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**Master's thesis**  
**Teachers' cognition on teaching about**  
**racism**

A qualitative study on how teachers in lower  
secondary school teaches about 'racism'.

Læreres tanker rundt å undervise om rasisme

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“Education is the most powerful weapon  
which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

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Hamar

Marte Bjerkestrand

## Abstract

This master's thesis explores how teachers in lower secondary school teach about racism and what they find important in that regard. By researching racism through a theoretical perspective, racism as a term has been shown to be amorphous and vague and proven to be a changing ideological framework which people can use (and have used) to discriminate or violate many different groups. The previous research indicated that some teachers are uncomfortable teaching about racism as it is a sensitive topic, and teacher students report a lack of foundation and language to address the topic which cultivates insecurity. Some teachers also believe that teenagers are not mature enough to have reflected arguments in a potential discussion about racism, resulting in avoidance of the topic. The data collection in this thesis consists of three semi-structured interviews conducted with three white teachers in lower secondary school in Innlandet county. They reported that it is important to teach about racism with the intention of raising awareness and acceptance towards others. The teachers explained that they used films, book excerpts, and presentations as their practices. One of the teachers highlighted discussions as a fruitful approach as it encouraged the pupils to bring reflected arguments. The teachers found conceptual terms and heated arguments to be challenges regarding teaching about racism, through which research indicates that by remaining clear and transparent in what we mean by a term, could be sufficient in the classroom. Several teachers are careful in including the multiculturalism in their teaching due to the fear of singling them out, something Badu (2023) encourages as it can build the pupils' self-esteem and sense of value in the class. More research is needed in the field to see if there are different practices and fears in a monocultural classroom, and if non-white teachers have different approaches to conceptual terms.

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## Introduction

The intention with this master's thesis is to explore how teachers teach about the topic racism in the English subject in lower secondary school in Norway. Throughout the thesis, I will justify the importance of including the topic racism in school based on the new Knowledge Promotion (2020) and what other researchers have found previously. The aim is also to figure out if there is a suitable approach to the topic, or if there are aspects of today's teaching methods that need more thorough attention in the lessons. The findings will also be related to the aim of Democracy and citizenship located in the LK20.

The reason for addressing this topic is based on own experiences in practicum which is a part of the teacher education, where students are placed in schools and practice being a teacher. Here I discovered the lack of confidence I had as a white liberal teacher when it came to how I should address the important topic that racism is in a respectful manner that still challenged the pupils' preconceived notions. The classes I taught were all multicultural. The fear of unintentionally offending someone resulted in vagueness and insecurity. This is how I realized that I needed to explore this field. While conversing with other teachers, I learned that this is an insecurity shared with other professionals as well. The uncertainty around for instance which terms to use was a common obstacle, as we aim to not offend someone. Through looking at previous research and theory books that address the topic racism and teaching, I decided this would be an interesting and useful topic for my master's thesis which would benefit my own practice and could be beneficial to other teachers who experience insecurity as well.

According to Cyndi Kernahan (2019), some instructors find it easier to avoid teaching the topic of racism as there are many pupils who does not acknowledge that racism exist and do not take the themes of racism and discrimination seriously (Kernahan, 2019). She explains how she felt shocked that the students questioned every piece of information given to them. Researchers have found that this kind of teaching is difficult (Boatright-Horowitz and Soeung, 2019; Sue, Rivera, Watkins, Kim, Kim and Williams, 2011 in Kernahan, 2019, p. 4). This shows that a number of teachers experience similar feelings related to this topic, not only my feeling of insecurity, but also the exhaustion that comes from actually approaching the topic



and not receiving the wanted results. This is a topic that will be presented and addressed in the interviews of the respective teachers.

I have conducted a semi-structured interview with 3 English teachers in lower secondary school to find teachers' attitudes and beliefs concerning the teaching of the topic racism in the classroom. The teachers work in lower secondary school in Innlandet county, where they all have multicultural classrooms. The reason for choosing interviews is the type of information needed to answer the research questions, where meeting experienced teachers and having a personal meeting would provide that, as the questions require an understanding of not only the teachers' practice, but also follow up questions regarding their reasons for their approaches. The reason for the interviews being semi-structured is that there were questions that needed to be answered by all three teachers to collect the required information, which explains the structured part, and the semi-part is in order for the teachers to be able to explain in more detail what comes to their mind. Teachers approach the topic differently, and I sought to understand the reasons behind their approaches.

Overarching topic:

- How do Norwegian teachers approach teaching about racism in the English classroom?

Supporting research questions:

- What are the teachers' thoughts on racism and the importance of teaching about it?
- What are the teachers' practices when teaching about racism?
- What do the teachers consider challenging when teaching about racism?

## Background

### Core curriculum

The purpose of the education is stated in the Core curriculum in the Knowledge Promotion (2020), a document every teacher vow to follow when stepping into the role as an educator. There are several values and principles in this curriculum that concerns the topic of racism in different ways. None of them mentions ‘racism’ explicitly, but aspects of the topic are present in several principals. The objective clause of the Education Act states that “The education (...) shall (...) open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). Racism is a large part of the world’s history and is used to describe the brutality and injustice inspired by beliefs associated with the concept of race through slavery and segregation acts in the South states of USA; “the Nazi’s demonization and extermination of European Jewry; and the noncitizenship and economic servitude of South African blacks under Apartheid” (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 152), and it has influenced various cultures. The Education Act continues as follow:

“Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, and on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020).

Racism contradicts these values as the idea that there is a hierarchy of races disrespects human dignity and equality, leaving this to be a fundamental issue to be addressed in the education.

The Core Curriculum includes three interdisciplinary topics – Democracy and Citizenship, Health and Life Skills, and Sustainable Development. The interdisciplinary topic that will be most central in this thesis concerns Democracy and Citizenship, but Health and Life Skills will be included as additional relevance.

The interdisciplinary topic ‘Democracy and citizenship’ in LK20 addresses the importance of pupils learning about how they are formed by their culture, and how cultures around the world both differ and are similar. Learning this helps the pupils to “interpret the world in new ways and promotes curiosity and engagement and helps prevent prejudices” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). This is also stated in the section of ‘Relevance and Central Values’. This indicates that working against prejudice is an important part of the education itself. By not understanding other cultures and people who differ from oneself, people are prone to develop prejudices which are based on presumptions of how other people are, also known as social categorization (Klößner & de Raaf, 2013). Orlene Badu (2023) refers to prejudice as “unreasonably hostile feelings or opinions about a social group” (Badu, 2023, p. 20). By addressing and working on this issue that is prejudice, pupils can start exploring other cultures and social groups with open minds, providing acceptance. Although prejudice might seem conscious, prejudice can also unfold as unconscious bias, which is a term that “describes the associations we hold outside of our conscious awareness and control” (Badu, 2023, p. 21). This provides an urge to make pupils aware of racism and prejudices in order to challenge their unconscious bias.

Trond Solhaug (2021) explains in *Skolen i Demokratiet – Demokratiet I skolen* (The School in the Democracy – The Democracy in School) that the idea of education for democracy and citizenship in school can be traced back to 1814 in Norway (Solhaug, 2021, p. 19). He continues by pointing out that lesson plans throughout the 1900’s has emphasized the democratic mission in different ways, and that the Norwegian Parliament in 1920 wrote a decision about the school’s societal mandate, that the school shall be a national collecting, social equalizing, and conciliatory institution (Solhaug, 2021; Telhaug & Mediås, 2003). Due to this, the teachers became nation builders. Solhaug (2021) refers to the Central Statistical Office (SSB) when he claims that the increase in immigration led to new challenges to the teachers’ roles as national builders. He says that the social differences in the society might “lead to feelings of injustice and create tensions and conflicts in a democracy (p. 19). Although teachers are not directly responsible for social differences in the society, pupils bring these feelings with them into school, and teachers are required to execute an inclusive and democratic practice, which – as proved above – is challenging.

## Identity and cultural diversity

A value in the core curriculum in which the education should be based upon is the value of identity and cultural diversity. “Insight into our history and culture is important for developing the identities of pupils and their belonging in society” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). Gullestad (2006) states that “individualization (...) correctly places ethical responsibility within each individual” (Gullestad, 2006, p. 252). Concluding that everyone has an individual responsibility to act ethically demands an awareness of our own place in this world and our influencing power. Gullestad (2006) claims that “the idea of ‘finding oneself by creating oneself’ presupposes cultural pluralism. In order to create the pupils’ unique combinations of roles and identities, each person needs many established traditions to associate with, move among, pick from, and combine in new ways” (p. 252). This shows that when people are given insight into history and culture, along with the opportunity to explore and comprehend, they can find themselves and discover their identity. Eriksen (2017) claims that ethnicity is in itself a significant aspect of a person’s identity (Eriksen, 2017). As the pupils’ multicultural backgrounds are a part of the pupils’ identity, they should be given the opportunity to explore this on a deeper level in order for them to understand themselves and the world around them. By learning about their peers’ cultures, pupils can begin to understand that although someone’s identity differs from theirs, that does not mean that the other person is wrong – which links to prejudice explained above. In spite of that, the curriculum does not provide a definition of culture, providing confusion on what aspect of culture should be taught.

## English subject curriculum

The English subject curriculum emphasizes that “English is an important subject when it comes to cultural understanding (...)” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). Students are enabled to develop new perspectives by acquiring knowledge of the language, communication patterns, lifestyles, and social conditions through exploring the world and oneself (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). All subjects should contribute to the work on core values (1. human dignity, 2. identity and cultural awareness, 3. critical thinking and

ethical awareness, 4. the joy of creating, engagement, and the urge to explore, 5. Respect for nature and environmental awareness, and 6. Democracy and participation). A study conducted by the Education Research Institutes of UNESCO (2015) show that values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and empathy are transversal competencies, and should be promoted in education due to the essential role they play in highlighting justice, racial equality, and human rights.

One would naturally believe that the history of racism is mainly addressed in social studies as it affects the society. The topic should, however, be worked with interdisciplinary and use knowledge from other subjects into their own lessons and see how they connect. “The knowledge base for finding solutions to problems can be found in many subjects, and the topics must help the pupils to achieve understanding and to see connections across subjects” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). Pupils should understand that racism is not just a phenomenon that took place in history, but also how it affects other parts of society and how it has formed – and still forms - the world today. By connecting the knowledge from social science into the English subject, one can start to reflect on the diversities and ways of thinking in the English-speaking world, which is a competence aim in the English subject curriculum after year 10 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). English can contribute here by teaching about injustice done in English-speaking countries, and also connect that knowledge with what is happening in Norway to understand that racism is not something that only happened to some people in another country, completely unrelated to Norway.

## Relevance

There are weekly headlines in the media concerning utterances, attitudes, and actions concerning racism in Norway and other parts of the world. The access to real and concrete examples are vast and can be included in the teaching. The school’s mission is to give the pupils knowledge *about* ‘racism’ (Directorate of Education and Training, 2020) and be an arena that reflects antiracist values in practice (Department of Education and Training, 2017). ‘Racism’ is at the top of the list of topics that many teachers are hesitant on teaching about (Utdanningsnytt, 2020). Many report that racism is present in schools despite it being taboo to address (Olser & Lindquist, 2018). Bangstad (2017) claims that a long-lasting anxiety of

addressing the topic related to ‘racism’ in the Norwegian society has led to a poorly developed conceptual apparatus (Bangstad, 2017). This is proof that highlighting this issue is relevant to research, as this thesis focus on how teachers choose to design their lesson plans about racism and what it is they find challenging.

Due to globalization, society and schools are becoming increasingly multicultural.

“Globalization is (...) a very old phenomenon that began when our human ancestors moved out of Africa and then sought to connect and reconnect as they spread all over the globe” (Hamilton & Quinlan, 2008). This phenomenon meant a rapidly increasing pace, ease and degree to which people interact across continents and around the world” (p. 17). People move across continents due to multiple reasons. A parliamentary announcement by the Ministry of Education and Training from 2007 clarifies that a multicultural school is characterized by a staff that consider the cultural and linguistic diversity as the normality and applies this diversity as a resource. The announcement also adds that differences in cultural, linguistic and religious background can be a valuable source of knowledge and understanding. This will therefore contribute to acceptance- and recognition of diversity (St.meld. 23 (2007-2008)). Multiculturalism will be looked into more deeply in the theory chapter.

### Racism in Norway

Being convinced that racism is non-existing in present Norway is debatable. There is a monument in Holmlia that reminds us of that fact. Benjamin Hermansen was stabbed with a knife multiple times, solely based on his skin color. The three people responsible had a connection to a neo-nazi environment called *Boot Boys* (Spernes, 2020) and were convicted of murder and complicity in murder. The *Boot Boys* were convinced that immigrants destroy the Norwegian society and culture. Sindre Bangstad and Cora Alexa Døving (2015) quotes the speech given at the unveiling of the monument in 2002 by the Norwegian Minister of Education and Research at the time, Kristin Clemet:

“The monument of Benjamin is a reminder for us all, a reminder that the battle against racism is not over [...] We must fight this battle every day, and we can never think that this battle does not affect us. [The battle against racism has three steps]: (1) give as many as possible the knowledge of what racism is, (2) to understand why racism,

xenophobia and hatred occurs, and (3) to work against racism” (Bangstad & Døving, 2015, p. 9) (own translation).

Since the school is an area everyone has a relation to, Clemet’s first step is secured. Step 2 is fulfilled through the education due to competence aims and basic principles in the Education Act. The Norwegian government writes in The Government’s *Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination based on ethnicity and religion* (2019) that they wish for “strengthened knowledge about discrimination and racism directed at children and young people” (The Norwegian Government, 2019, p. 52), which means that the knowledge about racism and discrimination should not only include what those terms are, but also how it affects young people.

Racism was also a contributing factor to the terror which took place in Oslo and at Utøya July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. Anders Behring Breivik had spent several years playing violent online games, and through radical online forums he was converted into believing the Norwegian Labor Party was performing “stealth Islamization and culture betrayal” (Borchgrevink, 2012, p. 166). Breivik was convinced that he should perform a mission for the greater good to punish the Norwegian Labor Party by bombing the government quarter where the party was stationed, and then kill their youth party, AUF, at Utøya (Borchgreving, 2012). The belief that Muslims were taking over the country led to a Norwegian tragedy.

## 2. Theory and previous research

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

A good research project requires a theoretical perspective to understand and interpret the empirical findings presented. The aim for this chapter is not to find one specific definition of racism to base this thesis on explicitly, but rather to create an understanding that there are different definitions, to explore these, and to clarify my own position. As the main focus of the empirical findings is how the teachers understand racism and how they teach, the aim of this chapter is to create an understanding of the topic in general. This thesis concerns how teachers teach about racism, so it is therefore relevant to first understand teacher cognition, which will be explored first, focusing mainly on perceptions by Simon Borg (2018, 2006) and Clark & Peterson (1986). Since two key words in this thesis are race and racism, it will be fruitful to first define race – and the ways of seeing race – before looking into racism, which will give an understanding of how widely the term can be interpreted, which consequently affects how people use it. In this regard, Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2023) explanation for why we need a definition will be mentioned first, before exploring the main theories which are inspired by Frode Helland (2019), Stephen D. Brookfield (2018), George M. Fredrickson (2002) and Raundalen & Lorentzen (1995), and they will be complemented by other researchers. This chapter will also seek to define aspects of racism, which includes race, multiculturalism, and conceptual terms.

#### 2.1.1 Teacher cognition

A major aspect of this thesis, and one of the main focuses of the gathering of information, concerns teachers' cognition about the topic, meaning their thoughts and actions (Borg, 2018). In the interview, they are asked whether they believe that 'racism' is an important topic to teach about or not, why they believe so, and what aspects of the topic they find important. Given the fact that teachers are not mechanical implementers of external prescriptions, it is natural for teachers to have their own thoughts on what is important and how a topic should be taught. Simon Borg (2006, 2018) states in his research on teacher cognition that teachers are "(...) active, thinking decision-makers, who process and make sense of a diverse array of information in the course of their work" (Borg, 2006, p. 7). There are several documents that



give directions on how the education should be ran, thus creating certain restrictions. There are, however, many decisions teachers are required to make that are based on their intuition. “Teachers’ thinking and behaviors are guided by a set of organized beliefs, and these often operate unconsciously” (Borg, 2006, p. 9). Teachers are employees who are required to act professionally and in accordance with guidelines. They are also humans who are influenced by their education and society, which again influences their planning and action.

