



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Upstairs – Downstairs

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

European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL), 20-23 October 2014

Iceland - Background

- Population: 326.000 – 3 persons pro km²
- 65% of the population 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: 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.

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 education and 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/ principals) 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

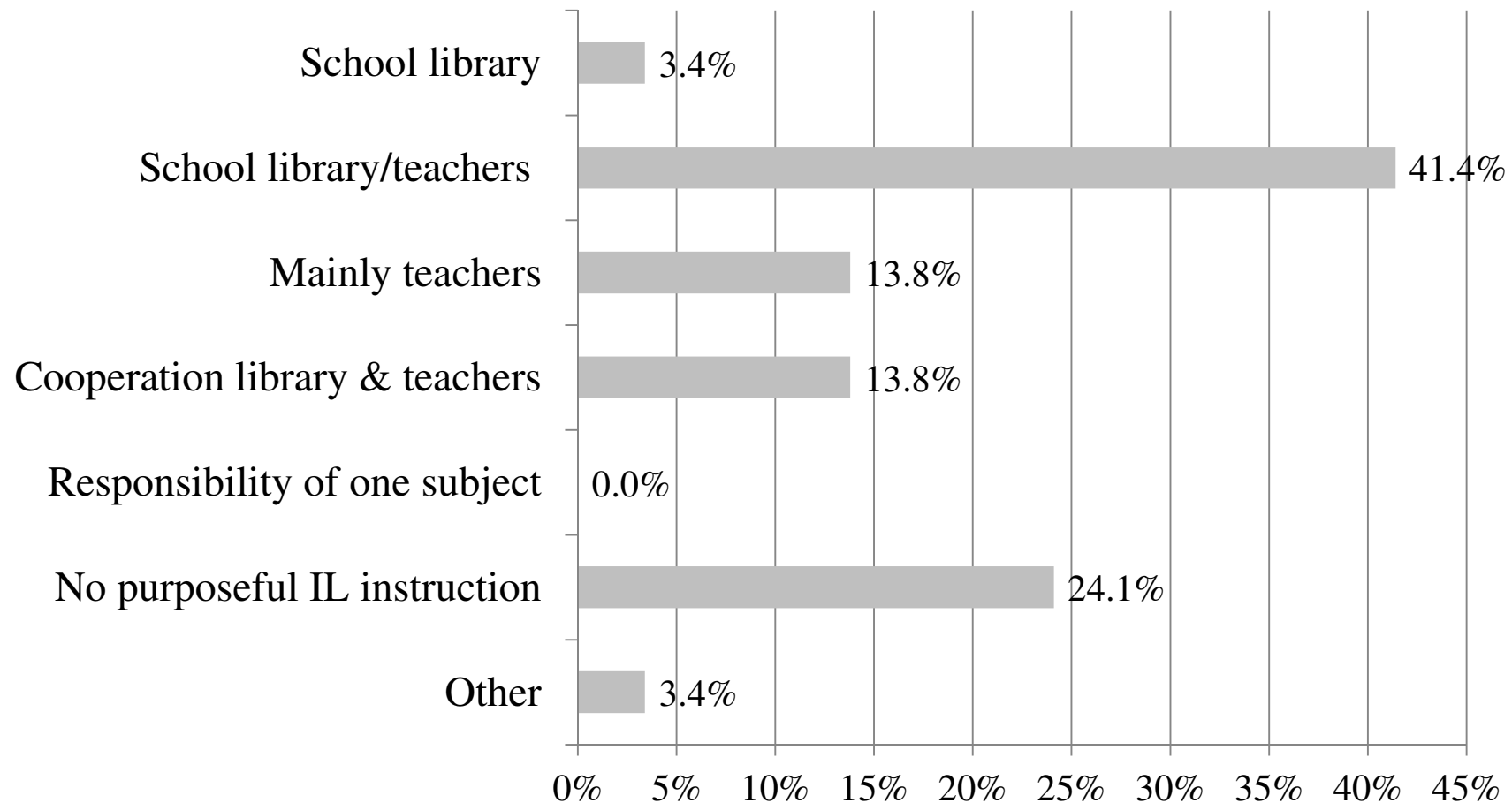
National Curriculum Guidelines (NCG)

