NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

LEARNING MATERIALS BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM

Edited by Karl Christian Alvestad,
Kari H. Nordberg and Hege Roll-Hansen

New Perspectives on Educational Resources

Bringing new perspectives on educational resources together, this book considers how a range of learning materials can be used to effectively highlight creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking in learning.

Covering a broad scope of educational resources, the book examines the use of resources in Scandinavian education within language studies, literature, history, and social studies at all levels of education through empirically grounded research, including ethnographies and textual analysis. Written by practising experts in the field of education studies, chapters present examples of both cutting-edge digital media and more traditional artefacts and books, providing critical discussion and inspiration for how a range of resources can be used creatively within the classroom.

This interdisciplinary book is a valuable addition to scholarly discussions around educational development and learning and will be relevant for academics, researchers, and postgraduate students in the fields of teacher education, didactics, curriculum, and educational technology.

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Introduction

Karl Christian Alvestad, Kari H. Nordberg
and Hege Roll-Hansen

Educators need to select, adapt, and make use of different educational resources in their daily practices of teaching. Both their use of learning materials and the development of these resources take place in specific cultural and historical settings. The use and development of educational resources are influenced by a range of factors, such as economy, technology, and pedagogical ideas, and the use of resources are hence subject to change. Although much research has focused on the content of printed textbooks, textbook practices, and the use of different types of learning materials have also received attention from researchers (see e.g., Knudsen, 2013; Gilje et al., 2016; Fuchs & Bock, 2018). The school textbook has traditionally been regarded as the main educational resource, but the classroom has most often also included resources such as maps and blackboards (Bruillard, 2022). Going beyond the classroom can be regarded in a historical light: in his philosophy of learning, Froebel (1782–1852) emphasized play and outdoor experiences. In this volume, we apply a broad perspective on educational resources and include both historical and contemporary examples of debates and use of different resources in education in humanities and social sciences on all levels, from kindergarten to PhD.

It is often stated that our current society has moved beyond the era of industrialization and can be characterized as a society of knowledge, defined above all by the fast-evolving digital technologies. The outlines and direction of our educational systems therefore form a main concern for politicians and educators. The discussion takes place in the specific national contexts – but not least on an international level. Initiated by international organizations, a comprehensive catalogue of policy documents and analyses has been produced, defining the supposed competences and skills for the future world – and the subsequent need for comprehensive educational reforms. The concept of twenty-first-century skills has been prominent in the discussions of educational politics on a global level, outlined in different frameworks of education by organizations, such as OECD, EU, UNESCO, and the *Partnership of 21st century skills* (established in the USA in 2002) (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). It has also triggered a broad debate among educators, social scientists, and politicians on the role of educational systems balancing between serving the needs of economic and political systems and providing an independent base for criticism.

Curricular developments, increased digitalization, interest in place-based learning, and, lately, the Covid-19 situation, will perhaps lead to even more attention being paid to the use of resources – as well as to different types of learning resources. To us, a broad perspective on educational resources encompasses materials and activities not intentionally developed for educational purposes. Danish researchers have referred to such materials as *semantic* learning materials (Hansen & Gissel, 2017, p. 125). The term *secondary* learning materials refers, in a similar manner, to materials such as novels and films not produced for or originally intended for teaching. Textbooks and learning portals are examples of *primary* learning materials, which can also be described as *didacticized* learning resources (see for example Gilje, 2021, pp. 231–232; Skjelbred, 2019, pp. 17–23). "Didacticized" is a neologism from German *Didaktik* that refers to the processes of both planning and reflecting on teaching, and hence, "a didacticized learning material has a more or less implicit design for learning inscribed in it" (Hansen, 2006 in Bundsgaard & Hansen, 2011, p. 33). In this volume, although also focusing on specific materials, we see many examples of design for learning as a "constellation of artifacts (which can be called learning materials) arranged (in space) and articulated (in time) by someone with the intention to initiate and support someone's learning" (Bundsgaard & Hansen, 2011, p. 32).

Learning materials, educational media, educational resources, designs for learning, pedagogical texts, educational texts – these are some of the terms surrounding the field. In a changing and diverse educational landscape, the deployment of terms may differ. In this volume, we emphasize how materials and practices have *potentials* for learning, and that teachers and students can thus use these in creative and collaborative ways. Through practice and critical reflection, teachers may acquire skills that can unlock the potentials of possible educational resources within and beyond the classroom.

While the quantity of potential resources may be larger in today's digital knowledge society, teachers have nonetheless employed resources in different historical and societal contexts. Many of the examples presented in this volume might be transferable and applied in both analogue and digital settings. We see these settings as complimentary and that they to some extent require similar skills and abilities by the educators using them. Both types of learning materials can be applied in creative, collaborative – and critical – ways.

Creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration – together with communication – are the key competences often referred to as the four Cs, which are central to the idea of twenty-first-century skills (see for example Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2009; Qian & Clark, 2016; van Laar et al., 2017). Many of the chapters in this volume explore the potential and relevance of twenty-first-century skills to educational practices and the use of resources. They exemplify creative ways of using resources in different contexts, with studies that are grounded in pedagogical practices, as well as in the humanities and social sciences.

We emphasize a strong connection between these practices and the concrete subjects of knowledge as we explore the potentials of educational resources to promote competencies and knowledges relevant to the humanities and social sciences. The authors place their studies and examples within the traditions of their specific subject traditions and their associated pedagogies. As such, the book draws together chapters that showcase the continuing importance and relevance of the pedagogical traditions of the humanities and social sciences for promoting learning inside and outside the classroom.

Today's policies, both nationally and internationally, often focus on the future, and there might be inherent presentism in the discourse on skills. By also including historical perspectives, we find continuities and can put today's practices in both contemporary and historical contexts. Another point that can be discussed is whether the idea of a repertoire of skills may also constrain creative ways of learning and using learning materials. Although these concepts connote independent thinking, multi-perspectivity, and the capacity for posing relevant questions, the rhetoric of twenty-first-century competencies has also been criticized as giving "yet another facet of an economist approach to education" and preparing workers for "knowledge-intensive economies or even in some cases for particular firms" (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009, p. 6).

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated an acute need for educators across the world to re-think how they use diverse learning arenas and digital and analogue resources in their teaching (Gouëdard et al., 2020). This re-thinking highlights how individuals and institutions adapt (drawing on creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication) to continue to provide education effectively in the face of Covid-related challenges. The recent events have further accentuated the need for literature that addresses the use of educational resources to promote and attain such skills. By considering the recent and ongoing process aspects that impact education across levels, this volume seeks to address these themes from Norwegian educational contexts.

The chapters in this book are written by authors who work within an educational setting where collaborative learning and social constructivist perspectives dominate. These perspectives thus influence many of the chapters of the book. Drawing on the ideas of Jean Piaget, of learning through one's own actions and exploration (Halvorsen, 2017, p. 181; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2009, p. 294), and Lev Vygotsky, of learning through participation in social and linguistic collectives and interactions (Halvorsen, 2017, pp. 205–207; Schunk, 2009, p. 243), we understand learning to take place in an active and relational process. This understanding is reflected in the recent educational reform in Norway, LK20 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017), where social learning is seen as one of the cornerstones of the curriculum. Thus, the chapters below offer complimentary and comparative examples of the diversity of educational resources and theories aiming at the same target: a good education for the future.

Simultaneously with promoting an active and social learning style, the recent curriculum reforms also draw on international trends such as twenty-first-century skills, and above all questions of what kind of knowledge and education societies need and want for the present and the future. Drawing on the ideas of Støren et al. (2006), Imsen (2020a), and Merricks (2014), we argue that the evolution towards a knowledge society places new demands on education compared to the demands reflected in the previous prevalent industrial societies of the west. Thus, the shift of political and policy understanding of societal development, and education's place within it, frames the demands placed on educators to keep their education relevant.

At the same time, educational resources, both within a traditional classroom and beyond it, need to be updated and adjusted from time to time to prevent them from becoming outdated and irrelevant for students. This point was, according to Halvorsen (2017, p. 204), argued by Vygotsky, and it emphasizes the need for a connection between the lives and experiences of students and that presented in the educational resources they are exposed to. Imsen (2020b) shows how this ideal is part of the individual adaptations of education for each and every student. Both this individually customized education and the need for updated resources speak to one overarching element of education, namely making it accessible for students, and ensuring the relevance of the education for the students' lives and individual experience. Imsen (2020b) describes the individual characteristics and life experiences as the students' life world, meaning their whole being, that is the foundation for learning and attainment. Drawing on these "life worlds" means educators should be open to drawing actively on resources and activities outside the classroom so that activities, resources, and learning are engaging with the real-life experiences and challenges of students. Such specifically curated learning activities, Imsen argues (2020a, p. 177), will promote interest in learning, enhance students' motivation, and contribute to their *Bildung*.

The concept of *Bildung* or its Norwegian equivalent *dannelse* – meaning the development of a person's morals, personality, behaviour, and values – reflects among other things the impact of the ideas of Wolfgang Klafki in Norway. Imsen argues, on the basis of Klafki's didactical theory, that it is the educator's role to examine and consider whether an educational resource has content that has the capacity to stimulate the students' *Bildung*. She claims, like Klafki (2011), that learning and *Bildung* happen when students engage with "exemplary" learning resources that trigger the students' active learning (Imsen, 2020a, pp. 177–179, Klafki, 2011, p. 176). Furthermore, they highlight that not all learning resources have this capacity, and thus that educators need, as suggested above, to evaluate critically and select activities and resources on the basis of their suitability. To help educators achieve this, Klafki outlined three categories that a resource or activity would need to work on to be an exemplary educational resource. There is nothing in these categories that suggests they only exist within the classroom, thus also opening the door to including other resources and activities outside the traditional classroom.

The overall aim is, as Straum (2018, p. 50) argues, to give students "insight into base categories, methods, work techniques and principles in a subject". Consequently, if educators work towards this overall aim, then educational resources, like those included in this volume, will contribute to educating the students in both overall values and principles, and the key competencies of the subject studied.

The chapters within this volume include a vast number of different educational resources mainly from a Norwegian context, including specific sites and places, diverse types of activities, artefacts, and media in a contemporary and historical perspective. The volume is divided into three parts: (I) places, (II) activities and artefacts, and (III) new media. This thematic organization provides the reader with perspectives on and examples of the use of educational resources in the humanities and social sciences in education. The first part is concerned with examples of resources and perspectives on place-based education; the second part comprises contributions that consider how artefacts and activities contribute to learning. The third part consists of chapters discussing new media, such as computer games and blogs, and the possibilities they offer in education. Combined, these three parts offer complimentary examples demonstrating different changes in and pressures on the use of resources in humanities and social sciences education in a Norwegian context.

Part I, Places, explores how sites, landscapes, and places can be invaluable resources for learning. The chapters in this first part of the book discuss the potential of place-based education to address different levels of learners and intended learning outcomes. Street names, World Heritage Sites, museums, but also the immediate surroundings and local environment, are examples of the role places may have in learning, and together the six chapters in this section comprise a variety of perspectives that allow for a holistic and wide-ranging consideration of the role of place(s) as educational resources.

The first two chapters are based on fieldwork where the authors have followed elementary school-classes learning about the past through visiting specific places that are used as educational resources. Audhild Lindheim Kennedy's chapter "Choreographing the Rjukan-Notodden industrial heritage: Uses of heritage in the Cultural Schoolbag" explores how students learn about industrial heritage in a small, post-industrialized town. She follows the students inside and outside the classroom as they explore this local cultural heritage through activities that give them a sensory experience of the past. Kennedy argues that the local heritage ideology instructs a social choreography in which the children both experience and perform the past industrial life, and that this serves the intention of protecting and preserving the local World Heritage – ideology. Kennedy's case is part of *The Cultural Schoolbag*, a large national programme for providing art and culture in Norwegian schools. Lise Camilla Ruud's chapter also takes a Cultural Schoolbag–project as her point of departure as she follows seventh graders confronting Norwegian whaling history visiting a whaling museum. "Museums and the socio-material emergence of curiosity" explores how objects, such as a gigantic model of a blue whale

and a preserved century-old foetus, have an impact on how curiosity may emerge at this concrete site of learning.

In the third chapter, "An 'Acropolis' in miniature' and a house that 'must be filled with spirit and content': Ideals of Bildung in the building of two Scandinavian schools in the 1920s", Anne Helene Høyland Mork discusses ideals of *Bildung*, uses of history, and pedagogical ideas as these were expressed in the planning, design, and inauguration of school buildings at two schools founded in the 1920s. Ideals from antiquity, but also from progressive pedagogy were inscribed into the buildings and the processes surrounding the founding of the two schools. Mork gives a historical perspective on how places, through the architectural design of its buildings, may be shaped to stimulate learning and interest in topics and how the design process and the architects' intentions may influence the learning environments. In a slightly different approach, Karl Christian Alvestad in "Street names as monuments and a starting point for teaching historical knowledge" argues, based on a Notodden example, that street names allow educators to address questions of identity, diversity, and democracy through locally important places relevant to the learner.

The last two chapters in this part of the volume, by Iben Brinch and Inger Birkeland, take different perspectives on place-based education. Brinch's chapter is titled "Reboot and gather your thoughts: Place-based writing as a learning resource for novice scholars". She explores place-based writing as an entrance to academic reflection, engagement, and writing. The study is based on "place-based" texts written by PhD candidates, and Brinch argues in favour of a "holistic" approach that connects biography, place, and profession. In "Discovering ecologies of learning in place-conscious education", Inger Birkeland discusses the importance of an ecological approach to place-conscious education. She revisits earlier research and highlights how collaboration and reciprocal teaching situated in the habitat of place offer an opportunity to think ecologically about place and learning. The literature on the concept of place, and on place-based learning, has been and is still an evolving field of scholarship, and Birkeland offers a critical discussion on the concept of place and place-based learning. Hence, this section then ends with an emphasis on theoretical development and critical discussion of place and place-based education in light of the climate crisis and the need for critical thinking and collaboration in education.

Part II, Activities and Artefacts, considers how objects or activities are used to raise emotional and cognitive engagement in students in order to obtain learning. The six chapters of this part discuss the didactical implications of these concrete teaching methodologies in a broader societal perspective, historically and/or politically. The first two chapters discuss different experiences of dealing with emotionally challenging topics within the context of teacher education. In the chapter "A war souvenir as learning resource", Kerstin Bornholdt focuses on how touristic souvenirs in specific contexts can be bearers of complex personal and emotional, as well as social and political narratives. She shows how interacting with such objects can thus lead to mobilizing empathy

as a didactical tool. Åsmund Aamaas, Kristin Gregers Eriksen, and Anne-Line Bjerknes take as their starting point in the chapter "Working with twenty-first-century skills through engaging with indigenous perspectives in teacher education" the legal obligations of Norwegian educational systems to integrate Sámi perspectives at all levels, including teacher education. The authors explore, by applying a collaborative autoethnographic methodology, how a reading circle nurtured deeper understandings of indigenous perspectives, and the engaging in "slow pedagogy" as a means to change the experience of "the other". Although the main aim of the chapter is to explore the potential of collective learning processes, this topic is linked to a broader political discussion on the meaning of twenty-first-century skills and the need to include indigenous knowledge and perspectives in these skills.

The political context of developing educational practices is also discussed in the following three chapters. By applying the method of critical discourse analysis to central educational political documents from Norway and England, Aya Thida Oo and Anders Davidsen explore in the chapter "Play-based learning discourses in the Norwegian and English curricula" how different understandings of play-based learning impact educational policies and practices in early years education in the UK and Norway. The authors show how societal values and political agendas of the two countries may have influenced the curricula relating to play-based learning in quite different ways. The political and societal context of learning and the use of resources is also the theme of the next two chapters in this section. They remind us that the adaptation of all educational resources and activities is dependent in different ways on contemporary socio-cultural norms and ideas. Merethe Roos' chapter "Critical thinking in the 1950s: Language dispute, textbooks, and newspaper debates in a Norwegian upper secondary school" reflects on how the highly contested Norwegian language politics in the 1950s, had local consequences. The educational implications of the language politics are analysed with reference to the ideology of twenty-first century skills and the concept of critical thinking, hence implying that this idea can be identified in mid-twentieth-century discussions on education. Hege Roll-Hansen's chapter "Into the woods: Forestation as education" treats the changing pedagogical, political, and ideological purpose of involving school children in forestation projects over a longer historical period, comparing this practice to today's ideals of education for sustainability.

The last chapter of this section "Songs in English-language education: A well-known resource used in the twenty-first century" scrutinizes how a widespread and well-established educational practice – the use of songs/singing in foreign language training – can be reinvented and made highly relevant in a modern context, defined by new technologies and cultural practices. By way of comprehensive empirical material, Ragnhild Lund explores the motivation of teachers and the theoretical foundation of this methodology. She finds that teachers in the study use songs primarily as a motivation factor and argues that more attention should be paid to the affordances of songs in foreign language teachers' education in order to obtain the full potential of this resource.

Part III, "New Media", consists of four chapters that explore how media innovations in the form of digital media and games can be used in teaching. Building on the understanding that the digital technology revolution of the twentieth century has resulted in new media that can be adapted or utilized for learning, these chapters offer a varied selection of opportunities and challenges which educators have to consider when approaching the use of digital media in education. Smartphones, blogs, and video games are examples of resources employed in education in our so-called digital age.

New technology and different forms of representation both challenge and give new opportunities for education. Critical thinking, historical consciousness, and resemiotization are some of the keywords for this section, which opens with Kari H. Nordberg's chapter "Teaching about pornography: A historical perspective on educational resources". This chapter takes a historical perspective on exploring how teaching in Norwegian schools has attempted to engage with pornography as a topic in sex education. In her study, Nordberg compares a historical attempt to use pornography in teaching from the 1980s with a contemporary guidebook about how to talk to young people about pornography. Both cases illustrate how pornography is a tricky topic for educators, and especially how visual educational media which can represent the phenomena is very difficult to use in a classroom setting, hence making different types of "indirect" approaches often necessary. Eirik Brazier and Magnus Sandberg's "Gamers' perspectives on the First World War: Developing historical consciousness using video games in teacher education" considers the use of non-education-developed media – video games – in learning. Their chapter considers how video games about the First World War can be used in higher education, and especially teacher education, to foster historical consciousness. Brazier and Sandberg draw on the presentation of the war in three different video games and discuss how educators can engage with the biases of the games to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes.

The last two chapters of this section, and of the book, explore how students' active engagement with blogs and blog comments in one, and redesigning and critical literacy skills in the other, can contribute to students' learning. Both Kari Anne Rustand and Marthe Øidvin Burgess demonstrate in their respective chapters how a teacher with the help of creativity and critical thinking can actively use blog comments and mobile phones in learning. Rustand's chapter "Roles in peer interaction in comment sections in educational blogs" explores how peer comments on educational blogs can be used to understand peers' interaction in online learning spaces, and to unpack how learners take on different roles in the online dialogue. For this chapter, Rustand draws on empirical data produced as part of a course in teacher education, and in so doing she highlights the learning potential embedded in these dialogues for teacher education students learning about communication in different forms. The final chapter of the book, "Redesign as method in critical literacy education" by Burgess, explores how examples of students' adaptation of non-fiction to film by using smartphones and adaptation of mythology in hand-drawn

Instagram posts can be inspirational examples of resemiotization. For this chapter, she draws on data from two case studies from Norwegian upper secondary schools, where students redesigned subject materials and through that critically engaged with the original materials subject to redesign. Through this, Burgess argues that redesign is an effective method for implementing critical literacy education. Hence, this section also offers examples of how digital new media opens up new learning resources beyond traditional textbooks and blackboards.

As these short presentations show, the chapters of this volume cover a wide range of perspectives and methods in their approach to the common theme – the use of learning resources beyond the traditional classroom. The chosen examples cover education at all levels. Some of the authors aim at exploring and discussing the didactical value and possibilities of concrete materials and teaching methodologies, while others look at how political contexts influence the availability and the use of different resources. Some texts present contemporary dilemmas and debates, while others discuss historical cases. The authors combine theoretical insights from current scientific debates from the social sciences and humanities with pedagogical practices that are situated in different historical, political, and cultural contexts.