Figure 1 represents a model made by Clark and Peterson (1986) where they attempted to make sense of literature they covered in their review of teacher cognition, presented as teacher thought and action (Clark & Peterson, 1986, in Borg, 2006). The components which circle ‘Teachers’ Thought Processes’ accounts for the unobservable psychological context of teaching. This is the process teachers go through when planning which is heavily influenced by their theories, which consequently influence their decisions. Where a teacher believes that students’ attitudes are problematic, this is what the teacher then choose to base their lecture on. This link is represented by the arrow between the circles. What the teacher observes influences how the next lesson is planned.

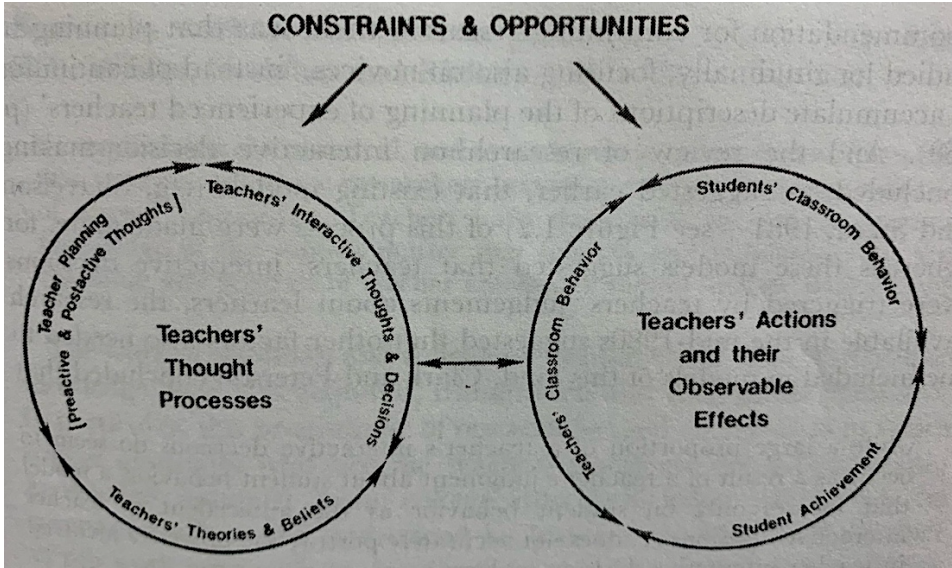


Figure 1: Model of teacher thought and action.

(Clark and Peterson, 1986: 257, in Borg, 2006)

Clark & Petersons’ (1986) study claims that on average, teachers were found to make an interactive decision every two minutes, where the most frequently reported focus was consistently the learner (Borg, 2006, p. 17). The teachers’ job is to educate the pupils, creating

lessons plans in accordance with guidelines, where choices are made by others. The teachers are, however, trained professionals and make choices based on their training and knowledge. Teachers have theoretical, as well as practical, knowledge of the subject and topic matter that informs and is informed by their teaching (Wilson, Shulman and Richert, 1987). Through own experience of teaching and learning from other teachers, the decisions made during lesson planning should be based on knowledge and desired outcomes.

### 2.1.2 Race

The topic of this thesis concerns ‘racism’, and a definition of what ‘race’ is carries value as ‘racism’ is a system of benefits based on races (Bangstad & Døving, 2015), at least several of the racisms that will be covered below. Kyllingstad (2023) states that “race is something that is created, reproduced and reformed through race researchers’ activities” (p.23) (own translation), and something that is socially constructed (p. 15). New scientific research grew in the early 1700’s, specifically namely by Francis Galton in 1883 (Badu, 2023) with the intention of researching bodily variations within the human race, dividing into scientific defined races, organizing these in a classification system, and mapping the races’ historical origin and migrations, and in this way exploring humanity’s history (Kyllingstad, 2023). This science was called physical anthropology (Snipp, 2010). Since this was considered science and several respected scientists made their contributions, the views and results from their research gave people the confirmation they desired to treat other ‘races’ differently. Where certain ‘races’ were seen as biologically different and inferior, it gave people the permission to act on it and treat “inferior races” badly. Badu (2023) claims the following:

“Power is integral within this system and its primary function has been to maintain the power structures that allow white Eurocentrics to thrive and constrain others.”

(Badu, 2023, p.9)

Through this claim, Badu (2023) says that the white Eurocentrics placed themselves as the “superior race” and justified it in supporting research, something Kyllingstad (2023) supports and adds that “a common feature concerning almost all science done on ‘race’ from 1700’s to mid-1900’s is the idea of the world’s peoples were on different civilizational development levels, with the Europeans at the top” (Kyllingstad, 2023, p. 21) (own translation). Europeans placed themselves in the center of the universe, as the European nations found themselves in the center of the colonial imperium, and simultaneously religion and traditions had to compete with the rising ideas of science and universal sense (Kyllingstad, 2023, p. 26). As race was established as a scientific object of knowledge, it is – as Kyllingstad (2023) explains - paradoxical that this establishment was connected with the age of enlightenment with ideas such as common sense and human rights. Banks & Banks (2019) explains how race is a complex issue and provides the example of races in the United States where the categories of race are defined and highly inflexible - if a person has any African ancestry, he is considered black, if a person is white but acknowledges some African ancestry, he is considered black (Banks & Banks, 2019). The complexity in their example comes when this white person (considered black) is placed in any Caribbean or Latin American nation, where there is a strong relation between social status and race, and the mentioned person would be considered very white. “The criteria for determining the characteristics of a particular race vary across cultures, an individual considered Black in one society may be considered White in another, and racial categories reflect the social, economic, and political characteristics of a society” (Banks & Banks, 2019, p. 15).

Although most of the scientific studies conducted on race was from 1700’s to mid-1900’s and is today considered untrue, American scientist James Watson – who is well-known as a biologist, geneticist, and zoologist – said in a public interview in 2007 that people from Africa were not as intelligent as “us” (Rutherford, 2020), to which Rutherford (2020) conclude as ignorant ostracism (p. 143) and pointed out that people do still believe this. As scientists are supposedly reporting truths, it is challenging to know what to believe. However, Watson’s research was shrinking in value and his remaining titles and portrait was removed from his lab at Cold Spring Harbour, as well as in labs around the world (Rutherford, 2020). He was known for being a racist and scientifically ignorant, and scientists around the world are now working more focused against bigotry in their research.

#### 2.1.2.1 Biological race

Several racisms are based on a theory that claims there are biological differences between people (Spernes, 2020, p. 201). This is where ethnic minorities are perceived as not fully developed humans, and they are seen as genetically and culturally inferior and are therefore a burden for the society (Spernes, 2020). The race hygiene movement, also called the eugenic movement (Kyllingstad, 2023; Spernes, 2020) was formed as a consequence of this theory, with the intention of preventing “inadequate genes” to spread. This theory was widely accepted in the 1930’s, with a medical affiliation even in Norway where we continued to sterilize the Romani people with force (Phil, 2000, cited in Spernes, 2020). This theory was the basis of Hitler’s assertiveness in the Germanic race being superior to other races. He worked to wipe out peoples he claimed could disrupt this race.

Research have found that only a small fraction of all genomic variation is responsible for the visible morphological differences such as skin color, facial features, or hair form that are commonly used to assign people to different races (Feldman, 2010, p. 157). Feldman proposes what he calls a more accurate name for such “genetically defines clusters”, that instead of calling it ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’, we might call it “ancestry groups” (Feldman, 2010). López (1995) explains that “various minds tried to fashion practical human typologies along the following physical axes: skin color, heir texture, facial angle, jaw size, cranial capacity, brain mass, frontal lobe mass, brain surface fissures and convolutions, and even body lice” (López, 1995, p. 194-195). Although López (1995) in his essay argues for race primarily in the USA, there were similar attributes the Norwegian government used to segregate the Saami people.

#### 2.1.2.2 Cultural race

Where classical racisms claim people to be biological different, the neo-racist ideology – which will be explored in section ‘2.1.3.1.4 Modernized racism’ - argues that people are different based on their culture. As a consequence of this cultural difference, people from other cultures cannot live together and should be separated as it causes conflict. This form of racism contains an ethnocentric understanding of race and places its own culture as more valuable than others (Kyllingstad, 2023; Spernes, 2020), here implying that the ethnocentric culture is the most valuable. What is challenging about this understanding of race, is that what defines a specific culture is not static, as culture is developed through continuous conversing

with others and is always changing (Eriksen, 2017). It is therefore questionable whether cultural race is a sustainable concept or not as the constant change challenges this form of boxing people according to how they differ from the Eurocentric culture.

To close of the section on race, Kyllingstad (2023) explain that the concept of race can give the impression of being something that was invented back in the history of time, and then later disclosed as being false. On this matter, he says:

“The matter is however that race is and has always been an unclear, flexible, and adaptable concept. It has been justified within various scientific, religious, and cultural frames of reference, and it has had different meanings in different social contexts. This is (...) part of the reason why the idea of race has unfortunately not died out.”

(Kyllingstad, 2023, p. 22)

Kyllingstad (2023) continues to argue that race is something that is created, reproduced, and reformed through race scientists’ work. This proves that the concept of race is difficult to fully grasp as they are in constant change, and it is challenging to leave this work to “scientists” due to them looking at humans through biology, and consequently looking for differences. It is therefore of my opinion that one has to be updated on the latest research from scientists as they are people we trust to tell us the truth.

## 2.1.3 Racism

### 2.1.3.0 Why do we need a definition?

Why is it that we require a clear definition of the term? Firstly, we need a clear definition in order to understand the boundaries around it. What one individual considers to be a racist act; another individual would call edgy humor. As professor Kwame Anthony Appiah said in his lecture on ‘Understanding Racism’ at University of Oslo, “without a clearer account of what racism is, these debates [on structural and individual racism] are not likely to make much progress” (University of Oslo, 2023). Appiah claims that one needs to know what the person was thinking in order to decide how wrong their act was (University of Oslo, 2023, 11:13). If

the intention of hurting someone is the foundation of a racist act, then there should be punishment, Appiah claims. Should someone who unintentionally violates another human being not be punished? The violation is present, intentionally or not. What Appiah means to be of importance is that there should be a clear definition in order for there to be a category of racial hate crimes. Appiah continues by arguing for the need of a clear definition in order to know where we should place our focus. Only by understanding where the society has gone wrong are we able to change our course. The final reason to be mentioned here as to why we need a clear definition of the term is for people not to falsely accuse others of being racist, which can cause great discomfort for the accused. Not every mistake people make about race should count as racism. Members of the majority population experiences difficulty defending themselves from accusations of being racist (Faye, 2021), and by responding to the accusations, they risk the following accusation of refusing to take responsibility (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2010, p. 34). There is no doubt that unintentional racism cause distress, and this chapter will therefore seek to find a definition and an understanding of the term as well as related terms I find to be relevant to be used later in this thesis.

#### 2.1.3.1 Defining racism

A dominating conception in the research on the history of ‘racism’ is that even though it is logically possible to separate ‘racism’ and the idea of ‘race’, these two terms have almost always been connected (Kyllingstad, 2023). The word ‘racism’ is well-known and widely used. With regard to the central place the word has in this thesis, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what it means. Kari Spernes (2020) claim that the term is challenging to define as it depends on who uses it, and who hears it (Spernes, 2020, p. 200). She refers to the ‘Norwegian Government’s Action Plan about equality and ethnic discrimination from 2009-2012’, which introduces two different understandings of the term. The first understanding states the following: “Racism is the idea of there being different races or ethnic groups who withholds different characteristics, and these differences legitimizes negative discrimination. [...] This form of racism is based on contempt and prejudice towards difference”. The second understanding claims that racism the same as ethnic discrimination and is independent from which intention the given action has (Spernes, 2020, p.200-201). What separates the two explanations is “whether the action is justified and defended with basis in an ideology of that people have different characteristics and different value on the basis of their origin” (Spernes,

2020, p. 201) (own translation). By different value, I understand it to mean inferior value as this is a central point in 'racism'.

Bangstad & Døving (2015) agrees that it is challenging to give racism a definition that covers every aspect of it (Bangstad & Døving, 2015).

“It is because racism as a phenomenon plays out in different ways and is directed towards different groups of people, and because racist attitudes are justified differently in different parts of the world and for different historical eras.” (Bangstad & Døving, 2015, p. 10)

Even though Helland (2019) supports Bangstad & Døving's (2015) claim, he does, however, use the following explanation as a base in his book *Rasismens retorikk* (Rhetoric of racism): “Racism unifies population groups, reduces them to certain essential values of cultural or biological species, so they implicitly or explicitly become inferior, dangerous and/or ‘problematic’ in ways that appear immutable” (Helland, 2019, p. 12) (own translation). He continues his explanation by stating that what fundamentally lies in racism is the stereotyping, where one reduces individuals to certain character traits, and that this stereotypical presumption places people in boxes (Helland, 2019). So, what Bangstad & Døving (2015) and Helland (2019) implies is that although racism is challenging to define explicitly, it works as a way of reducing certain groups to being perceived as less than others. So far, the researchers implies that racism concerns stereotyping certain groups, legitimizing negative discrimination as they are considered inferior, in the basis of an ideology.

George M. Fredrickson (2002) states that “the word ‘racism’ first came into common usage in the 1930s when a new word was required to describe the theories on which the Nazis based their persecution of the Jews” (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 5), which excludes the aspect of skin color as being Jewish as limited connection to the color of one's skin. The actions had been executed for ages, but the term had not been made until then. This relates to Helland's (2019) definition of racism as stereotyping and making a people inferior. This demonstrates that racism is amorphous and vague and proves that the term is a changing ideological framework which people can use (and have used) to discriminate against or violate many different groups. As a consequence, this makes a wide definition like Helland's necessary.

### 2.1.3.1.2 Institutional racism

Racism can also occur as institutional racism. Steve Garner (2010) quotes MacPherson's definition (1999: para 6.34) in his book *Racisms – an introduction*:

“The collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen and detected in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”

The politics and society are designed to not benefit minority ethnic people. Educator Stephen D. Brookfield (2018) builds on MacPherson's definition by adding: “Organizational structures, social policies, and institutional habits embody racism by combining to exclude people of color from access to full participation in social, political, and economic life.” Brookfield (2018) continues by giving an understanding of how racism functions:

“Racism is a system of beliefs and practices that are embedded in the institutions we move through as individuals and routinized in the conventions of our everyday lives. These beliefs and practices legitimize the power of whites and justify their viewing all other racial groups as inherently inferior” (Brookfield, 2018, p. 2).

By stating this, Brookfield (2018) criticizes white supremacy, which he explains as a worldview that ensures that white people stay in control of the systems and structures of our society (Brookfield, 2018). “The point of racism is to preserve the power of one dominant racial group” (Brookfield, 2018, p. 3). He continues to explain white supremacy as believing that white people should hold the highest positions in the society as “whites are held to be able to use reason more effectively and think more logically”, whereas people of color are more “moved by passion and raw emotion”, which is used as a legitimation strategy to withhold the positions consisting important decision-making for white people (Brookfield, 2018). This belief that is used to defend the practice of favorizing whites, is considered discrimination. Discrimination means to treat someone less favorable than others (Ik Dahl, 2022).



Institutional racism is similar to structural racism which is where the racism is imbedded into the society's structures. Rogstad & Midtbøen (2010) clarifies that structural perspectives on racism are based on post-colonial thinking, "where a basic premise is that the relation between majority and minority groups in Western countries is characterized by historical references to Western dominance and still maintains the distinction between 'us' and 'them'" (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2010, p. 50) (own translation). Two examples of structural racism are Apartheid in South Africa where the division of races constituted as one of the society's ground pillars (Bangstad & Døving, 2015), and the segregation in USA's southern states (Jenssen, 1994; Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2010). Slavery, colonialism, Jim Crow laws, and other forms of oppression are consequences of structural racism (Burns, 2022). This structural racism was also a key component in World War II, where "the Nazis were in no doubt that Jews were a distinct race and posed a threat to the Aryan race to which authentic Germans supposedly belonged" (Rattansi, 2007).

