

ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING IN NORWEGIAN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL:

*Does upper secondary school EFL instruction effectively help
pupils develop academic writing skills?*

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Abstract

The main aim of this thesis is to examine whether or not the EFL writing instruction according to the R94 curriculum in Norwegian upper secondary school prepares the pupils for higher education with regard to academic writing. Preparing for higher education is stated in the overall aim for the core curriculum for Norwegian upper secondary school that states that pupils are to be “prepared for higher education”

Based upon relevant literature I drew up a list of criteria which constitute the so-called *intermediate academic article*. This is an academic article genre and style of writing that upper secondary school pupils should be able to master after completing the Advanced English course in VK1 and VK2.

Using the above mentioned criteria, I examined the LK97 and R94 English curricula and syllabi for references to academic writing instruction. I then turned to four Advanced English textbooks to see how the textbook writers interpret and/or convey these competence aims into concrete academic writing instruction. After the textbooks, I looked at a selection of the final examinations from the Advanced English course. Finally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with six English teachers about their views and attitudes towards academic writing instruction.

My findings show that there are serious issues with the way academic writing instruction is conveyed through the Advanced English syllabus. Academic writing is overlooked and undercommunicated. With the notable exception of one textbook, the lack of clarity and focus on academic writing persists in the textbooks, nor do the final examinations test this in a consistent manner. This leaves most of the responsibility to the English teachers, who have to compensate for the vague criteria on academic writing in the Advanced English syllabus.

In the conclusion I try to look forward to and make the connection to the current curriculum, the LK06. A brief analysis reveals that things have changed for the better on the topic of academic writing instruction. The syllabus is clearer, and the criteria are more solid as to what an academic text in upper secondary should consist of. However, I also point out that it is currently too early to properly assess the full impact of the changes brought forth in the LK06.

Sammendrag

Hovedmålet med denne masteroppgaven er å finne ut om R94 i tilstrekkelig grad forbereder elevene i norsk videregående skole for høyere utdanning med tanke på opplæring i akademisk skriving i engelsk. Det står i den generelle delen av læreplanen at det overordnede målet med videregående opplæring er å klargjøre elevene for høyere utdanning.

Ved hjelp av relevant litteratur, laget jeg en liste med kriterier som tilsammen utgjorde det jeg kaller en *mellom-akademisk artikkel*. Dette er en akademisk artikkelgenre og en måte å skrive på som elevene burde mestre etter å ha fullført to år med engelsk fordypningsfag i VKI og VKII.

Jeg brukte disse kriteriene til å analysere og gjennomgå læreplanene LK97 og R94 med hensyn til akademisk skriveopplæring. Deretter gjorde jeg det samme med fire lærebøker i engelsk fordypning for å se hvordan de tolket læreplanen og eventuelt formidlet læreplanmålene. Etter dette gikk jeg gjennom et utvalg av eksamener fra fordypningsfaget i engelsk, før jeg til slutt intervjuet seks engelsklærere fra videregående om deres holdninger til akademisk skriveopplæring.

Mine funn viser at det er alvorlige mangler ved måten akademisk skriveopplæring er behandlet i fagplanen for engelsk fordypning. Akademisk skriving som område er oversett og underkommunisert. Bortsett fra en lærebok har disse manglene forplantet seg til lærebøkene og eksamene klarer ikke å teste elevene konsekvent i dette. Det gjør at mesteparten av ansvaret for å drive akademisk skriveopplæring faller på engelsklærerne som må tilpasse undervisningen for å kompensere for de dårlige vilkårene i læreplanene.

I konklusjonen ser jeg fremover for å dra en sammenligning til den nåværende læreplanen, LK06. En rask analyse viser at ting har bedret seg med tanke på akademisk skriveopplæring. Kriteriene er klarere og tydeligere på hva som forventes av elevtekstene. Imidlertid påpeker jeg også at det er for tidlig å kunne komme med en endelig vurdering av i hvor stor grad endringene i LK06 har lyktes.

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1.0 Introduction

One of the most defining experiences I had when first encountering English academic writing at the university level was in an entry level English literature course. As a part of a seminar group, our seminar teacher decided to speak to all of us at the same time pointing out some of the most common mistakes committed in the first draft he had recently corrected. It turned out that half the seminar group, incidentally all those who had just made the transition from upper secondary, had submitted drafts where up to 70% had been pure biographies of the author whose work we had studied. For some, an additional 20% had been spent on a summary of the novel/short story we had read. This is where I first became aware of that many students did not have a clear idea of how to write academic papers. Over the next few years, this scenario repeated itself in various ways and it became apparent that the current system for teaching academic writing at the upper secondary level as preparation for higher education had failed. Judging from my own experience, many students struggle with the academic article genre that is prevalent in higher education as they undergo the transition from upper secondary school to university level instruction. My hypothesis is that there is too little focus on the academic writing in upper secondary before university. The goal of this thesis is therefore to examine the current situation for the teaching of the *academic article* (also called the *academic paper*) genre in upper secondary school.

Not many studies have been conducted on academic writing within EFL¹ instruction in upper secondary schools in Norway. However, to support my aforementioned experiences, I will briefly look at two previous studies. The first one is by Associate professor Glenn Ole Hellekjær at the University of Oslo called “A Case for Improved Reading Instruction for Academic English Reading Proficiency” from 2008. The second is a doctoral study by Torunn Moksheim Lehmann from 1999 called *Literacy and the tertiary student – Why has the communicative approach failed?*.

Hellekjær’s text is an article published by Acta Didactica Norge² where he writes about the state of academic English reading proficiency, a matter that is closely connected to academic writing³. An excerpt from the abstract says that: “The article presents a study of the academic

¹ English as a foreign language.

² A Norwegian periodical on didactics - <http://www.adno.no/index.php/adno>.

³ Reading and writing could be said to be parts of the same “double helix”, with reading often being considered the passive variant to writing..

reading proficiency in English of 217 senior level Norwegian upper secondary school students who upon graduation are *considered qualified for higher education*”.⁴ The phrase in italics is critical with regard to my research question, and will be further outlined in chapter three where I analyse the core curriculum for the Norwegian school system. The core curriculum for the Norwegian school system from elementary school through upper secondary specifically states that the main goal for teaching is to prepare pupils for higher education⁵. Nevertheless, Hellekjær then goes on to reveal that: “. . . two thirds of the 178 respondents with ordinary EFL courses did not achieve the equivalent of the IELTS Band 6⁶ score minimum that is usually required for admission to British and Australian universities.”. This is an alarming number in itself, and it can probably be assumed that the same numbers would be repeated in an equivalent test of writing. After the abstract, it is stated in the introduction that:

In Norway it has been taken for granted that upper secondary level instruction in English as a Foreign Language (hereafter referred to as EFL) develops the proficiency needed for higher education. Indeed, this might even seem reasonable since English is taught for all ten years of elementary school and from one to three years of upper secondary. Norwegian students also receive extensive media exposure from subtitled English films and TV programs. Furthermore, Norwegian 16-year-olds did well in a comparative, eight-country European study of English proficiency (Bonnet 2004). However, this assumption of adequacy has been challenged in two doctoral studies. Lehmann (1999), and Hellekjær (2005) found serious weaknesses in university and college students’ writing and academic reading proficiency respectively.

(Hellekjær 2008: 1-2)

In other words, it would seem that there is a serious issue with the current state of reading skills among Norwegian upper secondary school graduates.

In his conclusion of the article Hellekjær states that:

⁴ My highlighting.

⁵ This is a critical criterion which I will come back to several times in my thesis.

⁶ IELTS = International English Language Testing System.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the current Norwegian complacency about the quality of upper secondary EFL instruction as preparation for higher education, or for occupational purposes, is unmerited (see also Lehmann 1999). For institutions of higher education it means that these institutions need to offer their own English courses to prepare their students for their future careers (see Lehmann 1999; Hellekjær 2007a). For upper secondary EFL instruction, or to be more exact, for Norwegian EFL instruction in general, it means serious changes in teaching practices and learning objectives as well as in examinations and testing.

(Hellekjær 2008: 1-2)

Hellekjær's study is of academic reading in English. Torunn Moksheim Lehmann's doctoral study of student writing proficiency is not a continuous dissertation on the topic of writing, but a collection of articles and studies. Lehmann says in the preface that ". . . I have been asking myself: Why do they⁷ write so poorly after so many years in the EFL classroom, without even knowing it?" (Lehmann 1999). Rather than giving a full review of the study as a whole, I will try to single out some important points that are valid with regards to this thesis. The study consists of two main parts, the first one is called "The differences between speaking and writing: pedagogical implications" and the second part is a collection of seven papers on the topic. In the introduction to the summaries of her papers from the doctoral thesis, Lehmann mentions the following:

Later, when taking up regular college teaching again, I noticed that the students were rather vague about their learning goals. . . . When elementary errors were pointed out to them they would say: 'But you understand what I mean, don't you?' The combination of low motivation, low attendance and low competence observed, gradually made the teaching of English more difficult, and made me question the nature of their prior EFL education. I asked myself the following question[s]: *Have the students been prepared to meet the requirements of tertiary education*⁸? . . .

(Lehmann 1999: 43)

⁷ students

⁸ My highlighting.

Lehmann's experiences of low motivation, low attendance and low competence in the above quote will be revisited in chapter seven, where one of the respondents⁹ of an interview conducted dealing with academic writing mentions the same things. The highlighted part of the quote is yet another reference to the paramount curricular requirement that upper secondary school is supposed to prepare pupils for higher education.

In addition to this, Lehmann, in her "Paper 1: 'Written English: Lack of Competence and Motivation among Norwegian College Students'" mentions that: "Findings revealed low correspondence between the student's upper secondary school graduation grades and college examination grades." (Lehmann 1999: 44). This correlates highly with my experiences mentioned earlier in this chapter of my thesis. Later, in pages 75-76 of Lehmann's Paper 1 chapter, several questions are raised in an attempt to figure out the reason for the lack of correspondence between upper secondary and higher education¹⁰. The questions raised address hypotheses from such as teachers possibly "ignoring formal competence in favour of creating self-confidence in the students", to "Have secondary school curricula played down too far the importance of written English compared to spoken English?", and whether a lack of time and resources has "led to inadequate training in written English"¹¹. In the conclusion of the paper, the question of "what should be done?" is asked. It is indicated that there needs to be a reassessment ranging from secondary school to the job market. It is important to map out what is really needed of pupils when they finish upper secondary, and how the situation can be improved by consulting the needs of the job market. Perhaps most important of all in relation to this thesis, is the idea that educational authorities need to reinvent the curriculum so that written English gets as much attention and focus as oral English. This is something I will investigate as well in chapter three where I analyse the curricula and syllabi. I will revisit this issue towards the end of the thesis.

1.1 Research statement and limitations

The research statement of this thesis is: "English academic writing in Norwegian upper secondary school: Does upper secondary school EFL instruction effectively help pupils

⁹ A teacher from upper secondary school with extensive experience.

¹⁰ It should be noted, though, that Lehmann's research material from upper secondary is from so-called "business students" (Lehmann 1999: 75).

¹¹ There are eight of these questions in Lehmann's paper, but I have decided to focus on the three I found the most relevant to this thesis.

develop academic writing skills?” The question calls for a thorough review of the status of EFL academic writing instruction at the upper secondary level.

In order to investigate the current state¹² of academic writing instruction in upper secondary school, I will start by examining the curricula and syllabi for English, first at the introductory level, but mainly at the advanced level (“engelsk studieretningsfag”, hereafter called “Advanced English”). I consider it likely that the pupils that are taking English at the university level will have chosen the option of English in-depth studies in the 2nd and 3rd grade of upper secondary. I will therefore focus on the subject curriculum¹³ for this specialisation. At the time I started to write on this thesis, the new curriculum for elementary-lower and upper secondary school, LK06¹⁴, had not been implemented in 3rd grade yet. Since this year’s 3rd graders will be assessed according to the new curriculum in the spring of 2009 the results from the new examination will not be available before Summer/Fall 2009. I have therefore decided to focus on R94¹⁵ which pupils have followed for over ten years now. This is also the foundation I have based my experiences and my resource material on. I will, however, still sometimes refer to LK06 for comparison.

In addition to references in the syllabi, I will also look to other means of conveying writing instruction, such as examinations. Next, I will interview some English teachers to hear their viewpoint on academic writing, and how they teach writing. I will also analyse textbooks to find out how they convey academic writing instruction. Basically, I will analyse the different aspects of EFL academic writing instruction through the prism of the R94 Advanced English syllabus. This is because the syllabus is the foundation that teachers and textbooks interpret before the pupils finally have their examinations which assess whether or not they have met the criteria from the syllabus.

1.2 Key definitions

It is assumed that the academic article, the academic paper and the research paper are synonyms, and these terms will all be used interchangeably in this thesis when speaking of the academic paper. It is also assumed that the topics in these papers deal with literary, cultural

¹² “The current state” means the situation for the last ten years. Explained later in the paragraph and the thesis.

¹³ Also called syllabus.

¹⁴ Will be addressed in chapter three of this thesis.

¹⁵ The previous upper secondary school curriculum introduced in 1994. Will be thoroughly explained in chapter four.

and political issues. These are all themes found in the upper secondary English courses and in many university courses. The structure of the school system is based on how pupils are expected to gradually progress academically. It is therefore likely that there is a kind of transitional genre paper between the original English essay¹⁶ written up until upper secondary and papers written in higher education. In my thesis, I will refer to this type of academic paper written in upper secondary school as the *intermediate academic paper*¹⁷.

The English used in this thesis is British English. Usually, when talking about the participants in the school system, I have consistently used the word *pupils* before higher education, and *students* for those who have completed upper secondary school. The same reasoning is used when using the word *teacher* up through upper secondary, and *lecturer* or *supervisor* in higher education. Chapter four of this thesis covers the topics *syllabus* and *curriculum*. A closer definition of these terms is included in the beginning of that chapter. As plurals, I have decided to use the *syllabi* and *curricula* as I personally find the Latin version more academic in tone. However, it should be noted that many use the plurals *syllabuses* and *curriculums*. All of these terms are accepted in most dictionaries. Furthermore, when using sources, I have attempted to mostly quote published material in order to avoid reliability issues. However, seeing how more and more reliable published information is being put on the internet, I have sometimes used online versions of reputable dictionaries or databases such as “Google Scholar”¹⁸. Often used abbreviations in this thesis are *AEs* for the Advanced English syllabus, *AEC* for the Advanced English course, and *EFL* for English as a foreign language. When talking about the Advanced English course, I am usually referring to the third and final year of upper secondary. The Norwegian terms for the three years of upper secondary school are *Grunnkurs (GK)*, *Videregående Kurs 1 (VKI or VK1)* and *Videregående Kurs 2 (VKII or VK2)*.

In the next chapter, I will set out to define what academic writing is, and try to outline a general set of criteria that can constitute an *intermediate academic paper*¹⁹. I will come back to these criteria when analysing the theory data and use them as reference. After the academic writing chapter, I will outline the method and research design used in this thesis. Following these first three chapters, I will then first analyse the *curricula* and *syllabi* in chapter four for

¹⁶ Called “Stil” in Norwegian.

¹⁷ This term will be addressed in the next chapter.

¹⁸ <http://scholar.google.com/>.

¹⁹ A self—coined term that will be thoroughly explained in the following chapter.

signs of academic writing instruction. Then, I will analyse the interpretations of the syllabus in the forms of *textbooks* in chapter five, *examinations* in chapter six, and interview *teachers* for their thoughts on the topic in chapter seven. Towards the end of my theory and research material analysis, I will in the last two chapters sum up and discuss the findings, and then finally, conclude with some thoughts on the future of EFL academic writing in upper secondary school in Norway.

2.0 Academic writing

In this chapter I will attempt to define the term *academic writing*, so that it will be clear what is expected of students in higher education. I will use Lennart Björk's & Christine Räisänen's (hereafter referred to as B&R) book *Academic Writing* as my main reference. In addition, I will draw heavily on a review article by Brian Paltridge called "Academic writing", in which he reviews research and developments that are relevant to second language students writing in academic settings. I will also use *Assessing Writing* (2002) by Sara Cushing Weigle and *Theory & Practice of Writing* (1996) by William Grabe & Robert B. Kaplan. In very brief terms, academic writing is writing objectively about a particular subject where the writer discusses within the paper and draws in other references, with the aim of arriving at a conclusion. There are many aspects to this, and in this chapter I will present formal expectations for an academic paper in higher education. One of the main aims of the chapter is to sum up all the knowledge on this and create the outline for what we can call the *intermediate academic paper*.

This section will also serve as a brief survey into the different ways of understanding what academic writing is, although, as mentioned in section 1.2, it is highly likely that the term *semi- or intermediate academic paper* will be the more accurate when speaking of upper secondary school. This is a critical point. It would not be fair to expect that pupils who just finished upper secondary are able to write the more advanced form of academic papers that is found in higher education. Therefore, I will not only try to define what general criteria the academic paper genre should have, but I will attempt to narrow down what we can call the *intermediate academic paper*. This is a level of academic writing that pupils should be able to master after completing upper secondary, and will serve as a natural stepping stone for them in making the transition to writing in higher education. In other words, there should be a clear progression in expectations to academic writing between upper secondary and higher education, even though there is not a formal syllabus in place tying upper secondary to universities or colleges.

In his article, Paltridge quotes Y. R. Dong (1997:10) who mentions that academic writing "involves learning a new set of academic rules and learning how to play by these rules". This is the very essence of teaching and learning academic writing. Paltridge also talks about the context of academic writing, where he lists up the various factors students have to take into

consideration when writing, such as purpose, cultural and academic context as well as mastery of the discipline in which they write, audience and intertextuality (Paltridge, 2000: 88-89). The term intertextuality also figures in *Theory & Practice of Writing*, where Grabe and Kaplan state that writers need to: “be cognizant of intertextuality – that is, have a clear sense of what others have had to say on the topic and know how to incorporate that material into their text” (Grabe & Kaplan 1996: 171). In Paltridge’s article, there is also a reference to a book by Christine Feak and John Swales called *Academic writing for graduate students* (2004), in which they point out that:

even before students begin to write, they need to consider their audience (...) their audience’s expectations and prior knowledge”, and also “If the audience knows more than the writer, as is often the case with academic writing, the writer’s purpose is usually to display familiarity and expertise in the particular area, beyond simply reporting on the research and scholarship of others.

(Feak & Swales 2000)

This is also something Weigle points out, “... how much needs to be explained and what can be left implicit ...” (Weigle 2002: 23). In other words, it is important to remember the idea of the writer having a clear idea of what his or her audience is, the purpose of the text, as well as awareness of the text’s place within the discourse of a given academic subject.

Some of these terms are related to B&R’s (1997) views on writer-oriented- and reader-oriented writing where they distinguish between audiences, purposes, language and forms. The table below shows the difference in B&R’s distinctions between the two main ways of writing. One (writer-oriented) is mostly personal and used to explore ideas without taking an audience into consideration. The other shows the reader-oriented writing, where the written production is made with an audience in mind. I will get back to the audience term later in the chapter.

The following table reproduced from *Academic Writing* (B&R 1997: 17):

Table 1 Writer-oriented writing vs. Reader-oriented writing

Writer-Oriented writing	Reader-Oriented writing
Audience: self	Audience: others
Purpose: personal exploration of ideas	Purpose: communication between individuals
Language: informal	Language: formal
Forms: journals, notes, rough drafts	Forms: essays, papers, business letters

The main point here is B&R's distinction between writing for oneself²⁰ and writing for others²¹. The problem for many upper secondary school pupils could be that they tend to mix points from the writer-oriented side and the reader-oriented side. Ideally, the students will write academic articles from a reader-oriented standpoint. The main problem could be the language²² point (from the table above), where the language and tone used can end up towards the informal, subjective side. This will be one of the focal points in the examinations papers review chapter. It seems apparent, however, that the writer-oriented features are excellent for planning academic papers, as a meta-text outline²³. This thesis will focus mostly on reader-oriented writing, as I deem it most appropriate to the academic writing genre.

However, there are more aspects to the writing process. The writer, preferably, has to go through the process of assimilating current knowledge about the topic and transform it into new ideas. In addition to this, the writer needs to have an intimate knowledge of the genre specifications in order to participate fully in the academic discourse community he or she is a part of²⁴. This will follow in the next section.

2.1 Knowledge telling and knowledge transformation

In *Assessing Writing*, Sara Weigle addresses the difference between *knowledge telling* and *knowledge transformation* (Weigle 2002: 31-35), terms that were introduced by Bereiter & Scardemalia in 1984. Knowledge telling is described as the most basic form of conveying knowledge, involving little cognitive processing. This is said to be an innate ability for most people who can write, and resembles the act of speaking. In other words, it means that the

²⁰ Writer-oriented.

²¹ Reader-oriented.

²² This also includes tone.

²³ Meaning that the writers do not have to worry about formalities and genre familiarity since they are only writing for themselves in the beginning.

²⁴ More on this on pages 7-9.

writer is able to assimilate information or previous knowledge on a topic and is able to reproduce it more or less unaltered. An example of knowledge telling from a literary subject could be that a pupil is asked to write a paper on literary devices used in a random text of fiction. The pupil is able to identify a few, and points out where in the text they are, because he or she has learnt what, for instance, a metaphor or a simile looks like. The pupil is also able to reproduce the basics of what the teacher has taught him or her about literary devices, but is unable to make further connections beyond the literary device itself.

The step beyond knowledge telling is known as knowledge transformation, which requires more planning and rhetorical skill than knowledge telling. This means that the writer is able to assimilate knowledge to an extent where he or she can not only reproduce it, but also elaborate on it, showing a greater degree of insight. To continue with the example from the previous paragraph, a pupil who masters knowledge transformation instead of knowledge telling will in the same paper not only be able to point out the different literary devices. He or she should also be able to show to what effect the devices have on the reader, frame them in the context of the literary work studied, and possibly draw a comparison to other texts which employ similar means.

Knowledge telling and knowledge transformation, in the mentioned order, could also be regarded as stepping stones towards becoming an academic writer. Weigle puts it this way:

In knowledge transformation, the process of writing involves not only putting one's thoughts to paper as they occur, but actually using writing to create new knowledge: in this kind of writing the process of writing of itself frequently leads to new knowledge and may change a writer's view of what he or she is trying to communicate.