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Part I
Places

1 Choreographing the Rjukan–Notodden industrial heritage

Uses of heritage in the Cultural Schoolbag

Audhild Lindheim Kennedy

Introduction

This chapter draws on a case study taken from my anthropological fieldwork and participant observation in Norway between 2019 and 2022 and explores the processes of learning invoked by local industrial heritage as it is conceptualised in an educational text (or curriculum) and utilised as a learning resource.[1] It addresses how local World Heritage may serve as a learning resource. In the first part of this chapter, I show how heritage is used as an educational resource in the classroom and during educational/school excursions. In the second part, I discuss how children use their senses and experience local heritage. I will address the question of whether heritage ideology conveys a specific narrative and teaches a particular social choreography during the activity. Furthermore, is it a performance or a social choreography of heritage ideology? Thus, this chapter discusses the performative and taught aspects of local heritage as it is used as an educational resource in a small, deindustrialised town in Norway.

The Cultural Schoolbag and UNESCO

The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) is a government-initiated educational program, implemented nationally in 2001. It constitutes the core of the 20-year-old national scheme for promoting the arts and culture of high quality to Norwegian school children, so that every child has the same access to arts and culture productions, independent of geographical location and socio-economic background and must be seen as a democratization of the arts and culture (Ruud et al., 2022, p. 97). In a follow-up study of TCS, anthropologist Hilde Lidén (2004) describes TCS as an ideological and politically grounded project that places children at the centre of productions within the arts and culture (Lidén, 2004, p. 23). Upon revision, in the white paper *Cultural Schoolbag for the future*[2] (Kultur- & kyrkjedepartementet, 2007–2008), continued anchoring within the school system is emphasised (Kultur- & kyrkjedepartementet, 2007–2008, p. 12). The white paper explicitly states that schools have a particular responsibility to provide follow-up activities in the classroom upon

completing a TCS-activity (p. 13), thus showing that TCS is considered to be an important learning resource in classroom education (p. 54), as well as indicating how schools must be organised to provide teachers with the competence to carry out these activities (pp. 17, 19, 23, 38). Accordingly, teachers are perceived as important role models for children when they experience art and culture (p. 53). Finally, TCS must adhere to the Norwegian National Curriculum (pp. 22–24). The museum educators facilitate student learning in accordance with National Curriculum and local environment. Relevant for this study is the emphasis the National Curriculum places on local environment and the local school authority's[3] responsibility to adjust and adapt the National Curriculum to a local context and environment. In this way, schools are allowed some room and freedom to adjust curriculum and subject content to their own local community and environment.

Empirical context

This chapter draws on empirical data from Notodden, a small, deindustrialised town in south-eastern Norway, where the Rjukan–Notodden Industrial Heritage Site was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015. The example used, *A Day in 1913*,[4] is a local TCS production offered to schools in Notodden, promoting local heritage. It is organised and developed by the Norwegian Industrial Worker's Museum (NIA) and TCS. Another collaborator, the Notodden Local History Society, provides a venue and actors. The excursion is aimed at year four students (9-year-olds) and is organised as 'time travel' back to 1913, where students meet several characters who supposedly lived in Grønnbyen, Notodden's company town. The programme is organised into two parts: the first half is spent in an old historic building/home in Grønnbyen, where amateur actors roleplay and oversee students carrying out household chores. The second half is spent in an old schoolhouse allowing children to experience the authority, discipline, and lessons of an imagined 1913 school.[5]

Below is an excerpt of my observations, describing the students' first encounter with the past and the 1913 teacher. Here, students meet an imagined time, i.e., 1913. In this example, they experience and possibly learn about the relationship between students and teachers in 1913, and how the classroom in this period was organised differently than what they are accustomed to.

A man wearing a pince-nez, white shirt, grey vest with a pocket watch, grey pants and boots walks over to us. 'Good morning, my name is teacher Goksøy!' He talks and gives instructions in stilted, old fashion Norwegian, making the children giggle.

Inside, the classroom is tiny with a large blackboard covering one wall. A long table with benches on either side dominates the room. The teacher instructs them how to sit: 'the young maidens must sit on the left side, the swains on the right side! Furthermore, sit with straight backs, hands resting and palms touching the tabletop. When answering a

question, put your hand up. Upon answering, you must stand up, before you answer! Understood?' The students nod, taking in the unfamiliar.

'Now, introduce yourselves; stand up and state your last name.' The children giggle as the teacher pronounces 'last names' in old-fashioned Norwegian. Some imitate him, exaggerating '*eeeeeeefternavnet*!' The children are visibly awkward about using their last names. Some forget: 'Only last name!' the teacher calls.

The museum also prepares for this excursion through online information: 'By the use of roleplay, dialogue and practical work in an authentic environment, the students are given a greater understanding of how Notodden was established and what family life was like in the local community in 1913' (Norsk Industriarbeidermuseum, n.d.). Already, the focus is on creating a connection between the students and the local place, rather than using it as a backdrop. This perception of place and learning, which focuses on creating ties between students and place, shares similarities with observations made by Hiroti and Martin (2021) in their study on how Māori children in New Zealand engage with place through bodily experiences (Hiroti & Martin, 2021, pp. 129, 137). I will return to this aspect of learning as embodied and tied to place later in this chapter.

From Paris to Notodden

Many of my interlocutors[6] look to authoritative heritage texts published by NGOs such as UNESCO, World Heritage Norway[7] and the Directorate for Cultural Heritage,[8] employing definitions of heritage used by these organizations. Here, it is important to emphasise the distance between Paris and Notodden – between the UNESCO centre and periphery, between experts and laymen – although, UNESCO indicates that universal implementation is a core value. 'What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application' (UNESCO, About World Heritage, n.d., paragraphs 1–3). According to both the experts at UNESCO and the laymen in Notodden, World Heritage is viewed as something irreplaceable, something the locals must preserve for future generations. These international white papers and grey literature are translated into the local context and encourage local learning resources and TCS to integrate these as their core values. Ultimately, even though UNESCO has a guiding role, the actual preservation of the individual World Heritage site is intrinsically administered by the local population according to the criteria set by UNESCO. Noteworthy here is the emphasised value in TCS on teaching local children about UNESCO World Heritage: 'The educational programme aims to provide the students with knowledge and a sense of honour in relation to World Heritage' (Norsk Industriarbeidermuseum, n.d.).

This notion involves a transfer of the value of World Heritage from the centre to the periphery and is an instrumentalization of local heritage for new

purposes, i.e., the education of children in order to create a sense of belonging and ownership of the local heritage. The process of heritage inclusion and exclusion, what to preserve and conserve versus that which has no apparent heritage value, is bypassed, leaving children out of the decision-making process. *A Day in 1913* serves not only as a case study and window on how heritage is utilised as a learning resource but also as an example of *adult* heritage prioritization.

Below are two observations on learning about heritage exemplified by the term 'cooper'. First it is introduced in the classroom as a new word, then the students are reintroduced to this term later in Grønnbyen and are by then familiar with it and know the words to explain it to Mrs. Dahl.

The classroom before the TCS-excursion

Teacher: 'As you know, on Monday we've an excursion to Grønnbyen, we'll learn about living in Grønnbyen in 1913, and be given some tasks to carry out. Many of you have watched *Farmen?*[9] The children nod affirmatively. 'So, it'll be a bit like that, going back in time and carrying out tasks from the old days. I've written on some pieces of paper the various tasks we'll carry out and unfamiliar terms from 1913. I want you to take one, look at it, but don't say anything! When everyone's taken one, you'll read aloud what it says and share what you think the word means'. The first child reads out *cooper* and admits they've no clue what it means. The teacher explains the term.

Grønnbyen 1913

Upon meeting Oscar, the cooper, who's just finished his night shift, Mrs. Dahl asks: 'Do you know what a cooper does?' Most raise their hands: 'He's a barrel-maker'. Mrs. Dahl: 'What are the barrels used for?' They seem unsure, one suggests: 'For storage?' Receiving an encouraging nod from Mrs. Dahl, she elaborates: 'The barrels are used to store and transport nitrogen fertiliser produced by Hydro, then shipped all over the world! "Our" fertiliser increases the production of potatoes eight times! Compared to old-fashioned manure or poo from animals!' Mrs. Dahl takes the children to the shed outside, where she shows them a hessian sack. She opens it, revealing its content: 'The white beads are fertiliser, fresh from the factory!' she explains, before letting the children dig their hands into the sack, touching the 'beads' with their fingers.

In my view, these two examples show that in learning about the past, students benefit when educational resources are used in different learning contexts. The term 'cooper' is given a meaningful context outside the classroom to which students can apply the term. In the classroom they are given words to describe the term, but not a setting. In Grønnbyen, they are introduced to Hydro and its production of fertiliser, some have a bodily experience of the product as they touch the white, synthetic fertiliser 'beads' with their hands.

These actions may therefore be seen as a performance set in motion by using the local World Heritage story as an educational resource. Later, I return to viewing the children's experiences in Grønnbyen as a performance.

Heritage in the classroom

After the excursion, the teacher invites me back to the classroom to observe their follow-up work, and they elaborate on how to integrate TCS activities into classroom teaching: 'I've made room for our follow-up activities in the Norwegian lesson – we've no more time left in humanities, so I'll ask them to write ten sentences with information about our day in Grønnbyen or write an essay about being a child in 1913'. Again, heritage is used as a learning resource, now in the subject of Norwegian. The classroom follow-up activities take place within a week of the excursion to Grønnbyen, as according to educational research on this topic, such excursions fade from students' memory (Fjær, 2012, pp. 167–168, 192; Remmen & Frøyland, 2013a, p. 80; Remmen & Frøyland, 2013b, p. 82; Remmen & Frøyland, 2015, p. 24). 'The quality of students' understanding rests on their ability to master and use bodies of knowledge that are valued by their culture. More specifically, it rests on their ability to make productive use of the concepts, theories, narratives, and procedures' (Mansilla & Gardner, 1997, p. 162). Furthermore, the students' learning process benefits from having an end product, such as a report, or in this case an essay.

The follow-up activities may also provide students and teachers a way of approaching the topic with a more critical perspective than is possible during the excursion. As Kielland and Nilsen (2013) observe, during excursions students may be drawn into the perspectives and ideas presented and are thus temporarily blinded, forgetting about critical reflection on the topic at hand (Kielland & Nilsen, 2013, pp. 201–202). Others have shown that students are less motivated and show a lower degree of learning during follow-up work than during the excursion, making strategies for deep learning essential (Remmen & Frøyland, 2015, p. 24). Follow-up activities might help the teacher to encourage critical reflection when working with the information and knowledge acquired during the excursion, thus helping students to reveal alternate information or other knowledge on the presented topic – thereby encouraging a deeper knowledge and understanding of the topic, specifically, heritage. However, during a conversation with a high school teacher, they confided to me that they wished for other and more critical stories to be told in TCS productions about the local World Heritage site and in classroom teaching, thus revealing some resistance to present heritage ideology.

Conceiving the past

The use of roleplay in museum education is not unique for NIA and TCS (see Allern, 2016; Johanson & Pedersen, 2019; Luff, 2000; Lund, 2016; Magelssen, 2004). Roleplay is considered to be an educational tool which motivates

and engages, as well as promoting empathy, learning and understanding of a topic (Johanson & Pedersen, 2019, p. 74). A relevant aspect of using roleplay as a method for teaching children about the past is history literacy because it deals with questions of how to understand the past and to practice understanding the past on the actors' terms (Lund, 2016, p. 134; Johanson & Pedersen, 2019, pp. 76–77). These are important and relevant aspects in learning about the past, though here the focus is on the sensed and children's bodily experiences as they take part in 1913 activities.

I conducted some individual interviews with children who participated in *A Day in 1913*, but who belong to other Notodden schools than the one I visited in the above example. My interpretation of these interviews is that these students were, to some degree, introduced to TCS-production but did not have follow-up activities. In the interview, they seemed to rely on memory and the sensed, rather than on information taught in class (unlike the school class I visited), thus making the sensed and bodily experiences *their* source of knowledge. The interview below illustrates my observations.

Me: D'you know why you participated in *A Day in 1913*?
Child: No, … or maybe to learn about what it was like a long time ago?
Me: If you imagine you lived in the house in Grønnbyen, how d'you think that might've been?
Child: Small, perhaps, it's quite a small house; not so big, but enough for six people. He, the grandfather; or something. He worked in Hydro, I think, he worked there and that's why he had his own house; and they were really pleased about their house too!
Me: Why's that; d'you think?
Child: Because they could have a house of their own!
Me: D'you know what Hydro is?
Child: It's where they make that synthetic fertiliser; from air.
Me: Did you know that they made fertiliser in Notodden before the excursion?
Child: Maybe, because my big sister, she has a greenhouse, and she makes fertiliser or maybe she uses that synthetic fertiliser; don't remember.

Here, I believe, the child has an experience of the past and local heritage. However, it seems that the experienced and the sensed overshadow information and knowledge given during TCS productions. My focus is drawn to the child's emphasis on their sensory experiences when describing living in Grønnbyen. In their answers they compare the experience of the past with their own experience of home and the emphasis is on 'quite small', 'not so big, but enough for six people' and 'they were really pleased about their house'. In a study by Hiroti and Martin (2021), a child remarks: 'I never really knew Whanganui as a beautiful place, just the place I live' (Hiroti & Martin, 2021, p. 138). In both cases the children observed the place where they live in a new light – the house in Grønnbyen transforms and is rediscovered as a house

which 'they were really pleased about', due to new, partly embodied experiences, reconnecting the student's body to a local place (Hiroti and Martin, 2021, p. 138). I believe this explains how the sensed and the experienced aspects pop more readily in the child's mind during our interview.

Choreographing 1913

Hiroti and Martin (2021) encourage us to engage ourselves and our bodies to place with movements and reflections. So far, I have considered the educational aspects of TCS activities, next I look at the bodily experience of Grønnbyen as being socially choreographed in how students move, experience, and perform a variety of activities set in an everyday 1913 context.

Performing heritage

During the educational program, the children take an active part in everyday activities of 1913, experiencing a world both familiar and unfamiliar, ranging from attending school to emptying chamber pots. Thus, they learn about the unfamiliar industrial past of 1913 through the familiar present, in Grønnbyen, their neighbourhood, with their bodies and senses. As Edensor (2001) observes, 'Performance is a useful metaphor since it allows us to look at the ways in which identities are enacted and reproduced, informing and (re)constructing a sense of collectivity' (Edensor, 2001, p. 69). According to Edensor, identity is performed, dynamic, and processual. Emphasizing performance as a metaphor enables a view of 'the everyday, whereby conventions are reinforced and broken', furthermore allowing us to explore why particular habits and practices are carried out, which, in turn, reproduce and challenge the social world (Edensor, 2001, p. 59). To some extent, this identity-performance and reproduction of the social world take place in the TCS production, as local heritage is reproduced in the students' performances. The programme opens a space to be explored analytically. On the flip side, the authority of museum educators and teachers is undeniable, as there is a mandatory aspect to the programme in which the children must learn, sense, and embody heritage and values associated with it. To me, this implies a certain heritage ideology.

Behind all performances there is an idea or notion of how to perform – there is a planned choreography that sequences the movements of (student) bodies as specified or designed by a choreographer. The choreographic aspect of the children's movements, set in motion by the TCS production, captures my attention, and I approach this material from the perspective of social choreography rather than as a phenomenological perspective.

Like Hewitt (2005), I see the value of stressing the social function of choreography – 'its dispositions and manipulations of bodies in relation to each other' that put the social order into focus (Hewitt, 2005, p. 11). Social choreography points to the way people are compelled to move through the world as it 'speaks to the ways the people of a given society are trained to move

(both physically and spatially) and to contort and comport their bodies in keeping with and in (counter) production to a given social order' (Johnson, 2018, p. 63), constituting a space where social interaction is performed and practiced.

Helstad and Øiestad (2021) point to how knowledge and learning activities may be developed in collaboration with students, in a process where the teacher acts as director of the production (pp. 27–28), allowing the learning processes to be seen as theatre dramaturgy (p. 32). *A Day in 1913* shares many similarities with Helstad and Øiestad's notion of learning as a theatre production. Thus, it can be seen as an interactive theatre production in which the adults and the children come together as an ensemble making a production, specifically a heritage production. In my view, perceiving *A Day in 1913* as social choreography points more in the direction of viewing the students' movements as embodying a specific heritage ideology or social order. Thus, the concept of social choreography highlights the heritage social order, rather than student performances – and as a concept, choreography is less rigid than that of theatre production. Therefore, I read the examples below as a social choreography of industrial heritage.

Chamber pots

The children go about their chores; emptying chamber pot, giggling, and pretending to be grossed out. The chamber pots are filled with 'urine'; a special mix made by members of the Local History Society. I observe the children tasked with emptying the chamber pots. One says: 'Mary says it's not real pee, that it's just water', showing the pot to the others. The child seems quite pleased with themself and asks aloud: 'Where do we empty the chamber pots?' and, upon receiving an answer, does as they are told and searches the outside area for another activity but notices that one of the others has not emptied the last pot. They turn to the child, saying: 'You have to empty the pot!' 'No, I don't want to, I want to rake the lawn first!' 'But Mary said that it's not real pee; it's just water!'

Bloomers

Mrs. Dahl carries the tub and washboard outside and places the washboard in the tub, resting it against her knees. She takes a piece of clothing and washes it, showing children the movements. The kids seem impatient to give it a go. They wash the clothes vigorously. Some kids walk by and tease 'Oh, look at you! You're washing clothes!', laughing at the pair bent over the tub. One replies: 'Oh, but it's fun!' 'Yeah!', the other one agrees. They ignore the teasing and continue, taking turns, chatting about the technique of washing by hand as the others observe them. One washes a pair of bloomers and wonders aloud what sort of clothing it is, holding the undergarment up so that they can investigate it properly. Mrs. Dahl on her way past answers: 'Those are undies'. 'Yuck!', says the kid holding the pair, dropping them. The onlookers have lost

interest, walking away, though as soon as they are out of sight the kid fishes the bloomers out of the tub and continues.

When children re-enact emptying the chamber pots and washing clothes, the intention is that they sense or experience heritage. Their actions may be seen as bodily experiences of heritage, as they re-enact these 1913 activities. The concept of social choreography lets us view systems of possible actions as 'established upon habituated patterns of interaction in space and time' in which the socio-cultural signals are what we can expect from an interaction (Seawright, 2018, p. 923).

When children empty the chamber pots, or are instructed by the strict teacher, a personal link to 1913 may be established, as in the interview above where the child connects synthetic fertiliser with their sister's greenhouse. TCS activities give children a framework in which they seem to sense and experience heritage. In TCS's narrative, the 1913 activities work as a source of reflection through which students may be encouraged to engage with heritage. The fun part of this performance is important, as it creates a connection between the child, the activity, 1913, and heritage – thereby making heritage a fun experience. Thus, heritage speaks, as mentioned earlier, 'to the ways the people of a given society are trained to move (both physically and spatially) and to contort and comport their bodies in keeping with and in (counter) production to a given social order' (Johnson, 2018, p. 63).

1913   Body-ballets

Wee et al. (2019) view encounters as 'ordered moments of time in space, distinctive interactions that are produced by choreography rather than happenstance' (Wee et al., 2019, p. 110). The encounters in the TCS programme take place between museum educators and students and are intended, staged, and planned, rather than accidental or random – though an aspect of improvisation is internalised in each task. *A Day in 1913* may be seen as initiating learning in which a social choreography is developed according to the interaction between the educators, students, and the value of industrial heritage. Thus, the concept of choreography is here a construct, rather than a metaphor (p. 111), because as a metaphor, it directs the analytical focus towards social action and interchangeability (Aronsson, 1998, p. 76). Instead, choreography as a concept highlights aspects such as design, performance, and ideology: 'to show how bodies in spaces of encounter are rhythmically ordered to move through space in particular ways at specific speeds and times' (p. 109). Choreography as a concept also 'suggests time rhythm, space, force, tempo, and bodily motion. It highlights a relation of power: the chorographer makes the dance for other bodies to carry out' (Aronsson, 1998, p. 112). In this way, local heritage is both performed and an educational resource that is choreographed by a choreographer according to an ideology conceptualised by the local curriculum.

A Day in 1913 is therefore a social choreography, performed and repeated annually by evoking Rjukan–Notodden's industrial heritage. Grønnbyen is a

space where museum educators have designed and choreographed an encounter with Notodden's industrial society in the year of 1913. The behavioural geographer David Seamon, in his phenomenologically inspired research on the human experience of space and place in everyday life, looks at encounters between people and between people and objects. During everyday activities, people meet and interact with each other and objects. This kind of behaviour stretches over time and space in such a manner that it 'takes on a sense of place' (Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 35), so that in a way the space transforms to place through children re-enacting an imagined 1913.

