



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Representation of information and media literacy in Icelandic educational legislation, policy documents and curricula of upper secondary schools and its implementation in the schools

Pórdís T. Þórarinsdóttir doctoral student and Dr. Ágústa Pálsdóttir Professor
Dept. of Information Sciences
Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
School of Social Sciences
University of Iceland

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Iceland - Background

- Population: 335.000 – just over 3 persons pro km²
- 65% of the population live in the capital area
- National language: Icelandic
- 1944 Republic – Social changes after the Second World War
- **Educational system** - Free education on all levels
 - **Kindergarten**: 4 years - 2-6 years
 - **Compulsory school**: 10 years – 6-16 years
 - **Upper secondary school**: 3-4 years – 16-20 years
- Oct. 2008: Economic crisis – Considerable impact
 - Cutbacks in funding, e.g. the education system

Aim of the study

- **Main aim** is to study if there is a connection between representation of media and information literacy (MIL) in the educational legislation and other policy documents for the upper secondary schools and its manifestation in school curricula on one hand and on the other hand the implementation in the upper secondary school
- **Purpose** is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between government policy on MIL and how it is reflected in school curricula

Background

- Information literacy (IL) and media and information literacy (MIL) skills are generally considered to be essential competencies for the individual in the information and knowledge society of today and competencies worth striving to have and hold for all walks of life, for university studies, for the working life and for leisure activities.

Main components of IL

- Information literacy is a multidimensional concept embedded in social and cultural contexts
- The main components of information literacy are to be able to ***recognize one's information need*** and the ability to **identify, locate, evaluate, organize, create, use and communicate** information, see for example the *Prague Declaration* from 2003 in an ***ethical*** manner
- UNESCO and IFLA developed the concept MIL and promote it jointly. See the *Moscow Declaration* from 2012

Information literacy and education

It is recognized that skills in information literacy is one of the basic components of education. According to the *Prague Declaration*, information literacy should “be an integral part of Education of All, which can contribute critically to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

Klingenberg's IL Framework

Search	Evaluate	Know	Present
Formulate need	Relevance	Phrase	Simplicity
Find sources	Factual accuracy	Compare	Semantic redundancy
Choose sources	Formal accuracy	Arrange	Cognitive structuring
Identify information	Completeness	Structure	Cognitive conflict
Steps	Criteria	Steps	Criteria

Methods

- Content and discourse analysis in two steps.
 - 1) Studying frequency of key themes (IL, MIL, IT)
 - 2) Coding the themes and analyse if they are:
 - Just listed
 - Explained
 - or silenced in the discourse
- An electronic survey sent to all Icelandic institutions (librarians/head masters) preparing students for university studies (n=33).
 - Response rate: 87.9%

Legislation for the secondary school

- New educational legislation in 2008
 - there the paragraph on school libraries omitted
- Amendment passed in 2010 where the paragraph on school libraries was reinserted
- In the meantime there had been cutbacks in the funding of school libraries, especially in the elementary school
- In the current legislation media and information literacy is not explicitly considered - information related competencies are outlined, like:
 - independent working methods, critical thought, seek further knowledge
- In the new paragraph on school libraries stated, that
 - The main emphasis in the operation of a school library is to train the students in independent searching and the use of databases