(Weigle 2002: 32-33)

This is a very describing quote when it comes to one of the focal points of academic writing. Weigle points out the necessity of students being able to master knowledge transformation in order to master a key element of the academic discourse. That is, that knowledge is not a static concept, but something that needs to evolve based on the contribution of many. Although not explicitly stated, the curricula and syllabi are supposed to reflect these steps over the course of the primary education of the pupils. That is, the pupil starts at a point where he or she can use knowledge telling when writing, but where the goal is that the pupils

develop knowledge transformation skills. Knowledge transformation is arguably one of the most fundamental parts of academic discourse. It would seem fair to believe that the intermediate academic paper stage is where the pupils will hone this skill, and subsequently perfect it when writing in higher education.

2.2 Text types and genres

When discussing writing, it is important to distinguish between the following terms: text type and genre/discipline. Whereas the former can appear in different genres, the latter terms reflect how we categorise different ways of writing. For instance, there can be different text types within a specific genre, such as the academic paper. However, you never write one text type and vary the genre within a paper. In their book, Björk and Räisänen look at the various text types and genres. They list the following text types (B&R 1997: 18):

- Causal analysis – explains the cause of something
- Problem solving – offering solutions to a problem
- Argumentation – making claims or stating a position on a specific issue
- Summarising – an abbreviated version of another piece of writing

These are just some of the text types used in an academic context, but probably the most used ones, and in the following sections I will focus on them. Björk and Räisänen remark that these text types may be referred to as “basic language functions” in building expository texts. Many of these features are prominent in the academic article.

Genre is a broader concept than the aforementioned text types. There are many literary genres, such as those from fiction, novels, short stories, fairy tales and plays, as well as the non-fiction, discursive genres often used in business or academic contexts. So how can a genre be defined? B&R points out that:

... there are no inherent, original-or natural-criteria for any genre; the criteria are culturally determined. This means that the characteristics of a specific genre are defined by the conventions agreed upon by the writing communities within each genre is used.

(B&R 1997: 19)

This is a critical point. Where there are no innate preconceptions about writing, it seems imperative that the genre expectations are properly conveyed to the students. This is mainly the teachers' responsibility. Paltridge addresses the genre question in his review article, where he mentions a paper by Carolyn Miller (1994). In her paper, Miller states that genres are keys for participating in a community. She refers to genres as social actions. Paltridge interprets it as follows: "genres are part of the social processes by which knowledge about reality and the world are made" (Paltridge, 2000: 89). In chapter four I will look further into if the curricula and syllabi communicate this.

If one assumes that genres are set and developed by social processes, then it could also be said that they would be subject to rapid change as well. How can a syllabus make formal requirements about genres, when they cannot be defined once and for all? Does this indicate that the teacher's autonomy will influence the teaching of academic writing more than the curriculum? Paltridge gives an example from Aviva Freedman where it is pointed out that in different contexts, the same paper can change meaning radically (Paltridge, 2000: 89). This is an interesting point. It can be construed as if there is a safety net for the students to write papers knowing that only their teacher will read it. This is important since, one of the aims for academic writing must be to fully participate in authentic academic discourse. If pupils, when writing intermediate academic papers in upper secondary school, only write with the idea in mind that their teacher will approve, then how can they be prepared for higher education, where their contributions often will be read by many more? What if intermediate academic papers are addressed to a member of parliament, or to be included in a job application? Will the added level of authenticity make pupils better prepared?

Paltridge calls the discussion on the topic mentioned in the previous paragraph the "new rhetoric" (Paltridge, 2000: 89). Later in his article, Paltridge draws up two main stances, one being the "academic literacy as a singular phenomenon, comprising a set of skills to be acquired and problems to be fixed", and the other a "socialisation process" that teaches the academic culture requirements to the students "through a kind of apprenticeship" (Paltridge, 2000: 90). The points here constitute a basic discussion within the area of academic writing. They also touch upon the foundations of this thesis: is it even possible to teach pupils academic writing before university? If there is indeed such a thing as academic apprenticeships when it comes to writing, when should this process start? Should it, for instance, start in upper secondary? There are, however, certain limitations to this theory. To

what extent is the syllabus actually able to communicate the academic genre? Also, if we are dealing with the concept of apprenticeships, is it not a problem that the EFL syllabus does not reach over to the university courses as well?²⁵ Some criteria can be expected conveyed through examinations, but that could be too late in the learning process for the pupils. This is where the aforementioned term *intermediate academic paper* could come into play. I will come back to this definition in the section below.

2.3 The search for the intermediate academic paper

As can be seen from the discussion in section 2.2, it is hard to find a simple definition of the academic paper. It seems that everyone is talking *about* it, but no one is saying what it *is*. There are, however, many individual references to the criteria an academic paper should contain. In this section I will sum them up and see if a clear picture can be drawn on what academic writing is. Everyone appears to agree on the fact that it is critical for the students to master the academic paper genre in order for them to participate in the academic community. I will therefore list essential elements from Paltridge's article, based on the various views on the genre. It can be said that the intermediate academic paper must contain the following (names of the original authors in brackets):

- Critical thinking (Pennycook, Canagarajah as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 91)
- Command of the language
- General discourse community expectations and conventions, as well as the particular expectations, conventions and requirements of their particular area of study (Dudley-Evans as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 91)
- Awareness of the intended audience, the audience's reactions and the criteria used to evaluation and response (Johns as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 91)
- Rhetorical functions such as: (Trimble as cited in Paltridge, 2000: 91)
 - Compare and contrast
 - Cause and effect
 - Definition
 - Problem-solution

²⁵ Meaning that there is not an overarching syllabus from upper secondary to university.

In addition to the examples above, Grabe & Kaplan mention the following advanced writing options when it comes to style:

extensive use of appositive parenthetical clauses and absolute clauses, variation in modality for modifying reasons, modification with final participial clauses, complex patterns of nominalization, the use of a variety of punctuation options (e.g. dash, colon, semicolon), and the use of passives and impersonal structures.

(Grabe & Kaplan 1996: 373)

Some of the points from Grabe and Kaplan are very specific, and refer to a semantic level, while the last two points are more general. The mention of the use of passives and impersonal structures is likely to have a familiar ring for scholarly writers. However, it can be discussed whether or not the use of passives is the ideal. Note that when it comes to that point dealing with the use of passives is where Grabe & Kaplan's ideas do not correspond with B&R's views on the topic. This is something I will address in the interviews with the teachers in chapter seven. Nevertheless, Grabe & Kaplan and B&R still share views on other facets of academic writing.

In the next section, I will apply some of the theory from this section to provide an example on concrete criteria for a specific subject within English academic writing. I will also elaborate with some new criteria. The chapter builds on an idea from *Academic Writing*²⁶.

2.3.1 An example – A literary academic paper

An extension of my findings from Grabe and Kaplan can be found with Björk and Räisänen as they go through the various academic fields when it comes to academic papers. In the chapter dealing with “Research Papers in the Humanities: Literature” (B&R 1997: 259-262) B&R describe the process involved in the writing of a literary academic paper. Their summary uses the classical division of the paper with introduction, body and conclusion. The use of title and references are also explained. I have tried to construct a summary of their requirements for what constitutes a good academic paper based on this chapter. The summary is focused on the formal features of such a paper.

- The **title** should be informative, giving a clear indication of topic and content. Empty phrases should be avoided

²⁶ B&R 1997: 259-262.

- **The introduction** contains rhetorical moves²⁷ such as
 - awakening the reader's interest
 - orienting the reader with background information and forecast of content
 - the introduction of the thesis statement
 - the purpose of the paper (not necessary for papers under 25 pages)
- **The argumentation** (body) is the core of the paper
 - Arguments supporting the thesis statement. Will usually be accompanied by examples from primary and secondary sources
 - Structure of argumentation.
 - Focus on communication process between writer and reader
 - Coherent paragraphs
 - Logical development of argumentation going from general to specific
 - Documentation. Avoid too many quotations, but document them all
- **The conclusion**
 - A summing up of the main points for the reader. Should be the culmination of all the argumentation supporting the original claim
- **References**
 - Here, B&R refers to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Some main points:
 - Book titles (or collections) in *italics* or underlining.
 - Articles in “quotation marks”

Furthermore, B&R emphasise that rhetorical and textual signals should always be used to give a clear indication on what is going on in the paper, often referred to as signposting. This is one of the most critical aspects of academic writing, especially in longer papers, where the reader easily can get lost. Signposting improves the coherence of the paper.

²⁷ A rhetorical move is a literary device used by the writer designed to make matters more appealing and convincing to the reader.

Next, with regard to language and style, in chapter six of *Academic writing* B&R have a survey on coherence in academic papers (B&R 1997: 208-219). The following points should be noted (this is a selection):

- Complete sentences
- Subordination, the most important point ought to come in the main clause of a sentence
- Avoid dangling modifiers. It must always be clear who is doing what
- Avoid long strings of clauses
- Vary the length of the sentences
- Replace nouns with active verbs
- Avoid wordy phrases and expressions. Using long phrases instead of shorter ones, can often lead to obscurity of meaning
- Avoid obscure words when simpler ones will do
- Avoid sexist language

One of the points comes, as mentioned above, directly into conflict with one of Grabe & Kaplan. “Replace nouns with active verbs” from B&R and “the use of passives and impersonal structures” from Grabe & Kaplan do not necessarily correspond. B&R substantiate their claim by saying that when too many nouns are strung together, the sentences become overloaded, forcing the reader to unpack the meaning more than he or she should. Grabe & Kaplan’s view can be defended by saying that use of passives and impersonal structures will appear to be more objective. That way the reader arguably will be less influenced by what will appear to be a stronger claim

2.3.2 Argument or discussion?

In a lecture given at the University of Oslo²⁸, British professor Richard Andrews talked about argumentation in academic writing. Having written several books and conducted large surveys on the matter, he gave an overview of the state of English academic writing, with focus on argumentation. Andrews mentioned several things that are critical to understanding the concept of argumentation. He mentioned that argumentation is a fundamental part of communication between human beings, and despite the term “argumentative” having come

²⁸ April 10, 2008.

under attack for having a negative connotation, he drew the line more towards classical rhetoric. As an answer to the critics, the term “argumentational” was launched as a more neutral, academic term. The term “argument” must be seen in comparison with the term “discussion”. Andrews pointed out that “argument” could be defined as a “discussion with an edge” while evoking the ideas of didactic thinkers Lev Vygotsky²⁹, Jürgen Habermas³⁰ and Mikhail Bakhtin³¹. Andrews’ views are quite important since they deal with academic texts both within linguistic and literary arts. Furthermore, Andrews went on to reveal a clear link to heuristics, where he drew up the following figure.

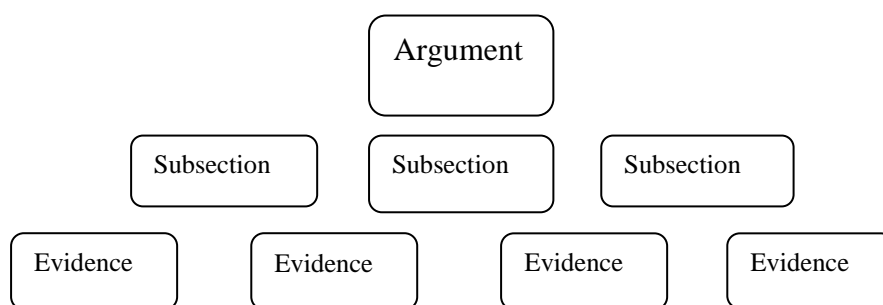


Figure 1 The structure of an argument according to Richard Andrews

According to the Oxford English dictionary online³², the term “heuristic”³³ refers to the method of finding something out for yourself, often by trial and error. In figure 2.3.2, this is visualised through a pyramidal scaffolding display of structures and devices. At the top, the argument resides, being the main part of the structure; it has to be supported by elaborating subsections. The foundation, or grounding, consists of evidence backing up the claim. Figure 2.3.2 is meant to illustrate how an argument can be built up both for the sake of understanding the problem; not only for the writer, but also for the reader. This way of building arguments in a text works in both writer-oriented and reader-oriented writing.³⁴

Richard Andrews also talked about inductive methodology versus deductive methodology. He alleged that deductive methodology dominates the scientific field of academia with its focus on hypotheses and finding evidence for or against. He also indicated that inductive methodology stands out in literary arts in the way that it deals with the text itself and is open

²⁹ language and thought development.

³⁰ discourse ethics.

³¹ the dialogic imagination.

³² http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/heuristic?view=uk.

³³ The word itself comes from old Greek and means “to find”.

³⁴ See figure 2.0 in chapter 2.0.

for many interpretations. It is important to mention, though, that these are just observations, and do not imply that they are mutually exclusive to the different fields in the academic world.

The intermediate academic paper is without a doubt a complicated matter, and in this chapter, I have pointed out many of the features that should be considered in a definition. Björk and Räisänen make it quite clear that clarity, order and syntactic efficiency through the use of active sentences are key factors for writing good papers. In the next section I will simplify further in order to define the intermediate academic paper.

2.4 The Intermediate academic paper - a simplification

There is a strong need for simplification with regards to the sheer number of points mentioned in the previous section. I have therefore decided to come up with a list of points that I feel comprise the intermediate academic paper. As mentioned earlier, this is the term used for the paper pupils can be expected write in upper secondary school before attending higher education. It means that after having mastered the intermediate academic paper genre in upper secondary, the pupils are prepared to make the transition to the slightly more complex academic paper expected at university level. I will come back to this checklist several times later in the thesis when analysing my research data:

- The language must be formal and objective
- The text is meant to illuminate, discuss and explore
- The text must be cohesive and coherent, using argumentation to progress, such as pros and cons
- Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works
- The text is valid in its attempt to answer the task at hand

However, there is a gap between the intermediate academic paper and the academic paper expectations in the transition between upper secondary school and university. Having the idea of writing apprenticeships³⁵ in mind, a further elaboration is likely to be introduced at a higher level. The next step in the apprenticeship could then be considered to contain such criteria as:

³⁵ From 2.2 Text types and genres.

- The text is written by scholars for scholars³⁶
- The writer must show command of the English language as well as knowledge of rhetorical devices used to convince the reader
- The language will also lean more towards the scientific as students are becoming more specialised and acquiring a more technical vocabulary related to the topic or subject

The main point here is that at higher education, the students' written work is more likely to be assessed as contributions to an ongoing academic discourse as they have become a part of that society, while in upper secondary, pupils mostly write for their teacher. However, Richard Andrews also³⁷ talked about the concept of "peer collaboration". The term reflects how two or more pupils can model dialogue in a single paper for the sake of developing multiple views, and thus making the paper have a more nuanced perspective. The method is important, as Andrews pointed out that research had showed that pupils were not necessarily good at counter-argumentation. Andrews indicated that it might be because pupils have a hard time actually imagining the opposition in a paper. In order to remedy the situation, Andrews suggested that one look at some of the concepts from French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, namely the "vow of obedience" versus the "vow of suspicion". This means that it is easy for pupils or students who are not experts in a certain field to take opinions from authorities in the field (the most usual person would be the teacher) for granted³⁸. Instead, the pupils sometimes need to employ more critical thinking and challenge the established "truths" from time to time, i.e. suspicion. Ideally, by the time they have mastered the academic paper genre, they will be able to know when to be suspicious and when to accept established opinions. Thus, a varied and engaging discussion can thrive not only within a single academic paper, but also as a part of a larger academic discourse. Ultimately, Andrews also emphasised the importance of academic writing as a democratic process, underlining the fact that academic writing is participating in the academic discourse. I will give a summary of this chapter in the next section.

³⁶ The term scholar here refers to a participant, be it student or teacher, in academia.

³⁷ From section 2.3.2 .

³⁸ I.e. obedience.

2.5 Chapter summary

When reading Paltridge's article, it is astounding to see how complicated the matter of academic writing is. It is clear, however, that mastery of the academic article genre is critical for the students to gain access to the academy as peers and participants. Why is the genre so shrouded in its idea? Why is the genre not more accessible and defined? It must be noted that towards the end of his review article, it is stated that content-based courses *do not adequately prepare* students for *real academic classes* (my highlighting). In addition, Paltridge has a reference to C.P. Casanave, stating that "students are often required to produce written genres that they have not prepared for in preparatory academic writing classes" (Paltridge 2000: 98). By consulting the literature of Björk & Räisänen, Grabe & Kaplan and Sara Weigle, I have tried to get to the bottom of what the formal requirements for an academic text are, and next, the requirements of the intermediate academic text that upper secondary level students should be able to write, so that they can be used consistently in the analysis of the research material in the coming chapters.

This chapter was intended to be an introduction to the academic writing genre, but also an attempt to outline what academic writing is. It is important to maintain the focus on upper secondary school when looking at the definitions, although in order to see the need for a more overarching syllabus, a few thoughts on how the transition can be improved have been included. The main point is that in upper secondary school, pupils should be expected to be able to write an intermediate academic paper, which in turn will enable them to progress in higher education where the bar for academic writing is even higher. In the next chapter I will scrutinise the English subject curricula in the Norwegian school system with the intent of finding concrete references to academic writing expectations.

3.0 Method and research design

In this chapter I will give an overview over the approach I have used to research the topic, as well as give an overview of how the data was collected. Because of my background as a teacher it has been very important to me to illuminate both the theoretical sides of the academic writing instruction issue, such as the curriculum, as well as the more practical parts, such as textbooks and teachers. I will not only point out the challenges of using specific methods or ways of information retrieval, but also when I think I as a teacher have benefited from doing things a particular way. Bear in mind that some of the information in this chapter might come across as a little shallow, but will be properly expanded on later in dedicated chapters.

3.1 Theory – Defining the academic paper

Following the introduction chapter, I set out to define academic writing, a critical condition for the rest of the thesis as it presents the criteria I am looking for in all subsequent chapters. In every way, the academic writing chapter is the foundation for the rest of the dissertation. I first tried to find out if there was a finite understanding of what academic writing really is. I made several inquiries to colleagues, books and the internet to find “the definitive document on academic writing”. Unfortunately, the search yielded no results, and I realised I had to develop my own definition of what academic writing is, and draw up the basics for the intermediate academic paper for use in my analysis. This was no small undertaking, seeing how there is a whole academic world out there, consisting of scholars, universities, colleges, elementary schools, lower and upper secondary schools as well as numerous others, which deals with academic writing every day. My quest for defining the academic paper/article genre was therefore carried out by looking at books and articles specifically written about the topic. I had previously come across *Academic Writing* by Björk & Räisänen (1997) and *Assessing Writing* (2002) by Weigle in my master studies at the University of Oslo. My thesis supervisor also pointed me towards *Theory & Practice of Writing* (1996) by Grabe & Kaplan. These three books, along with several articles and my personal experiences both as a pupil, student and a teacher helped me in narrowing down the academic article genre. One of the challenges that I faced was that the genre is not necessarily the same at upper secondary as in higher education. It would be naïve to assume that pupils in upper secondary are expected to master the full scope of the genre before attending higher education. This raised the need to focus on upper secondary school specifically, and try to define an academic article genre that

the pupils could master in upper secondary, but still allowed expansion in higher education. The reason behind this is the specific curricular goal of preparing students for higher education³⁹. After having defined and outlined what I was going to look for in the Advanced English syllabus, textbooks, examination papers and teacher interviews, I started on a review of the curricula and syllabi. The intermediate academic paper definition checklist from the academic writing chapter of this thesis has been applied in all cases in the information retrieval phase⁴⁰. In other words, the points outlined in the academic writing chapter to describe the intermediate academic paper have been used as a framework for analysis in the following chapters. Because I developed my own set of criteria for the academic paper, I could not look for explicit word for word matches, but had to look for similarities and equivalents between the intermediate academic paper list and the research material.

3.1.1 Curricular and syllabic study

In Norway, two different curricula have spanned from elementary school to upper secondary school, thus covering 13 years of English teaching. English teaching arguably starts in preschool in Norway, which means I had to examine the English syllabus from the very beginning, always keeping the details from the academic writing chapter in mind. I had not expected to find anything concrete before upper secondary, and thus I focused on that part of the curriculum. In addition to this, the curriculum in question really consists of two parts, the first reform came in 1994 and covered upper secondary school, while the other came in 1997, and covered elementary and lower secondary school. There have been claims that this dichotomy has led to a certain fragmentation in how the curricula fit together. Together with the academic writing chapter, the curricula & EFL syllabi chapter constitutes a critical reference source to be used when looking for signs of academic writing instruction in textbooks, examination papers and teacher interviews. This is because ideally the syllabus should try to outline something similar to the intermediate academic article because that is what pupils are expected to write in upper secondary and higher education. It is then up to textbooks, examinations and the teachers to implement what the syllabus says. At least, that is what was expected before I started writing this thesis.

The curricula and syllabi were reviewed chronologically and I went through them point by point in detailing the references to academic writing. I then commented on the points and how

³⁹ From the Core Curriculum outlined and explained in the following Curricula & EFL syllabi chapter.

⁴⁰ I.e. study of syllabi, examination papers and textbooks..

they related to the outline from chapter two of this thesis. The reasoning behind studying them chronologically is that even though the curriculum for elementary and lower secondary (LK97) were published after the reform for upper secondary school (R94), LK97 was designed specifically to precede R94. In reviewing the curricula like this I had hoped to get a sense of the intended development of academic writing skills.

After defining academic writing and reviewing the English syllabi, the theoretical bases were covered, and moved on to finding references to academic writing instruction in textbooks, examination papers and interviewing teachers about it.

3.3 Practical study and information gathering

When reviewing textbooks to see how they deal with academic writing instruction, I needed to make a valid selection of books. The term *validity* refers to “whether the findings are ‘really’ about what they appear to be about” (Robson 2005: 93). This is a term which should be seen in connection with two other terms. The first one is *generalisability* that “refers to the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied” (Robson 2005: 93). The final term in this relation is *reliability* “(the consistency or stability of a measure; for example, if it were to be repeated, would the same results be obtained?)” (Robson 2005: 93). In other words, I needed to make sure the selection of books reflected the majority of what has been used in the Advanced English course in third grade of upper secondary school in Norway. I debated the selection with my thesis supervisor, and was encouraged to contact some publishers to find out more about sales numbers and market shares. One publisher responded and provided some statistics on the most popular textbook. Luckily, one of these was explicitly mentioned several times during the interviews I had with various teachers, so I had more than one motive to look at that (the book is called *Tapestry*). In order to get an as valid, generalisable and reliable selection as possible, I chose the four most sold⁴¹ textbooks (based on sales numbers and market shares provided from a major publishing house in Norway). I then applied the specifics from the theory chapters to my search, and set out to find references to academic writing instruction in one book at a time.