The phenomenological perspective, according to Seamon and Nordin, recognises how everyday activities can reveal spatial behaviour which is both habitual and bodily, provided by places where everyday activities occur. I understand the presumed everyday activities from 1913 carried out by students in terms of Seamon's *body-ballets* (Seamon, 1980, p. 157; Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 36), that is as socially choreographed body-ballets. 'A body-ballet is a set of integrated gestures and movements that sustain a particular task or aim, for example, washing dishes, ploughing, house building, operating machinery, potting' (Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 36). Thus, I view emptying chamber pots, washing with a washboard, and how students sit at their school desks as socially choreographed body-ballets. These body-ballets are included in the TCS production because they are seen as everyday activities that could have taken place in Grønnbyen in 1913. These performances are based on everyday activities which the museum educators have assessed as everyday activities of people in 1913. These activities are not organic or integrated into students' personal everyday activity but are rather based on a notion of 'what might have been', and hence these activities' relevance.

Time-space routines

The concept of body-ballet, taken from behavioural geography, is analytically helpful when examining the students' performances in the presumed 'everyday' 1913 activities. These reflect museum educators' conceptions of 1913. In my view, these body-ballets are choreographed socially. In the TCS production students mirror body-ballets which they are told people performed in 1913. The spatial aspect is similar, though by virtue of the TCS production and its social choreography, new meaning is given to a specific physical place, because in the year 1913, Notodden was not a World Heritage site. Thus, the timeline of 1913–2022 unfolds the industrial heritage.

A Day in 1913 may be viewed as a time-space routine (Seamon, 1980, p. 158) within the educational system in Notodden. According to Seamon, time-space routines consist of series of habitual everyday activities, of 'habitual bodily behaviours which extend through a considerable portion of time' (Seamon, 1980, p. 158). Viewed as time-space routines, *A Day in 1913* is organised around a system of bodily behaviours determined by habits which people in Grønnbyen in 1913 might have had – by the 'might have been'. In my view,

patterns of Seamon's space-time routines can be detected throughout the day in Grønnbyen, as in the excerpt where the students meet the 1913 teacher. Do children embody and experience 1913 – of being a child in a presumed 1913 context, by listening to the instructions given by the strict teacher? The TCS production can be viewed as a social choreography that fixes or instructs their movements in a routine, *a time-space routine*. According to Seamon and Nordin (1980), this can incorporate body-ballets and 'is a set of habitual body behaviours that extend over a considerable length of time' (Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 36). Accordingly, time-space routines are made up of elements from everyday living, and people take on, automatically, these activities over time, creating a continuity in their lives, so that they can 'do automatically in the present what they did in the past' (Seamon, 1980, p. 159). In my view, the notion of time-space routines may be discerned in the 1913 everyday activities because these are tied to a specific place. Seamon and Nordin (1980) note that, as humans, we do not only have a sense of place; but we also establish ties to place[10] that create certain behavioural patterns.

> [P]lace is defined as the sum of individual human behaviours. Place ballet, in contrast, interprets place as a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Its identity and dynamics are as real as the human behaviours happening in that place. Place ballet is an environmental synergy that people unknowingly create.
>
> (Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 40)

The TCS production may thus be seen as a medium which fills the space of Grønnbyen with meaning and establishes ties between it, the students, and local heritage – thereby constructing Grønnbyen as a place which children would want to preserve, conserve, and value in the future. According to Seamon and Nordin, the place ballet 'provides a concept that might have a role in protecting, enhancing and creating environments that generate a sense of vitality, atmosphere and well-being' (Seamon & Nordin, 1980, p. 41). These are values emphasised in the local curriculum: 'Heritage may provide most of us with a sense of meaning and value in our lives, and it can give us inspiration!' (Telemark Fylkeskommune, 2018, p. 29). I believe that the local curriculum in Notodden is set in motion by *A Day in 1913*, evoked by spatial and temporal aspects of lived life, and captured as a time-space routine in the TCS production.

Considering *A Day in 1913* as social choreography in which the house in Grønnbyen forms the backdrop, the re-enactment and performance of children living there takes place as the students engage in 'interaction in space and time that reflect social-cultural cues allowing participants to know what to expect from an interaction' (Seawright, 2014, p. 923). The framework of *A Day in 1913* is not absolute but is based on a heritage ideology that translates a sociocultural understanding of reason, tradition, and behaviour – choreographed by adults in a wide sense, i.e., by adults such as museum educators, teachers, and politicians.

Conclusion

Values such as local ownership and belonging are at the core of the local curriculum. Moreover, the students perform a social choreography instructed by heritage ideology. By participating in the TCS excursion, children are familiarised with values of industrial heritage and behind it is an intention to create ties of ownership with local industrial heritage. Local heritage is utilised as a learning resource and interacts with the students through educational artefacts and choreography. Ultimately, it aims to encourage local children's education, interest, and knowledge of heritage, creating a bond with heritage objects and making a connection to a local World Heritage Site. In turn, the initiative behind the local curriculum can be seen as informed by a heritage ideology that places value on a particular narrative and social choreography with the intention of shaping local children as future citizens who will care for, protect, and manage the World Heritage Site satisfactorily, according to UNESCO. As a learning resource, this kind of educational activity is engaging and fun, although the heritage ideology may restrict children's ways of understanding heritage as the sensed and experienced are emphasised rather than critical reflection.

Notes

1 In spring 2019, 2021, and 2022, I carried out, as participant observation, informal conversations and interviews with interlocutors involved or participating in an educational activity.
2 Author's translation.
3 In Norway, primary schools are generally public and owned by the local municipality.
4 The year 1913 was selected because Notodden was granted town status and is the year in which Notodden's first public school opened.
5 Old-fashioned teaching methods make an impression on the students, who find the teacher stricter compared to today.
6 These are museum staff, teachers, politicians, and bureaucrats.
7 Norsk Verdensarv https://www.norgesverdensarv.no/world-heritage.127100.en.html.
8 Riksantikvaren https://www.riksantikvaren.no/en/about-the-directorate-for-cultural-heritage/.
9 *Farmen* is a Norwegian reality television show on a farm in an assumed past, without modern technology.
10 The topic here is not perceptions of place. For further reading, I refer to Agnew's (1987) work on place as *location*, *sense of place* and *locale*, ideas further developed by Castree (2009).

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2 Museums and the socio-material emergence of curiosity

Lise Camilla Ruud

… A class of seventh graders has arrived at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord. They meet up with the educator in front of the museum building and gather around a platform. Some of the students sit down on it, just as they are supposed to. Others stand or lie down on top of it, and are told to sit properly. Next to the platform, a monument of a polar bear, the perfect height for climbing, tempts a couple of students to mount its back. They are told to get down and sit next to their classmates while the educator explains what will happen during their visit: they will learn about whales and the whaling industry that was once important to their hometown.

(Ruud, excerpt from fieldnotes)

Seventh graders are curious explorers. Upon their arrival at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, a small town in south-eastern Norway, they immediately start to explore. What kind of place is this? How are we supposed to act here? What makes the objects here so special? This chapter follows groups of 11- and 12-year-old students during their visit to the museum in what was considered Norway's "whaling capital" until the 1960s. During the visit, the educator takes the lead and guides the students through the museum. She presents objects and introduces topics such as the different species of whales and the economic and environmental impact of whaling while encouraging students to engage in discussions.

The concept of curiosity guides this analysis. Curiosity will be understood as emerging through socio-material interplays among the students, educators, and museum objects and –spaces. The first section presents the analytical approach, followed by three sections analysing how curiosity emerges during the visit. Museums present collections of objects, and the first part of the analysis focuses on the students' initial explorations of the exhibits. Second, the analysis shows how counterfactual curiosity emerges among the students when they encounter a giant model of a blue whale. In the third section of the analysis, a fluid-preserved whale foetus is the starting point for student discussions. Museum objects can inspire different meanings for visitors, and this section explores how the foetus functions as a tool for the fostering of curiosity, while curricular concepts introduced by the educator seem to prevent reflection.

The analysis is based on observations of five groups of seventh graders participating in the museum's educational program during September 2020. I remained mostly passive during the observations, but if students approached me with comments or questions, I engaged actively.

Curiosity in education and museums

Curiosity is often explained as the desire and craving for new knowledge, expressed through explorative behaviour towards something new and unknown. The epistemic desire intrinsic to curiosity means seeking knowledge for its own sake, rather than in service of an external goal (Lindholm, 2018, p. 987; Menning, 2018, p. 242; Oudeyer & Smith, 2016, p. 493). Curiosity is a key resource in the development and training of thought, and scholarly interest in the concept stretches back to antiquity (Blumenberg, 1985, 2006; Leigh, 2013). Within education studies, Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) is considered a starting point for academic interest in the concept, later followed by influential scholars such as Key (1900), Dewey (1910), Piaget (1953), and Freire (1970). While the desire to seek knowledge for its own sake has been seen as constitutive of curiosity for a long time, the concept has changed as it has incorporated different historical and cultural contexts. Ideas about who should be curious and why someone should act with curiosity and under what circumstances have changed across time and between cultures (Zurn et al., 2020).

The emphasis on fostering skills like collaboration, creativity, and innovation within education as ways to meet societal needs is specific to our time and political context. Parallel to this emphasis, a turn towards curiosity has taken place within education studies. Central is the idea that curiosity, as a driver for knowledge, is an inherently relational and social phenomenon. While earlier scholarship understood curiosity as something that takes place within the individual, a frequent argument today is that curiosity emerges and plays out between people (cf. Engel, 2011; Heggen & Lynngård, 2021; Lindholm, 2018, pp. 987, 989; Menning, 2018, p. 241; Zurn et al., 2020). Emphasis on the social and relational dimension of curiosity, and a corresponding intrinsic political potential, was seen in Freire's revolutionary pedagogy, and in his arguments on how children's spontaneous curiosity could be developed into an epistemological curiosity apt to work against social oppression (Freire, 1970; Menning, 2018). More recently, scholars have suggested *curiosity studies* as a proper, cross-disciplinary field of research, in which curiosity should be seen as fuelling "an openness to difference and a drive toward innovation" as it "has the capacity to upend what we know, how we learn, how we relate, and what we can change" (Zurn et al., 2020, pp. xii–xiii).

Fostering curiosity has become a major concern in education, and this concept forms part of the reservoir of educational tools expected to solve the needs of present and future societies. Curiosity is described as key to participation and democracy within learning practices (Menning, 2018, p. 241). When curiosity emerges between people, it can be "a catalyst for active citizenship,

social responsibility, and care" and requires the "spaces in which curious be-haviour is tolerated and curious people can flourish" to be suitable (Phillips, 2014, p. 494). Education and museum scholars argue that museums can be such places as they combine the cultivation of interest in culture and science with the fostering of active citizenship (Andre et al., 2017; Pennay, 2020; Phillips, 2014, p. 504). As learning environments, museums "take into account the sensory needs of their learners" (Lasky, 2009, p. 73), and the skills often learned in museums, like collaboration, creativity, and innovation, resonate with the competencies important for solving present and future societal challenges (Lasky, 2009; Savva, 2013; Thomas, 2017).

A core task for today's museums is to sustain civil society by enabling par-ticipation and fostering active citizenship. Since the 1990s, alongside their tra-ditional focus on interpretation, conveyance, and care of collections, museums have sought to connect with and be relevant to their audiences and commu-nities through various forms of engagement (Hetland et al., 2020; Hooper-Greenhill, 2008; Pennay, 2020; Simon, 2010; Thomas, 2017). In addition to these participatory approaches, curiosity has had a renaissance in museum studies during recent decades. The concept has deep roots in museum history, pointing back to the cabinets of curiosities of kings, princes, and other wealthy people in the seventeenth century (cf. Findlen, 1996; Mordhorst, 2009). To-day, museum scholars argue that there is much to gain in revitalizing the con-cept of curiosity. Although ideas of who could be a *curioso* and why one should be curious have changed since early modern times, the objects that facilitate epistemic desire are still the same, namely museum collections (Arnold, 2006; Thomas, 2017). Within museum studies, a focus on materiality is added to the idea of curiosity as relational and social. Museum objects, considered to nurture curiosity, are often seen as relationally constituted. Collections and objects may prompt a multitude of connections to different people, histories, and cultures, through exhibitions, catalogues, and labels. The manifold rela-tions and associations inherent to museum objects may be latent or explicit, hypothetical or real – characteristics that enable them to change in significance (Alberti, 2012; Brenna, 2016; Ruud, 2018; Thomas, 2017).

Curiosity scholars Zurn et al. (2020) argue that curiosity "is something that is done, expressed in behaviours, habits, architectures, and movements across physical, conceptual, and social space" (p. xii). In line with this, curiosity will be investigated as emerging through socio-material interplays among students, educators, objects, and the museum spaces. How is curiosity sparked and ex-pressed? The first section of the analysis follows the students as they curiously explore museum rules, objects, and spaces at the beginning of the visit.

Curiosity and museum space: "But I'm too young to go to prison!"

The students are familiar with museums, and most of them have visited the Whaling Museum before. However, museums may be experienced differently over time, and the setting for today's interplay is different than the last time

they visited a museum. Through a socio-material approach, the museum space will resonate differently depending on who and what contributes to the setting (Alberti, 2012, p. 7; Fenwick & Landri, 2012; Henning, 2011, pp. 156ff.; Ritchhart, 2007).

From the platform outside the museum building, the group now moves into the vestibule. Hands are cleansed with anti-bac, jackets are hung in the wardrobe, and the level of noise is substantial. On the rear wall of the vestibule, a television plays an old documentary about whaling on a loop, making it difficult for students in the back to pay attention to the educator's instructions. If someone back there takes a step or two to the right, and of course someone does, the automatic doors to one of the exhibition halls slide open. It is amusing when the automatic doors slide open and close, again and again and again! After some hushing, the educator explains that the students must remain orderly and move in line, without touching anything, to the innermost part of the museum hall. From the vestibule, they can see parts of the giant model of a blue whale which hangs from the ceiling in the hall they are about to enter. On the way, some of the girls take a detour into the museum shop to feel the soft fur of some toy polar bear babies for sale: "Ooohhhh, look!" "They're sooo cuuuute!"

Curiosity has, during its scholarly history, not only been considered epistemically beneficial but also as immature and superficial as opposed to more rational approaches to knowledge seeking (Thomas, 2017; Yun, 2018; Zurn et al., 2020). Museums are packed with fascinating objects, and to follow the desire to cuddle toy polar bears instead of following instructions may seem immature, but it also expresses the urge to seek knowledge for its own sake. It can even be seen as intent to figure out the museum and its rules. For these students, it is almost as if the museum is organized to steer one's attention in all directions, to make one do what one should not! It is not easy to sharpen one's attention, move at a certain pace in a prescribed direction, and keep the body under control (cf. Andre et al., 2017; Bennett, 1998).

Heading into the exhibition hall, the students pass a variety of stuffed polar animals placed inside glass cases, safe from the touch of visitors. What makes the objects here so special? Eagerly, the students pose questions as they move more or less in an orderly line: "Is it real?" "Is that a real animal!?" "Yes, these are all real animals", the educator explains, followed by enthusiastic surprise among the students: "Whaaat!?" "For real!? Have they been alive?!" A girl, aware that the animals once were alive, wonders whether "the ones sort of standing inside those cages, are they stuffed?", while some others want to know how one stuffs an animal. The educator explains how taxidermists mount the specimens: "First, one must shoot an animal, and then one must take off its skin and prepare it well so that the skin does not rot. Then you make an artificial body, mount the skin onto it, and then you add glass eyes". The queries from the seventh graders circle around what makes museum objects real. While material objects have a physical reality of their own, the

students seem very conscious of how the museum setting contributes to the meaning or authenticity of the objects.

I form part of the rear group, and some of the students ask me about the objects we see. Inside a large glass case, a polar bear has raised a paw ready to attack a stuffed seal, and a girl wonders: "How did they manage to make it pose like that when they killed it?" Dead animals do not move, so the question makes sense. Two boys look up at a crow's nest from an old whaling ship, placed high up on the wall. In it, a human mannequin is looking out for whales, and they ask: "Is that a real human, up there?" In museums, objects can be dead and real, and it would only be logical if this applied to the mannequin also. The ability to respond to what is new and unknown with simple questions such as these can be considered important to the training of analytical skills (Thomas, 2017, p. 145).

Neither the variety of polar animals nor the art of taxidermy, however, is on today's agenda, and the educator states: "Now, I must be a bit strict, and I say that we must move on!" At the end of the hall, we see an enormous whale skull placed on the floor. Unlike the objects the students have met with so far, the skull lies unprotected. A girl touches the jawbone, and the educator explains the rule of no touching: "It is a real skeleton, and that is why we cannot touch it". This rule can be difficult to follow, she elaborates, as "there have been children visiting who have climbed on top of it, and adults who have walked around knocking on the bones… but it is a real whale skull!"

Museum objects are authentic and real and must be protected from curious hands. Here, the educator introduces a rule with historical roots. While the privileged visitors to the early modern cabinets of curiosities engaged with objects in a multi-sensory manner, touching is prohibited in most modern museums. Museums both exhibit and preserve objects, and since touch may cause harm, visitors must only engage visually with the objects (Candlin, 2008; Eriksen, 2009, pp. 135 ff.). The students cannot touch the skull, the educator explains, since "it is what we call an irreplaceable object. It is very difficult to get hold of a whale skeleton today because the blue whale is a highly endangered species", and so "we are not allowed to go out and shoot them". One of the boys asks about what would happen if someone did shoot a blue whale, and she replies that one then would be punished and probably end up in prison. The boy reflects for a couple of seconds, then he triumphantly counters: "But I am too young to go to prison!"

While the museum is a space for curiosity, the students' exploration is regulated by rules. These rules are not new to the students, as they have been to museums before. However, there is always something new and unknown to discover, and curiosity spontaneously emerges as the seventh graders engage with the museum surroundings. They ask a lot of questions about the objects, identify relationships, and make associations as they try to understand and learn. Intrinsic to museum objects are many potential associations and histories, and making these connections may stimulate the development of analytical skills (Andre et al., 2017; Ruud, 2021; Thomas, 2017). A lot of curiosity

emerged during the first minutes of the visit. Among other things, the students have learned that they cannot kill blue whales. But what if one did it anyway? The next section discusses counterfactual curiosity as a learning strategy.

Counterfactual curiosity: "But what if?"

Arriving at the end of the exhibition hall, the students are told to sit down on the floor in a half-circular shape, in front of the skull and below the head of the 24-metre-long blue whale model that hangs from the ceiling (Figure 2.1). The educator shows the students a poster depicting various species of baleen and toothed whales and starts to explain the differences between the two (Figure 2.2). After some minutes, the students start to ask questions, either at the educator's invitation or by simply interrupting. "Is it a real whale?", several students ask, and the educator, with many years of pedagogical experience, leaves baleen and teeth aside to follow the students in their spontaneous wondering. "No, it is not a real whale", she explains, it has hung in the ceiling for more than a hundred years, and if it had been real, she adds, then it probably would have been all rotten now. Laughingly, a boy notes: "then it would have stunk!"

The model is not a real whale, and it does not stink. However, if it *had* been real, perhaps it *would* have stunk. Such "what if" reasoning regularly took place among the students when they encountered the model. Another example is how a student asked: "Has it ever fallen down?" The model is attached to the ceiling with steel wire ropes, which may appear fragile to visitors.

