



Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences

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Master's thesis

**Validity in Measuring Intercultural Competence at the  
Written Exam in English**

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## Norsk sammendrag

I denne masteroppgaven har jeg utforsket validiteten i å måle elevers interkulturelle kompetanse på vg1 skriftlig eksamen i engelsk. For å gjennomføre dette så analyserte jeg viktige styringsdokumenter og eksamensdokumenter i norsk utdanning. Styringsdokumentene som jeg har vurdert er læreplanene ENG1-03 og ENG01-04 og den nye Overordnet Del. Eksamensdokumentene er eksamensspørsmålene og forberedelsedelen for vår 2019, og eksamensveiledningen for 2019. Jeg har også gjennomført semistrukturerte intervjuer med tre engelsklærere på vg1 for å utforske læreres forståelse av interkulturell kompetanse og deres meninger om dens rolle i norsk utdanning, klasseromsaktiviteter og vurdering.

Dokumentanalysen viser at interkulturell kompetanse er bare nevnt én gang i samtlige styringsdokumentene. Det ser også ut til å være mangel på sammenheng i hvordan interkulturell kompetanse er promotert i styringsdokumentene og eksamensveiledningen. Fremtredelsen av perspektiver av interkulturell kompetanse i den nye Overordnet Del og læreplanen ENG01-04 antyder derimot til at det er et økt fokus på interkulturell kompetanse i de nye læreplanene. Dette kan potensielt påvirke validitet i vurdering av interkulturell kompetanse fordi lærere vil ha tilgang til dokumenter hvor konseptet er mer tydelig fremtredende.

Intervjuene med lærere tyder på at det er vanskelig å sikre validitet i måle elevers interkulturelle kompetanse på eksamen fordi det er mangel på eksplisitt fokus i styringsdokumentene og eksamensdokumentene. De mener også at eksamen har flere hensikter og at målingen av elevers interkulturelle kompetanse ikke nødvendigvis er første prioritet.

Jeg diskuterer utfordringene for lærere i å sikre validitet i vurderingen av elevers interkulturelle kompetanse, og mangelen på sammenheng i hvordan interkulturell kompetanse blir promotert, understreket og fremmet i de forskjellige styringsdokumentene og eksamensdokumentene. Jeg har inkludert Overordnet Del og den nye ENG01-04 læreplanen i engelsk for å ha et fremtidsrettet perspektiv i min masteroppgave. Masteroppgaven er et bidrag til den pågående pedagogiske diskusjonen angående implementeringen av de nye læreplanene.

## **Engelsk sammendrag (abstract)**

In this thesis I have explored the validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence at the vg1 English written exam. To do this I analysed important steering documents and exam documents in Norwegian education. The steering documents that I have considered are the ENG1-03 and ENG01-04 subject curricula and the 2017 Core Curriculum. The exam documents are the spring 2019 exam questions and preparation booklet, and the examination guide for 2019. I have also conducted semi-structured interviews with three vg1 English teachers to inquire into teachers' understanding of intercultural competence, and their beliefs on its role in Norwegian education, classroom implementation and assessment.

The document analysis shows that intercultural competence is only mentioned once in all of the steering documents. There also seems to be a lack of coherence between the advocacy of intercultural competence in the steering documents and the examination guide. However, the prominence of perspectives of intercultural competence in the 2017 Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 suggest that there is a heightened focus on intercultural competence in the new curricula. This can potentially affect the assessment validity of intercultural competence as teachers will have access to documents where the concept is more coherently emphasized.

The interviews with teachers indicate that it is difficult to ensure validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence at the exam because there is a lack of explicit focus in the steering documents and exam documents. They also state that the exam has multiple purposes, and that measuring pupils' intercultural competence is not necessarily the priority.

I discuss the difficulty for teachers in ensuring validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence, and the lack of coherence in how intercultural competence is advocated, emphasized and expressed in the various steering documents and exam documents. I have included the 2017 Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum to have a forward-looking perspective in my thesis. The thesis is a contribution to the on-going pedagogic discussion regarding the implementation of the new curricula.

## 1. Introduction

The main aim for this thesis is to investigate validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence (ICC) at the final summative written exam in English. The final exam in a subject is an important part of assessment, and often an important part of pupils' academic lives. The exam is the final summative assessment in a subject, where the pupils will be assessed on the culmination of the pupils' knowledge and their ability to convey this knowledge. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDET) emphasises the importance and purpose of the exam by stating that "the candidate will be given the opportunity to show his/her competence in accordance with the curriculum, and the grade will provide information about the candidate's individual competence in the subject, as expressed on the exam day" "Kandidaten skal få anledning til å vise sin kompetanse i samsvar med læreplanen, og eksamenskarakteren skal gi informasjon om kandidatens individuelle kompetanse i faget, slik den ble uttrykt på eksamensdagen" (NDET, 2017). I will use a previous written exam as an example in this thesis. The exam that I am using is the written English common core subject in upper secondary school exam for spring 2019. Assessing ICC requires the examiners to have an in-depth understanding of what ICC is and it corresponds with the existing steering documents and assessment criteria. It also means that teachers need to have a considerate understanding of what ICC is and how to sufficiently implement it in classroom activities. Norwegian education is also in a transformational situation as there are new curriculums to be implemented in 2020. I am interested to know how ICC is understood and as such assessed. Furthermore, I intend to examine if the selection of these aspect is based on clear and concrete national guidelines and criteria, or an culmination of teachers' own professional judgement and individual understanding of ICC.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The relevant previous research on ICC has focused either on teachers' beliefs on the concept and its didactical implementation, or the importance of formative practices to ensure valid assessment of ICC. Teachers' roles are now especially important because they are taking part in constructing the new curriculums through feedback. Their professional judgement is a crucial factor in understanding perspectives of ICC and consolidating the up-coming curriculums into productive and valid classroom activities. Previous research on teachers' understandings of ICC show that ICC is perceived as culture learning with both practical and theoretical competencies. Previous research on the assessment of ICC, indicates that



researchers and teachers alike emphasize the importance of formative assessment when assessing ICC (Fenner, 2005; Fantini, 2009; Deardorff, 2009). However, there is a lack of studies who take the current Norwegian exam format into consideration when researching the relation between teachers' understanding of ICC and summative assessment. This is an indication that there needs to be more research on how the validity of assessing pupils' ICC is affected by the current exam format. Furthermore, a study has argued that "there is an overall lack of an assessment culture, competence and practice in [Norwegian] schools and in teacher education" (Baird, Hopfenbeck, Newton, Stobart & Steen-Utheim, 2014, p. 15). This gives me an indication that there needs to be more research on how the current exam format and relevant documents for assessment are problematizing the assessment of ICC.

The overarching for this thesis is to explore the challenges of validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the final written exam in English. I will explore previous research, teachers' experience with and understandings of ICC and assessment, and relevant steering documents and exam documents. My first research question is "to what extent do the exam questions and assessment criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC?". The second part of the research will focus on: "teachers' beliefs and understanding of ICC, the exam questions and assessment".

The first research question will primarily be a document analysis of relevant steering documents and exam documents. These documents are the 2017 Core Curriculum, the ENG1-03 and ENG01-04 subject curriculums, the examination guide for 2019, the preparation booklet and the exam document with the exam questions. I will analyse the validity in definition of ICC across these documents. I will also analyse how the criteria ensure the validity in measuring such competence. The second research question will be a combination of analysis of previous research on teachers' beliefs, and also qualitative interviews with teachers. Teachers' beliefs and understanding are important because their professional judgement has effect on classroom activities, assessment and the new curriculums. There is a difference between *beliefs* and *understanding* in this thesis. Teachers' *understanding* is understood as the ability "to know the meaning of something... [or] knowledge about a subject, situation etc. or about how something works" (Understand, 2013). Their understanding will therefore be their knowledge about ICC and related perspectives. Their understanding is related to how they interpret the concept. Teachers' *beliefs* are understood as "individual mental constructs, which are subjectively true for the person in question (Skott, 2015, p. 18). Belief is therefore related to their opinion on certain topics. For example, when

teachers are asked for their opinion on how to implement ICC into classroom activities, I will regard their answers as their beliefs. Skott (2015) states that “subjective truth means that beliefs are characterized by a considerable degree of conviction, but also that the individual may accept a different position as reasonable and intelligent” (Skott, 2015, p. 18). Beliefs will be used when they evaluate questions regarding their opinion on the exam questions, the exam and assessment. There is therefore a distinction between the two terms. However, teachers’ understanding and beliefs are often discussed together in this thesis.

## 1.2 Thesis Structure

In this chapter I will justify the focus of this thesis, and emphasize the importance of ICC, the preparation booklet and the 2017 Core Curriculum. Chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework for the thesis where I present established understandings and approaches to ICC, validity and teachers’ beliefs by researchers in the field of study. It is important to have an overview of these concepts to have a fuller understanding of the purpose and intention of this thesis. Chapter 3 is a document analysis where I examine the presence of perspectives of ICC in various steering documents, and the validity of measuring ICC in assessment criteria and exam questions. In chapter 4, I present previous research on ICC in education, and teachers’ beliefs on ICC and assessment. I will give an overview of the methods used in this thesis in chapter 5. The findings from my interviews with teachers are presented in chapter 6. In chapter 7 I discuss my findings in the light of the previous research and conceptual framework. My concluding remarks are in chapter 8.

## 1.3 Intercultural Competence and the Preparation Booklet

I have to justify certain assumptions. My aim for this thesis is to examine the validity in measuring pupils’ ICC at the final exam. This aim is therefore conceived on the presumption that skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC are meant to be assessed at the final exam. Dypedahl and Bøhn state that the ENG1-03 subject curriculum “does not clarify what intercultural learning is and how intercultural competence can be achieved” (2018, p. 160). Upon further investigation, ICC is not mentioned in the examination guide, the preparation booklet or in the exam questions either. This begs the question; how do I make the assumption that pupils’ ability to display perspectives of ICC are measured at the final exam? Firstly, I would argue that ICC is a highly intricate concept with various understandings, approaches

and perspectives established over decades of vigorous research. Magne Dypedahl defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate appropriately with people who have different mindsets and/or different communication styles” (2017, cited in Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2018, p. 14). Further research shows that ICC encompassed more complex attitudinal perspectives such as tolerance, diversity, identity development and discussion on international politics. I will argue that all the perspectives I just mentioned are important aspects of Norwegian education and advocated in steering documents. Although ICC as a term is not mentioned in any of the documents mentioned above, I argue that all of these perspectives of ICC are advocated and encouraged in Norwegian education through steering documents. There is a distinction between *ICC* and *perspectives of ICC*. I will use ICC when I discuss literature and past research that explicitly mention ICC. I will use ‘perspectives of ICC’ when discussing perspectives that are related, but not explicitly described as ICC.

How does this relate to the written English exam for spring 2019? I will argue that the perspectives on ICC I mention above are reflected in texts in the preparation booklet for the spring 2019 exam. I make the argument that the texts concern perspectives of ICC such as identity development, scrutiny of established cultural norms, activism in international politics and diversity. Although neither of the relevant exam documents mention ICC, I will argue that the topic and the texts in preparation booklet reflect perspectives of ICC. This makes the preparation booklet the most significant document in the entire thesis. It is the document that encouraged me to write my thesis on ICC and the exam. The preparation booklet does not measure or promote ICC in any way because it is only a document intended to provide pupils with the topic of the exam and contextual texts. However, I argue that the preparation booklet facilitates the opportunity for pupils to apply skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC when answering the exam questions.

#### 1.4 The 2017 Core Curriculum

I have chosen to focus on the 2017 Core Curriculum because of various reasons. Firstly, I do argue that schools have worked extensively with the new curriculum for several years. In my experience as a teacher student at several lower and upper secondary schools, there has been a focus on the new curriculum. Since 2017, I have participated in numerous meetings discussing the pedagogical and didactical consequences and possibilities of the new curriculum with teachers in groups. The new curriculum has also been important to me personally as a teacher student. The class of 2020 at Inland Norway University has been in a

situation where we have known for a long time that the new curriculum would be implemented right after our graduation. Therefore, we have had an extensive focus on the new curriculum in class. We have always had a forward-looking perspective on how to implement it into our teaching practice because we are the first class of 5-year lecture students that will officially use the new curriculum in their first year of teaching. I intend to have the same forward-looking perspective in my thesis. I want this thesis to be part of the on-going pedagogical discussion on the implementation of the new curriculum. Consequently, I have chosen not to put much emphasis on exploring older curriculums when analysing the 2019 written English exam. I do see much more pedagogical potential and relevancy in evaluating the exam in the light of the new curriculum.

Kommunesektorens Organisasjon (KS) states that “Norwegian education needs a new core curriculum that, to a larger degree, is adapted to contemporary society and current objects clause and subject curriculums” “Norsk skole trenger en ny generell del som i større grad er tilpasset dagens samfunn og nåværende formålsparagraf og læreplaner” (KS, 2017, my translation). The new Core Curriculum is therefore intended to reflect contemporary educational purposes and incentives. I would argue that the perspectives on ICC that are advocated and presented in the preparation booklet are more accurately reflected and presented in the new Core Curriculum. I would also argue that if a teacher were to assess pupils’ abilities that constitute ICC, the new Core Curriculum would provide a much more relevant and a better indication to what those abilities are. The new Core Curriculum gives an indication to of the development of ICC in Norwegian education. This comparison will evaluate to what extent the exam questions and assessment criteria enable validity in measuring the newly established perspectives on ICC in the new curriculum.

## 1.5 Background

It was an article by Astrid Haugestad and Desmond McGarrighan that sparked my interest in writing a thesis on the final exam. In this article, the researchers try to illuminate why English pupils failed the written exam of spring 2017 by evaluating examiners’ explanations. The empirical evidence shows that the main reason for pupils failing was not issues with grammar, but rather of ‘relevance’. 85% of the failed responses were responses that displayed deficient or irrelevant content. Only 15% of the failed responses had exclusively linguistic issues such as deficient grammar skills (Haugestad & McGarrighan, 2018). Therefore, it is evident that coherent display of relevant content is important at the exam.

This thesis is researching validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. I have this focus because I believe it is a very important aspect of assessment. NDETs continual work with *Fagfornyelsen* shows that there are disagreements on what competences pupils are supposed to display at the exam. NDET (2019a) states:

There are disagreements on whether it is clear *what* competence the pupils are to display at the exam. Half of school administrators believe it is very clear, while the other half say that it is a bit unclear.

Det er...uenighet om det er klart *hvilken* kompetanse elevene skal vise til eksamen. Halvparten av skolelederne mener at det er helt klart, mens den andre halvparten svarer at det er noe uklart.

(5.1 forholdet med eksamen og læreplanen, my translation, italicization in original)

This is an issue with validity because I would argue that a clear statement of relevant competences is essential for validity in assessment. It is interesting to see that there is such a significant discrepancy in assessment criteria. It is also clear that assessment validity in Norwegian education is a topic that should be continually researched. I therefore believe that it is necessary to examine the relevant exam documents and steering documents and evaluate whether competences that can be related to ICC are clearly stated. This is also an indication that there should be supplementary research on teachers' beliefs on what competences that pupils are to display at the exam. The development with *Fagfornyelsen* also illuminate some issues regarding competence and validity. The NDET seems to anticipate that there will be issues regarding criteria and assessment with the implementation of the new curricula. NDET (2019a) states that:

Understanding of the curriculum, including the concept of competence, is a prerequisite to develop and assess the exam in accordance with the subject curriculums...there might be a lack of competence, cooperation, coherent interpretation and planning in the education sector considering the validity of assessment in the classroom. Given that the concept of competence is even more complex in *Fagfornyelsen* than in the Knowledge Promotion, one can conclude that the challenges will probably increase.

Læreplanforståelse inkludert kompetansebegrepet er en forutsetning for å utvikle og vurdere eksamen i samsvar med læreplanverket i fag...det kan være svak / mangel på kompetanse, samarbeid, fortolkningsfellesskap og planlegging i skolesektoren når det gjelder validitet i den løpende vurderingen i klasserommet...Gitt at fagfornyelsens kompetansebegrep er enda mer komplekst enn Kunnskapsløftets kompetansebegrep, kan det konkluderes at utfordringene sannsynligvis vil øke.

(5.2 Læreplanforståelse i endring).

This statement shows that there are issues with assessing the role of the exam in Norwegian education because there is a lack of coherence in identifying the competences relevant for assessment. This is also a reason to why I want to focus on the new Core Curriculum because there is here explicit concern regarding validity in defining competences and assessment.

In this thesis I want to examine teachers' understanding of ICC, its implication on learning and assessment, and assessment criteria. Henrik Bøhn did a study examining teachers' grading behaviours and their professional judgements of competence aspects in an oral English examination at the upper secondary level in Norway. Naturally, there will be certain differences between an oral and written exam, such as the focus on pronunciation. However, there are certain key elements one can take from his study. Firstly, there are a considerable amount of studies which show a significant rater variability. He argues that past researchers have divided assessors into different 'rater types', "depending on the extent to which they focused on content, correctness, comprehensibility, description, completeness or overall performance" (Bøhn, 2016, p. 31). There is therefore a question of assessment validity in oral exams, that one can assume is also prevalent at written exams. The findings in this study illuminated the importance of teachers' own beliefs and professional judgement in teaching and assessment. Bøhn argues that there are many factors that could explain this discrepancy, including professional background, rating experience, test tasks, and rating training (2016, p. 31). These findings encouraged me to inquire with teachers to gain a fuller understanding of teachers' beliefs in reference to ICC and the exam. A study by Baird & Hopfenbeck, et al. (2014) also emphasise the importance of teachers' professional understanding when it comes to assessment. They state that "several authors have written about the importance of addressing teachers' and students' beliefs on assessment and learning as a relevant part of the change management implementation process of formative assessment strategies" (Baird & Hopfenbeck, et al., 2014, p. 50). It became apparent to me that my thesis would benefit from considering teachers' beliefs on assessment of ICC at the exam. However, the recent revisions and discussions regarding the new Core Curriculum prompted me to also consider teachers' beliefs when analysing the common understanding of ICC in the steering documents. A consultative group from my institution, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, did submit suggestions for revision of the new subject curriculum in 2019. They did actually emphasize the importance of perspectives that can be connected to ICC. They (NDET, 2019b) stated regarding the content of section *The Subject's Relevancy and Central Values*:

In the current draft it says 'English is a language subject'. We believe it should be changed to 'English is a language and bildung subject' to properly maintain the focus on literature, culture and *multilingual identity* in the English subject, and clarify how language, culture and literature are connected to prepare pupils for *cross-cultural communication* in English. This will connect the subject's relevancy closer to the section on values and principles, because the *perspective of bildung* is important to work towards these values and principles. Additionally, the sentence which argues that 'the English subject prepares the pupils for an education and working environments that have standards in English-language competence in reading, writing and oral communication' should also include *competence in intercultural understanding*.

I nåværende utkast står det at "Engelsk er et språkfag". Vi mener det bør endres til "Engelsk er et språk- og dannelsesfag" for å bedre ivareta fokuset på litteratur, kultur og flerspråklig identitet i faget, samt tydeliggjøre hvordan språk, kultur og litteratur er knyttet sammen for å forberede elevene på engelskspråklig kommunikasjon på tvers av kulturer. Dette vil knytte fagets relevans tettere til delen som omhandler verdier og prinsipper, som vi synes er god, siden dannelsesperspektivet er viktig for å jobbe mot disse verdiene og prinsippene. Videre bør setningen som argumenterer for at "engelskfaget forbereder elevene på en utdanning og et arbeidsliv som stiller krav til engelskspråklig kompetanse i lesing, skriving og muntlig kommunikasjon" også inkludere kompetanse i interkulturell forståelse.

(*Subject Curriculum in English*, Question 18, my translation, my italicization)

I make the argument that this an example of how teacher have a comprehensive and elaborate understanding of perspectives of ICC. It seems clear that teachers' beliefs are important when considering validity in assessment and understanding of ICC, because they have valuable knowledge and do have the opportunity to affect the expression of ICC in the steering documents.

## 1.6 Method

For this thesis I have conducted qualitative interview with three teachers that work and have experience with the English written exam for vg1 pupils. I conducted semi-structured interviews with my participatory teachers. DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) define this form of interview as an interactive dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, where the interviewer has prepared a set of open-ended questions which can create other questions or a discussion on the set topic (p. 315). I constructed an informal interview guide with five overarching questions that concerns their understanding of ICC, beliefs on assessment, and the exam format (See appendix 1). The questions were to function as the starting point to a conversation on their thoughts and perceptions of ICC and classroom implementation, past experiences with assessment of exam papers, and assessment of pupils' ICC. I examined the

teachers understanding of ICC in relation to the preparation booklet and the exam questions. I believe that the interviews give insight into how teachers balance classroom teaching, assessment criteria and their own professional understanding of key terms and concepts. The interviews were not recorded, and my findings are based notes that I took during the interviews.

The other method that I have employed in this thesis is document analysis. I employed document analysis to examine the first sub-research question. I did this to analyse how perspectives of ICC are reflected and presented in relevant documents such as the 2017 Core Curriculum, the subject curriculums ENG1-03 and ENG01-04 and the preparation booklet. The steering documents provided insight into how ICC is advocated in Norwegian education. I argue that the presence of perspectives of ICC in the texts in the preparation booklet facilitate the opportunity for pupils to display ICC. I also examined the relevant exam documents, including the examination guide and exam questions. The analysis of the exam documents gave me an indication on how validity is ensured in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam.

I have also done extensive research into the conceptual understanding of ICC in the field of study, and previous research relevant to my research questions. The purpose of the conceptual framework was to show that ICC is complex, and that there are several important perspectives of ICC. The conceptual framework also provided me with a conceptual understanding that I could compare to the relevant documents. The purpose of the previous research was to explore teachers' understanding of ICC, and their beliefs on the exam format and assessment. Both the literature review and previous research gives me the opportunity to discuss my research questions in light of insightful information.



## **2. Conceptual Framework**

In section 2.1 I explore previous literature to gain an overview of the various established understandings of ICC. I evaluate different aspects of ICC through the perspectives of researchers in the field of study. I do this because I need to have a substantial understanding of ICC if I am to address my research questions. In section 2.2 I address theoretical understandings of validity and establish the aspects of validity that I focus on in my thesis. In section 2.3 I establish theoretical understandings of the importance of teachers' beliefs in education and research.

### **2.1 Literature review: Intercultural Competence**

This section is a literature review where I examine previous research on ICC. I do this to gain an understanding of how previous literature define ICC and what it says about what needs to be in place for it to be promoted. This literature review will provide the conceptual framework used when examining the steering documents in later sections. I do this to establish a more concise understanding of ICC in a Norwegian educational context. I also show that there are multiple established aspects of ICC that are important. ICC is a conceptual hypernym that encompasses several important aspects. In the section I will firstly establish some of the general understandings on ICC and the interculturally competent individual. Secondly, I present research on the importance of cultural contexts in cross-cultural interactions. 'Cultural contexts' as a concept is similar to diversity and emphasize the importance of considering a diverse variety of cultural expressions to gain a fuller understanding of a given subject. Thirdly, I explore research on individual agency in relation to ICC. I Lastly, I show research discussing the role of educational institutions and teachers in the promotion of ICC. I focus on these aspects because they are prevalent in the literature, and important aspects on ICC. However, I have also chosen these aspects because I argue that they are related to the topic addressed at the exam.

#### **2.1.1 General Understandings of Intercultural Competence**

In this section I explore the understandings of ICC by established theorists and researchers. Bøhn & Dypedahl (2018) define a part of intercultural learning as "the ability to analyse and interpret cultural products and practices in other cultures" (p. 162). They also emphasize the importance of tolerance, openness, and critical evaluation of cultural practices (p. 162, 2018). Although Bøhn, Dypedahl and Myklevold (2018) and other researchers (Fantini, 2009; Van

Ek, 1984) emphasize cross-cultural communication, there is also a focus on acceptance of other cultural inputs and being open-minded. Bøhn and Dypedahl (2014) argues that “the essence of intercultural competence is to relativize one’s own point of view, or change perspective” “Essensen av interkulturelle kompetanse er nettopp å relativisere eget ståsted, eller skifte perspektiv” (Dypedahl & Bøhn, 2017, p. 68). As cross-cultural communication could be categorized as a skill, an open mind-set describes the attitudinal and reflective competence that drives the interculturally competent individual. Laila Aase (2005) argues that:

It is not sufficient to know or be familiar with; the intercultural person must have insight, understand and act properly, or at least with good intentions in light of such insight.

Det [er] ikke nok å vite eller kjenne til; den dannete må ha innsikt i eller forstå og kunne handle rett, eller i hvert fall med god vilje ut fra slik innsikt. (p. 21, my translation)

This statement seems to indicate that pupils must have a deeper understanding of a given knowledge, thus requiring that knowledge to be internalized. Furthermore, Fenner (2005) argues that educational institutions have a responsibility to intercultural competence through tolerance. She introduces a new and essential term to complement the existing knowledge on intercultural competence. She introduces the term *danning*, which I translate to *bildung*. This term is important because it further emphasizes the idea that intercultural competence is not necessarily a passive requirement and attainment of knowledge, but an active way of how pupils act and interact with others. Anne-Brit Fenner (2005) states that

A part of educational institutions’ bildung project in foreign language learning, through the development of intercultural knowledge and reflections, is to develop acceptance and respect for that which is different.

En del av skolens dannelsesprosjekt i fremmedspråkopplæringen blir gjennom utvikling av kunnskaper om den fremmede kulturen og refleksjoner over disse i forhold til egen kultur, å utvikle aksept og respekt for det som er annerledes. (p. 97, my translation)

Aase (2005) also deploys ‘bildung’ as an important aspect of culture learning, and the importance of the implementation of the ‘bildung’ process in the classroom. She states that:

Bildung requires the knowledge to be internalized in order for the learner to be able to construe and understand new knowledge and new situations, and able to act and interact with others with sharpness, judgement and reason.

(Danning krever at kunnskapen blir internalisert slik at den som lærer blir bedre i stand til å fortolke og forstå ny kunnskap og nye situasjoner og kan handle og samhandle med andre ut fra skarpsindighet, dømmekraft og forstand). (p. 21)

One can see that *bildung* adds an active component to intercultural competence, information has to be internalized to create new insight. This introduces a new aspect of ICC because it requires time to internalize knowledge. This indicate that ICC requires patience and sufficient time.

The understandings of Norwegian researchers on ICC is shared by international research as well. I do believe it is highly important to include theories of international and established researchers because they supplement the established understanding of ICC with valuable insight. It is therefore crucial to not only focus on Norwegian researchers and their understanding of ICC in a Norwegian educational context, but also extend the scope of the conceptual framework in order to widen the understanding of ICC. The British Council defines intercultural competence as “the ability to understand cultures, including your own, and use this understanding to communicate with people from other cultures successfully” (British Council, 2020). This definition of ICC reflects the sentiments conveyed by Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold (2018) and their focus on cross-cultural communication. However, it also emphasizes the importance of culture and diversity.

There are other theorists and researchers that include a sociolinguistic aspect to intercultural competence, and therefore emphasizes the importance of language (Fantini, 2009). Van Ek (1986) defines *Sociolinguistic competence* as “the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms...is determined by such conditions as setting, relationship between communication partners, communicative intention, etc. ... [this] competence covers the relation between linguistic signals and their contextual – or situational – meaning” (cited in Coperias-Aguilar, 2002, p. 89). One can see that sociolinguistic competence is an aspect of ICC where language is viewed as a competence to achieve functional and meaningful cross-cultural communication. This promotes cross-cultural communication, and is therefore related to Bøhn & Dypedahl (2018) and their insistence that ICC has to do with communication. In section 3.2.1 I argue how sociolinguistic competence is prevalent and regarded as an important aspect of ICC in the Core Curriculum. However, this literary review focuses on the cultural, political and social skills, attitudes and knowledges of intercultural competence. I choose to focus on these competences because I argue that those are the competences that are pupils are encouraged to display at the exam. I will argue this more thoroughly in section 3.1.