- 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”
- *Information technology* is mentioned **three times**
 - Ethical use of resources is not mentioned

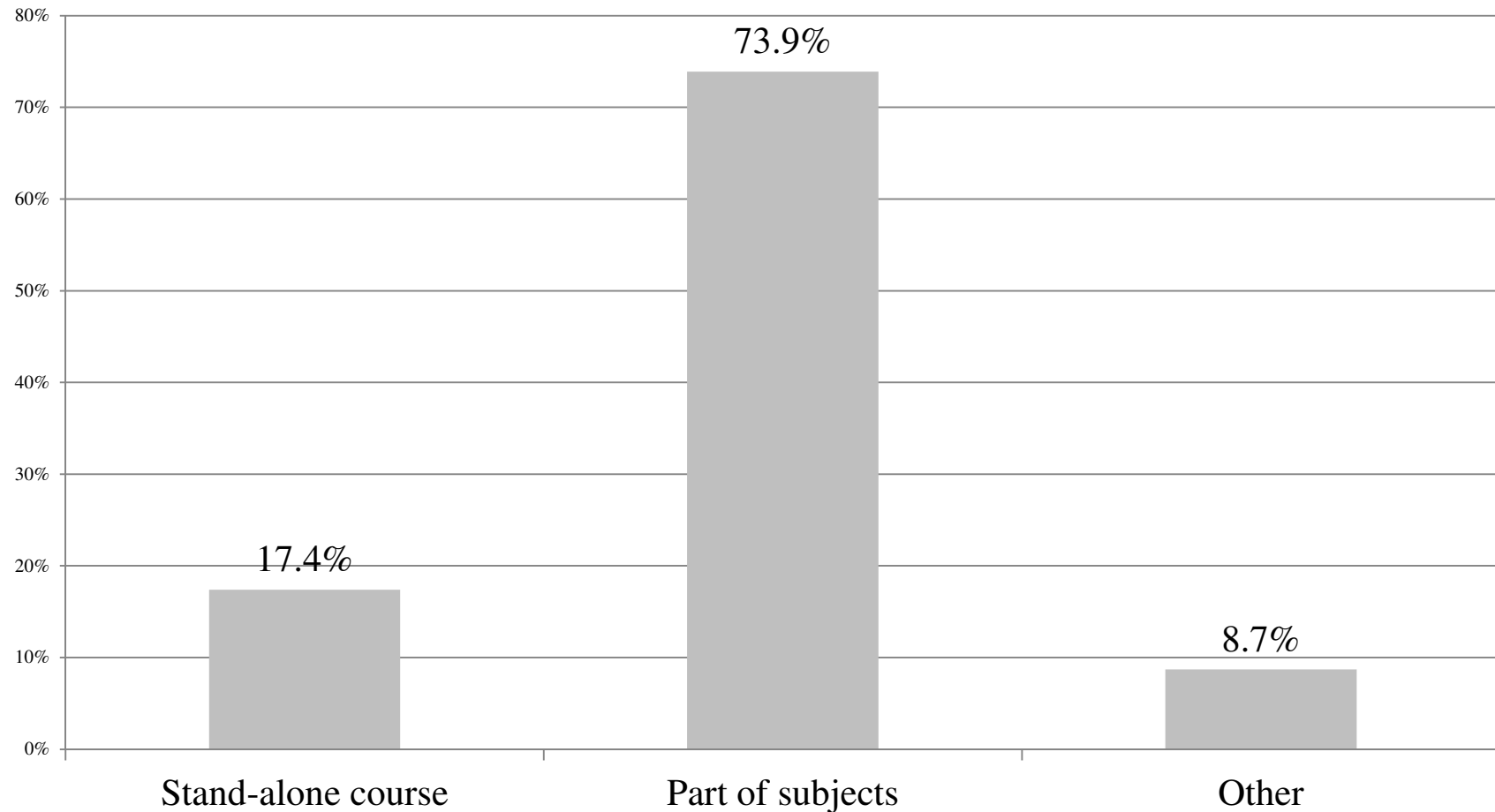
Analysis of the survey

- **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).