#### 2.1.3.1.3 Intrinsic racism

Appiah (1989) define intrinsic racists as people who "differentiate morally between members of different races, because they believe that each race has a different moral status, quite independent of the moral characteristics entailed by its racial essence" (Appiah, 1989, p. 9), and the intrinsic racist believes that being of the same race is a "reason for preferring one person to another" (p.9). It is the belief that people of another racial identity are not deserving of decent treatment and ordinary respect on the sole basis of them being of that race, resulting in hostile attitudes. Simply put, it is the belief that one's own race is intrinsically more worthy. According to Appiah (2024), intrinsic racists are prone to not only have false beliefs about other races, but quite likely irrational ones – often motivated – "very easy to hold on to because they work to the racist's advantage (Appiah, 2024, p. 11).

"For an intrinsic racist, no amount of evidence that member of another race is capable of great moral, intellectual, or cultural achievements, or has characteristics which in members of one's own race would make them admirable or attractive, offers any ground for treating that person as one would treat similarly endowed members of one's own race" (Appiah, 1989, p. 9)

This relates to Badu's (2023) definition of systemic racism which she describes as "the normalization and legitimation of a myriad of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantages those who are viewed as white whilst producing chronic adverse outcomes for none-white people" (Badu, 2023, p. 9). Both intrinsic and systemic racism are determined that other races do not deserve basic respect, and no amount of proof that people are equal will change that perception.

This shows racism as a separation of groups based on their entitlement, placing whites at the top of the hierarchy, and other groups at the bottom. The whites are entitled to advantages and respect, while other groups are not, often defined as White privilege.

#### 2.1.3.1.4 Modernized racism

Racism has historically been put into action by openly discriminating blacks and using slavery as a labor force. The modernized racism is defined somewhat differently by Raundalen & Lorentzen (1995). They define modern racism as:

*"(...) flows of negative attitudes in the population towards other ethnic groups, especially towards immigrants of color and Muslims, attitudes that lead to negative actions of different severity. The modernized racism uses a seemingly logical-political reasoning. It is emotionally rooted in a general xenophobia"* (own translation) (Raundalen & Lorentzen, 1995).

This belief is – through xenophobia – based on the conviction that immigrants are taking 'our' jobs, and they are threatening the values, culture, and land of the respective country. The ideology of modernized racism is not focused on biological differences, but on cultural differences, explained in section '2.1.2.2 Cultural race'. "To ensure the Nordic culture's purity is natural and necessary to ensure a good future" (Raundalen & Lorentzen, 1995, p. 19). There are certain attributes that are assigned to other cultures – often referred to as prejudice – as the single immigrant is not considered an individual with good or bad characteristics, but rather a representative for a series of characteristics we place on his or her ethnic group (p. 20). Raundalen & Lorentzen (1995) explains how this form of racism is more prominent in today's society, and that some identify this racism as neo-racism. There is a conviction that

the differences between the cultures are incompatible, and that a mix of cultures will lead to a conflict, which Rogstad & Midtbøen (2010) explicate do “serve as an argument for a restrictive immigration politics” (Rogstad & Midtbøen, 2010, p. 36). Neo-racism has in common with older definitions of racism that there exists a hierarchy of assigned values to ethnic groups.

#### 2.1.3.1.5 Everyday racism

Essed (1991) refers to everyday racism as recurrent and normalized existence of racism imbedded into everyday practices, including talking – often jokingly - and behavior (Essed, 1991, p. 3). “The idea that color is a badge of inferiority and a justification for the denial of opportunity and equal treatment is deeply ingrained” (Delgado, 1995, p. 159). Everyday racism may be classified as microaggression, and aspects of it identifies as colorblind racism (Combs, 2018; Fredrickson, 2002). Fredrickson (2002) argues that racism was previously considered as primarily a matter of ideology and beliefs but may now “express itself in institutional patterns or social practices that have adverse effects on members of groups thought of as ‘races’” (Fredrickson, 2002, p. 151). He adds to this by saying that the consciousness regarding the belief that those groups are inferior or unworthy is absent in this regard. Comments regarded as everyday racism will usually result in denial of responsibility as the ones attempting to point out the problem and challenge racism will be accused of oversensitivity and exaggeration, followed by a form of ‘it was not meant that way’ (Essed, 1991). A study by Hällgren (2005) regarding everyday racism in Sweden showed that people “who were adopted, having parents from abroad, belonging to a national minority, showing characteristics deemed ‘non-typically Swedish’, and being labeled ‘non-typically Swedish’ puts individuals in a racist box of the ‘other’ who cannot belong” (Hällgren, 2005). Everyday racism is therefore not part of any political movement, but something integrated into everyday situations – not to confuse as any less harmful.

In sum, the presented definitions of racism focus of different aspects of the term, providing a necessity for a wide definition, and proving that the term racism has been used in several areas to cover a need for justification to treat other people badly. Fredrickson (2002) stated in 2002 that the term racism is “in danger of losing the precision needed to make it an analytical tool for historians and social scientists examining the relations among human groups and

collectives” (p. 151). As racism carries a diverse number of aspects and is immensely complex, a limiting definition might not cover all of the respective aspects and consequently risk losing important points.

By researching what racism is, the conclusion is that the term is vague and differs depending on how one needs it. Racism as a term has been used to identify injustice used against peoples seen as inferior, to legitimize discriminatory behavior, and excluding people from certain advantages in society. “Racism” has over time shifted from only concerning biological race to also describing issues of culture. Since there are several aspects of what racism is and variations in what the definition covers, it is interesting to discover how the teachers interviewed defines the term in their own teaching. They might have different understandings of the term, which impacts their practice and consequently the pupils’ learning outcomes. As an attempt to collect the definitions of racism into one understanding, I suggest the following: Racism is a wide term which is based on a fear of groups of people who do not withhold the same complexion and belief system as oneself, and therefore view “them” as inferior because “they” have not understood the world as the collective “we” have. This view works as a justification that “I” am in my right to suppress these “others” and withholding “them” from the same opportunities.

#### 2.1.4 Multiculturalism

All three of the interviewed teachers have multicultural classes, but what does multicultural entail? A key concept of multiculturalism is culture (Fowers & Richardson, 1996), and by using the concept of a ‘multicultural society’ to explain, it means a society consisting of two or more groups who consider themselves, and are recognized by others, as culturally different from each other (Eriksen, 2023), and it is important to point out that culture and race is not the same in this context. Culture is a collective term where there are people who share beliefs, symbols, and interpretations within the human group (Banks & Banks, 2019), where shared sets of values constitute the core. The Western society can no longer be considered monocultural (e.g. ‘white’ or ‘Christians’), but is composed of different cultural groups (Fosshagen, 2021) (own translation), which is the desired aim for the ideology of multiculturalism and is a central feature of the world which we live in (Seglow, 2018).

“Knowing one’s own personal biases, values, interests, and worldview – which stem from culture – as well as knowing one’s own culture will greatly enhance one’s sensitivity toward other cultures” (Locke & Bailey, 2014, p. 2). This claim entails that by living in a society where several cultures live together, it will lead to better understanding and less prejudice.

### 2.1.5 Diversity in the Norwegian classroom

All three teachers interviewed teach multicultural classes which they report have an impact on how they plan their lesson about ‘racism’. Therefore, there is a need to define and understand that multiculturalism fundamentally is.

The cultural diversity in Norwegian classrooms is increasing due to globalization and immigration. Immigration is a definition of the action where people move into another country. Immigrants bring along their own cultures in which they have a desire to hold on to. These cultures consist of values, ways of doing things, beliefs, ideologies, cuisine, etc. Different cultures can also be brought along by refugees, who flee from war or persecution, to receive shelter in another country. When the cultures that immigrants and refugees bring with them differs from the Norwegian culture, some view this as a problem. However, the Norwegian school system is encouraged to include this multiculturalism as a resource.

### 2.1.6 The importance of inclusion

Including pupils’ backgrounds and culture in the classroom is vital in the process of creating a safe space. Encouraging pupils to contribute with their uniqueness can help build their self-esteem, their sense of self-value, and consider themselves as assets to the class (Badu, 2023). Pupils’ sense of belonging helps build a psychologically safe classroom, which Badu (2023) argues will give every child the right to:

“(…) a safe space in which they can be open and honest; a space in which their views are valued (no matter how challenging); a space in which they are intentionally made to feel they belong; a space in which they can be their whole self; a space that reflects them; a space they can thrive in; a space which places importance on their mental wellbeing; a space in which they can trust and be trusted; a space in which they are truly seen.”

(Badu, 2023, p. 87).

The importance of inclusion is vital to every pupil's mental health, as the feelings of a safe space where they can be themselves gives them the space needed to grow. When pupils realize that the person sitting next to them in the classroom who look different or sound different, actually is similar to them in several ways, it could create connection, build understanding, and prevent prejudice.

### 2.1.7 Conceptual terms

Language and words hold a great deal of power, and people need a language in order to speak about topics such as race, racism, ethnicity, and diversity in a useful manner. Being fearful of which words to use when talking about 'racism', ethnicity or diversity creates a hindrance in teaching resulting in vagueness. One way of figuring out what term to use is to see what is used by the writers of Learner's books used in schools. Looking at the learner's book *Enter 10*, which is used in multiple Norwegians schools – including the interviewees' schools - the chapter that contains an aspect of the topic racism, namely segregation, is called "The US" (Diskin & Winsvold, 2021). The topic of segregation is introduced in the subcategory "The Road to Equality" where the writers briefly tell the history of The United States from when it was founded up until today. When introducing slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, there are three different terms used when talking about the people who was suppressed. There is the term "African Americans" which is used 9 times. The second term "blacks and whites" is used only once while explaining what the Jim Crow laws were. The last term is "slaves" which is used 9 times. The term "slaves" is used in a historical sense when explaining the slave trade and how they were treated. As this is a learner's book specifically created to bring knowledge to pupils, it is therefore understood that "African American", "blacks", and "whites" should be safe conceptual terms to use when teaching and discussing the topic of racism.

#### 2.1.7.1 Racial insults

In Critical Race Theory, Delgado (1995) explains the stigmatization that is based on race, causes severe human misery, as skin color is not something one chooses (Delgado, 1995). The psychological harms consist of feeling humiliated, isolated, and hating oneself, which leads to feeling ambivalent about own self-worth and identity. Racial insults carry intentionality, and “therefore most reprehensible” (Delgado, 1995). Most people are aware that there are certain words that are used to offend and only expressed with the intention of wounding the recipient, words such as “nigger”, ‘wop’, ‘spick’, and ‘kike’” (Delgado, 1995, p. 163). These words have no other meaning attached than to be cruel. Delgado (1995) points out that racism and racial labeling have “an even greater impact on children than on adults” (p. 162). Continuing his point, he found that some minority children exhibit self-hatred based on the color of their skin, and some majority children associate through learning that dark skin is linked to ugliness and dirt. When children – especially minority children - repeatedly hear racist comments on their behalf, they begin to question their own intelligence, competence, and worth, and Delgado (1995) argues that children who fall victim of belittlement – and does not possess mechanisms of coping with it – can react only with two strategies, which he believes are unsuccessful: “hostility or passivity” (p. 164). The hostility strategy implies that the child acts like he is being told he is like, which adds to the alienation and feeling of rejection. The passive strategy implies that the child does not act on it outwards, but turns it inwards, robbing their confidence and motivation, creating fear (Delgado, 1995). This proves that people are affected by the words that one chooses to use, and pupils should therefore learn that their words carry meaning. ‘Identity and cultural diversity’ is one of the values included in the Core Curriculum where pupils should understand that everyone has an individual responsibility to act ethically which demands an awareness of our own place in this world and our influencing power. Our words carry influencing power, both positive and negative.

#### 2.1.7.2 Changing appropriate conceptual terms

The Norwegian word “Hottentott” was a few years ago considered appropriate and non-offensive in Norway. “Hottentott” is included in the song ‘Visen om Vesle Hoa’ (The Tale of Little Hoa), by the well-known Norwegian poet Thorbjørn Egner (. This song includes the

word “Negro kid” and entails Little Hoa who lives in Africa and uses bow and arrow. Astrid Lindgren’s Pippi included the word “Negro-king” about Pippi’s father, which was changed to “King of the South Sea” due to debates on whether it was politically correct to use. Is it therefore fruitful to change every word in the dictionary we find offensive?

Language professor Finn-Erik Vinje disagrees with the need to change words and does not believe that the word “negro” is negative or offensive. In a debate video on NRK Skole (NRK School) from 2001, Vinje explained why he did not believe in the need for a cleanup regarding the term “negro” in the Norwegian language, which he argued for by referring to the Norwegian tradition where that word is used for “a person with a dark skin color” and it not used as an offensive word (NRK, 2001a, 02:59). He continued by claiming that it is of significance what people of color associate by being called a negro, but that the Norwegian people does not use it as a loaded word. It is of importance to notify that this debate found place in the year of 2001, and much has changes since then. Vinje pointed out that if one replaces a term due to negative emotions tied to it, then those same feelings will be moved over to the new term, and therefore the need for another replacement again (NRK, 2001b, 00:02). After having questioned the need for a new word, Vinje agreed that one shall sympathize with those who feel labeled as inferior by a certain usage of words, but suggested that an alternative approach was to accept the word, but change the attitudes towards it as he believed the ones who were offended had too much confidence in that linguistic manipulations should be able to influence attitudes (NRK, 2001b, 01:45).



## 2.2 Previous research

This thesis research how teachers in lower secondary school teach about racism along with their cognition on the topic. Therefore, it is of great value to see how other researchers have researched this topic concerning what teachers have expressed in terms of their experiences. Central findings presented here concern what teachers find challenging and what approaches others consider fruitful.

### 2.2.1 Fear of doing wrong

Teachers are the ones that have direct contact with pupils, and their words have vast power. However, teachers are influenced during their studies by teacher educators and how they present the topic. Fiona Dowling (2017) researched six teacher educators' discourses on whiteness, "race" and (anti)racism in their work within physical education (Dowling, 2017). Dowling (2017) mentions that teacher educators experience uncertainty and vulnerability due to lack of knowledge, fear of saying the wrong thing, and feelings of resistance among student and coworkers (Dowling, 2017, p. 256). She mentions in her explanation of why there were only six informants in her study when she actually contacted twenty, that several of the educators asked answered that they did not feel "qualified" and that there were others who "took care of that topic" (Dowling, 2017, p. 256). The question here would be who these "others" are and why they would be more qualified when most educators have had classes that included cultural diversity. As a researcher who seeks connections, I interpret this again to be connected to the fear of saying the wrong thing. In Dowling's (2017) study, she conducted a group interview where teacher educators shared experiences on this topic. One of the educators mentioned that she felt the need to be extra kind to two non-white students during the lecture when the topic was ethnicity as she interpreted the students to be uncomfortable. Dowling (2017) criticizes this reaction to an extent as she states this reproduces the normative power position of the majority as the power includes interpreting the perceived others' feelings. This critique causes confusion and ambiguity in me as the educator attempted to take the students' feelings into consideration but is criticized for it.

Another teacher educator in Dowling's (2017) study recalls an example where they had a student in an intercultural class who was popular. The teachers were fond of him, and he was

humorous. The problem occurred when he was being racist to another student for being “a foreigner”, and the teachers did not know what to say. The student was attempting to be funny, but the educator had trouble pinpointing what to arrest him on. Dowling (2017) includes McKinney’s (2005) thoughts on this topic as “instances such as these of ‘damaging passivity’ contributes to the reproduction of white privileges” (own translation). Where the educator had trouble knowing what to do, the students missed a chance to learn how to properly speak about the matter.