Mark A. Ashwill & Duong Thi Hoang Oanh (2009) define the intercultural competent pupil as a reflective and diverse person who inhabits many of the same attributes as stated by Norwegian researchers. However, one can also see that they believe the intercultural competent individual should adapt a global mind-set. Ashwill & Oanh argue that:

[a intercultural competent pupil]...is a global citizen with some level of intercultural competence: (a) has a diverse and knowledgeable worldview, (b) comprehends international dimensions of his or her major field of study, (c) communicates effectively in another language and/or cross-culturally, (d) exhibits cross-cultural sensitivity and adaptability, and (e) carries global competencies throughout life. (p. 143)

The definition of the intercultural competent pupil does now have a universal component which requires the pupils to adopt a global mind-set. However, there are certain assumptions in their definition. They mention communicative, attitudinal and cultural competences but do not explain how to attain such competences, or give any indication to what level of comprehension pupils must have to meet the requirements. I would argue that their understanding is relied on an assumption that teachers have a conceptual understanding of what the various competences mean. Lonner and Hayes (2004) further focuses on the reflective attributes that Ashwill & Oanh stress above. They argue that the intercultural student is “a person who is emotionally caring yet controlled, sensitive to interpersonal dynamics, and genuinely perceptive when in complex and highly interactive situations” (Lonner & Hayes, 2004, cited in Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 312). The perspectives mentioned above are relevant understandings and useful in the context of this thesis. As I examine other perspectives of ICC and its components, there seems to be an agreement in understanding. In the next section I will examine the importance of cultural context and diversity when discussing ICC.

### **2.1.2 Context and Diversity**

An important aspect to intercultural competence is cultural context. The exam preparation booklet gives examples of young individuals who are combating social and political issues in specific cultural contexts. To be able to discuss and elaborate on these social issues, one must have an understanding of the importance of cultural context. *Cultural context* and *diversity* are two terms that are closely related. Cultural context is the acknowledgement that perceptions can be relative and that individuals are situated in different cultural context that create unique meaning. Diversity is more related to the acceptance and promotion of these contexts. David

Coulby (2006) has emphasized the notion that intercultural competence is contextually specific, and realised through a careful examination of social encounters in a cultural context. He states that: “without context, the research becomes of limited usefulness, since the reader is unable to assess the extent to which the findings might be applicable in other settings” (p. 249). In the context of cultural diversity, this stresses the importance of being able to acknowledge, respect and distinguish between cultural contexts. With this knowledge, individuals have the ability evaluate situations in a more constructive and nuanced manner.

Although the individual is a being with unique understanding of culture, one might view identity through collective norms in any given community. Bøhn and Dypedahl (2017) argue that the individuality of each individual is realized through affiliation with a larger group. They state that “people’s identity is to a large extent bound to group affiliation” (p. 62, my translation). They argue therefore that even though the individual is a significant factor in its creation of individuality, one cannot not undermine the effects of cultural constructions. They elaborate and state that:

Each and every one of us have a unique life story and our own mix of cultural persuasions. To a certain extent we can argue that that each individual is a “culture” in itself. However, we must consider that both national and ethnical identities exist as important constructs or concepts in many situations. (2017, p. 62, my translation)

This is an important aspect of intercultural competence. It functions as an acceptance of other cultures. An integral part of intercultural competence is therefore the ability to recognize and acknowledge foreign and cultural constructs and constructions as significant. Ashwill and Oanh (2009) elaborate on the same notion. They see it as crucial for an intercultural competent person to acknowledge the effects of cultural environments on the individual. They argue it is important to recognize “that a person carries a particular mental software because of the way that person was brought up, and that others brought up in a different environment carry a different mental software” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004, cited in Ashwill & Oanh, 2009, p. 143). The recognition of diverse cultural backgrounds and being tolerant and respectful towards various cultural expressions are essential aspects of ICC.

However, there are certain problematic issues one must consider when discussing cultural context. One does not want to promote cultural determinism that limits individuals’ agency and cultural expression. Bøhn and Dyndahl state that the use of contextual research with focus on national differences in cultures are not meant to simply predict how humans will act in certain situations, but “...meant to illustrate that individual differences...can help us to

generally understand communication” “ment å illustrere individuelle forskjeller som kan hjelpe oss til å forstå kommunikasjon generelt” (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017, p. 68-69). This is well connected to one of the primary purposes to intercultural competence, namely the acceptance and understanding of other cultural perspectives. An intercultural competent person must have the understanding of multiple cultural perspectives. Therefore, contextual understandings of ICC are not meant to promote cultural determinism, but rather the exploration of diverse cultural expressions and understandings. Bøhn & Dypedahl also emphasize the importance of challenging and discussing foreign norms and attitudes. They state that:

We cannot instinctively assume that others think just like us. Even though the similarities can seem evident and obvious, there can be underlying factors that are fundamentally different.

Faktum er at vi ikke instinktivt kan gå ut fra at andre tenker akkurat som oss. Selv om likhetene kan synes store på overflaten, kan det være dypereliggende faktorer som er grunnleggende forskjellige.

(2017, p. 64, my translation)

By exploring norms and attitudes of foreign cultures one can gain an understanding of the similarities and, perhaps more importantly, the differences between specific cultures. One can also gain an intricate understanding of cross-cultural communication and interaction between individuals. This sentiment is meant to counter prejudice, ethnocentrism and racism, and is considered to be an essential aim of ICC.

Anne-Brit Fenner (2005) argues that the exposure to other cultures heightens pupils' critical thinking. She states that:

when pupils encounter a foreign culture with their own cultural background, they get, through dialog with the other culture, new insight as well as an 'out looking' view of themselves.

Når elevene møter den fremmede kulturen med sin egen kulturbakgrunn, får de, ved å gå i dialog med en annen kultur, mulighet til økt innsikt i det fremmede samtidig som de får et utsideperspektiv på seg selv.

(Fenner, 2005, p. 96)

However, this does not mean that intercultural competent person is a passive participant in social and cultural matters, assuming that all perspectives are equally inconsequential. Quite the opposite, the intercultural competent person is advocating the widening of the scope of cultural and social discussion, and that these discussions are an important to have.

One can see that context is highly important when it comes to intercultural competence. Cultural context is the understanding that individuals are situated in different cultural contexts, and that they may have different values and interests. However, the study of cultural contexts is not meant to limit the individual to rigid and cultural restrictions, but rather give the interculturally competent pupil an opportunity to expand the understanding of cross-cultural communication, mindsets and worldviews. Cultural contexts give the individual a fuller understanding of how people live and interact with each other. Although cultural context is an important aspect of ICC, one must also consider the agency of the individual to construct own meaning. In the next section I explore understandings on intercultural identity.

### **2.1.3 Intercultural Identity and the global citizen**

In the previous section I explored the understanding of cultural contexts as an important aspect of ICC. Comprehension of cultural contexts give pupils the ability to elaborate on cross-cultural communication, mindsets and worldviews. However, the literature also suggests that the culturally situated individual is not merely a passive recipient of influences from its immediate culture. Intercultural identity is a concept that is advocated by researchers as the individual situated in a global context with the ability to consider international issues. The term encompasses many different aspects on identity, including *bildung*. Researchers have examined the individual in a global setting, and how it interacts with multiple communities (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Kim, 2009; Ashwill & Oanh, 2009). I will explore these perspectives because I argue that they are directly connected to the theme of the exam. The theme of the exam is “Just do it! Speak up! Break the mould!”. As mentioned in the section above, the exam gives examples of individuals in various contexts. Several of the texts and questions are concerning the individuals’ ability to ‘break’ with the presumed cultural norms and express their intercultural identity. In section 3.1 I will show exactly where these perspectives are prevalent in the exam documents. It is therefore essential to explore perspectives on individuality and the creation of an active “self” in a global context, and its importance for developing intercultural competence.

Young Yun Kim (2009) emphasizes the importance of the individual to distance himself from the rigid boundaries of ethnocentric mindsets. She sees it as a prerequisite to transitioning intercultural competence into meaningful action. She argues that “in the process of becoming intercultural in identity orientation...the individual is likely to become more competent in making deliberate choices of constructive actions rather than simply being dictated by the

prevailing norms of a particular culture” (Kim, p. 56). An individual is more likely to “break the mould” and stand up for what they believe is right through constructive actions by incorporating an intercultural and international view on identity. She further argues that the rejection of monoculturalism and the incorporation of an intercultural identity is a gradual process to a more inclusive mind set to intercultural relations. She explains that “intercultural identity is...conceived as a continuum of adaptive changes from a monocultural to an increasingly complex and inclusive character [and]...the more inclusive an individual’s identity orientation, the greater his or her capacity to engage in cooperative intercultural relationships” (Kim, 2009, p. 56, 59). Kim also stresses the importance of allowing for an intercultural identity to prosper and develop. She states that “an inclusive and secure identity is a necessity for anyone striving to develop meaningful and fruitful intercultural relationships” (Kim, 2009, p. 62). She argues that it is essential that the individual is secure and confident in his assessment of intercultural relations.

Ashwill and Oanh (2009) elaborate further on the intercultural competent individual and identifies him as a ‘global citizen’. The characteristics of this individual are openness to other cultures and a non-discriminatory attitude towards foreign and international influences. They state that “the global citizen’s intellectual landscape and sense of connectedness and belonging extend to all of humanity” (2009, p. 142). The individual is no longer bound by national restrictions on identity and intellectual expansion. They do to a certain degree elaborate on Kim’s thoughts and theories on rejection of monoculturalism. However, they do not discard the significance of national interests and influences completely but change the order of importance. They state that “the logically consistent global citizen supports or rejects national interests on the basis of the extent to which they complement or are damaging to those of others” (Ashwill & Oanh, 2009, p. 142). With this understanding, the national and ethnical aspects of intercultural competence is viewed, not as the foundation, but rather as a compliment to intercultural identity. It is therefore important to emphasize that the global citizen is a culturally and socially active individual who has interest in political questions beyond its immediate demographical and geographical location. Ashwill and Oanh conclude that “global citizenship is not just a static mind-set, but a dynamic worldview imbued with a sense of commitment to issues of social and economic justice at the local, national, and international interests” (Ashwill & Oanh, 2009, p. 142). It seems clear that they argue that pupils must withdraw themselves from their own cultural context, and be able to recognize and discuss the social issues from an intercultural perspective. This is very important in the



context of this thesis, because this aspect of ICC is prevalent in the texts in the preparation booklet and the new curricula. I will elaborate more on this in chapter 3.

#### **2.1.4 ICC in education**

It is therefore important to examine how intercultural competence is manifested in education, and explore the role and responsibilities of teachers in allowing pupils to explore various aspects of ICC.

Eva Thue Vold (2014) comments on the importance of the implementation of ICC in the classroom in a Norwegian context. Vold argues that teaching on culture and society should not be seen as the acquisition of knowledge about cultures and societies, but rather as “a mean to achieve the true purpose, which is to lay the foundation to develop healthy intercultural competence” “...som et middel i oppnå det virkelige målet, som er å legge grobunn for utvikling av god interkulturell kompetanse” (Vold, 2014, p. 4, my translation). One can see that knowledge about cultures and societies is not sufficient, and that Vold argues that teachers must actively focus on ICC in teaching. This is relevant for my thesis as I make the argument that perspectives of ICC are emphasized in the 2017 Core Curriculum. Aase (2005) provides another insight by arguing that ICC in an educational context should be the creation of active citizens. Relating to the concept of *Bildung* as I mentioned above, she states that “the bildung project is to a large extent related to the development of knowledgeable members of society who can be active participants in the culture” “Danningsoppdraget er i stor grad knyttet til ønsket om å skape kunnskapsrike samfunnsmedlemmer som kan være aktive deltakere i kulturen” (Aase, 2005, p. 17, my translation). Political and educational institutions can and should take an active role in advocating universal and intercultural discussions and aspects. Bøhn and Dypedahl (2017) commented on the importance of Norwegian educational institutions stating that “Norwegian schools are strong influencers when it comes to pupils’ attitudes toward equality, democracy and individual rights” “Norsk skole er en sterk påvirkningsfaktor når det gjelder elevers forhold til likestilling, demokrati og individers rettigheter” (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017, p. 61, my translation). Considering these findings, it is evident that some researchers emphasize that Norwegian institutions of education do have a societal responsibility in teaching ICC. These are valuable understandings to consider because I will make the argument that perspectives of ICC are emphasized in the new curricula.

The perspectives of Vold (2014), Aase (2005) and Bøhn & Dypedahl (2017) are shared by international researchers as well (Coulby, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2009). This consolidates the importance of educational institutions as promoters of ICC. Cushner and Mahon (2009) have commented on why intercultural competence is increasingly important in national and international education. They argue that “young people today are entering an increasingly interconnected society, which demands they acquire intercultural competence so they not only understand the complexity of global problems but also develop the ability to collaborate with others in their resolution” (p. 315). This understanding by Cushner and Mahon is highly relevant because it functions as a justification for ICC in education. They also view diversity as an integral part of the implementation of ICC in the classroom. They state that the teaching and introduction of intercultural competence in classrooms are “seeking to help students reduce their prejudice and increase their understanding and appreciation of ethnic, racial and religious diversity” (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 306). This perspective indicates that educational institutions must have clear and purposeful incentives that actively promote tolerance, respect and diversity. Coulby (2006) also argues that schools and educational institutions need to actively continue to advocate social issues and discussions. He states that:

identity and identity politics; government and governance; transitional economies and societies; nationalism and nation construction; globalization. Intercultural education needs to link itself more firmly to these mainstream debates if it is to make an academic contribution that goes beyond the parochial. (p. 254)

Coulby is also complimenting the theories of Cushner & Mahon and he is also connecting intercultural competence and its role in the classroom to combating and discussing ideological and political issues. He argues that discussing and examining international political and social issues are indispensable aspects of intercultural competence, and the exclusion of such is an rejection of its social duty. He states that “to the extent to which the context of globalization is overlooked, intercultural education will have de-politicized its subject matter and, despite its progressive normative position, it will ill-serve both its subjects and wider social understanding” (Coulby, 2006, p. 249). He is indirectly agreeing with Kim (2009) as he views intercultural competence as an internalized mean to appropriate action. This also connects to the theory of cultural context, as Coulby is arguing for the importance of culturally specific social issues. He further states that “to depoliticize intercultural education is to cut it from many of the possibilities of political action and redress” (Coulby, 2006, p. 249). He specifically emphasizes social engagement and its international properties as two important

elements of intercultural competence. He states that a classroom concerned with social issues is dependent on:

An insistence that the complexity [,exploration and clarification] of the social context... is a precursor to meaningful research; and an awareness that education is an international activity and that neither its pupils or its subject matter can be constrained by familiar boundaries. (p. 254)

Coulby is complementing the notion that ICC is realised through a practical implementation in the classroom. Educational institutions do have an important role in promoting ICC. These aspects are hugely important because there are similar sentiments in the steering documents for Norwegian education.

### **2.1.5 Teachers' Responsibility**

Cushner and Mahon (2009) have also emphasized the importance of competent teachers and their ability to convey and teach intercultural competence properly. They state that “an attempt to address intercultural competence must consider aspects associated with psychosocial development of young people, entrenched value systems that underlie such actions as racism and homophobia, and the cognitive and affective readiness of both teachers and teacher educators” (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 305). They further elaborate on this importance by linking it to the development of the pupils. The teachers will be the main source of information and learning, and there must therefore be a considerable high standard when it comes to teachers' competence. Cushner and Mahon argue that “the goals of this standard is the development of educators who can help students learn and who can teach from multicultural and global perspectives that draw on the histories, experiences, and representations of students from diverse cultural backgrounds” (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2001, cited in Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 308).

### **2.1.6 Summary**

Considering this literature review, I argue that there are two different but relevant approaches to ICC. The first approach is a reflective and attitudinal approach that views ICC as an ability that allows you to communicate across cultures and appreciate insights from other cultures. Researchers have argued that this approach is an essential part of pupils' development of bildung. There is an emphasis on allowing the knowledge to be internalized and create true understanding. This approach of ICC is based on the respect of other cultures, and self-

reflection. However, this approach is not connected to specific content and actions, but is rather focused on the mental aspect and change of mentality through a reflective an open mind. In that sense, I would argue that this approach is a ‘theoretical’ understanding of ICC because it promotes a general mental change. Theoretical does in this context mean the opposite of practical. This form of ICC is supported by researchers such as Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Aase, 2005; Fenner, 2005). All of these perspectives focus on cross-cultural communication and bildung as a mean to achieve comprehensive cultural understanding and tolerance and respect of foreign cultures and others.

The other approach is practical understanding that promote a political application of ICC. This approach has focus on the agency of the individual as an active participant in social and political issues. The approach emphasizes the importance of engaging with contemporary social and political issues at an international level. I argue that this perspective is a practical understanding because it is more connected to specific content, i.e. international political issues. The mental aspect of the perspective is more a clear consequence of engagement with specific content, and the individual to take on a more international mentality to combat prejudice and racism. This approach is in accordance with researchers such as Kim (2009), Ashwill & Mahon (2009), Bøhn & Dypedahl (2017), Cushner & Mahon (2009), Coulby (2006). These researchers emphasize the importance of the active intercultural individual, and the importance of educational institutions to promote contemporary issues of political and social justice at an international level to achieve ICC.

My overarching aim for this thesis is to explore validity in assessment of ICC. The conceptual framework provides me with a comprehensive understanding of what researchers in the field of study argue that ICC is, the various aspect it encompasses and its role in education. The conceptual framework also provides me with a foundation as I explore how perspectives of ICC are presented in the steering documents. It will provide me with a better understanding of how ICC can be related to specific competences mentioned in the steering documents. I argue that my document analysis of the relevant documents will provide me with an understanding of how teachers are supposed to ensure validity in measuring these competences. I will also have the opportunity to compare teachers’ understanding of ICC expressed in previous research and interviews, with the established aspect mentioned here, to see if there is a coherent understanding.

## 2.2 Validity

Another important concept to define is ‘validity’. In this thesis I analyse to what extent the exam questions and criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils’ ICC at the exam. That is therefore a question on the correlation between the definitions and demarcations of the conceptual concepts and the assessment criteria. I am not examining actual exam responses and investigating the validity of the assessment of those responses. I want examine validity in terms of the definition and understanding of intercultural competence and to what extent the exams questions and assessment criteria ensure validity in measuring that understanding. Gipps (1994) argues that “the traditional definition of validity is the extent to which a test measures what it was designed to measure. If it does not measure what it purports to measure, then its use is misleading” (p. 58). In the context of this thesis, it is therefore important to examine whether the exam questions and criteria reflect the purposed intentions of the assessment. I do also have a forward-looking perspective in my thesis, and I do argue that my findings can be indications on whether the exam, in its current format, is suitable to ensure validity in assessment. Nunnally (1978) commented on issues with criterion-related validity. He states that “[Criterion-related validity] is at issue when the purpose is to use an instrument to estimate some important form of behaviour that is external to the measuring instrument itself, the latter being referred to as the criterion” (Nunnally, 1978, cited in Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 17). I do believe that this is an important issue, because there might be a possibility that the exam purports to measure a competence that is difficult to assess within such an assessment format. Another important aspect of validity is the content in which the pupils can showcase their skills. Gipps argue that “*Content* validity...concerns the coverage of appropriate and necessary content, i.e. does the test cover the skills necessary for good performance, or all the aspects of the subject taught?” (1994, p. 58-59, cursive in original). The idea of content validity is relevant for this thesis because I will explore through my interviews how teachers implement their understanding of ICC into classroom activities. I make the argument that the assessment validity is dependent on how ICC is implemented in class.

Furthermore, in my interviews with teachers I examine teachers’ various understanding of ICC. The literature review has already indicated that there are different aspects to ICC. It is therefore important to consider that competences related ICC has multiple understandings, and the measurement of such competences can vary dependent on what understanding one is considering. For there to be validity in assessment, the concept that one is measuring must be

clearly expressed. Locke (2012) defines this issue as concept validity. He argues that before one is considering the validity of a test, one should "...move the discussion to a deeper level – to the level of formulating and defining the concepts themselves". This is relevant to my thesis because the validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam is dependent on how one is defining ICC. The fact that ICC is not defined in any steering documents, can limit the validity in assessment. The exclusion of a definition of ICC in the steering documents also emphasize the importance of teachers' understanding on ICC, because they understanding is the foundation for assessment at the exam. Locke further states that "a valid definition of a concept is a prerequisite to valid measurement. One cannot attempt to measure something unless one knows what it is one is trying to measure" (2008, p. 397). In the context of this thesis, the *concept* would be the skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. The validity of that concept is relevant for this thesis, as I am intending to examine teachers' beliefs on ICC and its relation to the exam. As stated above, the concept of intercultural competence is highly intricate and complex. I want to examine if there is sufficient understanding of the concept for there to be adequate assessment validity.

### 2.3 Perspectives on Teachers' beliefs

I want to examine teachers' understanding of ICC and their beliefs regarding its classroom implementation, the exam and assessment. I believe that teachers' beliefs are essential to examine validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. I believe that content (and how it is taught) is affected by teachers' beliefs about what is to be taught. Therefore, teachers' understanding of what ICC is affects what content and how that content is taught in the classroom. Furthermore, this affects their beliefs on what is to be assessed because assessment is supposed to measure what teachers believe pupils are supposed to learn. Both *LK06* and *Fagfornyelsen* give teachers an increased responsibility when it comes to analysing, defining and implementing methods in teaching. Therefore, I want to examine theories on teachers' beliefs to have a fuller understanding of how they interpret terms such as 'intercultural competence' and balance their own perceptions with guiding educational documents. One must understand that the beliefs one gets are not random, but a result of the collection and complex interaction between teachers' identity, social context, and understanding of educational documents. In this section I will explore the importance of teachers' beliefs and the factors that can affect their viewpoints.

### 2.3.1 Epistemology

Firstly, I must define and concretize certain terms and concepts. When interviewing teachers, one receives their professional opinions on given topics. These beliefs are constructed through many interactions and are the results of many factors, as they will be explored later in this section. What I intend to receive from the interviews, are teachers' own personal *epistemology*. Mercan (2012) define this as “the mental states in which a person holds a proposition about knowledge and knowing to be true” (cited in Lunn, Mascadri & Walker, 2015, p. 320). I want to respect their role as active teachers who have a considerable professional capital and experience on the matter. I will therefore assume that their beliefs are not mere opinions, but justified beliefs supported by various factors. I want to examine how they justify their opinions. Mosham (2012) coined this as *epistemic beliefs*. He defines it as “knowledge about epistemic matters – that is knowledge about truth and justification” (cited in Lunn et al., 2015, p. 320). The interviews do also intend to examine opinions and terms in a professional and educational context. It is therefore important to remember that these are evaluative discussions on specific topics. Kuhn & Weinstock (2002) called this evaluation as *evaluativist beliefs*. They argue that “knowledge is constructed, tentative, evidence based, and evaluated in context” (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002, cited in Lunn et al., 2015, p. 321). This is something I must consider when interviewing teachers. Their beliefs are constructed in a professional context by various factors. In the next paragraph, I will examine what ‘teachers’ beliefs’ are in a professional context.

### 2.3.2 Teachers’ Beliefs

This will help me to understand the theoretical and contextual justifications of their definitions and answers. Firstly, I will explore the of what *beliefs* are and how they manifest themselves in an educational context. Hermans, van Braak & Van Keer define ‘belief’ as “a set of conceptual representations which store general knowledge of objects, people, and events, and their characteristic relationships” (Hermans et al., 2008, cited in Gill & Fives, 2015, p. 1). This will be sufficient enough as a general definition of ‘beliefs’. However, it must be specified in an educational context. Skott (2015) argues that educational beliefs are to a certain degree subjective, but supported by environmental influences. He states that teachers’ beliefs are “individual, subjectively true, value-laden mental constructs that are the relatively stable results of substantial social experiences and that have significant impact on one’s interpretations of and contributions to classroom practice” (Skott, 2015, p. 19).

Zembylas and Chubbuck (2015) follow the same reasoning and argue that “teacher’s beliefs are understood as the interconnected, affective, conceptual, and evaluative perspectives that teachers develop about themselves, their students, student learning, methods of instruction, curriculum, and schools as social institutions” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 174). One can see that teachers’ beliefs are intricate and complex development of processing a spectre of diverse influences and interchanging perceptions. Hoffman and Seidel (2015) have argued that teachers’ beliefs are the core understandings that serve as the foundation of educational practice. They state that “[teachers’] beliefs serve as an epistemological base, or a theoretical underpinning, orchestrating, cognitive, affective, and behavioural decisions that manifest in the classroom” (Hoffman & Seidel, 2015, p. 106). It is important to emphasize that beliefs about a specific topic are not the result of incidental occurrences, but rather the result of an evaluation of teachers’ agency and the existence and interaction of potentially conflicting interests. Bandura (1989) argues that “[Teachers] are neither wholly autonomous agents nor are they simply at the mercy of animating environmental influences... Their behaviour is shaped by cognitive, affective, and other personal factors, interacting with environmental events and forces” (cited in Tschannen-Moran, Sallum & Goddard, 2015, p. 302). With a clearer understanding of teacher’s beliefs, I will in the next paragraph explore how the conceptual idea of ‘teacher identity’ can affect the teaching, beliefs and perceptions of ICC.

### **2.3.3 Teacher identity**

It is relevant to acknowledge the increased responsibility the teacher has in interpreting guiding documents and consolidate it with their own subjective understanding. It is therefore important to explore aspects that affect the decisions and understandings of teachers. This paragraph will examine the ‘teacher identity’ and its potential impact on teachers’ beliefs. Teachers perceptions can and often do change over time. Therefore, ‘Identity’ is not a term with absolutist connotations. Zembylas and Chubbuck (2015) define teacher identity as the process of consolidating teachers’ own agency, and environmental pressures and influences. They state that “teacher identity... is understood as a dynamic, career-long process of negotiating the teacher-self in relation to personal and emotional experiences, the professional and social context, and the micro and macro political environment” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 174). There are many components to teachers’ identity that one should consider. Firstly, the continuous creation of teacher identity is subjective and takes time. Zembylas and Chubbuck state that “identity is not a fixed entity, but rather the product of an ongoing



process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences” (2015, p. 177). It is therefore an understanding which emphasizes the importance of teachers’ subjectivity in interpretation and understanding. Zembylas and Chubbuck continue and stress the importance of environmental and conceptual contexts that teachers inhabit, and the interaction between the teacher and its environment. It means that their subjective interpretation and understanding is, to some or large degree, influenced or restrained within an established contextual and professional framework. They argue that “the interaction of this ongoing process involves both a person and a context and thus teacher is conceptualized in relation to communities of practice” (2015, p. 177).

One must also consider the cultural, social and political implications on teachers’ identity. Zembylas and Chubbuck do therefore emphasize the importance of teachers’ ability to balance their subjective agency with potential cultural and social norms, political restrictions and mandates, and environmental factors. They state that “teacher identity is considered to involve the complex interplay between personal experience and cultural, social, institutional, and environmental contexts” (2015, p. 177). This can lead to the teacher borrowing practices and replicate understandings depending on the environment. They argue that “teachers position their identity in relation to students, other teachers, teacher educators, and discourses circulating in curricula, schools, and national images” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 180). One must therefore stress the importance of the ‘self’ in this process. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) emphasize the importance of considering the subjectivity of teachers’ identity. Although there are cultural, political and environmental factors which influence the identity of teachers, they argue that the teacher is the integral starting point in the process. They argue that teachers’ identity is “an ongoing process of negotiating multiple I-positions in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one’s (working) life” (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, cited in Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 178). There are many factors to consider when interviewing teachers and asking for their subjective and professional understanding of certain topics and terms. Their understandings are the result of cultural and social interactions and political and conceptual interpretations. I do acknowledge these factors, but they are also beyond the scope of my discussion. The next paragraph will focus on the importance of collective beliefs and the effects of institutional pressures on teachers’ beliefs.