3.3.1 Examinations

However, before I reviewed the textbooks, I had looked through a selection of examination papers from the Advanced English course. I decided to analyse the latest examinations from

⁴¹ In terms of sales and market share.

2005 and 2007. These are examinations that have been used after pupils have completed the Advanced English course in third grade of upper secondary school. As shown in the next chapter dealing with the syllabus, they cover both the alternatives, Alternative A, and Alternative B⁴². The examination papers were reviewed in much of the same way as the textbooks, as detailed in the previous paragraph, but I also had to take the *washback* phenomenon⁴³ into consideration here. This means I had to not only look at the surface value of the examination papers, but also reflect on whether they could possibly provide washback effect for future English academic writing instruction.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews with English teachers

Between the work on the examinations- and textbook chapters, I interviewed six English teachers. Originally I had intended to interview Advanced English classes and their teachers, but ultimately ended up scrapping the idea as it would become too time consuming. Before deciding on who to interview, I ran it by my thesis supervisor, and he provided me with some names of people he thought could come up with good answers. In addition to this, I had a few acquaintances from my own days of studying in Bergen and Oslo, and finally some names were given to me by teacher colleagues. This can therefore be called a convenience sample. Together, these teachers comprised a body of six respondents of both genders ranging from under 30 to over 60 years old. Geographically, they represented the “four corners” of Norway, North, East, West and the middle part of Norway. The interview questions were sent in writing by email a few days before I rang up the respondents for a conversation⁴⁴. Six respondents were from different parts of Norway, three of each gender. Two have a non-Norwegian background. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and the answers have since been translated to English. The respondents are anonymised. A closer presentation of the respondents is given in chapter seven, the interview chapter.

I had decided early on that I wanted to use a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews for my data collection among teachers. Colin Robson states in his book *Real World Research* from 2005 that when it comes to semi-structured interviews,

⁴² These terms are explained closer in the following chapter of this thesis as well as in the “Examination Papers” chapter.

⁴³ How exam results will affect teaching . Explained in detail in section 4.5, dealing with assessment, of this thesis.

⁴⁴ As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, all interviews were conducted by telephone due to time restraints and the fact that the respondents were from all over Norway.

Interviewers have their shopping list of topics and want to get responses to them, but they have considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions, in their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention give to different topics.

Robson 2005: 278

The reasoning behind the use of semi-structured interviews is that academic writing and the intermediate academic article could be considered non-finite terms, and would perhaps need some explaining under way. This was due to difficulties that I had in developing my own criteria for reference purposes when analysing the data in this thesis. Other teachers would probably have come up with similar criteria, but perhaps with a different wording. The problem with this was that the respondents seemed hesitant initially, and were somewhat vague in their answers in what they thought academic writing was. Their trepidation quickly disappeared when I started mentioning some of the points from my own list of criteria, and most respondents agreed with me on the points. Also, I wanted to allow the respondents to elaborate on facets of the topic they thought would be interesting and relevant. The problem with my working full-time as a teacher during the writing of this thesis was that I did not have time to meet with the respondents face to face; I had to settle for phone interviews.

Delving deeper into the matter, I, as mentioned, conducted interviews with a six English teachers⁴⁵. Instead of asking direct questions that can be interpreted as leading, I went for more topic-based semi-structured interviews. By doing this, I expected to get answers with richer detail and also enable the respondents to come up with examples and parallels as they saw fit. However, subtle prompts⁴⁶ were applied from time to time, to make sure we stayed on topic. For instance, when the respondents seemed uncertain of what exactly I expected when asking them to define academic writing, I presented some of the points from my definition⁴⁷ and asked them to comment upon it.

I see this direct contact with the teachers as perhaps the most important way of sampling the current situation of academic writing in upper secondary. At the same time, many of the teachers I talked to have extensive experience from the AEC⁴⁸, and were able to see things in a historical perspective as well. Some of the respondents also had experience from being

⁴⁵ Of third grade advanced English in upper secondary.

⁴⁶ Robson 2005: 276-277

⁴⁷ From the "Academic Writing" chapter of this thesis.

⁴⁸ Advanced English course.

external examiners on AEC examinations in Norway⁴⁹, which meant they could also share some insight on the final competence level for the pupils who graduate from upper secondary school.

However, one of the problems with such a small sample of qualitative semi-structured interviews is that it can be regarded as having limited external validity. On the other hand, many of the teacher respondents gave committed and similar answers, and as often as not, consistent answers to the same questions. This could be seen as an indication that the selection reflected answers that a greater number of English teachers would agree on, and thus possibly leading to some degree of validity. Had time permitted it, I would have liked to follow up the interviews with a large scale survey in order to get a greater confirmation on the findings. In any case, the answers fit well into the hypothesis that academic writing in upper secondary school has been neglected in the R94 syllabus. Further information on this part of the thesis is given in the teacher interviews chapter⁵⁰ later on.

3.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have given an overview of my research methods, motives and provided reasons for choices throughout the thesis. The goal of the chapter is to increase the transparency into the process for the reader. Time constraints led me to seek solutions that arguably decreased the validity, particularly in the teacher interviews chapter, but the quality of the answers and the range between the respondents should make it come across as diverse, to the point and interesting. The outline for the intermediate academic paper presented in the second chapter was used when examining curricula and syllabi, textbooks, a selection of examinations, and finally by interviewing teachers. In the case of examinations, for reasons of time, I picked out a small selection of the most recent papers. Lastly, I followed up my previous analyses by interviewing teachers. Due to numbers, and the teacher interviews being a convenience sample, there is a limited external validity. However, the internal consistency strengthens my belief that the interviews give a useful picture of what teachers know about academic writing. In most cases, with a few exceptions, the different research perspectives seem to confirm each other.

⁴⁹ Cf. the examinations chapter. The examination papers are assessed and marked externally.

⁵⁰ Chapter seven.

4.0 Curricula & EFL syllabi

In this chapter I will briefly present the different curricula that are relevant to the present thesis. After the general overview, I will go deeper into the subject curriculum for the Advanced English course. Note that a curriculum covers the school system as a whole, whereas a syllabus, or subject curriculum, covers the individual subjects and courses, such as English. My investigations will be towards identifying the references to academic writing and finally to see how this is assessed at the bottom line. In the chapters dealing with examinations and teacher interviews, I have explored how the washback effect works in this regard. Lastly, I will briefly look into the idea of the “hidden curriculum”. A curriculum usually carries with it the political tendency from the time of its creation; however, I will not focus much on this as I do not see it as relevant for the topic.

To start with, it is critical to establish the fact that Norwegian upper secondary school has as a goal to prepare pupils for higher education, as can be seen below:

UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT

§ 2 PRINCIPAL AIMS

The purpose of upper secondary education is to develop the skills, understanding and responsibility that prepare pupils for life at work and in society, to **provide a foundation for further education**, and to assist them in their personal development. Upper secondary education shall contribute to increased awareness and understanding of basic Christian and humanist values, our national cultural heritage, democratic ideals and **scientific thought and method**. Upper secondary education shall promote human equality and equal rights, intellectual freedom and tolerance, ecological understanding and international co-responsibility.

*Core curriculum for primary, secondary and adult education in Norway
The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (my
highlighting)*

4.1 The situation today

The curriculum for 3rd graders the last years in upper secondary school is the *Curriculum for Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary Education* (Hereafter referred to as R94 and L97). This has lasted until 2008 following the 2006 introduction of the *Knowledge Promotion*

*Curriculum*⁵¹ (hereafter called LK06). The LK06 will replace both target-based R94 and L97 and for the first time, the Norwegian school system will arguably have an overarching curriculum that is designed for elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary as a whole. This is different from the 90's reforms where L97 was developed after R94. In other words, R94, the curriculum for upper secondary school came first, and then L97, the curriculum for primary and lower school was designed to precede R94. It could be claimed that this was working backwards, both in a literal and practical sense.

The Norwegian curriculum also includes a general core curriculum written in 1994 by the Minister of Education, Research and Church Affairs, Gudmund Hernes. In this curriculum, Hernes makes a detailed outline of what the general goals of education in Norway ought to be. He writes about the different facets of the human being the educational system should aim to produce. Despite Hernes being a traditional Labour Party man, the *core curriculum* has been retained through many changes of government in Norway. The general consensus has been that this common part of the curriculum is well-written and is valid regardless of political views. There is however little that specifically touches the topic of this thesis apart from the need to educate the pupils to be well-prepared, and well-informed, democratic *citizens*. "The ultimate aim of education is to inspire individuals to realize their potential in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humaneness in a society in development." (Gudmund Hernes, *Norwegian Core Curriculum*, 1994). In the following section I will therefore focus on the EFL syllabus.

4.2 Implementation, direct & indirect effects

R94⁵² is fairly specific, compared to the curriculum that is in the process of being implemented, LK06, as far as instructions go. As opposed to LK06, the teacher is given relatively little autonomy; the aims are spelled out quite clearly. This has been one of the main objections to the L97 reform in particular. An example of this is the instructions to teachers with concrete examples and references to specific authors and works in L97. In LK06 these are removed, leaving those choices up to the local schools and teachers. The concrete references from L97 have been under close scrutiny by Sylvi Stenersen Hovdenak at the University of Oslo who regards the 90's reforms as "instrumental mistakes", a violation of

⁵¹ http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/templates/udir/TM_Tema.aspx?id=3226.

⁵² The R94 will be closer described in the section: 2.2.2 R94 – Upper secondary – The English Foundation Course and the Advanced English course structure.

power from the governing authorities (Hovdenak, *P90-tallreformene - et instrumentalistisk mistak*: 2000). The review of the subject syllabus of R94 that follows shortly will therefore examine whether or not teachers are given clear enough instructions on how to conduct English writing instruction.

In the article called “Hva læreplanen kan og ikke kan. . .⁵³” Kirsten Sivesind and Kari E. Bachmann explore how well curricula are implemented, and whether or not it can be assessed. One must therefore take into account the *direct* and *indirect* effects of the curricula. In their article they emphasise a curriculum’s two main functions, the curriculum as a political and administrative directive/tool, and the more traditional view of it being an educational tool. It could be argued that on one level Sivesind & Bachmann suggest that these functions can be regarded as *direct* (educational/content-wise) and *indirect* (political and administrative). Arguably, the direct function of the curriculum is what you see; the indirect function is what you get. The curriculum as an indirect instruction is also called the “hidden curriculum”. These are the invisible instructions from the government intended to give model citizens in the long run. There are no explicit references to this in the subject syllabi, but the tendency is there if one knows where to look for it. The other level is more hands-on, where the *direct* effect of the curriculum on the classroom teaching occurs when teachers study it and plan their teaching based on this. The indirect effect can be seen as coming from secondary sources, such as textbooks, didactic traditions and follow-up studies of the teachers (Sivesind & Bachmann 2002: 30). In addition to this, there is the discussion on whether the final exam has a direct or indirect effect on the teaching. The seemingly obvious answer seems to be that it has an indirect effect as a result of the so-called *washback effect*. I will address this in more detail in the assessment section⁵⁴.

In their article, Sivesind & Bachmann (hereafter referred to as S&B) use terms such as “political intentions” and “educational practice”⁵⁵. The concept of the school curriculum as a political directive makes it hard to see the direct impact it will have on the pupils. As mentioned earlier, a curriculum is a political instrument where the government ultimately seeks to mould the pupils into citizens based on their current political reality. This is

⁵³ What the curriculum can and cannot. . .

⁵⁴ Section 4.5 of this thesis.

⁵⁵ My translation.

something Sylvi Hovdenak points out in her book⁵⁶. This is also reflected in the statement by Hernes in the Core Curriculum mentioned earlier. That being said, S&B are also quick to point out that there are numerous opinions and definitions on what a curriculum is.

To sum up, it can be argued that the syllabus is first interpreted by the textbook writers, who in turn operationalise it into the textbooks that teachers and pupils use. Then, at the bottom line, it is interpreted by the teacher who works with the pupils on a day-to-day basis. In section 4.3, I will take a closer look at the subject curriculum for Advanced English. I will focus on the parts where written production is explicitly referred to.

4.3 A closer look at L97, R94 and the Advanced English syllabus

In this section, I will give an overview of the structure of the English programme. I will briefly show the outlines of the composition from the beginning in elementary school, but my main focus will be on upper secondary school.

4.3.1 L97 – 10 year compulsory school overview

According to L97, English teaching starts in preschool. There are no concrete references to the exact number of hours English is supposed to consist of. Instead, the progression is divided into three parts. The curriculum also distinguishes between “subject-related objectives” and “main subject elements”. The former relates to the general skill aims, while the latter is more *syllabic* in nature, referring to the specific content the pupils should work with. The *primary stage* goes from preschool/grade 1 through grade 4. The subject-related objectives are:

Encountering the spoken and written language

Pupils should discover and experience the English language and develop their ability to understand it and express themselves in it. They should learn about life in English-speaking countries and begin to understand how they themselves can learn English.

L97, English, Subject-related objectives for the - Primary stage, grades 1-4

Furthermore, there are specific criteria that should be focused on in the syllabic part, such as which literary works and stories that should be used. This is in the “target-objective” tradition

⁵⁶ As mentioned in the previous section, Hovdenak 2000.

of the 90s curriculum reforms, meaning that the syllabus lists exactly what the pupils should learn, instead of drawing up what competence they should possess, like in LK06. It should be noted that pupils are expected to be able to express themselves in the language at such an early stage. This is important, since it sets the standard for the progression. The sooner pupils can express themselves clearly, the sooner they can start the task of progressing in the content of the language, the sooner they actively use it for academic purposes. It should be noted, however, that the requirements for written production at this point correspond with the knowledge telling term⁵⁷.

The next stage is the *intermediate academic stage*, from grade 5 through 7:

Using the language

Pupils should develop their ability to understand English and express themselves in English, to discover meanings in English texts, and to communicate in English.

Knowledge of the English language and culture and of one's own learning

Pupils should develop some insight into the language as interaction and as an expression of culture. They should learn about ways of life, traditions and customs in English-speaking countries. They should gradually develop insight into how they can work with the process of learning English.

L97, English, Subject-related objectives for the intermediate academic stage, grades 5–7

In the above aims, the conscious learning process is referred to for the first time. This is a natural development of the idea in the primary stage. The syllabic elements here are mostly focused on content learning (written works and pieces), but also on enhancing writing skills and communicative skills.

The final part of the L97 curriculum is called *Lower secondary stage*, grades 8-10, and the subject-related objectives are:

Using the language

Pupils should further develop their ability to communicate in spoken and written English in various situations.

⁵⁷ Sarah Weigle, as mentioned in 2.0.

Knowledge of the English language and culture and of one's own learning

Pupils should develop insight into the language as communication and as an expression of culture. They should learn about historical and current developments in English-speaking countries. They should develop insight into how they can work with the process of learning English, and become increasingly independent as users of the language

L97, English, Subject-related objectives for the Lower secondary stage, grades 8-10

Again, we see the main points being the further development of communicative, learning, and writing skills. This is the final stage before upper secondary school. Thus, ideally, the pupils who have attended lower secondary with EFL for three years should be adequately prepared for upper secondary.

4.3.2 R94 – Upper secondary – The English Foundation Course and the Advanced English course structure

In this section I will give a short general overview of the structure of the upper secondary level EFL today before looking more closely at the syllabus for references to academic writing. Unless explicitly stated, all references to the Advanced English syllabus means to R94 version.

Norwegian upper secondary school comprises the tenth to the 13th year of school, following primary⁵⁸ and lower secondary⁵⁹ school. The courses here can be compared to the A-level courses found in other countries. There are two main EFL courses in upper secondary school. The first is the Foundation Course that is obligatory to all pupils; the other is what will be referred to as the Advanced English course (AEc). The latter is an elective subject, which is split into two years. Pupils can choose to end the course before 3rd grade. The Foundation Course is considered to be a gatekeeper course⁶⁰, meaning that pupils must complete this course before they can take the step up to the Advanced Courses be it English or other subjects. In this thesis, I will operate under the assumption that pupils who go on to university to study English will have chosen and completed the Advanced English course in 3rd grade.

⁵⁸ 1st – 7th grade.

⁵⁹ 8th – 10th grade.

⁶⁰ A minimum requirement course.

This is because these pupils are more likely to be interested enough in English to want to study it at the highest level.

As we can read from the excerpt and table below, after the pupils have passed the Foundation Course, they have the option of taking two in-depth courses in their second year of upper secondary. One is considered more comprehensive and has five lessons a week (AA6070), while the other is more general and has three lessons a week (AA6071).

The Advanced English course is structured in the following way:

1.2 The structure of the study programme

The study programme is divided into English I and English II. Normally, pupils take English I, modules 1 and 2, in Advanced Course I and English II, alternative A or B, in Advanced Course II.

Pupils are free to choose between alternatives A and B, regardless of whether they attend the general or business area of study. In English II alternative A, a somewhat greater emphasis is placed on literary and cultural topics than in English II alternative B, which is more oriented towards financial topics and commercial English.

All pupils who take general studies are required to take a foreign language course of at least three hours per week either on Advanced Course I or on Advanced Course II. If English is chosen, this compulsory subject shall be English Module 1.

(English, Specialized Subjects in General and Business Studies, R94: 3)

For students who take the Advanced Course it means 5 lessons-per-week for three years as drawn up in the model below (as this thesis focuses on General Studies branch, I have not included any reference to the Vocational Studies branch):

Table 2 Overview of English courses on the General Studies according to the R94 guidelines. Compulsory courses are in bold type. Course codes indicate the examination number.

Level	General studies branch	
Grade 1	<p style="text-align: center;">English Foundation Course 5 lessons-per-week VG1200 (Compulsory)</p>	
Grade 2	<p style="text-align: center;">English 1 AA6070 5 lessons-per-week (Elective)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">General English course AA6071 3 lessons-per-week (Elective)</p>
Grade 3 or Supplementary Course class	<p style="text-align: center;">English 2 5 lessons-per-week (Alternatives A or B) AA6080 or AA6081 (Elective)</p>	

With consecutive 5 lesson-per-week courses over three years, there should be enough time and opportunity to raise the academic writing skill to university level. To clarify further, the teaching hours in the Advanced English syllabus are presented below:

Table 3 Overview of the distribution of tuition hours per subject in the Advanced English courses.

1.1 Distribution of tuition hours per subject

Modules	Hours per year	(average hours per week)
English I		
Module 1	112	3
Module 2	75	2
English II		
Alternative A	187	5
Alternative B	187	5

Note to appendix 1

The basis for the number of tuition hours is the total number of tuition hours per year. The average number of tuition hours per week is equal to the number of tuition hours per year divided by 38. Cf. the contract of employment, where it is laid down that teaching shall be arranged on 190 days of the year, divided into 38 weeks.*

- * Specially arranged courses for adults may be completed more rapidly (intensive courses). Training may also be extended over longer periods when this is needed by groups or by individual pupils.
(AEs: 10)

Again, it must be reiterated that this thesis assumes that the pupils who choose this specialisation will be the ones who continue with English at the university level.

4.4 Academic writing in the EFL syllabus

When we delve into the syllabus for “English, Specialized Subjects in General and Business Studies”, or Advanced English (hereafter called Advanced English syllabus, AEs), we find the following references to academic writing (I am highlighting the words I deem critical in this matter). All these aims are from the R94 AEs, and apart from the first excerpt below, all of these are for the 3rd grade AEC. In the common objectives, it says that the pupils are to:

- “**discuss** and comment on literary and non-fiction texts”,
- “use available literature and **reference works**”,
- “adopt a **critical** and creative approach to the matter that they study”,
- “**defend** their own opinions and **explain** their own choices”.

These are among the “common objectives”. The criteria correspond with some of the points from Björk and Räisänen⁶¹. However, further down in the document we find the following formulation: “3d - Carry out a written assignment based on one of these issues” (AEs: 5). There is no specific reference as to what type of written production this must be. These criteria are intended for the 2nd grade course, Videregående Kurs I/Advanced Course I (hereafter called VKI). The next criteria are from the 3rd grade course, VKII. Under the second objective of English II, alternative A, we find the following: “Pupils shall be able to understand and use written English confidently”, indicating that some of the following bullet points are to be put in context with writing. In the learning targets we see that the “pupils shall be able to”:

- 2c understand linguistic effects and textual structure
- 2d **discuss** topics concerning cultural and social conditions
- 2e **analyse** and **discuss** the form and content of literary texts

(AEs: 6, my highlighting)

⁶¹ From chapter two.

None of these learning targets seem to specifically refer to academic writing, but it should be noted that most of the criteria above could be attributed to academic writing. So in spite of being relevant as a general rule in dealing with writing, there are no explicit points referring to the academic article or academic writing.

Furthermore, objective 4 states that “Pupils shall be able to analyse and discuss a selection of literary texts from the English-speaking world and place them in terms of literature history”.

According to the learning targets, pupils shall also be able to:

4b orally and **in writing analyse** and **discuss** content, characters and topics and **explain** the use of literary techniques in a representative selection of texts from the period after the year 1900. (...)

(AEs: 7, my highlighting)

In this aim we see a clear reference to *discussion*, indicating that the pupils will have to see the topic from more than one side. As the discussion element is introduced, the knowledge transformation⁶² aspect comes into play for the first time. This thread is picked up again in alternative B, where the learning targets say that pupils are to:

2b be able to present and **assess** the circumstances of a case

2c be able to use **correct** and **appropriate English** in financial, commercial and formal **contexts**, for example different types of commercial correspondence, orders, reports, minutes and summaries

2d be able to understand and **discuss** contents and topics of literary texts and texts with financial, administrative and social content

(AEs: 8, my highlighting)

For the first time, the words and terms “assess”, “correct and appropriate English” and “contexts” are introduced. Also, this is the first place specific written genres the pupils are intended to master are mentioned. This is arguably the first sign of a knowledge transformation requirement.

⁶² Sarah Weigle, as mentioned in 2.1.