Figure 2.1 A giant model of a blue whale hangs from the ceiling of the Whaling Museum. Photo: Atle Selnes Nielsen, Vestfoldmuseene/The Museums in Vestfold.
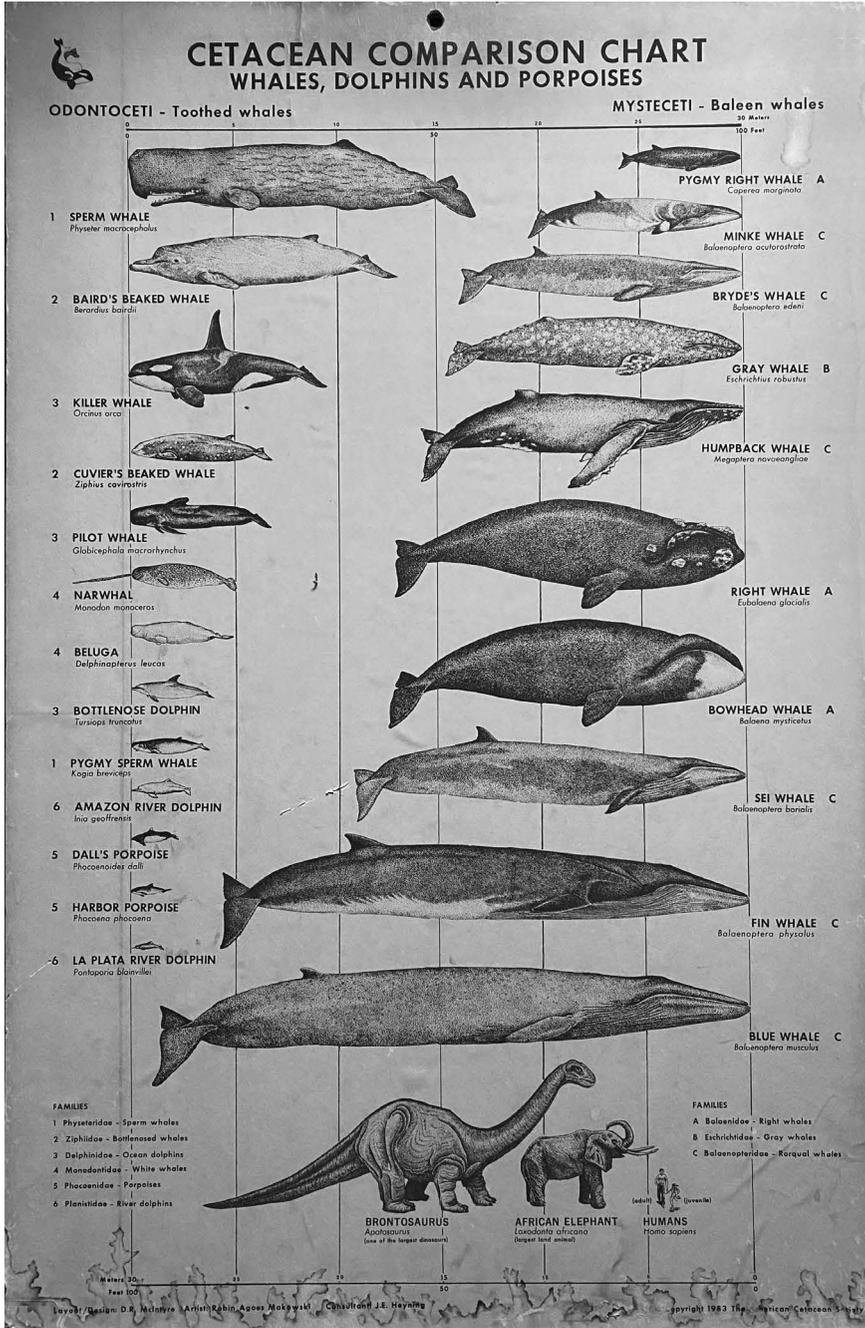
Figure 2.2 Educational poster depicting species of whales and their size relative to a brontosaurus, an elephant, and humans. Photo: Inger-Lise Krekling/The American Cetacean Society 1983, Vestfoldmuseene/The Museums in Vestfold.

It hangs entirely safe, the educator explains, and she pursues the speculations a little bit further: "In theory, it could fall down, but it has never happened, and the whale has hung there since 1917". Also, she says, the model "was strengthened with new wire ropes around 70 years ago". Some of the students are not satisfied with this explanation: "but what *if* it falls down?" "Well", she adds, "I guess it would fall down here, then, and perhaps it would destroy the floor, and end up down in the basement".

Counterfactual curiosity implies imagining alternatives to what one knows is true. It involves envisioning that the present state of being, and the things which are true about the world, could change, and the possible reasons for such a change (FitzGibbon et al., 2019, p. 155; Nyhout & Ganea, 2019, pp. 254 ff.). Counterfactual enquiry is based on knowledge about what one knows is true and real causal relations, and it entails comparisons with imagined, alternative realities. When we try to figure out how things are connected in the world, the exploration of unreal, unlikely alternatives is a strategy for learning (Buchsbaum et al., 2012, p. 2022; Nyhout & Ganea, 2019, p. 258). Further, counterfactual reasoning remains close to reality, as one normally alters only one or a very few dimensions of the real world in the imagined alternatives (Rafaetseder et al., 2013, p. 390). This makes the structure of counterfactually imagined alternatives rather firm as most of reality is kept stable. This stability enables collective reasoning; a group of people, such as a school class, may easily agree on and cooperate within the imagined reality (Rafaetseder et al., 2013, p. 390). When the students considered the whale model, such cooperation about the unreal but imaginable took place continuously. If one student made a counterfactual question, another would follow up on the answer given by the educator, and so on.

"Now, let us continue with the baleen whales", the educator continues, as she explains that blue whales have baleen inside their mouths and then she asks: "Do you know what the blue whale is eating?". Some of the students know: "Tiny little fish!" "It's krill!". She continues to elaborate on how the blue whale swims with its mouth wide open so that it captures millions of krill in its mouth, and then it presses out the seawater through the baleen, and the krill remain inside. A boy suddenly interrupts: "What happens if a whale devours you?" quickly followed by some schoolmates' astonished shrieks: "Can they kill humans?!"

Interactions between whales and humans occur rarely, and humans are extremely rare to find on a whale's menu. The giant whale model still makes its impact on the students, as whales just as large or even much larger exist in the ocean (cf. Henning, 2011, p. 152). The students imagine that they meet a real blue whale, and what would that be like? Would the whale swallow and eat them? During all the visits observed, students cooperated in the counterfactual reasoning, by altering the factor of krill: "How many whales can kill? Or, like, kill people?"

Blue whales and humans do not swim in the same waters, the instructor explains, and blue whales are not capable of eating humans due to their narrow

throats. The model above the group, however, is enormous, and the students have a clear sight up to its head and mouth. The factor of krill is easy to change, and so is the unlikeliness of co-presence in the same waters. During the educator's explanation, some of the students shout out: "Why can't we do that?" "But what if I go out there?" What if one had been out there where the whales live, and just happened to be in front of the blue whale's mouth: "Could we swim into it, if it, like, had its mouth open, could I dive into its belly, and sort of be inside of it?" The educator follows the students in their counterfactual curiosity. If one had been in the wrong place, in the wrong moment, well then, yes, she explains, one could probably end up inside the blue whale's mouth, but not inside their belly due to the limited size of the throat.

The aforementioned educational poster depicting species of whales is located next to some of the students. A boy points towards it, asking: "why is that whale called killer whale? Does it kill?" The affirmative answer he gets causes a moment of agitated, collective shock: "Whaaaaat!?" "Oh, My Goood!" "Can they kill humans!?" A girl shouts out, "but I thought whales were kind!" and many others join her: "Me too!", "So did I!" Countering their question, the educator notes: "Well, then, what does it mean to be kind?" The question sparks intense engagement, and many students talk or shout at the same time: "They have to eat!", "But we kill animals to make money on them and in order to eat them!" Curiosity may not only be an unstable epistemic attitude, but it is also "marked by an eagerness to encounter what is new or unfamiliar, an openness to difference and perhaps a willingness to suspend judgement" (Thomas, 2017, p. 15). The idea that killing must necessarily mean that one is cruel is suspended, and now whales potentially killing for food or even for retaliation against humans seems to be accepted among the students.

The model is gigantic, its mouth enormous, and it is truly strange to think that whales eat tiny fish. Counterfactual curiosity appears feasible for figuring it out, and such reasoning depends upon the students' acknowledgement of reality. They understand that whales are far away from where humans are and that they are very unlikely to ever kill a whale or end up inside a whale's stomach. But what if? Counterfactual curiosity helps learners grasp reality by envisioning unreal alternatives.

Curiosity and curriculum: "It looks like an alien!"

When the discussion about the whale model comes to an end, the educator wonders whether the students have any questions. They may ask about whatever they want, she says to encourage them, and "are there perhaps any objects around here that make you curious?" Just next to where the students are seated, there is a glass case on a pedestal. Inside the case, a tiny, grey creature is floating in a foggy, greenish fluid. The question posed to the students is open, but leading; the educator wants them to ask about that specific specimen. At first, the creature is easy to overlook due to its modest size and peripheral place in the exhibition, as compared to the large, centrally placed

model (cf. Henning, 2011; Ritchhart, 2007). As the students turn their heads around to look for any objects in the surroundings that "make them curious", however, the specimen immediately appears intriguing. During all the visits I observed, students pointed in its direction: "What is that?" "What is that little thing over there?"

A museum object, due to its many potential associative meanings, can be suggestive as "it stimulates and enables the imagination, it gives you a push into a space in which you can move and think" (Thomas, 2017, p. 53). Some associate the tiny creature with things very different from whales. "It looks like an alien!" a student suggests imaginatively and not entirely implausibly, as the shape and size of the foetus bear a certain resemblance to the extra-terrestrial creatures which broke their way out of crew members' chests in the *Alien* movies. Drawing comparisons between whales and humans, a couple of the students call out: "Wow, look! It's got a six-pack!", making the rest of the group look towards its stomach where a squared pattern resembles a fit human stomach. Such suggestions form part of the collective exploration of the foetus' physical appearance. Some others make suggestions closer to reality: "It looks like a fish, a whale!" "Is it a blue whale, a baby whale?" The educator replies affirmatively; it is real, but it is a right whale, not a blue whale, and it is something even smaller than a baby, it is a foetus. Which, she adds, is probably much too young to have developed a six-pack. Astonishment follows her replies: "Whaaat?!" "Is it real?!"

It is a baby that is not fully developed, the educator explains, receiving many questions in return: "It's a baby that is in the making?" "It's a whale baby, who got cut out?" Yes, the instructor explains, the foetus was inside its mother until the mother was shot dead by whalers. The students study the foetus closely as they gather around the glass case. The foetus is surrounded by fluid, and the glass case looks like an aquarium, and some wonder whether the creature is alive: "Is it alive?" "Noooo, it cannot be alive, can it…?" It is not alive, the educator explains, it has been dead for about a hundred years. "Oh, damn!", a boy shouts out. "Is it a stuffed foetus? Is it, like, real?" one of the girls asks.

The foetus was once alive in a completely different environment, but it is also here, in this moment, on display. This transformation calls for explorations (Alberti, 2012; Thomas, 2017). How much of the live foetus followed it into the museum? The foggy, greenish liquid around the specimen is drawn into the queries: "Does it lie in water?" "Is it, like, foetal water?" Another student wants to know whether the educator has "ever touched it", while another wonders "why has it not putrefied?" "You pose some very good questions", the educator encourages them, and she asks them about what they did at the beginning of their visit (Ritchhart, 2007, p. 147). "We used anti-bac!" some of them shout out. "Correct", she replies, "and why did you do that?" "Because of corona!" "Yes, to kill germs, and the foetus is placed in a fluid similar to anti-bac to prevent decay", she explains. "Do you change the water sometimes?" a girl wants to know, while a boy wonders, "what would happen if we

opened the glass case now?" The fluid in the glass case "looks a bit nasty", the educator agrees, and "it should have been replaced, but that is something for the experts to do". The foetus is sealed off inside its case, impossible to smell or touch: "How strong would it smell if someone broke the glass case?" "It wouldn't have been very delicious to open it!" A multi-sensory exploration is neither possible nor allowed, but the students easily imagine themselves using their other senses (cf. Classen, 2017).

The socio-material approach is based on the idea that objects gain significance through their relationships to other items, such as people, catalogues, ideas, or histories (Alberti, 2012; Fenwick & Landri, 2012; Ritchhart, 2007; Ruud, 2018). Such relations may not only spontaneously be activated by the students, but they may also be strategically introduced by the educator. Educational museum programs offered to schools often include elements of relevance to the National Curriculum for education. "Respect for nature and environmental awareness" constitutes one of six principles in the recently introduced Core Curriculum, while "sustainable development" constitutes a cross-disciplinary topic to be integrated into all subjects and levels (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022). A question from a girl seems like a good opportunity to introduce a relation between the foetus and the curriculum: "Why did they kill the foetus when they killed the whale?"

The whalers could not see the difference between male and female whales, the educator explains, and neither could they see whether a female was pregnant. It was difficult to avoid shooting the pregnant ones, and when the mother died, she continues, pointing towards the foetus' navel, it died too since it no longer received the nutrients it needed through the birth cord. So, they killed not only one but also two whales. A huge decrease in the number of whales followed, she elaborates, and our forefathers almost extinguished the blue whale: "We were *this* close to extinguishing the world's largest animal because we wanted its oil and to make money". She elaborates a bit on how humans have not been good at taking care of nature, and that we must be better at it in the future, and then rounds off by asking: "What do you think about that?"

In none of the groups I observed did students engage with this question. The typical answer would be very brief: "It's stupid". An entire class even neglected the question and the conversation turned when a boy, after several seconds of complete silence, asked: "Will there be time enough to see the documentary film later on?" Norwegian seventh graders are familiar with the need to respect and care for nature and the concept of sustainability. They meet these ideas at school and also in everyday life outside school. So why did they not respond to the introduced relation between the foetus and the curriculum?

The strange-looking creature is a real whale. It was once alive inside its mother. It has been dead for a century. It is surrounded by germ-killing fluid, is probably disgustingly stinky, and looks like an alien with a six-pack! There is an overwhelming range of topics and connections to make regarding the

foetus (cf. Alberti, 2012, p. 8; Henning, 2011, p. 156). Perhaps the connection to the curriculum simply overwhelmed the students with associations. Perhaps the gap between the suggestive, material immediacy of the foetus and the abstract generalization of extinction and sustainability was too wide for the students to grasp. The astonishing qualities of the foetus may have led the students to neglect its potential to connect with curricular concepts.

The lack of response, however, does not mean that the students did not consider whales as in need of care and as victims of human exploitation (cf. Dolby, 2019, p. 405). "What happened to them when they were found?" a girl asks. The educator explains that the foetuses, after being cut out of their mothers, were sent down into the whaling ship's boilery alongside the blubber harvested from whales. The group is appalled, and someone shouts out: "What if it had been us!?" "But what have we done to them!?" Based on a comparison between humans and animals, the killing of whale foetuses appears unjust and brutal. The students added themselves to the relational multitude surrounding the foetus, instead of responding to the suggested relation with the abstract curricular concepts. Reflection on responsibility and care seems easier when the students include themselves in a "we" related to this particular foetus.

Conclusion

The concept of curiosity has gained cross-disciplinary scholarly interest in recent years, and this chapter contributes by combining insights from education and museum studies. Curiosity has become an educational tool expected to solve the needs of present and future societies. It is seen as a key to fostering creativity and innovation, social responsibility, and cooperative and democratic skills. Within the field of museums, curiosity stretches back to epistemic practices related to early modern, private collections. The current revival of the concept relates to the view of museums as important nurturers of engaged citizenship and democratic participation, as well as to a scholarly turn towards materiality and the relational capabilities intrinsic to collections and objects.

Based on observations of seventh graders visiting a museum, curiosity has been discussed as resulting from socio-material interplays. Triggered by the objects and surroundings, guided by the educator, and responding to epistemic impulses emerging between them, the students eagerly went about figuring out the museum and its objects. The students challenged, obeyed, and disobeyed rules when they explored the museum, and they made probable and improbable suggestions as they tried to untangle whales and the history of whaling. Among the range of epistemic practices emerging in this interplay was counterfactual reasoning. Illustrative of the relational characteristics of museum objects, the gigantic whale model was a trigger for inquiry: what if it falls? What if a whale swallows you?

To be curious implies seeking knowledge for its own sake. To follow one's urge to cuddle a toy polar bear, to imagine being inside a whale's belly, to

envision aliens, six-packs, or stuffed humans on display – all of these actions and suggestions lack, at least seen from a curricular point of view, a clear purpose. As curiosity turns into a tool for solving present and future societal needs, however, educational goals are attached to it, and this may put learning "for its own sake" at risk. The whale foetus sparked vivid imagination, and while the educator sought to establish a relation between the foetus and key curricular concepts, the students prioritized other types of relations: what have we done to them? What if it had been us? A socio-material lesson learned from this museum visit is that curiosity thrives when students are allowed to imagine themselves as related, in improbable or probable ways, to the objects and issues at hand. A corresponding lesson is that if curiosity is to flourish through socio-material interplays, curricular content ought to be adapted in ways that scaffold the students' imagination and ability to ask questions, rather than limit it through abstract concepts and predefined values.

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3 "An 'Acropolis' in miniature" and a house that "must be filled with spirit and content"

Ideals of Bildung in the building of two Scandinavian schools in the 1920s

Anne Helene Høyland Mork

School buildings are resources that facilitate learning, as well as expressions of ideas and ideals central to the institutions and the people who planned them. Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor argue that schools should not merely be viewed as capsules where education is located but also as "designed spaces that, in their materiality, project a system of values" (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008, p. 8). One could add that such projections of values are dependent on finances and involve compromises, and that certain values are easier to express in a building than others.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore expressions of systems of values in buildings at two secondary boarding schools established in the 1920s, Norwegian Eidsvoll offentlege landsgymnas (ELG) and Swedish Sigtunastiftelsens Humanistiska Läroverk (SHL). ELG was a public *landsgymnas* (rural gymnasium) aiming at giving academically gifted youth from the countryside a path to university studies. SHL was a private secondary school founded by the Christian Sigtuna Foundation. In both cases architects and educators cooperated closely in planning school buildings. Both ideology and pedagogical ideas played a role in these processes. History was central to the ideological foundations of both schools. When studying the planning, design, and inauguration of these schools, two helpful concepts are Bildung and uses of history.

The concept of Bildung (*dannelse* in Norwegian, *bildning* in Swedish) is complex. Bildung includes both the notion of formation and that of a goal or an ideal (Gustavsson, 1991, pp. 242–243). Wolfgang Klafki distinguishes between material theories of Bildung, focusing on content, and formal theories of Bildung, focusing on individual development, and suggests categorical Bildung as a dialectic combination of elements from material and formal theories (Klafki, 2001). Bernt Gustavsson discusses tensions within the concept of Bildung between process and result, equality and elitism, and integration and specialization. In the context of Sweden between 1880 and 1930, he connects an ideal of Bildung promoting civic education to the folk

high schools, and a neo-humanistic ideal of Bildung, emphasizing classical languages and the culture of antiquity, to secondary schools and universities (Gustavsson, 1991, 2014, 2017, pp. 13, 27). The schools of this study were secondary schools, but many of the people involved also had close ties to folk high schools.

Anders Burman points out that in Swedish public debate at the beginning of the twentieth century, Bildung was not only one of the most central pedagogical concepts but also one of the most central political concepts (Burman, 2014, p. 6). A main goal of schooling, as expressed in school acts and curricula in Norway and Sweden, was to provide general Bildung, but there were different ideas about the nature of this Bildung. Especially from the last half of the nineteenth century, the emphasis on classical languages was increasingly challenged by ideals promoting the sciences, modern languages, nationalism, and democratization (Thue, 2019, pp. 170–174). The main question of this chapter is: *Which ideals of Bildung were expressed in the planning, design, and inauguration of the first buildings of ELG and SHL?*

History is a central element in many ideals of Bildung. Peter Aronsson defines uses of history as "those processes in which parts of the historical culture are activated in order to create specific sense-making and action-oriented entireties" (Aronsson, 2004, p. 17).[1] Which parts of the historical culture one chooses will depend on which values one wants to promote. When planning school buildings, the needs of the present and visions for the future are essential, but the past can also play a significant role. The second question of this chapter is therefore: *Which parts of the historical culture were activated when planning, designing, and inaugurating the first buildings of ELG and SHL?*

Ideals of Bildung naturally encompass ideas about pedagogy, given that the content of Bildung must be conveyed and/or the process of Bildung initiated. This also has a practical side, and as Eva Alerby et al. point out, school buildings represent not only architectural styles but also pedagogical epochs, thus making the activity dependent upon the possibilities and limitations of those buildings (Alerby et al., 2006, p. 8).