### 2.2.2 Political issues in the classroom

A study conducted in Sweden by Per-Åke Rosvall and Elisabet Öhrn (2014) contain aspects of how some teachers in Swedish multicultural schools respond to racism and discrimination in their school (Rosvall & Öhrn, 2014). The study shows that students have a need to address the topic when situations appear, situations that are experienced as threatening or scary. Some of the teachers dismiss their needs and respond with silence. When questioned why they remain silent, the teachers interviewed gave several answers. One of the responses was that their students did not have a good enough understanding and knowledge about the topic in order to discuss it properly, that “facts have to be mastered before opinions can be formed, and students who were perceived as lacking expected mastery could not be ‘trusted’ with more analytical tasks” (p. 343). Another reason that the interviewed teachers gave for their withholding on the topic, was that they were uncertain how political they can be in their teaching. Rosvall & Öhrn (2014) interprets this as the teacher implies that by engaging in discussions about political ideas would be to enter a politicized field where objectivity cannot be maintained (p. 343). A number of students in this teacher’s class had attributes and voiced opinions that represented nationalism, and the teacher was afraid that opening for discussions in the classroom would cause more damage. However, as addressed in the introduction in the section about the core curriculum, the school is required to facilitate an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment, which is very much a political direction. A different teacher in the same study mentioned the importance of challenging students’ views to help foster critical thinking (p. 343), which can be practiced by asking questions and having the students justify their opinions with arguments and listening to others’ points of view. The teacher thought this important, but when asked if he had done this he concluded the same response as his colleague; that he is not allowed to voice political ideas.

### 2.2.3 Whiteness as an obstacle

As pointed out by Ladson-Billings (2001), “teachers in western democracies are usually White, middle-class individuals who maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies” (in Rosvall & Öhrn, 2014). Shirin Housee (2008) studied the influence of lecturer’s ethnical background and racial experiences as pedagogical issues when teaching about ‘race’ and racism in the University of Wolverhampton where she works in the Department of Sociology. She writes in her article that the students in her multicultural class would rather listen to her lecture on ‘race’ and racism as she is of South Asian origin, than to her white colleague. The students expressed that because of her ethnic (minority) background, she would have a “better understanding of, and a greater empathy with, ‘their’ experiences of racism” (Housee, 2008, p. 417). They reported that whites have knowledge only based on what they read, and that Housee “shared a collective memory of postcolonial black migrant experience that connected her to other (black) ethnic minorities (Housee, 2008, p. 417). Housee (2008) had told the students they conflated the academic understanding with experience, and that she found it challenging to break down the barriers and “open teaching to those best qualified in terms of knowledge, skills and passion”. Through conversations with the students, Housee (2008) found that when the teacher shares their own experiences of racism, it legitimizes the students’ experiences and creates an open space to talk as they did not feel they could easily share specific experiences of racism when the class was led by white lecturers (Housee, 2008, p. 418). Connecting this to Dowling’s (2017) findings, when teachers fear they can offend someone, it results in vagueness and lack of language to use in conversations about ‘race’ and racism. By what the students express, teachers with minority backgrounds have a better language to talk about the topic and challenge the white supremacy and various forms of racism than white teachers do. Housee (2008) interviewed several other lecturers on this topic, and one lecturer of African-Caribbean descent refused to identify himself with a certain background but realized that being ‘read’ by students is inevitable. He argued the importance of challenging the students’ preconceptions and misconceptions. He agreed that black students needed a safe space to express their feelings alongside the importance of also giving white people a safe space. Black students do indeed need a safe space. They should, however, also respect whites’ experiences on racism and the experience of being white. The African-Caribbean lecturer recognized that the white students would often tend to silence as they were not comfortable speaking about the issue. “These courses never work if people can’t say what

they think because they are terrified of being accused of being a racist” (Housee, 2008, p. 426). This creates a barrier which is challenging to break.

“It is really about how you are going to maximize the potential for the students who do respond within the teaching context. For these students, you’ll make a difference; and it is partly because of what they bring to class, and how they respond to teaching” (Housee, 2008, p. 426).

Creating a safe space makes for a better learning environment. The lecturer believes that well-developed, progressive teaching methods are essential in the unlearning of racism and is “fundamental to anti-racist and critical ‘race’ pedagogy and politics” (Housee, 2008, p. 427). She explains that the teaching strategies should be inclusive of black’s experiences and use them productively by questioning the structures, relations and processes of power that exists in e.g. whitearchy. “The application of critical pedagogical teaching methods that centre ‘whitearchy’, is inclusive of marginalized voice, listens to their counter-stories, and promotes broader critical race thinking and engagement are the markers of effective teaching around ‘race’ and racism. These are what really matter in our work as lecturers” (Housee, 2008, p. 427-428).

#### 2.2.4 Swedish study of anti-racist action

An article written by Emma Arneback & Jan Jämte (2021) researched how 27 high-school teachers work to counteract racism in Swedish education. The writers developed a typology of anti-racist action based on their findings, containing six approaches where three of the approaches target structural manifestations of racism (emancipatory, norm-critical, and intercultural actions) and the other three engage individualized expressions of racism (relational, democratic, and knowledge-focused actions) (Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 199). These are presented in Arneback & Jämte’s (2021) figure which is included in this chapter as Figure 2.

Findings from this article will be compared in this thesis’ own findings from interviews in how they relate and differ. Arneback & Jämte’s (2021) research takes place in the Swedish education system which might indicate that the policies differ from the Norwegian

educational system. The Swedish curriculum began to change after WWII, emphasizing democratic tasks: “teaching students the knowledge, skills and values needed to be active democratic citizens, as well as instilling an awareness of and commitment to the equality of all people, equal rights and equal opportunities” (Englund 1986/2005, cited in Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 194). This is linear with what is stated in the Norwegian curriculum in the core values, where it says that the “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” (Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The two curriculums are not synchronized word by word, but the democratic task is clear as the pupils shall learn about democracy and the values within the system. The Swedish curriculum talks of equality and the Norwegian curriculum talks about counteracting prejudice and discrimination. Learning about equality and the importance of it is a way of counteracting prejudice and discrimination as it is intended to enlighten the pupils. It is therefore relevant to use what the studies have shown in Swedish schools, as the curriculums are similar.

The study conducted by Arneback & Jämte (2021) shows how selected teachers in Sweden conducted their teaching on the topic anti-racist action, presented in three columns. The first column shows what the six actions wish to achieve, the second column shows whether the action is based on countering structural or individual racism, while the third column shows what the action wishes to change. The approaches will be explained further in detail below the figure, and all of the information is retrieved from what Arneback & Jämte wrote in the article.

	Anti-racist action	Manifestation of racism	Main target of change
<b>Emancipatory action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critically examine lived experiences and develop students' ability to counter racism and rid themselves of internalized oppression.</li> </ul>	Structural: A focus on power structures and systemic inequality, as well as internalized racism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Societal inequality</li> <li>School, as (re)producer of unequal opportunity.</li> <li>Students, as possible victims of internalized racism.</li> </ul>
<b>Norm-critical action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make visible, critically examine and challenge social norms through (self-)reflexion.</li> </ul>	Structural: A focus on dominant norms that create exclusion, discrimination, harassment and unequal opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Society, as producer of social norms that lead to oppression</li> <li>Schools, teachers and students as (re)producers of norms and privileges.</li> </ul>
<b>Intercultural action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create space for cultural diversity and intercultural processes in education.</li> </ul>	Structural: A focus on monocultural education, segregation and lack of representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Society, as characterized by segregation</li> <li>Schools, teachers and students as possible reproducers of ethnocentrism.</li> </ul>
<b>Democratic action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve students (often from different backgrounds and with different opinions and values) in democratic dialogue.</li> </ul>	Individual: A focus on views and beliefs that grow in isolated social milieus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students as possible reproducers of anti-democratic perspectives and practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Relational action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable positive self-worth in students through recognition, care, respect and solidarity.</li> </ul>	Individual: A focus on racism as a consequence of problematic socialization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students as possible carriers of negative self-worth.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge-focused action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for knowledge development and critical evaluation of sources of knowledge to prevent racism.</li> </ul>	Individual: A focus on how racism stems from a lack of knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students as possibly uninformed.</li> </ul>

Figure 2: A typology of anti-racist actions

(Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 207)

The teachers who found themselves using the *emancipatory action* were those who had experienced inequality or harassment themselves and believed that their lived experiences could be used in the examination of societal power structures critically. “Teachers working with this approach see their students as political subjects” (Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 199). Their focus was to prepare the students to encounter life, providing tools and strategies needed to respond to racism, being both structurally and in everyday life. One of the teachers who chose to use this anti-racist action, included social mobilization where he created situations where the students could take part in local society by demonstrating or writing articles. The emancipatory approach is used to place focus on the complexity of power relations and demonstrate how people are differently positioned in relation to these structures. This approach focuses on helping the privileged understand what being privileged entails, as well as helping the structurally disadvantaged find their voice.

The *norm-critical action* seeks to challenge social norms that are dominant in society, schools, and education. The aim is to “make visible informal and formal social rules of what is considered normal, desirable or superior in a given context” (p. 201). It seeks to encourage



change and self-reflexivity as an individual teacher, student, or school. One teacher (white male) who used this approach, reported that he wished to be a role model for his students by question his own prejudices, recognizing himself as imperfect. He used experiences from his own life to prove to his students how he played a part in the norms of the society, unwillingly. Another teacher (black female) described how she used pictures of famous Swedes with different ethnic background, and showed to newly arrived students with migrant background, to have them identify their occupations. This exercise was used to discuss stereotypes and prejudices, and the newly arrived students associated the pictures of white Swedes with the professional occupations. This approach focuses on reflecting on one's own position and unequal opportunities in society.

Teachers who used the *intercultural approach* focused on creating communicating spaces for intercultural meetings in hope of counteracting internal segregation at the school. This approach was commonly used in very diverse schools, and the aim was to create spaces through social activities where the students would work on their attitudes towards each other by minimizing their suspicions and prejudices. One teacher (black male) who vouched for this approach said he did not believe this approach would magically make everyone best friends, but he was determined it would mitigate segregation and racism in the long run. What teachers intend to obtain by implementing this approach, is for “these altered patterns to move beyond the school setting, challenging patterns of segregation in society” (Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 203). Challenging students to realize that people are similar to them, could help create open minds and prevent prejudice.

The *democratic action* reflects the belief that dialogue on political and moral issues can counteract racism in an educational context. This strategy was used by most of the high school teachers interviewed for this article, where some of the teachers wanted open, deliberative communication in the classroom, and other teachers wanted dialogue among students, where they aimed to “make visible, challenge, and transform the racist views present” (p. 203). One of the teachers who used this approach (white male), took part in the conversations, and made sure he met his students human to human, and not teacher to student, which his pupils reportedly appreciated the authenticity that eliminated the distance and hierarchies when the discussions entailed controversial issues. However, the discussion on the limits of freedom of speech in education had another teacher (white female) work extensively with boundaries in the democratic communication as she wished for the dialogue to be

productive by differentiating between a person and the aim, refraining students from turning discussions into debates by denying them to violate one another. This approach focuses mainly on the individual and its expressions of racism and fostering democratic citizens by changing students' views and beliefs.

The *relational action* is based on the belief that if a student develops positive self-worth, then he is less likely to judge others. "The main idea behind this kind of action is that racist attitudes and practices develop through problematic socialization, which leads to negative self-worth, detachment, and a lack of trust of society" (Arneback & Jämte, 2021, p. 204). The most important students to focus on through this approach are the ones who engage in racist speech and behavior, and by creating a good relation to these students, teachers can show care for and recognize them. One of the teachers (white male) within this approach reported relating with a right-wing extremist through their common interest in history, meeting him on this common ground, and hoped that their positive meeting would change the student's self-perception and how he experienced the 'other'. In his mind, it was essential that every teacher knew that everyone had the opportunity to change their mind, they just needed a little help getting there. Another teacher (white female) highlighted the importance of meeting the students with respect, especially those who experience racism. With the wish for every student to feel like they belong in her class and eliminating differences, she focused on relational work within her classroom. In the relational approach, "the object of change is students and their views on how to relate to themselves, and in the long run, the world in which they live" (p. 204).

The last approach, *knowledge-focused action*, builds on the belief that racism occurs due to lack of knowledge, and that they will change when provided with enough of the 'right' kind of knowledge. The study discovered that the teachers highlighted different topics regarding this approach, from ethnic minorities and religions, to the history of racism, and others to its contemporary expression. The topic that all of the teachers agreed on was Holocaust and Nazism, which is "the dominant narrative on racism in northern Europe" (p. 205). One activity mentioned by one of the teachers (black male) was visiting Holocaust sites with the students, which he reported having significant impact of the students. He mentioned that by traveling to awful historical places, the students are left with emotions and knowledge which they use to make documentaries and exhibits based on what they have learnt. Similar to the two previous approaches, the student is the target of change.



These presented approaches (emancipatory, norm-critical, intercultural, democratic, relational, and knowledge-focused) have different focus of what they are intended to change, the structure in the society, or the students' prejudices and attitudes. These approaches will be discussed in relation to what the teachers interviewed for this thesis report, in the discussion chapter.

#### 2.2.5 Space for discomfort

Faye (2021) found that teachers experience emotional ambivalence regarding teaching about racism in the classroom as racism is considered a challenging and sensitive topic (Faye, 2021), and that teacher students and practicing teachers lacks language to deal with the issue and lack pedagogical aids to address racism at school. She argues that instead of avoiding racism in the classroom, there can be pedagogical benefits of embracing racism as a topic, even when it feels uncomfortable (Faye, 2021, p. 181). By focusing on the structural aspect of racism, we can avoid the emotional debate of the individual's moral, and rather experience a fruitful framework from a learning perspective. In a seminar Faye held with six groups of teacher students – consisting of 10-25 students - at Høgskolen på Vestlandet in 2018 and 2019, she focused on having the students reflect on how to maintain norm-critical (explained in the previous study) in practice in the classroom. “The focus for this lesson was to raise awareness for the students on how ideas about ‘us’ and ‘the others’ can occur, the several kinds of racisms that exists, how it feels to be exposed of racism, and what implications it has on people’s lives, what responsibility they have as future teachers to work against racism” (Faye, 2021, p. 183) (own translation). An important momentum in this seminar was to make the students aware of how they position themselves in majority- or minority groups when facing racism, and how this affects how they themselves conceptualize racism and prejudice. The seminar consisted of a theoretical part, a film, and discussion. By using VR, the students were challenged in uncomfortable scenarios as they watched a film designed to make them uncomfortable. The scenario consisted of a boy being exposed to incitement on a bus due to him being non-Western, supposedly Muslim and sitting in a wheelchair. The students watched this scenario twice – once as a bystander, and once as the boy in the wheelchair. The aim was giving students who had not experienced racism insight into how it feels, creating a discomfort that would serve as a topic for reflection. The majority students (white) reported that the scenario of being the boy had the most impact on them emotionally, they felt small

and unable to defend themselves, experiencing anger and injustice which resulted in sympathy. The minority students (non-white) related personally to the scenario as they or someone they knew had experienced something similar. Faye (2021) claims that it is not a problem in itself to have the majority students experience sympathy with others, but when the sympathy alone becomes the meaning of the teaching as that can lead to ‘othering’ (Faye, 2021). Faye experienced that by putting the pupils in the same figurative boat, they could constructively challenge their own prejudices and opened up about their reflections. The students expressed that it was safe to open up and become aware of their attitudes. The minority students opened up about their attitudes towards whites, to which the majority students found surprising as they were not aware it could go the other way.

In Faye’s (2021) seminar, a big opportunity opened up where the students could reflect and listen to experienced racism as one of the minority students had the opportunity to explain how she had experienced it herself. Despite her self-reflection on the situation, Faye experiences discomfort on behalf of the student as she was afraid it would be uncomfortable for the student. This minority student told Faye afterwards that she felt the space was safe for opening up and would very much like to talk about it. It was therefore Faye herself that stood in the way of learning. When the teacher attempts to reobtain harmony and limit problems, it “blocks the opportunity to problematize mechanisms that marks a social hierarchy” (Faye, 2021, p. 196).

