text (Paris et al., 1991).

Answers given in the interview with students from *Class One* also support the result indicating that pre-reading strategies are helpful. When they were asked what could have been done differently by the teacher or themselves to make the texts easier to read and understand, students from *Class One* answered that the teacher could have reminded them to read the complete texts and told them a little bit about what the texts were about. None of these students noticed the map in the middle of the *Travel guide* text. In other words, they did not read the whole text. "It would have been useful if the teacher had said a little bit about the structure of the text and pointed out the map," several students from *Class One* said and added that a box with translation of difficult words would have been helpful. Further, the students in *Class One* expressed that they could have made the reading easier themselves by reading the questions before reading the text as "This would have made me notice different things." One student said that looking more closely at the text before reading would have been a good idea; another said that it was important to remember to read all the text. "I also know that I should have paid attention to everything on the page and that I should have read more thoroughly," one student remarked. It is interesting to note that many of the elements students from *Class One* said could have been done differently actually describe pre-reading strategies that were used in the other class. In other words, we can say that students from *Class One* miss the strategy instruction described by Baker (2008) to be essential when choosing the correct strategy depending on the type of text and purpose for reading. One of the

characteristics of a fluent reader is how he or she consciously and deliberately are able to apply relevant strategies (Baker, 2008; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2008). It is interesting to note how students from *Class One* report that use of pre-reading strategies is something they think would have helped them when reading the texts and answering the comprehension questions.

Another result that was observed in the quantitative data was a difference between the two classes in the number of answered questions. *Class Two* worked quicker and had a lower percentage, 1%, of unanswered questions compared to *Class One*, who had 5.8%. Replies given in the interviews also imply that students in *Class Two* overall seemed to have a more positive attitude towards doing the tasks. This is interesting when we know that students` attitude towards reading also plays a significant role in motivation for reading tasks (Nuttall, 1996). In the interview, several of the students in *Class Two* said that they had fun and reported that they felt motivated to do both the reading and the comprehension tasks. Neither fun nor motivation were mentioned in the interview with students from *Class One*. Students from *Class Two* were asked which of the three pre-reading strategies they thought were most helpful. Several of the students immediately answered: "Motivation is very important. It helps to set the mood and it connects me to the topic in a different way. It also makes me curious." One of the students in *Class Two* added that use of games and fun activities that were connected to a text made it much more motivating to read the text afterwards. Another student in *Class Two* said: "Reading texts and answering questions like this is something I normally find very motivating, but I think that I felt even more motivated this time because I felt that I managed to answer the questions." This is an interesting observation that supports Afflerbach et al.`s (2008) description of how the feeling of mastering a task can help build motivation. Reading skills and strategies complement one another and together help motivate the student, Afflerbach et al. claim, which is also how it was expressed by students from *Class Two*. A student that normally find reading in English hard, remarked that it was motivating and satisfying to be able to answer "even the questions that looked difficult."

Further, when the students were asked which pre-reading strategies they could use themselves the next time they were asked to read a new text, one of the students from *Class Two* said: "I think I would review the text. Because this will make me more ready for reading." Another student from *Class Two* said that reading about the topic in another source first also would be useful: "This way I have some background knowledge and remember what I know about the topic already." This view is supported by Aebersold and Field (1997), who explain how opportunities to make sense of the text will increase if students are able to recall

the knowledge they already have about a topic, also known as content schema. By recalling personal knowledge and learning more about a topic prior to reading, cultural factors of a text might also be brought to mind, and learning about these in advance is something which may enhance comprehension. One student from *Class Two* pointed out that "I will probably remember what I have read for longer if I use pre-reading strategies." Another added: "This (pre-reading strategies) is a very clever idea."

In addition, it was pointed out by a student in *Class Two* that the pre-reading strategies used to enhance vocabulary had been helpful: "I think I have learned at least five new words today because we did it this way." According to Koda (2004), vocabulary knowledge correlates highly with reading comprehension, and pre-teaching vocabulary is therefore a very useful pre-reading strategy. For *Class Two*, pre-teaching vocabulary was done as part of the pre-reading material for both texts (Appendices G and I). Hill (1999) and Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) point out that pre-teaching collocations is a useful way of pre-teaching vocabulary as this allows for quicker comprehension that will enable the student to recognise chunks of language. English has a large number of collocations, and when pre-teaching vocabulary through these lexical chunks, the fluency development is enhanced, according to Hill (1999). In the pre-teaching material used in *Class Two*, collocations and sentences were used in a sorting task (Appendix G) and a matching task (Appendix I). *Class Two* overall had a better result than *Class One*, see Figure 5 below, and there are reasons to believe that pre-teaching vocabulary has contributed to this result. This is also supported by the interviews where students from *Class One* said they wish some of the words were translated and students from *Class Two* said they learned new words and phrases.

The overall results show that students in *Class One* managed to answer 82% of the comprehension questions correctly. Students in *Class Two* answered 93% of the questions correctly, see Figure 5 below.
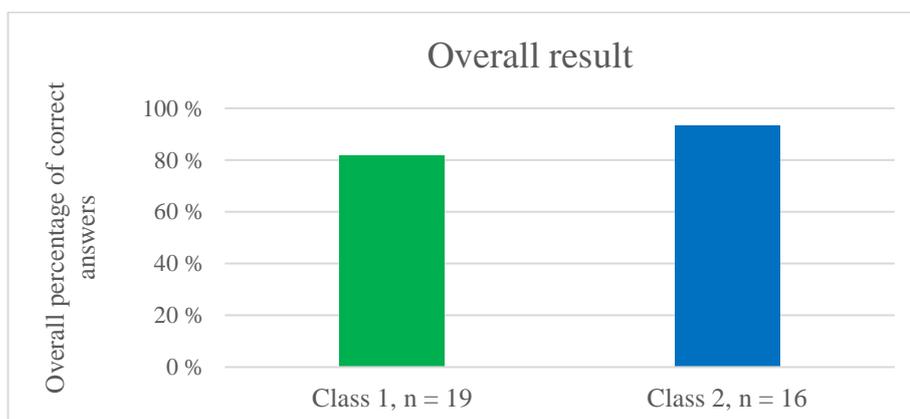
Figure 5: Overall results of reading comprehension

To check if the difference between the two classes is statistically significant, a two sample T-test assuming unequal variances was carried out in Excel, using the mean score of each question. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in results between the two classes. The alpha value was set to 0.05.