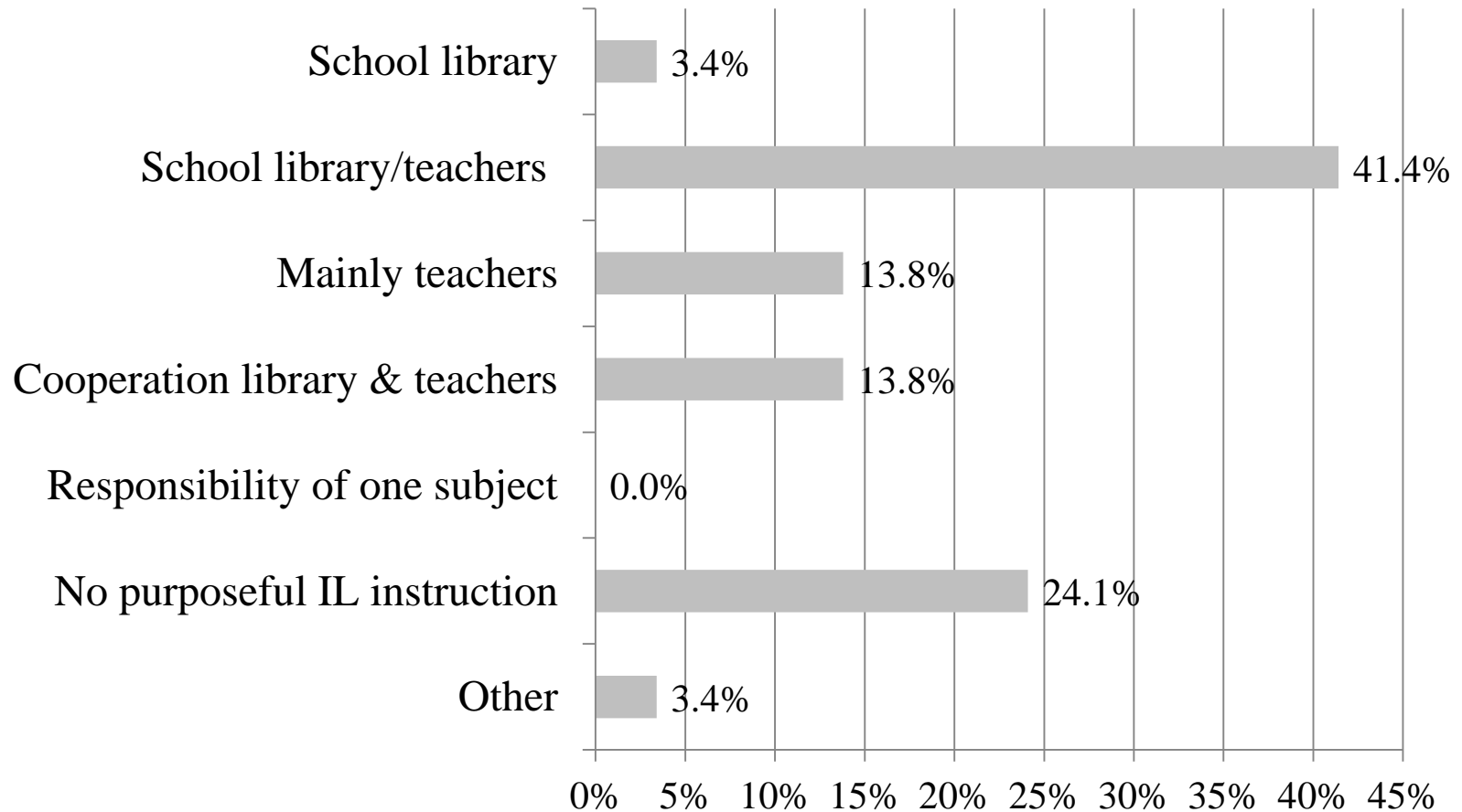
National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG)

- In the NCG for the secondary school information-related issues do not get much coverage
- In the general section of the NCG from 2011 *school library* is mentioned **once** as an information center for teachers and students. *Information literacy* occurs **twice** and is defined as involving “among other things, **information technology** as it is important for everyone to be able to **collect data, categorize, process** and **communicate** information in a **critical** and creative manner. **Media literacy** makes students capable of analyzing the information of different media so that they can **evaluate** it in a critical manner” (pp. 36-37). *Information technology* is mentioned three times
 - ethical use of resources is not mentioned