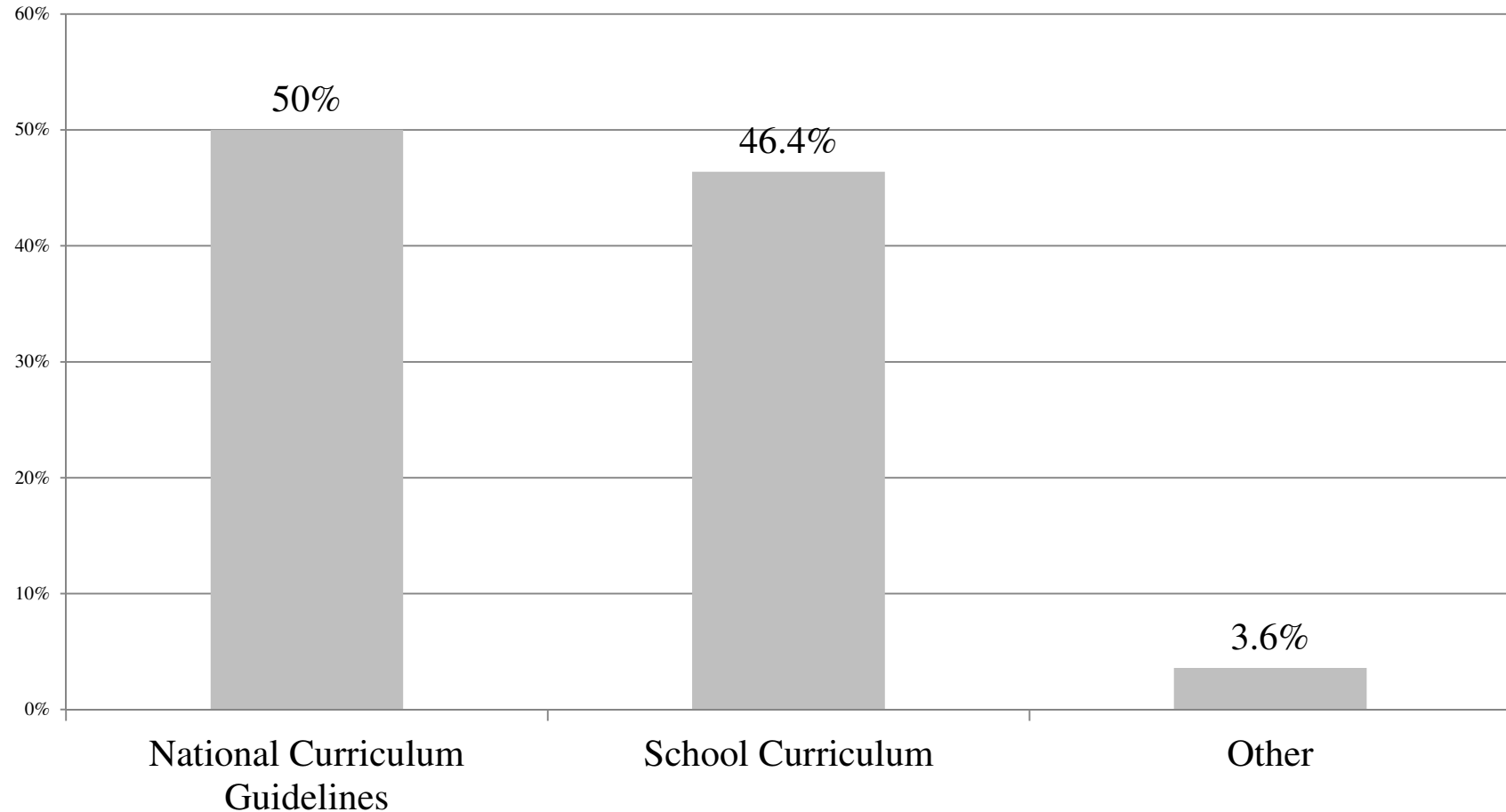
Who is responsible for the information literacy instruction?