### 2.3.4 Professional identity - the influence of collective beliefs

One must therefore not forget the importance of educational institutions and schools. Hoy and Miskel (2012) argue that schools are contextual arenas where teachers interact with various influences to (). They state that “Schools are organizations where teachers work together in an interactive social system and the social organization of the school structures the relationships of teachers, administrators, and students in ways that affect instructional activities” (Hoy & Miskel, 2012, cited in Tschannen-Moran, Sallum & Goddard, 2015, p. 302). I do therefore expect that their views can be influenced by educational and political guidelines on both local and national level. A teacher must take certain considerations into account although they have their own identity that influences their professional role and behaviour. Zembylas & Chubbuck define these considerations as *politics*. They state that “politics are understood as the micro and macro interactions in which power relations are constantly negotiated and impact on the work of teachers” (2015, p. 174). The relationship between teachers and educational institutions is not necessarily in conflict. It is not meant to be a perpetual dispute between two rivalling oppositions. It is a professional interaction where actors of different perspectives and practices can work with a common purpose. Schraw & Olafson (2015) have commented on this mutual agreement and purpose, and coined it as *collective school efficacy*. They define it as “the belief that teachers and administrators can work together successfully to educate their students. Ideally, the construct should be defined with enough specificity that there is little ambiguity when interpreting its meaning” (p. 89). Interaction between teachers and their respective schools are therefore not only meant to be restriction and awareness of conceptual and professional boundaries. It is meant to be an opportunity for teachers to share common or contradicting practices, and use these interactions to advance their own understanding. I do therefore not expect that teachers’ beliefs on terms such as ICC are too restricted by macro-politics, but rather seen as a professional foundation where conceptual discussions occur. Tschannen-Moran, Sallum and Goddard state that “[teachers’] beliefs are shaped by interactions with others in the environment in which they work and the collective beliefs that grow out of these interactions” (Tschannen-Moran, Sallum & Goddard, 2015, p. 301). It is therefore important to remember that the insight I receive while interviewing, are given by individuals who have taken part in active interactions with their peers and share a common learning objective. Neither teachers or schools do have an absolutist approach to their views and identity. Zembylas and Chubbuck have called this interaction for ‘professional identity’. They argue that “professional identity is situated and malleable, forming and

shifting in response to the expectations of structures” (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015, p. 183). There are other researchers and theorists who have supported and further built on this perspective. Day, Kingston, Stobart & Sammons (2006) do define the term in appropriate matter, combining the different interests and aspects to highlight the complex interactions. They (cited in Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015) state that:

Personal and professional identities appear to operate in a dynamic tension, influenced by both agency and structure, as teachers respond to and are shaped by the interaction of...institutional structures and the personal investment derived from agency that such work demands. (p. 183)

I must consider teachers’ professional identity and the influence of collective beliefs when I interview teachers. It is important to realise that the beliefs of teachers are constructed through professional interactions with political, cultural and environmental considerations.

## 2.4 Summary

In this chapter I have constructed a conceptual framework of ICC as it is defined by established researchers in the field of study. ICC is a complex and intricate concept that encompasses aspects such as cross-cultural communication, bildung, intercultural identity and the importance of cultural contexts. I have also explored researchers’ beliefs on the role of ICC in education. Considering the findings in this chapter, I will argue that ICC is a highly important competence in education. Additionally, I have defined the three types of validity that are relevant for this thesis. The important questions to explore further are how teachers’ understanding of ICC affects concept validity, and how the exam questions ensure validity in measuring pupils’ ICC at the exam. I have also examined theories on the importance of teachers’ beliefs, and explored how teachers construct their professional beliefs. This chapter provides me with a conceptual framework of ICC that will help me to identify the presence of perspectives of ICC in the steering documents. I will also be able to draw parallels between the understandings on ICC expressed in previous research and interviews, to the ones expressed here. I will argue that the comparison gives me a fuller understanding of the concept validity of ICC.

### **3. ICC in the Steering Documents and Exam Documents**

In this chapter I conduct a document analysis. A document analysis is an evaluation of documents to extract meaningful information. I elaborate on this in chapter 5. I will take the understandings from the previous chapter on ICC and analyse how the understandings are reflected in the steering documents and exam documents. As I mention in chapter 1, ICC is only mentioned once in the steering documents. I will therefore refer to the findings as perspectives of ICC, because ICC is not explicitly mentioned. Firstly, in section 3.1 I present my understanding of how texts related to perspectives of ICC are presented in the preparation booklet to facilitate pupils to display skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. Secondly, in section 3.2 I justify my assumption that perspectives of ICC are important values in Norwegian education and prevalent in steering documents such as the 2017 Core Curriculum, the ENG1-03 and ENG01-04 subject curriculums. I also compare the expression of ICC in the three documents to evaluate the coherence in how it is advocated and promoted. Thirdly, in section 3.3 I analyse whether the exam questions and the examination guide for 2019 ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the written English exam for spring 2019. The understandings of ICC presented in chapter 2 functions as the conceptual framework in this document analysis. I would argue that a document analysis of the steering documents gives me a good understanding of how perspectives of ICC are expressed across several relevant documents and whether the concept validity is ensured. I would also make the argument that a document analysis of the exam documents gives me the opportunity to evaluate how the exam questions and criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam.

#### **3.1 ICC as Outlined in the Preparation Booklet**

In this section I will conduct a document analysis where I present my understanding of how the perspectives of ICC in the literature review are reflected in the texts provided in the preparation booklet. I do this because I make the argument that, although ICC is not mentioned in the exam questions, the preparation booklet facilitates the opportunity for pupils to display abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC at the exam. I will therefore establish where in the preparation booklet I believe perspectives of ICC are expressed, and how they relate to the established understandings of ICC presented in the literature review such as intercultural identity, the global citizen and cultural contexts.

The preparation booklet is the primary preparation material that pupils are given before the exam. It gives the pupils information about the topic of the exam, and contains texts that are related and give contextual material to the topic. The preparation booklet introduces the topic of the exam, which is 'Just do it! Speak out! Break the mould!' (See appendix 2). The slogan is related to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nike's 'Just do it' campaign. The topic is youth pursuing their convictions, sharing their opinions and challenging established conventions. The pupils are also given contextual information on the origin of the Nike slogan. The preparation booklet contains eight primary texts that are related to the topic and show young people engaging in contemporary social and political issues in English-speaking countries.

I argue that many of the texts in the preparation booklet present perspectives of ICC that are related to the aspects in the literature review in chapter 2. Text 1 relates to perspectives on intercultural communication, diversity and cultural contexts. Text 3 contains three texts on sustainable living and environmental challenges and they can be related to the perspectives on intercultural identity and global citizen. These three texts encourage pupils to adopt a global and dynamic world view and actively engage with international issues. Text 4 comments on race relations in the United States of America and, much like the texts in text 1, functions as an additional cultural context related to the topic. Text 5 is the text with perhaps the most sophisticated connection to ICC in the whole preparation booklet. It is a song lyric by Macklemore critiquing the Nike slogan, and commenting on the dangers and effects of consumerism in poor communities. The text gives the pupils cultural context and the opportunity to engage with issues of economic and social justice. These diverse texts function as my justification for presuming that the exam assesses skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC.

Text 1 gives the pupils seven short texts with their own contextual reference to the topic. Texts 1C, 1D, 1E and 1F show strong correlation to perspectives on ICC (See appendix 3 and 4). All the texts give the pupils an insight into political and social issues in four different and unique contexts. Text 1C is about a Maori youth how want to protect the environment and succeed in the English-speaking world. Text 1D is about an Australian youth who comments on race relations in Australia. Text 1E is on youth involvement in the gun-control debates in the United States of America. Text 1F is about a youth and his opposition to Brexit in the United Kingdom. All of these four short texts function as a political context to the topic as the text are concerned with youth activism in politics.

These texts relate to many perspectives of ICC. Firstly, all of these texts are there to give a contextual reference to the topic of youth activism. This relates to Coulby (2006) and his persistence that ICC must be examined in clearly defined contexts in order to be discussed properly. The texts also revolve around contemporary social issues, which is an integral part of ICC in education according to Coulby (2006) and Cushner & Mahon (2009). This allows the pupils to have contextual insight and a deeper understanding of universal social issues. The texts concern universal social issues such as racism, economic injustice, political debates and environmental challenges. However, the text also put these universal social issues into various national contexts. This allows the pupils to have contextual insight and a deeper understanding of the social issues presented. This relates to the perspectives on contexts by Bøhn & Dypedahl (2017) who stress the importance of relativizing one's own viewpoint, and not assume that people have the same mindsets.

Furthermore, the texts in text 1 also have strong correlations to the perspectives on intercultural identity. The texts concern young people who have taken action, followed their convictions and challenged established conventions. This has clear connection to perspectives on intercultural identity by Kim (2009), as she is advocating an intercultural mind-set that is not bound by monocultural norms. All of the texts are individuals who have expressed different forms of intercultural identity as they are not dictated by the established norms in their respective cultures. The texts allow the pupils to evaluate the four texts as 'global citizens'. The texts allow the pupils to consider all of the different cultural contexts and evaluate their relevancy in accordance to the topic. This relates to Ashwill & Oanh (2009) and their insistence that the global citizen must adopt a global mind-set and engage in political questions beyond its immediate geographical location. I argue that the texts allow the pupils to consider the unique national interests of each text, and evaluate them from the perspective of a global citizen.

There are also other texts in the preparation booklet that reflect perspectives of ICC found in the literature review. Text 3 consists of three texts that concern environmental awareness and sustainable living (see appendix 5-7). The power and agency of the individual is in focus in texts 3.1 and 3.3, and I argue that is related to the perspectives of intercultural identity by Kim (2009). I make the argument that the texts also reflect perspectives of ICC related to the 'global citizen' by Ashwill & Oanh (2009) as they stress the importance of international political issues. All three texts advocate an international mind-set, I argue that although the texts do not concern cultural issues like the texts in text 1, they facilitate the opportunity for

pupils to display perspectives of ICC that are more related to international political issues and a heterogeneous mind-set.

I argue that text 4 and 5 are also texts that reflect the perspectives of ICC in the literature review (See appendix 8 and 9). Text 4 concerns a TV-series that raises issues such as race relations in USA and police brutality. Text 5 is a song lyric about consumerism in poor communities. These texts are on highly political issues. I analyse this as indications that pupils are meant to take interest, or at least have a good awareness of these types of social and political issues. These texts are therefore related to the perspectives of ICC by Coulby (2006) and Cushner & Mahon (2009) which stress the importance of social and political issues.

Based on this document analysis, I argue that the preparation booklet facilitates for pupils to display skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC at the exam. The preparation booklet alludes perspectives on ICC such as the importance of cultural context and cultural insight, intercultural identity and the global citizen. The preparation booklet incorporates all of these perspectives in texts on contemporary social and political issues with an international focus. I would also argue that the topic of youth activism has a clear correlation to perspectives of intercultural identity. The pupils must be able to evaluate these texts and their respective social and political issues in an objective manner.

### 3.2 ICC as Outlined in the Steering documents

In this section I present my analysis of how perspectives of ICC that are presented in the literature review are reflected in the three steering documents; the 2017 Core Curriculum and the two subject curriculums, ENG1-03 and ENG01-04. I argue that this document analysis will justify my premise that perspectives of ICC are important in Norwegian education despite the absence of an actual definition of ICC. I argue that this analysis gives me an understanding of the concept validity of ICC across several relevant documents because I will connect the perspectives in the steering documents to the aspects of ICC in the literature review. I make the argument that the document will provide an indication to what skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC at the exam. I do this to analyse the coherence between established understandings of ICC and the perspectives expressed in the steering documents. I have included the ENG01-04 because it gives an indication on whether or not perspectives of ICC have been given additional consideration in the new subject curriculum. The Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 also allow me to have a progressive perspective on

ICC and evaluate the current and future sentiment towards ICC in Norwegian education. The aspects of ICC presented in the literature functions as the conceptual foundation to how I interpret ICC in the steering documents.

### **3.2.1 The Core Curriculum**

The Core Curriculum is the overarching document that present core values, interdisciplinary topics and purpose of Norwegian education. I believe it is important to discuss the Core Curriculum because it is supposed to be an integral part of teaching and assessment. NDET states that “the curriculum in its entirety is the foundation for the teaching and training, where the different sections are closely linked and are to be used together” (NDET, *About the Core Curriculum*). The Core Curriculum also gives teachers an indication to how they should implement content into their teaching. It states that “the core curriculum describes the fundamental approach that shall direct the pedagogical practice in all lower and secondary education and training” (NDET, *About the Core Curriculum*). The competencies, attitudes and values that are found in the Core Curriculum should therefore be an important part of Norwegian education. NDET also emphasize the teachers’ responsibilities in implementing the Core Curriculum into their everyday teaching. NDET states that “everyone working in primary and secondary education and training must allow this fundamental approach to guide the planning, implementation and development of the teaching and training” (NDET, *About the Core Curriculum*). Perspectives of ICC are expressed throughout the Core Curriculum. There are numerous indirect references to the perspectives of ICC outlined in the literature review. I have divided the document analysis into three categories, where each category relates to perspectives of ICC.

#### **Context and Diversity**

In this section I will explore how various statements in the Core Curriculum reflect perspectives of ICC in the form of the recognition of the importance of cultural context and cultural diversity. I regard ‘cultural contexts’ and ‘diversity’ to be terms that are closely related. Cultural contexts are the knowledge and acknowledgement of the various contexts that individuals derive meaning, identity and communication from, and that these contexts are important to gain understanding of any cross-cultural encounter or social issue. Cultural diversity is more related to the appreciation of these cultural contexts and the individuals.



Cultural context and cultural diversity are important aspects of both ICC and the Core Curriculum.

The importance of ICC in the form of cultural context and diversity is found immediately in *The Purpose of the Education*. It states:

Education and training shall help to increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions. Education and training shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. (*The Purpose of the Education*)

One can see that the Core Curriculum promotes the notion of expanding pupils' understanding of heritage and traditions to an international level. This relates to the perspective of Fenner (2005), namely that pupils' interaction with foreign cultures creates insight. The insight into cultural diversity heightens pupils' tolerance, respect and understanding. The statement is also supported by the perspectives of Bøhn and Dypedahl (2017). They argue, much like the statement above, that exposure to various cultural contexts increases understanding of communication. This sentiment on ICC and the importance of diversity is also found in the *Human Dignity* section. It states that "we may all experience that we feel different and stand out from the others around us. Therefore, we need acknowledgement and appreciation of differences" (*Human Dignity*). This statement reaffirms the perspectives expressed by Fenner (2005) and acknowledge the importance of cultural contexts and diversity in communication and development of identity.

The importance of culture contexts and diversity is further consolidated in the section *An Inclusive Learning Environment*. It states:

Knowledge exchange with individuals of all ages and from all over the globe will give the pupils perspectives on their own learning, their all-round development as young people and their identity, and show the value of cooperation across linguistic, political and cultural boundaries" (*An Inclusive learning environment*).

The statement promotes diversity, development of intercultural identity and cross-cultural communication. This statement reassures the importance of cultural contexts and diversity and reaffirms the perspectives of Fenner (2005) and Bøhn and Dypedahl (2017).

The Core Curriculum also comments on the unique differences that often constitute cultural contexts and diversity. It states:

A common framework gives and shall give room for diversity, and the pupils must be given insight into how *we live together with different perspectives, attitudes and views of life...* a good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity. (*Identity and Diversity*, my italicization)

One can see that there is a focus on recognition of cultural differences in individuals. This statement reflects perspectives related to the knowledge of and acceptance of various cultural contexts. I would argue that this indicate that education aim to acknowledge the unique differences. This sentiment relates to the perspectives on context and diversity by Hofstede & Hofstede (2004, cited in Ashwill & Oanh, 2009). They stress the importance of acknowledging the individual as a cultural being with distinctive attributes. I would also link this to the perspectives of Bøhn and Dypedahl (2017) and their insistence that the acknowledgement of diversity and cultural differences is not meant to promote cultural determinism, but rather the understanding of communication.

The Core Curriculum also promotes cultural context and diversity through sociolinguistic competence. It states:

[It is important]...that they develop their language identity and that they are able to use language to think, create meaning, communicate and connect with others. Knowledge about the linguistic diversity in society provides all pupils with valuable insight into different forms of expression, ideas and traditions. (*Identity and Diversity*)

This is supported by researchers who emphasize the importance of cross-cultural communication and sociolinguistic competence (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2018; Coperias-Aguilar, 2002). There is a common notion that language and the knowledge of linguistic diversity creates ICC and provide insight into foreign cultures.

The Core Curriculum also emphasize the role of educational institutions and teachers in teaching and promoting the significance of cultural contexts and diversity. It states that “school shall promote democratic values and attitudes that can counteract prejudice and discrimination. Pupils shall learn in school to respect the fact that people are different and learn to solve conflicts peacefully” (*Democracy and Participation*). This statement is supported by the perspectives of ICC by Cushner and Mahon (2009), that that teaching of intercultural competence must seek to combat racism, homophobia and prejudice and other damaging value systems. The perspectives of ICC expressed by Cushner & Mahon and the statement from the Core Curriculum reflect cultural diversity and reject value systems that do not recognize its importance.

The Core Curriculum also promotes a recognition of the relationship between cultural contexts and power structures. It states:

All the participants in the school environment must develop awareness of minority and majority perspectives and ensure that there is room for collaboration, dialogue and disagreement. Nurturing diversity on the one hand and including the individual on the other demands awareness of values and the exercising of professional judgment. (*Democracy and Participation*)

This statement is supported by the perspective of Coulby (2006) that mainstream debates on social issues are essential to intercultural teaching. Coulby also agrees with other researchers (Aase, 2004; Vold, 2014; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Cushner & Mahon, 2009) on the importance on emphasising the important role of educational institutions and teachers in promoting cultural contexts and diversity. This is reflected in the statement from the Core Curriculum, which specifically emphasize the importance of teachers' professional judgement in the teaching of topics related to diversity and identity.

### **Identity**

In this section I will explore how various statements in the Core Curriculum promote ICC in the form of intercultural identity. The promotion of intercultural identity is prevalent throughout the Core Curriculum. This is an aspect of ICC that promotes development of identity through engagement with various cultural expressions. The aspect regards the individual as the most essential subject in ICC, and is therefore slightly different from perspectives on context and diversity.

One can see the promotion of intercultural identity in *Identity and Diversity*. It states that “the experiences the pupils gain in the encounter with different cultural expressions and traditions help them to form their identity” (*Identity and Diversity*). This statement is well supported by and share many of the same sentiments with Kim (2009). There is a common idea that the individual benefits from interactions with different cultures and cultural expressions. The cultural exposure is essential in creating an intercultural identity.

The Core Curriculum also promotes intercultural identity through critical thinking and evaluation of one's own viewpoints and convictions. It states that “[Pupils] must...be able to understand that their own experiences, points of view and convictions may be incomplete or erroneous...Ethical awareness, which means balancing different considerations, is necessary if one is to be a reflecting and responsible human being” (*Critical Thinking and Ethical*

*Awareness*). This statement is supported by the perspectives on ICC by Bøhn & Dypedahl (2014). They emphasize the importance of relativizing one's own worldview to change perspectives. Also, it relates to the perspective of Kim (2009) and her insistence that intercultural identity is developed through the rejection of homogenous binaries. Open-mindedness creates a more reflecting identity. The sentiment of open-mindedness and critical thinking is elaborated further. The Core Curriculum emphasize the importance of cultural diversity by stating that "our aesthetic sense is developed when we are exposed to different cultural expressions, and this helps to point out new perspectives" (NDET, *the Joy of Creating, Engagement and the Urge to Explore*). I argue that this statement further consolidates the perspectives on critical thinking expressed by Bøhn & Dypedahl (2014) and Kim (2009). The statement is also in accordance with Fenner (2005) who argues that encounters with foreign cultures promote curiosity and insight.

The Core Curriculum also emphasize the importance of schools and educational institutions in promoting perspectives of ICC that are related to intercultural identity. It states that "the school's mission is the education and all-round development (Bildung) of all pupils... The teaching and training shall give the pupils a good foundation for understanding themselves, others and the world, and for making good choices in life" (*Principles for Education and All-Round Development*). This statement introduces educational institutions as integral promoters and creators in pupils' intercultural identity. The statement supports the notion that educational institutions should have an active role in promoting intercultural competence in the form of identity formation, bildung and the global citizen expressed in the literature review (Vold, 2014; Aase, 2005; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Coulby, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2009).

### **Global Citizen**

In this section I will discuss how various statements in the Core Curriculum on global citizenship may be linked to ICC as explored in the literature review. This is an aspect of ICC that promotes the individual becoming more aware of economic and social issues at an international level and adopting a dynamic worldview.

I argue that the *Identity and Cultural Diversity* section advocates the promotion of the global citizen. It states:

In a time when the population is more diversified than ever before, and where the world is coming closer together, language skills and cultural understanding are growing in importance. School shall support the development of each person's identity, make the pupils confident in who they are, and also present common values that are needed to participate in this diverse society and to open doors to the world and the future. (NDET, 2020, *Identity and cultural diversity*)

This statement is again alluding to the effects of globalism and the participation in a diverse and rapidly changing world. It focuses on the importance of cultural diversity, which relates to the literature regarding context and diversity (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Fenner, 2005;). It can also be connected to aspects of intercultural identity (Kim, 2009). However, I argue that this has the strongest correlation to the understanding of ICC by Cushner & Mahon (2009). Their emphasis on individuals situated in a global society, show the importance of 'the global citizen'. Cushner and Mahon (2009), similarly to the statement above, allude to an ever-changing world and pupils must acquire ICC to comprehend the scope of global issues. There is a common insistence that the pupils must broaden their intellectual landscape and adopt a dynamic worldview to participate in a diverse society. Through their education, pupils must be given the appropriate tools in order for them to understand global issues and participate in a global society as global citizens.

The insistence of the 'global citizen' can also be found in the description of the *Interdisciplinary Topics*. It states: "these three interdisciplinary topics in the curriculum are based on prevailing societal challenges which demand engagement and effort from individuals and local communities, nationally and globally" (2.5 *Interdisciplinary Topics*). There is again a persistence that the pupil must be able to think and act on an international level. This has a clear correlation to the perspectives of Ashwill and Oanh (2009) and their argument that the global citizen has a dynamic worldview and is committed to issues at local, national and international level. I argue that you also see the same sentiment in the *Sustainable Development*. It states that:

Sustainable development is based on the understanding that social, economic and environmental conditions are interconnected. Our lifestyles and resource consumption have local, regional and global consequences...This topic includes issues relating to the environment and climate, poverty and distribution of resources, conflicts, health, equality, demographics and education. (*Sustainable Development*)

Again, one can see a focus on a dynamic worldview. There is now a clear incentive to the awareness of global issues of economic and social justice, which is directly related to Ashwill and Oanh (2009). This is also in accordance with Coulby (2006) who view globalism and

international issues as the essential element in intercultural education. However, I would argue that this statement also introduces elements of empathy and the ability to be perceptive in complex situations, as mentioned by Cushner and Mahon (2009). Pupils must be able to evaluate and examine issues of great importance and must have the intellectual composure, endurance and patience to do so. Furthermore, I argue that *Democracy and Citizenship* promote the ‘global citizen’. It states that “the school shall stimulate the pupils to become active citizens, and give them the competence to participate in developing democracy in Norway” (*Democracy and Citizenship*). This statement is in accordance with the researchers who argue that educational institutions should have an active role in promoting intercultural competence, bildung and the global citizen (Vold, 2014; Aase, 2005; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Cushner & Mahon, 2009).

Based on this document analysis, I argue that perspectives of ICC are prevalent and actively promoted as core values in Norwegian education. I argue that ICC is not just understood as an outward understanding of intercultural interactions and practises, but also an inward realisation of one’s own identity. It is interesting to note that ICC is not just as a reflective and attitudinal understanding of various cultures and peoples, but also a process of self-realisation in an intercultural context. I make the argument that the perspectives of ICC that are found in the Core Curriculum and the aspects in the literature review are quite similar, and it seems to be concept validity in the how they are expressed. I would argue that is effortless to follow the transition from conceptual understandings by researchers and theorist, into the more pedagogical angle in the Core Curriculum. However, one must acknowledge that ICC is not mentioned and defined. Considering the research aim, these statements do not provide me with the opportunity to evaluate the validity in assessing pupils’ ICC because there are not any criteria for assessment in the Core Curriculum.

### **3.2.2 ENG1-03**

The ENG1-03 is, as of spring 2020, the current subject curriculum in English. It is also the subject curriculum that the written exam in English for spring 2019 is based on. I will argue that the most significant difference between the Core Curriculum and ENG1-03 is specificity. The core curriculum is much more specific in its promotion of ICC in the forms of cross-cultural competence, diversity and intercultural identity. It also explicitly explains why these competences are important and valuable. The Core Curriculum actively promotes diversity, intercultural identity, and the value of engagement with foreign cultures. ENG1-03 has a more

practical approach. Naturally, the subject curriculum has more focus on language learning and communication skills. However, the competences related to ICC are less concise. There are statements that I can connect to perspectives on ICC, but it takes interpretation and willingness. The interpretation and implementation of perspectives of ICC is less definitive, and it requires more professional judgement from teachers.

One can see the promotion of cross-cultural communication in ENG1-03. It states that “to succeed in a world where English is used for international communication, it is necessary to be able to use the English language and to have knowledge of how it is used in different contexts” (*Purpose*). This statement does indicate that pupils must be able to use language as a tool for cross-cultural communication, and it relates to the perspectives of researchers who view ICC as cross-cultural communication (Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Fantini, 2009; Coperias-Aguilar, 2002). However, I will argue that the purpose of language is more focused on the application of a practical competence in this context. The statement does not allude to the reflective and attitudinal benefits of interaction with foreign cultures. One can see the same tendency in other statements. The ENG1-03 states that “...when using the language for communication we must also be able to take cultural norms and conventions into consideration” (*Purpose*). The statement can be linked to the perspectives of researchers on context and the importance of diversity (Fenner, 2005; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Coulby, 2006). However, they are not explicitly promoted. Pupils must be able to consider cultural norms and conventions, but there is not the same active promotion of engagement, acknowledgment and reflection as one can see in the Core Curriculum.

Furthermore, the ENG1-03 does emphasize the importance of language in the interaction with foreign cultures. It states:

...the subject of English shall contribute to providing insight into the way people live and different cultures where English is the primary or the official language...learning about the English-speaking world and the increasing use of English in different international contexts will provide a good basis for understanding the world around us... (*Purpose*)

The statement does refer to perspectives on cultures and cultural contexts. It does mention insight into and knowledge of foreign cultures, which are aspects of ICC. However, the statement is unspecific. I would argue that according to the wording of the statement, the pupils have a passive role in acquiring knowledge about cultures and ways of life. It does not explicitly explain the value of cultural insight, diversity or the benefits of cross-cultural

communication which are important parts of developing ICC according to researchers in the literature review (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2014; Fenner, 2005; Coulby, 2006).

The ENG1-03 connects the application of language competence to heightened cross-cultural communication. It states that “development of communicative language skills and cultural insight *can* promote greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds” (*Purpose*, my italicization). This statement does link more actively to the more attitudinal and reflective perspectives of researchers on cultural contexts and diversity. However, I will still argue that the statements are far more general, passive and reserved than those found in the Core Curriculum. I make the argument that the word ‘can’ does take the urgency out of the whole statement and do not reflect the importance that is expressed in the Core Curriculum and the literature review.