	Class 1	Class 2
Mean	0.8190	0.9325
Variance	0.030546	0.010976
Observations	50	50
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	80	
t Stat	-3.94046	
P(T<=t) one-tail	8.65E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.664125	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000173	
t Critical two-tail	1.990063	

Table 2: T-test 1

The results above show that the P value for both the one-tail and the two-tail test is lower than the alpha, and we can therefore reject the null hypothesis. The difference we observe is, in other words, statistically significant, and the alternative hypothesis is therefore true: *Class Two* has a higher percentage of correct answers than *Class One*.

From the T-test, we also observe that the variance in *Class One* is higher than in *Class Two*. The variance indicates "the dispersion of scores around the mean" (Creswell, 2014, p. 183). For *Class One*, the variance was 0.030546. For *Class Two*, it was 0.010976. This indicates that pre-reading strategies level out differences between the students in a class. In the interview with students from *Class Two*, it was valuable to hear the opinion from a student who normally struggle with reading English. For this student, it felt like the pre-reading helped: "This time I didn`t feel so bad at reading. It was fun, and I actually managed quite a lot." The result in variance indicates that pre-reading may be of help for students who struggle and that pre-reading strategies may be helpful in raising both the reading comprehension and self-esteem for students who normally find reading in English difficult. This finding is confirmed by Baker (2008), who emphasises that students at all ability levels benefit from

instruction. Using pre-reading strategies is important when it comes to building students`
confidence that he or she can make sense of the text they are about to read (Wallace, 1988).
Seen in this light, it is particularly intriguing to observe the research results described above.
Further, we know that novice readers often have low expectation of success; they feel anxious
about reading and are often unwilling to persevere when the texts become difficult (Paris et
al., 1991). If use of pre-reading strategies can contribute to build novice readers` expectations
and stamina and to lower their anxiousness, it will be well worth the time and effort put into
strategy instruction.

Altogether, the results described and discussed above lead us to an answer to the first
research question: Pre-reading strategies seem to have a positive impact on students` reading
comprehension. Students from *Class Two*, who used pre-reading strategies, have a higher
mean score than the class that did not. Hence, there is a significant difference in
comprehension results between the two classes. Students from both classes reported in the
interviews that they very seldom use pre-reading strategies at school, and hardly ever at home.
The research results and student interviews indicate that there are valid arguments for
spending time on pre-reading strategies both at school and at home.

4.2. Research question 2

The following section discusses and attempts to answer the second research question:

*(ii): To what extent do the possible benefits of using pre-reading strategies vary
according to the type of comprehension tasks?*

To answer this question, results from the different task types were compared. The
results are presented in Figure 6 below. As we can observe in this figure, the most striking
difference in comprehension results between the two classes was registered in the open-ended
questions, *Travel guide* task 3 and *The noticeboard* task 3. These tasks (Appendices K and M)
were also described as difficult by *Class One*: "The last questions from *Travel guide* were
difficult because for some of the questions you had to think about several things at the same
time," as one student from *Class One* expressed. Another student from *Class One* remarked:
"Some of the last questions were really difficult, and I had to think more." A majority of the
students from *Class Two* said that although task three for both texts were the most difficult
ones, they found some of these questions quite easy: "It was mostly about my opinion,"

several of them remarked. One student from *Class Two* added: "Even if these questions were the most difficult ones, I found them quite easy. All the answers were in the text in one way or another. I just had to look a bit more to find them." Several students from *Class Two* expressed that they liked these questions: "The most difficult questions were also the most fun ones." One student said the reason for this was that "these questions are open and then I can sort of choose how to answer them." The quantitative data shows that the students in *Class Two* to a fuller extent could justify their opinions and answer questions that required deep thinking. These results indicate that for a text at this difficulty level, pre-reading strategies have a more significant benefit for open-ended questions that require deep thinking or justification than the other task types used in this research project. This is clearly shown in table 3 below:
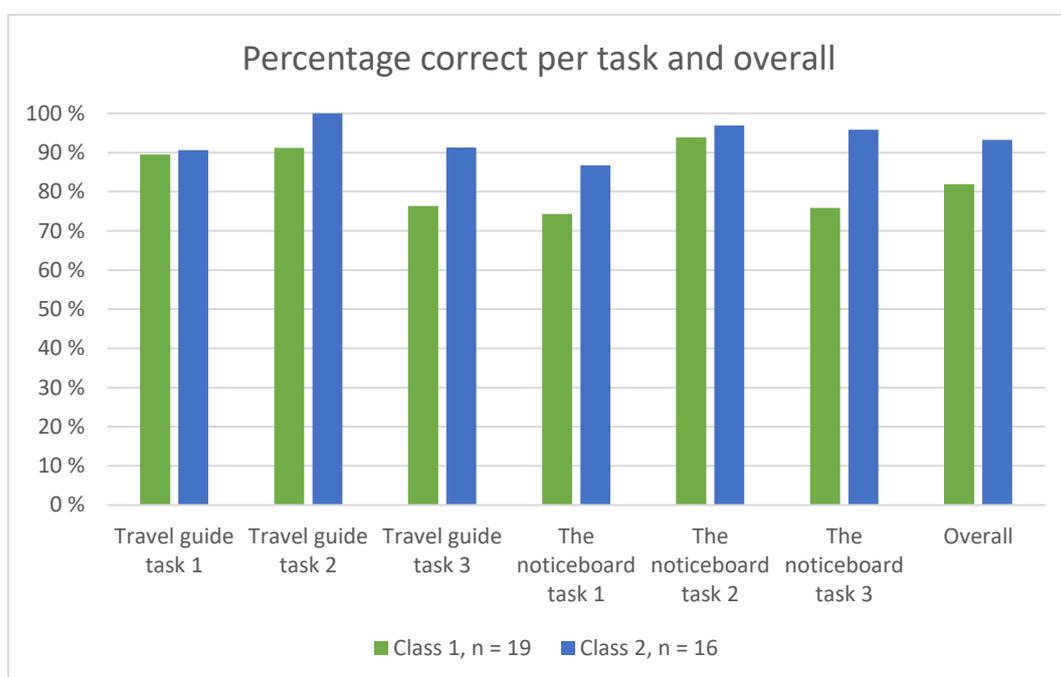