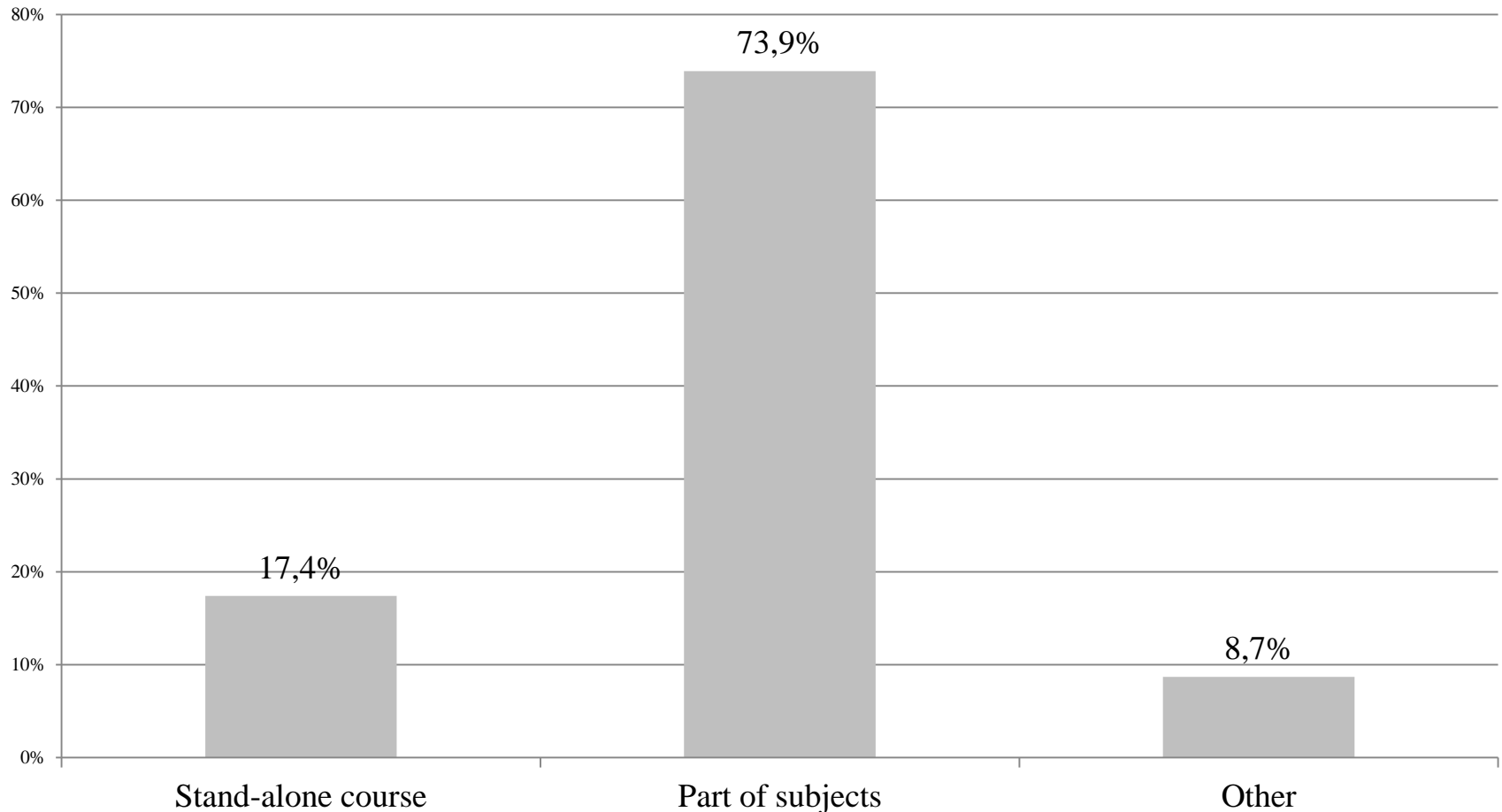
Analysis of the survey

- **82%** of all upper secondary schools in Iceland **operate a school library and information center**
- **85%** of the libraries are run by **professional information specialists** (with university degree in library and information studies)