Faye (2021) does not claim that one will necessarily find facts or truths about racism by implementing this strategy, but rather “to explore how feelings of discomfort and the need to escape the discomfort affects the teachers’ thoughts and actions, and that this effects the pupils” (Faye, 2021, p. 188). She advocates that giving space for discomfort lets the pupils express emotions they might feel are wrong, and then the class – and the teacher - can explore how emotions can be used constructively, instead of avoiding the topic altogether, by questioning where that discomfort comes from. The aim of this strategy is not to come to a specific agreement, but to discover what the teacher and pupils find challenging. Challenging pupils’ world view and opinions can also provoke aggression and anger, and Faye (2021) claims that by creating a good relation – pupil to pupil, and pupil to teacher – the pupils can understand that the teacher is merely trying to challenge, not provoke (Faye, 2021). It is therefore important to face the discomfort, and through confronting it, find an understanding.

### 3. Methodology

The main research question for this thesis is “*How do teachers in lower secondary school teach about racism in the English subject and why is it important?*”. The information needed to answer the research question will be retrieved through qualitative semi-structured, in-depth interviews. This method chapter explains and discusses the research design used in this thesis to answer the research questions chosen and the method chosen to retrieve the required information. It will also explain why the respective method was chosen. The approval from NSD and the interview guide will both be included as appendixes to this research paper.

#### 3.1 Research design

This master’s thesis is about how teachers in lower secondary school teach about racism in the English subject and why it is important. To research this in a strategic way, the topic is divided into three areas. The first area addresses the teachers’ cognition, the second area is about their practice, and the last area deals with potential challenges. These areas result in three research questions:

1. What are the teachers’ thoughts on racism and the importance of teaching about it?
2. What are the teachers’ practices when teaching about racism?
3. What do the teachers consider challenging when teaching about racism?

These research questions will be answered through interviews with teachers as that method contributes to deeper understanding, which quantitative research method would not provide. It is important to get a deeper understanding because it is not sufficient to only see what the teachers do in practice. Interviews will provide the opportunity to see the reasons behind their choices.

#### 3.2 Qualitative approach

“Qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 23). The research questions aim to find how

teachers experience teaching about a given topic where they are asked to explain how they make meaning of the topic and how they teach it. Boeije (2010) explains that qualitative methods give the opportunity for the participants to describe a topic in their own words (p. 32), which is why I have concluded that a qualitative approach was most suitable to find the wanted information.

This study focuses on how teachers think about and teach about racism, meaning that it highlights their experiences on the topic. “Phenomenology is a study of people’s conscious experience of their life-worlds” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 26), which is relevant for this thesis as my aim is to understand the teachers’ experiences of their own teaching. “To capture experiences, the [interviewees] usually contributes with retrospective descriptions of their own experiences and opinions linked to these” (Giorgi, 1985, in Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 118) (own translation). Therefore, it is accurate to label this approach as a phenomenological interview.

The teachers were asked to bring a lesson plan for me to look at during the interview. The reason for this was to have a visual example of how they prepare for the topic racism, what aims they choose to focus on, and how they actively go about when executing the lesson. This was a voluntary part and not a requirement as the main focus for the interview was the questions in the interview guide. If the teachers did not bring a lesson plan, I had questions prepared in advance that focused on their lessons, so I would nevertheless get an understanding of how they went about when planning.

### 3.3 Interviews as a data collecting tool

The participants in this research were interviewed one at a time. Creswell & Guetterman (2019) explains that one-on-one interviews are “time-consuming and a costly approach”, where the time-consuming part is the creation of an interview guide, connecting with relevant interview subjects, doing the interview and the transcription. However, they also explain that these interviews are “ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, who are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 218). Another benefit by doing interviews in person is that it “increases the possibility of

establishing a good relation between the interviewer and the one being interviewed which leads to a more open conversation” (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016, p. 68) (own translation). The interview questions in this research requires the teachers to elaborate and explain further in detail. Studies show that the interviewed find it more difficult to lie or hold back on information when they are faced with the other person physically (Frey & Oishi, 1995, in Postholm & Jacobsen, 2016). This shows that although one-on-one interviews are time-consuming, they offer detailed and truthful information.

### 3.4 Choice of informants

The reason for choosing Norwegian teachers of English in the lower secondary school, is based on what information is needed to answer the research questions (their cognition, practice, and challenges). This research focuses on the teaching in lower secondary school, which means that these teachers are the ones that hold the required information for answering the thesis statement. The informants are chosen from my personal acquaintances made through my own teaching, so I knew they would be convenient for this project as I knew they teach in multicultural classes and would give relevant input during the interviews. All three teachers teach in schools located in Innlandet county. This is what Boeije (2010) calls convenience sampling, which she explains as being a sample that is “intentionally selected according to the needs of the study (p. 35). Several e-mails were sent to a number of teachers I had connections to, and three of the teachers were available and interested. These teachers were ideal for my project as their teaching experience varies in how long they have worked in lower secondary school, and that could bring a possibility of different results. My three informants are all women. They are given the pseudonyms Astrid, Susan and Anne. It was made easier for me when using names instead of numbers to recognize which informant it was, and they were also more humanized with actual names. The following table shows the teachers’ pseudonyms, age range, how many years they have practiced the profession, and the subjects they currently teach.

## Pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Age range	Years as a teacher	Current subjects
Astrid	35-44	8	English, religion, and Arts & Crafts
Susan	45-54	25	English, Social Studies, English specialization, and Norwegian
Anne	25-34	5	Norwegian, English, Social Studies, and Skills for Working Life

**Table 1.** *Informants' pseudonyms*

### 3.5 Interview guide

The interview guide was made based on the research questions, where the three questions were broken down to retrieve more detailed information. Not only is it beneficial to know if the teachers believe it is important to teach about racism, but also why it is important.

An interview is a “(...) conversation that develops between two people face to face” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021, p. 204) (own translation), so to make the process of an investigating interview more comfortable and authentic for the teacher, I chose to conduct the interview in Norwegian. The intention of the interview is not to speak fluently, and it would steal energy away from delivering an informative answer. I also considered whether speaking English would distract them from a desire of giving a well-articulated answer or not, but I concluded that my wish was for them to be comfortable. I was confident that I would be able to translate appropriately and have their points brought out accurately.

The interview guide contains four parts, where the first part includes simple questions about their age and years of teaching, as well as which subjects they teach. These first questions require minimal thinking but give a picture of their teaching experience. The reason for

including years of teaching is to see if the teachers who have taught for a longer period of time have experimented more with strategies and lesson plans than the less experienced teachers. This could also potentially give information on whether the more experienced teachers have found a strategy they hold on to. The second part of the interview guide contains questions about the topic racism, such as how the teacher defines the term and their thoughts on teaching the topic. They also concern what kind of terms they might use and not use in the classroom and what challenges they face in this regard. It is also the second part that contains questions about multiculturalism and multidisciplinary lessons.

The third part of the interview guide concerns the lesson plan I asked the teachers to bring, including how they planned it, how it worked, and whether or not they would change anything. This part was voluntary, meaning the teachers were not required to give it to me. They were informed of this in the information letter they received prior to the interview. The fourth and last part of the interview guide is where the teacher is given the opportunity to express what they have not been able to express earlier in the interview. This is formed as a “yes/no” question, whereas if the answer is “no” they are not required to explain why. If the teacher answers “yes”, they are given the space to express themselves.

The questions are a mix of closed and open questions. Several questions are designed to firstly give an indication of whether or not they have an answer, where I lead the conversation based on what they said, meaning questions such as “why/why not”. This is to get a clearer understanding of their process when planning and how they experience teaching the topic. As the questions were prepared beforehand and they were asked in a similar order, they might remind one of a structured interview. What places this interview within the semi-structured category is that I am open for the interviewees to introduce ideas they see as important to highlight which makes me able to ask for elaboration and ask questions where they seem to come in naturally (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). I make sure all my questions are answered and leave room for additional information.

### 3.6 Pilot interview

To determine the quality of the interview guide, I conducted a pilot interview on a fellow student. This student was also studying English and taking the same education, so the topic would be familiar and answerable. This gave information on the length of the interview, the quality of the questions, and how the interviewee could experience the questions. What I experienced was that the interview would take approximately 40 minutes if the interviewee had long answers and received follow-up questions. I also experienced that a few questions elicited similar answers, and changes were made accordingly. The fellow student informed me that the questions were direct and concrete, and he did not have a negative experience while answering. This indicated that the interview would give me the information I needed. During this pilot interview, I also got to practice using the Dictaphone app and website, as I could hear how the quality of the sound turned out and I could adjust the placement of the Dictaphone accordingly. I found it useful to conduct a pilot interview beforehand because I got to practice being an interviewer and experience what it was like to be a researcher for a project.

The interview is intended as a conversation where I wish to make the interviewee comfortable and follow up on the information they give. This can be challenging because an interview is structured where the topic is decided beforehand, something a normal conversation is not. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) explains the relation between the interviewer and the interviewee as an asymmetrical power relation where the interviewer has a scientific competence, and that “the research interview is not an open, everyday conversation between equal partners (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 52) (own translation). As I am the researcher in this thesis, I am the one in control of the topic, the questions, and which answer I choose to follow up. As the researcher, I control how the answers are interpreted and how they are of relevance. As the interviewer, I am also the one who decides when the interview is over. This power is taken into consideration when designing the interview as this thesis is reliant on teachers giving information. They hold the power of withdrawing from the interview should they feel uncomfortable.



### 3.7 The execution of interviews

After having secured three informants, we had to find a suitable time to do the interviews. The communication happened over e-mail as I wished to have all of the information in one place and to keep the communication professional with the agreements and exchanges in the same thread. This also gave the teachers the power to decide when to respond as I did not wish to come across as pushy. We agreed on having the interviews in person and I went to see them at their respective schools. The reason I wished to meet them where they are was to demonstrate that I am the one who is gathering data, and they are the ones who hold the desired information. Teachers also have busy schedules and are giving me their time and energy, which is why I thought it best that I went to see them.

The first teacher had booked a meeting room for us to do the interview in peace. The recorder had been tested beforehand and I reminded her of the procedure and her rights should she choose to stop. She had prepared a copy of the lesson plan used on the topic for me to take with me, and she gave thoughtful answers to the questions. I focused on being an active listener and asking follow-up questions where I interpreted her to have more thoughts. To ensure comparable data, I followed the interview guide, but I also asked follow-up questions based on what I found to be relevant and unique.

The second teacher had also booked a meeting room at the respective school. This interview was supposed to be held earlier, but due to illness we had to reschedule. Like the prior interview, I reminded the teacher of her rights and went through the procedure to create a common understanding of what was going to happen. The recorder was placed in a location I was confident would provide high quality sound for my transcription later on. The third teacher worked at the same school as the second teacher, so the location and meeting room were the same. Teacher three was ready when the second interview was finished, and I repeated the process and her rights. She gave longer answers and needed more time to think of what to say, but in some places I repeated what I heard to ensure that I had understood the essence. I thanked the teachers after each respective interview for their time and their contribution to this project.

By sticking to the interview guide, I was more confident during the interview as I had rewritten it several times and I knew the questions would give me relevant information. “ (...) Adequate preparation can increase self-confidence and lower the stress” (Boeije, 2010, p. 53). I could therefore focus fully on what the teachers said to ensure good follow-up questions, and to know that I would not forget to ask essential questions.

### 3.8 Transcription

To keep the impressions from the interview as accurate as possible, the transcription was done shortly after the interviews. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) claims that when transcribing the oral speech into written words, a series of impractical and principal problems can occur (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 204). The physical conversation between two people changes as a written text requires more formality for it to give immediate information to the reader. This includes a loss of social interaction such as irony and sarcasm which is challenging to reproduce as it “implies a conscious discrepancy between non-verbal and verbal language, or between different elements in a linguistic message” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205) (own translation). The interviews were recorded on tape, which ensures that the intonation is not lost, and it ensures that the interviewer does not have to make notes, so no points are lost. However, one loses important aspects such as body language and gestures. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). By transcribing shortly after the interviews, I still had some memory of how the teachers acted while answering questions, giving me the impression of whether they were uncomfortable or not when answering, if they considered racism as a difficult topic to discuss. For me to ensure good sentences for my analysis and quoting, I excluded many thinking pauses, and filling words such as “uhm” and “you know”. As I remembered how the teachers acted during the interviews and I could interpret what the message of the sentence was, it had little effect on the outcome.

The interviews were done in Norwegian and transcribed in Norwegian. However, during the chapter on Findings, the quotes used will be translated into English. The possibility of lack of suitable words during translation is present, but it will be done to the best of my ability.

The transcriptions will not be included as appendixes to this thesis, but they are available to the sensor on request.

### 3.9 Coding the collected data

Coding the data collected gathers the material for exploration (Richards, 2021, p. 119), where findings are put into categories based on the codes. When coding, the researcher first reads through the transcriptions and codes what is seen as relevant information, and then retrieve the codes for further exploring (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2021, p. 226). As mentioned previously in the “Research design” section, the research questions in this thesis covers three areas I find to be relevant to give the information needed to see how the teachers teach about racism. These three areas are the overarching codes. The first research question is “What are the teachers’ thoughts on racism?” which give information on their ‘cognition’, their thoughts. The second research question is “What are the teachers’ practices when teaching about racism?”, which ultimately creates the second code ‘practice’, and the third research question asks: “What do the teachers consider challenges when teaching about racism?” giving the code ‘challenges’.

The code ‘cognition’ entails their thoughts on what racism is, why they think it is important to teach about racism, what they think about their own role as a teacher during those study sessions, and what aspects of the topic they feel are important to highlight. The statements they give for their thoughts are highlighted with a selected color which gives me an overview of where to look when presenting the findings in the next chapter. The information the teachers give on their ‘practice’ is given a separate color, and the third area ‘challenges’ likewise. As I follow the interview guide’s order of questions, I know somewhat where to look in the transcriptions since I can code the questions according to which of the three areas they represent. However, since I conduct a semi-structural interview, there may be slight differences in the order of which the questions are asked, and the teachers are allowed to speak freely and elaborate on their answers. This is where the color coding is beneficial, as I can look for the colors when comparing answers and I am therefore not required to read every word to find relevant data.

### 3.10 Ethical awareness, validity, and reliability

There are several factors that need to be considered when conducting an interview, dealing with validity, reliability, and ethical awareness (Boeije, 2010; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018). One factor is the time limit.

Teachers' workday is occupied with several tasks in need of tending. There are situations that may occur which the teacher needs to solve, and one needs to find the appropriate time. There is also the feeling of being analyzed as their teaching practice is the main topic. The interview contains several questions on how they make choices and which considerations they make while planning the lessons. Since the interview subjects are being informed that the answers they deliver will be analyzed and compared to other teachers, there is a possibility of their answers being formed thereafter. Participants may leave things out and "(...) present themselves in a way they wish to be perceived" (Boeije, 2010), and as people are not always aware of everything about themselves, "they do not wish to share everything, and they are not capable of putting everything into words" (p. 58). Bearing this in mind, I am aware that my empirical findings through the interviews may not be the entire truth of the teachers' practice, but mainly what they wish to share.

An ethical consideration that is crucial during research where people voluntarily give their time and share their experiences, is to not give out information that could harm the person in any way (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 251). The interviewees should not have any negative experiences during the research, and the researcher should follow Fontana and Frey's (2000) ethical principal which entails that the researcher's responsibility of the research participants should exceed the aims of the study. This responsibility was taken into account while transcribing as some of the teachers' answers gave local information that could identify the school and the area. This information could give me relevant points to write about, but I chose to let those points go in favor of keeping the teachers' anonymity.

There is also a possibility of receiving the answers they think I wish to hear. The fact that the relation between interviewer and interviewee is primarily formal, their feeling of being judged has a possibility of being present. As discussed in the making of the interview guide, making the teachers feel comfortable was a priority during the interview. They were informed of the process of protecting their privacy and anonymity throughout their participation according to the regulatory requirements established by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD).