The first decades of the twentieth century saw intensive educational debates. Reform pedagogy, progressive pedagogy, and activity school pedagogy are terms used to describe movements that criticized and challenged traditional education. Inspired by European thinkers such as Georg Kerschensteiner, Maria Montessori, and Ellen Key, and the ideas of John Dewey, the student was placed in the center, rather than the teacher and the learning material. Students should be active and learn by progressing from the known to the unknown (Aagre, 2016, pp. 109–110; Samuelsson, 2021, pp. 39–48). These progressive movements were diverse. In Norway, Christian conservative Erling Kristvik and socialist Anna Sethne were both leading progressive educators, although their views on many matters were very different (Helsvig, 2004, p. 173). New ideas about learning entailed new ideas about

how school buildings should be built. The third question of this chapter is therefore: *In what ways did pedagogical ideas affect the design of the buildings of ELG and SHL?*

Sources and previous research

To answer these questions a variety of sources have been studied. Meeting protocols, architectural drawings, photographs, letters, inauguration speeches, newspaper articles, school publications, and selected texts, written by and about central actors, have been reviewed. Some sources have been used for contextualization, while others have been analyzed closely, focusing on expressions of ideals of Bildung, uses of history, and pedagogical ideas.

In line with stronger emphasis on material aspects in historical research over the last decades, more attention has been given to places and houses of education (Grosvenor & Rasmussen, 2018; Lundahl & Lawn, 2015; Töpper & Isensee, 2021; Westberg, 2014). The buildings of SHL are discussed in some studies, mostly from the perspective of art history. Hjördis Kristenson briefly writes about SHL in her extensive presentation of Swedish school buildings (Kristenson, 2005, pp. 384–386). Karin Eriksson Hultén's biography of architect John Åkerlund has an extensive section on his buildings in Sigtuna, including SHL (Eriksson Hultén, 2005), and Margareta Gustafson's bachelor's thesis includes a short chapter about the buildings of SHL (Gustafson, 1987). Mabel Lundberg and Gösta Wrede discuss connections between the ideology of the Sigtuna Foundation and its architecture and give insights into ideas expressed by architect Åkerlund and the manager of the foundation, Manfred Björkquist, but they do not cover the buildings of SHL (Lundberg, 1977; Wrede, 2008).

Not much has been written about the school buildings of Eidsvoll landsgymnas. Jarle Simensen briefly describes and comments on the buildings in the book *Landsgymnas* (Simensen, 2007, pp. 124–126). Some mentions are made in texts written about architect Arnstein Arneberg, but the focus is on the building he built for Eidsvoll Folk High School in 1908, and not the school building of Eidsvoll landsgymnas from 1926. This is also the case in Svein Arne Myhren's section about the buildings of the *landsgymnas* in his master's thesis. Myhren exemplifies how these schools, despite many common traits in ideology, were not built according to a certain national architectonic philosophy (Myhren, 2001, pp. 52–54).

There is a need for more research exploring connections between ideas and materiality in school buildings, and comparative studies with a transnational perspective can provide valuable insights. A study of the processes of planning, designing, and inaugurating the buildings of ELG and SHL contributes to knowledge about the complex processes of designing school buildings both as pedagogical resources and as expressions of values.

Eidsvoll landsgymnas and Sigtunastiftelsens Humanistiska Läroverk

Eidsvoll landsgymnas was a public upper secondary school and the second of 12 *landsgymnas*. The initiative for the school type, which existed from 1914 until 1964, came from the youth organization *Noregs Ungdomslag* (Norway's Youth Association) which suggested establishing upper secondary boarding schools in the countryside for academically gifted students. In the parliamentary debates, different arguments for the cause were raised, such as social equality, meritocratic elitism, providing "Norwegian Bildung", and creating "Norwegian civil servants" (Høydal, 2007, pp. 27–34).

Reidun Høydal argues that the *landsgymnas* as a historical phenomenon is inconceivable without the movement *norskdomsrørsla* (The Norwegian Movement). This movement was united by a strong emphasis on the nation and the struggle for *landsmål*, the written standard that had been created based on Norwegian dialects. *Norskdomsrørsla* considered the written standard *riksmål*, with its Danish origins, unnational. In Eidsvoll this created conflicts, and the students were allowed to choose which standard to use (Høydal, 2007, pp. 54–57). The question of language remained a source of conflict, as shown by Merethe Roos' chapter in this volume where she analyzes a newspaper debate involving one of ELG's teachers.

An important argument for locating the school to Eidsvoll was the possibility of buying the buildings of Eidsvoll Folk High School. The main building from 1908 had been designed by architect Arnstein Arneberg in cooperation with principal Jon Sørensen, and his wife Agnes Vinding Sørensen (Nordheim, 1980, p. 15). This building served as the school building and dormitory when Eidsvoll landsgymnas opened in 1922.

A building committee cooperated closely with architect Arneberg and the school board to plan new buildings. The initial plans included a school building, four new dormitories, a gym hall, and a banquet hall. These plans were reduced in stages by Parliament, and of these only the school building was built, without modern sanitation and with classrooms on both sides of the corridors (Goksøyr, 1947; Haug & Dæhlie, 1998; Stortingsproposisjon 97, 1923). The building from 1908 remained the only dormitory, and only first-year students would live at the school.

Although designed by the same architect, the buildings were notably different. While the wooden building from 1908 had national features giving associations to old Norwegian farm architecture, the plain white brick building from 1926 had more classical characteristics in its proportions and symmetry.

SHL was a private secondary boarding school founded in 1926 as part of the Sigtuna Foundation. The foundation was established by leaders of *ungkyrkorörelsen* (The Young Church Movement), a revival movement within the Swedish church (Aronson, 2008, p. 48). Educator and later bishop Manfred Björkquist was the initiator of the Sigtuna Foundation and its first

manager. The foundation established a center with a guest house, a folk high school, and conference facilities in Sigtuna, labeling their ideology as Christian humanism. In Björkquist's writings, Christianity and the nation are closely connected in the slogan "The people of Sweden, a people of God" (Björkquist, 1942, p. 15).

From the start there was an idea of establishing an upper secondary school that would put special emphasis on classical languages, history, and Christianity, as expressed by Bishop J. A. Eklund in 1916:

> I dream of a real gymnasium on Germanic ground, where Christ is Master, but where also the singers and seers of Greece and the state builders of Rome, as well as the men of newer times, speak to Swedish youth.
>
> (Bruno, 1927, p. 253)

A school committee was formed, and theologian and educator Arvid Bruno was hired as principal (Henriksson & Askaner, 2001, pp. 35–38). Björkquist and Bruno cooperated closely with architect Åkerlund, and the buildings were financed through donations. The first building, containing a great hall, kitchen, living quarters for teachers, and a dormitory for students, was inaugurated in 1927. By 1929, a new dormitory and the school building had been built. These buildings were built in neoclassical style with strong connotations to ancient Greece.

The architects of ELG and SHL, Arneberg (1882–1961) and Åkerlund (1884–1961), belonged to the same generation. Arneberg started his architectural education in Kristiania before moving to Sweden to study and work (Fett, 1952, p. 16). Unlike Arneberg, Åkerlund did not have an architectural education, but he started working as an architect early in his career. Arneberg and Åkerlund shared a strong commitment to creating national architecture, based on old traditions and inspiration from other countries (Eriksson Hultén, 2005; Stenseth, 2000). They belonged to a Nordic community of architects, and both participated in the Nordic Architectural meeting in 1912 (Aftenposten, 1912). They worked with their buildings in Eidsvoll and Sigtuna at a time when trends in architecture were shifting from a national toward a more international style (Eriksson Hultén, 2005, p. 107; Norberg-Schultz, 1983, pp. 7–9).

Both at ELG and SHL, history was stressed as being significant in the schools' self-representation. In the case of ELG, the fact that the Norwegian constitution was written in Eidsvoll in 1814 was used as an important argument for placing the school there (Stortingsproposisjon 52, 1918), and principal of ELG, Johan Fredrik Voss, emphasized the constitution, the medieval court, and poet Henrik Wergeland as reasons for the great historical importance of Eidsvoll (Voss, 1927a, p. 4). SHL's location naturally followed the location of the Sigtuna Foundation. Lundberg writes that the main reason for choosing Sigtuna was historical, namely that it was an important center during the Christianization of Sweden, which could foster commitment in the younger generation (Lundberg, 1977, pp. 62–65).

Bildung and uses of history in the buildings of SHL and ELG

Antiquity is the prominent element in the architecture of SHL. The plan of locating the school on a hill inspired Åkerlund's first draft titled "An 'Acropolis' in miniature" (Åkerlund, 1942, p. 42). In a letter to Björkquist in May 1926, Åkerlund writes:

> The facility of antiquity that it should all become, has naturally led me to much literature about the building and life of Greece that has captivated me for many late hours, but also given me wonderful motifs. I feel that my head has for a while been like a melting pot into which I threw in all sorts of noble ores, in addition to many older shining metals, about to be melted down to something I sincerely wish will become noble and beautiful metal, preferably a piece of jewelry.
>
> (Åkerlund, 1926)

Åkerlund states that since the teaching at SHL places a special emphasis on the values of the culture of antiquity, it was natural to keep a classical imprint on the building and in detail on both the inside and outside. This was, as shown in the photos below (Figures 3.1 and 3.2), emphasized especially by including a classical gable and Ionic columns on the wide granite steps leading up to the main hall, and pilasters in the central part of the school building

Figure 3.1 Midgården at Sigtunastiftelsens Humanistiska Läroverk built in 1927. Photo: Sigtunastiftelsen.

Figure 3.2 The school building of SHL built in 1929. Photo: Arvid Thelander, Sigtuna bok och pappershandel. Sigtunastiftelsen.

(Åkerlund, 1942, p. 43). It frustrated Åkerlund that he ended up with an uneven number of columns, which was a break with classical ideals (Eriksson Hultén, 2005, p. 110).

The idea of a humanistic secondary school, closely associated with humanistic ideals of Bildung, made it natural to construct buildings with clear connotations to Greek antiquity. Connections to antiquity are also evident in the speech given at the inauguration of SHL in 1927 by theologian, historian of religion, and archbishop Nathan Söderblom. Söderblom criticizes an exaggerated belief in progress, arguing that "the future can only be built on the best of the past" and that the world has probably already seen the best of human achievement. Söderblom presents two foundations: the culture of antiquity, and the revelation to the people of Israel and its fulfillment in Jesus and the church (Stockholms-Tidningen, 1927).

In the buildings Åkerlund had previously designed for the Sigtuna Foundation, there is a connection to Swedish history. These buildings were inspired by national romanticism, Italian monastic architecture, the Arts and Crafts movement, and Sigtuna's medieval ruins (Aronson, 2008, p. 36; Carlström et al., 2007, pp. 60, 202; Wrede, 2008, pp. 347–351). In the buildings of SHL, the neoclassical is dominant. Texts from the inauguration in 1927 show that the national aspect was emphasized in other ways.

A cantata written for the inauguration by priest and psalmist Oscar Mannström connects elements of ancient Greece, Swedish history, and Christianity. In the first stanza, the waters of Lake Mälaren lead thoughts to the archipelagos of the Athenian and the Peloponnesian coast. The building on the hill, a "reflection of the proud glory of Greece", is surrounded by tall Nordic pines securely rooted in the soil "without vanity or bragging", and the church of Maria provides peace and cohesion. In the second stanza, these connections are again emphasized, with reference to the first Swedish king to be baptized. A blessing is given to the students, who "from a classic colonnade" look at "the old town of King Olov!" (Mannström, 1927, p. 257).

While Greek antiquity was clearly the most central part of historical culture used when designing the first buildings of SHL, the situation at Eidsvoll landsgymnas was more complex. The school opened in a building (Figure 3.3) built for Eidsvoll Folk High School in 1908. The folk high schools were inspired by Danish priest and poet N. F. S. Grundtvig's national romantic ideals about ordinary people attaining knowledge about their history, language, and cultural heritage (Lövgren & Nordvall, 2017, pp. 61–66).

Figure 3.3 Eidsvoll Landsgymnas in 1924. The building was built in 1908 for Eidsvoll Folk High School. Photographer: Anders Beer Wilse, Public Domain, National Library of Norway.

After seeing drawings which architect Arneberg had made for an architectural contest to design a lodge for the royal family, principal Sørensen became convinced that Arneberg was the right architect for Eidsvoll Folk High School (Nordheim, 1980, p. 14). Arneberg had listed old Norwegian wooden farmhouses, the fairytale illustrations of painter Erik Werenskiold, and Swedish architecture as his main sources of inspiration for the entry, and elements from these drawings were used in the design of Eidsvoll Folk High School (Aubert, 1917, p. 209; Mørch, 2006, pp. 48–53). Sørensen gives a vivid description of how he and Arneberg met on the designated building site and agreed on a building in which "each beam would sing" the first line of the Norwegian national anthem: "Yes, we love this country" (Nordheim, 1980, pp. 14–15).

Arneberg later called this building "the sin of my youth" (Nordheim, 1961, p. 133), and the differences between this building and the one (Figure 3.4) he designed for Eidsvoll landsgymnas in 1926 are, as shown by the photos below, considerable.

The simplicity of the school building from 1926 was not only used as an argument to prove to Parliament that one had tried to save money (Stortingsproposisjon 97, 1923), but it also reflects Arneberg's views, as expressed in an article from that year. Positive aspects of the latest years' development are, according to Arneberg, a "substantial increase in purity and strictness, a sense of dimensions, proportions and the effect of volume, and the increased demands for planning", but negative sides are "an often uncritical and seminaristic worship of, and reverie for, antiquity that has the effect of killing any free personal expression, as well as an admiration for old, worn-out forms and a dryness

Figure 3.4 The school building of Eidsvoll landsgymnas built in 1926. Photographer: Lars Bry, Bry & Skuggedal. Digitale Eidsvoll.

bordering on tediousness" (Arneberg, 1926, p. 47). Arneberg still strongly emphasizes the role of the national and Nordic:

> We have a changing, colorful tradition. With conscious and clear thinking, we must work our way towards a building art with a Nordic temperament, with strokes of seriousness and melancholy, alternating with leaping joy – just like our own wonderful country's nature.
>
> (Arneberg, 1926, p. 49)

There were elements in the school building of ELG that gave associations to the Nordic, for instance the design of the doors.

Greek antiquity did not have a very central role in the ideology of the *landsgymnas*, where national elements were fundamental. However, in Arneberg's drawing of the whole set of planned buildings, dated May 1923, he included wide stairs leading up to four columns in the building meant to house the gym hall and banquet hall (Arneberg, 1923). This drawing tellingly illustrates the position of the *landsgymnas* between the rural and national on the one hand, evident in the building from 1908, and the classical tradition of the university and gymnasium on the other. However, this part of the complex was never built. The duality in Arneberg's drawing corresponds with Myhren's observations of the differences in architectural styles of the *landsgymnas*, from classical buildings to those resembling large ancestral farmhouses (Myhren, 2001, pp. 52–54).

Bildung and pedagogical ideas in the buildings of SHL and ELG

At both schools, the architects worked closely with building committees and school boards. Arneberg had some experience with school design. According to Harry Fett, he was inspired by Swedish architect Ragnar Östberg's ideas of the school being a work of art. Fett writes that Arneberg tried to include some of the rich cultural life he had experienced in Sweden in his school buildings, but "Sweden was then ahead when it came to art in school", and resources in Norway were very different from those available for Stockholm's monumental school buildings (Fett, 1952, pp. 31–32). Åkerlund had designed several schools and was a member of the Swedish National Board of Education and of the expert group that made the building plans for elementary schools (Eriksson Hultén, 2005, pp. 72–79). While there is not much information about pedagogical considerations in the protocols from the time of the planning of ELG and SHL, inauguration speeches and texts written later shed some light on these matters.

A point made by both principal Bruno and architect Åkerlund in the 25-year anniversary book of the Sigtuna Foundation is that the rooms of SHL's school building were initially made as subject rooms. The question of classrooms versus subject rooms illustrates an interesting difference between Bruno

and Björkquist. Bruno writes that he got the idea of subject rooms from the teacher seminary in Göteborg. Björkquist, who argued for the importance of the classroom as a center for students' spirit and attitude, had to be convinced. Åkerlund, on the other hand, was enthusiastic and they started finding characteristic colors and symbols (Bruno, 1942, p. 127). The English room was sea green with a ship, the room for Latin was in terracotta with the Roman eagle, the room for Greek and philosophy was in Pompeian red with Greek designs on the walls, while the room for Christianity and history was purple with St. Göran and the dragon as symbols (Åkerlund, 1942, pp. 43–44; Svenska Dagbladet, 1930). Bruno writes that this saved one room, and students would find a certain fascination in encountering some of the "subject's own atmosphere". As the school grew, one had to change to a system of classrooms. According to Bruno, this was necessary, but he still agrees with one of the teachers' "pedagogical pain over the fact that an idea has been betrayed" (Bruno, 1942, pp. 127–128).

One might argue that Bruno places more emphasis on material aspects of Bildung, by making the subject the starting point, while Björkquist prioritizes formal aspects of character formation. However, using the visual, as well as finding the most characteristic traits of a subject, was also in line with progressive pedagogy, and Bruno states that interest for new teaching methods was the reason for this choice. An idea of reducing the distance between teacher and student is also apparent when Bruno explains that classrooms were organized with loose chairs and that no platforms for teachers' desks were allowed, since these belonged in a school museum (Bruno, 1942, p. 127).

At the inauguration of SHL in October 1927, Archbishop Söderblom and principal Bruno gave the main speeches. Söderblom devoted most of his speech to praising the classical languages, especially Latin grammar, and its formative function. Söderblom argues that Latin grammar supplies logic, clarity and order, overview, and discipline that are fundamental to any education of reason and character (Stockholms-Tidningen, 1927). Bruno balances two concerns in his speech. While he strongly emphasizes the importance of Christianity and classical languages, he also stresses similarities between SHL and other secondary schools. He ends his speech talking about how wonderful it is to be a part of "living history" and expresses a wish that the building will not only be a school and a home but also "an anchor for life", and that the young will learn

> independence, quickness and certitude in their studies, and self-discipline that freely submits to the laws, written and unwritten, which are the foundation of all society. And that they, through the hardening life outdoors in Sigtuna's particularly fresh air, will be strengthened in body and soul.
>
> (Bruno, 1927, p. 256)

A comparison of these speeches at SHL with two speeches from the inauguration of the school building at Eidsvoll landsgymnas four months earlier

shows differences in emphasis, with more focus on the present and newer pedagogical ideas in the speeches at ELG. Principal Voss expresses gratitude for the new building, saying that if the "outer apparatus needed for administration works well, is practical and in touch with time, it is possible to keep up with the changing and growing conditions of today's upper secondary school". He also stresses that even if one has a beautiful building, it must still be filled with "spirit and content", and he emphasizes the importance of "high ideals, religious, ethical and national" (Eidsiva, 1927; Voss, 1927b).

Voss connects a description of different rooms in the school building to differences between the school of the present and that of the past, emphasizing the great development within science and pedagogy. Now, according to Voss, it is most important to learn from observing, through individual work and to learn how to gain new knowledge. Facilities for the scientific subjects, well suited for experiments, are essential. Voss talks about his visits to Swedish schools, asserting that the Swedes are far ahead when it comes to modern equipment in schools. The science rooms at ELG are, however, very good compared with Norwegian schools (Voss, 1927b). These rooms had been planned by Sverre Bruun, who was a leading educator in introducing experimental activity school principles in the sciences in Norwegian secondary schools (Helland, 1964, pp. 10–11; Voss, 1952, p. 13).

Voss further argues that the amount of information available in present society, as well as new ideas about learning, places demands on rooms and equipment. When learning history, one needs pictures, illustrated books, and slides shown through an episcope. One also needs rooms that can be made dark in the middle of the day. Teachers need books and students need to learn how to find information, so a library and a reading room are crucial (Voss, 1927b).

That evening, festivities continued with a midsummer celebration where priest Eivind Berggrav, who was a member of the school board of ELG and former teacher of Eidsvoll Folk High School, gave a speech about schooling. Like Voss, Berggrav criticizes the "old school" where the emphasis was on memorization, arguing that real knowledge is having ways into knowledge, so you can find it when you need it, and that knowledge, without ideals and the wish to act, is worthless (Romerikes blad, 1927).

The views expressed by Voss and Berggrav seem far from those expressed by Söderblom in his speech at SHL. While Söderblom stresses the past and classical languages, Berggrav and Voss stress the present and new ways of learning. However, this image requires some nuancing. In other texts, Voss argues for the value of Latin (Voss, 1928, pp. 209–211). An interesting connection between the two schools is that Berggrav was a close friend of Björkquist and Söderblom. Berggrav also wrote a book about Söderblom expressing deep respect for him (Berggrav, 1931). As different as the speeches are, there are also certain parallels in stressing formal aspects of Bildung and the importance of ideals.