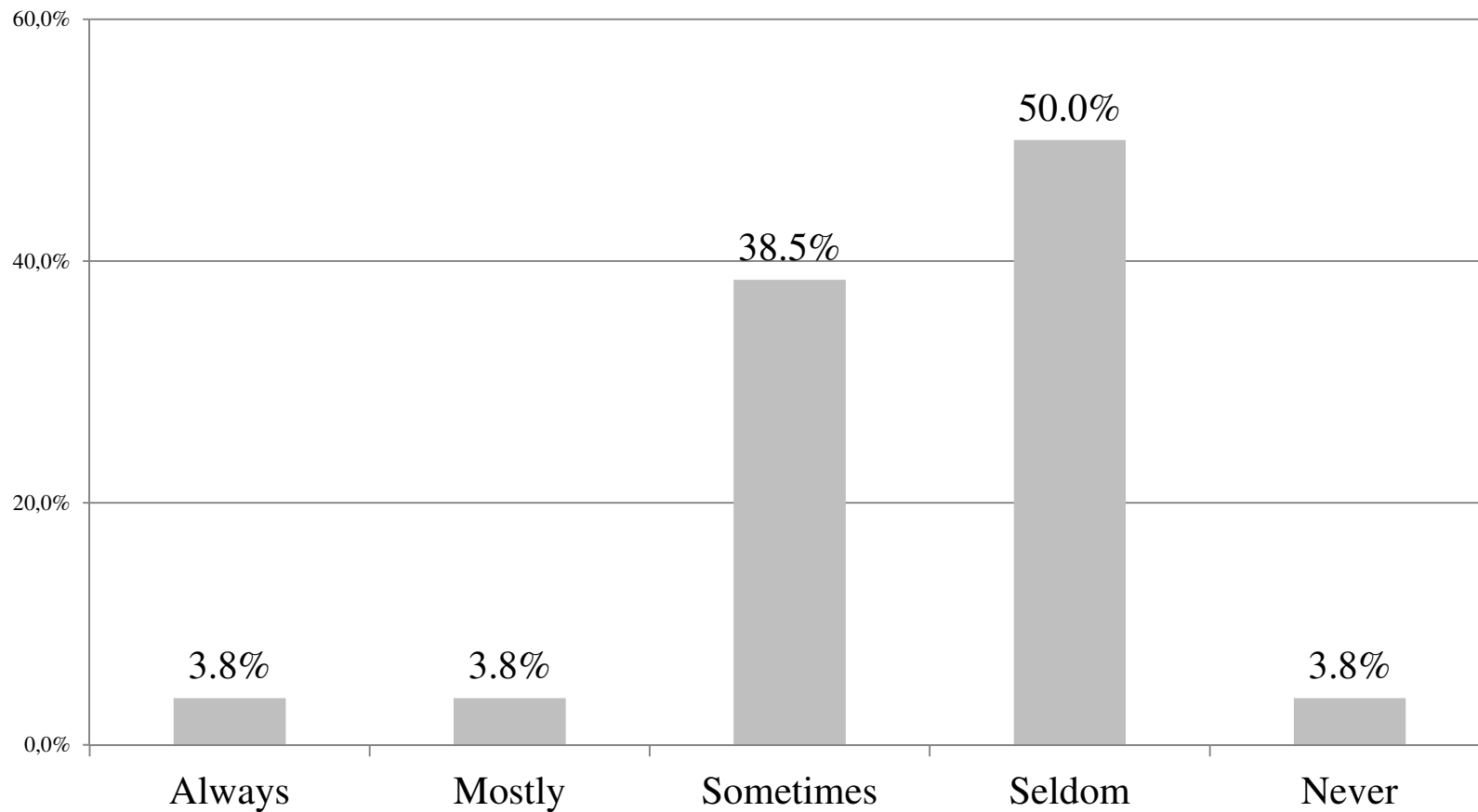
How is the IL instruction in your school organized?