Figure 6: Percentage of correct answers per task per class, including the percentage of correct answers overall

	Travel guide			The noticeboard			
	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Overall
Class 1, n = 19	89 %	91 %	76 %	74 %	94 %	76 %	82 %
Class 2, n = 16	91 %	100 %	91 %	87 %	97 %	96 %	93 %
Difference	1 %	9 %	15 %	12 %	3 %	20 %	11 %

Table 3: Percentage of correct answers per task per class, the percentage of correct answers overall, and the difference in score between Class 1 and Class 2

It is already shown that the mean score for *Class Two* is significantly higher than for *Class One* (Table 2). The difference is mainly the result of replies given to the questions in task 3 from both texts. A t-test was carried out on the comprehension results from *Travel guide* task 3 and *The noticeboard* task 3, as shown in table 4 below.

	Class 1 task 3	*Class 2 task 3*
Mean	0.7608	0.9375
Variance	0.033433	0.004836
Observations	22	22
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	27	
t Stat	-4.23748338	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000117747	
t Critical one-tail	1.703288446	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000235494	
t Critical two-tail	2.051830516	

Table 4: T-test 2, Travel guide task 3 and The noticeboard task 3

As expected, the mean score in *Class Two* is significantly higher than in *Class One*. It can also be noted that the variance in *Class One* is a lot higher than in *Class Two*. Further, for *Class Two*, the variance for task 3 is lower than the overall variance (Table 2). These findings indicate that the use of pre-reading strategies benefits the whole class when comprehension questions require deep thinking. These indications are supported by the interviews, as mentioned above.

The matching task, *Travel guide* task 2, also shows a difference in results between the two classes (Figure 6 and Table 3). *Class One* answered 91% of the questions correctly, whereas *Class Two* answered 100% of the questions correctly. Students from *Class One* said in the interview that they found this task quite difficult and that they had to go back and redo many of the answers to complete the task. Students from *Class Two* said this task was quite easy. The task required the students to understand both words and phrases and to combine information from different parts of the text. Hence, there are reasons to believe that students

from *Class Two* benefitted from both pre-teaching vocabulary and previewing the text. As pointed out by a student in *Class Two*: "There were quite a lot of difficult words in this one (*Travel guide* task 2), but I remembered many of the words from the task I did together with my learning partner." *Class One* had to do the same task without any help of pre-reading strategies, which might be the reason why we see a difference in the results between the two classes in this task.

Figure 6 and Table 3 show that there is very little difference in the percentage of correct replies to *Travel guide* task 1, which was a true/false task, and *The noticeboard* task 2, which was a multiple choice task. When we look at the results from these tasks, we see that the majority of the students in both classes managed to answer the questions correctly and thus making these the easiest tasks in the comprehension material. The level of these tasks is probably the reason why there is such a small difference in comprehension results between the classes. Easy tasks and questions are most likely possible to answer correctly for most students even without the use of pre-reading strategies. For such tasks, pre-reading strategies do not seem to be of the same importance as they do for the more difficult tasks, although the pre-reading might have made the students more motivated. Duke and Martin (2008) indicate that reading strategies are most helpful when reading difficult texts and that students need strategies that can help them comprehend increasingly demanding texts. If students are able to monitor their understanding, they are able to apply the necessary strategies, Duke and Martin claim.

When looking at the quantitative and qualitative data described and discussed above, we see that the student interviews support the comprehension results. Pre-reading strategies seem to be of more significant help for tasks that require deep thinking and tasks that ask students to justify their opinion. The main reason for having students work with pre-reading strategies is to enhance their ability to understand the text they are going to read (Wallace 1988). Use of such strategies will enable the students to understand increasingly demanding texts. Further, the goal is for students to learn how to pay attention to their comprehension and to know what to do if they do not understand (Baker, 2008). If they are able to do so, the students will know which strategies they should apply to which text and for which purpose of reading. Being a competent reader is essential when acquiring information and knowledge from written texts, according to Roe (2006). Further, reading is important for interpersonal relations and to function in a literate society (Saville-Troike, 2012). If teachers of English as a

second language want to help students become competent readers, pre-reading strategies may be a very useful tool.

Further, it is necessary to address the feedback given in the interviews regarding the use of pre-reading strategies at school and at home. In the interviews, the students were explained what pre-reading strategies are, and for *Class Two*, it was explained that what we had done prior to reading was different types of pre-reading strategies. The students were then asked what pre-reading strategies they were used to working with at school and at home. The answers from both student groups were that they hardly ever used pre-reading strategies at school and never used them at home either. "Sometimes our teacher tells us a little bit about what the text is about," one student answered. Roe (2017) points out that it is the school`s responsibility to teach the children to read to learn. Good reading strategies are crucial if we should manage this, she claims. Duke and Martin (2008) also emphasise how important it is that comprehension instruction in school includes strategy instruction. Further, teachers need to teach pre-reading strategies regularly and use the term consciously. This way, they can help students develop the habit of using pre-reading strategies independently, deliberately and consciously (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Strategy instruction might also be transferrable to reading in other languages and other subjects (Charboneau, 2016).

Given the results listed above, the research data indicate that the benefits of pre-reading strategies are larger for open-ended questions than for multiple choice tasks and true or false-tasks. When answering questions that require deep thinking or justification, pre-reading strategies seem to be of great help. The variance observed in the data also indicates that when reading demanding texts, the use of pre-reading strategies has a positive impact on reading comprehension for students who struggle with reading English.

It has already been concluded that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension between the students who used pre-reading strategies and the students who did not. We also see that the advantage of pre-reading strategies seems to be greater for some types of tasks and questions than others, and that pre-reading strategies are particularly helpful for students who normally struggle with reading. Together, these results indicate that it is well worth the effort of spending time on reading instruction in school. Moreover, the goal should be to promote learner independence and a transfer of strategies so that the use of pre-reading strategies becomes part of the student`s pre-reading skills available for independent use. For this to happen, strategies must be practised regularly and for a sustained

time. Variations of strategies for different types of texts and tasks must be modelled to strengthen students` metacognitive awareness (Shih, 1992; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

4.3. Limitations

Some potential weaknesses, or limitations, might have affected the results of this research project. One of these is the sample size. For quantitative data collection, the rule of thumb is to select as large a sample as possible. The more samples, the fewer chances there are for the sample to be different from the population (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data collected for this research project included two classes only, which also impacted the internal validity. As the study was carried out in existing classes, the differences in reading comprehension may be caused by differences in for instance previous teaching; therefore the study does not have internal validity.