Another important point is that the inauguration of SHL happened before the school building was built, which probably contributed to less emphasis on

pedagogical aspects of a more practical sort. As mentioned, Bruno was interested in new teaching methods, and opportunities for trying out new methods were an important argument when the school applied for public funding (Bruno, 1942, p. 104).

Principal Voss at ELG exemplifies the diversity within progressive movements in Norway. While promoting many principles of progressive pedagogy, Voss was very far from the progressivism of educators like Anna Sethne. Her progressivism included an emphasis on democracy, peace, and gender equality (Aagre, 2016). During the German occupation, Voss joined the NS party and was active in attempts to Nazify the schools. He was convicted of treason after the war.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with questions concerning ideals of Bildung, uses of history, and pedagogical ideas in the first buildings of SHL and ELG. The systems of values that school buildings project are complex, and this projection is influenced by different people, concerns, ideologies, and pedagogical and architectural trends, as well as finances.

The idea of "a humanistic gymnasium" at SHL harmonized well with a use of history where Greek antiquity was chosen as inspiration to build "An 'Acropolis' in Miniature". Texts from the inauguration show that, in addition to antiquity, other ideals were emphasized, especially Christianity and Swedish history.

At ELG the nation was the most central element. The building from 1908 had originally been built as a folk high school, connected to ideals of Bildung emphasizing the national, the rural, and democratic participation. Especially the two first elements were visible in the building from 1908, with its references to farm architecture and Norwegian fairy tales. The *landsgymnas*, while strongly influenced by national, rural, and democratic ideals of Bildung, were also linked to the elite academic tradition of the gymnasium. Although classical in proportions, there are no clear references to ancient Greek architecture in the school building from 1926, and antiquity played no role in the inauguration speeches.

The presence of ideas central to progressive pedagogy seems stronger at ELG than SHL when studying the inauguration speeches. But, when looking at some more practical decisions about organization of classrooms, one sees expressions of ideas of progressive pedagogy at SHL as well.

Further studies of the history of school buildings can bring new insights into ideals of Bildung. There are also interesting possibilities in exploring links between ideas and materiality by including such themes in history education in schools.

Note

1 All translations by the author.

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4 Street names as monuments and a starting point for teaching historical knowledge

Karl Christian Alvestad

Walking through the centre of cities such as Oslo, London, Paris, or Notodden, one is routinely confronted by references to the past. Not only by the remains of the past in the form of objects and buildings, but also through monuments, statues, plaques, *Stolpersteins*, and street names. Helge Jordheim, in his introductory chapter to an edited volume on statues of Women in Norway, noted:

> … these cityscapes, that at times are quite idyllic, [are] populated by humans that are not of flesh and bone, and that do not move along the street. Instead, they are made of bronze or stone and exist about one metre above ground level on a plinth. They are the cityscape's permanent residents, they do not move, they do not age, or at least not as quickly as the rest of us, they are always outside. They are humans with a fixed place.
>
> (Jordheim, 2017, p. 13)

Similarly, the editors of the same book highlighted that public spaces in Norway were filled with historical narratives (Herming and Nerdrum, 2017, p. 9). Herming and Jordheim are here referring to statues, but I would argue that their perspectives on the permanence of monuments can be applied to street names as well – at least those referring to personal names or events or similar – and that they can be understood and read in the same way. Examples of such street names in a Norwegian context include Sam Eydes Gate in Notodden, Dronning Eufemias Gate in Oslo, Magnus Barfots gate in Bergen, or examples like Hafrsfjordgata in Stavanger and Stiklestadgata in Haugesund which commemorate significant events in early Norwegian history. As such, street names may to some extent be understood as small monuments and historical references that populate the spaces around us. These names and statues, like other monuments, are part of the narratives and materiality that contribute to people's "sense of place" according to Tim Cresswell (2013) and Doreen Massey (1995), even if we very often do not notice or consider them as such.

Looking back at the early twentieth century, the teaching of history and social studies had a clear and overt societal purpose, namely the construction and maintenance of a national community and the development of law-abiding citizens, some of whom were meant to be active and democratic members of society.[1]

Textbooks and learning resources developed at the time clearly demonstrate how this was communicated, as well as how overt cultural narratives were communicated through text and illustrations. Scholars have already demonstrated how the narratives within textbooks had clear nationalist purposes (Alvestad, 2016a, 2016b, 2021a, 2021b; Lorentzen, 2005; Sigurdsrud & Kjølberg, 1998; Skjelbred et al., 2017; Stugu, 2001) and how they can be seen as part of a larger cultural landscape of nation building in Norway (Sørensen, 1998). Among the things included in the textbooks, especially from 1896 onwards, are representations of national symbols and monuments (Alvestad, 2016a, p. 107), the inclusion of which can be seen as a direct representation of the symbols and their cultural meaning, and a reminder to the reader of their story. As such, one can argue that these symbols were part of the wider multimodal messaging aimed at constructing shared understandings of the nation's past, present, and future, thereby cementing the imagined community of the nation. These ideas are also evident in the curriculum of the time, and one may thus argue that the use of these illustrations as reminders was part of the larger framework of references for the nation, through which the membership in the national community was continuously created and strengthened in every single child attending school. This, at least, is the argument I have presented earlier (Alvestad, 2016a; 2016b; 2021a; 2021b) and where I have suggested that the observations of Benedict Anderson (1991) about the imagined community and construction of it can also be useful tools when considering Norwegian educational history. Thus, this raises the question of how can one engage with monuments and memory sites in contemporary Norwegian education. This chapter explores one learning activity focused on street names as memory sites and specifically examines how street names can be used in teacher education to engage with concepts of memory, identity, and history. At the same time, I will also seek to position this activity and the potential of street names as an educational resource within a wider tradition of history and social studies pedagogy, thereby considering its potential in other parts of the Norwegian education system.

I will start by outlining the learning activity and resources I explored with my students, before exploring some perspectives on street names as monuments and how they might be considered access points for historical narratives and cultural memory. To achieve this, I will draw on perspectives from the pedagogy of both geography and history. These perspectives will frame my argument about how street names can be seen as monuments, and how unpicking their narratives and memories can foster learning and a critical perspective on memory, identity, and place-based narratives. I will then move on to considering how this activity fits with contemporary educational policies in Norway and the transferability of this activity from higher education to primary and secondary schools.

The learning activity and point of departure

As a way of challenging both my own students and myself to engage with the cultural memory embedded in the landscape around us, I devised a learning activity in which I asked my students to analyse a street name and present it as a

podcast or vlog. The students were in their fourth year of a Master's degree in teacher education and were taking a 15 ECTS module focused on heritage and place-based education in social studies. The group consisted of 35 students from all over Norway, including students specializing in both primary and secondary education. In the activity the students were asked to choose a street name in their local community that commemorated something, and to analyse its name. In so doing, they needed to consider who or what the name commemorated, when the commemoration was established, who the commemorators were or are, and whether they could use this in their teaching (and if so, how). The students were asked to prepare a podcast or a vlog where they presented their analysis and reflections. After submitting their assignments, I held a debriefing session with them in groups, where we discussed the assignment and the students' findings. The empirical data for this chapter consists of the submissions and reflections of some of the students who undertook this assignment. A total of 2 out of 35 students consented for their reflections and submissions to be used. The debriefing session with these two students was recorded and transcribed, and the data used below is taken from the transcriptions along with their submissions. Due to the number of participants, this chapter will not be an in-depth analysis of the learning outcomes and products of the students, but it will instead use the reflections of these two students as a point of departure for considering the potential of street names as an educational resource in social studies and history as proposed by didactical theory. The small number of reflections is a clear limitation for this study, and I will therefore not draw any conclusions on the basis of the attainment of the students. Instead, I will focus on unpicking the potential of street names as an educational resource that can be used in teacher education to focus on memory, identity, and the (at times) contested nature of the past.

As highlighted above, the learning activity in focus for this chapter takes as its point of departure place names and street names in the local landscapes of the students. In this activity the students were asked to produce a podcast or a vlog on a street name and its educational potential. This instruction was influenced by ideas in the work of Pierre Nora (1989) and Doreen Massey (1995), discussed below, and it reflected other work about memory sites and history I was doing at the time. The students were explicitly asked to consider the names as manifestations of cultural memory and heritage in public spaces, and how they could link it to the wider topics of the module. The activity was designed as an individual activity with a pass/fail mark. To help the students in their engagement with the street names, I had developed some questions to help them focus their minds while engaging with the street:

- What is the name of the street?
- Who or what is the road named after?
- Why do you think the street is named after this person or object?
- Does the person or object commemorated in the street name have a local, regional, national, or global significance? What kind of memory is this commemoration?

- How can you use this street name, and the individual or object it commemorates, in social studies education?

My initial motivation for choosing this activity was to encourage the students firstly to engage with the concepts of social and cultural memory on the one hand, and with memory sites on the other. Secondly, I wanted them to consider how these concepts manifested themselves in the local communities around the students. Indirectly, I also hoped to stimulate them to reflect on how they could use street names in their own future teaching. This last point will not be discussed in detail here due to the lack of evidence. As an additional outcome, I hoped the audiovisual format of the assessment, i.e. the podcast or vlog, would help the students to engage with the curriculum of the module and thus formulate individual reflections that would help them apply theoretical knowledge to their selected case studies. Although it would have been interesting to explore the vlogs and podcasts the students produced for this assessment, the aim of this chapter is not to explore the students' learning, but rather the pedagogical thought behind this activity.

Even though the products and the reflections of the students' activities are the focus of this study, I will briefly outline the two student examples, and their reflections from the debriefing session. Student A, from the city of Skien, submitted a video about St Olavs Street in Skien, identifying in their video that the street name was based on the medieval abbey of St Olaf that had once existed in the heart of Skien. Student A also noted in the debriefing that St Olav had multiple other medieval dedications in the local area, and therefore the student proposed that these had contributed to the memorialization of Olaf in the city. Furthermore, Student A argued in their video that the street and name dated to the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, and that it reflected a culture of nationalism and contemporary historic medievalist culture, i.e. the use of the Middle Ages in a postmedieval context. Student A then went on to argue in the video that this street name could be an interesting access point for exploring urban developments in the city and local historical memory with school classes.

Student B produced a podcast about Betzy Kjelsbergs vei in Drammen. This student reported this to be an eye opener about the role of women from their local community in the Norwegian suffrage movement, and the societal role of women at the beginning of the twentieth century. Similarly to Student A, Student B saw the street name as a local commemoration of the history of the city. Moreover, Student B used this street name when teaching a Year 9 class while on placement and reported in the reflection session that referring to the street and its name had helped some students in the class to relate more closely to individuals involved in Norwegian women's fight for the vote prior to 1913.

Although the reflections by Students A and B suggest that students became aware of how their local communities engage with the past, it must be acknowledged that this might not be surprising given that the topic of the

activity was local memory and memory sites, and that they had previously engaged with related topics like the role of history in society, and the use of history and cultural heritage in general. As such, the assignments did to some extent only reproduce knowledge the students had been introduced to in the lectures. Yet, the reflections of Student B suggest that this activity helped this student realize how saturated their surroundings were with the history of the second industrial revolution and the labour movement. Student A, on the other hand, encountered national romantic medievalist traces highlighting the medieval past of their community and of the nation. These same students also noted in conversations that it was at times difficult to find information about local history and about the street names around them – highlighting that not all names and monuments would be resources that could be easily used – but at the same time they also suggested that this contributed to making street names useful as points of departure for local history projects they could do with their classes. They suggested this could help them teach to their classes research skills and different methods of creating knowledge – which are also important attainment goals in the new Norwegian curriculum. However, this raises the question of how street names and sites of memories intersect with didactical literature, and how these sites can be understood on the basis of this literature and related theoretical perspectives.

Theoretical perspectives on place and memory

As I approach street names from a historical perspective and from the frame of memory studies, which was the inspiration of the learning activity, Kvande and Naastad (2020), Lund (2020), Folkenborg (2018), Duhn (2012), and Birkeland (2014) can help us situate the learning activity into the wider field of place-based education and history education. To explore their perspectives, I will first briefly consider some key elements of place-based education, before shifting to the role of place in relation to memory in history education, for, as Jordheim (2017) has implied, these monuments are narratives permanently residing in the cityscape. The chief reason for this is that I believe that street names are often sites of memories, and that the narratives attached to these names help us make sense of who we are as a community and who we wish to be. Thus, the chapter seeks to highlight how the two perspectives help underpin a possible approach to engaging with street names as educational resources in history education.

Place can, according to Tim Cresswell (who builds on John Agnew), be understood in three different ways: location, locale, and sense of place. The first refers to the geographic locality in the world, while the last two refer, respectively, to "the material settings for social relations" and "the subjective and emotional attachment people have to places" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 23). These three understandings of place contributed to Inger Birkeland's 2014 discussion of places of learning, where she expands on Cresswell and others to consider the role of place and space in education and learning for children

(Birkeland, 2014, p. 105–115). Birkeland's consideration of this parallels perspectives we also find in Duhn's article from 2012. In her study of place and pedagogy, Duhn considers "that place-as-assemblage, with its consideration of the agency of matter, provides a conceptual territory for a preliminary exploration of a posthumanist pedagogy in early years' education" (2012, p. 100). Alongside Cresswell, Birkeland, and Duhn, Doreen Massey's seminal 1995 article on places and their past sheds light on the use of places and their role in education.

Massey's study (1995) is focused on the meaning of place to "lay" people rather than our academic theatricalization of place. Massey primarily examines how communities understand places and their past through their lens of identity, memory, and experiences (1995). To some extent, this echoes Cresswell and Agnew's ideas of "sense of place", notions also included in Birkeland and Duhn's understandings of place and space. Yet, Massey's consideration of history and memory, paralleling some of Pierre Nora's ideas (1989), shows how "a place is thus always inevitably an intervention not only into geography but also, at least implicitly, into the (re)telling of the historical constitution of the present" (Massey, 1995, p. 190).

Nora's (1989) article famously outlines and explores the ideas of memory sites and their cultural importance, based on materials from a French context. His work, along with that of his colleagues, in the Lieu de Memoire in France has inspired many considerations of other places and their role and power in relation to memories, identities, and community construction (Alvestad, 2016a, 2016b; Nora, 1989). Nora's concept of sites of memories can help us reinterpret how places and the materiality of a place can be imbued with meaning and how that meaning is understood, used, and processed by the community in creating a sense of place. Such sites of memories are not fixed but are, as Tilley suggests, "always in process, rather than static" (2006, p. 7). However, such monuments hold the potential to shed light on social and cultural memory but can also be a powerful tool in exploring identity and history. For, as Xavier Guégan argued in 2015, reproductions of a site or even just the textual references of a site can strengthen the memory of the narrative imbued in the site among the audiences who claim that site. As such, both the site itself and a depiction of a site or monument can be a mnemonic access point to the cultural memory and narrative the site is commemorating. One such example of this is that one can access the memory of the Holocaust not only through visits to Auschwitz, but also through depictions of the Auschwitz gate or textual references to it. The reproductions and references offer the reader/viewer a reminder of their pre-existing knowledge about the site and its history. As such, sites, monuments, and references to them can be mnemonic devices holding the potential for remembering. Textbooks' use of pictures of monuments and buildings can be seen in Jonas Vellesen's textbooks on Norwegian history of 1910 and 1896, which both show pictures of the Haraldshaugen monument (Vellesen, 1896, p. 16, 1910, p. 20), and the 1910 book depicts

Nidarosdomen, Haakonshallen, Akershus Castle, and the Eidsvoll building as cultural symbols on the front of the book (Vellesen, 1910, p. 1). It can also be seen in Jens Hæreid's (1921) history textbook showing a picture of Borgund Stave Church (Hæreid, 1921, p. 63). By including these images, the authors provide the readers with a depiction of surviving medieval monuments, reiterating both in text and images the cultural importance of these objects and the medieval past in Norway at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Street names are, like other memory sites and monuments, sometimes subject to being contested. Following on from Tilley (2006, p. 7), these names are always in process and can thus be taken down, renamed, and changed depending on the context in which they exist, and the ideas and opinions of the time. A recent example of this has been a lengthy debate in Oslo about Marta Steinsviks vei. The individual after whom the street is named, Marta Steinsvik, has been found to hold antisemitic views among other things, prompting the local community to lobby for a change of name on the street (Lundgård, 2023; Stensen, 2021). This case mirrors to some extent the cases of toppling statues in the UK or the US (Siddique & Skapeliti, 2020; Taylor, 2020) and other places, following recent debates about public history and its place in modern cities.

Recent didactical literature in Norway considers street names as monuments that are important to the local population, and that represent the ideas and identity of the community (Folkenborg, 2018, p. 123; Kvande & Naastad, 2020, p. 242). Kvande and Naastad (2020) are joined by Lund (2020, p. 112) and Folkenborg (2018) in considering monuments as public history and thereby a potential tool for learning. Following this, Ketil Knutsen, Norwegian professor of history and history didactics, argued in 2023 that the use of history in Norway is expressed in many ways, including monuments and education (Knutsen, 2023, p. 34). Thus, textbooks and monuments represent the same "landscape" of uses of the past and the construction and promotion of particular interpretations of the past. He further highlights how groups and individuals in recent years have started re-evaluating some monuments by highlighting how monuments can re-iterate and promote narratives that uphold and reflect racist and suppressive values and structures (Knutsen, 2023, p. 36). Street names are just one of many types of sites of memory (Koshar, 2000) and thus, as illustrated with the case of Marta Steinsviks vei, need to be handled with care. The study of place names has a long tradition, and place names are informative of social and cultural memory through history. As I have previously claimed (Alvestad, 2019), street names in Norway can be understood as an extension of cultural and social memory practices, i.e. the conscious construction of sites of memories. At the same time, as street names and place names are sites of memories, they are also part of the largest public archives of the past (Ottesen & Hylested, 2015, p. 32). Similarly to place names and street names, the Stolpersteins made in 1994 by Gunter Demnig to commemorate

the victims of the Holocaust are integrated into streets and pavements in towns, cities, and settlements across much of Europe and may at times seem fairly invisible in day-to-day life. In Norway, the 757 Stolpersteins (Jødisk Museum, n.d.) have for some time been used for educational purposes, with institutions like the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (2022), the Nansen Center for Peace and Dialogue (n.d.), the Narvik War and Peace Centre (n.d.), and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance through Dembra (2019), all offering educational activities using the Stolpersteins as resources or starting points for educational activities with secondary school students. Thus, we can see memorial sites and monuments in the cityscape of Norwegian towns and cities as an established part of history education in Norway. However, the didactical literature explored above does not offer any concrete guidance on how to engage with memorials and monuments in education. With the exception of the activities surrounding the Stolpersteins, no description of how to use monuments, street names, or other objects is forthcoming in the literature. This suggests that although the pedagogy of social studies and history have accepted the potential of using such monuments in teaching, there are very few practical suggestions for how to use them. It might therefore be useful to consider these resources in light of the most recent educational reform in Norway to unpick the potential of such monuments, and at the same time to evaluate the potential of the activity I undertook with my students. It is also significant to this study, and to the context of the learning activity described above, that teacher education in Norway must actively engage with the curriculum in use in Norway at any given point. Thus, by examining the role of history and monuments in this curriculum, the potential of street names as an educational resource will be more apparent.