4.4.1 Short summary of findings of academic writing references

In this section I have reviewed the syllabus for Advanced English with the intention of finding references to academic writing. As stated in the beginning, the principal aims of the upper secondary education act (§2) clearly state that upper secondary is meant to prepare pupils for higher education. The R94 AEs is not clear when it comes to academic writing proficiency among pupils. Although there seems to be attempts at outlining advanced writing skills, academic writing does not appear to be emphasised at all, given the lacking in-depth description throughout the syllabus. Nonetheless, words like “discuss”, “analyse” “reference works” and “explain” give us some kind of indication on what is expected of the pupils.

The terms *article* or *academic writing* are not mentioned at all in the syllabus. In addition, as clearly displayed in this chapter, there are very few references to the points made in chapter one. For a curriculum and syllabus (R94) that is to prepare for higher education, the writing section seems to be underdeveloped, to put it mildly. This is surprising, but also reflects the point made in the introduction, where it is claimed that pupils coming out of upper secondary are not adequately prepared for higher education.

It would be reasonable to expect a number of the points mentioned in chapter two⁶³ of this thesis, meaning that the syllabus would give an outline of the genre we have called the intermediate academic paper. Instead, it seems we have to look elsewhere for clarification on the matter. This will be addressed in the chapters dealing with teachers, assessment and textbooks.

4.4.1 Methodical guide – overlooked?

It can be mentioned that there is a methodical guide for the English Foundation Course⁶⁴, a companion for a more direct approach to teaching the course. What is surprising about this is that it does not appear to be widely distributed. It is not explicitly mentioned in the syllabus document, and I stumbled upon it by chance, that is to say, a colleague who teaches English found it in a drawer. The guide is heavily process-based oriented and emphasises the social aspect of writing. It also emphasises that there should be a certain focus on reasoning, as well as logical and independent text production⁶⁵. Under a headline called “Grammar”, there are some very important points on discourse competence. It also mentions some very specific

⁶³ Academic Writing.

⁶⁴ *Metodisk Rettleiing, Grunnkurs engelsk* by Nasjonalt læremiddelsenter (1994).

⁶⁵ *Metodisk Rettleiing, Grunnkurs engelsk* (1994: 51)

discourse markers that pupils should master, such as “as a result, as a consequence, consequently, so since, as, because, one of the most important reasons why...., the main reason why..., despite, in spite of, however, yet, although, nevertheless, therefore, on the other hand” etc. It seems rather strange that this was not mentioned as a guideline in the syllabus instead. This is both interesting and relevant, and seems to correspond with the intermediate academic paper criteria listed in chapter 1.1.3. In any case, it is curious that such a detailed guide to the English syllabus was produced, apparently without being used. It is possible that including many of the features in the guide into the syllabus itself would have provided a clearer and more complete progression path towards more advanced writing for English pupils. On the other hand, ultimately, the guide is not formally a part of the syllabus, and any speculation on the matter could be construed as a moot point.

4.5 Assessment

An examination can be seen as an indirect implementation of the curriculum based on the *washback* effect. The washback effect is a term used to describe how exam results will affect teaching. Good or bad exam results could be seen as indications of the level of success teaching has had in conveying the aims in the curriculum to the pupils. For instance, bad exam results are likely to make the teacher revise planning and teaching the next year. Sara Weigle says that washback:

“can be positive or negative. Positive washback can be defined as any effect of a testing procedure that encourages teachers to adopt practices that are in line with the current best thinking in the field with respect to pedagogy. Negative washback is any effect of testing that leads teachers to practices which they feel are counterproductive, in terms of student learning, or which do not reflect the current thinking in the field.”

(Weigle 2002: 54)

Weigle, however, also points out in relation to this that washback is a “complex phenomenon”. Nonetheless, it is an important factor in assessing writing.

In accordance with the above mentioned thoughts on washback, the AEs states that:

“Assessment serves different purposes, e.g.: to motivate the teacher to continuously assess his or her teaching” (AEs: 10)

The assessment criteria also give the authorities an indication of how well the curriculum has been implemented at that particular school. Meaning that, ideally, if teaching has been according to the criteria in the curricula and syllabi, then the assessment should reveal that the objectives have been adequately met, and thus ensuring a high grade average. The following is taken from R94 AEs, assessment chapter:

The aim of assessment is to ensure that education and training comply with a national standard, so that we are sure of providing satisfactory and equivalent educational facilities for all. Assessment entails that the result of attending the course is assessed on the basis of the objectives set out in the curriculum.

(English, Specialized Subjects in General and Business Studies, R94: 10)

There is no specific mention of a written intermediate academic article assessment in the quote, apart from the final examination that will always include a written part, though that is not mentioned specifically in the AEs. There are recommendations for using work books, log books or journals as a part of the informal assessment. However, these are most likely to be in the form of notes, and are not likely to reflect much skill of intermediate academic article writing⁶⁶. Thus, academic writing seems to be overlooked in the assessment part as well.

4.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have given an overview of the structure of the English subject from preschool to VKII. The curricula and syllabi have been scrutinized in search of references to academic writing, or more importantly, the lack thereof. I have also looked at the curriculum from a larger perspective, as a political instrument. I have gone through some key definitions, such as the *washback* effect, *direct* and *indirect* effects of the curricula, *implementation* and the *hidden curriculum*. Finally, I had a look at the assessment details for the English course. Throughout, I have tried to tie in opinions and perspectives from people writing about this, such as Sivesind and Bachmann. The chapter is intended to create a theoretical background for discussion later.

What seems evident, though, is the fact that there are very few, if any, concrete references to academic writing instruction in the curricula and syllabi. The findings in this chapter show a

⁶⁶ See Björk and Räisänen, concept of writer-oriented writing, section 2.0.

lack of focus on academic writing that is somewhat startling, to the extent that it can be debated whether or not this course actually prepares pupils for higher education. If that is the case, then it is an oversight from the makers of the syllabus and might as well have affected pupils negatively. What it also means, is that in practice the quality of the writing instruction is left to the textbooks and the discretion of the teachers. This is rather surprising, and will be discussed further in the coming chapters dealing with textbooks and teachers. There is, however, a possible reconciling factor in all of this: the written exam. Formal assessment has, as mentioned, a substantial impact when it comes to determining whether or not pupils are adequately prepared for higher education. In chapter five, I will therefore examine a number of examination papers.

The R94 curriculum and the individual syllabi as a whole, have received a lot of criticism over the years for being too detailed and rigid, arguably leading to a devaluation of the teacher as a professional capacity. It might be perceived as ironic, then, that the part dealing with academic writing seems underdeveloped, leaving much of the academic writing instruction to the individual teacher. This is an interesting scenario and will be further investigated in chapter seven.

In the following chapter I will take a look at the textbooks based on the AEs. It is possible that the textbooks could alleviate some of the shortcomings of a somewhat vague syllabus as far as academic writing goes, and provide a clearer focus on academic writing instruction.

5.0 Textbooks

As seen in the previous chapter, the Advanced English course syllabus for Norwegian upper secondary school is rather vague with regard to drawing up expectations for the academic writing genre⁶⁷. Hence, much of the instruction is then likely to be conveyed through textbooks for teaching. In this chapter I will therefore look at a selection of Advanced English course textbooks to see how they deal with academic writing. More specifically, I will examine if they attempt to define the intermediate academic article genre and expectations, and if so, how the tasks dealing with academic writing are constructed. This will mainly be done by looking at the prefaces/introduction to get a sense of which direction the books will take, as well as examining the textbooks as a whole, with focus on the sections dealing with writing.

Many of the respondents in chapter seven, “The English teacher”, used the textbook “Tapestry”⁶⁸ and pointed out that it was quite good when it came to conveying academic writing. This is one of the books I will look closer at. For further selection criteria, please refer to the method chapter of this thesis⁶⁹.

The market for English textbooks in Norway over the past years has been dominated by three publishing houses, Aschehoug, Cappelen & Gyldendal. According to an internal overview from by Aschehoug, they have had the biggest share of the market, while Cappelen and Gyldendal have followed at second and third place. Based on these numbers, I have therefore chosen to take a closer look at the following English textbooks: *Impressions, New Perspectives* (both from Aschehoug), *Tapestry*⁷⁰, and finally *Bookmarks* (from major publisher Gyldendal⁷¹). All these works are VKII books, meaning that they are used in the final year of the Advanced English course⁷². They are also all intended for the alternative A variant. By surveying these four books I will have covered most of the market, and at the same time limited my data material. These VKII English A textbooks can be said to be

⁶⁷ As presented in section 4.4 of this thesis.

⁶⁸ <http://tapestry.cappelen.no/>.

⁶⁹ Section 3.3.

⁷⁰ <http://www.cappelendam.no/>.

⁷¹ <http://www.gyldendal.no/>.

⁷² See section 4.3.2 regarding the structure of the course.

predominantly concerned with literature, but they also contain substantial social- and cultural issues chapters.

As mentioned in section 3.4,⁷³ there is no mention of *academic writing* or *article* in the syllabus, but there are multiple references to *analysing* and *discussing* literature and social and cultural issues. In terms of this, it would be surprising if the textbooks would convey a more detailed approach to the writing itself. Of the four books I am looking at, only one is solely dedicated to social and cultural issues, *New Perspectives* by Aschehoug. This is meant to be a complement to the literary focused *Impressions*⁷⁴. *Bookmarks* by Gyldendal contain both fiction and non-fiction texts and deals with both classic English literature and social and cultural topics; this is also the case of *Tapestry* by Cappelen.

In the following section, I will examine these textbooks for any mention of academic writing. After giving a general overview of the textbooks, I will try to focus on the most relevant ones with regard to academic writing.

5.1 A quest for academic writing instruction in four VKII English textbooks – Forewords and prefaces

In this section I will start by looking at the forewords of the different textbooks, since the foreword often indicates what the authors wish to emphasise in the books. This is meant to function as an introduction before examining the rest of the textbook chapters. Again, it must be repeated that I will look for references to academic writing, using the list from the academic writing chapter of this thesis as a reference.

Most of the books focus on the reading of literature. The foreword to *Impressions*, in their “A Welcome to the reader” (Bårtvedt et al 2004: 4), is no exception. The term *literary analysis* is introduced in the second paragraph. It is also mentioned that one of the main points of “Part One - Working With Literature” is to provide the pupils “with ideas of how to write about literature” (Bårtvedt et al 2004: 4). The second to last paragraph of the introduction states that:

⁷³ Academic writing in the EFL syllabus.

⁷⁴ Though *Impressions* also has a few factual texts; mostly commenting on the literary periods.

We also hope that by understanding the craft behind good writing you will develop an awareness⁷⁵ of how the language works, with all its richness in genres, image and meanings.

(Bårtvedt et al 2004: 5)

This last quote can be interpreted in different ways. It could be argued that seeing how the focus of the book is mainly about fiction, the statement can be said to reflect that the authors' hope that the pupils will develop their language skills by reading the fiction literature. Thus the introduction does not give a clear emphasis on academic writing apart from the references to literary analysis.

Described in its own preface as “an all-in-one coursebook for the civilization component of the VK2A course” (Hasselgård et al 2000: 6), *New Perspectives* has a stronger focus on the non-fiction facets of the AEc. Among the concrete aims of the book, the following aspects have been listed: “increase your cultural awareness”, “increase your vocabulary”, “avoid the mistakes that are most typical of Norwegian learners, and generally improve your practical command of English” (Hasselgård et al 2000: 6). In addition to this, there is a mention of “listening material” (op.cit.). Among the things quoted in the preface, the development of vocabulary and the awareness around typical mistakes as well as a general improvement of the pupil's command of English can all be contributed to a writing perspective. Again there is no specific mention of writing, neither of the academic kind nor of the fiction-kind. Based on the wording in quotes like “improve your practical command of English”, it can be argued that the book is intended as a more orally focused complement to *Impressions*.

The preface to *Tapestry* refers to “written assignments” (Anthony et al 2003: 3) after the different sections. However, a highly relevant and interesting quote comes towards the end of the preface where the following is mentioned:

In the appendix at the end of the book we give guidance and practical tips to help you improve your communicative skills in written English. We have constructed these to meet the specific requirements of Goals 2b, 2c and 2d of the syllabus. Goal 2a is worked with throughout our book.

(Anthony et al 2003: 3)

⁷⁵ This is an actual spelling error in the textbook.

The quote is, of course, right on the spot when it comes to academic writing references, and makes *Tapestry* stand out from the rest in their explicit mention of this. I will return to *Tapestry* in further detail later in the chapter.

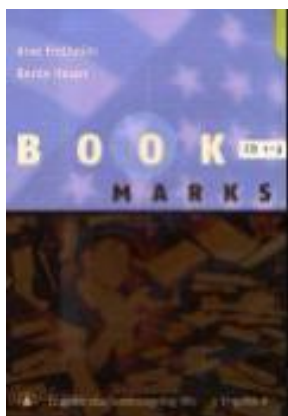
Bookmarks has a one page foreword where it is stressed that the book is an all-in-one textbook for the AEc (alt. A). In terms of academic writing, it is pointed out that the book contains, “step-by-step bookmark fact files and tasks . . . that will help you produce your own . . . written interpretations of the text” (Fretheim & Heitan 2003: 5). This is repeated towards the end of the preface where it is stated that the tasks in the book are intended to improve written communication skills.

To sum up, the prefaces of all four books have references to writing in English, but there seems to be some elusiveness with regard to specifying exactly what genre of writing will be emphasised. In terms of clarity, only *Tapestry* stands out in singling out the prominence of academic writing. This is one of the reasons why I will focus more on *Tapestry* than the other books further in this chapter. The tasks connected to academic writing will be analysed in the next section.

5.2 Texts and exercises dealing with academic writing

In this section I will take a closer look at the various tasks and assignments connected to academic writing in the four textbooks. Instead of giving a complete overview of every single task, I will focus on the most frequent ones, since they could be said to be descriptive of the majority of the tasks in the books.

5.2.1 Bookmarks



The authors of *Bookmarks* are Arve Fretheim and Bente Heian. The edition that is reviewed here is first issue of the first edition from 2003. The book is 399 pages long and has six main chapters further divided into sub-chapters. *Bookmarks* is referred to as “Fretheim & Heian 2003”.

To start off, *Bookmarks* stands out in this comparison by starting the textbook with the chapter “Introducing Literature – On Writing” (Fretheim & Heitan 2003: 11-13). In this short chapter, the majority of the text is written by American horror writer Stephen King, who, in his text, “On Writing” stresses the importance of reading a lot in order to become a good writer. Although there are valid points in this text, there is an unmistakable focus on reading and writing fiction, not academic writing. There is no trace of a focus on academic writing in the task section either. The same focus on fiction and writing reappears throughout the book after the fiction texts. Though there are many points referring to the content of a literary analysis, which can be considered an example where the use of the intermediate academic article is ideal, there is no concrete instruction on how to structure such a paper. On page 61, however, there is a task calling for the writing of an article called, “write it down”:

You have been asked by a literary magazine to write an article about a poem you like very much. Give an analysis of the poem and state why you have chosen this particular poem.

(Fretheim & Heitan 2003: 61)

However, there is not much substance to the task apart from the mere mention of the word “article”. It should be noted that the audience the text is intended for is not specified⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ Cf. Chapter 2 introduction (Feak & Swales).

In chapter 2 of *Bookmarks*, which deals with social issues, the tasks appear to be slightly more specific in their calling for academic article features. On page 70 there is a task called “Talk about it” that asks the pupil to “agree or disagree with these statements and explain your views”. If such a task is paired with the one on page 77⁷⁷ which invites to writing an article with a “critical angle”, then we start getting close to fulfilling several of the objectives outlined in section 2.4. Later in the chapter, the tasks get more interesting and much more relevant with regards to academic writing in higher education. There are two tasks about explaining and backing up statements by using examples and commenting on statistics. However, there is no instruction as to which register is best suited for these tasks, nor any of the other points from the intermediate academic article list outlined in chapter two of this thesis.

The tasks used throughout the whole book are built up around similar characteristics as those outlined in this section. When it comes to bigger and more specific tasks with relevance for writing, there is an excellent training exercise dealing with connecting paragraphs on page 98 in *Bookmarks*:

Write it down

Connecting paragraphs

Work in pairs. One of you focuses on positive aspects of the American health care system and drafts 2-3 paragraphs discussing one aspect in each paragraph, supporting your core statements with examples or explanations. The other focuses on negative aspects in 2-3 corresponding paragraphs. When you have finished, read your drafts out loud to each other and arrange all the paragraphs in the order you find most appropriate. Use suitable expressions from the list below to connect your paragraphs. These connectors need not necessarily be used as the opening words of the paragraph.

On the other hand – another point is that – what is more – however – moreover – although – nevertheless – furthermore – nevertheless

(Fretheim & Heitan 2003: 98)

⁷⁷ The task is called “Write it down”.

This task is one of the book's most direct attempts at helping pupils improve their academic writing skill. The task assists pupils in presenting their case in an objective, and exploring manner. Furthermore, the task echoes one of the main points from section 2.4: "The text must be cohesive and coherent, using argumentation to progress, such as pros and cons".

Another exercise that directly bolsters the concrete act of writing and speaking rhetorically⁷⁸ is a task on pages 176-177 that deals with the concept of emphasis. Even though the exercise is not solely designed for writing, it should nonetheless be useful for teaching pupils the subtle nuances of the art of rhetoric.

Work it out

Emphasising your point

A Listed below are various ways of adding emphasis to what you are saying or writing. Which of them are used in informal everyday speech, and which ones are mostly used in a formal style of speaking, such as a public speech?

1. *Inverted word order*: certain expressions with a negative or restrictive meaning can be put at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis, reversing the order of the subject and verb. Inversion can also take place with certain conditional sentences.

I had hardly glanced at the report before I was asked to comment on it.

Hardly had I glanced at the report, before. . .

2. *Use of what, who, where or it*:

The President's approval of the scheme is vital.

What is vital, is. . .

It⁷⁹ is the President's approval. . .

3. *Use of intensifiers*

I *greatly* admire the senator's *unflinching* attitude in this *crucial* matter.

B Restructure the following statements to make them more emphatic:

1. The country has never before faced such a crisis.
2. We must all realise that the way ahead is difficult.

⁷⁸ as discussed in section 2.3.1.

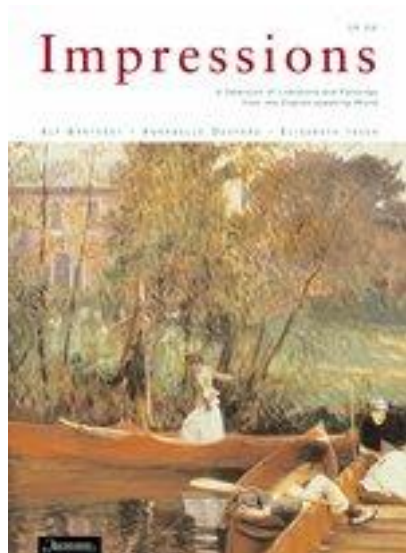
⁷⁹ Actual spelling error in the textbook.

3. The President put his foot down.
4. You only rarely meet a man of such integrity.
5. He did not only deceive his country, but he cheated on his wife as well.
6. I believe the people of this nation will face up to the challenge.

(Fretheim & Heitan 2003: 176-177)

This final example concludes the review of the relevant texts and exercises in *Bookmarks* by Gyldendal. There is no direct mention of any links to writing in higher education, nor is the academic writing genre properly sketched out as a whole. Though the exercises seem a bit scattered and unfocused at times, all in all, the sum of all the tasks outlines an approximation of many of the critical components in the intermediate academic article chapter⁸⁰.

5.2.2 Impressions



The authors of *Impressions* are Alf Bårtvedt, Annabelle Despard and Elisabeth Ibsen. The edition of *Impressions* that has been used in this thesis is the third issue of the second edition from 2004. *Impressions* is 294 pages long, and consists of three main parts divided into subsections. The first part deals with understanding literature, while the last two deal with literature before and after 1850. The book is referred to as “Bårtvedt et al 2004”.

Impressions is a textbook that deals almost exclusively with fiction. Overall, the book does not offer much insight into how to structure an intermediate academic paper apart from the topic contents of a literary paper. The most interesting part of the book, with regards to academic writing, is on pages 29-32. These pages comprise a step-by-step guide on how to write a literary analysis, which is well within the academic article genre. Perhaps most importantly, there is an explicit reference to a writing audience, as mentioned in Feak & Swales⁸¹. *Impressions* states:

A tricky point is whether you should expect a reader of your essay to know the story in advance. In an ordinary class situation, the teacher who will be marking your essay knows the text. In the exam you are normally told the context in which you are to work. Literary interpretations are usually written for an educated readership.

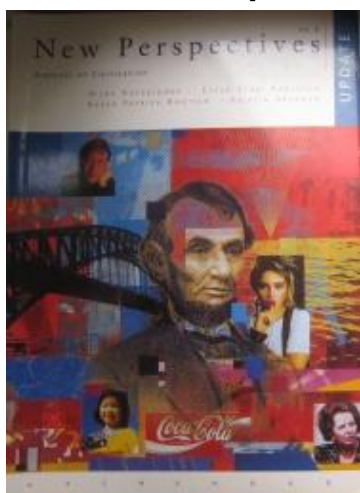
(Bårtvedt et al 2004: 29)

⁸⁰ Chapter 2

⁸¹ Chapter 2 introduction.

Knowing the audience you write for is, as mentioned, a key point when it comes to writing an intermediate academic paper. However, the quote also states that the pupil will normally be told about context and audience in an exam. As will be shown in the next chapter about examinations, this is not always the case. Nevertheless, the example text with instructions is a very good example of how to use a step-by-step guide when teaching pupils. Ultimately, though, *Impressions* contains next to nothing on academic writing instruction, but functions mostly as a text compilation with follow-up questions.

5.2.3 *New Perspectives*



The authors of *New Perspectives* are Hilde Hasselgård, Espen Strai Karlsson, Karen Patrick Knutsen and Kristin Årskaug. The edition that has been used in this thesis is the second issue of the first edition from 2000. *New Perspectives* has 360 pages and has four parts; the first and the last part deal with communication and other English-speaking countries. The main segments of the book are the middle parts which deal with the UK and the US respectively. These last chapters are further divided into subchapters. I will refer to this book as “Hasselgård et al 2000”.