The teachers were also informed of their rights as a participant, which includes the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

There is a possibility of variations in the interview subjects' experience as there will be difference in how many years they have worked, what they focus on, and how they view the topic racism in school. It will therefore not be possible to generalize their answers into being teachers' opinions, but rather "some teachers' opinions". This includes their experiences, because their opinions, thoughts and values are formed by their experiences. As this research project was given a certain time, I found it necessary to limit the number of informants in order to have time to transcribe and analyze the information to the best of my capability. A continuation of the topic regarding a generalization in teachers' cognition could be that more teachers should be interviewed in a separate research project. From there it could be a possibility of finding how teachers think the same and draw a conclusion from the majority answer.

An ethical consideration regarding the validity of these findings links to how the teachers experience reality. Postholm & Jacobsen (2018) explains that reality is in constant change, and it is challenging to define an experience as the truth (p. 61). This thesis focuses on the teachers' cognition, which is their experiences and thoughts. This places their reality not as the truth, but rather a truth – their truth. Since the number of informants collected for this study is limited, there is no possibility of stating their opinions and thoughts as a common cognition shared by every teacher in practice. However, the possibility of researching each informant in more detail increases and their opinions are more valued. This is not to say that an increased number of teachers would not be a beneficial factor, but rather that each teacher is valued more, and their thoughts are given more space. Since this thesis seeks to find information on the topic racism and how teachers teach it, I find this chosen method to be the most useful one as it was found in the theory chapter that the term racism depends on who uses it and what you need it for, which makes it person dependent. The teachers interviewed have made up their own opinion on what the term means based on their knowledge and what they find as important for their pupils to learn about it, and that is what I wish to find through this method.

## 4. Findings

This chapter will present what information the teachers gave based on the codes explained in the method chapter – thoughts, practice, and challenges. Postholm & Jacobsen say that “the knowledge is constructed in the research’s meeting between theory and findings” (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2018, p. 220) and they need to be connected for the research to be of high quality (p. 221). The codes were made to segment the data into pieces, and then reassemble the pieces by “looking for patterns, searching for relationships between the distinguished parts, and finding explanations for what is observed” (Boeije, 2010, p. 76). This is where I will use the codes to compare what each of the three teachers have answered, see if there are differences, and then discuss those similarities or differences that do appear. This chapter will present the new information found during the interviews. The findings will then be discussed in relation to theory in the next chapter, called “Discussion”. In the current chapter, the structure of the findings will reflect the order of the interview guide, where I will first look at the teachers’ cognition in relation to how they define the term racism and whether or not they find it important to teach. Then I will move on to their teaching practice and see how they choose to teach about the topic before lastly looking at what they find challenging about teaching about racism and related topics.

Overarching topic:

- How do Norwegian teachers approach teaching about racism in the English classroom?

Supporting research questions:

- What are the teachers’ thoughts on racism and the importance of teaching about it?
- What are the teachers’ practices when teaching about racism?
- What do the teachers consider challenging when teaching about racism?

To enhance where the direct quotes starts and where they end, the quotes will be written in cursive. For total transparency, their pseudonyms will be included in parenthesis behind their quotes.

## 4.1 Teacher cognition

### 4.1.1 Defining racism

All of the three teachers knew in advance that the interview would deal with their thoughts and practice regarding teaching about racism, so they could prepare for and think about their opinions on the matter beforehand. I did not provide an explanation on what racism is, as I wished to hear how the teachers understood the term, if there were any differences, and if that would lead to any differences in their practice. When presenting the findings, I will use the teachers' pseudonyms to show their responses to the questions from the research design.

When asked about how she defines racism, Astrid explained it as following:

*“When I describe it to my pupils I say it is about **attitudes** and **mindset** which places people in a **booth** that says we are different from other each other based on skin color for example, or religion. Vi are all human beings, we cannot be separated into different races.”* (Astrid)

Susan explains it similarly, and Anne includes that racism is “*everything that in a negative way is based on not just race, but **origin** unrelated to country or anywhere on the planet.*”

(Anne)

In search of a more filling definition from Anne, I asked her how she explains the term racism to her pupils, to which she replied:

*“I try to make it quite open what I think about it, and I listen to what [the pupils] think about it, and have a discussion based on that.”*

As I understand it, Anne finds it important to not give a definite definition but include the pupils' points of view. She continued to highlight the importance of letting the pupils express themselves and practice critical thinking.

### 4.1.2 Why is it important to teach about racism?

The next question on the interview guide was whether or not they find racism important to teach to which all three teachers said yes. They were asked to elaborate on why they think it is

important, and Susan mentioned that there are still many racist attitudes in today's society. She continues:

*“(…) And there is a form of ‘everyday racism’ too, right, that takes place without the pupils being aware of it. ‘Oh, it that racism?’ they ask, and that is why it is important that they are made aware of the fact that there are several forms of racism.” (Susan)*

Astrid expresses the same opinion and adds that she sees several pupils at her school having bad perceptions and attitudes regarding racism which makes it perhaps more important to address now that it was a few years ago. *“There has been a change that has made the pupils more aware of it and they might use it more consciously and maybe accuse each other of being racists”* (Astrid), and she adds that she and her colleagues need to grasp it and look into it more closely. Susan pointed out that today's multicultural society contains much 'everyday racism', and the pupils are exposed to it in some form or another through social media and the news by reading about it or seeing someone become a subject of it.

When asked what her motivation is for teaching about racism, Astrid responded:

*“I believe that we can **avoid many conflicts**, both right here and now at the school, but also in the future. They will carry those attitudes with them in the future, and if they believe from such a young age that having those racist attitudes and expressing racist statements is OK, then it might limit them in the future. So, I believe that it is important that they get a good start on adulthood here. It is conscious from my part.”*  
(Astrid)

Anne expresses similar thoughts on the importance and adds that the aim is to spread tolerance and acceptance for the people we share the planet with. *“You either accept that people are different, or you at least have to tolerate it.”* (Anne) She ends the response to the question by expressing her concern that history could repeat itself if we avoid teaching and learning about it.



#### 4.1.3 Is it important to teach about racism in the English subject?

As this thesis focus on the English subject and therefore the English classroom, the teachers were also asked why it is important to teach about racism specifically in the English subject. All teachers said that it is natural to address the topic racism in the English subject and they all focused on USA and specifically the rise of focus on the Black Lives Matters movement and George Floyd. George Floyd was arrested in Minneapolis in 2020 by a white police officer on false accusations and was choked to death as the police officer knelt too long on his neck. Anne mentioned that there are competence aims that focus on Native Americans and the English-speaking world, and she addresses the injustice that was done to the Native Americans along with Apartheid and the Civil Rights Movement. Susan shares the same perception and adds that when she and her class read texts related to the history of America, they often reflect slavery and segregation which creates opportunities to discuss racism. Based on their answers, they both place racism mainly in the USA.

#### 4.1.4 How do they view their role as teachers when teaching about racism?

The teachers' perception on their own role in this teaching context is an interesting factor to see how they position themselves in relation to openness. Susan argues that her role is to be clear and convey different aspects of the topic. When working with texts, she aims to have the pupils detect racist actions and discuss those. Astrid's and Anne's answers are similar to each other as their perception of their role is to remain somewhat neutral and give room for discussions and let the pupils express their opinions. Astrid highlights her role as being a moderator and break discussions up should the pupils go too far and have them reflect on why certain words or expressions are not acceptable. *"I believe that it is not my role to add a mindset in the pupils' heads, but rather open up for discussions and give them an open space."* (Astrid). Anne adds that she lets the pupils think what they wish, but enhances the fact that they should not treat people badly just because they disagree, which is where her focus on acceptance and tolerance comes in.

#### 4.1.5 What aspects of the topic are important to include when teaching about racism?

In order for me to understand what they highlight of importance about the topic racism, I asked the teachers which aspects they make sure to include. The teachers gave three different answers. Anne, as pointed out previously, emphasizes tolerance and acceptance as key aspects in her teaching. Susan focuses on awareness so the pupils know how they can detect racist actions in everyday life, in addition to the historical aspect: *“I believe it is important to underline the historical aspect as well, by how peoples through time have been very exposed, by the government too”* (Susan). Astrid pointed out the importance of conceptual understanding in order for the pupils to have a language to talk about racism. She also focuses on using examples that ties the theme locally, nationally as well as internationally so the pupils do not think of racism as a distant concept and irrelevant for their lives. To summarize, aspects the teachers find important to focus on are tolerance, acceptance, the historical aspect, and conceptual understanding.

#### 4.1.6 When do they think it is appropriate to introduce the topic in lower secondary school?

The teachers said they often use the learning book *Enter 10* where racism is introduced through slavery and segregation. The competence aims for lower secondary school stretches over three years – 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade – but they are not specific in which year the teachers should introduce the topic racism. The interviewees were therefore challenged to reflect on when they thought it fit to introduce racism. Astrid said racism should not be specifically addressed in only 10<sup>th</sup> grade: *“I believe teachers should begin in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and then gradually build a better and deeper understanding of the topic to increase reflection and critical thinking, which might be challenging for an 8<sup>th</sup> grader but a 10<sup>th</sup> graders have worked their way up to”* (Astrid), and added that if the topic racism is isolated into only being taught in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, that might sustain the negative attitudes and are allowed to fester as she observe pupils who bring these attitudes and derogatory words and expressions along from elementary school.

Susan had a different belief and said it is OK to address it in 10<sup>th</sup> grade as the pupils are then more mature. However, through Susan’s response, it appeared that she does address the topic racism in 8<sup>th</sup> grade when she teaches about Australia and the aboriginals. *“I have chosen to*

*follow [Enter's] order of topics, so racism comes in naturally as a topic in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in my part. [Racism] pop up every now and then in all three grades, but in relation to maturity, I choose to focus on racism in 10<sup>th</sup> grade”* (Susan). Interpreting Susan's response, she is of the opinion that the topic of racism requires the ability to reflect and seriousness to a certain extent.

Anne answered similarly to Astrid, but she reported bringing up the topic when it felt natural to her in all three years of lower secondary school. Anne explained how she includes talking about racism in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade when the opportunity occurs in terms of other topics in the English subject, but also when incidents and discussions occur unrelated to teaching in the sense of comments and attitudes shown otherwise. *“It is a topic of maturing and discussion that the pupils benefit from, which hopefully encourages good attitudes when [the pupils] grow up, that they benefit from repetition and repeating it”* (Anne), and she added that the repetition encourages reflection where she observed that her pupils show more reflected attitudes and feedback on racism the more they talk about the topic.

#### 4.1.7 Multiculturalism

##### 4.1.7.1 Definition

The teachers were asked if their classes were multicultural, to which all of them said yes. Furthermore, they were also asked how they would define multiculturalism, to which Astrid and Susan answered similarly: *“I believe that means that there are people with different backgrounds which entails where you are from geographically, but also regarding belief systems.”* (Astrid). Anne defined multiculturalism as a mixing bowl of several things including: *“homeland, the parents' homeland, background, traditions at home, culture, you could origin from a different part of Norway as well as a different country, a different skin color, religion, pretty much anything”* (Anne).

#### 4.1.7.2 Do you include the multicultural diversity in your classroom in your teaching?

None of the teachers reported explicit use of their classes' multicultural diversity in their teaching about racism. Susan explained that she does not wish for the pupils to stand out as they do not view themselves as particularly different, but she does leave the opportunity open for the pupils to volunteer should they wish to. Astrid expressed her uncertainty regarding the inclusion of pupils in that manner as there are pupils who might not appreciate it. *"I experience it as a pitfall to ask pupils to contribute in that way as they might get offended by me saying 'Since you are from ...' or 'You know this language', right? They might get uncomfortable"* (Astrid).

Anne included the multicultural aspect in an indirect manner as she explains a Norwegian class she had where the pupils were asked to write "Hello" in different languages on the board. They were not required to know the language fully, and they ended up with 20 different ways by the end of the exercise. Her focus of this exercise was to demonstrate how the class worked wonderfully as a group in spite of having different backgrounds and levels of knowledge. She could not recall including the multicultural classroom in other ways as she shared the uncertainty of the possibility it could risk offending some pupils.

## 4.2 Practice

The main research question for this thesis concerns the teachers' practice, which will be looked more into in this section. The teachers were asked to explain how they plan their lessons, their experiences, and if there were any alternative approaches they would consider. During the recruitment of teachers for the interviews, they were asked if they could bring a lesson plan for us to discuss to gain a greater understanding. This was voluntarily and some did not bring actual lesson plans, but we did manage to get a discussion of how they went about. These lesson plans will not be included in this section nor as appendixes to avoid possible identification of the teachers. To make the findings clearer, I decided to give each of the teachers their own section. This way gives the opportunity to focus on each approach more holistically.

#### 4.2.1 Astrid

##### **How do you go about when teaching about racism?**

Astrid explains how she works in a cross-curricular way with social studies and religion on a lesson plan she brought with her. This lesson plan was in process when the interview took place. In the respective lesson plan, she had chosen film and documentaries, specifically a series from TV2 called *Det Hvite Sinnet* (The White Mind) to include the local perspective as it takes place in Innlandet county. *“We are also going to include song. There is a song called Black Lives Matter, and we are going to look at the lyrics and break it up to see what the artist is addressing, what it is about.”* (Astrid). The movies she had chosen for this were *12 Years a Slave* which depicts slavery in the antebellum south, and therefore racist attitudes, and *American History X* which portrays the neo-Nazi. Astrid states that the reason for choosing film is: *“We might get even better reflections and they get a better impression by watching films rather than just standing and talking about it, reading texts.”* (Astrid)

During the interview, Astrid informed me that this lesson plan was created in relation to a module plan concerning Democracy and Citizenship, which was to be the topic in focus for a scheduled period of time at her school. The aim for this period was for the pupils to learn how to meet different societies and cultures by communicating with others all over the world, regardless of literal and cultural background, which is described in the Core Curriculum. The central idea of this module plan is to contribute to opening new ways of interpreting the world and contribute to create curiosity and engagement, and preventing prejudice.

Three main questions the pupils are to focus on during the lessons are:

1. Why is it important to learn about the ongoing BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement?
2. How and why is it important to argue against racism?
3. How can you use your voice in this world?

These questions encourage the pupils to reflect on current events and how they can participate in the debate (questions 1 and 3). They also open up for a discussion on antiracism and in a way encourage pupils to think about antiracism as the correct action (question 2).

##### **Which competence aims from LK20 do you use when planning a lesson about racism?**

Astrid pointed out that she had chosen a few competence aims to be the main aims, and that some competence aims were met through the exercises and tasks, such as written and oral.

The chosen competence aims were:

- explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world,
- explore and present the content of cultural forms of expression from various media in the English-speaking world that are related to one's own interests,
- ask questions and follow up input when talking about various topics adapted to different purposes, recipients, and situations,
- listen to and understand words and expressions in variants of English,
- read, discuss, and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts,
- describe and reflect on the role played by the English language in Norway and the rest of the world.

(Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

To get an understanding of the teacher's cognition and self-evaluation, she was asked whether or not she was content with the chosen approach. As this lesson plan was an ongoing process at the time the interview took place, there was no end product Astrid could evaluate.

Nevertheless, she did express contentment on the process where they had watched movies and engaged in discussion. *"It is important to talk about the films after watching them, breaking it up, to get the natural pauses to talk about stuff and reflect before moving on"* (Astrid).

### **Alternative approaches**

Astrid said that the movies she chose depicts some gruesome scenes that she was aware could alarm some pupils, but Astrid reported that none of the pupils had such reactions. *"If that was to occur, I thought of changing the lecture into reading excerpts from the book, as Twelve Years a Slave is a book one can listen to. Or we could use more songs."* (Astrid). Astrid did underline the fact that her pupils want to watch the movies, that they are moved by them. *"In consideration of the films we have chosen theme-wise, we have not had to do any alterations, actually"*. (Astrid).