Street names and the 2020 national curriculum

In 2020 Norway implemented a new national curriculum, LK20. In this curriculum one can find learning outcomes such as "explore cultural heritage and how people lived during the time the cultural heritage is from, and compare this with how we live today" for year 4 and "explore and describe the cultural heritage and cultural and natural landscape of the local community" for year 2 in social studies (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). These learning outcomes highlight the importance of cultural heritage within Norwegian society, and how the landscape and places around us are shaped by us and the stories we tell about our past. However, what is challenging when engaging with these learning outcomes is that the authoritative translation into English uses the term Cultural Heritage, whereas the Norwegian curriculum uses *Kulturminne*. The Norwegian word has a more specific meaning than the English term Cultural Heritage – and in the text of LK20 it means any specific object or monument from the past. A *kulturminne* does not have to be part of a living and evolving cultural heritage, as the English term might

suggest. *Kulturminne* can therefore be, among other things, statues, burial mounds, museums, Stolpersteins, monuments, and more – thus this learning outcome could apply to a *kulturminne* in the form of a street name. What is more, these learning outcomes for year 2 and year 4 give clear instructions on what kind of activities the students in their schooling should undertake when working towards attaining these targets. For year 2, students need to "explore and describe", while year 4 students are meant to "explore", "describe", and "compare". These learning outcomes thus highlight how students are meant to engage not only with the content of the subject of history but also with its materiality and through that be able to retell and analyse stories and remains from the past. That the curriculum offers the local community and its memory landscape as an educational resource seems to have contributed to making the implementation of the new curriculum more challenging, as there are no text-books that can directly address these learning outcomes. The challenge here may be partially related to the varied natures of *kulturminne* in local communities throughout Norway, and the historical and societal knowledge attached to them. In a research report published in 2022, Burner et al. have argued that teachers in social studies experienced some challenges in their work due to the lack of updated and relevant textbooks and teaching resources (Burner et al., 2022, p. 55). This experience may, as suggested above, be borne out by the complexity of the learning outcomes and their implication for the diversity of content knowledge in the subject. One of the teachers quoted in the report claimed to counteract this by using resources outside of the classroom to develop skills among their students. They[2] stated, "society is a fantastic [learning] tool" (Burner et al., 2022, p. 54). To illustrate this the teacher explained that among the objects this teacher used in their teaching was the medieval stone church across the road from the school where they work. The teacher's argument that society is an excellent source of learning reinforces my proposal that street names, like other monuments and remains, could be excellent points of departure to teach social studies and history in a Norwegian educational context, as they are part of the local community.

Although the most recent reform of history and social studies in Norway has shifted towards more methodological learning outcomes, the subject is still seen as one that is meant to promote belonging, understanding, and identity for the individual and the community (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019; Roos, 2022, p. 16). A key point with the new curriculum is that the community is no longer explicitly national, but that it can instead be global, local, regional, or even intra-national. Moreover, one may argue that the nation that is promoted in the new curriculum is from an ethno-national model to a civic-national model of nationhood, where citizenship and not ethnicity and blood determines belonging to the nation. Even with this slight shift in the operationalization of the subject, some stereotypes about history and the relevance of historical knowledge persist. Although the teachers in the 2022 report by Burner et al. noted the lack of appropriate textbooks and curated learning resources, some new learning resources have been produced. In Gyldendal

Norsk Forlag's Salaby (Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, n.d.), for example, one may observe a continued focus on historical content knowledge centred on the political history of the nation. Yet, this content diverges somewhat from the current aim of history education in Norway. In the new curriculum, history, which is part of social studies (as mentioned above), is meant to enable students to:

> learn to understand why people seek to come together in society, and how the development of identity and belongingness is affected by geographic, historical and current conditions. This means having different perspectives on what may constitute a good life, where the students develop an awareness of history and competence in making decisions by understanding themselves in light of their past, present and future.
>
> (Kjerneelementer – Læreplan i samfunnsfag
> (SAF01-04) (udir.no))

This quote shows how the curriculum is focused on historical thinking, historical consciousness (Roos, 2022), and the use of the past, rather than specific content knowledge. However, this means to some extent that children and young people leaving school at the end of compulsory education do not necessarily share the same cultural and historical references with their peers in the community. Yet, the most significant change in the curriculum, and thus in the context of teacher education, is the shift from knowledge about the past and historical events to competencies that will allow students (of all ages) to decode and make sense of the past and the stories we tell about it. This means that students are meant to be able to engage with history and local heritage sites and to decode them in lieu of the past, the lives of the people who built it, and their livelihoods. This shift is represented by the use of "explore and describe" and "explore … describe … compare" in the learning outcomes quoted above.

Among the many divergent points of education that some have feared (Roos, 2022, pp. 17–19) is the lack of shared historical narratives, such as the history of the Vikings and the historical developments of Norway in the Middle Ages and afterwards. This fear is rooted in a concern that students would lack the opportunity to learn about key historical events that help us make sense of the world around us (Roos, 2022, p. 18). The concern about the lack of content knowledge has to some extent gone away following the implementation of the new curriculum, but teachers in the above-mentioned report by Burner et al. (2022) have highlighted that the subject has become very open and it is up to each teacher to fill the subject with the content knowledge they see fit. Yet, these shifts in the curriculum and the concern about the lack of content knowledge suggest that students studying to teach history and social studies need to be equipped with skills both to unpack the use of history in our society and at the same time to acquire research skills in obtaining knowledge content when needed.

Concluding reflections

With the learning activity outlined above, the didactical literature on place and memory, and the nature of history in the new curriculum all laid out, a question remains – does the learning activity focused on street names outlined above help me in engaging teacher education students in developing skills and competencies to face the demands of the new curriculum? The aim of this activity was to help students activate ideas of place and memory when exploring their everyday context, thereby reflecting on how street names could be a resource in their future. By drawing together ideas of Nora, Massey, Duhn, Birkeland, Cresswell, and Agnew, and by focusing on how "sense of place" and the narratives attached to memorials and monuments are key parts of engaging with places, the activity has opened the possibility for my students to engage with historical content knowledge through their research of the monument – thus showing what role this knowledge has within the Norwegian curriculum. By seeing street names as memory sites, and by engaging with memory sites and *kulturminner* as a point of department for unlocking the cultural and societal memories embedded in street names, this learning activity offers one approach for the use street names in teaching.

However, I will not argue that this is the only way, and as recent didactical literature for history education in Norway suggests, memory sites can be a fruitful way of engaging with society's relationship with the past, and its use of it. Thus, considering ways to actively encourage student teachers to evaluate the possibilities and resources that surround them every day and in every community throughout the country would offer a way of both encouraging the students to activate their theoretical knowledge and at the same time to experience some of the ways they can work with monuments and cultural heritage with their own students in the future. Consequently, seeing street names as monuments and representations of local, regional, or national memories of the past, and thus as sites of memories, can be one point of departure for actively integrating street names into learning and the world beyond the school into the teaching history in line with LK20. Looking beyond the Norwegian context and its most recent educational reform, street names – at least those that offer historical references – may also hold a useful potential for engaging with critical thinking, citizenship, and community, and to help make children and adults aware and conscious of how memories and history impact us and surround us every day.

Notes

1 Here it is important to remember that history and the early elements of social studies were introduced in Norwegian schools prior to the introduction of universal suffrage for men and women in 1913. Thus, at the beginning, what we today understand as social studies were not always intended to prepare all students to become democratic participants.

2 The author is here insisting on using "they" as a gender-neutral singular pronoun.

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5 Reboot and gather your thoughts

Place-based writing as a learning resource for novice scholars

Iben Brinch

Introduction

"Being able to take a short break to look out into nature and reflect on what I've learned is in itself a pedagogical resource because it helps me 'reboot' and gather my thoughts". These are "Marianne's" words, cited from her writing log, which was shared with the other ten participants on a PhD course in the early spring of the pandemic year 2021. The quote is part of a longer text, and a response to one of the daily writing exercises given as part of the course. The students were instructed to go for a walk – indoors or outdoors – and to take pictures and reflect on how their surroundings could be viewed as a learning resource. After having done this, they were to publish a text with their reflections on the learning platform, for the other students and teachers to read and comment on. I was one of the course leaders and instructors of the writing exercises, and I wanted to share with the students my experience of the potential transformative agency for academic thinking and authorship through using reflective and creative non-fiction writing (Brinch Jørgensen, 2020). At the same time, the writing exercise would offer the opportunity for both myself and my students to examine how place-based writing may be seen as a resource for novice scholars to develop *ethos* (Carlo, 2020), and thus, in an informed and reflective way, prepare novice scholars for becoming part of the professions of academic writers and researchers within their fields.

In this chapter, theory of rhetoric and composition is combined with approaches to biographical learning, pedagogy of place, and place-based writing to frame the analysis of the texts and give some key concepts for interpreting them, as well as the practices and doxas within which they were written. Writing is a way of thinking, as I will soon elaborate, and a text is a rhetorical scene enabling you creatively to become a particular character and raise your voice of scholarly originality. The specific type of writing that will be examined here is processual and reflective writing where the writers are connecting their personal and professional life – what I will refer to as a kind of *life-writing*. The *place-based* concept in the specific texts comes from the walk and taking pictures of views and objects, along with reflection on the places and its things. The fact that the students were asked to walk and take photos activated

potentials of the places that they focused on for their writing and, at the same time, pointed out a possibility for using places for inspiration in academic texts. Both these processes include forms of *identification* (Burke, 1969). The different steps of the writing exercise (walking, photographing, writing, publishing on the writing log) broadened the space of a learning *process* for the students. The genre – a "photo essay" – that the students were asked to write gave room for a personal essayistic and reflective form, as well as the creative use of visual and aesthetical elements. The analysis of the texts will show that the students share certain themes and ways of creating the texts.

Primarily, this chapter will shed light on the potentials of using place-based writing in the education of novice scholars and aims to point to some key functions of the approach as a learning resource. Academic texts are the main learning artefacts for scholars, as we read, write, review, revise, comment on, and quote texts, etc. daily. Moreover, texts are at the same time what we need *to master* for succeeding as scholars. This means that the paradoxes and complexities in the agency of becoming and being a scholar are present in the writing process, as well as in our shared practices of writing and disciplinary doxas. In the following, I will introduce theories of writing processes, biographic learning, and life-writing as learning resources, followed by theories of pedagogy of place and place-based writing. I will then move on to the analysis of the PhD students' texts, with a discussion of what kind of functions of place-based writing as a resource the texts point to and what practice of knowledge production they mirror.

Theories of place-based writing

That writing is conceptualized as an activity that can contribute to constituting acts of thinking has already been noted by Lev Vygotsky (1978). That *writing is a way of thinking* is now an integrated and well-known mantra within the research field of writing theory and writing pedagogy (Booth et al., 2016; Brinch Jørgensen, 2020; Menary, 2007). According to this concept, the writing *process* is no longer just stages on the way to a text, but constitutive of the knowledge produced. That writing has transformative power for the human mind that has implications for how we conceptualize and use writing as a learning resource.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, a reaction to the somehow standardized and generalized way of teaching writing has appeared. The well-regarded works by the experts in cognition and writing, John Hayes and cognitive rhetoric Linda Flower (Flower & Hayes, 1981), were some of the first examples of research on writing that emphasized the importance of a more individualized approach, or more precisely, for recognizing that there is a productive dynamic in the shifting of modes in the writing process – something that experienced writers use strategically. This insight should be taken seriously in the classroom as well. Students should be empowered to follow and learn from their own processes because that is how good authorship is established and practiced.

Other new perspectives on writing came from writing pedagogies (for example Elbow, 1981) and the social sciences in the form of the validation of lived experiences as a source for meaning making and knowledge about culture and society. Sociologists and cultural theorists like Anthony Giddens and – more lately – Andreas Reckwitz have pointed to the individualization and singularization of society in late modernity, that call for, as Giddens puts it, a "life politics" that "flow from processes of self-actualization in post-traditional contexts, where globalizing influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realization influence global strategies" (Giddens, 1991, p. 214, also see Hallqvist, 2014, p. 5). The emphasis on individuality and subjectivity has found its way into education and research, and within history and social sciences, it has been termed "biographical learning":

> The concept of biographical learning is attractive partly because of its holistic character, including both formal and informal learning processes, binding emotional, existential and cognitive aspects, and uniting preconscious and conscious dimensions.
>
> (Hallqvist, 2014, p. 6)

At the core of biographical learning is the *story*, and theories of the narrative (or narratology) from literary theories were connected the cognitive/individual and collective/social: "The everyday narrator, precisely in his or her function as a narrator, is a bearer of 'structures', because the narrative networks him or her within the social and historical lifeworld in which he or she takes part" (Alheit, 2005, p. 204).

Sociology professor Laurel Richardson has developed a theory of the importance of "writing stories", denoting stories about the way academic texts were written (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018). For Richardson, writing stories is a kind of "life-writing" (Prescott, 2011; Rioux, 2017), ranging from all sorts of fictional and factional writing about daily life to complete lives of places, objects, institutions, individuals, families, and groups. "Life-writing has to do with the emotions, it has to do with memory, and it has to do with a sense of identity. Life-writing is a vital form of cultural communication", it says on the website of The Oxford Centre of Life-Writing (31.03.2022). Richardson's idea is that we can become better communities of practice, including scholarly practice, if we talk about – and publish texts on – the circumstances within which we write and the process that contributes to forming the academic text. The writing stories are keys to learning about academic knowledge production.

The place-based texts that the PhD students wrote for the writing logs were written for a small audience – themselves, the other students, and the course leaders. The writing log was a semi-public "learning journal" (Moon, 2006), and therefore, the texts were not just reflective texts for the students' own use but also rhetorical texts. They were stories of single afternoons and

the students' surroundings, and thus a kind of life-writing as well as mirroring what the students deemed proper for the purpose and discipline (the doxa).

The pedagogy of place and place-based writing

Before I unpack what I mean by "place-based writing", I will discuss *the pedagogy of place*. The pedagogy of place is neither a defined theory nor a pedagogical method but consists rather of different pedagogic approaches that share the thinking of the child being "situated" (Harboe, 2021, p. 39). A modern classic introducing this approach is David Orr's article "Place and Pedagogy" from 1992, where the pedagogy of place is defined as the opposite of teaching abstract knowledge. Turid L. Harboe, a scholar of the philosophy and history of education, has written about the use of pedagogy of place in Norway, defining it as an approach that emphasizes "direct observation and exploring of the near surroundings, experimentation, and problem solving. It is the real problems we face in our everyday life and the places where we live our lives which are in focus" (Harboe, 2021, p. 40, my translation). The pedagogy of place highlights experiences created in situations, and thus, both place and materiality are important. Together with *situation* and *materiality*, the Norwegian pedagogue Lars Løvlie (Harboe, 2021; Løvlie, 2007) points out *the atmosphere* as being central to grasping the pedagogy of place philosophically. The atmosphere is created not only by the spatial qualities of the place but also by the *relations* between people and the objects and, as the American professor in psychology Theodore R. Sarbin puts it, between people and *places as scenes* (Sarbin, 2005). Places play a part in identity construction as "place identity": "[T]he observations of people's preferences for some scenes and symbolic places justify the concept of place identity" (p. 204). The preferences can come from the functions of the place such as providing comfort, making a good impression, and recalling memories, warm feelings, or aesthetical pleasure. It is in the processes of making relations that the place can be used to create a sense of belonging, developing of feelings of home, as well as the opposite: yearning, exclusion, feeling exiled, etc.

To be able to write about places requires personal, social, societal, and cultural awareness from the student; awareness in the heuristic process of sensing and experiencing the surroundings, awareness of how and why they interpret the places as they do, and awareness of how the impressions and understandings can be turned into text that gives meaning for an audience (even if it is just the writer herself). The American rhetorician Kenneth Burke sees the processes of creating identifications as the core activity of communication (1969). One could say that place-based writing requires a high degree of awareness of points of identifications together with creativity in the process of writing and motivation for being understood by an audience. Because writing is a way of thinking, the writer will deepen her knowledge of places and relations to places and refine her place identity in the process of writing about them. It is a kind of pedagogy of place that Roseanne Carlo, American scholar in text and

composition, uses in her thinking of place-based writing for students in the writing program at the College of Staten Island, CUNY. Carlo describes and discusses place-based writing as an activity for university students to transform their ethos and to develop critical, civic literacy (Carlo, 2020):

> I believe assignments like place-based narrative essays allow students to understand rhetorical identifications. They learn how to appeal to their audiences through descriptive writing that invites readers to walk through the world as students inhabit and see it. The everyday revelations walkers experience are the origins for their character development, and by relating this experience to readers, there is potential for moments of identification as readers become consubstantial with the writer's way of being.
>
> (Carlo, 2020, p. 149)

Carlo's approach seems to aim at making the college students better identify with the writing exercise and invest more in the process. The place-based writing becomes a multiple resource for learning because it is not just a question of design but of transforming the writer herself (also see Donovan, 2016, 2018; Edwards-Vandenhoek, 2018; Jacobs, 2011; Prescott, 2011). Carlo's pedagogic seems to have the double purpose of developing character in textual form and developing competent and participating citizens out of students at a marginal university college, which combines a holistic pedagogy with critical pedagogy. A similar approach, combining the development of subjects ("subjectification") and what "matters" to the students based on their individual lives, is to be found in the book *World-Centred Education. A View for the Present* by Gert Biesta, professor of educational theory and pedagogy (2022). By using the term "ethos" instead of "subjectification", I mean to call attention to the double development of the subject that happens by writing: the development of a voice in the text and the development of the author herself as a character and social agent by her authorship. Because place-based writing is grounded in reflection, personal stories, and memories as well as observations and multiple awareness, it "leads to unique, vivid writing", and "the uniqueness of experience and place combine to give the elusive quality of 'voice,' as well as providing a reason to write" (Jacobs, 2011, pp. 50–51).

Place-based writing can be a resource for learning in another sense, too. In her book *Air & Light & Time & Space*, Helen Sword uses a title from a Charles Bukowski poem ironically: If we just had the air, light, time, and space, we would write beautiful academic texts! (Sword, 2017, p. ix). Sword points to the fact that academic writing can take place anywhere "…writing is a movable feast, an activity that academics can carry with them wherever they go—and they do" (Sword, 2017, p. 30). Places are viewed as conditions – and excuses – for writing/not writing, and we may have to trick our brains *to get in the mood* using places. Sword also points to the influences that the outdoor spaces and physical exercises like *walking* may have on the writing; not only wilderness but also

"parks, urban walkways, peasant neighbourhoods" (p. 40). *Shifting places*, even by changing places in your own home, can become a generator in the creative process of writing, as the Norwegian rhetorician Aslaug Nyrnes states (Nyrnes, 2012). Nyrnes uses the rhetorical concept "topos" to conceptualize. Topos (pl. topoi) is the Greek word for place and was used in classical rhetoric, especially by Aristotle, as a metaphor describing epistemologically how to seek knowledge in the mind and collective memory for topics for speech or text. But – as Nyrnes points out – *real places and shifting between them* can become a motor behind a productive and creative writing process. As we will see, this mode of connection between place and writing is found in the students' texts.

In their article "Between campus and planet: toward posthumanist *paidei*", Rebecca A. Alt and Rosa A. Eberly declare the importance of making the education in rhetoric and composition relevant for contemporary students using their local contexts – such as the campus – to create interest in both human and nonhuman life globally (2019). In other words, they use the pedagogy of place with the purpose of empowering the students to contribute to solving the climate crisis. The place-based writing is thus used very specifically as a resource for *another*, though important, purpose than developing personal ethos or creating high communicative texts. This study highlights the *ethical* dimensions of ethos.

Ethos and ethics share the same etymological root, and ethos has the place-based and societal dimension incorporated in its original meaning referring to character of person and custom among people at a specific time and place. Thus, ethos has – since its classical Greek origin – been conceptualized theoretically with different weight on ethos as a dimension of rhetorical discourse and ethos as an aspect of a person's spirit, character, and reputation (Baumlin, 2001). Aristotle defined ethos as the trustworthiness that the speaker establishes *during the speech* based on his ability to show benevolence towards the audience together with his knowledge and his moral character. When I use the rhetorical term ethos, the understanding of ethos is seen not only as such an Aristotelian rhetorical act *in the text* (i.e., the voice) but also as a concept referring to the spirit of the author and his or her ethical relation to "the other" that share the same time and place (Corder, 1978). The second part of this double perspective mirrors Isocrates' view on ethos, where ethos refers to the person behind the rhetorical discourse: "for who does not know that words carry a greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words?" (Isocrates in Antidosis, Benoit, 1990, p. 257). To work with ethos in academic writing is therefore both to work on the argumentation in the text formed by a textual voice *and* to work on finding out who you are as a person living in time and place that can bring weight to the words. The more academic writing skills you develop, the more it will be possible to communicate your life and spirit in the text in some way or another; and the more you make clear what it is in your life that makes you a trustworthy scholar, the more you will know what is important for your audience to know in listening and being persuaded by you.