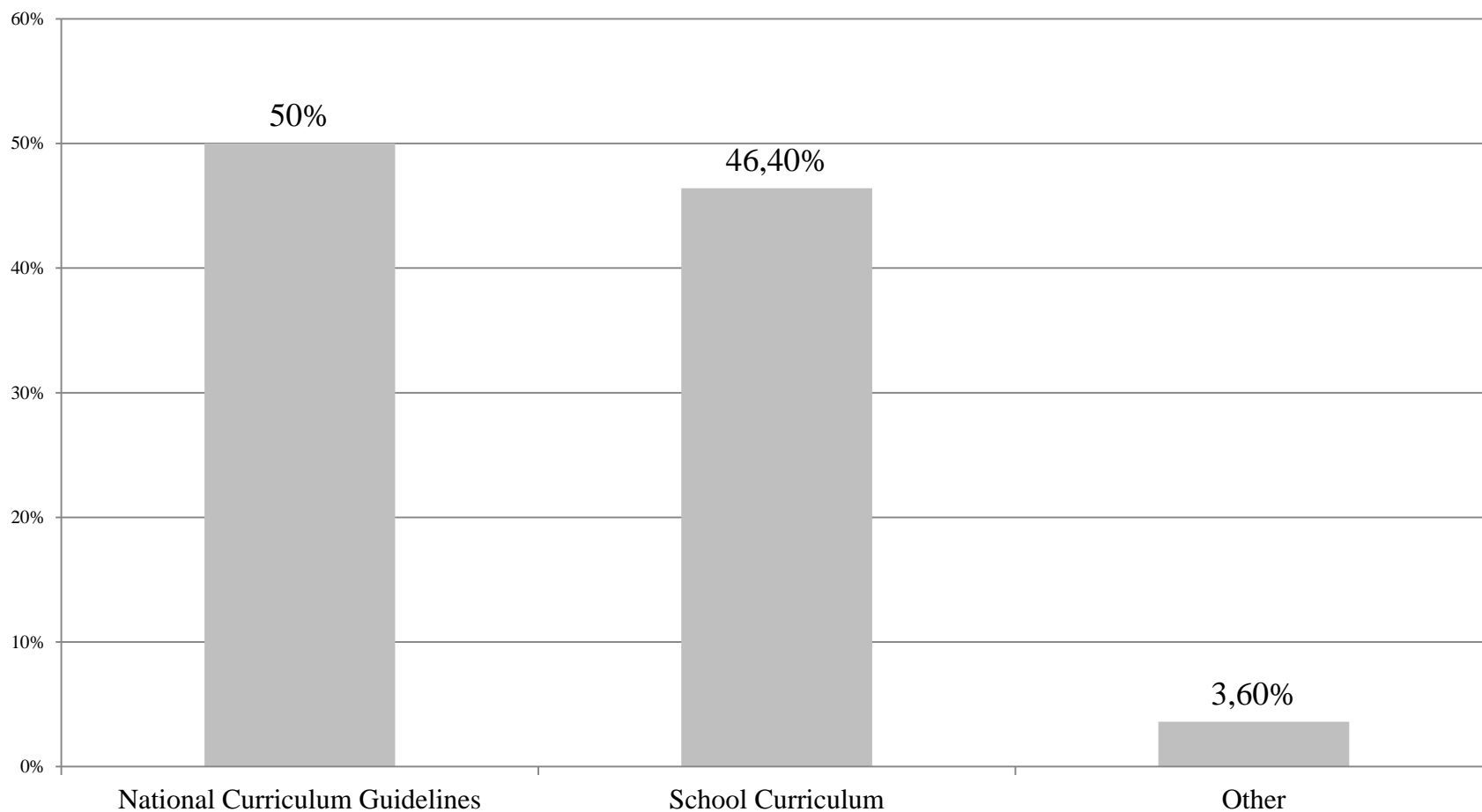
Who is responsible for the information literacy instruction?



