
Policy Impact of PIRLS 2006 in Norway

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Impact of international studies

- Since PISA 2000 participation in international studies has been an important part of the Norwegian strategy for quality improvement in school
- The result of this is
 - Much stronger focus on learning outcomes
 - Strong focus on basic skills: Reading, mathematics and English
 - Development of a national quality assessment system
 - Further education programs for teachers

Quality Assessment in Norway

- National Quality Assessment System
 - National tests and diagnostic material,
 - Pupil's survey
 - National educational statistics
- Participation in international comparative studies
 - PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, ICCS, TALIS, SITES, TEDS-M
- Access to necessary support and guidance
- The School Portal,
<http://skoleporten.utdanningsdirektoratet.no>
 - Presentation of selected data and indicators at school, municipality, county and national level
- National supervision and inspection on municipality level

Initiative	Purpose
Diagnostic material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the need for follow-up and adjustment at individual and class / school level
Grades and learning-support tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ascertain the students' performance and abilities within specified parts of the subject to identify areas for improvement
Guidance material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional material showing how school administration at local level, schools and teachers can best use the system to enhance learning
National tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess students' competence in basic skills • Basic dialogue and quality development at local and national level
Final exam / craft and journeyman's certificate exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal assessment of the student's / apprentice's skills and competence on graduating / leaving; documentation for working life, relevant institutions of higher education and society in general
International studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the skills and competence of Norwegian students in relation to other countries • Basis for development of benchmarks and national policy

Age and grades in Norway

- Since 1997 children start school at 6 years age
- Compulsory primary education is 10 years
- Grade 1 was introduced as a compulsory preschool year
- After the new curricular reform (2006) teaching starts at grade 1
- Consequence for PIRLS:
 - Norwegian children are among the youngest in the test group, and have had less teaching
 - Therefore Norway has also tested a smaller population in grade 5 as a national option

PIRLS 2006

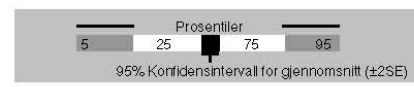
Tabell 1.1 Fordeling av leseferdighet

Land	Fordeling av leseferdighet	Gjennomsnittlig skåre	År med formell skolegang	Gjennomsnittlig alder
^{2a} Russland		h 565 (3.4)	4	10.8
Hong Kong SAR		h 564 (2.4)	4	10.0
^{2a} Canada, Alberta		h 560 (2.4)	4	9.9
Singapore		h 558 (2.9)	4	10.4
^{2a} Canada, Britisk Col.		h 558 (2.6)	4	9.8
Luxembourg		h 557 (1.1)	5	11.4
^{2a} Canada, Ontario		h 555 (2.7)	4	9.8
Italia		h 551 (2.9)	4	9.7
Ungarn		h 551 (3.0)	4	10.7
Sverige		h 549 (2.3)	4	10.9
Tyskland		h 548 (2.2)	4	10.5
[†] Nederland		h 547 (1.5)	4	10.3
^{†2a} Belgia (flamsk)		h 547 (2.0)	4	10.0
^{2a} Bulgaria		h 547 (4.4)	4	10.9
^{2a} Danmark		h 546 (2.3)	4	10.9
Canada, Nova Scotia		h 542 (2.2)	4	10.0
Latvia		h 541 (2.3)	4	11.0
^{†2a} USA		h 540 (3.5)	4	10.1
England		h 539 (2.6)	5	10.3
Østerrike		h 538 (2.2)	4	10.3
Litauen		h 537 (1.6)	4	10.7
Kinesisk Taipe		h 535 (2.0)	4	10.1
Canada, Quebec		h 533 (2.8)	4	10.1
New Zealand		h 532 (2.0)	4.5 - 5.5	10.0
Slovakia		h 531 (2.8)	4	10.4
[†] Skottland		h 527 (2.8)	5	9.9
Frankrike		h 522 (2.1)	4	10.0
Slovenia		h 522 (2.1)	3 eller 4	9.9
Polen		h 519 (2.4)	4	9.9
Spania		h 513 (2.5)	4	9.9
^{2b} Israel		h 512 (3.3)	4	10.1
Island		h 511 (1.3)	4	9.8
PIRLS gj.snitt		500	-	-
Moldova		500 (3.0)	4	10.9
Belgia (flamsk)		500 (2.6)	4	9.9
[‡] Norge		498 (2.6)	4	9.8
Romania		i 489 (5.0)	4	10.9
^{2a} Georgia		i 471 (3.1)	4	10.1
Makedonia		i 442 (4.1)	4	10.6
Trinidad og Tobago		i 436 (4.9)	5	10.1
Iran		i 421 (3.1)	4	10.2
Indonesia		i 405 (4.1)	4	10.4
Qatar		i 353 (1.1)	4	9.8
Kuwait		i 330 (4.2)	4	9.8
Marokko		i 323 (5.9)	4	10.8
Sør-Afrika		i 302 (5.6)	5	11.9