Even if the texts and questions were chosen according to the CEFR level and piloted with other students born the same year, it might be that the selected texts are not at the right level for all students in these groups. As there are considerable differences between the students regarding reading skills, the texts and comprehension tasks are most likely too difficult for some and too easy for others.

The classrooms that these students use are rather small, and the students do not have a lot of space between their desks. When the students sit so close together it might have been possible for them to look at each other`s papers. Further, it was easy for the students to see when their classmates were finished. This could have stressed some of them and led to less concentration towards the end of the comprehension tasks. In total, the reading and comprehension tasks took 70 minutes. In both classes, the reading was done towards the end of the day, and some students were most likely tired from the previous lessons that day. In addition, for some of the students, it could have been confusing that there were so many different types of comprehension tasks.

The reading tasks were carried out on paper, and several students in both research classes mentioned that the print was rather small. "When we read on the screen, we can make the letters bigger, and that makes it easier to read", one of the interview students said. The National tests are now being done electronically, and students increasingly read on digital

platforms (Leu et al., 2008). With an increasing number of online reading resources available to students, they are likely to carry out a lot of reading electronically. Further, the interactive, authentic nature of online reading has also changed some students` motivation for reading (Poole & Mokhtari, 2008), which might have had a negative impact on the motivation for the analogue reading that was carried out in the research task.

5. Conclusion

The goal of this Master`s thesis was to research the relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension in the ESL classroom. In order to achieve this, theory regarding the different aspects of reading in general and reading in a second language specifically was consulted. Several studies conclude that being able to read in English is of utmost importance for students` social life, and for future education and work. Further, research articles, as well as theory and official regulations, state that the use of reading strategies is necessary to become a fluent reader who is able to read both for pleasure and to learn. Reading strategies can be divided into three areas: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. The first of these is used to prepare for the reading (Roe, 2017). In the current research project, the aim was to find out if pre-reading strategies could be of help for seventh grade ESL students when reading texts and answering comprehension questions. Two classes participated, but only one of these used pre-reading strategies prior to reading.

A mixed method was used to conduct this research project. Quantitative data from comprehension questions and qualitative data from student interviews were collected at the same time to provide comprehensible and reliable data (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data collected for the research project show a statistically significant difference in the comprehension results between the two classes. *Class Two*, who used pre-reading strategies, had a higher, overall score than *Class One*. The results furthermore indicate that the benefits of using pre-reading strategies are most profound for open-ended questions that require deep thinking or justification, and that pre-reading strategies are particularly helpful for students who normally struggle with reading English. The qualitative data collected through interviews support these results.

The results from the current study cannot be generalised, and further research in the field of reading strategies on a larger number of informants is necessary to understand the relationship between reading strategies and comprehension better. Still, when looking at the results from this research project seen in the light of second language reading theory, contemporary research articles and official regulations, it is tempting to claim that strategy instruction should have priority in the ESL classrooms. Students need practice in choosing the appropriate strategies that fit text, purpose and occasion (Paris et al., 1991). Moreover, reading teachers need to be familiar with a wide range of pre-reading strategies and continue encouraging their students to predict, monitor and re-predict every time they read (Block &

Duffy, 2008). The goal for teachers should be to provide practice that will enable the students to transform strategies into skills that they can use independently later in life. This way, the students will be better prepared for future reading at work, for learning, for everyday life and leisure (Stangeland & Forsth, 2001). If teachers succeed in providing useful strategy instruction, they may help their students towards becoming independent learners who can read with confidence and enjoyment (Paris et al., 1991).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview guide

<u>Interview (five students from each class)</u>:

NB! The aim is to include all the interviewees in each question and encourage everyone to state their opinion. The interview will be held in Norwegian.

Klassen <u>uten</u> førlesingsoppgaver:

Innledningstekst: Nå har dere lest to ulike tekster og svart på spørsmål til disse. (Legger tekstene og oppgavene på bordet foran elevene slik at de husker hvilke tekster og oppgaver det er snakk om). Nå vil jeg stille dere noen spørsmål om oppgavene dere har gjort. Dette er ikke en test, og det er ikke slik at noen svar er mer riktige enn andre. Det er viktig at dere spør dersom dere ikke forstår spørsmålet.

1) Hvilke spørsmål synes du var enklest?

2) Hvilke spørsmål synes du var vanskeligst?

3) Hva kunne vi (læreren eller du selv) ha gjort før vi skulle lese teksten for at den skulle bli enklere å forstå?

4) Aktiviteter som man ofte gjør før man skal lese en ukjent tekst og svare på spørsmål til denne kalles *førlesingsoppgaver* eller *pre-reading tasks.* Vi kan også si at dette er en type lesestrategi – altså en slags *plan* for lesingen. Hvilke førlesingsstrategier er du vant med at dere jobber med på skolen? Hvilke jobber du med hjemme?

5) Hvilke førlesingsstrategier kan du selv bruke en annen gang du skal lese en ukjent tekst?

Klassen <u>med</u> førlesingsoppgaver:

Innledningstekst: Nå har dere lest to ulike tekster og svart på spørsmål til disse. (Legger tekstene og oppgavene på bordet foran elevene slik at de husker hvilke tekster og oppgaver det er snakk om). Nå vil jeg stille dere noen spørsmål om oppgavene dere har gjort. Dette er ikke en test, og det er ikke slik at noen svar er mer riktige enn andre. Det er viktig at dere spør dersom dere ikke forstår spørsmålet.

1) Hvilke spørsmål synes du var enklest?

2) Hvilke spørsmål synes du var vanskeligst?

3) Før dere skulle lese tekster og svare på spørsmål jobbet vi med noen oppgaver. Vi hadde en lek, dere snakket med læringspartner om hva dere visst om temaet, vi så på strukturen i teksten og jobbet med oppgaver hvor dere skulle sortere ord og fraser og matche ord og fraser. Hadde disse oppgavene noen betydning for forståelse av tekstene? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

4) Hvilke av aktivitetene vi gjorde før dere skulle lese og svare på spørsmål mener du var mest nyttig? Hvorfor?