New Perspectives, on the whole, could be argued to be mostly about promoting discussion among pupils, and thus complements *Impressions* from the same publisher in dealing with academic writing. Most of the tasks appear to be constructed to realise the syllabi’s goals for oral production in mind, both listening and speaking. The exercises that recur throughout the book are mainly in the categories: “Discussion”, “activities”, “language”, “cloze tests”⁸² and “listening comprehension”. However, there are some gems with regards to academic writing all through the book. Although there is no dedicated chapter dealing with academic writing tips, there are instead small fact boxes and exercises scattered throughout the book, seemingly independent of the preceding chapter with regard to topic. This is first encountered on page 48 where there is a whole page dedicated to paragraphs. Nearly the entire page is devoted to advice on how to construct paragraphs, and what their contents should be. The section is capped off by an assignment on the bottom of the page that says,

Now practise what you know about paragraph unity, paragraph completion and paragraph length, by writing at least four coherent paragraphs on one of the following topics . . . (Hasselgård et al 2000: 48)

⁸² “The Cloze test measures students' comprehension abilities by giving them a short text, with blanks where some of the words should be, and asking them to fill in the blanks. “ (http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/~mayer/fifth_dim_website/HTML/cloze_test/cloze_home.html) .

This information is very important when it comes to the pupils' understanding of what is expected of them in one aspect of academic writing⁸³. Able use of paragraphing means that the text will appear much more orderly and coherent to the reader. This point is undoubtedly a good example of one of the emphasised bullet points from section 2.4: "The text must be cohesive and coherent . . .".

The next step in the somewhat scattered⁸⁴ writing instruction part of *New Perspectives* appears on page 76 where the art of paraphrasing is emphasised. This characteristic is relevant to the academic writing genre in terms of promoting academic honesty, as mentioned in another bullet point from section 2.4: "Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works". In the textbox titled "Using Sources: How to Paraphrase" the following is outlined in the beginning:

Whenever we are dealing with a written assignment, we should always make sure that the sentences we use are our own. In many cases it may be natural or even necessary that we use other written sources (textbooks, encyclopaedias, newspaper articles etc) to find the information we need. However, it is important that we do not simply copy this information word for words, but rather try to *paraphrase it*, which means to express it in other words.

(Hasselgård et al 2000: 76)

The textbox then goes on to describe how to paraphrase correctly, partly by drawing up a five step method to help pupils improve. In order to avoid the sword of Damocles that is plagiarism, mastery of correct paraphrasing is absolutely critical to every academic writer that wants to be taken seriously.

The next topic dealing with academic writing comes on page 116. In "Essay Writing: Writing For or Against", the classic writing discussion⁸⁵ issue is brought up. The textbox has no concrete exercises accompanying it, but contains a step-by-step guide in showing the pupil how to conduct a written discussion within a paper. The introduction states that, "When we

⁸³ Though most would agree with the fact that the use of paragraphs is always important, no matter the genre.

⁸⁴ Meaning that the writing tasks are not focused in one area of the book, but rather are spread evenly out throughout the book.

⁸⁵ Many would claim that arguing for and against in a school paper may be the most fundamental focus for showing critical understanding of a topic.

write an essay where we need to argue for or against something, it may be useful to follow a few basic steps towards an effective organisation of the essay” (Hasselgård et al 2000: 116). The book then goes on to outline four basic steps the pupils may use when writing an academic paper. The first step includes terms such as “topic paragraph”⁸⁶, “catch the reader’s interest”, plus “define” and contextualise the topic. Neutrality is given emphasis in this section. The second step contains tips for showing which stand the pupil will be taking in the text. Examples of appropriate language are provided. The third step outlines taking opposing points of view into consideration and argue against them using objective, scientific language. The fourth and final step refers to the conclusion of the text where pupils are to summarise and present their findings in a logical manner. The textbox dealing with this topic reflects to a large extent the following bullet points from section 2.4 of this thesis:

- The language must be formal and objective
- The text is meant to illuminate, discuss and explore

Thus, the writing instruction in *New Perspectives* can be said to be right on track according to the aspects of academic writing from chapter two of this thesis. This is continued two pages later in the textbook. On page 118, there is a small textbox about “Complete and Incomplete Sentences”. It is described as:

. . . a group of words which expresses a statement, question or order. A complete sentence usually has at least a verb and a subject. When you write essays or other ”formal” piece of writing, you should always make sure that all your sentences are complete.

(Hasselgård et al 2000: 118)

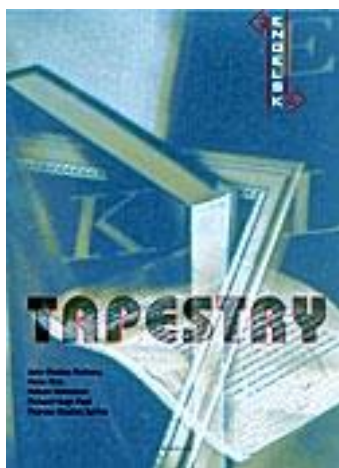
The introduction is superseded by two examples of complete and incomplete sentences. While it is very important to make sure that sentences are complete when writing in English, this point comes across as a little out of place. One could argue whether it is really necessary to tell 18-year-old pupils in their final year of upper secondary to remember to use complete sentences? Based on the previous advice for academic writing in *New Perspectives*, it seems a bit pedantic to actually mention this. The advice arguably could rather belong in a lower secondary textbook, or even in an elementary school textbook. On the other hand, this could

⁸⁶ Introducing and defining the main problem in the text.

also be a valid countermeasure against interference from Norwegian. Nevertheless, it is a reminder for pupils to make sure their language holds up in an academic context.

After the writing textbox on page 118, there is a departure from the topic which lasts for the duration of the book. So even though there is a good initiative from the authors of *New Perspectives* in dealing with academic writing, it ends up appearing a bit shallow with regards to the style and genre as a whole. The tasks are spread out through the first part of the textbook and may at times seem a little misplaced⁸⁷. Nonetheless, the advice given on the subject of academic writing is mostly relevant and shows a good implementation of the syllabic goals, vague as they may be⁸⁸.

5.2.4 *Tapestry*



The authors of *Tapestry* are John Charles Anthony, Karin Hals, Robert Mikkelsen, Richard Hugh Peel and Theresa Bowles Sørhus. The edition reviewed in this thesis is the first issue of the first edition⁸⁹ from 2003. It is noted that the textbook is tailored to meet the R94 aims as of 2001. The book has 480 pages and is divided into two main parts plus an appendix. The main parts are called “A Tapestry of the Past”, and “A Tapestry of Modern Times”. The appendix deals with writing skills. *Tapestry* is referred to as “Anthony et al 2003”.

The final textbook that will be reviewed in terms of academic writing is *Tapestry*. As pointed out previously, this book was mentioned by several of the interviewed teachers from chapter seven. In spite of this apparent popularity among the respondents, according to the numbers presented from Aschehoug it is not the most popular textbook when it comes to market share. Market share aside, *Tapestry* appears to have a similar focus on the general exercises used after the different chapters in the book as *New Perspectives*. They are to a large extent text reviewing activities, including i.e. vocabulary tasks and discussion. There are also some writing exercises, but few of these can be said to be within the intermediate academic article genre⁹⁰. These writing tasks often want pupils to mimic a specific written genre. Every so often, though, there are some writing tasks where the pupil is expected to write an essay on a

⁸⁷ Cf. The bit about complete sentences in the previous section.

⁸⁸ Cf. Chapter 3 about the lack of clarification around what is expected of the pupils when it comes to academic writing.

⁸⁹ There appears to be a discrepancy in *Tapestry* between the data in the sleeve of the book and the preface. The sleeve notes clearly indicate that this is a first issue of the first edition, yet in the preface, the authors speak of “this edition” as the second edition. I have not been able to clarify what this means, but it should not have a significant impact on the analysis of the book.

⁹⁰ For instance, on page 102 there is a writing task calling for pupils to write a continuation of a novel.

particular issue in a literary work. These are cases when using the intermediate academic article seems appropriate. However, there are no concrete instructions on exactly how this should be conducted. Keep in mind that the first half of *Tapestry* is dedicated to fiction literature the second half is dedicated to social issues. The writing assignments in the second half are mostly focused on discussion, asking pupils to defend or attack an opinion. As a sidenote, *Tapestry* seems to have most fleshed out tasks following the different chapters out of the four books studied here. There are also more options and more ways for the pupils to work with the text or topic after reading through a chapter. Yet, and in spite of this, there is no direct writing instruction spread throughout the book, as in *New Perspectives* for instance.

The reason for this apparent procrastination from the authors of *Tapestry* is that they have decided to gather all the writing instruction into an own appendix. This is called “Appendix: Writing Skills”. In the appendix, the various syllabic goals⁹¹ are being used as headlines and are extensively explained with, among others, a number of examples, and aphorism-like advice in small fact boxes. In a short introduction to the appendix, it is stated that:

The curriculum for this course demands that you, the student, continue to improve your communicative writing skills (see “Læreplan for 3 Engelsk A, Mål 2”)⁹². Of course, the main part of this book gives you loads of guidance and training in improving these skills. This is particularly the case with respect to goal 2a, which says that you must be able to write effectively about *literary* texts. This appendix therefore gives guidance and tips to help you achieve the other goals. They are 2b, which says you must be able to express your own point of view in a precise and discriminating way; 2c, which says you must be able to write coherent texts; and 2d, which says you must choose the style of language (called your linguistic register) that is appropriate for your genre and context.

(Anthony et al 2003: 468)

Again, this must be seen in relation to the bullet points listed up in reference to the intermediate academic paper in section 2.4 of this thesis:

⁹¹ From the R94 AES.

⁹² As explained in chapter 3.4 in this thesis.

- The language must be formal and objective
- The text is meant to illuminate, discuss and explore
- The text must be cohesive and coherent, using argumentation to progress, such as pros and cons
- Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works
- The text is valid in its attempt to answer the task at hand

There seems to be a concurrence between the points listed in 2.4 and the points mentioned in the introduction to the writing appendix in *Tapestry*. It is still important to bear in mind, however, that most curricular aims in a textbook will always be an interpretation from the authors' side. This fact might carry the implicit message that the curricular aims by themselves are rather vague, a notion previously explored in the chapter four of this thesis. It is important that we have the above bullet points in mind when going through the writing appendix in *Tapestry*. The appendix on writing is ten pages long, and I will now analyse the different sections that comprise the addendum. Where I can, I will also draw a line between the facets mentioned in *Tapestry*'s appendix and the academic writing chapter⁹³.

“How to Express Your Point of View (2b)” is the first section of the appendix. On a general basis, this can often prove a challenge to many novice writers in an academic setting because it is easy to come across as too categorical. *Tapestry* says that: “A great deal of what you write is intended to convince the reader that you have an important point to make.” (Anthony et al 2003: 468)⁹⁴. The section in *Tapestry* elaborates on the topic by stressing the importance of engaging the reader, a practice the authors cleverly carry out themselves in the chapter by drawing constant parallels to the pupils' lives. An example of this is seen in the following excerpt:

⁹³ Chapter two of this thesis.

⁹⁴ This must be seen in the light of the things mentioned in section 2.3.1 where B&R points out that rhetorical moves must be deployed to make the text appealing to the reader.

You do [this]⁹⁵ by arguing your case. You offer “a line of argument” keeping it within the framework of the chosen topic. For example, you letter of application for a job has a presentation of yourself and your qualifications as its framework. “You” are the topic! It might therefore be relevant to mention your hobbies in your letter. If you are applying for a job in a bookshop it would be sensible to point out that reading is one of your hobbies, if it is. You include this in the line of argument running through the letter, perhaps giving this information after you have listed your education and other formal qualifications. You do not, however, spend a paragraph writing about your brother’s or sister’s hobbies. That would be irrelevant. Information about them falls outside the framework you have constructed.

(Anthony et al 2003: 468)

The passage talks about relevance of ideas in a specific situation. This is significant within all non-fiction genres. The line of reasoning used in this excerpt is continued later in the section when talking about writing convincingly. A scenario is raised where the pupil is being challenged by another pupil on the fact that the US in fact has 52 states. It then draws up three counter-arguments and the pupil is called upon to find the most convincing one. Two of the arguments are based on hear-say while the third argument is based on an official folder published by the US Embassy stating that there are 50 states. So while all the counter-arguments claim that there are indeed only 50 states, only one of them does it in a convincing manner. The book goes on to explain *why* the third argument is the most convincing, and also why the other two are not. Following this, there is a concrete example from the literary world which is intended to teach the pupil how to apply the same logic in a literary analysis. Towards the end of the section on writing convincingly there is a little text box telling pupils to: “Use evidence to support your ideas. Refer to an appropriate authority. Work evidence and information into your line of argument.” This goes toward the bullet point⁹⁶ about academic integrity. The section ends with signposting to the next part which deals with coherence in writing.

The introduction in *Tapestry* to goal 2c⁹⁷ in the curriculum says that:

⁹⁵ That is appealing to the reader, appearing to have points that shed light on a particular issue.

⁹⁶ From the second chapter of this thesis: “Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works”.

⁹⁷ “understand linguistic effects and textual structure”. For a more detailed description, refer to chapter four of this thesis.

“A good piece of writing is organised so that it is coherent, making it easy for a reader to follow its line of argument. If you write in a chaotic or haphazard way, your readers will lose their way, and not understand what you are trying to say⁹⁸

(Anthony et al 2003: 472)

A number of points are mentioned throughout this section dealing with coherence. There are three bullet points listed initially. The first one specifies that the pupil must always keep focus on the question(s) that have been asked⁹⁹. The second states that there must be clarity about whether the pupil is attacking or defending an argument, or simply just have an objective discussion. The last bullet point in the introduction refers to length. This point immediately seems a little vague, and no additional detail is given. However, it becomes clear when reading through the rest of the section that the point stresses the importance of planning and proper execution to make sure that the text becomes well balanced.¹⁰⁰ The section then goes on to deal with finding a topic (if the pupil is asked to come up with his own), and planning in general.

Next, the term “strategy” is used when talking about planning a paper. A step-by-step guide is presented and there is a suggestion for a possible outline for the pupil to use when planning. The segment ends with a textbox emphasising that, “Careful planning increases your coherence, and makes your writing more effective” (Anthony et al 2003: 473). By saying this, the authors of *Tapestry* also come back to the initial idea of coherence in the curriculum and thus making it a highly valid summary statement. The section on coherence does not end there, though. There is also a more detailed guide to the writing process that follows the planning stage.

The next section within the coherence section deals with the execution of the planning stage. This part takes up roughly a page all in all, but is very central in many regards. The interesting thing about this section is that it lists a “not-to-do” which, as mentioned in the introduction, I encountered many times as a student in higher education myself. It is in many ways a large

⁹⁸ While it seems like an epitome of irony, there is actually a spelling error/typo, so that the “to” is missing from the sentence in the textbook.

⁹⁹ Thesis question

¹⁰⁰ Meaning that, for instance, the introduction does not go on for 50% of the paper, or that the discussion part is left out etc.

part of the reason I chose to write about this topic in my thesis. In the guide on how to write, there is a paragraph dealing with the first paragraph of the paper. It says the following:

The first paragraph should not be too long, and should not start giving any sort of extra information. (For example, do not start giving a biography of the writer¹⁰¹.) This first paragraph is simply an introduction. It shows a map of the topic, and signposts the route your line of argument is going to take. The very first sentence is often difficult to write, and you should not worry if you find it difficult to make it “appealing”.

(Anthony et al 2003: 473)

The highlighted part of the above paragraph sums up the experience I had when I started to study English at the university level, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis¹⁰². Apparently, *Tapestry* tries to alleviate the situation.

The guide is quite detailed, and should make a formidable ally both to the teachers and the pupils in conveying academic writing skills. After giving advice on everything from the first paragraph to the conclusion, there is a type of summary in a small fact box: “Good paragraph discipline is important. Show that you are in control of your writing. Make your line of argument clear, and try to hold you reader’s interest” (Anthony et al 2003: 474). The section dealing with curricular aim 2c dealing with coherency ends with several concrete examples of text binders or transitional phrases¹⁰³ and when to use them. The segment is summed up in a textbox stating that, “Linking-words give a flow to your writing, and they help your reader to follow your line of argument.” Yet again, the authors make the connection to the initial intention of the section when rounding off.

The last part of the writing appendix in *Tapestry* deals with curricular aim 2d, and is called “Choosing Your Genre and Adapting Your Language”. Here we touch upon some debatable observations in what otherwise appears like a balanced and well thought of writing guide. The section goes beyond just the intermediate academic article focus, and lists the need for

¹⁰¹ My highlighting.

¹⁰² That students were not sufficiently prepared for higher education after completing the AEC in upper secondary school, in spite of the curriculum explicitly stating this.

¹⁰³ “. . . remember that while transitions describe relationships between ideas, they do not automatically create relationships between ideas for your reader. Use transitions with enough context in a sentence or paragraph to make the relationships clear.” <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/trans1.html> .

knowledge on when to use the different literary genres. However, the main focus of this thesis is on the article genre, so I will mainly deal with the points regarding that genre.

Apart from some general advice on choosing genre, the following is said about the article genre: "... an *article* can be anything from a light-hearted newspaper column for a Saturday morning newspaper to a serious article demanding close reading,. ...". While the impression so far has been that the authors have had an intermediate scientific/academic article in mind when they have written the previous sections, they seem to blur the issue to some extent here. It seems like an odd choice of words, considering the fact that the genre they have gone to great lengths to explore earlier would need clarification most of all at this point. Hopefully, pupils are able to distinguish the different meanings of the term "article", and will not get confused over the apparent oversight in not mentioning the academic article. In any case, guide gets somewhat back on track when it is stated that the writers need to think of the "audience or readership" (Anthony et al 2003: 475), and also the context in which the text will be read.

Furthermore, nearing the end of the appendix of *Tapestry* the significance of choosing the appropriate style, language and register is illustrated in a lively way:

Imagine you are in a dangerous situation where you are being hunted by desperate criminals. You are in a small room with your partner who is a man of action, a Bruce Willies¹⁰⁴ type, more than a man of words. You think here in this room you are safe, at least for the moment. But then, suddenly, you catch sight of an arm sneaking out of a closet. Your partner has his back to the closet, and does not see the arm, or the hand on the end of the arm that is gripping a large hunting knife with a serrated edge; the kind of knife that can do quick, major damage. How do you warn you partner? Would you say, "I think perhaps, all things being considered, that we should extricate ourselves from this precarious situation with all haste as danger is most certainly developing just beyond your right shoulder?" Or would you simply should: "Behind you! Move your butt!

(Anthony et al 2003: 475-6)

¹⁰⁴ (My footnote) Again a small typo from the authors, the name is Willis.

Apart from the fact that the example illustrates a good point, it is even more interesting that it has likely been conveyed like that to reach the pupils more effectively. The text continues by supplying more examples of register adapted to fit specific situations.

The final points of the appendix deal with what English variant should be used. It is pointed out that there are several varieties, but Standard English is recommended on the basis that it is, “generally used by professional English speakers and writers” (Anthony et al 2003: 476). Emphasis is also put on avoiding contractions in standardised written English, meaning that the pupil should write for instance “you are” instead of “you’re”, and “going to” instead of “gonna”. In what has become almost a trademark “punchline” for *Tapestry* to this point, the appendix ends with the following: “Writing, like talking, is fun, and is important. Language is indeed a tapestry” (Anthony et al 2003: 477).

Once more, there appears to be a harmony between some of the aspects brought up in the academic writing chapter in this thesis, B&R’s thoughts on the matter, and finally, perhaps most entertainingly, put by Anthony et al in *Tapestry*. In fact, the whole appendix section has an underlying humorous approach. This is most likely used as a means to connect with the pupils. There is probably little doubt that many pupils in upper secondary find the aspect of academic writing boring to read about. However, there might be a downside to the witty style used in this part of *Tapestry*, and that is that the pupils might get the idea that they are to adapt the same style when writing in an academic setting themselves. Academic pitfalls aside, the main points put forwards in the appendix, correspond to a great deal with what has been mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis. It seems that the teachers that were interviewed in chapter seven of this thesis applauded this textbook for a reason.

Tapestry is without a doubt the winner with regards to academic writing instruction of the four candidates reviewed in this chapter. It quite simply has the most focus on academic writing instruction, and is not afraid to consider considerable space on it. This could be because *Tapestry* with its 480 pages is significantly longer than the other books, and that the authors decided to devote more pages to the syllabus goals they thought were important¹⁰⁵. As mentioned already, this will be detailed in the teacher interviews chapter, *Tapestry* was heralded by most of the respondents as particularly good on academic writing, and therefore a

¹⁰⁵ In this case, the goals dealing with academic writing, as outlined in the syllabus review chapter of this thesis.

subsequent favourite. In the next section I will summarise and conclude the chapter on textbooks.

5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have analysed the four textbooks with the largest market share in Norway the past few years with the aim to find out how they conveyed the curricular aims about academic writing. As was pointed out in chapter three of this thesis, the Advanced English syllabus has shortcomings in outlining criteria for academic writing in the Advanced English course. This led me to believe that task of conveying academic writing instruction to the pupils was delegated to teachers and textbooks (and to a lesser extent, examinations). The textbooks have different ways of dealing with this, and some, such as *Impressions*, have almost not dealt with it at all¹⁰⁶.

Impressions from Aschehoug turned out to be somewhat disappointing in conveying academic writing instruction. The one strength *Impressions* has is that it makes the reader aware of the concept of writing for an educated audience. *New Perspectives* is probably intended to complement *Impressions*, and one would therefore expect it to flesh out the details about academic writing more, as it was lacking in *Impressions*. How to make paragraphs, use sources and discussion in a text are *New Perspectives*' strengths. However, the book deals with these things in a rather haphazard way by scattering textboxes with academic writing tips throughout the book instead of presenting it in a more unified manner, such as the writing appendix in *Tapestry*. Even though *Bookmarks* does not mention academic writing explicitly, it does contain some references to aspects of academic writing. The two most obvious traces of this were segments on connecting paragraphs and learning how to put emphasis on the right points in a paper. Even though *New Perspectives* and *Bookmarks* show moments of grandeur, *Tapestry* leaves them in the dust with its dedicated section on writing in an academic setting. Going straight to the source, which is the AEs in this case, *Tapestry* ups the ante and manages to clarify and explain the importance of academic writing, and does so in an entertaining manner, highly likely to appeal to pupils. Perhaps some of the moments in the guide should be incorporated into a future AEs, or perhaps it could become an official guideline, complementing the syllabus. In any case, many of the issues dealing with conveying academic writing instruction are illustrated nicely in *Tapestry*. One could therefore probably conclude

¹⁰⁶ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is little to no academic writing instruction in *Impressions*.

with the fact that textbooks can be vital with regards to conveying academic writing instruction, and be just as instrumental as the teachers when the syllabus fails.