The ENG1-03 subject curriculum does have terminology that is similar to that found in the literature, and does mention ‘cultural competence’. However, the term is not defined or explained. Moreover, it is not seen as a central aim, but an ability that will strengthen democratic involvement. It states that “...language and *cultural competence* promote the general education perspective and strengthen democratic involvement and co-citizenship” (*Purpose*, my italicization). This statement mentions ‘cultural competence’ and does for the first time include aspects of democracy and global citizenship that can be linked to perspectives of the ‘global citizen’ expressed in the literature review by Cushner & Mahon (2009). However, I would argue that the statement is delivered with a certain assumption of cultural competence that is not thoroughly explained.

### **Main subject areas**

The main subject area *Culture, Society and Literature* is the subject area that is connected to perspectives on ICC. The three other subject areas, *language learning, oral communication* and *written communication*, I argue are competencies related to specific skills of acquisition of knowledge. *Culture, society and Literature* are more related to content and the implementation of competences aims in the classroom.

*Culture, Society and Literature* is the subject area that have most in common with perspectives of ICC. It states that “it is based on the English-speaking countries and covers key topics connected to social issues, literature and other cultural expressions” (*Main subject areas: Culture, society and literature*). This statement can be linked to the perspectives of Coulby (2006) and Cushner & Mahon (2009) on educational institutions role in promoting



contemporary issues of global relevance. However, the statements are not definitive and the scope of engagement with such issues is not specified.

The subject curriculum does promote the importance of being able to evaluate various cultural expressions to create valuable interaction with others. It states that “...literary texts and cultural forms of expressions from different media... [are] *essential* to develop knowledge about, understanding of and respect for the lives and cultures of other people” (*Main Subject Areas: Culture, Society and Literature*, my italicization). This statement relates to perspectives on the importance of cultural context expressed by Coulby (2006), and Fenner’s notion that diversity of cultural texts increases understanding (2005). This statement also reflects the intention expressed in the Core Curriculum and the literature review, by emphasizing that this is ‘essential’.

### **Competence Aims**

The competence aims have the same issues as the rest of the subject curriculum, namely that the statements are less definitive, unspecific and not concrete. There are 27 competence aims in total, and I can justify the connection to ICC in four of them. The four competence aims are:

- discuss and elaborate on culture and social conditions in several English-speaking countries
- present and discuss current news items from English language sources
- Discuss and elaborate on English language films and other forms of cultural expressions from different media
- Discuss and elaborate on texts by and about indigenous peoples in English-speaking countries

(*Competence Aims: Culture, Society and Literature*).

All of these competence aims have components that can be linked to perspectives on ICC, such as cross-cultural communication, diversity and the importance of contemporary social issues. However, the competence aims are less definitive and the scope of implementation of ICC is not specified. It depends on how teachers and pupils interpret ‘discuss’ and ‘elaborate’, and to what degree they find these competences to be important. It requires a considerable knowledge about perspectives on ICC, and professional judgement and ability to teach such knowledge properly. I argue that the concept validity of perspectives of ICC are considerably weakened in the competence aims. The perspectives of ICC are not thoroughly explained or expressed, and it is increasingly difficult to see the connection between the competence aims and ICC without being explicitly made aware of it.

### 3.2.3 ENG01-04

The ENG01-04 subject curriculum is the upcoming subject curriculum in English that is scheduled to be implemented 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 2020. Compared to the ENG1-03, the ENG01-04 is much more specific in its description of culture learning related to perspectives of ICC. They are not two separate forms of learning that can potentially benefit from each other, but interacting with each other and seen as a complex competence. ENG01-04 is also the only steering documents in this entire document analysis that actually mention the term ‘intercultural competence’. Most aspects of culture that I relate to perspectives of ICC are found in the sections *The Subject’s Relevancy and Central Values*, *Core Elements* and *Competence Aims and Assessment*. There are elements of ICC in the sections *Interdisciplinary Topics* and *Basic Skills* too. However, the statements are almost identical to those in the sections mentioned above, and I do not want to repeat myself too much.

#### **The Subject’s Relevancy and Central Values**

In this section one can see that the purpose of language learning is closely linked to culture learning. It states:

English is a central subject for cultural understanding, communication, bildung and identity development. The subject shall give pupils a foundation to communicate with others on a local and global level, regardless of cultural and national background. English should promote the development of *intercultural understanding* of various life choices, mindsets and patterns of communication.

Engelsk er et sentralt fag for kulturforståelse, kommunikasjon, danning og identitetsutvikling. Faget skal gi elevene et grunnlag for å kommunisere med andre lokalt og globalt, uavhengig av kulturell og språklig bakgrunn. Engelsk skal bidra til å utvikle elevenes interkulturelle forståelse av ulike levemåter, tenkesett og kommunikasjonsmønstre.

*(The Subject’s Relevancy and Central Values, my translation, my italicization)*

As I state above, the cohesion between language learning and culture learning seems to be much more clearly expressed in ENG01-04. There are several terms that are linked to ICC in this statement. The statement relates to the perspectives on ICC in the form of cross-cultural communication (Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Coperias-Aguilar, 2002). It also mentions the importance of bildung and identity, which are two integral aspects to ICC (Fenner, 2005; Aase, 2005; Kim, 2009; Ashwill & Oanh, 2009). The statement also includes the term ‘intercultural understanding’, which can be linked to perspectives on the importance and acceptance of diversity and cultural contexts (Coulby, 2006; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017;

Fenner, 2005). I will also argue that ‘intercultural understanding’ do relate more do the common threads of reflective and attitudinal abilities instead of practical skills.

ENG01-04 also emphasize the importance of diversity and a reflective mind-set. There is a heightened focus on critical thinking and evaluation. It states:

Knowledge about and an exploratory approach to language, communication patterns, ways of life, mindsets, and social conditions allow for new perspectives on the world and ourselves. The subject should aid pupils to understand that their perceptions of the world are culturally relative. This can allow for more ways to interpret the world, contribute in creating curiosity and engagement, and combat prejudices.

Kunnskap om og en utforskende tilnærming til språk, kommunikasjonsmønstre, levemåter, tenkesett, og samfunnsforhold åpner for nye perspektiver på verden og oss selv. Faget skal bidra til å utvikle elevenes forståelse av at deres oppfatning av verden er kulturavhengig. Dette kan åpne for flere måter å tolke verden på, bidra til å skape nysgjerrighet og engasjement, og medvirke til å forebygge fordommer.

*(The Subject's Relevancy and Central Values, my translation)*

The statement shows perspectives on the importance of diversity and exposure to other cultures (Fenner, 2005), relativizing one’s own viewpoints, and perspectives on combating cultural determinism (Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017). It also actively promotes perspectives on ICC that seek to combat prejudice (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Coulby, 2006). It also advocates a more active engagement with cultural expressions, much like in the Core Curriculum. Pupils are not meant to merely observe or be able to present cultural differences. Pupils are meant to engage with curiosity, which is a common sentiment in the literature review on ICC.

### **Core Elements**

ENG01-04 also mentions the importance of literature and various types of texts in the promotion of ICC. Literature and English texts are not only means to achieve proper language. In fact, the engagement with English texts is viewed just as equally as a foundation to develop ICC. In the *Core Elements* section, it states:

Working with English texts contributes in giving pupils knowledge about and experience with linguistic and cultural diversity, and also insight into indigenous peoples ways of life, mindsets and traditions. By reflecting, interpreting and critical evaluating various types of English texts, the pupils shall acquire language, and knowledge about culture and society. Consequently, the pupils develop *intercultural competence* so they can relate to different ways of life, mindsets and patters of communication. The

pupils should have a foundation to view their own and others identity in a multilingual and multicultural context.

Arbeid med engelskspråklige tekster bidrar til å gi elevene kunnskap om og erfaring med språklig og kulturelt mangfold, og også innsikt i urfolks levemåter, tenkesett og tradisjoner. Gjennom å reflektere over, tolke og kritisk vurdere ulike typer engelskspråklige tekster skal elevene tilegne seg språk og kunnskap om kultur og samfunn. Elevene utvikler med dette interkulturell kompetanse slik at de kan forholde seg til ulike levemåter, tenkesett og kommunikasjonsmønstre. Elevene skal få et grunnlag for å se sin egen og andres identitet i en flerspråklig og flerkulturell sammenheng.

*(Core Elements: Engagement with English Texts, my translation).*

First thing to note is the inclusion of the term ‘intercultural competence’. Although ICC is not specifically defined, one can get a clearer understanding of what the term encompasses in the subject curriculum. ICC is described as a component in culture learning that relates to the perspectives in the literature review on diversity, cross-cultural communication and identity.

### **Competence Aims**

I argue that the competence aims in ENG01-04 do have the same issues as those in ENG1-03, mainly that they are unspecific and unclear. There are only two competence aims that I would argue are related to perspectives on ICC. The two competence aims are:

- Explore and reflect on diversity and social conditions in the English-speaking world with historical context.  
Utforske og reflektere over mangfold og samfunnsforhold i den engelskspråklige verden ut fra historiske sammenhenger.
- Discuss and reflect on form, content and methods in English cultural forms of expression from different mediums, including music, film and games.  
diskutere og reflektere over form, innhold og virkemidler i engelskspråklige kulturelle uttrykksformer fra ulike medier, inkludert musikk, film og spill.

*(Competence Aims and Assessment)*

Much like the competence aims in ENG1-03, the competence aims can be linked to perspectives on ICC, such as diversity, the importance of contemporary social issues and cultural contexts. However, they are indefinite and unspecific. Their meaning and scope are dependent on how teachers and pupils interpret the statements and to what degree they find them important. However, the rest of the subject curriculum is quite specific and detailed in its description of ICC. Therefore, I would argue that it possible to relate the competence aims

to specific abilities or skills, and understand the scope and intended implementation of ICC in teaching.

### **3.2.4 Short Summary**

The main difference between the two subject curriculums is the terminology. I argue that the expression of perspectives of ICC have a much clearer connection to those in the Core Curriculum and the literature review. There is therefore a stronger concept validity of the perspectives of ICC that are expressed in the in the ENG01-04 and the Core Curriculum. It gives me the impression that perspectives of ICC will have a more significant role in Norwegian education in the future. However, the competence aims in both subject curriculums are unspecific. It is also difficult to evaluate the assessment validity in measuring pupils' ICC because there are no guidelines on how teachers are meant to assess any of these competences. I will therefore in the next section analyse the exam documents and evaluate the assessment criteria.

## **3.3 Assessment of ICC in the Examination Guide and Exam Questions**

In this section I will analyse and present my understanding of how competences related to ICC is advocated in the documents relevant to the exam, such as the examination guide and the exam document. In the section above, I have analysed the inclusion of perspectives of ICC in the steering documents, and evaluated the concept validity across the three documents. In this section, there is a change in focus on validity. There is now a focus on assessment validity. This document analysis aims to evaluate how the documents ensure validity in measuring pupils' abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. I conduct this document analysis to investigate my first research question; "to what extent do the exam questions and assessment criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC". This section I will explore how the examination guide and exam question ensure the validity in measuring the skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC that were presented in the previous section.

### **3.3.1 Examination guide**

As I have expressed in section 2.2, I argue that ICC is described and advocated differently depending on what steering document one is examining. It is therefore important to examine the examination guide in an attempt to establish what steering documents that both examiners are meant to follow at the exam. If pupils are meant to consider the Core Curriculum in

addition to the ENG1-03 subject curriculum at the exam, I would argue that it requires them to show a much more intricate and reflective understanding of ICC. The analysis of the examination guide will also function as an evaluation on whether the examination guide is an appropriate guide for valid assessment of ICC in the future. The analysis gives an indication on how the examination guide, in its current format, would ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC as it is expressed in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum and the new steering documents.

The examination guide for 2019 gives information about the exam, and about how the exam is assessed. It states in the document that it is relevant for both pupils and examiners (p. 2). It gives me information on what pupils must focus on at the exam, and what examiners assess. The exam guide states that “the external examiners must use the guide as a common framework in their work “Sensorane må bruke rettleiinga som ei felles referanseramme i arbeidet sitt” (p. 2, my translation). It is therefore clear that all examiners are supposed to use this document, and that it is an important document for assessment of pupils' competences.

I argue that it is not clearly stated in the examination guide what steering documents that examiners should use as outline for their assessment at the exam. The examination guide does state that “The entire *curriculum*, including Vg1 – programmes for general studies and Vg2 – vocational education programmes, are relevant at the exam” “Til eksamen er heile *læreplanen* til og med Vg1 Studieførebuande utdanningsprogram/Vg2 Yrkesfaglege utdanningsprogram aktuell” (p. 2, my translation, my italicization). I initially assumed that ‘læreplan’, in this context, would encapsulate the subject curriculum and the Core Curriculum. However, the exam guide also states that “The entire subject curriculum is relevant at the exam” “Til eksamen er heile læreplanen for faget aktuell” (p. 4, my translation, my italicization). I therefore presume that the exam is limited to the ENG1-03 subject curriculum, and would be limited to the ENG01-04 subject curriculum in the future. I make this presumption also because I figure the exam guide would use the word ‘læreplanverket’ if they meant to include the Core Curriculum. I must emphasize again that this is my assumption, and that I cannot make a definitive conclusion on whether or not the Core Curriculum is included in the exam based on the exam guide.

The exclusion of the Core Curriculum would also reduce the scope of the assessment substantially, especially considering the relevancy of ICC. By scope of assessment I mean the available material that is relevant for the examiners to take into consideration when grading at the exam. As I mention in section 3.2.2, I argue that the importance of ICC is much more

prevalent in the Core Curriculum than in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum. If the understanding of ICC at the exam is limited to the perspectives given in the ENG1-03, I argue that it will affect the examiners' assessment of it. The ENG1-03 subject curriculum does not describe ICC in a definitive manner, and the validity of the assessment of ICC will be less supported. The subject curriculum does not have many of the reflective perspectives and attitudinal nuances of ICC that the Core Curriculum encourages. Therefore, I argue that the exclusion of the Core Curriculum in the assessment process, will limit the assessment of ICC because the definition of ICC is less substantiated.

Furthermore, the exam guide states that the exam questions are based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum. The statement is not specified further, and I do believe that it can lead to potential confusion on what documents that examiners should use in their assessment.

The exam guide states that:

The exam tasks are based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum. They test the pupils' overall competence in the main subject areas; Language learning, written communication, and culture, society and literature.

Eksamensoppgåvene er baserte på kompetansemåla i læreplanen for faget. Dei prøver den samla kompetansen til elevane ut frå hovudområda Språklæring, Skriftleg kommunikasjon og Kultur, samfunn og litteratur. (p. 2, my translation)

I argue that the examination guide contradict itself with this statement. It is not clear what steering documents that examiners are supposed to consider. The examination guide states, as mentioned above, that the entire curriculum is relevant for the exam. However, I argue that this statement limits the only relevant material for assessment to the competence aims in the subject curriculum. If the exam questions are limited to competence aims, there is no viable reason for examiners to measure pupils' abilities according to any other document. This is important because I argue that ICC is expressed and defined differently according to what document one uses as a measure for assessment. If the assessment is limited to the competence aims only, the conceptual understanding of ICC is restricted. I must specify that this is my understanding, but I do believe it is likely that examiners come to the same conclusions based in this statement. I argue that this issue will not subside regardless of the implementation of the new ENG01-04 subject curriculum. As I stated in section 3.2.3, I believe that the competence aims in both subject curriculums are unspecified and diffuse, and do not reflect the perspectives of ICC expressed in the Core Curriculum and the literature review in a proper manner. Therefore, I argue that if the examination guide is to ensure

validity in measuring pupils' ICC, it is essential that the entire subject curriculum and the Core Curriculum are included in the scope of available assessment material.

The exam guide states that examiners assess the exam answers according to the task instructions. It states that:

The task instruction dictates how the examiner will assess the exam answer. It is therefore important that the pupil answers all the points in the task instructions. The examiner will assess all the points, but the points should not be prioritized. When the grade is given, the examiners assesses the competence that is exhibited in the exam answer.

Opgåveinstruksjonen er styrande for korleis sensor skal vurdere svaret. Derfor er det viktig at eleven svarer på alle delane av oppgåveinstruksjonane. Sensor skal vurdere alle delane, men dei ulike delane skal ikkje vektast. Når karakteren blir sett, skal sensor vurdere kompetansen som er vist i eksamenssvaret. (p. 3, my translation)

I argue that the examination guide keeps problematizing the assessment process. It states that the task instruction dictates how the examiner will assess, but it does not specify *how* the task instruction will dictate the assessment. It states that the examiners will assess the competence that is displayed in the exam answer, but it does not specify *how* they will assess that competence or according to what criteria that competence is supposed to be measured. Furthermore, I would argue that this limits the scope of assessment even further. I argue that the competence aims are vague, and it requires substantial abilities to incorporate them into a reflective and cohesive text that show ICC. On the other hand, understandings of ICC are well presented and expressed in the Core Curriculum and there are many paragraphs and several sections that are dedicated to perspectives compatible with ICC. You do take a lot of material away both from the examiners and pupils.

The exam guide does state the assessment material and steering documents that examiners should use to assess the exam responses. However, the contradicting wording and purposes of the various assessment material and steering documents do not give examiners an indication to what standard of measurement they are supposed to use. It states:

The examiner must assess the pupil's competence with reference to the curriculum, examination guide and assessment matrix. The graded assessment should be based on an overall impression of the pupil's competence, as it is conveyed in exam answer.

Sensor må vurdere elevens kompetanse med utgangspunkt i læreplanen, eksamensrettleiinga og vurderingsmatrisa. Vurderinga med karakter skal basere seg på eit samla inntrykk av elevens kompetanse slik han kjem fram i eksamenssvaret. (p. 5, my translation)



I would argue that his statement furthers problematize the available assessment criteria and material. The statement introduces the importance of the assessment matrix that is found in the examination guide. I make the argument that this is confusing because teachers are not given concrete guidelines on *what* to assess according *what* measurement. The examination guide states earlier that the exam questions are based on the competence aims in the subject, which I argue would lead many examiners to believe that they are to measure pupils' abilities according to the competence aims. However, this statement introduces a new independent assessment matrix with its own criteria. How are examiners supposed to balance these various criteria without any clear guidelines? I argue that this has potentially huge consequences for the assessment validity at the exam, because the examiners are not given concrete guidelines to how and according to what criteria they are to assess. Consequently, the measurement of ICC is potentially highly inconsistent, because validity is dependent on solid and clear criteria. Furthermore, I believe that the issue of validity would start long before examiners assess pupils' ICC. These guidelines are difficult to comprehend even when evaluating the assessment validity of more practical abilities such as grammar, text structure and use of sources. By the time examiners are supposed to consider the assessment of attitudinal abilities such as ICC, I argue that there is no cohesive understanding that would ensure validity in assessment. It would require a considerable amount of professional judgement and discernment from the examiners. They are not only meant to assess pupils' abilities, but also evaluate what criteria that are relevant for the assessment. And even though examiners do have the professional judgement to do this, there is no guarantee that examiners will have a united understanding which would ensure validity in assessment.

As stated in the previous paragraph, the exam guide includes an additional assessment matrix that should function as a common framework in the examiners' assessment process. There are three bullet points in this matrix that I deem to be assessment of perspectives than can be related to ICC or competence related to aspects of cultural learning. However, I believe that I am generous when I make that connection, and would make the argument that they have more in common with competences related to written communication. The assessment matrix states that an exam response with high achievement:

Contains relevant and precise exam answers that show good understanding of theme, instructions, scope, and sources.

Shows that the pupils use and integrates relevant content from various sources in an independent, critical and consistent manner when it is appropriate.

Explains, elaborates and discuss subjects in an independent and thorough manner. The content is well substantiated with fitting examples.

Inneheld relevante og presis oppgavesvar som viser god forståing for tema, instruksjonar, krav til omfang og kjelder som er brukte.

gjør greie for, utdjuar og drøftar emne på ein sjølvstendig og grundig måte, innhaldet er godt underbygd med velvalde eksempel.

Viser at elevene bruker og integrerer relevant innhald frå ulike kjelder på ein sjølvstendig, kritisk og etterprøvbar måte der det er formålstenleg.

(Exam guide, p. 7, my translation)

I argue that the biggest confusion regarding these criteria, is their relevancy. Why are examiners and pupils given additional criteria for the exam, when similar and even more specific criteria are found in the competence aims in the subject curriculum? Furthermore, these criteria are more related to written communication. They are the only criteria in the examination guide that I could argue had even a slight connection to competences related to ICC. However, there are no indication to how pupils should express that competence, or how examiners should evaluate such competence. I make the argument that skills, abilities and knowledge related to perspectives of ICC that are expressed in the ENG01-04 subject curriculum, the Core Curriculum and the literature review are discarded in the examination guide. Teachers are not given sufficient information on how to measure pupils' ICC. Furthermore, I argue that the criteria in the examination do not aid examiners' discernment in distinguishing between high and medium achievements. The distinction between 'grade 3-4' and 'grade 5-6' is that the answer:

- Contains relevant exam answers that show understanding of theme, instructions, scope, and sources.
- Contains relevant and *precise* exam answers that show *good* understanding of theme, instructions, scope, and sources.

(p. 7, my italicization)

The only difference and, in worst case scenario, the potential difference between a grade 3 and grade 6, is the subtle addition of the two words *precise* and *good*. I do not see how statements like these are going to aid examiners in ensuring validity in assessment, regardless of ICC, grammar, text structure, use of sources or any other competence.

I still cannot make a confident judgement on whether the Core Curriculum is a document relevant for assessment according to the examination guide. The document analysis is my own subjective understanding of the examination guide. However, I believe that only strengthens my argument. Examiners have their own professional judgement, and they will also analyse this document according to their own subjective understanding. I believe that my analysis that the examination guide can be perceived as unclear, and that examiners might evaluate its content and purpose differently. This has consequences for the validity of assessment of ICC. ICC is such an intricate and complex ability, and it requires clear demarcation of concept and guidelines for assessment in order to ensure validity in its measurement.

### **3.3.2 Exam questions**

In this section I will analyse how the exam questions ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. As it is stated in the examination guide, the exam questions are based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum that I mention in section 3.2.2. Those competence aims were (1) discuss culture and social conditions in English-speaking countries, (2) Discuss current news items, and (3) discuss and elaborate on forms of cultural expressions from different media. All of these competence aims are reflected in the exam questions, especially in task 2. The pupils are generally required to discuss and elaborate on social issues, and present and discuss current news items from English-speaking countries (See appendix 11). Text 2a requires pupils to create a text about youth, where they explore the topic of youth activism. Text 2c requires the pupils to compare a text they have work with in class and a text from the preparation booklet. They are required to compare, explain and discuss the text with relation to the topic of the exam. Text 2D requires the pupils to discuss a current issue in an English-speaking country and the role of youth in addressing the issue.

It seems clear that the exam questions are based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum. The question is whether the connection to the competence aims is enough to ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC. As I argue mention in section 3.2.2, I argue that the concept validity on ICC is weakened in the competence aims. There is simply not enough elaboration on competences that constitute ICC for teachers to have a consistent understanding of what skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. The ICC that pupils display will be the result of how they manage to 'discuss' and 'explore' the topic in their exam answers. I argue that their ability to do so, is dependent on how they actively use and

engage with the preparation booklet. As I mentioned in the section above, I do believe that the preparation booklet does have many texts that show perspectives of ICC. It is therefore essential that the pupils actively use that material. The pupils have the opportunity, and are often required, to connect their answer to the texts in preparation booklet. Their ability to actively use these texts, elaborate and explore the social issues, and present this discussion in a coherent manner will be the foundation of their ICC. This requires reflective abilities and composure in the construction of argumentative texts. The exam questions require a considerable amount of judgement and discernment to dissect if pupils are to display skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. Since that requirement is not explicitly stated, both the concept validity and assessment validity of ICC will be inconsistent.

The exam document also complicates the question on what criteria that the exam questions are based on. It states in the exam document that the criteria for achievement is given in the examination guide (Appendix 10). As I explained in the previous section, I find the examination guide to be unspecific, unclear and inconsistent in its explanation of assessment criteria and achievement criteria. However, the most significant issue is the additional criteria that teachers and pupils are meant to evaluate the importance of. In the previous section I explained how I argue that the exam questions are near duplicates of the competence aims in the subject curriculum. Why are therefore teachers and pupils referred to the examination guide with its separate criteria? I definitely do see the potential for this to be confusing for pupils. With reference to the last section, I also do not believe that pupils do have the discernment to distinguish the difference between high and medium achievement based on the wording in the criteria. Furthermore, the exam document does not mention the subject curriculum or the Core Curriculum. The exclusion of the subject curriculum and the Core Curriculum means that the available material with any explanations of what and how to express ICC is excluded from the relevant assessment criteria. This affects the validity in measuring pupils' ICC, because the vital connection to the perspectives of ICC expressed in the Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum are overlooked. The exam document and questions do not provide teachers with any clear indication that ICC or any competences that can be related to ICC are important. I argue that this a critical issue because perspectives of ICC are prevalent in the ENG01-04 subject curriculum, the 2017, Core Curriculum and in the texts in the preparation booklet. I make the argument that this will affect the validity in assessing ICC, because the examination guide does not provide the necessary criteria for achievement or assessment. Furthermore, it states that pupils can access

the examination guide at NDET's website. I do not see how pupils are supposed to access the NDET website if they are not allowed to access the internet during the examination. This is not a big issue, more of an additional observation. However, it gives me the impression that there is a lack of coherence in the information that is presented in the relevant exam documents.

### 3.4 Short summary

The immediate and most significant issue is, in my opinion, the discrepancy in the expression of the importance of perspectives on ICC in the various documents. There is cohesion between the Core Curriculum and the new subject curriculum. Perspectives of ICC are emphasized, advocated and promoted as important of Norwegian education in both documents. However, the fact that ICC is not explicitly defined and explained does mean that there still is not a clear emphasis on ICC. The issue is the fact that there seems not to be a coherent understanding that these perspectives are inherently interconnected and parts of a bigger concept. The perspectives of ICC are therefore scattered across and divided into multiple core values and interdisciplinary topics. What are the consequences of this? Perspectives of ICC are there, but there is still not a coherent and common understanding of ICC. The Core Curriculum and the new subject curriculum provides a fragmented understanding of ICC that needs interpretation to fully realize. I would argue that the various attitudinal perspectives of ICC would be much easier to compartmentalize for both teachers and pupils if there existed a clear definition and demarcation of the concept. If ICC was seen as an important, dynamic and overarching competence, I argue that there would be much easier to categorize, draw connections and assess competences related to the various essential perspectives of ICC.

The importance of perspectives on ICC expressed in the Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 is not transferred into the exam questions and examination guide. It is important to consider that I aim to have a forward-looking perspective while examining the documents. My evaluation gives an indication on how the examination guide, in its current format, would ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC as it is expressed in the new steering documents. However, this is not only an issue if I am to evaluate the examination guide and exam questions in light of the new Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum. The same issue arises if I am to evaluate them in the light of the current subject curriculum. Although the ENG1-03 subject curriculum do have inconsistencies in its expressions and

advocacy of ICC, there are statements with perspectives of ICC that are reflected in the literature review. I argue that the examination guide, and the exam document's reference to the examination guide, discard the perspectives of ICC that are expressed in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum. I argue that the lack of coherence and cooperation between the documents, prevents validity of measuring pupils' ICC. Firstly, teachers are not given an explicit and clear conceptual framework of ICC and what aspects it encompasses. It is clear that this has negative effects for the concept validity of ICC, because teachers do consequently not have a coherent and common understanding of the concept. Because of the lack of explicit definition of ICC, I would argue that there are neither any clear assessment criteria to ensure assessment validity.