5) Aktivitetene vi gjorde før dere skulle lese og svare på spørsmål kalles *førlesingsoppgaver* eller *pre-reading tasks*. Vi kan også si at dette er en type lesestrategi – altså en slags *plan* for lesingen. Hvilke førlesingsstrategier er du vant med at dere jobber med på skolen? Hvilke jobber du med hjemme?

6) Hvilke av førlesingsstrategiene vi benyttet kan du selv bruke en annen gang du skal lese en ukjent tekst?

7) Vet du om andre strategier som kan være lure å bruke før man starter på en ny og ukjent tekst? Hvilke?

Appendix B

Information from the NSD

NSD Personvern
05.10.2020 12:10

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 809151 er nå vurdert av NSD. Følgende vurdering er gitt: Det er vår vurdering at det ikke skal behandles direkte eller indirekte opplysninger som kan identifisere enkeltpersoner i dette prosjektet, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet den 05.10.2020 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Prosjektet trenger derfor ikke en vurdering fra NSD.

HVA MÅ DU GJØRE DERSOM DU LIKEVEL SKAL BEHANDLE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER?

Dersom prosjektopplegget endres og det likevel blir aktuelt å behandle personopplysninger må du melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Vent på svar før du setter i gang med behandlingen av personopplysninger.

VI AVSLUTTER OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Siden prosjektet ikke behandler personopplysninger avslutter vi all videre oppfølging.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

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

Appendix C

Information letter to parents and caretakers

Informasjon om forskningsprosjektet

«The relationship between pre-reading strategies and reading comprehension in the English as a Second Language classroom»

Dette er informasjon om deltagelse i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan før-lesingsstrategier (altså ulike oppgaver og teknikker man benytter seg av før man leser en tekst) kan påvirke forståelsen av en ukjent faktatekst på engelsk. I dette skrivet gir vi dere informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deres barn.

Formål

Formålet med studien er å undersøke i hvilken grad førlesing i klasserommet kan påvirke leseforståelsen på engelsk. Dette er en del av min masteroppgave ved Høgskolen i Østfold, Master i fremmedspråk i skolen.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskolen i Østfold, Avdeling for økonomi, språk og samfunnsfag er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får ditt barn spørsmål om å delta?

Jeg vil se på hvordan elever på mellomtrinnet kan dra nytte av lærerledede førlesingsoppgaver i forkant av en ukjent engelsk tekst. Det er frivillig å delta, og jeg samler ikke inn eller behandler noen personopplysninger i forbindelse med prosjektet. I og med at det kun er anonyme opplysninger som behandles, skal prosjektet i følge Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (NSD) ikke meldes inn til dem, og det skal heller ikke samles inn samtykke fra foresatte.

Hva innebærer det for barnet ditt å delta?

Barnet ditt deltar i en engelsktime hvor han/hun leser faktatekster på engelsk og deretter svarer skriftlig på spørsmål til disse. Tekstene er på papir, og elevene skal svare ved å skrive/krysse av rett på arket. Det vil ta ca. 60 minutter. Jeg vil også be elevene gi noen tilbakemeldinger om tekstene i et intervju. Det vil være spørsmål knyttet til hvordan elevene opplevde å lese tekstene og gjøre oppgavene knyttet til disse. Jeg tar notater fra intervjuet. Dersom foresatte ønsker det, er det mulig å få se intervjuguiden på forhånd.

Elever som velger å ikke være med på forskningsprosjektet, vil ha undervisning med kontaktlærer i det tidsrommet innsamlingen av data pågår.

Hvor kan vi finne ut mer?

Hvis dere har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med:

- Student ved Høgskolen i Østfold Ingrid Toftemo Arneson (ingrid.arneson@osloskolen.no) eller mine veiledere ved Høgskolen i Østfold Ingebjørg Mellegård (ingebjorg.m.mellegard@hiof.no) og Karin Dahlberg Pettersen (kdp@hiof.no)
- Personvernombud ved Høgskolen i Østfold: Martin Gautestad Jakobsen (martin.g.jakobsen@hiof.no)

Med vennlig hilsen

Ingrid Toftemo Arneson   Karin Dahlberg Pettersen og

                                              Ingebjørg Mellegård

(Masterstudent)   (Veiledere)

Appendix D

Texts, *Travel guide* and *The noticeboard*

LearnEnglish Teens

Reading skills practice: Travel guide – guide

Discover America
California

1 San Francisco
Fisherman's Wharf is a historic marketplace on the seafront with trendy restaurants, shops and street performers. Visit Ghirardelli Square, home to the amazing Ghirardelli Ice Cream and Chocolate Shop, and Pier 39, a lively marketplace with shops, restaurants and music. From here you can take a cruise round the Bay.

3 Alcatraz Island
Once a high-security prison, Alcatraz Island is one of the Bay Area's most interesting tourist attractions. Take the ferry from Pier 41 and visit the dark cell blocks that were home to America's most wanted criminals.

5 Venice Beach
This is where skateboarding started, so you must visit the famous skate park right on the beach. Also watch the bodybuilders at Muscle Beach Gym, which is where Arnold Schwarzenegger started his career.

6 Hollywood
You can stand in the footprints of Johnny Depp at Grauman's Chinese Theatre and then meet his strangely accurate wax model, along with Hugh Jackman, Lance Armstrong, and Brad and Angelina, all at Madame Tussauds Hollywood. Discover how films are made at the working movie studio at Universal Studios Hollywood, where there are also exciting park rides and shows.

2 Golden Gate Bridge
Connecting San Francisco and Marin County, this is the largest suspension bridge in the world and one of the most famous Californian landmarks. As you cross the 4200-ft bridge below the famous orange towers, you'll enjoy awesome views of the entire Bay Area.

4 Santa Cruz
Go to the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum, which is in a lighthouse, and see classic boards including one eaten by a shark – the surfer survived! Next stop, the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk for a ride on the Giant Dipper rollercoaster.