In the next chapter I will look at examinations before I will continue with the teacher interviews in chapter seven.

6.0 Examination papers

In this chapter I look at AEC examinations, two from 2005 and two from 2007¹⁰⁷. I will give an overview of the assignments given and the criteria of what is to be expected of the pupils. As usual, I will focus on the matters related to academic writing. Throughout this, we must keep in mind some of the intermediate academic paper criteria drawn up in chapter two:

- The language must be formal and objective
- The text is meant to illuminate, discuss and explore.
- The text must be cohesive and coherent, using argumentation to progress, such as pros and cons
- Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works.
- Is the text valid in its attempt to answer the task at hand?

The official information that is enclosed in the instruction sections of all of these examinations says the following about assessment:

You are to answer both tasks. In the first task, you can choose between topic a), b) and c). The topics are open-ended and can be solved in more ways than one. It is up to you to choose the point of departure for your answer. The important thing is that you utilise your knowledge and skills. The assessment will take most consideration into

- to what extent relevant syllabus criteria have been met
- precision, clarity and accuracy of language in the answers

It is the written response as a whole that counts in the end. Extensive and independent responses will be rewarded.

Official English exam. AA6082/83. 3 English alt. A/B, June 3rd, 2005 – Assessment guide

6.1 Advanced English examinations 2005

The English examinations are from the advanced English, alternative A course: AA6082 (this is the equivalent of the AA6080 course mentioned in Table 1), and advanced English,

¹⁰⁷ There is one exam for each of the alternatives listed in chapter two, VKII Alt. A & B.

alternative B course: AA6083 (equivalent of the AA6081 course). I will start by looking at the two examinations from 2005.

6.1.1 Advanced English, alt. A exam 2005

The first exam is from June 3rd 2005. The Exam in English, alternative A (AA6082), has two sections, which in turn are divided into three topic questions. The pupils are expected to write a text based on one of the three topics for each section, so that they will end up with two texts. In section one; the pupils are given three topic choices, all of them dealing with Great Britain's position in the world today. The topic choices are designed so that in the first section, the pupils will have to comment on society issues in the English speaking world, and in the second section they are to analyse English literature. In other words, the first section has a non-fiction approach, while the second section is centred on fiction. Here is an excerpt of the first section/task. I have translated the heading from Norwegian.

TASK 1

(See "Appendix 1")

Choose one of the tasks below:

a) "Your problem," I once overheard Margaret Thatcher say to a group of Latin American Ministers, "is that you were not colonised by the British." I do not recall their response, and in any case, it took some time to think of one. Our former Prime Minister was happy to argue with gusto that the British Empire had done a great deal of good. William Hague, Mail on Sunday, January 26, 2003

Give your response to the statement above in an article on one or more aspects of the British Empire.

Give your text a suitable title.

b) Britain used to be one of the greatest world powers but has long since been surpassed by the United States in terms of social, political and economic impact on the world.

Write an article in which you describe how and why this shift in world supremacy took place.

Give your text a suitable title.

c) *Write a text with the title "The United Kingdom's position in the world today", in which you discuss this topic.*

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. A, June 3rd, 2005 – Section 1

As we can see, there are three topic choices here. Two (a and b) of them calls for an article, and the last one (c) asks for an unspecified text. Please note that in spite of not asking for an article, the task still lists topic discussion as the main criteria, arguably making the article genre ideal as the vehicle for discussion.

The second section has the following topic list (again, I have translated the heading):

Task 2

(See “Appendix 2”)

The First World War has been described as Britain's 'Vietnam', during which the true horror of war touched everyone and everything in the country. There may be no area of human experience that has generated a wider range of powerful feelings than war. The examples of war poetry in “Appendix 2” echo some of these feelings.

Choose one of the tasks below:

a) *Compare the two poems, paying special attention to how they contribute to your understanding of war.*

Give your text a suitable title.

b) *Use the poem “Back” as a point of departure for a text of your own choice on the horrors of war written from a different perspective than that of the soldier.*

Give your text a suitable title.

c) *Give an interpretation of a literary work (novel/play) from after 1970 and discuss how and why it appeals/does not appeal to you.*

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. A, June 3rd, 2005 – Section 2

The structure seems to be the same as in section one. It should be noted that none of the topics ask for articles, but unspecified texts. However, the vocabulary used here reflects the syllabus criteria with words and phrases like “compare”, “give an interpretation”, and “discuss”.

There can be little doubt that the tasks in this exam will be well answered in the form of an intermediate academic article¹⁰⁸. The tasks and topics in the English alt. A-exam might just as well have been used for papers in lower levels of higher education.

6.1.2 Advanced English, alt. B exam 2005

The alternative B exam is more social studies oriented than the alternative A exam, and this is reflected particularly in the first section. The assessment guidelines are the same as in section

A:

Task 1

(See “Appendix 1”)

Choose one of the tasks below:

a) In a speech to the Confederation of British Industry on migration, 27 April 2004, Prime Minister Tony Blair talked about a diverse Britain where immigrants had contributed much

¹⁰⁸ Cf criteria listed in section 2.4 of this thesis.

to the diversity of British communities. He said: "Britain as a whole is immeasurably richer – and – not just economically – for the contribution that migrants have made to our society".

Write an article in which you comment on this statement.

Give your text a suitable title.

b) Since May 2004, immigrants from the new EU countries have been crossing borders to the UK. Many arguments in immigration debates focus on the benefits and drawbacks, and on the rights and responsibilities of people crossing borders. Those in favour argue that immigration is essential, while those against see it as a threat.

You have just received an email from a 19-year-old friend in London saying that "...international borders are wrong in this day and age, altogether we have to learn to accept immigrants from all countries ...", and asking what your view is.

Write an answer to your friend.

Official English exam. AA6083. 3 English alt. B, June 3rd, 2005 – Section 1

The main difference from the alt. A-exam, is that the alt. B exam only has two topic questions instead of three. As mentioned earlier, there is also clearly a stronger emphasis on politics.

Task 2

Choose one of the tasks below:

a) *Give a presentation of a short story from the English-speaking world.*

Explain why it appeals to you or (why it does not appeal to you) and why you think (or do not think) young people in general would enjoy reading it.

b) The author of the poem "Picnic on the Lawn" ("Vedlegg 2") has said that "the best poetry is rooted in the human experience" and that "poetry is about love, hate, longing and despair".

Write a letter to the author commenting on whether you think this poem is about "love, hate, longing and despair".

Official English exam. AA6083. 3 English alt. B, June 3rd, 2005 – Section 2

Unlike the alt. A exam, this exam has fewer topics to choose from, and the written response genres are not as unilateral as alt. A. In this exam, two of the topics call for responses formed as letters/emails. Terms used to indicate what response is expected of the various topics include "article", "comment", "answer", "explain why" and ". . .letter to the author

commenting. . .”. One could argue whether or not it is likely that students in higher education would be asked to write letters as a form of assessment. Thus, it may be regarded as not all that valid with regards to the curricular paramount objective of preparing pupils for higher education.

6.2 Advanced English examinations 2007

This exam set is from November 30, 2007. The assessment criteria are the same as in the previous section.

6.2.1 Advanced English, alt. A exam 2007

This is the alternative A exam from 2007. Again, parts of the instructions have been translated to English by me.

Task 1

Choose a) or b).

a)

Based on “Ole Hansen’s Observations of the USA” (Appendix 1), write a text in which you discuss whether the quote from the American National Anthem, “The Land of the Free and Home of the Brave”, gives a true picture of today’s USA.

b)

Ole Hansen (Appendix 1) has been asked to give a speech to his fellow students. Use your knowledge of American society and Ole Hansen’s observations to write his speech called “A True American”.

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. A, November 30th, 2007 – Section 1

As we can see, the number of questions in section 1 of the alternative A exam has been reduced to two since 2005. Another observation is that the specific written response imperative is more integrated into the tasks this time around. The first topic is calling for the pupils to write an unspecified text about the current validity of the American National Anthem. The pupils are instructed to discuss the topic, which might implicitly be regarded as asking for an article. The second topic is asking for the pupil to write a speech for a peer. The topics clearly deal with culture based options.

In the second task, again we see that the 2007 exam has reduced the number of topic options to two, from three in 2005.

Task 2

Choose a) or b).

a)

Give an interpretation of the short story "21" (Appendix 2).

b)

Using the short story "21" (Appendix 2) as a starting point, write a text with the title "What We Choose is What We Are".

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. A, November 30th, 2007 – Section 2

Obviously more literary influenced than the first section, the section 2 options want pupils to either interpret a short story, or write an unspecified text based on the short story. The first option is doubtlessly the text most pupils are likely to encounter in English studies at higher education, the traditional analysis of a literary work. Consequently, it might be regarded as being most useful in terms of preparation for higher education. The second option arguably asks the pupil to write a fiction text, a genre which is hardly used at all in higher education, thereby arguably decreasing the topic's validity when looking ahead. On the other hand, the second option could be interpreted in another way, and might as well be answered in the form of an article.

6.2.2 Advanced English, alt. B exam 2007

Task 1

The Selbu Mitten and Voss Still Water (Appendix 1) are two examples of many special Norwegian products. As a sales manager for a company selling Norwegian products you want to expand the market and increase sales in the USA.

Using today's date and the names and addresses below, write a letter to the American company Scandinavian Design. In your letter introduce your marketing and sales ideas and ask the company to promote and sell your products. You should try to stress the cultural as well as the business aspects of introducing a new Norwegian product in the USA. Enclose a description of your chosen product.

Your name and address:

Kari/Ola Jensen
Nordmannsgate 78
0102 OSLO

The recipient's name and address:

Scandinavian Design
910 East Lake Street
MN55417 MINNEAPOLIS

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. B, November 30th, 2007 – Section 1

The first task of the first section of the alt. B exam is of a more untraditional nature in its design, and the first impression we get is how much more practical it appears in relation to the previous tasks. The task calls for the pupil to construct a letter which is to promote a product line for a Norwegian company in the U.S. The topic, albeit interesting and practical, is probably too situational to provide any validity for higher education when it comes to English studies. It should be mentioned, however, that it might be much more suitable for pupils looking to attend marketing education at a higher level.

Section 2 has a more familiar shape, echoing the features from earlier in contrast to section 1.

Task 2

Choose either a) or b).

a) *Based on the short story "21" (Vedlegg 2) write an article in which you analyse what kind of society the main character is living in.*

b) *Using the short story "21" (Vedlegg 2) as a starting point write a text with the title "What We Choose is What We Are".*

Official English exam. AA6082. 3 English alt. B, November 30th, 2007 – Section 2

The first topic option is the first of all the options in the 2007 exam explicitly asks for an article. Then again, the topic seems to be bordering towards a more traditional analysis, though with a stronger society perspective than the alt. A versions of the topic. Interestingly enough, topic option B is identical to the alt. A version. It could be that one might expect a different type of written response here, though, with a more social studies-based answer, making it the non-fiction alternative to its alt. A counterpart.

6.3 Chapter summary

When taking the criteria for an intermediate academic article in section 2.4 in the beginning of the chapter into consideration, it is debatable whether or not the tasks in the 2005 and 2007 examinations will reveal the full potential of the pupils' capacity for academic writing. Nevertheless, in spite of the questions being quite open at times, it could be argued that pupils are required implicitly to answer in the intermediate academic article genre. Indeed, quite often it seems that this genre appears to be the ideal vehicle for answering the topics.

Examinations in the AEC are twofold; on the one hand, the pupils are tested in the content of the course as far as topics go, on the other hand, they are also tested to see how they cope with choosing the correct genre when responding to the tasks, as well as show mastery of that genre¹⁰⁹. There is much to be said about examinations, but the aim of this thesis is to focus on academic writing. Perhaps more clarity is needed, though, in order to have tasks that reveal

¹⁰⁹ For instance, in form of style and structure.

the academic writing skill level of the pupils. This is a matter of construct *validity*¹¹⁰. Do the examinations really serve as valid assessments of whether or not the pupils are prepared for higher education? It seems like the examinations appear a bit out of focus in the bigger picture. In addition to this, the instructions the candidates are given before the exam could be said to be a bit underdeveloped. In order to increase the validity of the examination, why not have more concrete references to the parts of the syllabus they are expected to master? An answer to that could be that the exam situation is too tense for the pupils to be able to reflect on more detailed instructions,

Content-wise, the majority of the questions seem to be focused on issues that the pupils are likely to encounter in higher English education, namely literary analysis and social issues.

¹¹⁰ Outlined in chapter three of this thesis. Does the examination test what it is supposed to test?

7.0 The English teacher

Having looked at the influences on academic writing in the form of curriculum and syllabus, textbooks and examinations, I will now focus on the last piece of the puzzle that is academic writing instruction in this chapter; the English teacher.

As mentioned in the curricula and syllabi chapter, the English teacher has considerable influence on academic writing instruction; first and foremost because there are very few concrete writing instructions in the R94 syllabus. This means that it is up to the teacher to decide how to conduct the teaching of writing¹¹¹ English¹¹². As mentioned in chapter 2, the *Metodisk Rettleiing, Engelsk grunnkurs* (Methodical guide for the English Foundation Course) does provide some degree of direction, though one cannot assume that all English teachers in upper secondary have read it. Thus, much responsibility is put on the shoulders of the teacher with regard to meeting the curricular goal of preparing upper secondary pupils for higher education¹¹³. A critical question that needs to be asked in this regard is whether or not there is actually a need for a strong outline of academic writing in the syllabus. Will concrete syllabic goals for academic writing actually lead to a more streamlined system? Will the writing instruction become easier for the teacher, or will it constrain both the teacher and pupils too much to develop a foundation for writing in higher education?

In the following sections, I will give an outline of the interview questions, explain the criteria for choosing the respondents, and present anonymised profiles of the respondents. I will also, of course, present the answers and ultimately look closer at these and comment on them. There were two things in particular that really caught my interest, which I will come back to later in the chapter in sections 7.1.4 and 7.1.9.

7.1 The interviews

Much of the information about the procedures involved in this chapter is detailed and outlined in chapter three, and will be repeated here briefly. The interview questions were sent in writing by email a few days before I rang up the respondents for a conversation¹¹⁴. I decided to use a qualitative approach rather than quantitative approach because of time constraints. As

¹¹¹ In this chapter, I will refer to writing a lot. This is intended to encompass the “academic writing” term as well.

¹¹² The other factors are, as previously mentioned, textbooks and examinations.

¹¹³ Ref: 2.0 Curricula & EFL syllabi, *UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT § 2 PRINCIPAL AIMS*.

¹¹⁴ All interviews were conducted by telephone due to time restraints, and the fact that the respondents were from all over Norway.

mentioned in the method and research design chapter of this thesis, the six respondents I interviewed were from different parts of Norway, and of both genders. Two have a non-Norwegian background. The answers have been translated to English, and the respondents have been anonymised. This will be elaborated on in the next section.

This section comprises subsections dealing with each question, and I will draw in verbatim quotes for references. I will include longer quoted passages at various points, since some of the respondents came up with longer lines of reasoning. Some of the questions might be brought together for simplicity.

The questions I used are listed below:

1. What is your name?
 - a. What is your English teaching background?
2. How aware are you of the basic goal of the R94 curriculum stating that pupils should be prepared for higher education after upper secondary?
3. What are your thoughts on academic writing?
 - a. How do you see the genre expectations being conveyed to the pupils?
 - i. Do you see this as primarily your responsibility as a teacher?
 - ii. What about textbooks and examinations?
4. Do you actively work with your Advanced English pupils on this?
5. Do you feel Advanced English pupils are prepared for the challenges of academic writing in higher education, such as universities, by the time they have completed the AE course?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding this matter?

7.1.1 English teaching background

The questions here were a) “What is your name?”, and b) “What is your English teaching background?”.

In this section I will give a presentation of the respondents. All are currently, or have recently been, teaching the Advanced English course in 3rd grade of upper secondary school here in Norway. As mentioned earlier, the respondents were picked from different parts of Norway

and are both male and female. I found them by consulting my thesis supervisor and via colleagues. They all work in general studies upper secondary schools. I have given the anonymous respondents aliases.

One of the female respondents is originally from England and had a formal teacher's education from a college there. When she came to Norway she got a cand.mag. degree from the University of Oslo. She has taught English in upper secondary at all levels in Northern Norway for over 20 years, but is set to retire sometime over the next few years. She will be called Janet from now on.

Another female respondent is from Russia and has a master's degree in pedagogy from a Russian university. After she came to Norway she got a master's degree in English from the University of Oslo. She has been teaching general studies and IB¹¹⁵ English at an upper secondary school in Oslo for the last five years. I will refer to her as Olga from now on.

The third female respondent is Norwegian and has lived in Norway for most of her life, but also has substantial experience from both German and Norwegian universities and school systems. She has been teaching in Norwegian upper secondary school since 1994, and currently works in one of the larger upper secondary schools in the Oslo area. She has taught 3rd year AEC for two years now. From here on out I will call her Emma.

One of the male respondents is Norwegian and has an intermediate level English degree from a Norwegian University. He has taught both general studies and IB English in different parts of Norway since 1969. He currently works for an upper secondary school in Trondheim, Norway that offers both IB and general studies. During the interview, he remarked that he had extensive experience as an external examiner for the AEC and offered some very interesting insights into this. I will come back to this in the appropriate section. He will be called Sven from here on.

The second male respondent is Norwegian and has a Master's degree in English and a Bachelor's degree in Physics from the University in Bergen, Norway. He has a slightly different subject background than the other respondents with his science subjects (Physics

¹¹⁵ International Baccalaureate (<http://www.ibo.org/>). An international pre-university level educational programme offered in select upper secondary schools all over the world.

etc.), and pointed out some interesting observations between writing in literary courses and sciences courses. He has worked in upper secondary for five years and the AEc course for three years. He currently works for an upper secondary school in Bergen. He will be called Thomas from this point.

The last male respondent is from Northern Norway and also has his English degree from the University of Bergen, Norway. He also has an ample amount of experience from IT¹¹⁶, and chose English because of his love for English literature. He has worked for the last four years in Tromsø, Norway with three of those years spent with the AEc; two of them were at the 3rd grade. What makes him stand out is the fact that he became so dismayed with the wages in the Norwegian school system that he left for a better paid job as an IT consultant last spring. I will refer to him as Stig from now on.

7.1.2 Awareness of the R94 curriculum - preparation for higher education

The question was: “How aware are you of the basic goal of the R94 curriculum stating that pupils should be prepared for higher education after upper secondary?”. The question is meant to be an indicator of the macro perspective of teaching in upper secondary with the intention of making the connection to academic writing after this. This way the respondents are meant to get a sense of the importance of academic writing since it is a large part of higher education, and hopefully that will enable them to keep the link between upper secondary and higher education throughout the interview.

It should be noted many respondents answered the question 6.1.2 with a direct link to question 6.1.5 (“Do you actively work with your Advanced English pupils on this [academic writing]?”), where they elaborated their views.

The answers to 6.1.2 question varied somewhat. Two respondents said that they are very conscious about preparing the pupils for higher education on a general level. Two of the respondents referred to a kind of washback effect¹¹⁷ saying that this¹¹⁸ particular curricular goal directly influenced their teaching of academic writing. One of the respondents, Emma, further elaborated on this saying that she was very aware of the washback effect from the

¹¹⁶ Information Technology – In this case mostly programming computer code.

¹¹⁷ Section 4.5.

¹¹⁸ Being prepared for higher education.

examinations and used it to focus her writing instruction. I will look closer at Emma's thoughts on this, and more, later in the chapter. Stig simply commented on this question by answering "I guess I am aware of it, but it doesn't seem very thought-through in the implementation [i.e. the R94 syllabus]¹¹⁹." Olga dryly remarked that she was "aware, but not thanks to the syllabus". In other words, Stig and Olga shared views on the syllabic influence on academic writing instruction in R94.

Thomas thought about the awareness question for a minute, and replied,

I am aware of it, but it's not something I think many teachers constantly reflect on. Of course we're doing our best to prepare the pupils for what comes after upper secondary. In the short term view, it's a matter of trying to get the pupils to learn more of the content side of the course, such as literature and views on the English speaking world.

It is worthwhile to note the reflections on the struggle to convey the content of the course. Thomas was the only one to openly mention this. Janet said that she had some trouble with being conscious about the goal because she felt the syllabus is very unclear when it comes to this. When I asked her to clarify, she replied that the syllabus does not necessarily take into account the fact that some pupils do not intend to take higher education. Her sentiments were that she would like more room for the teaching of practical writing for those interested in English, but not at an educational level. Keep in mind that she works at a general studies school, not vocational studies. This was an interesting comment, and I intend to refer back to this statement in section 7.1.9 in relation to something Sven said.

7.1.3 Thoughts on academic writing and genre expectations

The main question in this section was: "What are your thoughts on academic writing?" with follow-up questions being: "How do you see the genre expectations being conveyed to the pupils?", "Do you see this as primarily your responsibility as a teacher?" and "What about textbooks and examinations?"

¹¹⁹ My comment in brackets.

These questions needed some clarifications from my part¹²⁰, but most of the respondents quickly caught on and gave details on their opinion on academic writing. Though some were somewhat superficial in their answer, just stating that it was very important, I got the impression that most of the respondents knew a good deal about this¹²¹. The fact that two of the respondents did not answer very thoroughly in the beginning could be seen as a certain lack of awareness of what the term means, or what I meant by the term.

Thomas from Bergen remarked that:

First of all, the term in itself¹²² may come across as a bit boring for the pupils, but it's important to understand the concept. I think many of the pupils will master this to a greater degree through their Norwegian course. There is simply not enough time for us to do spend on something that is not explicitly mentioned in the syllabus.

In other words, Thomas' statement could be seen as criticism of the R94 syllabus not dealing with academic writing as thoroughly as he thinks it should. This reflects some of my own thoughts on the matter, and I partially expected some of the respondents would say this. It should also be noted that Thomas draws a link to the Norwegian course, which is obligatory for all pupils for all three years of upper secondary.