## 4. Literature review

In this chapter I will conduct a document analysis of previous research on the role of ICC in education and teachers' understanding of ICC, their beliefs regarding classroom implementation of ICC and assessment. I do this because it will provide me with an understanding of the existing studies in the field of study. The review will provide me with the opportunity to investigate my second research question; "what are teachers' understanding and beliefs of ICC, the exam questions and assessment" because there are several studies that have explored similar topics. I argue that pupils do not develop ICC though a study of the available steering documents. I argue that pupils primarily develop skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC through classroom activities constructed by the teachers. In section 4.1 I examine the role of ICC in foreign language teaching. Section 4.2 consists of previous research on professional opinions on the relationship between ICC and assessment. In section 4.3 I explore previous research and studies on teachers' understanding of ICC and their beliefs on its implication for classroom teaching. I examine previous research and studies on teachers' beliefs on summative assessment in section 4.4. This review functions a foundation to the knowledge within the field of study before a conduct my interviews with teachers. It will provide me with relevant and contextual information for when I discuss my findings from the interviews.

### 4.1 Introduction and intercultural competence in foreign language teaching

Intercultural competence is becoming an important aspect of foreign language learning in Norway. This is evident by the inclusion of the term in the new and revised curriculum. It is seen as a process of critical thinking, evaluation of different viewpoints, and exploration of diverse cultures. It is therefore important to explore teachers' beliefs on the definition of the term and its application in various aspects of English education. One can also see the educational emphasis of intercultural competence in an international context too. Several studies (Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010; Castro, Sercu & Garcia, 2010, Tran & Dang, 2014) have highlighted the increasing relevance and importance of intercultural competence in the classroom and in assessment. Castro et al. (2010) have argued that the inclusion of ICC has enhanced the importance of attitudinal and behavioural objectives in language learning. They state that "recent curricular guidelines tend to focus more explicitly on the sociocultural dimension of foreign language education, distinguishing between cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural objectives to be attained in the area of language-and-culture teaching" (Castro,

Sercu & Garcia, 2010, p. 91). The increased focus on sociocultural aspects of language teaching do build on the conception that language and culture are interlocked, dependent on each other, and function as two aspects of the same phenomena. Researchers have therefore commented on the natural progression and inclusion of culture learning as a component in language learning. Tran & Dang (2014) state that “since culture plays such an important role in language teaching... incorporating culture in language teaching seems almost inevitable”. (Tran & Dang, 2014, 94). This reaffirms the notion expressed by researchers in the literature review, that ICC should be primary aim in education (Vold, 2014; Fenner, 2005; Cushner & Mahon, 2009).

Other studies such as Llurda & Lasagabaster (2010) support this statement, and argue that the ever-growing nature of multiculturalism and foreign language learning are connected and important aspects in education (p. 335) Researchers have also commented on the complications of the teachers’ role with an increased focus of ICC in an educational context. Castro et al. (2004) commented on the added responsibility of teachers, and the importance of contextualizing language learning. They state that “teachers are now expected not only to teach the foreign linguistic code, but also to contextualize that code against the sociocultural background associated with the foreign language and to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence” (Castro et al., 2004, p. 92). Studies also suggest that this new pedagogical and didactic consideration is a considerable challenge for foreign language teachers.

The concept of ICC is complex and intricate, and “...today’s teacher may not have the requisite disposition to be effective intercultural educators or the skills to guide young people to develop intercultural competence” (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 310). This is an interesting point because it highlights that learning is a complex process, which includes many factors and variables. One must make sure that the assessors are qualified and have a clear understanding of what intercultural competence would be in any context. Cushner & Mahon emphasize that “intelligent selection of culturally competent teacher behaviours would enable educators to facilitate the learning of students from multiple cultural backgrounds while providing them with the skills to succeed in an increasingly culturally diverse world” (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 307). One can see that Cushner & Mahon argue that true and valid cultural learning is a question and a process of structural importance. This thesis will not examine schools’ practices in educating their educators, and it will challenge the assumption that so called *culturally competent teachers* are a prerequisite for sufficient



intercultural teaching. As I will analyse further in chapter 7, I do believe that the 2017 Core Curriculum can aid teachers in providing clear guidelines for culturally competent learning.

ICC is becoming an increasingly important part of foreign language teaching, it is crucial to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs on ICC and its application in an educational context. Llurda & Lasagabaster (2010) suggest although ICC gains relevance and intellectual and conceptual reputation, that the practical implementation of ICC is still behind. This is illuminating an interesting pedagogical conundrum, because it suggests a contradiction between the intention of teaching and the outcome of teaching. Llurda & Lasagabaster argue that teachers still do view acquisition of language proficiency as the most important aspect of language learning in some countries, "despite their complete agreement with the fact that intercultural competence should be taught in the foreign language classroom, and that it encourages tolerance towards other cultures and their speakers" (Llurda & Lasagabaster, 2010, p. 329). The next sections will review literature which discuss and study (1) the relationship between intercultural competence and assessment, (2) teachers' beliefs on intercultural competence, and (3) teachers' beliefs on standardized testing.

## 4.2 Intercultural competence and assessment

This thesis explores how the exam criteria and exam questions ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam, and teachers' understanding of ICC. It is therefore important to look at studies on the relationship between intercultural competence and assessment. Bøhn and Dypedahl have argued that the problem with assessment of intercultural competence is the argument that intercultural competence is an attitude and awareness. They state that "assessment of intercultural competence [is] controversial because there is scepticism regarding assessing pupils' attitudes" "Vurdering av interkulturell kompetanse [er] kontroversielt fordi det er skepsis mot å vurdere elevens holdninger" (Bøhn & Dyndahl, 2017, p. 155). They argue that it is a complicated process to assess attitudes. This statement raises interesting questions with regards to assessment of intercultural competence. It provokes questions on whether teachers can assess intercultural competence, and how pupils can be allowed to demonstrate such competence. Alvino E. Fantini (2009) supports this notion and argues that intercultural competence is problematic to assess because criteria are difficult to define and contextualize. He states that "attitudes and awareness are not easily subjected to quantification and documentation" (Fantini, 2009, p. 459). Studies (Fenner, 2005; Deardorff, 2009) have therefore discussed the importance of defining clear and concrete competence

aims. Fenner states that assessors try to deconstruct intercultural competence to have more clear criteria. She states that “as of today it seems as if one is trying to divide intercultural understanding into smaller, measurable units” “per i dag ser det ut som man prøver å bryte interkulturell forståelse ned i mindre, målbare størrelser” (Fenner, 2005, p. 97). This is relevant to this thesis as I do intend to examine teachers’ perceptions on assessment of ICC at the summative exam. Darla Deardorff (2009) argues that defining and creating precise demarcations for assessment is a very important part of an assessment of cultural competence. She argues that:

The starting point for assessment of intercultural competence...is not with methods or tools but rather in defining what it is we are measuring and ensuring that the goals are aligned with overall mission and purpose of the course, program, or organization. (p. 477)

One can see that both Fenner and Deardorff comment on teachers’ practise in defining and contextualizing as demarcation of the term, and therefore constitute the specific criteria for assessment. However, I must state that Fenner (2005) do not view this practise as a productive mean to teach ICC, as ICC is not a competence that can be assessed under regular circumstances. She argues that this practise is problematic because it undermines the understanding of ICC as attitudes, awareness and a *bildung* process (p. 98). Considering the findings in the previous chapter in section 2.3, one can make the argument that Fenner’s concern has to a certain degree been realized in the current competence aims. I would also argue that the competence aims undermine the attitudinal, reflective aspects of ICC that are found in the Core Curriculum. Although Fenner and Deardorff both acknowledge teachers’ method of defining criteria, they are in disagreement on whether this is an advantageous initiation for teaching intercultural competence. This is relevant for me, because I want to examine teachers’ beliefs on ICC and how it can be assessed.

It is also important to examine the type of assessment used when assessing ICC. Fenner (2005) criticises the persistence of so-called “skill-tests” where teachers measure pupils’ skills as an indicator for intercultural competence. She argues that this is an international educational trend, and comments on the Norwegian equivalent in *nasjonale prøver*. This is a widely accepted form of criterion-referenced assessment. However, Fenner criticises this form of assessment when assessing intercultural competence, arguing that it judges pupils on their skills and not their attitudes or other communicative competencies. She argues that skill-tests “inquire what the pupils can do, not what they actually know or understand” “her spør man etter hva elevene kan utføre, ikke hva de egentlig har kunnskap om og forstår” (Fenner, 2005,

p. 98). This has a crippling effect on pupils' actual intercultural competence, because they spend more time meeting certain criteria. Fenner further states that it is evident that when the focus is on skill training, there will be less time to work with reflection, attitudes and identity development" "det sier seg selv at når fokus blir på ferdighetstrening, blir det mindre plass til å arbeide med refleksjon, holdninger og identitetsutvikling" (Fenner, 2005, p. 98). Fenner comments on this contradiction and argues that intercultural competence and assessment through skill-tests are incompatible. She states that "intercultural understanding and consciousness, which are essential in the development of *bildung* in foreign language learning, can hardly be reconciled with skill testing" "interkulturell forståelse og bevissthet som er avgjørende for utvikling av danning gjennom fremmedspråkopplæringen, kan vanskelig forenes med testing av ferdigheter" (Fenner, 2005, p. 98). This view is important to consider because my thesis is exploring the validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. It is beneficial to know that researchers do believe that ICC and skill testing are incompatible with each other.

Multiple researchers have supported this notion and argue that intercultural competence should be measured through a thorough and varied use of formative assessment (Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Munden & Sandhaug, 2017; Fenner, 2005, Fantini, 2009). Deardorff (2009) has therefore cautioned against assessing intercultural competence at a final summative exam. She argues that assessment of intercultural competence is a lengthy process which should be the responsibility of multiple assessors. She states that "a pitfall in assessing intercultural competence is "making assessment the responsibility of one individual and leaving assessment "to the end"" (Deardorff, 2009, p. 486). This is highly relevant to this thesis, because it is examining the validity of assessment of ICC at the final exam. Deardorff's concern with summative assessments of ICC will be a central point to address in the interviews. I want to examine my participants' beliefs on assessing ICC at a summative final exam.

### 4.3 Teachers' understanding of intercultural competence

There are different definitions and interpretations of ICC. Studies also show that teachers define ICC differently across cultures and countries (Castro, Sercu & Garcia, 2004; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Atay, Kurt, Camlibel, Ersin & Kaslioglu, 2009; Cheng 2012). However, the studies show that ICC is often understood within certain conceptual parameters, and that teachers emphasize various aspects of ICC in their teaching. Deardorff (2011) argues that

clearly defining terms and criteria should be the initial and essential foundation for an assessment. She states that “it is essential to arrive at a definition of intercultural competence before proceeding with any further assessment endeavours” (p. 66). Deardorff’s statement reaffirms the importance of concept validity before one evaluates assessment validity. This section will therefore examine previous research on teachers’ beliefs and understandings of ICC and its importance in foreign language teaching. I investigate this because I argue that teachers’ understanding of ICC is the starting point for their intercultural teaching. I make that argument on the presumption that teachers’ beliefs affect pupils’ competence. Hoffman & Seidel (2015) support my presumption by stating:

Teachers’ beliefs are widely acknowledged to influence instructional choices and teaching practices, and potentially determine, when, why, and how teachers interact with students. From a situated perspective, certain beliefs are related to teaching dispositions that promote superior motivation and learning outcomes for students. (p. 106)

Therefore, I do believe that investigating teachers’ beliefs of ICC is integral to evaluate the concept validity of ICC. This section covers teachers’ diverse understandings of ICC and its implementation in the classroom.

Many of the studies (Castro et al, 2004; Atay, Kurt, Camlibel, Ersin & Kaslioglu, 2009, Young & Sachdev, 2011; Gonen & Saglam, 2012) implement a research method which include a questionnaire which require participants to rank certain statements about culture learning, intercultural competence, etc. I mention their method because I argue that a questionnaire can affect teachers’ responses. Their answers are categorized by their rankings of certain pre-determined statements, instead of their own individual understandings. I argue that one might lose crucial nuances through such a questionnaire. This argument will be further substantiated in my method section. There is also a concern of terminology I should address. Many studies define perspectives of ICC in the classroom as *culture learning* or *cultural teaching* (Castro et al., 2004; Sercu, 2002; Atay et al., 2009) By studying the methods and results of the studies, I find no reason to strictly distinguish between ICC and culture learning/teaching in this section. The only difference that is worth noting is that ICC is perhaps perceived as a theoretical understanding, while *culture learning/teaching* seems to be the practical implementation of ICC in the classroom. The difference is often superficial, as teachers do not necessarily make a distinction between theoretical understanding and classroom implementation. I will therefore not make a distinction between ICC and culture learning/teaching, and I regard them as the same concept.

A study shows that foreign language teachers in Spain did, in most cases, view “culture from a pragmatic point of view, which means that culture teaching was defined in terms of the acquisition of information which allows pupils to participate and survive in the sociocultural reality of the foreign language” (Castro et al., 2004, p. 98). Furthermore, the same study shows that most important aspects of culture learning was in prioritized order: “Provide information about daily life and routines”, “Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other people and cultures” and “promote reflection of cultural differences” (p. 98-99). One can see that although the majority of teachers defined culture learning as the acquisition of information, there are aspect that promote reflection, exploration and attitudinal change. However, the study shows that a substantial majority of the teachers view culture learning as significantly less important than language learning. Almost 92% of participants agreed that the ratio between language learning and culture learning was 80% language and 20% culture (Castro et al., 2004, p. 100). This study shows that although aspects of reflection, tolerance and openness are important to teachers and their teaching, the practical implementation of ICC is not as prioritized as language teaching. This is important because it is connected to my conviction that teachers’ beliefs are important. If teachers deprioritize ICC in their teaching, it will limit the pupils’ exposure and interaction with such competence. I would argue that this also affect assessment validity, because teachers would not necessarily assess what they have not taught in class. I elaborate on this in section 7.2.

Lies Sercu (2002) has done similar studies in other countries as well. She examined the perceptions and beliefs on culture learning of foreign language teachers in Belgium, Denmark and Britain. In this study, most of the participants define ‘culture learning’ as acquisition and teaching of information (p. 154). Sercu further states that “teachers of French, English and German alike consider themselves most familiar with aspects relating to ‘daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink’, and least familiar with ‘international relations (political, economic and cultural)’” (Sercu, 2002, p. 155). Sercu states that teachers’ own competence in cultural matters have a natural effect on their teaching. She states that:

Since teachers define culture teaching mainly in terms of providing information, it can be assumed that their teaching practice will not be geared primarily towards promoting their pupils’ acquisition of intercultural skills, such as empathise with people living in the foreign culture, reflect on cultural differences and on one’s own culture and identity, and know how to handle intercultural contact situations. (p. 154)

She argues that the reflective and explorative aspects of culture learning will not be prioritized to teachers that expresses the belief that ICC is about transmitting facts about other cultures. I would make the argument that teachers with that understanding of culture learning do not assess ICC either. However, this gives credence to my argument that teachers' beliefs strongly affect pupils' ICC and their assessment of such competence, because teaching affects pupils' competence. Another study on teachers' beliefs on culture teaching of Turkish teachers reveal that the participants define 'culture teaching' as "the acquisition of the ability to use the foreign language for practical purposes and in terms of motivating students to learn foreign languages" (Atay et al., 2009, p. 132). A study by Gonen & Saglam (2012) on foreign language teachers in Turkey do support the results presented in Sercu et al., (2002), Castro et al., (2004) and Atay et al., (2009), being the prioritization of acquisition of knowledge on foreign cultures. However, the results indicate that participants do view knowledge about foreign cultures and daily life as a starting point to further learning. They prioritize the pragmatic knowledge dimension of 'culture teaching' to function as a foundation in a gradual process. One of the participants states that:

The students foremost need knowledge about the foreign culture, especially about the daily life. If they know how different people communicate, they will be more flexible in their communicative relations and this will pave the way to develop a more open attitude and tolerance to the target culture" (p. 35).

This is example that shows that some teachers view ICC as an educational and practical process. ICC is developed over time where pupils are given knowledge and exposure to other cultures and cultural contexts. The results also support the results in other studies (Castro, et al., 2004; Sercu, 2002; Atay et al., 2009) that aspects of critical thinking, reflection, exploration, empathy and tolerance are not discarded completely, but seen as integral parts of foreign language learning that are not given the same amount of time in the classroom (Gonen & Saglam, 2012, p. 42). Gonen & Saglam state that although there are some differences in how teachers define and prioritize aspects of culture and culture teaching, they usually emphasize the importance of pupils' ICC. They argue that teachers "generally stated that culture is an indispensable part of foreign language, and the language classroom should always welcome cultural elements for student success... Teachers' foremost objective to teach culture is to develop an openness and tolerance towards the target culture" (p. 43). However, one can once again see a discrepancy between teachers' ideal objective and the practical outcome in the classroom. The study shows that "Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink etc." where the only aspect of culture learning that more than 40% teachers

stated they dealt with ‘extensively’ (Gonen & Saglam, 2012, p. 42). This shows that even though teachers do have reflective and attitudinal understanding of ICC, the practical implication is often a pragmatic understanding. This can lead to the pupils having a skill-based competence based on the acquisition of knowledge, instead of the reflective and attitudinal competence promoted in the core values and other steering documents.

A study by S. Kilic (2013) on teachers’ beliefs on ICC in Turkey reports that English lecturers in Turkey “believe that the main objective of culture teaching is *to develop openness and tolerance towards other people and cultures* (Kilic, 2013, p. 52, cursive in original). This study distinguishes itself from the other studies above because it promotes attitudinal aspects of intercultural competence as the most important. Another study on the beliefs on intercultural competence of foreign language teachers in Hungary also show that participants advocate attitudinal and reflective aspects of intercultural competence. One of the participants lists “modesty, non-judgmental attitudes, flexibility, ability to adapt easily, openness, tolerance, critical thinking and the ability to draw back and observe,” as important aspects of culture teaching (Lazar, 2011, p. 121). Both of these studies show that some teachers have perceptions of ICC that are similar to the reflective and attitudinal understanding found in the core values and other steering documents. However, there are instances where teachers’ conceptual understandings of ICC are vague, and ICC part of their teaching. A study (Cheng, 2012) on English teachers’ beliefs on intercultural competence in Taiwan, reveal that intercultural competence can be seen as a combination of several abstract themes. Cheng (2012) states that:

The findings indicated several themes: 1) IC[\*] is a mixture of cultures, a phenomenon, and an invisible force; 2) IC develops naturally; 3) IC is about world culture and diverse cultures in the world; 4) IC deals with people from different cultures; and 5) IC addresses the vague concept of cultural self-awareness. (p. 171) \*IC is an abbreviation for *Intercultural Competence*.

The study shows that this fragmented understanding of ICC had a negative effect on the implementation of ICC in language teaching, as intercultural issues did not appear in their classes. The study also reveals that the teachers in Taiwan did not, at that time, have a theoretical framework for ICC (Cheng, 2012, p. 175). It is therefore important for me, during my interviews, to investigate what theoretical/conceptual framework the teachers derive their understandings of ICC from. One can make the argument that a shared conceptual framework will help teachers have a more consistent understanding of ICC, and consequently a more consistent assessment of pupils’ ICC.

An interesting study by Young & Sachdev (2011) illuminates teachers' beliefs on practical challenges of implementing intercultural competence into constructive classroom activities. Young & Sachdev explore the beliefs of teachers in the USA, UK and France on the application of intercultural competence in language programmes (p. 81). On a conceptual level, the definitions of and attitudes towards intercultural are quite similar to those of previous studies (Sercu, 2002; Castro et al., 2004; Atay et al., 2009). The study employs an educational model for intercultural competence constructed by Michael Byram, where intercultural competence “involves successfully mediating between cultures, the first culture, or ‘C1’, than individual was enculturated into, and a second, other culture, or ‘C2’, so than an individual aims to occupy a relativizing ‘C3’” (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 83). However, there were complications when this conceptual model were to be converted into a functional practice. Participants were critical to the potential outcomes if cultures and countries were to be discussed, evaluated and critiqued in the classroom. The participants were worried it would create unnecessary tension and conflict (p. 89). Young & Sachdev (2011) further state that:

...both the British and the American teacher groups stressed the need for a ‘safe, generally calm and unthreatening atmosphere’... in class – most agreed that such an atmosphere was difficult to create if topics such as religion and politics were issues for discussion. (p. 89)

One of the participants commented on a practical and ethical issue with intercultural competence. The participant stressed the difficulty of balancing tolerance and critical thinking in an educational context, stating “a sensitive person, even if engaged and curious, knows better than to raise this kind of thing. You cannot...have both controversy and sensitivity in the classroom ... some things are just too difficult” (Young & Sachdev, 2011, p. 89). Another participant acknowledges the statement and even argue that open discussions on potentially controversial topics are actively avoided, stating “the last thing you want in the classroom is real communication about this difficult stuff” (p. 89). These results show that intercultural competence have practical implications as well as conceptual aspects. In the context of this study, it seems to be ethical considerations which stifled intercultural discussions in the classrooms. The teachers did not want to create unnecessary conflict in the classroom by discussing potentially controversial topics. The study does not conclude on whether this hesitancy is a consequence of the teachers' lack of competence, confidence or classroom management. However, I should refer to the *Core Values* which do require teachers do engage in these types of discussions. Under the heading *1.3 Critical thinking and ethical awareness* it states that “if new insight is to emerge, established ideas must be scrutinised and criticised”



(NDET, 2020). The Core Values also states, under the heading *1.6 Democracy and participation*, that teachers should “ensure that there is room for collaboration, dialogue and disagreement” (NDET, 2020). These two statements give teachers in Norway a clear indication that there should be discussions in appropriate settings. It will be interesting for me, during my interviews, to investigate on whether they believe that there are any practical difficulties in implementing ICC in the classroom.

#### 4.4 Teachers’ conflicting beliefs on summative assessment

There is a lack of research on summative assessment of pupils’ ICC. An explanation for this can be the fact that researchers on intercultural competence tend to agree that ICC is most effectively assessed through formative assessments (Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Fantini, 2009; Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff, 2011). There are studies that examine the assessment of intercultural competence, but they are not necessarily in an educational context or in an exam format. There are studies who promote the assessment of intercultural competence, but many of them are assessing criteria through intercultural models or programs such as Intercultural Development Inventory and Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Fantini, 2007; Bennett, 1993/2017; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, Ang, Leung & Tan, 2014). These are tests meant to measure the unconscious racial biases and prejudices of individuals. They are not bound by an educational context and can be used in work environments or by any individual. Moreover, when studies examine the assessment of intercultural competence in an educational context, they highly encourage an extensive use of varied formative assessment strategies, formats and processes as stated above. However, there are many studies who explore teachers’ beliefs on assessment practices and assessment formats, such as standardized testing. It is important to examine these studies because it gives me an overview on teachers’ beliefs on standardized testing such as the exam. Their views on the validity of this assessment format is something I can compare and contrast with the beliefs of the participants in my own study, thus giving me a more comprehensible understanding of teachers’ beliefs on summative assessment.

A study did explore teachers’ beliefs on the purpose of testing, and specifically standardized testing (Barnes, Fives & Dacey, 2015). The immediate and apparent issue from the study is the wide spectrum of teachers’ opinions on the purpose of assessment. The study illuminates social and structural purposes for assessment and standardized testing. By *social* and *structural* purposes, I mean that they are not directly related to pupils’ learning. These

purposes were such as “sharing student progress on skills with parents” and “needed for determining how to allocate resources and for evaluating if schools are performing adequately” (p. 290-291). When it comes to purposes relating to pupils’ learning, one should note that some of the common factors presented are not beneficial for learning. Barnes et al. (2015) state that “teachers’ beliefs were conceptualized as a three factor model: assessment for improvement, assessment for accountability, and assessment is irrelevant” (p. 296). The first factor is the educational and beneficial factor of assessment, and “...is for the joint use of teachers and students to facilitate learning” (Barnes et al., 2015, p. 289). However, the two other factors do not share the same optimistic view on assessment. According to this study, many teachers are frustrated with many of the current assessment practices. The factor of accountability uses assessment “...to evaluate learning and to hold students accountable” (p. 290). This is a pragmatic approach to assessment, and does not coincide well with the conceptual understanding of formative approaches to assessment. The last factor discards the purpose and benefits of assessment, as many of the participants state that “assessment is irrelevant to their everyday work” (p. 291). They argue that “teachers reported that they believed standardized tests were time-consuming, not aligned with their curricular goals, and a poor reflection of students’ knowledge and skills” (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985, cited in Barnes et al., 2015, p. 293). The participants argue that standardized tests encourage pupils to practice ‘test-taking strategies’, which do not encourage further learning. The participants also state that they have more confidence in their own professional capabilities to create meaningful tests and assessments (p. 292-293). It is important for me to connect this to my thesis. The year 11 exam is a standardized test, and I want to examine my participants’ beliefs on this form of assessment. Their views on standardized testing should also influence their beliefs on whether the skills, attitudes and knowledge that constitute ICC can be assessed at the exam.

Other studies show similar beliefs and perceptions from teachers on the issues of standardized testing. A study by Brown & Harris (2009) examines teachers’ beliefs in New Zealand on types of assessment, and asks participants to rank assessment formats. The assessment format which was the least favourable with teachers, was standardized testing. This format was defined as “[assessment] used primarily to fulfil Ministry of Education mandates or school-wide directives” (p. 370). Teachers were highly critical to this form of assessment, because it only existed to comply with educational mandates. They state that “these practices were rejected as irrelevant, inaccurate, or negative for teachers, pupils, and learning. Many negative

attitudes towards particular assessments came when teachers did not understand how the assessments would improve teaching and learning” (Brown & Harris, 2009, p. 371).

A common thread in teachers’ negative attitudes towards summative assessment, is their conviction that the tests are inadequate measurements of what is taught and learned (Cimbricz, 2002, p. 6; Brown & Harris, 2009). A study put this into a Norwegian context. The study examines teachers’ beliefs on *Kunnskapsløftet*, and how they implement the curricula in teaching and assessment. The study revealed that all of the participatory teachers from upper secondary were sceptical or negative towards the competence aims. The participants argue that the criteria are “...vaguely formulated, too diffuse, in addition to being too open for interpretation (Hodgson, Rønning, Skogvold & Tomlinson, 2010, p. 92). This influence their view on assessment as well, because they were not sure how to apply the criteria in their judgement (p. 93). However, there are studies that indicate more positive attitudes towards summative assessments. An example of this is a study on teachers’ beliefs on the validity of summative assessments in Great Britain (Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall & Serret, 2011). The study does initially show that teachers held many of the same beliefs about summative assessment as in Hodgson, Rønning, Skogvold and Tomlinson’s study, especially if the assessment were in the form of a national test. They state that “teachers felt that the criteria available from the national curriculum were not adequate guides for consistent judgments” (Black et al., 2011, p. 457). However, the teachers did show more favourable attitudes towards summative assessment when criteria were discussed and agreed on with colleagues. The negative perceptions of summative assessment reflected in reality an uncertainty surrounding the validity of their assessment. They state that “the teachers only became aware of this problem when they took on responsibility for designing tasks which met their own criteria for validity and then for marking these in ways that would command agreement between colleagues” (Black et al., 2011, p. 462). Another study (Harlen, 2005) from Great Britain do support many of the findings as the study above. The study concluded that summative assessments can have a positive impact on pupils’ learning, as long as teachers are “...working collaboratively towards a shared understanding of the goals of the assessment and of procedures to meet these goals (Harlen, 2005, p. 214). This shows some of the conditions that needed to be in place for the teachers to value summative assessment as a benefit to pupils’ learning.