Norway Grade 5
(10.8 years)

Norway Grade 4
(9.8 years)

100 200 300 400 500 600 700

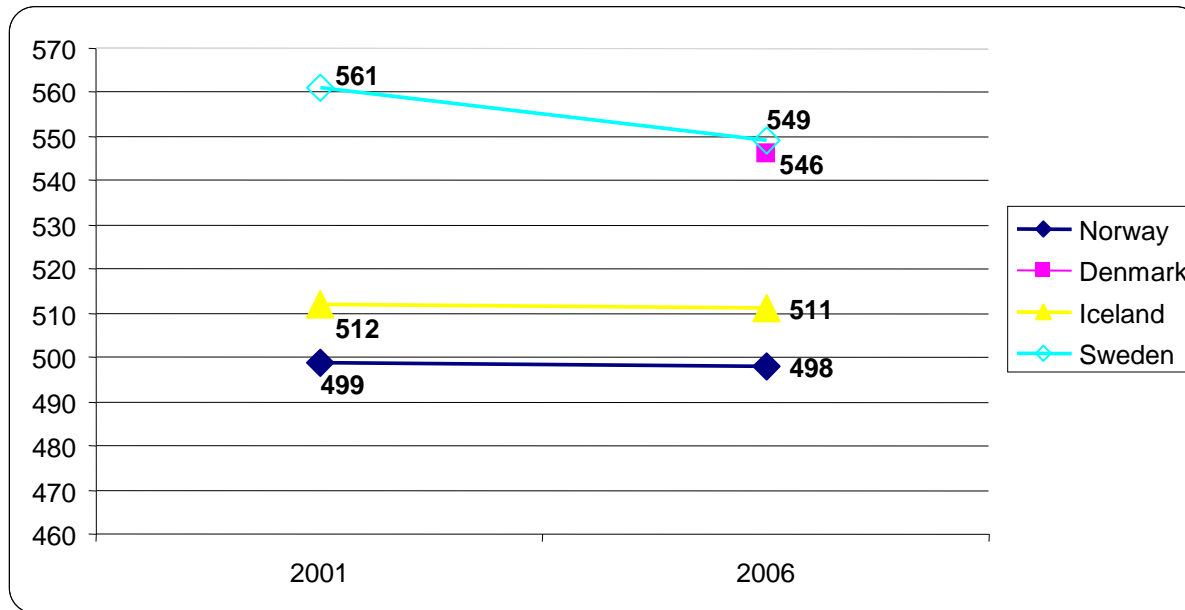


h Landsgjennomsnitt signifikant høyere enn gjennomsnittet
i Landsgjennomsnitt signifikant lavere enn gjennomsnittet