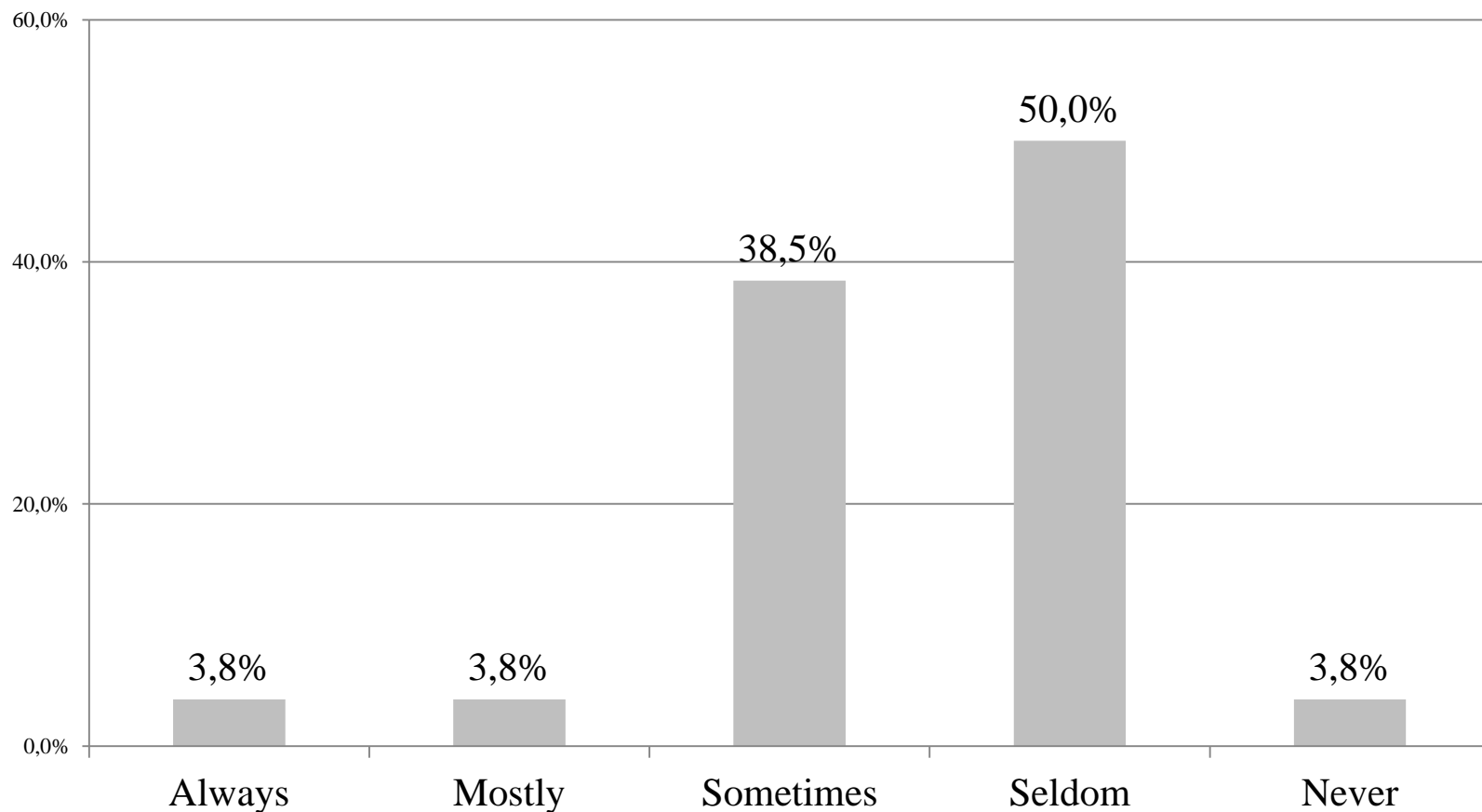
How is the IL instruction in your school organized?