Another interesting quote comes from Stig, the teacher who ultimately decided to leave his job to go back to work in the IT sector as a programmer and consultant:

What got me hooked on academic writing was when I was studying and working part time with IT for a few years. I worked as an assistant programmer for an IT-consultant and got to see the process from writing the code to implementing it with the customer. Often the instructions and explanations were so vague from the programmer's side, that he or she were the only ones who were actually able to figure out how it was all connected. I figured that if people are able to write in a way that conveys a clear message to the recipient, then we could be doubly efficient as a company because we

¹²⁰ Mainly on what comprises the term "academic writing". The respondents were then asked to reply what they felt it was, and then I said what my thoughts were. In the end, all respondents agreed to the definitions presented in the "Academic writing" chapter.

¹²¹ See previous footnote.

¹²² The term being "academic writing".

didn't have to spend half our time on the phone with the IT guys at the customer's. I figured the same thing would apply to my pupils when I started working in the upper secondary. So I set out with the mission that they would always be mindful about the fact that other people were going to read what they wrote, so they had to make sure the message was as objective and clear as possible. The way I see it, academic writing is the only way to do this properly.

This was one of the most concrete examples of “real life washback”¹²³ I came across in my interviews, but it shows a fascinating insight from someone who has traversed both the literary and IT world. It can also be seen as a direct reference to Feak and Swales in chapter two in their observations on expectations and audience in academic writing¹²⁴, though Stig had not heard of them before.

In response to the question about the teacher's role in academic writing, Olga said that it is, “undoubtedly her responsibility” as a teacher to see to that the genre expectations are properly conveyed to the pupils. She also stated that, “academic writing is highly necessary, especially when it comes to text analysis”, and that, “the only way to get this done properly is to do it over and over again.”

The Oslo-based teacher, Emma, went into detail when it came to genre expectations. She listed the following as critical components of academic writing: clear sense of structure and organisation (introduction, discussion (with examples), conclusion), correct use of paragraphs, use of academic terms (depending on the topic, important to use lyrical terms when analysing poetry for instance), and finally correctly listing sources. Instead of listing this as part of the interview survey, I have decided to split the discussion on it into its own five-paragraph essay-subsection, which comes next.

7.1.4 The five-paragraph essay

Emma also introduced something very interesting, which needs to be seen in relation to section 7.1.6 dealing with the practical, active work on academic writing. She told me that at her school they had been using the “five-paragraph essay” with great success. The five-

¹²³ Meaning that the respondent drew upon real life experience and let it directly influence the teaching.

¹²⁴ *Academic writing for graduate students* (2004).

paragraph essay¹²⁵ used at her school was a concept developed in-house at the upper secondary school she is working at, though the concept has been reported to originate in the U.S. during the fifties¹²⁶. The concept in itself was not originally conceived at her school, but they have attempted to take it a step further, perfect it and use it at the baseline level of all English writing. At the most basic level the five-paragraph essay is an upper secondary threshold writing template that consists of one introductory paragraph meant to draw in the reader, three body paragraphs, each one containing an argument starting with the strongest one, and one final paragraph that ties all the previous paragraphs together and tries to conclude. The respondent reported that they had used this with great success at her upper secondary school. She also explicitly mentioned that the necessity for such a model had arisen because of scarcity of concrete writing instruction in the syllabus.

I will come back to the five-paragraph essay in the conclusion.

7.1.5 Ranking the influences on academic writing

The question is: “How would you rank the influences on academic writing towards pupils: teachers, textbooks, exams and syllabus on the pupils?” This was intended to get a perspective on how the various influences I have gone through in this thesis are evaluated by the respondents. In other words, the respondents were to place teachers, textbooks, examinations and syllabus on a scale from one to four, where one is the most important and four is the least important. After all, the teachers interviewed are intended to represent the ones who work with this on a daily basis. Many of the respondents are also able to draw upon their vast professional experience from upper secondary for answers. I expected to see the respondents rank teachers first, but after that, I expected more randomness in the following ranks because the teachers have had different personal experiences in dealing with academic writing.

All six respondents ranked the teacher first when asked to position how important the various influences on writing instruction are. Most placed the textbooks second, apart from one respondent who felt that the examinations had the second most impact on writing instruction. This was the same respondent who used the five-paragraph essay, Emma, and she also stressed the importance of washback. All of the respondents ranked the syllabus third in

¹²⁵ There are numerous references to the five-paragraph-essay on the internet. For instance here: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/five_par.htm .

¹²⁶ I have not been able to find a reliable source for backing up this, just speculation. However, it is not of critical importance to the understanding of the matter.

importance, stating that it is too vague to be higher up on the list, but at the same time, the document is so crucial to the whole system that it cannot be ranked last. Finally, everyone ranked examinations last, except for Emma, who thought textbooks had the least impact on the teaching of academic writing.

Interestingly, Sven, who had the most teaching experience among the respondents said explicitly: “The exams do not seem to have a significant effect on this [academic writing instruction]¹²⁷.” This is a little surprising considering the fact that he also had most experience as an external examiner of written English examinations. In lieu of this role, he also divulged some rather interesting observations on geographical scores on the exams. I will come back to this and explain it in section 7.1.9 of this chapter.

As mentioned in the textbooks chapter, many teachers also brought up that the book *Tapestry* was often used, and that it had a considerable focus on academic writing instruction.

7.1.6 Active work with academic writing

The question was: “Do you actively work with your Advanced English pupils on this [academic writing]¹²⁸?”. This was a direct question to get concrete feedback on how the respondents conduct their writing instruction. I was not sure what to expect from this, but I anticipated that some would address time limitations. In addition to this, I could not even be sure that all respondents prioritised it.

Most of the respondents claimed that they spent much time on academic writing instruction, but were faced with various obstacles. Factors that worked against actively working on academic writing in the classroom were first and foremost time constraints; on the one hand the length of the school year, on the other the sheer amount of topics on the syllabus.

The respondent with an English background, Janet, said that her class used the intermediate academic paper¹²⁹ most actively when analysing literature. She also remarked that pupils improved noticeably after having their work corrected and handed back¹³⁰. However, she lamented that part of the class consisted of pupils not being properly motivated for the course

¹²⁷ My brackets.

¹²⁸ My brackets.

¹²⁹ Section 2.4.

¹³⁰ This could probably be viewed as some kind of washback effect.

(i.e. only taking it to make their schedules add up). Some had severe language problems and were therefore to a very small degree susceptible to writing instruction in any form. It should be noted that Janet works at what is considered an elite upper secondary school in the area¹³¹. This statement, along with what I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, and Sven's comments on examinations will be returned to in section 7.1.8.

Thomas, the one respondent that did not immediately reveal how his pupils worked, openly admitted that: "The pupils learn to express themselves orally in an academic/objective way, and this is something they can easily transfer over to written English and other subjects, such as the scientific ones."

Stig, who worked in Tromsø, simply stated something along the line of: ". . . the focus is mainly on getting important points across to other people. This is done best within the frame of academic writing.", and thus backed up his previous statement from section 7.1.3 where he talked about the communicative writing challenges he faced as a programmer.

The respondent with the clearest views about working with writing instruction on a daily basis was Emma, with her use of the five-paragraph essay – perhaps the most concrete system for English academic writing instruction. Though, she also confessed that the method made the pupils most ready when it came to the structure bit. She elaborated that it might indicate that with the stress of implementing the five-paragraph essay model, the pupils could come out lacking on the content bit. This problem has been previously discussed by several scholars, and will be further addressed in the discussion chapter.

7.1.7 Pupils prepared for higher education?

The question asked in this section was: "Do you feel Advanced English pupils are prepared for the challenges of academic writing in higher education, such as universities, by the time they have completed the AE course?" The question was intended to be confrontational to provoke a thought process with the respondents by suggesting personal accountability. I did not expect all respondents to reply positively to this question, and also I thought that those who had been conscious of the washback effect would be able to answer best.

¹³¹ Northern Norway.

Rather surprisingly, all of the respondents asserted that if the pupils had followed the course and worked at a steady pace, they were ready for academic writing in higher education. Two of the respondents remarked that some pupils were never able to make the jump from knowledge telling to knowledge transformation¹³², and thus would have a harder time adjusting to the next level. Sven observed that: “Many pupils learn most of what is being taught, but some pupils just seem to never be able to rise above the knowledge telling level.” It sounds like a reasonable assessment considering the skills of many pupils.

Olga pointed out that the time constraints prohibited them from making the pupils as ready as they could potentially be.

Stig from Tromsø said: “Hmm. I think that depends on what they decide to study, but mainly I think they will be able to adjust swiftly with the background from my course.”, This could support my theory about the intermediate academic paper in upper secondary evolving into the more expansive academic paper in higher education. There is, however, one huge drawback when it comes to this observation. What concrete washback from the university level to upper secondary, if any, is presented to teachers in upper secondary¹³³? This is quite a critical question, and I will come back to it in the chapter conclusion.

7.1.8 Final thoughts – open question

As the final question in the interview, I asked “Is there anything else you would like to add regarding this matter?” This is by far the most open question, and was intended to invite further thoughts on the topic that was not covered in the previous questions. I also wanted to use this question to come back to topics that might have been introduced previously in the interview, but did not necessarily fit under any of the questions.

My intention with this open question meant to allow the respondents to talk freely on the subject. However, most of the respondents felt they had mentioned the most important points already. Nonetheless, there were a few interesting final thoughts. One of them was that the new Norwegian curriculum and syllabus, LK06, seemed to be a vast improvement when it

¹³² Section 2.1.

¹³³ Meaning that the teachers in upper secondary will get some sort of feedback from their former pupils (or their lecturers) who are now in higher education.

comes to English writing instruction. Stig remarked, “The LK06 seems like a good idea right now. It will be interesting to see how it turns out when those who have studied under this curriculum for three years take the step up to higher education.” Emma shared the sentiment.

Janet from England remarked that the R94 syllabus seemed flawed in its design because it did not take into account the span between pupils in the AEc. I will use this statement as a bridge to the next section, geographical differences.

7.1.9 Geographical differences?

During the interviews with Janet and Sven, it became apparent to me that many of the things they said were connected. Bear in mind that Janet was the only respondent to bemoan the “pupil material”. At first I interpreted it as an elegiac statement for a teacher approaching the end of her career, but gradually it dawned on me that she could actually be commenting on factual differences in geography when it comes to academic writing in upper secondary.

Sven, the respondent with the most experience under his belt, revealed that over the years as an external examiner he had come across some apparent geographical differences in the AEc examinations. He said that overall there were few differences between the various areas of Norway. However, one region that often stood out in a negative way with many poor examination papers was Northern Norway. I am from that region myself and half-wondered if he was jesting first, but he then went on to tell me how the results were consistently poorer from the Northern parts of Norway. When I later interviewed Janet and she told me the things mentioned in the above paragraph, I had to ask if Sven’s observations could actually be accurate. Unfortunately, we may never truly know the answer to that question, as there are no officially released statistics dealing with this. Nonetheless, the reflection is interesting and opens for another mesh in the complicated web of academic writing instruction and examinations.

7.2 Chapter summary

The interviews seem to further strengthen the idea that the R94 syllabus does not sufficiently describe what academic writing is, or how it can best be conveyed. In spite of this, all of the respondents seemed to have a clear view of what academic writing is, the importance of it, and how it should be conveyed. Again, this underlines the previous suspicions that the teachers could be seen as the most important factor in English academic writing instruction.

Nevertheless, one of the most interesting answers from this interview chapter was the one where the teachers ranked the various influences on academic writing. According to the majority, the teacher is most important influence, then the textbooks, with the syllabus second to last, capped off by the examinations.

In the beginning of this chapter, I asked the following question:

Will concrete syllabus reference points for writing actually lead to a more streamlined system where the writing instruction becomes easier for the teacher, or will it constrain both the teacher and pupils too much to develop a foundation for writing in higher education?

The answers showed that academic writing is undoubtedly a focal point for many AEC teachers in Norway. At the same time it is said to be severely under-developed in the R94 syllabus, which leads to demanding more personal concentration from the teachers on it.

In the next chapter, I will look at the results of my findings from the teachers, textbooks, examinations and the syllabus and discuss them.

8.0 Discussion

In this chapter I will start by summarising my findings on the topic of academic writing. Next, I will discuss the validity of the findings¹³⁴, and third, discuss my findings. It should be noted that some discussion has taken place throughout the different chapters, but they will mostly be readdressed in the latter part of this chapter.

This thesis set out to investigate whether or not EFL academic writing instruction in upper secondary school effectively helps pupils develop academic writing skills that will enable them to make the transition to higher education. One of the critical points that should be emphasised when dealing with this topic is that the Norwegian Core Curriculum clearly states that upper secondary school is to *prepare* pupils for *higher education*. It thus sets an unmistakable precedence for the different syllabi: When pupils are done with 13 years of elementary-, lower- and upper secondary school, according to the curriculum, they are supposed to be prepared for the challenges they will face in higher education.

8.1 The road towards the intermediate academic paper

Having glanced quickly at the syllabus for EFL in upper secondary, both the basic course and the advanced courses, I discovered that there was little concrete mention of academic writing. This discovery did not only partially confirm my scepticism, but inspired me to look elsewhere for criteria that could help narrow down a definition of what an academic paper is. I focused on assembling a list of criteria for an intermediate academic paper based on the theory from B&R, Weigle, Paltridge and Grabe and Kaplan, as well as my own experiences as both an EFL student and an EFL teacher. This was because I wanted to narrow down a clear definition of the intermediate academic paper for the subsequent analyses of syllabi, textbooks, examinations and teacher interviews. Though the list could have been longer, it ended up with the following five criteria:

- The language must be formal and objective
- The text is meant to illuminate, discuss and explore
- The text must be cohesive and coherent, using argumentation to progress, such as pros and cons

¹³⁴ Outside of those given in the Method and Research design chapter of this thesis.

- Academic integrity to the extent that references are cited and thus the writer not plagiarising existing works
- The text is valid in its attempt to answer the task at hand

These criteria functioned as a definition of the intermediate academic article that I used in my analysis.

8.2 Method

In my thesis I examined the things that make up the triptych of everyday life in school: the curricula and syllabi as official guiding documents, the textbooks as interpretations and elaborations of these documents and finally the teacher as the connector and implementer between the two. Examinations should arguably also be a part of this, as it is the final assessment check that shows whether or not the pupils have learnt what they should have.

8.3 Curricula and syllabi chapter

In this chapter, I started by analysing the general LK97 and R94 curricula that cover lower secondary school and upper secondary school respectively, with the purpose of finding references to academic writing instruction. I used the list describing the intermediate academic article from section 2.4 in my review. I then focused on the Advanced English syllabus to see how it treated the matter of academic writing, as this is the syllabus that pupils go through last before making the transition to higher education. What I found was that the curricula and syllabi seemed to neglect the importance of academic writing. Even though there were several points on writing, these were rather vague and left much in the hands of textbooks and teachers when it comes to fleshing it out and making it concrete.

I also looked at the direct and indirect effects of the curriculum, using an article from Sivesind and Bachmann about what the curriculum can and cannot do. In addition to this, I explored the term *washback* in an attempt to outline the importance of examinations on EFL instruction, indicating that final examinations of AEC pupils could reveal flaws or strengths with the course. Those findings could then be used to make changes to the course in the following year in order to strengthen the weaknesses that may have been revealed. This was a point I came back to in my examinations paper chapter.

8.4 Textbooks and Examinations chapters

In these two chapters I applied the list of criteria from section 2.4 of the thesis when going through four different textbooks and four different examination papers. The goal of the analysis was to find concrete references to academic writing instruction. More specifically, how did the four most sold textbooks interpret the syllabic criteria dealing with academic writing? As has been shown frequently throughout this thesis, clear requirements with regard to academic writing instruction are nowhere to be found in the Advance English syllabi, and thus it is up to the authors of textbooks and teachers to elaborate and convey this. What I found was that each textbook had treated the topic differently. Though the textbook *Impressions* had a good and relevant point about the audience of a paper, it did not mention academic writing at all. Its counterpart, *New Perspectives*, had slightly more substance with regards to discussion within a paper. *Bookmarks* had some similarities with *New Perspectives*, but was slightly more focused in its academic writing instruction, though it cannot be called satisfactory. *Tapestry* was the last book reviewed, and proved to be critically relevant to this thesis with its own writing appendix. Even though all four textbooks dealt with academic writing instruction to some extent, *Tapestry* stood out as a solid victor among the four with a detailed and handily crafted writing appendix.

The four examination papers for the Advanced English course I examined all called for two tasks to be answered. The first one seemed to have a non-fiction approach, ideally suited for an intermediate academic article response. The second task was usually designed to have the pupils write a longer text of some description, often based on existing literature. In the 2007 papers, there were fewer alternatives to choose from in the tasks, and the papers seemed to be clearer and more precise in what they asked the pupils for. Out of all the 16 tasks spread across the four papers, three of these tasks specifically called for an article.

What could be concluded from these examination papers was that even though they tried to make the pupils answer in genres they would be comfortable with, such as e-mails, or writing a speech, these genres are not likely to be re-encountered in higher education.

8.5 Teacher interviews summary

The teacher interviews chapter was intended to serve as a connection to the everyday school-life after the analyses of the curricula and syllabi, textbooks and examinations. The vague

instructions on academic writing in the aforementioned guidelines from the authorities put much of the responsibility on the shoulders of the textbook writers and on the EFL teachers. At the end of the day the teacher remained the master implementer of the syllabus towards the pupils.

The criteria for the selection of the six interview respondents are outlined in the method and research design chapter as well as the teacher interviews chapter itself. The convenience sample of subjects was small, but the six respondents gave similar answers and ranked the influences on academic writing instruction in the same way. All of them saw the teacher as the most important factor in conveying academic writing instruction in the classroom. The majority of the respondents then ranked textbooks, syllabus and examinations in places two to four.

In fact, the teacher interviews confirmed my suspicions about the state of academic writing instructions. Many of them also pointed out *Tapestry* as the leading textbook in terms of dealing with academic writing. The semi-structured interview form also led to some interesting stories about the current status for EFL teachers, and fascinating insight was provided dealing with topics ranging from geographical differences in final EFL examinations to concrete ways of academic writing instruction, such as the five-paragraph essay. Most of the teachers expressed that the AEs was far too vague on the topic of academic writing instruction, and that they would like it to be clearer. Their main point was that the teachers ultimately end up having to compensate for the vague specification of academic writing criteria in the syllabus.

The limitation of the teacher interviews chapter is that the sample was small and it has limited external validity. However, the respondents were often in agreement, and the answers mostly corresponded with many of my findings in the thesis. It is assumed that even with a much broader selection of teacher respondents, I would therefore get similar results.

8.6 Discussion

In the following sections I will bring some of the main points together from the previous chapters for discussion. I will also, as mentioned in the introduction of chapter eight, look at some possible solution. I will also look at some of the topics that are not directly connected to academic writing instruction, but still influence it in some way, for instance the washback phenomenon.

8.6.1 Problems in defining the intermediate academic article

In section 2.2 of this thesis, the following question was asked: How can a syllabus make formal requirements about genres, when they cannot be defined once and for all? First of all, the thing that struck me in the beginning of writing this thesis was that it was very hard to find a concrete definition of academic writing, or more specifically, an intermediate academic article. The mere fact that I had to compile a list of criteria myself could be considered a testament to the failure of creating clarity in the syllabus. As said in the second chapter dealing with academic writing, whole books have been written on the topic, yet they seem to fail to outline a definitive set of criteria for academic writing or the academic article. This comes across as very strange since academic writing is an important aspect of learning and research in most of the higher educational institutions in the world. A possible answer to this comes from Björk and Räisänen in their book *Academic Writing*:

(...) there are no inherent, original-or natural-criteria for any genre; the criteria are culturally determined. This means that the characteristics of a specific genre are defined by the conventions agreed upon by the writing communities within each genre is used.

(B&R 1997: 19)

If we are to hold on to this approach, it means that there will never be a universally accepted set of criteria that can constitute an academic article genre, neither at higher education level nor at upper secondary school level. At the same time, we must ask ourselves whether this doctrine can be challenged or not. Is academic writing really so different around the world, so that it is impossible to come up with a finite list of principles? The question could be considered as being beyond the scope of this thesis, as the thesis focuses on the Norwegian system. Yet it is important in this day and age with regards to the flow of information to think

on a global scale as well. Nevertheless, as described in the introduction, this thesis will concentrate on Norway. Most teachers in upper secondary school can probably give you the answer to how an intermediate academic article should look. Why then, has it been so difficult to formalise this in the syllabus? As previously shown in the curricula and syllabi chapter, the LK97 and R94 curricula are by many considered to be too detailed and thus devaluing the teacher as an authority on knowledge. Nevertheless, it appears that academic writing instruction has been severely neglected even though the overall aim of the curriculum is to prepare pupils for higher education, and higher education is heavily based on academic text production. Furthermore, this leads to quite a conundrum when it comes to assessment. How can the pupils really be tested in something their curricula has not communicated clearly enough? At some point, perhaps there should have been a review where weaknesses such as the issue with academic writing instruction were brought up and alleviated. It should be mentioned, however, that while I worked on this thesis the R94 and LK97 curricula were discontinued and a new curriculum has taken their place, the LK06. This is something I will come back to in the conclusion.

In other words, the initial idea that there seems to be a gap between upper secondary school and higher education with regards to academic writing seems to hold water. This appears to be due to the curricula and AEs¹³⁵ undercommunicating the importance of academic writing instruction.

8.6.2 Regarding examinations

The examinations chapter was intended to almost be an extension of chapter four, curricula and syllabi, since the final examinations are an instrument for the authorities to see how well the syllabus has been implemented at the individual schools. To put it bluntly, the pupils are expected to pass the final examination if they have attended the Advanced English course. It is also of vital importance to emphasise that we have to keep the superior core curricular goal in mind as well: pupils are expected to be prepared for higher education after having attended upper secondary school. In the chapter conclusion, it is argued that the validity of the final examinations could be improved if more concrete references to the writing parts of the Advanced English syllabus were included in the introductory guide to the tasks. In fact, it is debatable whether or not the examinations succeed in what they are supposed to do. After all,

¹³⁵ Advanced English syllabus

is it fair to ask pupils to solve tasks in a way that is not properly outlined in the curricula and syllabi? As with the AEs, the AEC examinations need more clarity. To be abundantly clear here, academic writing is undercommunicated in the AEs, and it is therefore close to impossible to test this consistently in the final examinations. The question is then whether or not the core curriculum fails on the critical point of preparing pupils for higher education. This could arguably be because the authorities feel that it is more natural that pupils get this writing preparation within the Norwegian course which runs over three years. It is highly likely that pupils are better prepared through the teaching of Norwegian, which is an obligatory three year course¹³⁶, but this should not lead to Advanced English pupils being neglected.