* År med formell skolegang regnet fra ISCED nivå 1

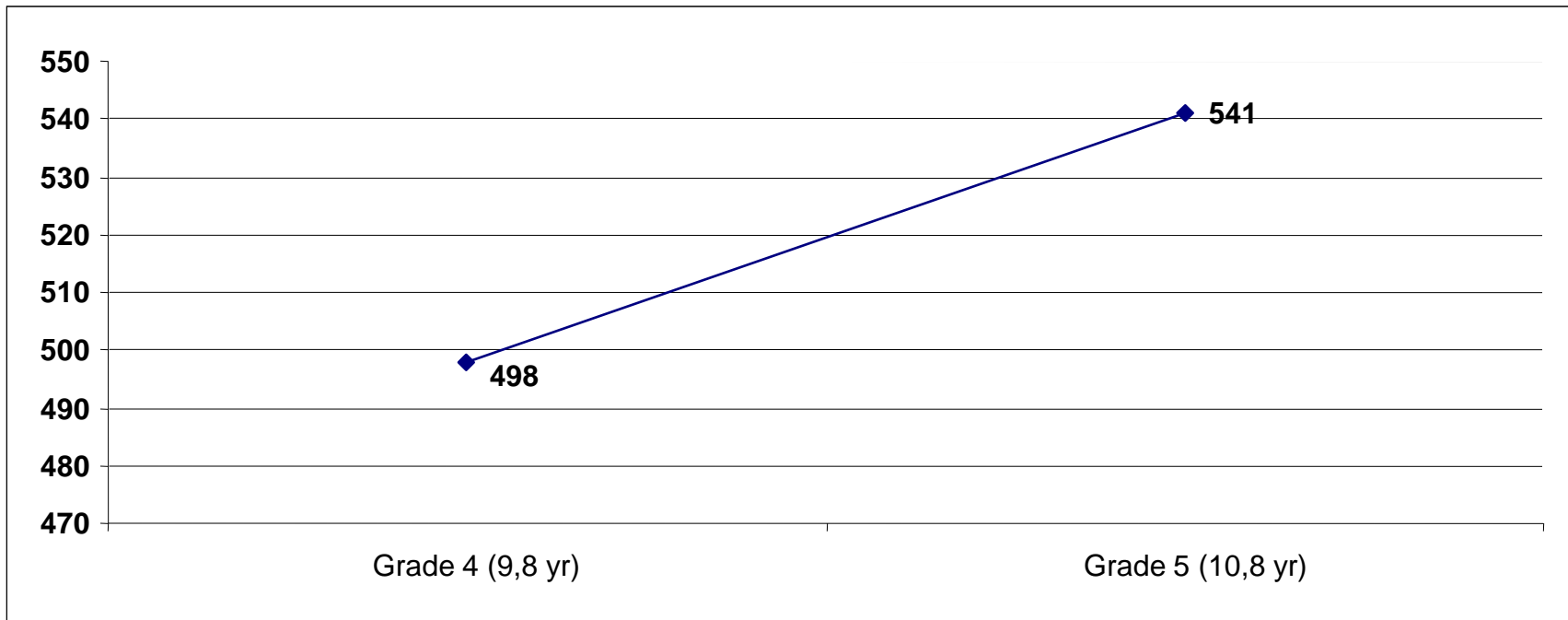
SOURCE: IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006