#### 4.5 Short summary

This review gives me a better opportunity to discuss my second research question, which is: “What are teachers understanding of ICC, the exam questions and assessment”? Firstly, researchers of intercultural competence argue that ICC is difficult and controversial to assess, and they agree that ICC is most effectively assessed through formative assessments (Bøhn, Dypedahl & Myklevold, 2018; Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff, 2011; Fantini, 2009; Fenner, 2005). Based on these studies, I must therefore consider whether or not there is enough theoretical foundation to justify the assessment of pupils’ intercultural competence at a summative final exam. Furthermore, there is a conceptual consensus on what knowledge, skills and attitudes that constitute intercultural competence. However, there is a wide understanding of the concept, and teachers have their own beliefs on what aspects that constitute their understanding. Teachers’ beliefs on ICC can be categorized in two general categories. The first category of teachers has a pragmatic understanding and define ICC as the acquisition of knowledge about foreign cultures, and daily life (Castro et al., 2004; Sercu, 2002; Atay et al., 2009). The other category of teachers views ICC more as a reflective and attitudinal competence with focus on critical thinking and open mindedness (Kilic, 2013; Lazar, 2011; Cheng, 2012). There is a significant difference in teachers’ understandings of the same term, but it does not seem to affect the concept validity of the term. The findings do indicate to me that although teachers have different focuses and priorities in their cultural teaching, they all acknowledge the various understandings of ICC and culture learning. I argue that this is similar to the findings in chapter 2 on conceptual understandings of ICC, that there are two aspects of ICC. There seems to be the same distinction, and that perspectives of ICC can be categorized into a more theoretical understanding and a more practical understanding.

Judging by the findings in these studies, teachers do not seem to differentiate between ICC and its practical implementation in class. Their understanding of ICC is more often than not related to how that understanding would translate into teaching. This is a natural and understandable as teachers do have to convert aims and criteria into practical and functional class activities. I must discuss whether or not teachers’ understanding of ICC have too much of an effect on pupils’ understanding, and therefore affects the validity of the assessment. However, I argue that the review also shows some of the components that need to be in place for teachers to teach and assess ICC. One of the components is *confidence*. The study by Young and Sachdev (2011) reveal that some teachers are afraid to have discussions in class in

fear of insensitivity. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have confidence in their knowledge and understanding of ICC to properly manage the classroom. The other component is *collaboration*. The studies by Black et al. (2011) and Harlen (2005) show that teachers were supportive of summative assessments as long as they were able to deploy their professional capital and collaboratively create criteria for assessment with colleagues. On a scientific level, I do believe this review shows the crucial importance of replicability in studies. Across four studies (Atay et al., 2009; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Kilic, 2013; Lazar, 2011) on foreign language teachers in Europe with similar demography, methodology and purpose, one can see clear and somewhat significant differences in teacher perceptions and beliefs on the definition, importance and implementation of ICC. It is therefore important that studies similar to these are being executed on regular basis to ensure that researchers have a larger framework to consider.

## 5. Research methods

In this thesis I decided to use qualitative research methods to explore how the exam questions and exam criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils ICC at the exam, and teachers' understandings of ICC, the exam questions and assessment. Qualitative research methods are useful to explore subjective understandings on topics. Boeije (2011) states:

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them....The methods produce rich, descriptive data that need to be interpreted through the identification and coding of themes and categories leading to findings that can contribute to theoretical knowledge and practical use. (p. 11)

Denzin & Lincoln (2011) argues that qualitative research "...reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 5). I therefore do have a responsibility to use a research method that allows the teachers to express their own opinions and beliefs without unnecessary restrictions and interferences from me. Denzin & Lincoln (2012) further state that qualitative researchers should "seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8, cursive in original). The two qualitative research methods that I chose for this thesis was document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The first and most comprehensive research method of this thesis is document analysis. I used document analysis to explore how the exam questions and exam criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as:

...a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. (p. 27)

I explored the preparation booklet, Core Curriculum, and the ENG1-03 and ENG01-04 subject curricula and analysed to what extent the perspectives of ICC in the literature review were reflected and presented in the documents. Subsequently, I examined the examination guide and exam questions to explore to what extent the two documents ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. My document analysis of the various steering documents and exam documents is in chapter 3.

To explore my second research question, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. I use semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' beliefs and understandings of ICC, the exam

questions and assessment. Maso (1987, cited in Boeije, 2010) defines a semi-structured interview as:

...a form of conversation in which one person – the interviewer – restricts oneself to posing questions concerning behaviours, ideas, attitudes, and experiences with regard to social phenomena, to one or more others – the participants or interviewees – who mainly limit themselves to providing answers to these questions. (p. 61)

Boeije (2010) emphasizes that there needs to be a balance in the interview's structure, so the answers are relevant but also allows for subjective beliefs and discussions. She states that "interviews are usually not entirely pre-structured with respect to content, formulation, sequence and answers. Neither are they left entirely open" (Boeije, 2010, p. 62). I wanted to follow this principle because I wanted the teachers to express their own beliefs and professional understandings of the various components to the research questions. Dunn (2005) states that "this form of interviewing has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant" (cited in Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010). I therefore created some preconceived questions that would allow for conversations and exchange of ideas, but within the context of my research question.

## 5.1 The interviews

My method of sampling recruitment was initially straight forward. I employed the method of 'snowballing', defined as "a process in which contact is made with participants appropriate for your research through whatever access routine you can find..." (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 6). I considered 'appropriate participants' to be teachers who have current or past experience with teaching English at upper secondary schools in Norway. I did not discriminate towards potential participants with experience from only vg2 and vg3. My conclusion was that ICC is cross-curricular and a competence that is not restricted by education levels. I reached out to both educational institutions and individual teachers by email and by telephone. The institutions and participants were also to a certain degree selected with geographical convenience in mind, in order for me to conduct interviews without much difficulty.

I had interviews with two male teachers and one female teacher. All the participants were teachers from different schools spread across two counties. I did not consider gender as an important factor in selecting participants for my study, because (1) I did not find any data in previous research that indicated that gender had any effect on beliefs on ICC and assessment,

and (2) I did not find a viable theoretical reason to discuss it in relation to my research questions. The participants are or have been teachers at upper secondary schools in Norway, with experience ranging from 3 to 25 years.

I wanted the participants to share their beliefs, understandings and experiences with ICC and its implication on teaching and assessment. I also wanted to explore their beliefs on the exam format as a tool for measuring ICC. I outlined an informal interview guide that I sent to the participants on e-mail. In the interview guide I presented the second research question that was specifically relevant for the interview. The interview guide included five questions which would function as points-of-departure in our conversation. The questions are open-ended and the questions functions as the headings for the categorization of information in my 'Findings' chapter. The questions were constructed to serve two purposes. Firstly, they were constructed to give me the knowledge in order for me to answer the research question. Secondly, they were constructed to hopefully reflect the academic and educational "frame of reference" which will allow the participants to engage with the questions using their own knowledge and understanding (Boeije, 2010, p. 63). The conversation also allowed for the teachers to focus on specific issues they found interesting within the parameters of the context of the research questions. I also provided the participants with the exam document and the preparation booklet in order for them to have the ability to prepare for the interview.

I conducted three in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus I was only able to sit down face-to-face with one of the participants. The other two interviews were conducted using video calls via internet. I did not use a voice recorder during the interviews. I did not report my thesis and questions to the NSD. Consequently, I was restricted to taking detailed notes while I was conducting the interview.

### **5.1.1 Analysis of the interviews**

In order for me to transform the data from the interviews, I had to interpret the data. The findings are therefore the result of me interpreting the data into categories that are relevant to my thesis. Boeije (2011) argues that the processing of data by the researcher is essential to qualitative research. She states that "processing the data in qualitative research explicitly requires the researcher's interpretation and consequently qualitative findings comprise the interpretations..." (Boeije, 2011, p. 150). I categorized the data by putting their answers into



pre-constructed categories that correspond with the questions in the interview guide. I did this during the interviews to ensure the validity of my notes. It was important for me to distinguish between the interpreted data that would make up my findings, and the data that would be supplementary knowledge for my discussion.

The categorization of the data was done right after the interviews ended. I did this to keep the memory of the interview in mind, which enabled me to categorize my notes more efficiently. I segmented the data into categories that were relevant to the questions in my interview guide. According to Boeije (2011), segmenting data is defined as subdividing “data into relevant categories and the naming of these categories with codes while simultaneously generating the categories from the data” (p. 76). The data from the interviews are therefore segmented into five categories. Those five categories correspond with the five guiding questions on the interview guide.

## 5.2 Strengths of Document Analysis and Semi-Structured Interviews

Document analysis of relevant steering documents and exam documents was crucial to get a perspective on the established understandings of ICC that are available for teachers in Norwegian education. I needed to conduct a document analysis of the steering documents, exam questions and assessment criteria in order to explore the concept validity of ICC and the validity in measuring pupils' ICC. A document analysis also allowed me to be flexible in how I explored my research questions. I could not find any previous research or studies on the relation between established understandings on ICC and Norwegian steering documents. I needed to conduct a document analysis to connect the established understandings of ICC to the various steering documents. By employing a document analysis, I had the opportunity to explore these relationships on my own. I chose the appropriate data and evaluated whether the data was relevant to my thesis. I also needed to conduct a document analysis to analyse the relevant exam documents facilitate the opportunity for teachers ensure validity in their assessment of pupils' ICC. I argue that interviews with teachers would not have been sufficient, because I did not inquire with them on how they work with the examination guide. Document analysis is also advantageous to my thesis because “documents provide broad coverage; they cover a long span of time, many events, and many settings” (Yin, 1994, cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 31). The document analysis gave me the opportunity to compare and contrast both current and future subject curriculum and evaluate the changes in accordance with my own research aim.

I chose semi-structured interviews to contrast with my document analysis. My document analysis was an examination and review of steering documents such as the Core Curriculum, the preparation booklet and the exam document. The data from that research method was therefore an accumulation of political and educational steering documents and my academic interpretation, substantiated by previous research. However, I did not want to rely on my understanding alone. Therefore, I wanted to expand the numbers of academic participants to strengthen my discussion.

I chose semi-structured interviews because I was interested in the participating teachers' professional and subjective understanding of ICC and their beliefs on its implications for teaching and assessment. I argue that pupils' ICC are not realised by teachers and pupils analysing various steering documents. I needed to investigate teachers' understanding of ICC, the exam questions and assessment because I do believe that teachers' beliefs and understandings of intercultural competence are the foundations of pupils' intercultural competence and how that competence are assessed at the exam. Without discarding pupils' abilities in autodidacticism, their intercultural competence is a reflection of their teachers' teachings. Teachers' understanding of ICC will in the end affect the assessment, because their personal and professional understandings of pupils' competence and steering documents are the starting points for the assessment. Therefore, I argue that the actual conceptual and practical presence of ICC, in relation to its classroom implementation, pupils' understanding and assessment, is a result of teachers' beliefs. I decided that the most effective way to explore these beliefs and understandings were through semi-structured interviews.

There are also several researchers who have advocated the importance of teachers' beliefs in educational development. Donaghue (2003) argues that teachers' beliefs must be considered before one make educational decisions. She states that:

It is generally agreed that teachers' personal theories, beliefs, and assumptions need to be uncovered before development can occur, enabling critical reflection and then change. Beliefs about teaching, learners, or teachers' role, for example, guide teachers in the practice, and are derived from sources such as experience and personality. (p. 344)

I believe that the semi-structured interviews enable teachers to reflect on their understanding and provide me with a fuller understanding of ICC. Gipps (1994) argues that teachers' beliefs are important to ensure concept validity and validity in assessment. She states that "we need to extend validity enquiry to include the teacher's and student's perspective to add to the professional's perspective in the validation of what test scores mean and whether they are

useful to teachers and learners” (p. 65). I argue that a semi-structured interview is an effective method to allow teachers to express their opinion regarding the concept validity and validity of ICC. The importance of teachers’ beliefs and the effect of their professional judgement on decision making is evident by the collaboration between the NDET and educational institutions in evaluating the new curricula (NDET, 2019d). I believe that my interviews will reaffirm that importance, giving teachers the opportunity to evaluate the perspectives in relation to assessment at the exam. This relevant to my thesis I examine validity in measuring ICC at the exam and must have a clear understanding of teachers’ beliefs on what skills and competences that constitute ICC. This will strengthen the concept validity of ICC as a concept. Furthermore, the teachers’ understanding of ICC and beliefs on its various implications on teaching and assessment give indications to whether or not the skills and competences that constitute ICC are prioritized when assessing exam responses.

I also chose to conduct semi-structured interviews to have a different method than several of the studies in the previous research. I mentioned in my review chapter that several studies on teachers’ beliefs on ICC (Castro et al, 2004; Atay, Kurt, Camlibel, Ersin & Kaslioglu, 2009, Young & Sachdev, 2011) implemented a research method that include a quantitative questionnaire which requires participants to rank certain preconceived statements about culture learning, intercultural competence, etc. I did not want to use the same method. My reasoning was that I wanted to allow the teachers to give their own subjective beliefs instead of mere agreeing or disagreeing to my statements. A semi-structured interview allows the participants to express themselves more freely, and it will be up to me to ask for appropriate clarifications. Harrell & Bradley (2009) states that a semi-structured interview helps the interviewer acquire a clearer understanding through follow-up questions. They state that “when interested in determining the relative emphasis on an issue, that is, how strongly someone holds an opinion, ...interviews permit the researcher to ask for emphasis” (Harrell & Bradley, 2009, p. 10). Semi-structured interviews have an intrinsic and structural opportunity that allows participants to express their opinions and emphasize on specific topics if they choose to. Horton, Macve & Struyven (2004) argue that:

...semi-structured interviews...allow the interviewees a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight areas of particular interest and expertise that they felt they had, as well as to enable certain responses to be questioned in greater depth. (p. 340)

I chose semi-structured interviews because it would provide the interviewees with the opportunity to express themselves freely and provide me with the opportunity to follow-up questions for any potential clarifications.

Denzin (1970) defines the use of multiple methods as *Triangulation*. He defines it as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 28). I did this to give myself more information and data to work with and give credibility to my discussion. Bowen (2009) comments on the value of multiple methods. He states that “by examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study” (p. 28). Triangulation of methods was also important because it solidifies corroboration between my findings. One of my theses is that teachers’ understanding and beliefs of ICC influence teaching *and* assessment. Therefore, to research validity in assessment I had to analyse how teachers’ understanding and beliefs correspond with the examination guide and assessment criteria. The document analysis allowed me to correspond teachers’ understanding and beliefs on ICC with the validity in measuring the skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. Lastly, a study by Tran & Dong (2014) indicate that different methodologies can give different results in teachers’ beliefs and perceptions. The study shows that teachers gave different answers and had different understandings of intercultural competence dependent on quantitative data and qualitative data (p. 97-98). I therefore restrict myself to qualitative research methods.

### 5.3 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity in my research, I conducted both document analysis and qualitative interviews. I did this primarily because ICC is a complex concept and I had to make sure to get a broad overview of the various understandings of the term, both by researchers and teachers. That is why I have done extensive research on the understandings of ICC. My intention was to have a good indication of the theoretical demarcation of the term. However, the exam is situated within the parameters of Norwegian education, and the assessment is dictated by the relevant steering documents. Therefore, I conducted extensive document analysis of the relevant steering documents to analyse how ICC is expressed within an educational context in Norway. I do argue that my document analysis is valid because it is necessary to contextualize the perspectives of ICC for them to be relevant in this thesis. Furthermore, the exploration of teachers’ understanding of ICC, the exam and assessment is

valid in regard to my thesis. I do argue that teachers' understandings of ICC are an integral part of pupils' learning, because the teachers do dictate the implementation of ICC in the classroom. Document analysis of previous research and qualitative semi-structured interviews do give a nuanced view of teachers' beliefs. In that sense, I do believe that there is validity in my research because I have considered a considerable amount of approaches to ICC and assessment.

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, and replicability of a study. Drost (2011) defines it as "...the extent to which measurements are repeatable – when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing" (p. 106). I do believe that my methods are clearly stated and can easily be replicated in future studies. However, I do acknowledge that I, as a researcher, am an interpreter of data. Noble & Smith (2015) states that "acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis" (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 35). I am aware that I as a researcher function as an interpreter of the data, and that my interpretations might differ from others. I do acknowledge that other researchers might define ICC differently, or emphasize different perspectives of ICC than I have done in my research. This can be significant because the definition and understanding of ICC might affect how a researcher interpret the validity of measuring such competence at the exam. However, I have tried to eliminate this issue by being generous in my research. I have included several different aspects of ICC presented by multiple researchers and theorist across various nationalities. The intention of my research has been to present a diverse set of perspectives to illuminate the many approaches and aspects that ICC can theoretically and practically be understood by.

My research has also included the beliefs of teachers. I could have borrowed the beliefs expressed by the many quantitative studies in the previous research and allow those findings to be the basis for teachers' beliefs on ICC and assessment in this thesis. However, I believe that the quantitative questionnaires are limiting because they do not explore how and why the teachers have come to their understanding. The intention of my thesis is to acquire subjective and nuanced perspectives directly from teachers. In that case, I do believe that my choice of methodology is effective and reliable, because the method of research can be replicated quite effortlessly. The qualitative interviews with teachers can present different answers from study to study, however I do believe that is the intention of enquiring with teachers; to allow them

to express their opinions, professional judgement and discernment in relation to a topic. In my opinion, the potentially diverse feedback from teachers functions as an enrichment to the field of study and should not be regarded as a limitation.

#### 5.4 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

In relation to Denzin & Lincoln's (2012) understanding of qualitative research, any research is a subjective perspective meant to enrich the conceptual and didactical understandings on the subject. They state that "objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5). My research and interpretation of my selected and collected data function as a subjective representation. Yin (1994) argues that the selection of data can potentially be biased because the researcher selects the data that reaffirm, consciously or unconsciously, preconceived opinions on the subject (cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 32). There are certain factors with my document analysis that I have to consider. It is important to note that I, the researcher, have to interpret and examine the data. The process of document analysis is therefore not objective, but a subjective evaluation of selected data with my research questions in mind. The fact that I have chosen to analyse the 2017 Core Curriculum could also potentially alter the findings. The 2017 Core Curriculum does reflect and present perspectives of ICC much clearer than the old Core Curriculum, and does in a way reaffirms my assumption that ICC is becoming more relevant in Norwegian education. However, I would argue that my forward-looking perspective encourages analysis of newer and more relevant documents. Furthermore, I do argue that the interviews with teachers provide additional information and depth to the discussion.

Because I do not have transcriptions of my interviews, I do acknowledge that there can be issues of representation in my findings. As I stated in the section above, I do recognize that the researcher is an interpreter of data. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) state that "there are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the world of – and between – the observer and the observed" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 12). I have tried to eliminate these issues by writing detailed notes during the interviews. During the interviews, I also restated certain statements they made back to them to reassure that I was representing their views appropriately. When it came to definitions and key statements, I asked if they were willing to either write them down or repeat them so I could use them as direct quotes. I also discussed the possible limitations of note taking both before and after the interviews. I did this to be honest about my methods and transparent about how their statements would be presented in

my findings. Boeije (2011) states that researchers have an “obligation to outline fully the nature of the data collection and the purpose for which the data will be used to the people or community being studied in a style and language that they can understand” (Boeije, 2011, p. 45). All of the participants were understanding of the limitations and did not have any issues with the fact that the findings would consist mostly of paraphrasing. All participants were also given consent forms either in person or as an e-mail attachment. None of the participants are mentioned by name or any other information that could compromise their anonymity.

My interviews were not recorded with any audio or visual devices and saved for transcription. This can potentially limit my research in a number of ways. Boeije (2011) comments on some of the benefits of either audio or visual recordings. Some of the benefits she mentions are quality of data, more insightful data, and literal quotes (p. 72). These are all valid points and I have to consider them accordingly. I had to take notes during the interviews which do inhibit me from completely focus on the interview. I had to continually evaluate the data and select what to take notes on while I conducted the interview. I should say that I had no issues with it while I conducted the interviews. The participants were cooperative and willing to clarify on thoughts. They were also patient whenever I needed to focus on my notes, and it rarely affected the flow of the conversation to the point where we lost the thread or repeated redundant points. However, I do acknowledge the limitations of not recording and transcribing the interviews. I have no doubt that if I had the chance to record and transcribe the interviews, my findings would be more insightful and valid. I mentioned above that the purpose of the interviews was to explore subjective opinions and understandings of theoretical concepts. I am sure that I would have gotten even more depth, nuances and insight into the participants’ understanding of ICC and its implications on teaching and assessment.

I only had the opportunity to have a face-to-face interview with my first participant because of outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. The two other interviews were therefore conducted with video calls. The video calls do have some technical considerations which affects the conversation. Sometimes there were delays in the video or audio, leading to the participants and I interrupting each other on certain occasions. This did not have a significant effect on the interviews, but it led to some unfortunate and momentary disruptions in the conversations. On two occasions the video call was interrupted and had to be restarted because of poor internet connection. This had a more significant effect on the interview, as it significantly disrupted the flow of the conversation. However, these were issues that were easily corrected. As I state above, the participants were very cooperative and patient whenever any technical issues

disrupted our conversation. The video calls had a relational limitation too. I did not get the same intimate conversation with a video call as I did with a face-to-face interview. One does interrupt each other as easily, and there are subtle non-verbal cues which helps the conversation flowing. Again, this is a minor difference and potentially just a matter of preference. But I can say with certainty that I would have preferred all three interviews in the presence of the participants.



## 6. Findings

In this section I present my findings from my interviews with teachers. As I explained in my method section, these interviews were not recorded, and I do not have a transcript of the interviews. My findings will therefore be based on the initial notes I took during the interviews. The findings are categorized into five sections; (1) their understanding of ICC, (2) how they teach ICC in class, (3) assessment of ICC, (4) ICC at the 2019 spring exam, and (5) the exam format. These sections were formulated with the research questions in mind. The findings are meant to illuminate the teachers' beliefs and understanding of ICC, the exam questions and assessment.

The teachers have several similar beliefs on the subject. Firstly, they all acknowledge that ICC is a term that is not specifically mentioned in class. However, they all agree that the concept of ICC is, or at least should be, important in their classroom teaching. Secondly, they view ICC as a complex and cognitive concept that requires critical and reflective thinking. Thirdly, they agree that the assessment of ICC is closely linked to their ability to construct coherent and argumentative texts.

### 6.1 Conceptual understanding of ICC

The teachers had their own understanding of ICC. Teacher 1 emphasized that ICC is reflective competence, where pupils must be able to reflect on how information about cultures relates to them personally. He stated that "ICC is the ability to understand why people from different cultures act in different ways, interpret the world through various approaches, and transfer the knowledge to your own life".

Teacher 2 argued that the concept is very complex and complicated. However, he stated that it has to do with the tolerance of other viewpoints. He stated that "ICC is the ability to reflect on how our own culture affect the way we understand and interpret information and various foreign cultural expressions".

Teacher 3 argued that ICC is a 'mentality' which can only be fully realised through actual interaction with other cultures. She argued that this is a maturity process that takes time and effort.

## 6.2 ICC and classroom teaching

ICC is not a term that Teacher 1 uses in his everyday teaching of English and culture. He explained that ICC is not mentioned in the competence aims, and that can be an explanation to why the concept is not specified in classroom teaching. However, he recognized the indirect emphasis of the concept in the Core Curriculum and argued that ICC as an idea is very prevalent in his teaching. He stated that “all we ever do in English class is culture learning”. He stated that they usually work with culture learning and ICC through the use of film and literature. He stated that they do this to identify various cultures individuals are situated in, and how that individual reacts and differentiates himself from that culture.

He also stated that they can have more knowledge-based lectures on cultures. Examples of this were objective culture specific texts on poverty or political conflicts in USA. The class would then use that knowledge to do what he described as “introspective tasks”, where they have to interpret and reflect on their own lives dependent on what they perceive.

However, he also criticized some of the techniques and preferences in culture teaching in classrooms. He believed that culture learning must be relevant to contemporary times, for pupils to be able to relate and reflect. He argued that culture teaching is too often “underdog stories” that are not necessarily relevant for pupils today. He contextualized this by referring to a conversation he once had with an Irish teacher. The Irish teacher had noticed that, when conducting culture teaching on Ireland, there was a prevalence in Norway to focus on ‘The Troubles’, IRA and conflicts between Protestants and Catholics. The Irish teacher proceeded to comment on the absurdity of that, considering how those things are not even truly relevant in Ireland anymore. Teacher 1 also added Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as examples of outdated culture learning. He argued that the teaching of these figures is not negative in and of itself, but they cannot be the main focus of culture teachings on India and USA, respectively.

Intercultural competence is not a term that teacher 2 ever uses in his classroom teaching. It is also not a term he had given any attention before agreeing to the interview and consequently examined steering documents. However, he admitted that it is a competence that is frequently employed in his classroom teachings. He also noted that the competence is cross-curricular because the ability to reflect on social and cultural issues is not limited to English classes.

An example from his classroom teaching was that his class has watched documentaries on countries in various and disparaging political and social situations. An important aspect of

showing these documentaries is teaching the pupils to not always evaluate and judge other cultures based on their *own* perspectives. They must use their intercultural competence to understand that their own perspective is affected by their own culture. It is therefore important to him that his pupils reflect on their acquisition and understanding of information. Another example was teaching on sustainable development. He wants pupils to reflect on how, and more importantly, why countries view sustainable development differently. Teacher 2 argued that ICC is not just the acknowledgement of differences between cultures, but also the ability to argue *why* cultures are different. On international issues he especially emphasized the socio-economic and socio-political influences as indications of well understanding reflective abilities.

However, he said that the focus on ICC disappear in his assessment practices. He stated that if he makes a written assessment where the pupils are to comment on international issues or relations, there would be an emphasized focus on (1) acquisition of information, (2) text structure, and (3) the ability to state differences and similarities in a coherent way. He argued that the reflective and evaluative aspects of ICC is devalued because they are more difficult to pin-point and evaluate at an assessment.

Teacher 3 argued that themes such as ‘Around the World’ are popular topics in vg1 English teaching. The culture teaching is often based on pupils’ abilities in acquiring knowledge and discuss certain differences. However, she stated that the differences are often trivial and banal such as food, sports and tourist attractions. She argued that they rarely have the opportunity to spend extensive time on one culture and truly evaluate cultural, social and political issues. Consequently, they do not have time to develop the reflective and mental aspects that constitute ICC. She argued that time is the crucial factor that impairs her culture teaching. The pupils are not given the opportunity to be curious about a topic. Consequently, the pupils do not have the required patience to delve into topics over an extensive time period. She coined this as *academic endurance*. The pupils are not given the time to be curious and interested in a topic and are consequently not equipped with the necessary knowledge to properly analyse and evaluate the topics.

Teacher 3 concluded her thoughts on ICC in the classroom by stating “How can you analyse something if you do not have sufficient knowledge?”. She also stated that this is not an

isolated issue with vg1 pupils. The ability to reflect on political, social and cultural issues on both international and national levels is challenging for vg2 and vg3 pupils alike.

### 6.3 ICC and assessment

Teacher 1 believed that the pupil must be able to not only retell or show that cultures are different, but also reflect on why cultures are different. Teacher 1 believed that this is a competence that can be assessed. It is heavily linked with the pupil's ability to write a coherent text with proper structure and arguments.

Teacher 2 stated that the assessment of ICC is the assessment on whether or not the pupil is able to show understanding of different viewpoints. The teacher must assess their ability to show that various individuals have unique interests and priorities. The pupils must be able to discuss two contrasting arguments of the same issue. They must not only state differences between cultures but discuss the origins of these differences.

Teacher 3 made the argument that the assessment of ICC must focus on the pupil's ability to discuss various viewpoints of an issue. The pupils must also be able to show an understanding of the complexity of such issues. The pupils must illuminate some of the factors that make issues complex, divisive and polarizing.

### 6.4 How does the spring 2019 exam allow for ICC?

Teacher 1 believed that the theme "Just do it! Speak up! Break the mould!" is a 'cliché'. He stated that the pupils at his school will have a hard time relating to some of the texts in the preparation booklet and some of the questions at the exam. He argued that "the pupils do not view themselves as revolutionaries...the texts do not have to be so extreme. Most of the pupils want to be good pupils with good grades. They do not necessarily want to be a new Greta Thunberg". However, he did state that the age of the individuals in the texts and the theme of youth could be a thread for the pupils to relate to.