7 Los Angeles
Have you ever wanted to record yourself? Now you can at the fascinating Grammy Museum. You can also learn how to dance like Michael Jackson, and find out about the links between blues and rap.

8 Disneyland
One of the most magical places in the world, Disneyland Park has hundreds of rides such as Space Mountain, Indiana Jones Adventure, Matterhorn and Pirates of the Caribbean. A day in Disneyland is a day you will never forget!

BRITISH COUNCIL

LearnEnglish Teens
Reading skills practice: The noticeboard – notices

Noticeboard

A
Computer problems?
Experienced IT engineer will sort out problems with home computers (PCs and Macs). Phone *'the Computer Doctor'* now for a free estimate -
09651 325693

D
Lost!!!
Small grey cat missing in the Lees Hall area. She's frightened of dogs and teenage boys. If you see her, please, please phone:

09651 324472

We really miss her!

B
DRUMMER WANTED
for recently formed band. Must have ability and experience. We play mostly indie rock. Many songs already written. Some performances in local pubs in Nov/Dec. Send details and sound samples to:
newband@hotmail.com

C
Babysitter wanted
for 2-year-old twins – occasional weekday evenings for up to six hours. Would be suitable for a student with some experience. £4.50 an hour.
Phone Jan on 719 873 466

G
PRESCO
supermarkets
Part-time supermarket work
Evening and weekend hours available. Experience of shelf-stacking an advantage but not essential.

Apply to the store manager

PRESCO, 32 Main Street, Lees Hall

F
Room to let
Two students looking for one more to share house. Own room with single bed, wardrobe, desk and chair. Near university campus and shopping centre. £250 per month + bills (including Wi-Fi). Non-smokers only.

Phone Luka on 719 533 857

E
I zumba
Get fit to the sound of Latin rhythms!
It's easier than you think and loads of fun. Join us TODAY!

Beginners classes:	Monday / Wednesday	11–12 p.m.
Intermediate classes:	Tuesday / Thursday	2–3 p.m.
Advanced classes:	Monday / Wednesday	7–8 p.m.

Come and book your place before 25 September at Lees Sports Centre. (Places are limited.)

Appendix E

E-mail from British Council

Dear Ingrid,

Thank you for contacting the British Council.

The content of our LearnEnglish website is free to be used for educational purposes. As you mentioned, we just ask you not to modify the content and to make sure that you credit British Council.

I hope you find this information useful.

Kind regards,

Rita Castro | Customer Advisor | British Council Customer Service UK
British Council | Bridgewater House | 58 Whitworth Street | Manchester | M1 6BB | UK
T +44 (0)161 957 7755
general.enquiries@britishcouncil.org
www.britishcouncil.org

Appendix F

PowerPoints used in the lesson

Slide 1

A TOURIST IN…?

First hints:
• Beaches
• Big cities
• Eartquakes
• Surfing
• Mountains

• Desert
• Coastline
• San Fransisco
• Los Angeles

Read these hints out loud. The students are not allowed to guess quite yet.

Slide 2

SECOND HINTS

Slide 3

Third hints

Have you guessed it? Please tell your learning partner where you think we are going.

Slide 4

THAT`S RIGHT. WE ARE GOING TO…

What do you know about California? Talk to your learning partner for two minutes.

Slide 5		Sum up what the students know about California. Point out where the state is located.
Slide 6		Show examples of travel guides (also real travel guides that will be put up in front of the classroom). Ask the students to talk to their learning partner. Do they have any travel guides/books at home? Have they ever used these kind of books?
Slide 7		Preview the text (without making it possible to start reading). Point out the main heading, the eight sub-headings, the map with the numbers and the pictures. Explain how important it is to read the headings – this can help you for instance when looking for a certain chapter, and is a good pre-reading strategy.
Slide 8		Explain and show the vocabulary sorting task. The task is handed out on paper. The students work together in pairs.
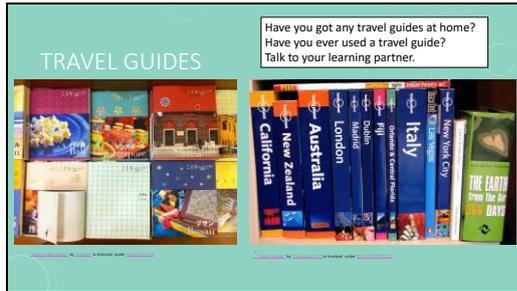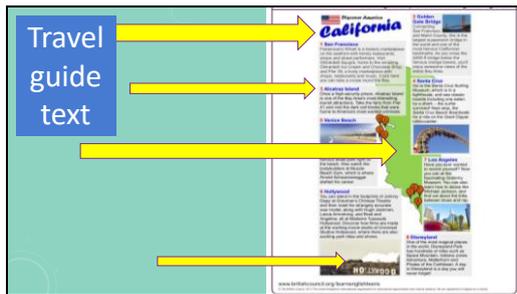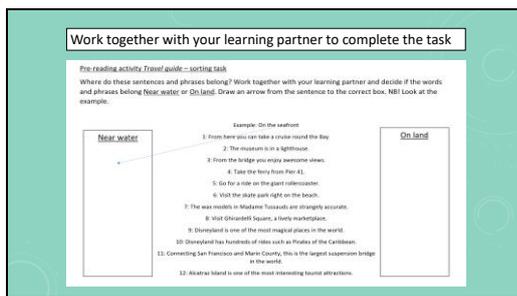
Slide 9

Read the text and answer the questions on the paper

Explain the different comprehension tasks. Then hand out the text (on one piece of paper) and the tasks (on another piece of paper).

Slide 10

Great job, boys and girls!

Hand in the texts and tasks. Take a short break.

Slide 1

You want to sell this sweater.

What can you do?

Talk to your learning partner for two minutes.

Slide 2

TOOLS FOR SELLING USED CLOTHES ETC

https://www.finn.no/bap/browse.html

https://tise.com/

Have you ever used any of these sites?

What can you sell/buy on Finn and Tise?

What are the advantages of selling and buying used clothes etc?

Talk to your learning partner for two minutes.

The students will most likely mention finn.no and tise.com when discussing the questions from the previous slide. Here, they will see what these web sites look like. After the students have discussed the questions, these will be summed up.