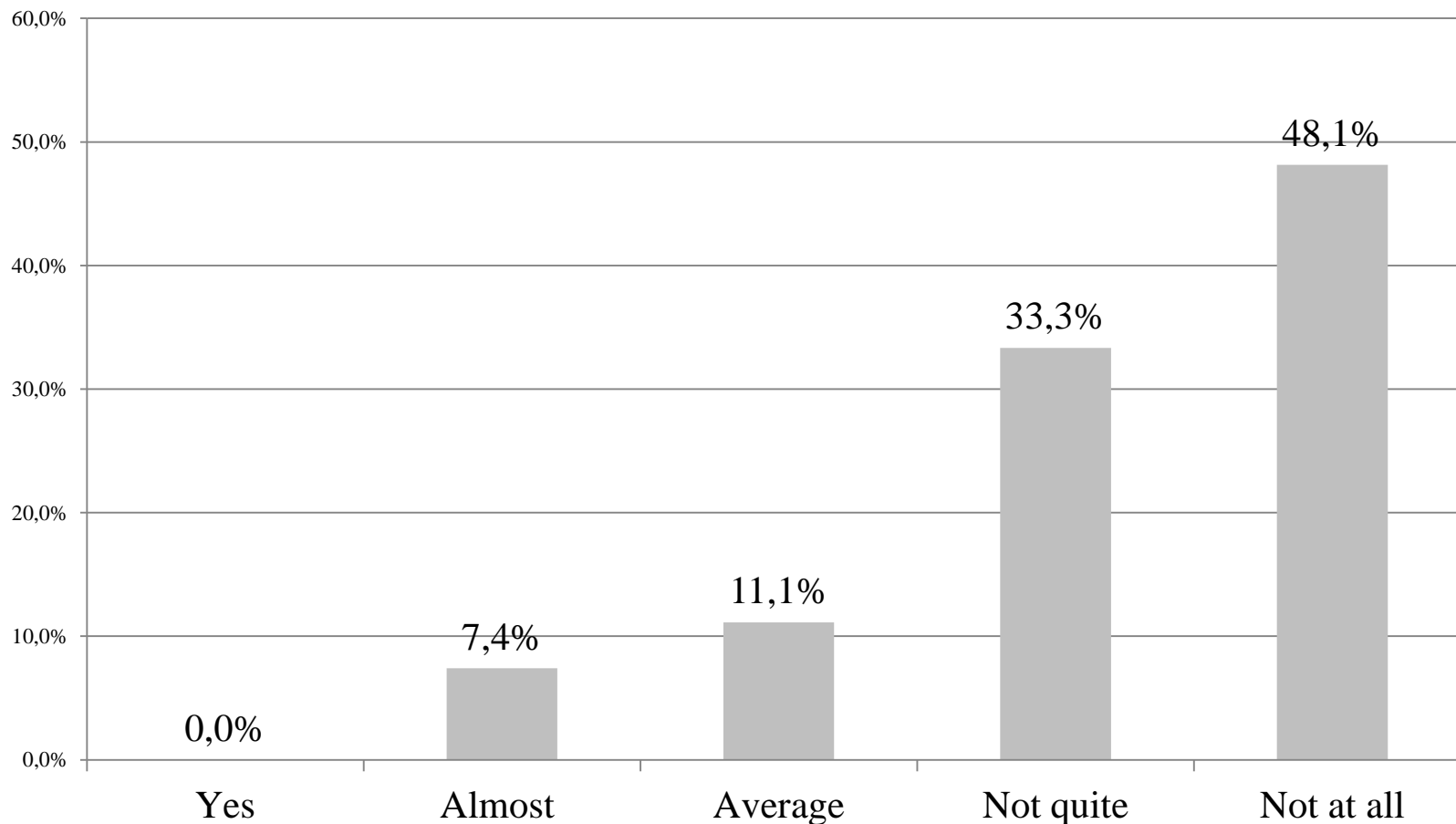
What type of curriculum is used?



Is information literacy included in the learning outcomes of the different subjects?



Do you think enough emphasis is placed on information literacy in your school?



Main findings

- The main findings of this study are that MIL is not strongly represented in the legislation and governmental policy documents for the secondary school.
- The survey revealed that information literacy is not very often included in the learning outcomes of course descriptions and 48.1% claim that the emphasis on information literacy in the schools is *not at all* satisfactory. This corresponds to the weak and unsystematic representation of IL/MIL in legislation and government policy documents for the secondary school.
- According to the results the National Curriculum Guideline for the secondary school does not seem to be a powerful tool for the schools to set criteria for MIL and there are a lot of opportunities for enhancements

Discussion

- Iceland does not have a formal national policy on information literacy.
- Desirable that MIL is more strongly represented in the NCG
- The country has much potential for building up a more media- and information-literate society - ca. 96% of the households have access to computers and the internet –
- It would strengthen the society as a democratic, inclusive, participatory knowledge society.
- It might contribute to improvement of MIL on the European level to develop, as Klingenberg suggests, a similar framework for MIL as for foreign languages
- It could support the recognition and promotion of MIL on the national level as well as in Europe in general



Thank you for the attention!