8.6.3 Additional thoughts on washback

The fact that the respondents from the teachers interview chapter¹³⁷ ranked examinations last in importance for the teaching of academic writing should be regarded as alarming for the proponents of the washback theory. Perhaps we are looking at the wrong kind of washback, and that the most important feedback, or washback would come from higher education? However, what procedures are in place to give feedback to the teachers in upper secondary on how their former pupils perform in higher education? At the moment, there is no washback apart from examination results at the end of third grade. It would seem evident to assume that feedback given from former upper secondary pupils writing in universities, for instance, to their old teachers would be immensely valuable for developing new strategies or methods for writing instruction. A system with improved contact between higher and upper secondary education where this feedback is organised and utilised could probably help validate and solidify academic writing instruction in upper secondary more than examination washback ever will.

8.6.3 The textbooks' challenges

As explored in chapter five, the differences in quality of academic writing instruction vary quite a lot between the four textbooks analysed. This must be seen in the light of the directions from the guiding documents that the textbooks interpret. One can hardly accuse *Impressions*, *New Perspectives* or *Bookmarks* for being inconsistent in dealing with academic

¹³⁶ As opposed to Advanced English which is an elective subject.

¹³⁷ Chapter seven.

writing instruction. After all, the AEs does not provide them with a lot of material on the topic. What this ultimately means, is that it is left to the textbook authors to decide whether or not they should go the extra mile to ensure quality with regard to academic writing. In fact, it can be argued that academic writing instruction in textbooks is no longer a question of interpretation of the syllabus, but instead one of compensation. The authors end up with having to fill a space neglected in the syllabus. My analysis showed that only one out of four textbooks did so; *Tapestry*, though it is important to mention that the other books have done nothing wrong. They have simply focused on conveying the syllabus such as it is.

In the end what this means, is that if the curricula and syllabi cannot properly convey the expectations for academic writing¹³⁸, the examinations will have a hard time in consistently assessing this. Furthermore, there is no particular reason for the textbook authors to put much emphasis on academic writing instruction since it is not accentuated neither by syllabus nor examinations. This leaves most of the burden of conveying academic writing to the pupils by the teacher.

8.6.4 The teacher as a conveyor of academic writing

Teachers are bound by law to follow the current curricula and syllabi. What impact will this have when the orders are unclear? Having taught in upper secondary myself for a few years now, I know that many teachers feel that their time already is stretched thin with course obligations, parent meetings, assessment documentation and so forth. Writing instruction is usually very rewarding for both teacher and pupil, but is often very time consuming. Having 30 pupils write an intermediate academic article of four pages or more, means that the teacher will probably have his or her hands full for a week correcting them and giving feedback. In addition to this, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, the curricula of R94 and LK97 are by many considered to be content-heavy. This means that it can be hard for teachers to set time aside for something not explicitly outlined in the syllabus. On the other hand, they have to. Every teacher knows that when the time comes, their pupils will have to master an intermediate academic article genre¹³⁹ in order to pass the final written examinations.

¹³⁸ In the form of an intermediate academic article.

¹³⁹ It is assumed that most pupils will write one of the tasks in the examinations in this genre.

Even though the teacher respondents from the interview section managed to give good answers on the issue of academic writing, one cannot presuppose that this goes for all upper secondary school teachers. While unfortunately not explored in this thesis, it would be interesting to survey a large number of upper secondary school AEC teachers to hear how much they know about academic writing. It could be that the knowledge about academic writing is uneven among AEC teachers. In any case, in addition to the syllabus being vague in its attempt to outline academic writing criteria, it does not even clearly delegate this responsibility on to the EFL teachers. Thus it makes the topic of academic writing instruction doubly elusive.

8.7 Further solutions to improve academic writing instruction in upper secondary

In this section, I will look at possible ways to strengthen academic writing instruction in upper secondary school in Norway. The following section can be seen as a continuation of section 7.1.4 which serves as an introduction to the topic. This is intended to serve as a suggestion to a concrete implementation of a standard similar to the intermediate academic paper.

8.7.1 The five-paragraph essay

The five-paragraph essay came up during the course of conducting interviews for chapter seven. One of the respondents, Emma, works at an upper secondary school in Oslo. She said that she and her colleagues used a method for academic writing instruction called the five-paragraph essay. She reported that the model had been used at her school¹⁴⁰ with great success and that their pupils' results from the final examinations seemed to confirm this. It should be mentioned that although it worked well for Emma at her school, the method is not without controversy.

When talking about the five-paragraph essay, it is important to keep in mind that the system is not necessarily without imperfections. In her article "The Ill Effects of the Five-paragraph Theme"¹⁴¹, author Kimberly Wesley points out some flaws with the five-paragraph essay technique. Her main concern is that pupils will be too constrained by the concrete setup and therefore will have a hard time applying the method to longer papers. Relying on a specific set

¹⁴⁰ According to Emma, their version of the five-paragraph essay was developed in-house, but the method itself apparently stems from the U.S. in the fifties. See section 7.1.4 for a concrete reference to the scheme.

¹⁴¹ *The English Journal*, Vol. 90, No. 1, Teaching Writing in the Twenty-First Century (Sep., 2000), pp. 57-60.

of instruction could be regarded as detrimental to academic writing instruction, as the rigid frame arguably prohibits the pupil from evolving as a writer.

The five-paragraph essay was a very clear example of how teachers can organise writing instruction, and the reports from the teacher who brought the topic up were that it had been hugely successful. It should be mentioned though, that this has not been verified through examination results. As pointed out earlier there are also a number of negative views when it comes to this method¹⁴², but the main objection against the five-paragraph essay seems to be that it constrains pupils too much and will prevent them from successfully making the leap from the intermediate academic paper to the academic paper. This is a part of a bigger problem that always affects teaching. The body of pupils that needs to be reached at any given time in a school situation will almost never be homogenous when it comes to learning skills and knowledge. This means that you cannot take one pattern or one method that works one year and automatically make it fit on another class the next year. The minds of the pupils are so complex and different that it is impossible to apply a universal method, in this case the five-paragraph essay, to all of them. Furthermore, extensive experience around the world has at best proven the technique to be controversial, sometimes efficient, sometimes not. Still, everyone who has ever taught in lower education knows that rules of thumb and predefined procedures for solving tasks are always highly demanded by pupils.

So how can one reach an effective compromise in writing instruction; without having to fear for the autonomy of the pupils when they make the transition to higher education, but at the same time ensuring that everyone departs from your Advanced English Class with the same baggage? The solution could be to use the five-paragraph essay as a caster wheel for structure in the beginning, but aim to abandon the predefined structure by the time they finish third grade and are set for higher education. According to my analysis, and backed up by the teachers' statements in their interviews, it seems that the R94 syllabus is deeply inadequate in conveying criteria for upper secondary school academic writing instruction. Too much responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the often already-fatigued teachers to develop academic writing skills so that the pupils are indeed "prepared for higher education".

¹⁴² See 7.1.4

8.8 State of the R94 syllabus

We may have gotten some glimpses into what a more detailed syllabus with regards to writing instruction would lead to in the five-paragraph essay method. Perhaps it would be better if there were some curricular masterplan behind this, so that the method could be introduced in lower secondary, only to be gradually expanded on and reaching its full potential at the university or college level? If this is indeed a possible solution, then it seems the R94 AEC syllabus again reveals its shortcomings when it comes to academic writing. The teachers interviewed in this chapter are certainly convinced that academic writing is important, and that it is neglected in the syllabus. As a consequence of this, they are forced to develop means of their own in an attempt to predict what is being required of their pupils in higher education.

In the interviews, it was a bit disquieting to hear upper secondary teachers who have taught for more than 20 years pointing out the current dire state of academic writing focus in the R94 AEC syllabus. These are professional educators that have done great service for the Norwegian school system for a long time. They probably have hundreds of former pupils who are grateful for their work and who owe them for their academic foundation. One can only wonder why they are seemingly left to their own when it comes to academic writing instruction. I have pondered this for quite some time writing this thesis, and it led me to the following question: Have the various actors within the construction of the curricula and syllabi ever sat down in the same room to discuss what to actually expect from pupils who come out of upper secondary school? The question is critical in the way that it currently seems to be a discrepancy in that the core curriculum says one thing¹⁴³, but then the syllabi do not follow up accordingly. This leads me to believe that key players that compose these guiding documents need to communicate better not only what pupils essentially are supposed to master when finishing upper secondary school¹⁴⁴, but also how this could be conveyed the best way possible.

8.9 Discussion summary

Ideally, when I started the work on this thesis, I had hoped to use the AEC as a reference list when searching for traces of academic writing instruction. However, the AEs did not provide any clarity to the matter, forcing me to define and outline a reasonable, general standard of what is expected in an intermediate academic paper. The possible reasons for this apparent

¹⁴³ I.e. preparing pupils for higher education.

¹⁴⁴ In order to be prepared for higher education.

elusiveness in the definitions for academic writing have been explored throughout the thesis. Though it is hard to point the finger at one particular culprit, it seems evident that the core of the problem is due to the lack of clarity in outlining the criteria in the curricula and the Advanced English syllabus. With more precision in these official guiding documents, the need for elaboration and clarification in textbooks and by teachers would not be so great. This is why the change has to start at the top echelon, the curricula and syllabi. The upside to this is that the change might already have been implemented. With the introduction of the new 13-year curriculum, the Knowledge Promotion¹⁴⁵, and its following syllabi, the academic writing situation might improve. Using the LK06 as the new reference I will look to the future of academic writing in Norwegian upper secondary school in my concluding chapter.

¹⁴⁵ Abbreviated LK06, as mentioned in chapter three of this thesis.

9.0 Conclusion

In this final chapter of the thesis I will look at options for further research and try to bring the thesis to a conclusion. I will also use the chapter to look at the new curriculum, the LK06, and see whether it will improve EFL academic writing instruction in upper secondary school in Norway.

9.1 Further research

The state of academic writing instruction in LK97 and R94 definitely merits further studies on the topic. First of all, it would be interesting to expand the study in terms of numbers; more textbooks studied, more teachers interviewed. Outlined in section 3.3 of the method and research design chapter of this thesis, there are a few thoughts on how I would like to have elaborated my teacher interviews. Also, it would be interesting to increase the study to higher education as well, the university, for instance. In the academic world of higher education, which criteria are used to define academic writing? How are these decided upon? Are the criteria universal for all the faculties, or are they developed on an individual basis for each faculty? It would also be interesting to follow a class of pupils through upper secondary and through their university career to see how they coped with the writing. This would be more of a case study, of course, but in a topic area that is so heavy on theory, perhaps a concrete, practical approach is needed to balance the scales? Writing, after all, is all about manifesting thoughts on paper.

Another idea would be to conduct a similar analysis of the LK06 curriculum using the criteria I developed in this thesis as reference. Such a study would probably have to wait for a few years, seeing how LK06 spans over 13 years, and it will be hard to truly assess it before it is properly implemented. In the next section I will analyse the LK06 AEs very briefly to see if there are any concrete changes on the horizon.

9.2 Looking ahead

In this section, I will take a quick look at the curriculum that superseded the R94 and LK97 curricula, the LK06. Some of the teachers interviewed in chapter seven responded that things were looking up with regards to academic writing instruction in the new LK06, and that they were anxious to see whether the new curriculum could improve the situation.

As mentioned in chapter four, the curriculum of LK06, also known as the Knowledge Promotion, has now replaced the curricula from the nineties. In the document for Advanced English, called “ENGLISH – PROGRAMME SUBJECT IN PROGRAMMES FOR SPECIALIZATION IN GENERAL STUDIES”, the outline for the new Advanced English courses¹⁴⁶ is laid out. As in my curricular analyses in chapter four, this short analysis will focus on the aspects dealing with academic writing instruction. I will first give a brief overview of the syllabus before looking at academic writing instruction references.

The visionary outlook in the “objectives of the subject” is an introduction to the English Programme courses. In the last paragraph of the introduction it is stated that:

The programme subject is wide and shall therefore provide multidisciplinary skills, in addition to language skills. The programme subject is unified; the various skills are integrated and are part of a context. A necessary part of the work with developing one’s English skills is to define one’s own language skills and develop learning strategies that can provide a platform for life-long language learning.

(AEs in LK06: 1)

The overall objectives are definitely ambitious. It should be noted, however, that the LK06 AEs explicitly specifies that the focus of the course is on developing multidisciplinary skills. This means that, for instance, even if some of the aims¹⁴⁷ come across as unclear about whether they refer to written or spoken English, they can be viewed as being meant to apply to both. One of the problems connected to this is that the syllabus may appear to lack clarity at times because of its apparent failure to consistently separate written and spoken English. On the other hand, many of the same criteria are relevant whether pupils work on a spoken or a written exposition.

¹⁴⁶ Called “subjects” in this new syllabus.

¹⁴⁷ Examined in the next section.

9.2.1 A new dawn for Advanced English as a subject

In terms of structure, the following is mentioned in the syllabus:

Table 4 Overview over the Advanced English courses/subjects in LK06

The programme subject English comprises three programme subjects: *International English*, *Social Studies English* and *English literature and culture*. Social English and English literature and culture can be taken independently of each other; both build on International English.

Programme subject	Main subject areas		
International English	Language and language learning	Communication	Culture, society and literature
Social Studies English	Language and language learning	Communication	Culture, society and literature
English literature and culture	Language and language learning	Communication	Culture, society and literature

Teaching hours

Teaching hours are in given in 60-minute units.

International English: 140 teaching hours per year
 Social English: 140 teaching hours per year
 English literature and culture: 140 teaching hours per year

(AEs in LK06: 1-2)

It must be noted that these are programme subjects, or elective courses¹⁴⁸, which means they are available to those who wish to study English after the obligatory initial year of upper secondary school. Also note that the total number of hours of the different courses has gone down from 187 in R94¹⁴⁹ to 140 in LK06. As we can see from the table, there are three main subject areas within the new Advanced English course: International English, Social Studies English and English literature and culture. These three courses are again divided into three main areas which are common for all three: Language and language learning, Communication, and Culture, society and literature. The exact content of the three subsections vary depending on the programme subject, though.

After the content-section, the LK06 AEs outlines the competence aims for the three different courses and their sub-sections. They all start by stating, “*The aims of the studies are to enable pupils to . . .*” (LK06, AEs: 5-7). A brief review of these aims with regard to academic writing instruction shows that there is a greater number of concrete aims directed toward written production of English than in the previous syllabus.

¹⁴⁸ As used in the previous syllabus.

¹⁴⁹ For alternatives A and B, cf. Table 4.3.3.

This section of the conclusion is not intended to be as extensive as the analysis in chapter four of this thesis. I will therefore limit the discussion to a brief overview of the competence aims in International English and Social Studies English, which could be said to be comparable courses to VK1 and VK2 in the AEs of R94.

The explicit references to academic writing¹⁵⁰ in International English, says: “the competence aims state that the aims of the studies are to enable pupils to: write coherent, well-structured texts on general, specialized and literary texts; present technical material . . . in writing, or in the form of composite texts; give an account of and evaluate the use of sources;” (LK06, AEs: 5). There are numerous references to analysis, elaboration and discussion of various topics, but it is unclear whether this is with regard to written or spoken English, or both.

In the competence aims for Social Studies, there are finally more concrete glimpses dealing with academic writing instruction. “The aims of the studies are to: elaborate on and discuss the relationship between form, content and stylistic register in sentences in social texts; analyse linguistic tools in texts in dissimilar genres and assess their impact; use suitable language appropriate to the situation in a variety of . . . written genres; produce texts in a variety of genres with clear content, appropriate style, good structure and usage that is precise and accurate“ (LK06, AEs: 5-6). There are also aims stating that the students should be able to “elaborate on and discuss . . .” and “summarize, comment on and discuss differing viewpoints . . .”, although it is unclear whether this is intended for written or spoken English. In any case, just some of these points contain enough concrete evidence that there is a greater awareness of the academic article genre than in the previous syllabus. This is a great relief when taking into account the shortcomings of the AEs of R94, and it is enough to make an academic writing enthusiast’s heart race. Of course, the curriculum change in itself will not be a revolution unless it can set off a chain reaction. The changes need to happen through all of the different channels of writing instruction, such as the textbooks and examinations. Perhaps what will be most to ensure the quality of the process will be to improve teacher training.

However, the assessment section of the AEs LK06 syllabus leaves much to be desired. The section basically states that the pupils will have a written and an oral exam. There is no detail

¹⁵⁰The criteria from section 2.4 of this thesis are kept in mind as well.

with regards to what they are being tested in, or anything that might suggest genre. It seems to be implicit that the pupils are to be tested in the competence aims specified above.

As some of the teachers in chapter seven pointed out, the LK06 AEs is able to counter much of the neglect academic writing instruction suffered in the R94 AEs. As I will come back to in the final words of the chapter, the LK06 AEs is definitely a step in the right direction with regard to academic writing, but it will be hard to gauge the significance of the more detailed academic writing instructions before more years have passed.

9.3 Final thoughts

The research question of this thesis was: “Does upper secondary school EFL instruction effectively help pupils develop academic writing skills?” I have tried to investigate the topic by looking at all of the key factors that come into play, ranging from the curricular level and down to the teacher level. In the introduction of this paper, I drew upon two works within the same topic area, the article “A Case for Improved Reading Instruction” by University of Oslo Associate professor G.O. Hellekjær (2008) and the doctoral study *Literacy and the tertiary student – Why has the communicative approach failed?*, by Torunn Moksheim Lehmann (1999). Both Hellekjær and Lehmann point out that the situation for reading and writing, respectively, is unsatisfying. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Hellekjær states in the conclusion of his article that: “For upper secondary EFL instruction, or to be more exact, for Norwegian EFL instruction in general, it means serious changes in teaching practices and learning objectives as well as in examinations and testing.” (Hellekjær 2008: 1-2). Lehmann comes to much of the same conclusion in her doctoral study where she ultimately calls for a reinvention of EFL writing instruction in Norwegian upper secondary school.

When I started writing my thesis, my suspicions were strong that something was wrong with the way academic writing instruction has been conducted over the past 10-15 years. As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the idea came into when I attended entrance level English courses at the university and found that many of my co-students were unable to produce the kinds of texts that were expected of them. Before I had started to review all the data I have gone through in this thesis, my initial thoughts were that I was going to find a weak link in the system. The first hint that the situation may be more serious than I imagined was when I tried to find what official concepts of academic writing existed. I searched many places for lists of what could constitute an academic paper at the upper secondary school

level, but came up empty-handed. I therefore had to turn to books and articles on the matter in order to create my own outline for what an intermediate academic paper should contain. The thought that bothered me most of all there and then was that if it was so hard for me to find clear and concise criteria for an academic paper, how could anyone expect pupils in upper secondary to figure it out?

The slightly ominous feeling that this critical area of writing as academic exposition was being neglected only got stronger throughout the writing of this thesis. Not only was it hard to find the criteria, but academic writing instruction appeared to be overlooked in the curricula and syllabi as well. One of the great ironies of this situation is that it is outlined in the core curriculum for the Norwegian school system that the overall aim of lower education is to prepare the pupils for higher education¹⁵¹. The overall vision of my thesis changed after having analysed the curricula and syllabi; instead of looking at how academic writing instruction is conveyed, I had to look for references to it. The fact that the Advanced English syllabus had given vague criteria on academic writing led me to believe that the textbook authors would emphasise the importance of it, and enhance the few references to it in the syllabus. It was somewhat dismaying to observe that only one of the four top selling textbooks¹⁵² had managed to do this properly. Because of these findings, I had not expected to find the final examinations treating the matter with greater focus.

It was not until I started interviewing English teachers I felt I had found the main way of conveying EFL academic writing instruction in Norway. All of the teachers I interviewed seemed to have a relatively firm grasp of what academic writing is, but what about the rest of the teachers in upper secondary school? Obviously, most upper secondary school teachers will have extensive writing experience from their own education, but it is debatable whether they technically should be expected to teach the pupils something the syllabus is unclear on.

In higher education, it is expected that the students are able to write academic articles that treat the subject, whatever it may be, scientifically and seriously. These articles are, along with lectures, a critical part of the discourse that drives academia forward. The need is therefore great that the pupils are able to make a smooth transition from upper secondary school to higher education. Many lecturers, seminar leaders and supervisors at the university

¹⁵¹ For the record, the core curriculum has been kept, unaltered, through the implementation of LK06.

¹⁵² *Tapestry*.

level, for instance, would more than likely want to spend time on giving feedback on content rather than having to define the academic writing genre to them.

Both Lehmann's and Hellekjær's works arrive at the same conclusion this thesis does: Norwegian EFL instruction does not sufficiently prepare upper secondary pupils for writing academically in higher education, which means that the whole EFL curriculum needs to be reworked in order to fix it. A change at the guiding document level will then hopefully lead to better textbooks, examinations and conditions for teaching academic writing for EFL teachers. The LK06 is a much needed change that will help get English academic writing instruction back on track. However, since the first class that has had three years of academic instruction under the Knowledge Promotion will not graduate until the summer of 2009, it is still too early to tell. The final verdict may not be in before those who started elementary school with the new curriculum have had their final examinations.

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¹⁵³ LK97

¹⁵⁴ Please note that the English version of the L97 curriculum and English syllabus is only available online and not for downloading.

¹⁵⁵ R94

¹⁵⁶ The English versions of the L97 are not currently downloadable for the lower secondary stage, but the online version has been used in this thesis.

¹⁵⁷ R94

¹⁵⁸ General studies.

*Eksamensoppgaver 3 Engelsk A og 3 Engelsk B H07*¹⁵⁹. Oslo: Utdanningsdirektoratet. URL: http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/upload/Eksamen/Videregaende/Tidligere_gitte_eksamensoppgaver/Allm_okon_adm_fag/AA_Engelsk_H07_NY.pdf (Accessed Apr. 12, 2007).

Notes on online sources:

All the R94 curricula and syllabi have been downloaded in Norwegian electronically from:

http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/templates/udir/TM_Artikkel.aspx?id=1120

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All examinations are downloadable from:

http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/templates/udir/TM_Type.aspx?id=205

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¹⁵⁹ General studies.