PIRLS: Nordic trends



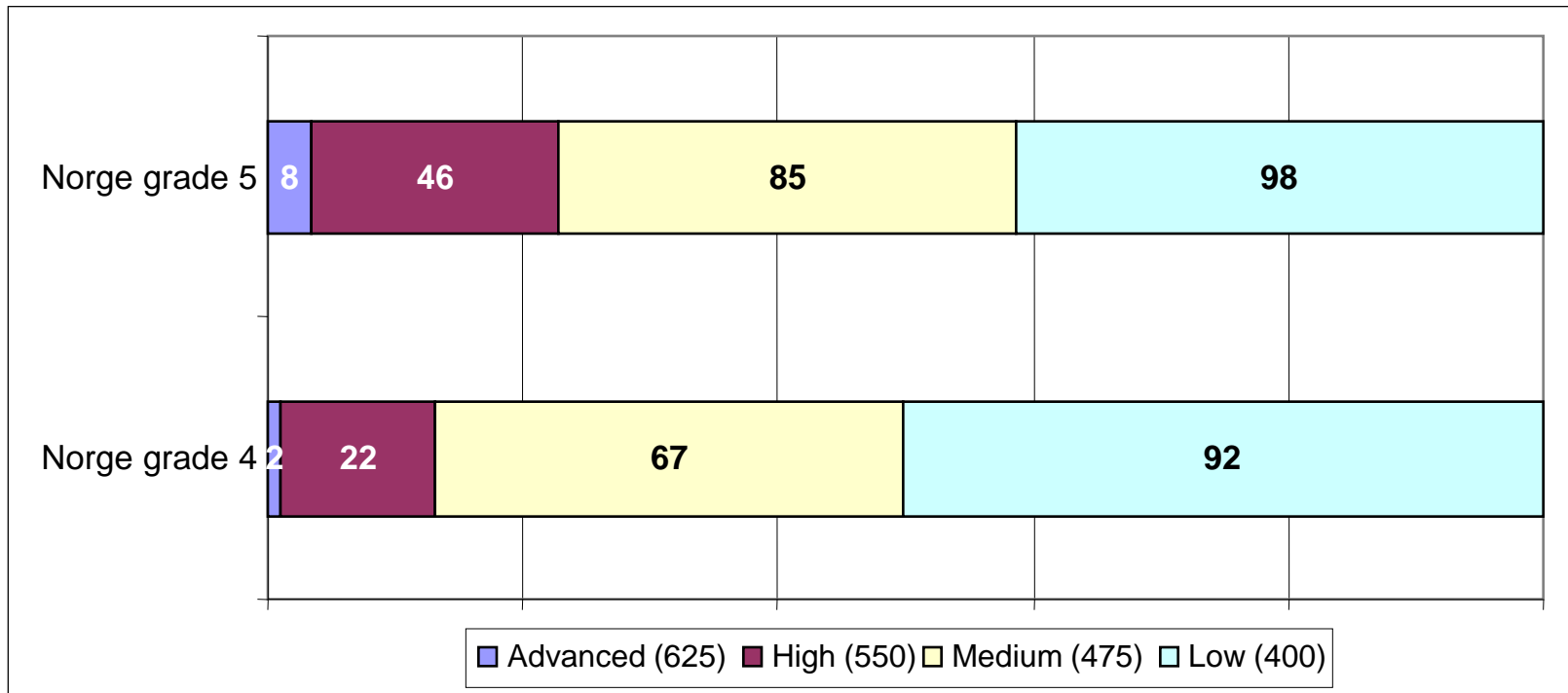
Kilde: Lesesenteret

PIRLS 2006 – Development from grade 4 to grade 5 (Norway)



Kilde: Lesesenteret

Reading proficiency grades 4 and 5



Kilde: Lesesenteret

Educational debate in media

- Last winter school and education have become the most important media debate in Norway
 - Compared with the release of PISA 2003 the release of PISA and PIRLS 2006 has resulted in three times as many media clips
- We see a multitude of participants in the debate
 - The prime minister's speech for New Year had education as one of its main focus points

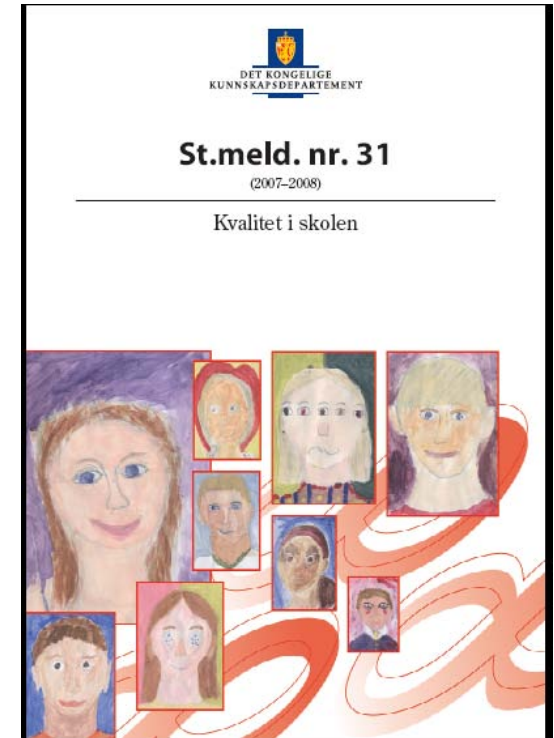
Contents of the debate

- Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science are weaker than expected, and results from PISA show a decline
- Large variation in results, both between individuals and between schools
- Several report about weak "learning pressure", noise and disorder in school
- Weak culture for systematic assessment of learning outcomes both at individual level and at school level
- Weak culture for school leadership
- The new Curriculum demands high competence and high professional level for teachers
- Many teachers are general teachers without subject specialization

Debate continued..

- Two main debate areas:
 - The teachers' role
 - Organization of teaching
- The teachers' role:
 - Teachers' competence
 - Debate about system general teachers
 - Discipline and authority
 - Teachers education
- Organization of teaching:
 - Class organization (class rooms vs. flexible teaching areas)
 - Weak "learning pressure"
 - Reform fatigue
 - Early actions for weak learners
 - Resistance towards increased demands for documentation ("paper mill")

- **Actions taken:**
 - New White Paper on Quality in schools presented to Parliament in June
 - New White Paper on Teacher Education will be presented in January
- **Main proposals**
 - New set of common national quality indicators
 - Further development of quality assessment system
 - New system for diagnostic reading tests in grade 1 - 3
 - Yearly quality report from all municipalities
 - Guiding system for weak performing schools
 - Continued focus on further education for teachers
 - Increased supervision and inspection on municipality level



Summary

- PIRLS has been one important element in the recent policy debate in Norway
- The main contribution from PIRLS has been focus on
 - Early start for reading instruction
 - Early actions for weak learners
 - Continued focus on reading through the whole primary level