Slide 3

> If you want to sell the sweater in your local neighbourhood, it might be possible to put it up somewhere close to where you live

> Red Christmas sweater for sale. NOK 200.
>
> Call 2233445 if you are interested.

> Maybe you could put up a small note on a noticeboard?

Slide 4

> Have you ever seen a board like this? Is there one close to where you live?

> Kundetavle

> What else can we put up on a noticeboard?

Talk to your learning partner – do you know about a noticeboard in your local area? What could we put up on this noticeboard? Examples from a local shop and a noticeboard in the area of the school. Make sure the students understand that a noticeboard can be used for several purposes apart from selling and buying used clothes etc.

Slide 5

> **Old Donald pocket books for sale**
>
> I sell my old collection of Donald pockets (58 in total). Price per book is £1, or you can buy ten books for £8.
>
> Call me on 040 – 6754 (Sabina)
>
> ▪ https://wheelofnames.com/

> **GAME: YOUR NOTICE**
>
> Read your notice carefully and explain to your learning partner what it says.

Show the students one example of a notice. Explain how the sit or stand-game works. Do a test round before the game actually starts to be sure that all students know how the game works.

Slide 6

> **Vocabulary task**
> Work together with your learning partner to complete the task. You need a pencil
>
> Pre-reading activity The noticeboard – matching task
> Which sentences/phrases belong together? Work together with your learning partner and draw an arrow to connect the English text with the Norwegian. NB! Look at the example.

The vocabulary matching task is handed out on a separate piece of paper. The students will complete this task together with their learning partner. Go through the task afterwards, explain how the task can be helpful later.

Slide 7

Slide 8

Show the comprehension tasks before the students start working.

Appendix G

Sorting task, *Travel guide*

Pre-reading activity *Travel guide* – sorting task

Where do these sentences and phrases belong?

Work together with your learning partner and decide if the words and phrases belong Near water or On land. Draw an arrow from the sentence to the correct box.

NB! Look at the example.

Example: On the seafront

Near water		On land

1: From here you can take a cruise round the Bay.

2: The museum is in a lighthouse.

3: From the bridge you enjoy awesome views.

4: Take the ferry from Pier 41.

5: Go for a ride on the giant rollercoaster.

6: Visit the skate park right on the beach.

7: The wax models in Madame Tussauds are strangely accurate.

8: Visit Ghirardelli Square, a lively marketplace.

9: Disneyland is one of the most magical places in the world.

10: Disneyland has hundreds of rides such as Pirates of the Caribbean.

11: Connecting San Francisco and Marin County, this is the largest suspension bridge in the world.

12: Alcatraz Island is one of the most interesting tourist attractions.

Appendix H

Notices for *The noticeboard* game

A	B
# Kittens for sale We have five cute kittens (one white, two black and two grey) for sale. Contact kitty@gmaill.com for more information.	# Old Donald pocket books for sale I sell my old collection of Donald pockets (58 in total). Price per book is £1, or you can buy ten books for £8. Call me on 040 – 6754 (Sabina)
C	D
### Part-time library work *Do you love books?* Would you like to work in the city library? We need extra help Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. £9 an hour. Contact **Lisa** in the library office if you are interested.	HAVE FUN AT KINGSTON BOOTCAMP HARD, SOCIAL AND FUN EXERCISES AT THE LAWN OUTSIDE KINGSTON COMMUNITY HALL EVERY TUESDAY FROM 20.00 TO 21.00. £65 FOR THREE MONTHS. CONTACT JOSHUA ON E-MAIL (JOSH@YAHOOT.COM) OR PHONE (040 – 2241)
E	F
### Need help walking your dog? We are two boys who love dogs, but don`t have our own. We can help you walk your dog for only £8 per hour. We are polite, fit and good with dogs. Call Matt (040 – 7463) or Theo (040 – 0989)	### Old chairs for sale 3 green chairs 4 blue chairs 1 white chair Price per chair: £20 Contact Thomas (thomas@mmii.uk) if you are interested. I can also send you pictures of the chairs.

G

Learn how to play the guitar

Beginner, intermediate or advanced? I can help you become a better guitar player.

Send me a text message if you are interested.
Molly (040 – 6767)

H

Tennis classes

New classes starting in week 45. Sign up on our webpage or contact Sam or Lily for more information.

www.tennis.sum.com

tennis.sum@mootoo.co.uk

Appendix I

Matching task, *The noticeboard*

Pre-reading activity *The noticeboard* – matching task

Which sentences/phrases belong together? Work together with your learning partner and draw an arrow to connect the English text with the Norwegian. NB! Look at the example.

Example: Evening and weekend hours available   Liten, grå katt forsvunnet.

1: The engineer will sort out problems with your computer.   Rom til leie.

2: Call for a free estimate.   Vil være passende.

3: Drummer wanted for recently formed band.   Kvelds- og helgetimer tilgjengelig.

4: Babysitter wanted on occasional weekday evenings.   Deltidsjobb i supermarked.

5: Would be suitable.   Ring for et gratis prisoverslag.

6: Small, grey cat missing.   Trommeslager ønskes til nylig oppstartet band.

7: Get fit to the sound of Latin rhythms.   Det er enklere enn du tror.

8: It is easier than you think.   Barnevakt ønskes på sporadiske kvelder i ukedagene.

9: Room to let.   Ingeniøren kan fikse problemer på datamaskinen din.

10: Part-time supermarket work.   Bli sprek til lyden av latinske rytmer.

Appendix J

Comprehension tasks, *Travel guide*

1. Check your understanding: true or false
Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

1.	Fisherman's Wharf, Ghirardelli Square and Pier 39 are all in San Francisco.	*True*	*False*
2.	The Golden Gate Bridge is the shortest suspension bridge in the world.	*True*	*False*
3.	Alcatraz is still a prison today.	*True*	*False*
4.	You can see a surfboard damaged in a shark attack in the museum in Santa Cruz.	*True*	*False*
5.	Ice skating is a popular activity on Venice Beach.	*True*	*False*
6.	You can meet real film stars at Madame Tussauds in Hollywood.	*True*	*False*
7.	The Grammy Museum in Los Angeles is dedicated to music and dance.	*True*	*False*
8.	Space Mountain is the name of one of the hotels in Disneyland.	*True*	*False*

2. Check your understanding: matching
Match the person with the place they would enjoy most. Write a recommendation for them in the box.