He stated that pupils are required to understand minorities. In his discussions with other teachers, many argue that there is too much focus on minorities at the exam. ICC cannot always mean 'underdog' or minority, there must be room to discuss various culture without antagonizing the majority.

However, he also believed that the exam does a good job at incorporating relevant news items and figures. He stated that the pupils are required to understand a lot of cultural context, but the individuals mentioned in the preparation booklet are people that the pupils are most likely familiar with through social media. One can see this in the preparation booklet, with texts about the actress Emma Watson, gun control activist David Hogg, the TV-series *Dear White People*, and the rapper Macklemore. He also stated that the exam does well to include texts on indigenous peoples, which is clearly represented in the competence aims. He argued that the preparation booklet and the exam is open to interpretation and that an external candidate can also do well, which is a good thing.

Teacher 1 stated that the exam questions are not reflective enough. He argued that there are no questions that require the pupils to interpret things they have learned and reflect on how their views have changed. Therefore, he believed that the questions might limit the scope of responses. Teacher 1 stated that he was missing something as simple as “what have you learned this year about other cultures, and how has that experience changed your views?”. However, he related back to his point earlier; the aspects of age and youth might help the pupils to relate and reflect on their own understandings. He also argued that the texts and questions on climate change can give pupils the opportunity to show ICC, as the pupils can comment and reflect on how individuals from different cultures contribute in different ways.

Teacher 2 stated that the exam does cover themes and issues that are controversial and to a certain degree taboo in their respective cultures. He also argued that the exam promotes independent thinking and requires the pupils to leave their “comfort zone” and express opinions that do not necessarily reflect their own. He further argued that the exam questions are difficult for the pupils that do not necessarily have strong opinions on international political issues. He stated that “you must have opinions to write a lot. You might have to make up an opinion, because everyone does not have opinions on how society should be. Even I do not have an opinion on all of these issues, so why would the pupils?”. He also did state that the exam questions are too complicated and complex for year 11 pupils, and that the questions are more suited for older pupils. Teacher 2 also believed that the exam questions do not allow the pupils to reflect and evaluate their own understanding. He also stated that the texts and the questions do not give any indications that self-reflection or evaluation is required. He therefore stated that the exam allows for pupils to show ICC to the extent that pupils understand that on their own. Teacher 2 concluded his thoughts on the year 11 exam by

stating that ICC is the ability to reflect, and the exam does not do a good enough job at explicitly stating that as a competence.

Teacher 3 did not think that the exam explicitly requires ICC. The intention is not for pupils to reflect on the material, but acquire information, retell and at most contrast two viewpoints. She stated that she has been exam sensor for many years and argued that the pupils are far away from the mental capacity that is required to truly reflect on international issues. Time was yet again the crucial factor. She argued that the pupils are not given the sufficient time to reflect on political, social and cultural issues in English classes. Access to internet is therefore not a sufficient substitute for the lack of time, because the pupils do not have sufficient knowledge. There is therefore a significant disparity between what pupils are supposed to know and what they actually know.

Teacher 3 also commented on the topic of the exam. She found it counterproductive that the pupils are not asked to write about issues that relate more to their everyday life. She argued that the topic of international political issues prevents pupils from showing their reflective capabilities because it is difficult to relate it to their own experiences. She argued that these topics are more suited for *International English* and *Social Studies English*. The topics are more embedded in the purpose of those subjects. Consequently, the pupils are given more time during the semester to build up general knowledge and analysing and evaluating political, social and cultural issues. The pupils are also older and have had the opportunity to mature both academically and mentally. However, she referred back to her earlier point; the competence of reflecting and analysing is challenging for all pupils, regardless of age.

## 6.5 The exam format

Teacher 1 emphasized that pupils are not assessed exclusively on ICC at the exam. He stated that if the pupils know how to write an argumentative text with proper structure and utilization of sources and the preparation booklet, they will achieve a high grade. He substantiated his argument with an example from his own class. They had worked extensively on text structure and how to form convincing arguments throughout the year, and more than half of his class achieved the top grade.

Furthermore, he believed that the exam format is good because the pupils are tested on many of the competence aims. However, he did acknowledge that pupils' abilities to show their ICC

can be difficult. He argued that pupils' skill levels might have an impact, and that high-performing pupils will more likely understand how to reflect through well-constructed arguments than low-performing pupils who lack that ability.

Teacher 2 argued that if one is supposed to use *Fagfornyelsen* as foundation, then the written exam is not sufficient enough to assess pupils' ICC. He stated that he has had conversations with pupils who find the exam to be stressful, and he argued that the exam does not evoke the excitement and encouragement that pupils need to write well.

Teacher 2 also commented on the issues with anonymity at the exam. In his assessment practices, he always has the pupil in mind. He uses his previous assessments of the pupils to give him a valuable context. It is difficult to separate the pupils from their previous texts and work. He stated that he evaluates the assessment through certain questions with the pupils in mind. These questions were such like: What did this particular pupil do well compared to earlier works, what can still improve, has he/she utilized the knowledge from class, etc. One does not have the ability to relate the assessment to the pupil at the exam. Teacher 2 therefore argued that you would lose many of the crucial nuances which often define a fair assessment. He stated that he would therefore emphasize more on fundamental and structural competences, such as clear demarcation of topic, relevancy, use of correct terminology, citation and sources, etc.

Teacher 3 stated that writing argumentative texts with coherent structure is an important competence for upper secondary pupils. They spend considerable time in class on this, she was therefore not opposed to the exam format. However, she did believe that the topics are too complex for the pupils to truly evaluate and analyse the issues. She also believed that the requirement of analysing and reflecting is often diffuse, and the pupils do not necessarily understand that it is a requirement to achieve a high grade. Consequently, the pupils only process and copy the texts and material from internet into their exam responses. Therefore, teacher 3 did believe that the exam format is not sufficient because the pupils do not have the time to process the necessary knowledge to show ICC. She believed that the topics at the exams reflect the notion that education in Norway strive to be political and technological conscious. It is a political incentive and the exams are reflections of that incentive.

## 6.6 Short Summary

I believe that it is interesting to see that all three participating teachers stated that ICC is a reflective ability in contrasting and exploring cultural issues. Another important concern is the fact that the teacher's understanding of ICC is not necessarily reflected in classroom teaching. There are practical complications such as time and pupils' abilities that can force teachers to change their theoretical understanding of ICC into a practical implementation. This is valuable information to discuss in the next chapter because the ICC that pupils are taught will affect how they are able to answer questions at the exam which allow them to display ICC. The practical implications are also important to my discussion because they show that ICC, much like in the literature review, consists of a theoretical and practical understanding. It is important to note that all three teachers also explicitly emphasized the importance of writing cohesive argumentative texts. The participating teachers also seemed to believe that pupils' ability to create cohesive argumentative texts is the primary purpose of the written English exam. However, one should also note that the teachers were in disagreement on whether the exam format is suited for pupils to show their ICC. Teacher 1 believed that the display of ICC is perhaps the distinction between a high grade and lower grade, while teacher 2 and teacher 3 believed that the exam prevents pupils from displaying ICC because of anonymity in assessment, and insufficient time to prepare with the material. This problematize my research question because it both praises and criticizes the current exam format and its validity in assessment of pupils' ICC.



## 7. Discussion

The primary purpose of this thesis was to explore validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the final exam. I have therefore presented and discussed established conceptual understandings of ICC in chapter 2. This presentation has functioned as my conceptual foundation in my research. It was also necessary to establish and discuss how perspectives of ICC are presented in the relevant documents, including the Core Curriculum, the subject curriculums and the exam documents. In chapter 4, I have explored previous research on the importance of ICC in education, teachers' beliefs on ICC and assessment. In this chapter I will discuss my main findings focusing on the following issues; teachers' understanding of ICC, the effects of classroom implementation of ICC on assessment, and assessment validity at the exam. I discuss these issues in light of my overarching aim to explore validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam.

### 7.1 Teachers' understanding of ICC

In this section I discuss the issues of concept validity regarding ICC. It became evident during my research that teachers in previous studies and the interviewed teachers have various understandings of ICC and beliefs on its role in education, classroom implementation, and assessment. I discuss how these different understandings and beliefs could affect the assessment validity of pupils' ICC.

My conversations with teachers show that ICC as a concept can be interpreted in different ways. Teacher 1 and 2 had somewhat similar beliefs and emphasized the ability to interpret various viewpoints and use the information for self-reflection. However, teacher 3 had a more attitudinal approach, where ICC was a mentality realised through actual interaction with other cultures. It was also interesting to discuss with the teachers how familiar they were with the term 'intercultural competence'. Teacher 1 and 2 admitted that they were unfamiliar with the term. However, by analysing the new Core Curriculum before our interviews and discussing with me, they acknowledged that several aspects of ICC were important aims in their classroom teaching. It seems clear that these different approaches to ICC will affect validity in measuring pupils' ICC because there is not a coherent understanding of what ICC encompasses. Even though they are promoting skills, attitudes and values that I have defined as ICC, it would be inconsistent in relation to ICC because it is a subconscious understanding of the term. It would still be uncertain what specific skill, ability or knowledge they are

assessing, because they do not have an overarching understanding of the concept or how to assess its competences. It seems clear that if teachers are to ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC, there must be a clear definition of ICC and coherent instructions on how to measure it in the steering documents.

The literature review also indicates that there are discrepancies in how teachers define ICC. Several studies show that many teachers regard ICC or cultural learning as the acquisition of information about daily life, food and drink, cultural artefacts, and the practical application of language in a cultural context (Castro, et al., 2004; Sercu, 2002; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Atay et al., 2009). Other studies show that teachers have a more attitudinal approach to ICC with focus on attitudes, tolerance and critical thinking (Young & Sachdev, 2011; Cheng, 2012; Kilic, 2013; Lazar, 2011). It seems clear that these different approaches to ICC and culture learning will lead to significant different classroom teaching. There is no clear and definite concept validity in teachers' definitions of ICC. Therefore, teachers have to use their professional judgement and discernment in defining the concept to the best of their abilities and knowledge. Moreover, if institutions were to create a reliable assessment template based on the two different approaches to ICC expressed above, I would also argue that they would be vastly different. The assessment templates would be different because the understandings of ICC and culture learning is significantly different. This is relevant for me because it seems clear that there is a need for steering documents, curricula and guidelines that explicitly define ICC. A clear framework would improve the concept validity of ICC, because teachers would have access to a document that give them a clear conceptual foundation of the term. It could also improve the assessment validity of ICC. A clear framework would allow teacher to create classroom activities that correspond more with the clearly defined conceptual ramifications.

## 7.2 Theoretical understanding vs classroom implementation

I believe that teachers' classroom implementation of ICC affects validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam. In my interviews with teachers I got the opportunity to ask for their understanding of ICC, but also examine how they came to their understanding. The interviews also gave me the opportunity to see that teachers' classroom teaching of ICC is not always a direct implementation of the teachers' own understanding of ICC. Teacher 3, who had a reflective and attitudinal understanding of ICC with connection to *bildung*, argued that teachers do not have time to implement ICC into their teaching. The previous research does substantiate the claim that teachers' theoretical understanding of ICC is not necessarily the

understanding that is implemented into the classroom. There are many studies in the previous research that show that teachers do have a certain theoretical understanding of ICC, but are unable to implement that understanding into their classroom teaching because of various factors (Castro et al., 2004; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Llorca & Lasagabaster, 2010; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Teacher 3 mentions time as the most crucial factor in ICC and culture learning, as the pupils must have the ability to internalize the knowledge. There are studies in the previous research that reflect the issue of time deficiency (Castro et al., 2004; Gonen & Sachdev, 2012). The study by Castro et al. suggested that the distribution of time in English classes between language and culture learning was 80-20. Teacher 3 commented on the lack of time, and wondered how teachers are supposed to elaborate on the intricate aspects of ICC if they do not have sufficient time to truly explore them? I would make the argument that classroom implementation of ICC also affects validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam because I do believe that teachers would be hesitant to assess pupils on their ability to meet competences that they have not focused on in class. My interview with teacher 3 is important because she was very aware of ICC and the importance of it. However, she acknowledged that there are certain obstacles, especially time deficiency, that prevents her from focusing explicitly on attitudinal abilities. Therefore, she acknowledged that her assessment of pupils' ICC was restrained to how well they retell and discuss viewpoints. The previous research does also show that teachers can be hesitant to implement certain controversial aspects of ICC in the classroom. Young & Sachdev (2011) show in their study on teachers' beliefs on ICC that there are certain practical and ethical complications in engaging in classroom discussions on international politics. Again, this is an instance where the teachers have a particular understanding of ICC but do not implement that understanding of ICC into their classroom teaching. Again, I believe this affects assessment validity, because I argue that teachers would not be assessing something that they have intentionally avoided in class. The fact that teachers are not teaching certain aspects of ICC creates an interesting conundrum. If teachers are not able to implement what they believe to be proper ICC in their teaching and assessment practices, can it still technically be called ICC? If one is to consider researchers and authors in the conceptual framework, it seems clear that it should not be regarded as ICC. There simply is not enough explicit focus on the integral aspects of ICC, such as global citizenship, bildung and internalization of knowledge, and intercultural identity.

The exam topic can affect the classroom implementation of ICC in the classroom. If one evaluates the topic of previous written exams in English, it is clear that the topic is often

related to discussing cultural or political issues in English-speaking countries (See Appendix 12). I would argue that all the exam topics from spring 2017 to spring 2019 advocate and facilitate the opportunity for pupils to discuss cultural or political issues in English-speaking countries. Zembylas & Chubbuck (2015) do mention the potential impact of *politics* on teachers' beliefs. They discuss how there are political and institutional decisions and incentives that teachers have to consider when teaching and assessing. Teachers do have their own professional judgement and agency when it comes to their understanding of ICC, but there are certain political considerations that teachers must acknowledge. The exam topics are decided by the NDET and are therefore decisions that the teachers themselves do not control. One must consider the possibility that the reoccurring theme of being able to discuss and elaborate on international politics in English-speaking countries does affect what teachers choose to emphasize in their teaching. It would be a disservice to the pupils if teachers prepared them for issues that are completely irrelevant at the exam. This is supported by the interviews, where all three teachers agree that the assessment of ICC at the exam must consider the pupils' ability to discuss and reflect on the complexity of political issues. Teacher 1 specifically mentioned that he and his class worked extensively on text structure and the writing of argumentative because he knew that those abilities are important at the exam. I do therefore believe that the topics of the exams can influence teachers to pragmatically focus on what they find be relevant for the pupils to know in order for them to be able to do well on the exam. I do see it as problematic that the culture teaching in classrooms are potentially the consequence of the topics given at summative assessments. Baird et al. (2014) have discussed the issues with modelling classroom activities to meet test standards. They state that:

Under the pressure of perverse incentives to improve test scores, teacher may decide increasingly to teach to the test rather than to teach for robust understanding. Training students in techniques for answering questions presented in predictable formats can help them to improve their test performances, but without any corresponding rise in their proficiency across the tested learning outcomes. (p. 81)

I would argue that if teachers were modelling their classroom implementation of ICC by the topics of the exam, one must consider to what degree established aspects of ICC are taught. I would assume that skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC are deprioritized because there has not been sufficient emphasis on that in class. This affects the validity in measuring ICC at the exam, because there is a heightened focus on assessing the competences that have been prevalent in class. Skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC are potentially in danger of being overlooked in favour of other more apparent competences. Baird et al. (2014) have commented on issues with excluding complex competences from

teaching and testing. They state that “when there are incentives to not teach or acquire learning outcomes that are predictability absent from test forms, then conditions are ripe for score inflation...” (Baird et al., 2014, p. 81). Although they discuss score inflation, I still believe that this is relevant for validity in measuring pupils’ ICC. I would argue that a narrow scope in teaching and assessment will lead to teachers not focusing on skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC, but rather on competences that they have taught throughout the year.

### 7.3 Validity in assessment at the exam

Considering my findings, I would argue that the teachers do not consider the summative exam as an appropriate medium to measure pupils’ ICC. The interviewed teachers seemed to agree that the exam, in its current state, limit the assessment to pupils’ ability to write coherent and argumentative texts. Teacher 1 and 3 emphasized the importance of pupils’ abilities to write coherent and argumentative texts. They also emphasized that they do not believe that the primary goal of the final summative exam in English is to measure skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. They argued that the abilities to write coherent texts with proper structure and use of citation are the most important competences at the exam. They stated that it would be difficult for an examiner to purposely differentiate between ICC and the ability to write coherent texts in an exam situation. There are certain fundamental abilities that need to be in place even for pupils to be able to show their ICC in an appropriate manner. In that sense, one can make the argument that the interviewed teachers prioritize basic skills related to written communication above the abilities that constitute ICC. Their responses indicate to me they believe that the exam questions are not created primarily for pupils to display skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC.

I would make the argument that one can see the same tendency in the document analysis in chapter 3. In the document analysis I argue that the reflective and attitudinal perspectives of ICC are not transferred into the assessment criteria in the examination guide. Although ICC is an important aspect of the education, the same expression of importance is not reflected in the exam documents. This discrepancy is visible in the examination guide, which does not specifically mention any perspectives of ICC or other abilities that can be linked to reflective and attitudinal aspects of learning. The examination guide does not emphasize the importance of teachers’ assessing such competence. The examination guide does not provide teachers with clear criteria on how they are to assess pupils’ exam answers, other than that the exam

questions are based on the competence aims in the subject curriculum. Teachers' assessment of pupils' ICC is therefore potentially limited to how pupils' display the skills, abilities and knowledge that are expressed in the competence aims in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum. I would argue that this has a negative effect on the validity of measuring ICC, because the competence aims in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum do not reflect perspectives of ICC in a constructive manner. As I have argued in chapter 3, the ENG1-03 subject curriculum does not advocate perspectives of ICC to the same degree as the Core Curriculum or the ENG01-04 subject curriculum. However, I would argue that the subject curriculum does provide teachers with a more accurate description of reflective competences that can be related to perspectives of ICC, than the competence aims alone.

The previous research indicates that many teachers are principally sceptical towards summative assessments, especially standardized tests, regardless of what skill, ability or knowledge they aim to measure (Barnes et al., 2015; Brown & Harris, 2009; Cimbricz, 2002). The previous research also indicates that researchers believe that summative assessment / standardized tests do not facilitate the opportunity for teachers to ensure validity in measuring ICC (Fenner, 2005; Deardorff, 2009; Hodgson et al., 2010; Black et al., 2011). Fenner (2005) argues that skill-tests are not reliable in ensuring validity of assessment of ICC because they limit teachers' assessment to skills that do not show reflection, attitudinal awareness or cultural consciousness. There is therefore no consensus on how teachers are to ensure the validity in measuring more reflective competences that can be linked to ICC. Baird et al. (2014) state that the exclusion of more complex competences can hurt the validity of assessment and compromise the purpose of the assessment. They state that:

Problems begin to emerge, however, when test design decisions preclude the assessment of certain valuable learning outcomes – typically those which are too hard, or too expensive, to assess accurately – under situations of high accountability when there are perverse incentives upon students and teachers to play the system. (p. 81)

One could argue that the beliefs of the interviewed teachers do reflect some of the sentiments as expressed in this statement. They seem to favour competences that are more easily identifiable and quantifiable, such as text structure, the ability to write argumentative texts and use of sources. This affects validity in measuring pupils' ICC because examiners might exclude skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC from their judgement.

Another element that can affect the validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam is the notion that the exam can have multiple purposes. As I mentioned above, validity in assessment might be affected by how teachers prioritize certain competences over others. The interviewed teachers also indicated that the exam can have multiple purposes, and that teachers value and prioritize the competences that the pupils' display at the exam differently. Teacher 1 stated that his class had worked extensively with text structure and how to form convincing arguments throughout the year, and that they achieved good grades because of it. He believed that the exam gave teachers the opportunity to evaluate pupils' ability to meet many competence aims. In our conversation he also stated that he believed that the most important thing is that pupils get the opportunity to show a versatile set of competences. Teacher 3 mentioned some of the political incentives she believed to be an important factor at the exam. She believed that the topic and questions reflect a notion that education in Norway strive to be political and technological conscious. This can potentially affect the validity in assessment, because teachers can have different beliefs on the purpose of the exam and assess pupils according to those beliefs.

Teachers in the review also have various beliefs on what the purpose of summative assessment should be. Studies have indicated that teachers believe that summative assessments such as standardized testing have multiple purposes (Barnes et al., 2015; Brown & Harris, 2009). These studies mention that standardized tests often have varying purposes, such as evaluating school performance and accountability. In reference to the assessment of ICC at the summative exam, I must mention the findings on Barnes et al. (2015) who mentioned 'assessment for accountability' as a reason for assessment. I do believe that this perspective is in drastic conflict with the perspectives of ICC. I argue that if assessors were to assess pupils' ICC as a mean of holding them accountable for their learning, the true purpose of both assessment and ICC is discarded. Teachers' various beliefs on the purpose of assessment will affect the assessment validity because examiners can potentially assess pupils' exam answers with different interests and intentions in mind. There is a study that indicate that summative 'high-stake testing' can undermine the professional judgement of teachers. Researchers have argued that "teachers' values can be in conflict with such systems, and a feeling of deprofessionalisation can occur" (Baird et al., 2014, p. 50). It is therefore a challenge to evaluate how the criteria ensure the validity in measuring ICC, because the exam also potentially measures other competences. Baird et al. (2014) comments on the difficulty on evaluating the assessment validity when tests have multiple purposes. They state that "it is

insufficient to evaluate the degree to which a test measures the attribute that it has been designed to measure, if it is also being used as a proxy measure for a whole host of other attributes” (Baird et al., 2014, p. 98). It can therefore be challenging to evaluate the validity of measuring pupils’ ICC because the exam does have multiple purposes. One could argue that there is not a coherent belief on the purpose of the exam, and examiners might assess it accordingly. However, there are several researchers (Vold, 2014; Aase, 2005; Fenner, 2005; Bøhn & Dypedahl, 2017; Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Coulby, 2006) who have emphasized ICC as an essential purpose of education, and I would argue that it would be a mistake to devalue its importance at the exam.

Another issue related to validity in assessing ICC at the exam is the lack of adequate questions enabling pupils to display ICC. This is relevant to validity in assessment because I argue that if the questions do not enable pupils to display ICC, the examiners will not have the adequate material to make a valid assessment of the skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. The interviews show that all three teachers believed that the questions do not give pupils the opportunity to reflect. All three teachers stated that indications for ICC are pupils’ ability to reflect on the texts with their own experiences. Teacher 1 and 2 specifically stated that the questions lack the integral aspect of self-reflection. Examiners would have to use their professional judgement and evaluate to what degree they are to focus on ICC. I would argue that this will affect the validity in measuring pupils’ ICC because there could be inconsistencies in assessment practice. I would also argue that examiners would be hesitant to assess pupils on a competence that the pupils have not been explicitly instructed to display.

My document analysis also analyses the exam questions. My evaluation of the exam questions does share the same concerns as the interviewed teachers, namely that the questions do not explicitly instruct the pupils to reflect on the issues. I make the argument that the exam questions are constructed to implement the competence aims under the ‘culture, society and literature’ subheading in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum. As I have argued in chapter 3, these competences do not require the pupils to reflect, analyse or explore the given topic and texts. The validity in measuring ICC will therefore be the result of how examiners manage to use their professional judgement and evaluate to what degree the pupils have displayed these abilities.



There are researchers that have emphasized the importance of pupils' ability to engage with and understand the depth of international and global issues (Cushner & Mahon, 2009; Coulby, 2006). The exam questions do not seem to facilitate that opportunity for the pupils. I would argue that this again relates to the opinions of Fenner (2005) and her evaluation of so-called 'skill-tests'. She argues that the issue with these tests is that they intrinsically fail to measure the appropriate competences. The questions are not constructed to allow for the pupils to display reflection or an in-depth understanding of a topic. This is an issue for the validity in measuring pupils' ICC, because the pupils are not given instructions to display ICC. I would argue that this would lead to examiners being hesitant to prioritize the assessment of abilities that constitute ICC because there are not instructions in the exam questions that would indicate that these abilities are essential to a valid assessment.

I would argue that the lack of explicit focus on ICC in the exam questions is also the main issue in the exam material. There are no instructions in either the examination guide or the preparation booklet that would clearly indicate that teachers are to assess skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. During the interviews we discussed the preparation booklet and its attributes regarding facilitating the opportunity for pupils to display ICC at the exam. Teacher 1, despite his issue with the topic of youth activism, was positive to the relevancy of the texts, and did believe that it provides the pupil with valuable contextual information. Teacher 2 believed that the topic was controversial but facilitated the opportunity for independent thinking and the ability to evaluate multiple viewpoints. Teacher 3 was more hesitant to acknowledge that the topic of the exam enabled pupils to display ICC, because she argued that the pupils did not have the sufficient knowledge or awareness to do so. Furthermore, all three teachers agreed that ICC was not explicitly emphasized enough in the preparation booklet. They stated that there are no clear instructions in it that indicate that abilities that constitute ICC are prioritized in assessment. I would argue that this affects validity in measuring pupils' ICC, because neither teachers or pupils are engaging with the preparation material with the appropriate mind-set. For instance, there are no instructional incentives in the exam material that would encourage teachers to emphasize relating the texts to ICC during the preparation day. The lack of explicit focus on ICC in the exam material can affect the validity in measuring pupils' ICC because there is no cohesive understanding of how to relate the exam material to skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC.

In my document analysis I make the argument that the preparation booklet does provide pupils with a topic and corresponding texts that can be related to perspectives of ICC. The issue with the preparation booklet is that it only provides the pupils with the topic and relevant texts. The preparation booklet, similar to all the other current steering documents and exam documents, does not specifically mention ICC. It does not have any instructions to neither pupil or examiner on how to display ICC, or how to ensure validity in measuring it. The preparation booklet only facilitates the opportunity for pupils to use the various texts in their exam answers. I would argue that the potential for pupils to display ICC through engagement with the texts in the preparation booklet is irrelevant as long as examiners are not given clear instructions on how to ensure validity in measuring their display of ICC.

I would argue that my findings also do indicate that there is a lack of explicit focus on how to measure ICC in the current steering documents. All the interviewed teachers agreed that there is a lack of explicit focus on and the assessment of ICC in the current steering documents. They all agree that validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam is dependent on examiners' professional judgement. I would argue that this would naturally have an effect on the validity because examiners lack explicit guidelines and instructions in the current steering documents to make coherent assessments of pupils' ICC. All three interviewed teachers emphasized that being able to reflect is an integral aspect of ICC, and the aspect that they often look for when assessing ICC. They argue that, in the context of the exam, reflection is the ability to critically evaluate different viewpoints, identify their complexity, and acknowledge their significance. The issues with validity in measuring this emerge when teachers have to evaluate to what degree pupils' display this ability. Teacher 2 stated that he has no issues with acknowledging what ICC is and implementing it into classroom activities. However, he said that the assessment of ICC is difficult because it is challenging to identify and evaluate to what degree a pupil has displayed abilities that constitute ICC. Assessment is consequently limited to acquisition of information, text structure and ability to write a coherent text. He also stated that the ambiguity of pupils' display of ICC is even more prominent at the exam. He stated that because of the anonymity and the difficulty of tracing nuances, he often focuses on the structural competencies such as correct terminology and citation. This has consequences for the validity in measuring pupils' ICC because teachers might evaluate differently to what degree pupils display ICC at the exam.

My document analysis could indicate that there is a lack of explicit focus on ICC expressed in the current steering documents. Teachers are not given clear instructions in neither steering documents or exam documents on how to discern ICC and evaluate to what degree pupils show that competence. The 2017 Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum do provide teachers with abilities and competences that can be related to aspects of ICC. However, these are more overarching values that function more as guidelines and an expression for the overall purpose of Norwegian education and the English subject. Furthermore, they are not yet implemented. I would argue that teachers are not provided with any guidelines in the ENG1-03 subject curriculum, the examination guide or the exam document that would aid them in ensuring the validity in measuring these competences.