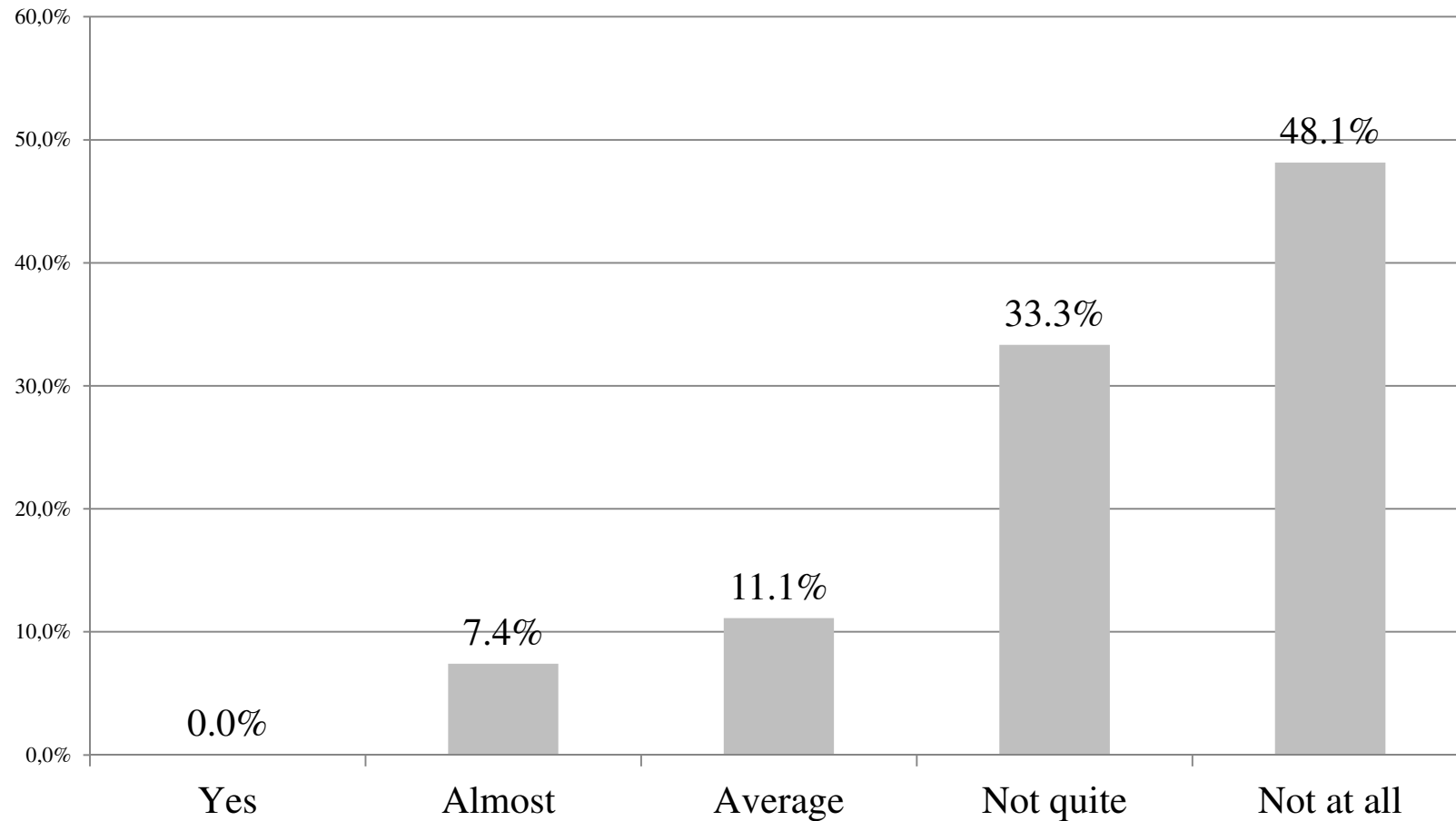
What type of curriculum is used?



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?



European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL), 20-23 October 2014

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 – 96.7% 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!

Questions?