Santa Cruz Surfing Museum	San Francisco	Golden Gate Bridge
Madame Tussauds Hollywood	Grammy Museum	Alcatraz Island

		Recommended place to visit
1.	'I love ferry rides. They're so much fun. I also like visiting places with an interesting and unusual history.'	…………………………..
2.	'I'd love to have my photo taken with all my favourite film stars!'	…………………………..
3.	'I really want to go on some exciting rides. I've just taken up surfing too so I'd like to learn more about that.'	…………………………..
4.	'I'm a keen photographer so I want to go to the place with the best views.'	…………………………..
5.	'When I'm on holiday, two things are most important for me: great shopping and great food.'	…………………………..
6.	'I'm a music lover and my dream is to record a song.'	…………………………..

Discussion
Which place in California would you like to visit?

Appendix K

Additional tasks, *Travel guide*

3: Check your understanding

Write a short answer for each question.

Prøv så godt du kan å svare på spørsmålene under. Det går helt fint om du ikke staver de engelske ordene riktig.

1. From which pier can you take the ferry to Alcatraz Island? _____

2. In what kind of building is the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum located? _____

3. How long is Golden Gate Bridge? _____

4. Where is Muscle Beach Gym located? _____

5. Which of the attractions and places mentioned are located close to Los Angeles? _____

_____

6. Why would music lovers choose the Los Angeles area over the Bay area? _____

_____

7. How can a travel guide be useful for travellers? _____

_____

8. Who do you think is most likely to pick up a travel guide? _____

_____

9. Which of the places sound most tempting to you? Why? _____

_____

_____

10. What tools (other than a travel guide) could you use if you wanted to find more information about the places you want to visit? _____

_____

Appendix L

Comprehension tasks *The noticeboard*

1. Check your understanding: true or false
Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

1.	The band is looking for a drummer to play classical music.	*True*	*False*
2.	The babysitter will be required to work on weekends only.	*True*	*False*
3.	There are no Zumba classes on Friday.	*True*	*False*
4.	The room to let is unfurnished.	*True*	*False*
5.	The job at the supermarket requires some experience.	*True*	*False*
6.	You can book places on a Zumba course any time in September or October.	*True*	*False*
7.	The lost cat is scared of some other animals and people.	*True*	*False*
8.	The computer doctor only fixes problems with PCs.	*True*	*False*

2. Check your understanding: multiple choice
Circle the best word to complete these sentences.

1. In which notice can you earn just under £5.00 an hour?

   a. notice A   b. notice B   c. notice C

2. In which notice can you find somewhere to live?

   a. notice B   b. notice C   c. notice F

3. In which notice can you get help installing some new software?

   a. notice A   b. notice E   c. notice G

4. In which notice can you get fit?

   a. notice D   b. notice E   c. notice F

5. In which notice can you find part-time work on Saturday, Sunday and some weekday evenings?

   a. notice E   b. notice F   c. notice G

6. In which notice should you reserve a place before the end of September?

   a. notice D   b. notice E   c. notice F

BRITISH COUNCIL

Learn**English** Teens

3. Check your understanding: write the answers
Answer the questions using information from the noticeboard.

1. What number should you call if you find a grey cat? _____

2. How many children will the babysitter have to look after? _____

3. Who should you contact if you want to work in the supermarket? (*two words*) the _____

4. When are the classes for people who are new to Zumba? _____

5. Where did the cat go missing? (*three words*) in the _____

6. Who should you call if you want to rent the room? (*one word*) _____

7. Where do the band have some performances booked? (*two words*) in _____

8. Who should you call if you want to work as a babysitter? (*one word*) _____

Appendix M

Additional questions, *The noticeboard*

Check your understanding

The noticeboard

Prøv så godt du kan å svare på spørsmålene under. Det går fint om du ikke staver de engelske ordene riktig. Det er viktig at du begrunner svaret ditt (at du forklarer *hvorfor* du mener det du gjør).

9.   Do you think a noticeboard is a good way of reaching out to people? Why? Why not?

_____

_____

10.   Where could the noticeboard in the picture be? Why? _____

_____

11.   Which age group do you think most of the notices in the picture aim for? Why? _____

_____

12.   Your parents want to sell four used chairs. Would this be a good place to put up their notice? Why? Why not? _____

_____

Reflection note

When I started planning the topic for this Master`s thesis, reading skills quickly came to mind. Through teaching English as a second language for the past 21 years, I have seen the joy reading can bring, but also the frustration. I have seen how difficult it can be to comprehend a text in a second language, but also how much that can be learned from reading. Further, I have witnessed the endless possibilities that open up when students are able to read the novels, recipes and comics they want in English. With these experiences in mind, I wanted to learn more about reading strategies and try to find out what could be done at school to help students towards becoming better readers who are able to use reading to learn, but who also enjoy reading.

I was curious to look at pre-reading strategies, and decided to research the relationship between these strategies and reading comprehension. When looking into the theories necessary to provide a thorough background for the thesis, I quickly realised that the material was so vast, I had to narrow my searches down. This was difficult as there were so many interesting theories and excellent books and articles available on the topic.

Another part of the research project that I found difficult, was analysing and interpreting the quantitative and qualitative data. This was a rather new field for me, and the learning curve has been steep. Having said that, I found this part of the thesis really interesting, and it was great to see the results that came out of the research material. I expected that the comprehension results would be better for the class who worked with pre-reading strategies prior to reading and answering comprehension questions, but I was still pleasantly surprised by how significant the difference was. Also, I found it interesting to see the benefits for students who struggle with reading English and the benefits for tasks that require deep thinking or justification.

I am really happy that I decided to write about this topic as I have found it both interesting and relevant for the job I am doing. I am also pleased that I took the time to try the texts and tasks out with a student group in another school, but I wish I could have done the research over again with a larger number of students and with a more thorough student interview.

I have learned a lot through writing this Master`s thesis, both about reading theory and reading strategies, and about the process of writing a paper such as this one. What I have learned about the use of pre-reading strategies is something I will make use of not only when

teaching English, but in all lessons that include reading. This new knowledge has already had an impact on how I prepare the students in my class before they start reading a text. When they use pre-reading strategies, they seem to be much better prepared, and hence comprehend more.