#### 4.2.2 Susan

##### **How do you go about when teaching about racism?**

Similar to Astrid, Susan also reported using film that raises the topic racism. The film Susan chose in this context was *The Hate U Give* which she explained came in 2018 in relation to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, which she used in English specialization where the year plan was divided into themes. The theme concerning this lesson plan was highlighting Afro-Americans' situation in the USA. The film is based on a book which the class read prior to watching. Susan explains that the pupils were given discussion tasks after watching the film meant to have the pupils reflect on the characters' actions and topics. Two examples of these questions are: '*Why do you think Khalil and Starr are not so close as they used to be?*', and '*What impression does the film give of different conditions of growing up in the USA today?*'. This lesson plan ended in an evaluation in the form of an oral conversation in pairs where Susan had prepared questions regarding the film, which resulted in low, medium, or high goal achievement. Of all the three teachers interviewed, Susan was the one who had worked as an English teacher the longest and had the most experience in teaching. She continued explaining how she usually teach about racism by saying that she has often followed the order of topic division in the learner's book (Enter 10). "*And then I have added additional information, for example films and texts that I find other places*" (Susan).

##### **Which competence aims from LK20 do you use when planning a lesson about racism?**

Unlike Astrid, Susan did not provide a detailed lesson plan. However, she did mention that she included several competence aims, such as the aim concerning communication, English speaking countries, cultures. The competence aims from LK20 regarding the mentioned are therefore:

- read, discuss and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts,
- explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world,
- express oneself with fluency and coherence with a varied vocabulary and idiomatic expressions adapted to the purpose, recipient and situation.

(Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019)

When asked whether she was content with the mentioned approach or not, Susan answered: *“Yes absolutely, the pupils said they thought it was a good film, and even though there are some strong scenes in there, it is definitely rewarding to see that film when you have read an excerpt of the book”* (Susan).

Susan did not provide any alternative approaches.

#### 4.2.3 Anne

##### **How do you go about when teaching about racism?**

Anne answered that she has varied the ways of teaching about racism in her classes dependent on how the classes have worked as a group. When asked what she specifically did the last time she taught about it in her English class, the answer was that she taught about Martin Luther King jr., Rosa Parks, and Civil Rights, they talked about Civil Rights back then and how they have changed up until now, before the pupils were assigned to make presentations where they could choose what to focus on. They had to include Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King jr., and other great names they wished to mention, before ending the presentation with a reflection on what life was like in the 60's versus today. The pupils were given the freedom to explore.

Unlike Astrid and Susan, Anne mentioned that she has often set aside her plans for the lesson whenever she has heard comments or witnessed discussions related to racism by her pupils. *“There was a situation that arose from language use (bad words) I had heard in the hallway. I put my plans aside and repeated the sentences I had heard, and I questioned them. 99,9% of the times the pupils say they were joking around, and we had a discussion about why that might be troubling”* (Anne).

Anne said she has experiences that approach as successful with the current class. She expressed uncertainty whether she would do it with the next class or not because she works to get to know the class before figuring out how to teach the topic as Anne considers racism a topic to take seriously. *“I feel [racism] is important to talk about and spend time on to have the pupils reflect and ask questions so they can think independently”* (Anne).



As Anne did not provide a specific lesson plan, she was not asked about competence aims.

### **Alternative approaches**

Anne said she has seen different approaches by conducting a social experiment where the pupils are unaware of what is really happening, by arranging chairs as a bus and let them experience what Rosa Parks did as someone says: *“You cannot sit here”*. Anne also mentioned a social experiment where some pupils were not allowed to vote for class representative to have them think in a more sympathetic way. While describing these alternative approaches, Anne reflected on how they would not work with her current class as the seriousness would be glossed over, and the teachers should know the class well in order to direct the lesson in a productive manner.

### 4.3 Challenges

As the teachers considered racism as an important topic to teach, there could be potential challenges that comes with it. They were therefore asked two questions regarding challenges, the first being: *“Which aspects/areas of the topic racism do you consider most challenging to teach and why?”*, and the second question: *“What do you consider possible pitfalls when teaching about racism in lower secondary school?”*. These questions were included to understand what hinders them in approaching the topic racism confidently. When answering the second question, the teachers were challenged to give a solution to what they considered as pitfalls.

### **Challenging areas**

Astrid mentioned when asked about what aspects were most difficult to grasp, that knowing which words to use was challenging and caused most discussion in her classroom. She said: *“To know which words are politically correct and not, because the pupils wonder ‘But we have said that before, why can’t we say that now?’ and that some groups can say the N-word, why is it OK for some and not others”*. Astrid expressed confusion on behalf of both the pupils and of herself that there are differences in what is acceptable to say for some cultures

and not others. Susan expressed similar concerns, along with the fear of offending a pupil as her class is multicultural. She feared addressing the topic of racism from an angle which could potentially be hurtful for some of her pupils as a teacher is no mind reader. Anne's reported challenges regarding this topic was staying neutral in discussions where she in private might have strong opinions on the matter. *"Me as a private person is a part of me as a teacher also, so if heated discussions occur it might be challenging for me to not say that they are wrong"* (Anne).

### **Possible pitfalls**

Anne and Astrid said they considered heated arguments as a possible pitfall, where the pupils completely disagree with each other and could express extreme attitudes which other pupils react upon. The solutions Anne provided when asked, was to set other things aside and have the pupils use their skills and knowledge about discussions and arguments to give reasons for their words. *"Words often come unfiltered, but when we set things aside and say 'OK, we will listen to what you have to say', and that has often deescalated the situation"* (Anne).

Anne, along with Susan, also mentioned using correct terms, which might arouse conflicts should any pupils misinterpret their words. Susan's proposed solution was to ask the pupils which terms they considered acceptable and have a discussion beforehand before moving on to more historical and factual things.

Astrid reported that what she considered possible pitfalls was crossing certain lines with pupils as it is unclear where their lines go. *"Without being aware of every pupil's background, I could have chosen a story or something that a pupil associates with himself or herself, and the whole thing becomes difficult"* (Astrid). Astrid did provide a possible solution to these misunderstandings, which was that teachers have to make themselves clear and their words transparent. Similar to her answer on challenging aspects, Anne repeated that keeping her own opinions to herself was hard as it is unclear how political teachers are allowed to be.

### **4.4 Descriptive terms**

The teachers were asked which terms they use when talking about the topic racism. To clarify what I meant by "terms", I gave the examples "black" and "Afro-American". During the interviews, I observed that both Susan and Anne were hesitant to give a straight-forward

answer. As mentioned during the presentation of challenges, all of the teachers saw terms as a challenging aspect of teaching about racism. When expressing her insecurity, Susan added: *“I try to use as ‘correct’ terms as possible, but it can be a bit difficult for the pupils to separate what is ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’”* (Susan). Susan expressed that as she reads a lot of texts with her class, she uses the terms that are written in the text. *“I use ‘Afro Americans’ as that is often the term that is used when we read text about [racism].”* (Susan).

When asked what terms she uses when she draws a connection to racism in Norway, Susan said she has used “black people” as that is what is written in most texts, and “black” is used in many films. *“I don’t know if [‘black’] is allowed to say either, I think terms are difficult as I don’t know if someone gets offended.”* (Susan). She, herself, reported using “colored people” as that term felt most ‘correct’.

Anne answered that since we live in a ‘fragile’ society, the pupils have to be aware of which terms they use, and at the same time teach them that even though some people use terms that one has never heard before, that it does not necessarily mean that term is bad. *“I try to use as many non-offensive terms as possible and dedicate a session on discussions on this. (...) We also have discussion on the fact that even though they don’t offend me as their teacher by using certain words, those words could be experiences as offensive by others.”* (Anne). When challenged to mention explicit terms, Anne said that they read a text once written several years ago which mentioned the word “Indians”, and Anne had a discussion with her class on why that word was not acceptable to use anymore, that the ‘correct’ term to use is “Native Americans”. *“Some pupils expressed frustration, but at the same time displayed understanding of why the N-word is not OK. And the way I answer these questions makes it obvious that this is frustrating for me too as there are words I don’t want to say in this interview, and there are other words I think it is OK to say”* (Anne).

Astrid mentioned similar terms as Susan and Anne such as “African-American”, “black” and “white” depending on what terms the texts and film use, including discussions on why certain terms are considered ‘correct’ and some terms are not OK. When asked about which terms she uses when talking about racism in Norway, Astrid did not have any definite terms. However, she reported focusing on different ethnicities and avoids talking too much about skin color. *“When the pupils make self-portraits in Arts & Crafts, I take the opportunity to simply tell them to make a skin color they see fit for themselves. And if they do ask for a skin-colored pencil, I ask them what they mean”* (Astrid).

## 5. Discussion

The central theme of this thesis revolves around the question, “How do teachers in lower secondary school teach about racism in the English classroom?”. This inquiry has been explored through theoretical framework, existing research, and interviews. In this discussion, we will interpret what the various dimension of the research findings means from different angles, and the discussion will be divided according to the supporting research questions: “What are the teachers’ thoughts on racism and the importance of teaching about it?”, “What are the teachers’ practices when teaching about racism?”, and lastly “What do the teachers consider challenging when teaching about racism?”. The discussions aim to interpret what the findings mean in a broader context, and with interpretations integrated into the discourse.

### 5.1 Understanding racism

The key finding from the results chapter concerning how teachers comprehend racism is that while there is a degree of similarity in their definitions, there are also nuanced differences in how they convey these definitions to their pupils. Astrid and Susan defined racism as the segregation of people based on skin color and religion. Based on the different racisms and races covered in the theory chapter, these teachers did not specify in their definitions whether the segregation occur on a structural or individual level. Anne, on the other hand, defined racism as being any negative behavior on the basis of origin, but when asked how she defined it with the pupils, she reported that she allows her pupils to define it through class discussions, empowering them with a sense of autonomy and a bigger voice. As found in the theory chapter, it is challenging to have a definition of racism that covers every aspect of it (Spernes, 2020; Bangstad & Døving, 2015; Helland, 2019), making it more relevant to understand what the teachers aim for the pupils to have reflected on after the lessons. The teachers emphasized the importance of teaching about racism to raise awareness, promote acceptance and prevent the historical injustices from reoccurring, aligning with the educational objectives outlined in the Core curriculum (2020). The teachers’ focus on fostering positive attitudes and interpersonal interactions resonates with Arneback & Jämte’s (2021) democratic anti-racist action where the pupils are seen as “possible reproducers of anti-democratic perspectives and practices” and the individual is seen as the one in need of change. This contrasts with Faye’s

(2021) suggestion that by refraining from focusing on the moral of each individual, teachers should rather raise awareness about racism in a structural aspect. That instead of searching for bad attitudes, they should focus on where the opinions stem from and through self-examination rid oneself on them. A possible explanation for this is - as Borg (2018, 2006) explained - that teachers (like all other humans) are influenced by their surroundings and what they read, so it is plausible that Astrid and Susan base their definitions on their own opinions and how they interact with others. Since racism is deeply rooted in today's society, it can be viewed as very challenging to change, but attitudes and opinions are elements that teachers can challenge their pupils on and therefore something they can possibly change in a conversation.

When asked about when teachers find it appropriate to introduce the topic in lower secondary school, the answers differed. All three teachers advocated for carefully introducing it in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and gradually increasing the level of reflections. Anne was of the opinion that the pupils benefited from repeating the topic in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade as she observed more reflected attitudes the more they talked about the topic. Susan was firmer in believing that the pupils are not mature enough to critically examine the topic before 10<sup>th</sup> grade. *“In relation to maturity, I choose to focus on racism in 10<sup>th</sup> grade”* (Susan). This relates to Rosvall & Öhrn's (2014) study who found that some teachers believe that students should be presented with all the facts before voicing specific opinions. One teacher in their study said that there is a certain level of knowledge that should be “mastered before being ‘trusted’ with more analytical tasks” (Rosvall & Öhrn, 2014, p. 343). As the interviewed teachers gave different opinions, it is challenging to state when racism should be introduced as a topic in lower secondary school. However, it can indicate that the teachers are free to determine for themselves when their classes are mature enough to fruitfully reflect on the topic, something Anne suggests is something that comes through repetition.

## 5.2 Teachers' practice

The main findings from the interviews regarding teachers' practice was that they move towards motion pictures, texts excerpts, and discussions when teaching about racism. The teachers who chose to use films explained that motion pictures are engaging for the pupils,

and Susan advocated that by reading excerpts from the books which her chosen film was based on, the pupils gained a deeper understanding of the content. Heum (2015) argues that motion pictures are great tools to provide historical depth and engage pupils, but problematizes the fact that they often portray a simplified and narrow truth, which weakens the historical credibility (Heum, 2015). The films that these teachers chose (*American History X*, *12 Years a Slave*, and *The Hate U Give*) portray stories that intend to show one side of the story, aiming to create reflections regarding one singular perspective in the pupils. As mentioned above, the teachers' aims for their teaching on racism was to challenge their pupils' attitudes and build acceptance. The films they chose were therefore appropriate in that sense. This indicates that motion pictures contribute to the interviewed teachers' aim to change the pupils' attitudes towards a specific topic, but whereas more historical anchorage is concerned, it is important to include knowledge of the broader perspective as well.

Anne reported that she used discussions frequently when teaching about racism, both in planned lessons and as a spontaneous solution to what happens during recess. Rosvall & Öhrn's (2014) study from Sweden showed that several teachers refrained from having discussion with their pupils, especially when situations occurred at school, because they believed that pupils did not have sufficient knowledge to be given such an analytical task. The teachers responded with silence, ignoring the pupils' needs to address the topic. However, Anne emphasized that the pupils were required to use what they had learnt about arguments and discussions, meaning they did need some anchorage in order for the discussion to be effective. Where Astrid and Susan chose motion pictures, Anne argued that based on her observations of her class, discussions had proven most effective when addressing topics such as racism. This relates to Clark & Peterson's (1986) model on how teachers plan their lesson based on how they interpret their class. Where the teacher in Rosvall & Öhrn's (2014) study observed his students as not informed enough to handle the topic, Anne's observations gave her the confidence that her class would gain a better learning outcome by actively engaging with the topic through discussions, an approach she also uses when situations occur spontaneously. This could mean that there is no singular approach that is more effective than any others.

The teachers believed that the English subject could best contribute to the teaching of racism through teaching about the USA. Their focus was on gaining knowledge on USA's history such as slavery, Native Americans, and the Civil Rights Movement, and drawing parallels to

recent events, to which all of the teachers mentioned George Floyd and Black Lives Matter. When asked about if they had considered any alternative approaches, only Anne had anything to provide, which was to arrange a dramatization of the situation on the bus in Montgomery concerning Rosa Parks. These teachers did not provide much reflection on how they could address the topic in a Norwegian setting, which could provide a picture of racism being something that happens other places and not close to the pupils. However, Astrid's lesson plan was in an interdisciplinary collaboration with social studies, and that could indicate that racism in a Norwegian context would be covered in that class rather than in the English subject. The teachers' selection of teaching materials and methods underscores the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that encourages reflection and dialogue on complex issues like racism.

### 5.3 Challenges

Teaching about a sensitive topic such as racism was reportedly also challenging, and there was one challenge that occurred in all three interviews: knowing which conceptual terms to use. The difference between the teachers occurred in how they approached it. Astrid and Susan explained how they felt most safe sticking to the terms that were used in the texts and films they used, although even if the text said "black", Susan was still unsure if that was appropriate to use. Anne focused on introducing as many non-offensive words as possible to educate the pupils on which terms they could encounter, and also let the pupils decide which terms they would use in class, but she refrained from mentioning any specific terms in the interview. A common reason why it can be difficult, was the fact that their classes were multicultural, containing pupils they were afraid to offend by saying certain words. As stated by Faye (2021), it is challenging to defend oneself if accused of being a racist, which I interpret the teachers' fear to be rooted in. Although, as discovered in the theory chapter, racist actions and comments are most often rooted in content and a belief that someone is inferior, which was not the case in either of the teachers' classrooms. Giving the pupils a language to use when speaking about and discussing racism is considered a main goal for teaching about the topic. The interviewed teachers report terms as an obstacle and it reduces the quality of the lesson when teachers are afraid to speak freely, they become vague in their explanations. Finn Erik Vinje argued that words that are considered offensive are only

offensive because of the emotions we transfer into them, which in this setting implies that if teachers are transparent, which Astrid mentioned, then teachers are in no need of attempting to sense if any pupils are offended by words they use. Teachers need to speak about the topic in a respectful manner, and also challenge the pupils' ways of thinking. The teachers added concern about heated arguments and the pupils getting out of control when promoting discussions as a learning method. Anne's proposed solution should this occur was to set all other things aside and have the pupils use their skills and knowledge about discussions and arguments and give valid reasons for their expressed opinions. Anne had experienced that this deescalated the situation as the pupils got a sense of being seen. Faye (2021) argued that there can be pedagogical benefits in embracing the topic even when it feels uncomfortable (Faye, 2021), and that the discomfort the teachers feel themselves should be challenged. The reason for that is that even if the teacher sees talking about racism as uncomfortable, and would seek to maintain the harmony, Rosvall & Öhrn's (2014) study indicates that pupils have a need to address the topic and are open for discussing it. This shows that the teaching would benefit from teachers also challenging themselves to face uncomfortable situations, and to be open for discussing which terms to use in the classroom.