I would argue that this is an issue for the validity in measuring skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC at the exam. The lack of explicit focus on definition and how to measure ICC in the current steering documents does mean that there is a lack of coherent understanding of how to do valid assessment. Studies in the literature review do substantiate this argument by revealing that teachers do believe that the criteria for assessment from the national curriculum were vaguely formulated and not adequate for consistent judgements (Hodgson et al., 2010; Black et al., 2011). The study by Hodgson et al. (2011) is especially relevant for this thesis because they were evaluating the development and implementation of *kunnskapsløftet*. I would argue that it is therefore important for validity in measuring ICC that its definition and scope is clearly stated. Deardorff (2009) does mention the importance of clearly defining what one is measuring in relation to the assessment of ICC. She states that the evaluating the validity of a tests begins with a definite and clear definition and demarcation of the concept one is measuring. Considering her comments, I would argue that it is equally as important to evaluate how steering documents facilitate the opportunity for teachers to ensure validity in measuring ICC, as it is to evaluate the actual exam questions.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence at the final exam. The first research question asked to what extent the exam questions and assessment criteria ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC. To explore this, I conducted document analysis of relevant steering documents and exam documents to analyse the presence and advocacy of ICC. The second research question explored teachers' understanding of ICC, and their beliefs on the exam questions and assessment. I conducted semi-structured interviews with three teachers to gain insight into their understanding of ICC and their beliefs on its role in education, classroom implementation, and assessment.

I would argue that my research shows that there are several factors that impact the validity in measuring pupils' intercultural competence at the final exam. Firstly, there are factors related to the steering documents and exam documents. It seems clear that there is a lack of explicit focus on ICC in the steering documents. The ENG1-03 subject curriculum does not mention it, and there are only allusions to perspectives of ICC. The Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 do seem to promote perspectives of ICC more clearly and in accordance with each other. However, neither document defines ICC. I would argue that this impacts the assessment validity of ICC because teachers do not have access to steering documents that provide them with a coherent and common definition of ICC. Furthermore, there is a lack of explicit assessment criteria for ICC in the subject curriculums and the examination guide. Teachers do not have access to valid and concrete guidelines on how to assess pupils' ICC at the exam. Consequently, teachers might find it difficult to assess ICC because there is lack of common understanding of what they are to assess. Due to the lack of explicit focus in the steering documents and the exam documents, individual teachers have different understandings of ICC. This affects the assessment validity of ICC because teachers are the ones who assess, and their understandings are not derived from a common conceptual framework. I would also make the argument that teachers' classroom implementation of ICC impacts validity. I would argue that teachers assess pupils according to what they teach, and would therefore be hesitant to assess ICC if they have not explicitly focused on it. This affects assessment validity because it seems clear that teachers employ different assessment practices. Teachers do also have different beliefs on the purpose of the exam. Previous research and my interviews with teacher indicate that teachers do not necessarily believe that the primary purpose of the exam is to assess pupils' ICC. This affects the assessment validity of ICC, because teacher might have completely different priorities when assessing pupils' exam answers.

Although that there are multiple factors that might negatively impact the assessment validity of ICC, there are also measures that can potentially help ensure assessment validity at the exam. I encountered these measures in conversation with the participating teachers, and in my research. The first measure regards the use of the preparation booklet. As I have argued in chapter 3, I believe that the texts in the preparation booklet do facilitate the opportunity for pupils to display skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC. However, I make the argument that pupils do not have sufficient time to transform the available texts into valuable contextual content to show ICC. Therefore, I do argue that there is a discrepancy between the theoretical potential of the preparation booklet and its practical function. Lunde & Skeiseid (2013) examined the effects of the preparation day on pupils' exam responses in 2010. The study suggests that the preparation day did not help the pupils' results at the exam. Neither support and help from teachers or discussions in groups had any significant effect on pupils' exam grade in relation to their overall achievement grade (p. 43). In fact, the study indicates that the pupils who made preparation notes and brought them the next day to the exam had significant negative deviancies in their exam grade compared to their overall achievement grade (p. 43). I do believe there is a simple solution to this issue. Pupils could be given the preparation booklet earlier, and it could be part of the classroom teaching one or even two weeks before the exam. I do not find any viable reason to withhold the preparation booklet from the pupils, as the additional time would give the pupils the opportunity to give their texts more contextual cohesion. The preparation could be a more focused collaboration between teachers and pupils where they evaluate the preparation material in accordance with ICC. This would ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC at the exam, because there has been a cohesive and focused preparation for issues regarding ICC. I would again support my claim with reference to Aase (2005) and Fenner (2005) and their emphasis on *bildung* and the importance of internalization of knowledge. Consequently, the issue of time has also been discussed when evaluating the exam format in the light of the new curriculum by the NDET (2019c). An assessment group of the current exam format states that:

One should consider to adopt a more extensive preparation period compared to the current model in appropriate subjects.

Det bør vurderes å åpne opp for å ta i bruk en lengre forberedelsestid enn i dag i fag der det er faglig begrunnet.

(NDET, 5.2 *Forberedelse*, my translation).

I do believe that this would benefit validity of assessment greatly. Both teachers and pupils would get additional time with texts, which would strengthen their contextual understanding of the topics. The additional time would also aid them in focusing on skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC and there would be a coherent and common understanding of how to assess them.

The ongoing work with the new curriculums can potentially be of great benefit to this cause. The cohesion in concept validity of ICC in the new Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 will create a common conceptual framework for teachers, and give a clearer indication to how achieve validity in measuring pupils' ICC. This is also the primary reason why I have focused on the Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum in this thesis. There are ongoing pedagogic discussions regarding the new curricula and I want this thesis to be an addition to the discussion. As I argue in chapter 3, there is a clearer cohesion in the definition and understanding of perspectives of ICC in the Core Curriculum and the new subject curriculum ENG01-04. This mutual understanding and shared emphasis will potentially create stronger concept validity and assessment validity of ICC. The cohesion between the Core Curriculum and the subject curriculum was, according to Kommunesektorens Organisasjon (KS), a primary issue while evaluating the *Knowledge Promotion* from 2006. KS argued that the previous Core Curriculum was disregarded in the reform and there was poor cohesion between the Education Act, the Core Curriculum and the subject curriculum. A clearer cohesion was an important component in the creation of a new Curriculum. KS states that "it is crucial that for the ongoing Fagfornyelsen that these three components of schools' social mandate build on each other and are clarified" "Det er avgjørende for den pågående fagfornyelsen at disse tre delene av skolens samfunnsmandat nå bygger på hverandre og tydeliggjøres" (KS, 2017, my translation). This is an indication to me that the Ministry of Education of Research is taking part of a steady and gradual international change in teaching objectives. This change is reflected in the new Core Curriculum and the ENG01-04 subject curriculum. The aspects of ICC that are presented in the literature review are prevalent in the new curricula. The inclusion of perspectives of ICC is a more accurate reflection of the current academic climate that emphasise the importance of ICC in foreign language teaching and general education. The heightened emphasis and expression of perspectives of ICC in the new curricula improve the concept validity of ICC. It could be said to provide the teachers with a clear framework on how to ensure validity in measuring pupils' ICC. The improved cohesion between the Core Curriculum and the subject curriculum could improve teachers'

assessment. However, I would still argue that it is essential that ICC is clearly defined and expressed. As I stated at the end of chapter 3, I believe that ICC should be its own interdisciplinary topic to signify its importance. That would mean that teachers do not have to spend unnecessary time using their professional judgement to define, dissect and evaluate terms and criteria for assessment. Some of these issues of validity in assessment will potentially disappear because the new curriculums are meant to be interpreted in accordance with each other and therefore validate each other. I do believe that this improved cohesion will provide teachers with more substantial understanding of the skills, abilities and knowledge that constitute ICC and how they are assessed.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Interview guide

#### **Research question:**

What are teachers' understanding of ICC, implications for teaching and assessment?

- 1) Hva er din forståelse av ICC?
  
- 2) Hvordan kan man lære det til elevene?
  
- 3) Hvordan kan man vurdere ICC og hva fokuserer man på?
  
- 4) Hvordan gir vår 2019 eksamen elevene muligheten til å vise ICC?
  
- 5) Hva er din mening om eksamen som format for vurdering av ICC?

## Appendix 2 – Exam topic

**The topic for this examination is:**

### **Just do it! Speak out! Break the mould!**

It is more than 30 years since Nike first launched their "Just do it!" campaign that encouraged young people to use their voice and play their sport. The Nike anniversary campaign in 2018 challenges people, especially young people, to reach for their dream, break the mould and never give up. Over the past three decades, "Just do it!" has moved well beyond being a slogan for Nike and has become a common saying.

The texts in this preparation material provide you with many examples of how people are just doing it, breaking the mould and speaking out about causes they feel strongly about. We encourage you to delve further into the issues that interest you by using the links provided and other relevant sources. The texts also aim to make you think about how you can "just do it". You can make your working environment and the world a better place, and the time to start is now!

While you are working with the preparation material you should consider how the texts relate to what you have worked with during your English course. Remember to note down your sources so that you can cite them in your texts for the examination.

#### **Just do it!**

To "just do it" is to step out of your comfort zone and willingly and without hesitation take on a challenge. It may also mean to reach for your dreams and not give up.

#### **Speak out!**

"Speaking out" means sharing your opinion about an issue or idea, especially regarding something that you feel strongly about.

#### **Break the mould!**

If you say that someone "breaks the mould", you mean that they do things differently from the way things are usually done. It can be also used to refer to someone who challenges expectations and traditions.

## Appendix 3 – Preparation booklet: Text 1C &amp; 1D



He's just 17, but young leader Watene Campbell is making his voice heard on issues facing Māori youth and the environment

"People sometimes think too much about themselves and don't think ahead. The reason I want to do these things for our environment is not only to revitalise our native birds, sea creatures and plants, but also for the next generations. I want my children to experience the beauty of the sea and forest as I have, and connect to our Maori gods the way I have," he says.

"I guess I'm representing a voice for Māori in the future. This world is based around English learning but I want a world where Māori can succeed as much as anyone."



Harper Nielsen, a nine-year-old Australian girl who refused to stand during the playing of the National Anthem at school.

"I feel we should respect Indigenous people and their culture. [The anthem] says Advance Australia Fair, which when it was originally written meant advance white Australia. It says we are young, but we're not young if we count the Indigenous Australians, who were here for over 50,000 years before the British colonised Australia."

When it was suggested that she could leave the room if she would not stand for the anthem she replied "I don't think I should be made to leave the room or do something different because I have different beliefs."

## Appendix 4 – Preparation booklet: Text 1E &amp; 1F



David Hogg, a survivor of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., speaks during the "March for Our Lives" rally in support of gun control in Washington on March 24, 2018. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

"When politicians say that your voice doesn't matter because the NRA owns them, we say: No more. When politicians send their thoughts and prayers with no action, we say: No more. And to those politicians supported by the NRA, that allow the continued slaughter of our children and our future, I say: Get your résumés ready. We will not stop until every man, every woman, every child, and every American can live without fear of gun violence."



"OFOC describe themselves as 'a group of angry, determined young people who think Brexit is a disaster and should be stopped'."

Oluwole, 27, points out that by the time the lengthy Brexit process is complete the ageing population of Leave voters is likely going to be outnumbered by Remainers.

He says: "It's our future. Who's going to be looking for a job in that economy? Who's going to be raising a family in that economy? Who's going to be looking for a mortgage in that economy? It's the people that voted not to have this."

Femi Oluwele is the co-founder of Our Future, Our Choice!

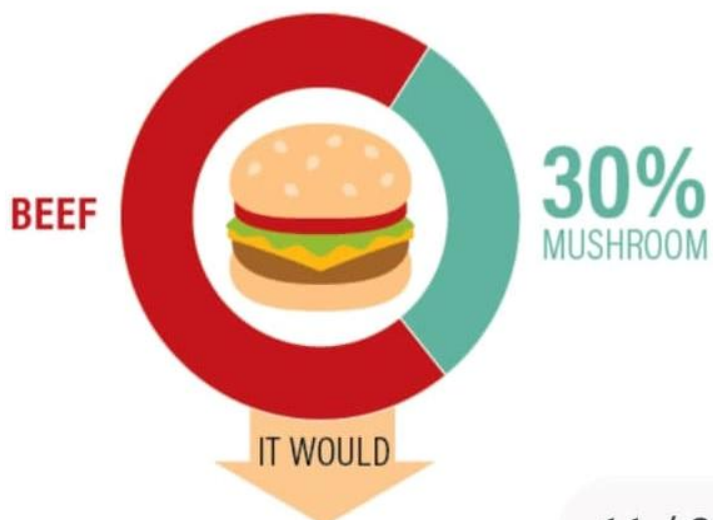
Text 3



## Appendix 6 – Preparation booklet: Text 3.2

AMERICANS EAT **10 BILLION** BURGERS ANNUALLY

IF 30% OF THE BEEF IN EVERY BURGER WAS REPLACED WITH MUSHROOMS...



11 / 24



Save as many emissions as taking **2.3 MILLION CARS** off the road



Conserve as much water as **2.6 MILLION AMERICANS** use at home each year



Reduce agricultural land demand by an **AREA LARGER THAN MARYLAND**



BETTER  
BUYING  
LAB



WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

## Appendix 7 – Preparation booklet: Text 3.3

# 8 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

There are an estimated **5 TRILLION** pieces of plastic in the ocean worldwide, with **8 MILLION** metric tons added to the ocean each year\*. Wildlife are dying at a rapid pace due to the ingestion of or entanglement in plastics.



 <b>1</b> →  <b>PLASTIC WATER BOTTLE</b> → <b>REUSABLE BEVERAGE CONTAINER</b>	 <b>2</b> →  <b>TO-GO COFFEE LIDS</b> → <b>TRAVEL COFFEE MUG</b>	 <b>3</b> →  <b>PLASTIC AND PRODUCE BAGS</b> → <b>REUSABLE CLOTH BAGS</b>
 <b>4</b> →  <b>SINGLE-SERVE COFFEE PODS</b> → <b>A POT OF COFFEE</b>	<p><b>YOU</b> can help reduce waste by removing single-use plastics from your everyday activities.</p>	 <b>5</b> →  <b>COFFEE PLUGS AND STIR STICKS</b> → <b>TRAVEL COFFEE MUG</b>
 <b>6</b> →  <b>BALLOONS</b> → <b>ECO-FRIENDLY DECORATIONS</b>	 <b>7</b> →  <b>STRAW</b> → <b>STRAW FREE</b>	 <b>8</b> →  <b>DISPOSABLE LIGHTER</b> → <b>MATCHES</b>

**CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION** | #StopSingleUse

\* ERIKSEN ET AL. 2014; JAMBECK ET AL. 2015



## Appendix 8 – Preparation booklet: Text 4

## Text 4

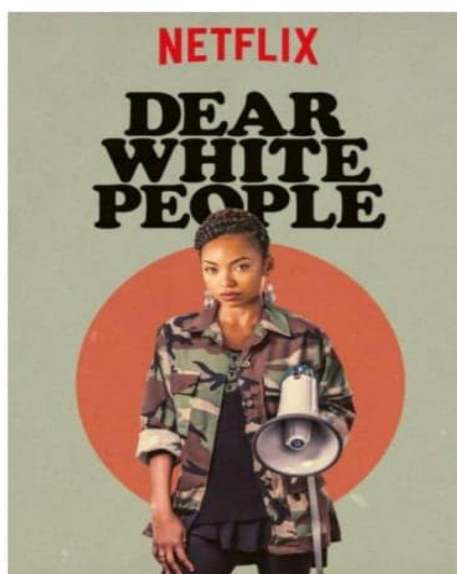
This poem was performed at an open mic session by the fictional character, Reggie Green in the Netflix series *Dear White People*. In a previous episode Reggie had been held at gunpoint by campus security following an argument with a white friend at a campus party.

We hold these truths to be self-evident  
that all men are created equal  
that they are endowed by their creator  
with certain inalienable rights  
Among these life, liberty and  
the pursuit of happiness  
unless you're loud and black  
and possess an opinion  
then all you get is a bullet

A bullet that held me at bay  
A bullet that can puncture my skin  
take all my dreams away  
A bullet that can silence  
the words I speak to my mother  
just because I'm  
other  
A bullet – held me captive  
gun in my face  
your hate misplaced  
White skin, light skin  
but for me not the right skin

Judging me with no crime committed  
reckless trigger finger itching to  
prove your worth by disproving mine  
My life in your hands  
My life on the line  
Fred Hampton  
Tamir Rice  
Rekia Boyd  
Reggie Green?  
Spared by a piece of paper  
a student ID  
that you had to see before  
you could identify  
me  
and set me supposedly  
free

Life  
liberty  
and the pursuit of happiness  
for some of us maybe  
There's nothing self-evident about it



You can see the video here:  
<https://youtu.be/4cyGNM44U-g>

## Appendix 9 – Preparation booklet: Text 5

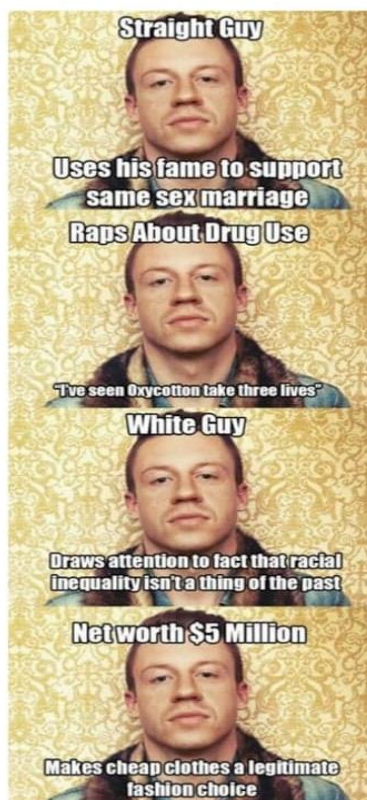
## Text 5

Wing\$ by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis

I was seven years old, when I got my first pair  
 And I stepped outside  
 And I was like, "Momma, this air bubble right  
 here, it's gonna make me fly  
 I hit back-court, and when I jumped, I jumped, I  
 swear I got so high  
 I touched the net, Mom I touched the net, this is  
 the best day of my life  
 Air Max's were next,  
 That air bubble, that mesh  
 The box, the smell, the stuffin', the tread, in  
 school  
 I was so cool, I knew that I couldn't crease 'em  
 My friends couldn't afford 'em, Four stripes,  
 some Adidas  
 On the court I wasn't the best, but my kicks  
 were like the pros  
 Yo, I stick out my tongue so everyone could see  
 that logo  
 Nike Air Flight, but bad was so dope  
 And then my friend Carlos' brother got  
 murdered for his fours, whoa

See he just wanted a jump shot, but they  
 wanted to start a cult though  
 Didn't wanna get caught, from Genesee Park to  
 Othello  
 You could clown for those Probings, with the  
 Velcro, those were not tight  
 I was trying to fly without leaving the ground,  
 'cause I wanted to be like Mike, right  
 Wanted to be him, I wanted to be that guy, I  
 wanted to touch the rim  
 I wanted to be cool, and I wanted to fit in,  
 I wanted what he had, America, it begins

I wanna fly  
 Can you take me far away  
 Gimmie a star to reach for  
 Tell me what it takes  
 And I'll go so high  
 I'll go so high  
 My feet won't touch the ground  
 Stitch my wings  
 And pull the strings  
 I bought these dreams  
 That all fall down



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We want what we can't have, commodity makes us want it  
 So expensive, damn, I just got to flaunt it  
 Got to show 'em, so exclusive, this that new shit  
 A hundred dollars for a pair of shoes I would never hoop in  
 Look at me, look at me, I'm a cool kid  
 I'm an individual, yea, but I'm part of a movement  
 My movement told me be a consumer and I consumed it  
 They told me to just do it, I listened to what that swoosh said  
 Look at what that swoosh did. See it consumed my thoughts  
 Are you stupid, don't crease 'em, just leave 'em in that box  
 Strangled by these laces, laces I can barely talk  
 That's my air bubble and I'm lost, if it pops  
 We are what we wear, we wear what we are  
 But see I look inside the mirror and think Phil Knight tricked us all  
 Will I stand for change, or stay in my box  
 These Nikes help me define me, but I'm trying to take mine, off

I wanna fly  
 Can you take me far away  
 Gimmie me a star to reach for  
 Tell me what it takes  
 And I'll go so high  
 I'll go so high  
 My feet won't touch the ground  
 Stitch my wings  
 And pull the strings  
 I bought these dreams  
 That all fall down  
 I started out, with what I wear to school  
 That first day, like these are what make you cool  
 And this pair, this would be my parachute  
 So much more than just a pair of shoes  
 Nah, this is what I am, what I wore, this is the source of my youth  
 This dream that they sold to you  
 For a hundred dollars and some change, consumption is in the veins  
 And now I see it's just another pair of shoes

You can see the music video here: <https://youtu.be/gAg3uMINyHA>

## Appendix 10 – Exam: Info

**Bokmål**

<b>Eksamensinformasjon</b>	
<b>Eksamenstid</b>	Eksamen varer i 5 timer.
<b>Hjelpemidler</b>	<p>Alle hjelpemidler er tillatt, bortsett fra åpent Internett og andre verktøy som kan brukes til kommunikasjon.</p> <p>For norsk, samisk, finsk som andrespråk og fremmedspråkene er heller ikke oversettelsesprogrammer tillatt.</p> <p>Når du bruker nettbaserte hjelpemiddel under eksamen, har du ikke lov til å kommunisere med andre. Samskriving, chat og andre måter å utveksle informasjon med andre er ikke tillatt.</p>
<b>Bruk av kilder</b>	<p>Hvis du bruker kilder i besvarelsen din, skal disse alltid oppgis på en slik måte at leseren kan finne fram til dem.</p> <p>Du skal oppgi forfatter og fullstendig tittel på både lærebøker og annen litteratur. Hvis du bruker utskrifter eller sitater fra Internett, skal du oppgi nøyaktig nettadresse og nedlastingsdato.</p>
<b>Informasjon om oppgaven</b>	Du skal svare på én oppgave i "Task 1" og én oppgave i "Task 2".
<b>Praktiske opplysninger</b>	Å presentere fagstoff, å bruke estetiske virkemidler og å utforme tekster er en del av kompetansekravene i engelskfaget. Du velger selv hvordan du best kan vise mottakerbevissthet og få fram hensikten med tekstene dine.
<b>Informasjon om vurderingen</b>	Se eksamensveiledningen med kjennetegn på måloppnåelse til sentralt gitt skriftlig eksamen. Eksamensveiledningen finner du på Utdanningsdirektoratets nettsider.

## Appendix 11 – Exam: Task 2 A-D

### Answer either 2A, 2B, 2C, or 2D

#### 2A

*Create a literary text about a young person who takes a stand or breaks the mould.*

You may choose to write any type of literary text. Your text must:

- include at least one young person from an English-speaking country
- explore themes such as taking a stand, breaking the mould, or just doing it
- be titled "Just do it!"

#### 2B

*Create a text to inspire students to learn as much as they can and connect with colleagues while on work placement.*

In your text:

- briefly introduce your educational programme
- explain why work placement is important in terms of practical learning
- discuss how and why you should connect with colleagues and clients/customers during your work placement
- discuss the importance of both being independent and part of a team
- conclude by convincing your readers to "just do it" while on work placement

Texts 2 and 8 may be useful for this task. Give your text a suitable title.

#### 2C

Powerful texts often focus on a person who dares to "just do it" by breaking the mould or standing up for themselves, others or a cause.

*Create a text discussing a powerful text (this could also be a film) you have worked with this year and compare it to one of the texts from the preparation material.*

In your text:

- introduce the two texts you will be discussing
- compare the two texts in terms of the message conveyed
- explain and compare what makes the texts powerful
- discuss how a character's or person's "just do it" attitude affects readers

Texts 1 a-g, 4, 5 and 6 are all suitable choices for this task. Give your text a suitable title.

#### 2D

You have learnt about current issues in English-speaking countries during your course and while preparing for this exam.

*Create a text about a current issue in an English-speaking country and how young people are raising their voice to address the issue.*

In your text:

- introduce the issue you have chosen
- explain how the issue is being addressed and by whom
- discuss the challenges young people may face when they decide to "Just do it!" and speak out
- discuss roles young people can have in terms of working with this issue

Texts 1 a-g, 3, 4 and 5 may be useful for this task. Give your text a suitable title.

## Appendix 12 – Previous exam topics

Spring 2017:

### **The topic for this examination is:**

#### **Being a good worker and a good citizen in English-speaking countries**

In this preparation material, you will find a variety of texts about being a good worker and a good citizen in different contexts in English-speaking countries. Such contexts might be historical periods, national or regional cultures, the workplace or school, a circle of friends and so on.

From time to time, we might be unsure about what to do in order to be a good worker or a good citizen. The expectations we find in one context may be different from the expectations in another. Both schools and workplaces, for example, will have their expectations about what it means to be a good worker or good citizen. Your friends, family and local community may also have different views about what it means to be a good citizen.

**We hope that these texts will inspire you to explore and discuss ideas about this topic. Remember to look for information from other sources as well, including what you have worked with during your English course. Make a note of useful keywords and phrases, and remember to note down your sources.**

**REMEMBER TO BRING THIS PREPARATION MATERIAL WITH YOU TO THE EXAMINATION. YOU WILL NEED IT.**

Autumn 2017:

### **The topic for this examination is:**

#### **Diversity in English-speaking countries**

Most English-speaking countries are culturally diverse, with people of many different ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs and language traditions. People can also be in a minority due to their sexual orientation or a disability. The texts in this preparation material aim to inspire you to consider this diversity. You will read about the benefits and challenges of diversity in various settings, such as at work, on the sports field and in everyday life.

Workplaces have rules and regulations that unite people of diverse backgrounds so that all employees are safe and healthy on the job. Employers are responsible for ensuring that all their employees understand their rights and responsibilities, despite different language backgrounds or proficiency levels. Not all people in English-speaking countries are competent English users. This can lead to communication challenges in personal, social and work settings that employers need to be mindful of.

Many people write or speak about the challenges faced by minority groups in English-speaking countries. They may express frustration as well as hope in their texts, as they highlight important social issues such as sexual harassment, racial discrimination and exploitation.

As the curriculum requires you to read and write a wide range of text types, this preparation material includes texts of many different genres discussing the topic diversity. We hope that these texts will encourage you to see the many options you have when writing your own texts for the examination.

**We also hope that these texts will inspire you to explore and discuss ideas about this topic. Remember to look for information from other sources as well, including what you have worked with during your English course. Make a note of useful keywords and phrases and remember to note down your sources.**

Spring 2018:

**The topic for this examination is:**

**Winning and losing in the English-speaking world**

There are many interpretations of what it means to win and lose. Our ideas about this can change over time and differ from situation to situation or group to group. While we may at times feel that we are stuck in a losing situation, opportunities arise, expectations change and everything can suddenly look quite different. But success can just as easily slip away, even for those who appear to have come out on top.

In many English-speaking countries, society is more oriented towards competition than cooperation. This can be seen in sports (particularly for children and young people), as well as in education, culture, working life, politics and other areas. English-speaking countries also tend to have considerable social and cultural differences between groups and individuals.

Competition can often be beneficial as it motivates us to strive for high levels of performance and to hone our skills. However, it can also demotivate us and lead to a lack of cooperation and even conflict. Finding the right balance between competition and cooperation can be challenging.

**We hope that these texts will inspire you to explore and discuss ideas about this topic. Remember to look for information from other sources as well, including what you have worked with during your English course. Make a note of useful keywords and phrases, and remember to note down your sources.**

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