In the previous research, Shirin Housee (2008) had researched whether the teachers' ethnical background had an influence on the teaching or not. As she found that college students often expressed opinions about white teachers not having enough personal experience on the matter in order to educate the students on racism, the interviewed teachers in this thesis did not report the same concern directly. I say "directly" because one of the main challenges they reported due to teaching about racism was – as discussed above - the fear of saying any incorrect descriptive terms or risking insulting a pupil. An interesting question regarding this matter is "Would the teachers have offended a pupil by saying anything considered incorrect if they themselves had an ethnic background other than white?". Astrid mentioned that her pupils express confusion about there being certain words that people of color can use about others and about themselves, but not by whites. This would arguably indicate that if a teacher identifying as a person of color using certain terms, it would not be considered offensive. It could also be argued that people of color have more experience about the topic and therefore more anchorage in saying which terms are offensive and which terms are OK. On the contrary, it would not be sustainable to demand that only teachers with a non-white background can teach about racism confidently and white teachers cannot. Since all of the



teachers reported this element of their teaching as a challenge, it is clear that teachers should be given proper training and information regarding which descriptive terms are politically correct to use.

The Education Act § 9 A-3 states: “The school shall have zero tolerance against violations such as bullying, violence, discrimination, and harassment” (Opplæringsloven, 1998, §9A-3). This law enforces the pupils’ right to a safe and healthy school environment, and if the school fails to provide this for the pupils, the parents are entitled to report the matter to the state administrator if the matter has been raised with the principal due to paragraph § 9A-6. These laws are created with the pupils’ best interest in mind. Without proposing that this law places negative restrictions on the teachers, it is arguable that the law creates a fear of being cancelled for the educators. They might gain a fear of being perceived as racist by unintentionally insulting someone, keeping in mind that the problem is not the law itself. The multicultural classroom creates opportunities and inclusion, and simultaneously gives teachers a more diverse group of human beings who have individual experiences, thoughts, and interpretations of what is acceptable behavior. Astrid’ proposed solution on the possibility of offending a pupil by using words that might be experienced as hurtful, was to make herself as clear and transparent as possible. This creates a general understanding of what the conceptual terms means, and Astrid works to ensure that the pupils are aware of what she put into the words she uses. Anne reported letting the pupils take part in deciding on which conceptual terms to use in class and having open discussion on the matter. This relates to the core value *Democracy and participation* where pupils are encouraged to collectively come to conclusions based on their expressed opinions. “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” (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). The democratic situation where pupils weigh in by participating in discussions creates the open safe space which Housee (2008) argues for creates better learning environments, and supports Anne’s conclusion in which well-developed, progressive teaching methods are essential in the unlearning of racism and fundamental to anti-racist and critical race pedagogy and politics (Housee, 2008).

Anne said in her interview that one of the things she found challenging when it comes to teaching about racism in separating between her role as a teachers and Anne as a private person. The reason for this was that Anne said she had clear personal opinions on the matter of racism, and withstanding from giving her personal opinion on a pupil's attitudes was hard to do. This relates to Rosvall & Öhrn's (2014) Swedish study which found that some teachers are uncertain how political they can be in their classroom. Racism is a delicate and political issue, but it is however stated in the Core Curriculum and Education Act that the school's practice is required to work against racism by teaching about the history and preventing prejudice. The historical aspect of racism is dark and unfair, and in order for the teaching of racism to portray it as a negative thing - not only as a part of the history, but something that is continually happening in today's society – teachers are required due to the Education Act to works against racist actions in the school and secure a safe environment for all pupils. This indicates that teachers should voice opinions about political matters as long as they align with the Education Act.

The last finding to be discussed is the fact that none of the teachers actively included the multiculturalism in their classroom explicitly. This was due to their reported uncertainty concerning making pupils uncomfortable as some pupils might not appreciate it. They had not asked the pupils directly, as that approach could also be considered uncomfortable. Badu (2023) on the other hand, argued that including pupils' uniqueness could provide a better self-esteem and consider themselves as assets (Badu, 2023). The pupils' opportunity to bring something new to the class could actually help create connection, build understanding, and prevent prejudice. The difference between the teachers' and Badu's perspective could be due to different experiences of the topic racism. It could also be a contributing factor that Badu is a black woman who have different experiences and perspectives than the three white teachers interviewed for this thesis. Where the teachers see a mine field, Badu sees opportunities based on her knowledge of the field. This could therefore imply that teachers' ethnic background is a contributing factor after all.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the discussion provided, a conclusion can be drawn that teachers in lower secondary school approach the topic of teaching about racism in the English classroom with varying perspectives and practices. The research findings indicate that teachers have different definitions of racism and approaches to teaching it, focusing on raising awareness, encouraging acceptance, and avoiding history from repeating itself. The challenges faced by teachers include knowing which conceptual terms to use, the timing of introducing the topic, and balancing personal opinions with professional roles. The use of motion pictures, text excerpts, and discussions are common practices among teachers, with a focus on engaging students and challenging their attitudes. It is important for teachers to create a safe and inclusive environment for discussions on racism, while also being transparent and respectful in their language use. The Education Act emphasizes zero tolerance for discrimination and bullying, highlighting the importance of creating a safe learning environment for all pupils. Overall, teachers play a crucial role in educating pupils about racism, promoting critical thinking, and fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding. In sum, discussions on teachers' approaches to teaching about racism in the English subject highlight the complex nature of this topic. By engaging with diverse perspectives, using varied teaching strategies, and addressing challenges with sensitivity and openness, educators can create meaningful learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, empathy, and social awareness among pupils. Embracing discomfort, fostering dialogue, and promoting inclusivity are key aspects of effective anti-racist pedagogy as teachers work towards building culture of respect, understanding, and equity in their classrooms.

### 6.1 Study limitations

Several limitations became apparent during this study. One such limitation is the small sample of teachers, making it difficult to generalize the findings, because as seen through the research, teachers have different approaches when it comes to teaching about racism. By interviewing more teachers, the ways of teaching could be very different from the ones covered here. Another limitation is that all of the teachers interviewed taught in multicultural classes, which they reported had an effect on how they approached the topic. By interviewing

teachers who teach in monocultural classes, the results could also uncover different ways of teaching. It could also show if teachers in monocultural classes share these teachers' fear of saying anything that could be considered offensive. The last limitation is that all three teachers interviewed were white, and it could be valuable to see if there are different approaches from non-white teachers - both non-white teachers who have experienced racism, and some who - if any - have not.

## 6.2 A larger perspective

The findings presented in the master's thesis can be placed in a broader perspective by exploring their implications for the education system as a whole. By examining how teachers handle teaching a sensitive topic like racism, insights can be gained regarding the challenges and opportunities that exist in education to promote awareness, acceptance, and inclusion. On a societal level, these findings can help shed light on the importance of integrating education on racism and diversity into curricula in a meaningful and effective way. They might also indicate the need for more support and resources for teachers who wish to address such complex topics in the classroom. Furthermore, these findings can also inform education policy and practice, considering how to enhance teachers' competence and support them in handling sensitive issues like racism in a constructive manner. This can help create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all pupils. In sum, by placing these findings in a broader perspective, efforts can be made to improve teaching on racism and promote a more diverse and inclusive education system.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1

### Intervjuguide

#### Oppvarmingsspørsmål

Bakgrunnsinformasjon om intervjuobjekt:

Kjønn:

Alder:

Stilling:

1. Hvor lenge har du undervist i ungdomsskolen?
2. Hvilke fag underviser du i?
3. Hvor lenge har du undervist i engelsk?

#### Hovedspørsmål

- Hvordan vil du definere/forklare hva rasisme er?
- Synes du det er viktig å undervise om rasisme?  
Hvorfor?
- Hva er dine tanker rundt det å undervise om rasisme i engelsktimene?
  - Hva tenker du om din egen rolle som lærer når du underviser slike temaer?
  - Hvorfor synes du det er viktig å undervise om slike temaer?
  - Hvilke aspekter ved temaet synes du er viktig å understreke?
  - Hvilke aspekter synes du er vanskeligst å undervise og hvorfor?
- Hvordan pleier du å undervise om temaet i ditt klasserom / dine timer, og hvilke kompetansemål legger du til grunn for disse?
  - Er du fornøyd med denne tilnærmingen? Hvorfor / Hvorfor ikke?
  - Er det alternative tilnærminger du har vurdert, men ikke prøvd ut enda? Hvilke?
- Hvilke begreper bruker du når du underviser om rasisme? (Eks.: svarte, afro-amerikaner, ...)
  - Hvorfor disse?
- Hva anser du som mulige fallgruver når du underviser om rasisme på ungdomsskolen?
  - Hvordan kan man løse det?

- Er klassen din multikulturell?  
Hvordan definerer du multikulturalitet?
- Inkluderer du det multikulturelle/multietniske klasserommet i din undervisning om temaer som rasisme og segregering? Hvordan / På hvilken måte?  
- Hva anser du som utfordrende rundt det?  
- Hvis nei, hvorfor?
- Når du underviser om rasisme, relaterer du det flerfaglig med andre fag?  
- Hvis ja, hvilke og hvordan?
- Mange skoler bruker læreboka *Enter 10*, hvor temaet slaveri og segregering er presentert. Kompetansemålene for ungdomsskolen strekker seg over tre år – 8., 9. og 10. trinn, og sier ikke noe om hvilket år lærere skal introdusere temaet. Når tenker du det er passende å introdusere dette temaet?  
- Hvorfor?

#### **Undervisningsopplegg fra intervjuobjekt**

- Hvilke tanker har du lagt til grunn for planleggingen av dette undervisningsopplegget?
- Hvordan fungerte utførelsen av opplegget?  
- Hva fungerte godt?  
- Hva ville du endret på?
- 

#### **Opprundingsspørsmål**

- Er det noe du ønsker å legge til som du føler ikke har kommet fram under intervjuet?

## Appendix 2

# Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

🖨 Skriv ut

☰ 11.01.2024 ▾

**Referansenummer**  
958878

**Vurderingstype**  
Standard

**Dato**  
11.01.2024

**Tittel**

Teaching about racism in the Norwegian lower secondary classroom

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Fakultet for lærerutdanning og pedagogikk / Institutt for humanistiske fag

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Ida Jahr

**Student**

Marte Bjerkestrand

**Prosjektperiode**

22.08.2022 - 31.05.2024

**Kategorier personopplysninger**

Alminnelige

**Lovlig grunnlag**

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2024.

[Meldeskjema](#) 

**Kommentar**

Personverntjenester har vurdert endringen i prosjektslutt dato.

Vi har nå registrert 30.06.2024 som ny slutt dato for behandling av personopplysninger. Hvis det blir nødvendig å behandle personopplysninger enda lengre, så kan det være nødvendig å informere prosjektdeltakerne.

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

Kontaktperson: Sturla Herfindal

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!



## **Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet «Teaching about racism in the Norwegian lower secondary classroom”?**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan lærere underviser om rasisme i engelskfaget. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

### **Formål**

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å finne ut hvordan lærere underviser om rasisme i engelskfaget. Det vil bli analysert hvilke valg de tar og hvordan rasismetemaet konkretiseres i deres praksis. Formålet er ikke å analysere hver enkelt lærer, men heller å se på sammenhenger og ulikheter i deres praksis og å samtale rundt hvilke refleksjoner lærer gjør seg rundt egen praksis og deres rolle når det undervises om et såpass kontroversielt tema som det rasisme er.

Eksempel på noen forskningsspørsmål som skal analyseres er:

- Hva er lærernes tanker rundt det å undervise om rasisme i engelsktimene?
- Hva tenker de om egen rolle i undervisning av slike temaer?
- Hvordan tilnærmer de seg temaet i eget klasserom?
- Hva anser de som mulige fallgruver i undervisning om rasisme på ungdomsskolen?

Dette er en masteroppgave som skrives i engelskfaget ved Høgskolen i Innlandet.

### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

Det er Fakultet for lærerutdanning / Institutt for humanistiske fag som er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Årsaken til at jeg ønsker din deltakelse er at du er lærer i engelsk på ungdomsskolen og har dermed erfaring med undervisning av dette tema. Jeg ønsker å få innsikt i denne erfaringen og utførelsen som gjøres på grunnlag av dette. Forespørselen går også ut til flere engelsklærere som besitter denne kunnskapen for å få mer tyngde og mulige forskjeller i praksisen.

### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det å stille i et intervju. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om dine tanker rundt temaet rasisme og refleksjoner rundt egen



undervisning om dette temaet. Intervjuet blir tatt opp med en båndopptaker, som deretter blir transkribert og brukt i analysen. Dette opptaket blir eliminert når prosjektet er ferdig. Lengden på intervjuet vil variere ut ifra besvarelsen på spørsmålene, men det vil ta rundt 45 minutter.

Det er også ønskelig å få innsikt i din praksis ved å dele det undervisningsopplegget du bruker når du underviser. Dette trenger ikke å være spesielt detaljert, men oversiktlig og forståelig slik at jeg kan tolke det. Dette blir en del av intervjuet.

Dette prosjektet har ikke som hensikt å kritisere intervjuobjektene praksis og tanker. Hensikter er derimot å få innsikt i praksisen for foregår i felten.

### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det er mulig å trekke seg under hele prosessen frem til prosjektet leveres inn.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

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

- De som vil ha tilgang til opplysningene er forskeren Marte Bjerkestrand og veilederne Ida Jahr og Heidi Silje Moen.
- Navn og kontaktopplysninger vil erstattes med en kode som lagres på en navneliste som holdes adskilt fra øvrige data. Vedkommende vil kun omtales i oppgaven med en kode.
- Siden intervjuet blir tatt opp på et nettskjema og transkribert, blir det ikke gjenkjennbart for andre hvem deltakerne er. Opptaket i nettskjema vil være sikkert lagret på en sentral server, og det er kun jeg som forsker og veilederne mine som har tilgang til. Dersom det dukker opp noen identifiserbare opplysninger under datainnsamlingen, vil disse omgjøres i transkriberingen og gjøres uidentifiserbare. Alt blir slettet etter bruk.

### **Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 15. mai 2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet med dine personopplysninger anonymiseres, lydfilene slettet og transkripsjonene ytterligere anonymisert slik at det vil være umulig å identifisere deg.

Dersom prosjektet må utsettes av diverse årsaker, blir ikke de anonymiserte opplysningene slettet, men brukt videre for å kunne videreutvikle prosjektet. Når oppgaven er ferdig, blir alle opplysninger slettet og makulert.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Innlandet har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Dine rettigheter**

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

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

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

- Høgskolen i Innlandet ved Ida Jahr [ida.jahr@inn.no](mailto:ida.jahr@inn.no) (veileder) telefon +47 480 39 696
- Student: Marte Bjerkestrand [marte.m.bjerkestrand@hotmail.com](mailto:marte.m.bjerkestrand@hotmail.com) telefon +47 970 25 980
- Vårt personvernombud: Usman Asghar [usman.asghar@inn.no](mailto:usman.asghar@inn.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via:

- Epost: [personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Med vennlig hilsen

Marte Bjerkestrand  
(Forsker)

Ida Jahr  
(Veileder)

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## **Samtykkeerklæring**

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Teaching about racism in the Norwegian lower secondary classroom», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- å dele et eget undervisningsopplegg
- at informasjonen fra intervjuet og undervisningsopplegget kan brukes i prosjektet

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)