The place-based texts

The PhD course examined in this chapter "covers theories, methodologies and methods for the analysis and critical evaluation of pedagogical resources" (PEDRES, 2022). The title of the course is *Pedagogical resources and learning processes* and the curriculum underlines that the two concepts "will be examined separately and together, as well as in relation to the stated learning outcomes". I was one of two course leaders sharing the responsibility to enable this, and among many other activities, we decided to create a learning process that could (1) develop an awareness of the shared knowledge culture by pointing to the writing practices, and (2) empower the students to use writing as a learning resource for themselves to strengthen their scholarly authorship and develop ethos. At the same time, publishing the reflective writing logs could create a shared experience that would make the students more visible for each other and encourage collaboration – as well as mirroring the doxa of the writing practice. Together with these two purposes, the writing logs and each task or instruction would be *examples* of a learning resource and learning processes to refer to in the texts and in plenum discussions.

The course was online because of the pandemic situation, with the consequence that the participants were situated in various places at home. On the second of five course days, the participants had two alternatives for their writing exercise. The second alternative used the potential of place-based writing as a learning resource, inspired by Roseanne Carlo (2020):

> Alternative 2 (first A then B):
> Take a walk in your neighbourhood (could also be indoors or in your garden) and take a few pictures of both large-scale and small-scale views and objects.
> Write a short text (could be a photo essay, including some of your photos) based on the walk and the pictures with this question in mind: "How can experience of place be a pedagogical resource for me?"

As for the other writing exercises, this task had the pedagogical purpose to make the students experience writing as a resource for thinking and deep learning, but this task on place-based writing had the purpose of connecting the person to *places that matters to them in their current learning processes*, and thereby the authentic forming of ethos (Carlo, 2020) based on their actual lives. Out of 12 students, 11 chose to write the place-based text, with 9 finishing the course and giving their consent for using their writing logs for research.

The topoi of the digital space, timeliness, and the home

Five of the nine analysed texts are about the homes of the students. Among them "Maria" and "Elisabeth" clearly reflect on the home as a resource either that one can use or that limits the process of learning, and they have taken

pictures of their working place and the things like laptop, screen, and book-shelves. Maria comments on the computer as a space that in a way transcends physical place and

> has become a tool not only for me to use for writing or searching for information, but also a tool that gives me the opportunity to discuss concepts with others or hear other people's interpretations of what I wrote or said – opportunities to create meaning and to learn.

But when she reflected on this by taking a photo of it, she found that she also used other things: "So I took a picture of my desk and "home office" and then as I looked at it, I saw other things that reminded me of what I need to do when I 'get stuck' in my reflections". She seems to have obtained new perspectives through a process of shifting from watching her surroundings directly to the contemplation of them. This could be an example of how place- and material-based writing points to the spirit and life of the writer for the writer herself, and how her writing about it then contributes to creating an ethos in the text – here as an open and exploring young researcher being able to surprise herself.

Through her many photos, Maria also shows us that she has many "places" to use and shift between which also resemble mental topos-shift functioning for deeper learning. Elisabeth has a similar reflection on place as always having an impact on learning, but that it is *the timeliness* of place that is crucial together with the *constraints of a situation*:

> This current task is written while sitting on the bathroom floor of my house, watching my son take a bath. I would have never thought that my bathroom could be a pedagogical resource, but somehow it works – at least for a little while. What I take with me from the experiences of the past year is that I have learned how important place is for my well-being and ability to learn. In a crisis, most places and spaces can function as a learning environment, but only for a short time.

The place as a learning resource is also crossed with its timeliness by "Maya". She seems to experience the activation of abstract knowledge and to strengthen her identity when she comments on the *date* that she writes the text being the national day of her original country. It makes her remember "being at school and being educated", and it reminds her of "a brain place" that she wants to visit more often in order not to forget where she comes from. Maya seems to have experienced that place and time carry knowledge and points of identification that must be remembered to exist. As in Maria's case, Maya builds her ethos in the text based on a reflection on her life as it is reflected in her surroundings – she creates a scholarly ethos with an exclusive outsider perspective.

The five students writing about home were situated in the south-east of Norway and the time was just before the Easter holidays, meaning that it was

early spring with melting snow outside. The day was sunny. Two of these texts had pictures of the view out of the window, but the view had two quite divergent functions for the students. For Maya, the view was of a Covid testing station showing a person dressed in a blue plastic suit standing in the opening of a kind of shelter. Her picture also shows signs and vehicles, and in the background, we see an old wooden building, trees, and mountains. Maya remembers having an ambivalent relation to this "neighbour" but concludes: "I think that this is in place to protect the people from not spreading the virus even more and somehow it comforts me". For "Marianne", as we have seen in the introduction to this chapter, not only the view is different and shows nature, but also here it is a resource for emotional balance that reboots and gathers her thoughts. In both cases, the texts contain reflective voices that point to ethically, reflective persons, but when it comes to Maya, the specific reflection on Covid adds a dimension of a person concerned with civic, societal questions.

The topoi of nature, growth, and transformative learning processes

Some of the other essays also use nature as a resource for a shift in emotions due to the atmosphere (Løvlie, 2007); "Amy" writes: "The place in the picture above is of a part of the forest where I only go if I have time to walk farther than the shortest round. Seeing this place makes me feel free, safe, and optimistic". For "Anna" and "Maya", nature in the form of indoor plants seems to be a resource for learning about time and growth of knowledge. Anne writes:

> Today, I look at the small avocado tree in the window and I am reminded that sometimes things take a long time, but that does not mean nothing happens. The avocado tree is a pedagogical resource both in terms of learning how an avocado tree develops, but also on a more philosophical level in acknowledging process and patience.

For Maya, the situation of being at home has shown her that she could transform herself by learning across her different social roles:

> Well as you can see, I started taking care of plants during the pandemic. So now I have the role of a PhD student, a researcher and a gardener with brown [sic, in contrast to green] fingers. I did all the wrong things I could have done to my plants and somehow, they still survive. I am proud of them and myself for learning through my errors.

She seems to spot herself as a character in a process of learning. The three students demonstrate academic virtues by writing about how they relate to nature: Amy seeks free thinking, Anna searches for knowledge, and Maya seeks to learn by trial and error.

The topoi of outdoor surroundings, walking, and critical thinking

Four of the essays include a walk in the surroundings of the home. "Sophie" reflects on the walk:

> During this walk I experienced place as a pedagogical resource in several ways. I will mention two. First, the simple activity of strolling without any purpose, other than being out in nature, is purifying both for body and mind. The experience of seeing and hearing life waking from hibernation gives perspective to and distance from everyday worries and digital fatigue. Second, performing the strolling in company creates opportunity for conversation and contemplation. The very sense of slowing down the pace makes space for listening, to each other, to nature, and to your own thoughts.

Amy supplies this reflection with a view on places in the forest that she "associates with working through difficulties, also concerning my PhD project. Even when thinking about a specific topic or problem, my thoughts wander, and I end up with solutions that I don't think I would have found sitting at my desk".

"Laura" has a somewhat distinct experience and reflections during her walk in her surroundings in the Arctic landscape and spring in Greenland. She has taken photos of the contrasts between human traces in nature in the form of infrastructures like bridges and roads and nature itself like the grass from last year showing through the snow. She reflects on the impact that humans have on nature and concludes that "…ecological topics can be addressed through experiencing the Arctic landscape". She goes on to reflect on the place as informative of historic and cultural knowledge as well: "The experience of Arctic nature could also be a pedagogical resource to reflect on history and how earlier generations managed to live in this harsh land without electricity, gas and oil, without goods supplied by boat, without any means of transport apart from dog sledges". The critical thinking is clearly activated by Laura's walk and her thoughts and feeling further deepened by her writing about it. Both Sophie and Laura point to the ethically engaged scholar that "sees" the world clearly. For Sophie, her gaze on the world is so accurate that she can pick out what is relevant for the reader (two of four perspectives), which shows her goodwill towards her audience as well as insight into the disciplinary doxa and what is expected of content and perspectives in the text.

Topoi of aesthetical knowledge and design for an audience

During Laura's walk, she experienced Arctic nature as a pedagogical resource "to address aesthetical concepts like beauty and purity when turning one's attention to the colours and contrasts in the landscape, so the experience could be a basis for a creative expression in a pedagogical context". The place could

be a resource for creativity and design for her own writing. This aspect is well expressed in "Melanie's" text, so that you could say that the aesthetical inspiration from the surroundings is carried out in her work. Her text is a photo essay without verbal text and consists of four photos made into one collage. The first picture shows leaves and flower buds on an outdoor plant, the second their shadows on a wall, the third a modern, grey building with a shadow of a church tower, and finally the fourth picture shows a skyline with the church tower. When read from left to right, the pictures show a story of a walk revealing connections between small and large objects existing in the same way – all making shadows on other objects. But at the same time, the pictures could be interpreted by the audience as function by stylistic form, and thus that the *contrast* of nature and culture comes forth along with the new and the old (spring and modern buildings versus the shadow and the old church); both contrasts are *repeated* by the images of shadows and both must be interpreted by *metonymic* relation (leaves and buds for nature and spring, for example). In this case it makes sense to talk about the writing as multimodal design. The ethos of this text functions by creating something artistic, unique, and novel and shows a student who is willing to risk not "answering right" to the question asked by the educator, but rather standing out by creating her own learning process.

Five functions balancing life and scholarly profession

The analysis of the students' texts seems to point to five functions of place-based writing as a learning resource. First, the novice scholars' texts show how place-based writing can reactivate and develop knowledge about places (Arctic nature, for example), and they reveal that the novice scholars experienced their indoor and outdoor surroundings as resources for inspiration for learning about topics (like humankind's impact on nature), and that the places in different ways as spaces (virtual, "in the brain", in nature, etc.) support reflection on topics that deepened their learning about them. Second, the places and the textual reflections about them seem to give a sense of place identity (the wood balancing the character, for example) and help the writer to find out what matters in life (surviving Covid, for example). Third, the novice scholars related to places and things like plants, special spots (indoor and outdoor), and landscapes, and the identifications seemed to function as emotional resources for getting in the mood for learning and giving the motivation and power for growth and transformation as scholars. Fourth, walking and photographing were learning resources together with places and things; the bodily movement in and between places supported the understanding of learning as stories and of sequential processes depending on time to shift perspective. The photographing and creative process of using pictures in the text design served as even more places – or topoi – for perspectives, even in the learning process itself. Fifth, the place-based writing tuned out to be a learning resource for developing a unique and reflecting subjective voice – ethos – when reflecting on

their places in *their* texts. Some of them revealed a civic ethos as well, by showing their engagement in the local/global concern about climate changes and identifying with the pandemic as a social crisis. In one of the texts in particular, the work with pictures made a space for developing creative and aesthetical agency of the writer and, with that, a strong subjective ethos.

Seen in relation to twenty-first-century skills (P21, 2022), writing as a learning resource is transcending *life and career skills* and *learning and innovation skills* when it is used creatively to develop an ethos as a professional, scholarly voice both in text and in the person in general. Of "the four Cs", writing individual reflective and essayistic texts and publishing them for a group supports the formation of *creativity* and *communication* skills, and when the activity includes writing place-based texts, the activity also facilitates *critical thinking* about life conditions, including climate change and threat of biodiversity, social identities, communities, and culture. In this case, where the students publish for each other and also comment on each other's writing logs, one could say that a supportive and collegial kind of *collaboration* skill is formed as well.

Using reflective, essayistic, place-based writing showed itself to be a learning resource for a "holistic" resource connecting life and profession that are available and highly relevant for novice scholars, and a benefit for a society that wants engaged citizens (Biesta, 2015, 2022; Carlo, 2020; Moon, 2006; Prescott, 2011; Sarbin, 2005). The texts are sorts of "writing-stories" telling about academic learning processes in a specific practice. The case lays open the somehow paradoxical aspect in the educational practice of novice scholars: although they are novices, they should generally master a profession as researchers and become unique ones, too. The German sociologist and culture and practice theorist Andreas Reckwitz (2020) points to the complex demands of success which most people – and especially the "new educated middle class" (p. 207) – in the society of high modernity share: The "valualization" and devaluation of our actions and creations are based on the individual being able to do something unique based on the idea of novelty and the outstanding quality of the singular, but at the same time, we are still situated in the doxas of the old institutions such as the university and general standards of what counts as scientific and proper academic writing in a discipline. As we have seen, place-based writing *can* be used to bridge the general and the singular because the writer – by her awareness of place – finds identification points that are both recognizable (general) and authentic (specific) and creates unique texts with a distinct voice. In general, place-based writing might expand and transform the agency of the novice scholars as designers of themselves as authors and scholars, while simultaneously rebooting and gathering their thoughts.

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6 Discovering ecologies of learning in place-conscious education

Inger Birkeland

Introduction

This chapter will discuss an ecological approach to place-conscious education. An ecological approach is relevant when we engage in teaching for climate change transformation. Teachers are facing ecological precarity and climate anxiety in everyday life as professionals. As a teacher educator, I am faced with ecological precarity whenever I discuss global dilemmas of climate change and unsustainability in subject teaching with teacher students.

In a recent global survey, 59% of young people responded that they felt very worried or extremely worried about climate change (Marks et al., 2021). As teachers, we must negotiate messages from climate and sustainability research and news, often narrated in ways that may create fragmentation, hopelessness, and feelings of despair. Climate change consists of transformative processes affecting everyone and everything all over the planet in different ways. The changes transform not only the Earth system but also how humans think about ourselves, our relationships to others, and how we deal with these changes (Leichenko & O'Brien, 2019). How can we as teachers and teacher educators meet and contribute to mitigating these changes in adequate ways? To meet climate change as an educational challenge, I think it is particularly important to provide teachers with professional tools that contribute to building hope, collaboration, support, and an understanding that we live in one, shared world even though we view this world and each other differently (Birkeland, 2012; Ojala, 2017). An ecological approach to place is one such tool, as it helps develop senses of nested networks, interconnectedness, and interdependency.

In the late 2000s I developed research on place-conscious education as part of an investigation of cultural aspects of deindustrialization in Tinn municipality, a post-industrial region in the southern interior of Norway (Birkeland, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2015). This chapter revisits and discusses this research in order to address the urgent need for new conceptual and ethical ecological approaches which move beyond human exceptionalism and human-centric constructions of place (Birkeland, 2014; Duhn, 2012). This chapter will be mainly theoretical, focusing on developing an ecological interpretation of place based on collaborative work with teachers. In the next section, I will

start directly with a quote from a situation where I and a teacher talked about the meaning of place-conscious teaching in terms of reciprocity. I will draw out the theoretical implications of this teacher's experience leading towards an ecological approach to place and learning, while also tending to the description of the context for the research. It is the dynamics, relationships, and interdependencies arising from thinking reciprocally about place which are at the centre of the discussion here. In light of ideas on ecological thinking from Lorraine Code and Isabel Stengers, on epistemological models for responsible knowing, I will reflect upon an ecological sense of place relevant for thinking ecologically about learning. I will show how these experiences resonate with twenty-first-century skills thinking, where collaboration and teamwork are two important features. This will be discussed in the final section of the chapter.

Discovering ecologies of learning and place

> The greatest user value for me is the different way of thinking, that we can give something back. This is the big thing for me. We are so used to using the local community, but it is new to give something back. We really haven't thought before about this, that if we want our children to be proud of their home place, they must of course experience and see what their home place is (quote translated by author from interview transcript).

I mentioned in the introduction that this chapter revisits and discusses research on cultural aspects of deindustrialization in a post-industrial region in Norway. The above quote is one teacher's reflections upon one of the questions for research: what happens when we see schools and kindergartens as resources for the local community, rather than only seeing the local community as a resource for the schools and kindergartens? I chose to do research in a region which has a special position in Norway's modern history. Rjukan is the main town here and is located close to the Rjukan Waterfalls, which was utilized for providing hydroelectric power for large-scale industrial development when Norsk Hydro, industrial company, established its first factory producing chemical saltpeter early in the twentieth century (Birkeland, 2008; Dahl, 1983; Kjeldstadli, 1943, 1994). Rjukan experienced rapid growth and, from the 1920s onwards, Rjukan and its rural communities suffered prolonged and relative population decline due to deindustrialization and economic restructuring of the international economy (Birkeland, 2008, 2015; Hansen, 1980; Kjeldstadli, 1943). Deindustrialization naturally threatened the region's economic sustainability and, from the 1960s, public schemes for economic restructuring were initiated here and in other so-called monocultural industrial towns in Norway. The population in Tinn municipality had to suffer an extra stigma as the Ministry of Industry invented a new term in 1968 for the problem of all these towns – the *Rjukansituasjonen* (the Rjukan Situation), named after the severe problems at Rjukan (Birkeland, 2014). It was as if

deindustrialization had led to depression and loss of Rjukan's spirit of place (Norberg-Schulz, 1979), to placelessness (Relph, 1979) or, in my words, a loss of a narrative of place which included a culturally sustainable vision of a future (Birkeland, 2018).

I wanted to explore what cultural needs deindustrialization produced for a sustainable future. Human geographers in Norway had investigated economic restructuring of deindustrializing regions for a long time, focusing on processes of economic restructuring (Berg et al., 2004; Hansen, 2004). I focused on cultural restructuring, drawing upon ecohumanities' critique of modernity's inherent anthropocentrism and the view that industrial society implies concepts of culture and humanity, posing a separation from and domination over nature (Birkeland, 2008; Plumwood, 2002). This is where the place concept is particularly relevant, as it bridges nature and culture, the local and the global, the self and the other. I created a research design organized around experiences and new discoveries relating to senses of place. Together with project participants, I sought to facilitate nourishing and sustaining experiences of place based on an understanding of place as both a meaningful analytical concept and a tool for sustainability work at the community level. We now know that senses of place are central to cultural sustainability and that culture matters to sustainability (Birkeland, 2014, 2018; Dessein et al., 2015; Soini & Birkeland, 2014).

I adopted a research design based on participative action research (PAR) methodology which focused on viewing the research process as a tool for change, based on collaboration with local partners who define their own local needs for change (Breitbart, 2003; Cahill, 2007, 2008; Kindon et al., 2008; Pain & Frances 2003, Pain, 2006). The research process was used to mobilize local social and cultural resources for culturally sustainable local development, centred on new senses of place. At the start of research, I was strongly encouraged to cooperate with schools and kindergartens in the rural areas of the municipality. The rural areas were particularly vulnerable in terms of depopulation, and local school authorities were interested in research to foster new knowledge that could increase the potential for cultural sustainability and positive development. A project group consisting of teachers from five schools and two kindergartens was set up, led by me, which connected the schools and kindergartens in the rural areas of Atrå, Austbygde, Bøen, Haukås-Lurås, and Hovin, all of which are located around Lake Tinnsjøen. Together we decided to work with the concept of place, and we developed teaching based on a shared theme: living with Lake Tinnsjøen (see Birkeland, 2014). The lake is large and deep, 35 km long with a maximum depth of 460 m. It is one of the deepest lakes in Europe and the world. The project consisted of pedagogical activities in the units, further training for the teachers, documentation of processes and results, and assessment of the results. Personal interviews with the teachers were carried out to map outcomes. Inspired by the work done by the Rural School and Community Trust in the United States on assessing learning outcomes from place-based education, I mapped learning outcomes at

different levels, including outcomes for the teachers and school organizations, and the local community, in addition to individual learning outcomes for the pupils and children (assessed by the teachers).

In the above quote, the teacher talks about the discovery of thinking in two ways, of not only seeing the local community as a teaching resource for the school but also for giving something back. What is it that may be given back? I remember the excitement and astonishment of this teacher when talking with me. I have thought about it many times afterwards as a statement with a wealth of meaning, and I have been wanting to write more about this experience. I find that there is something here which points to non-instrumental ways of living and learning *in and with place* as a form of processual exchange, which is plural and can be associated with flows of meanings and interdependencies that are hard to put directly into words. What was new was that the teacher now had a language of reciprocity to talk about what s/he in some sense *knew* beforehand. S/he points to a sense of interconnectedness, reciprocities, and interdependencies as something inherent in learning processes.

The monthly project group meetings over a year were important for the project. These meetings were used for developing teaching plans, exchanging experiences, and reflecting upon them, asking questions and getting answers, sharing results, and making decisions regarding progress and development. Indeed, we discovered outcomes from learning processes, very often missed in formal and individual(ist) assessment. It became obvious to the teachers that they, both teachers and pupils, became part of "what" they teach and learn. These parts and wholes are connected and characterized by flows and exchanges of meaning, materials, ideas, and so on, in many directions.

Throughout the year, new ways to talk about and think about their home place developed. Without having a vocabulary for thinking ecologically about teaching and learning, the teachers stressed the role of interrelationships, reciprocities, networks, flows, and movements of meaning. It is very interesting that teachers themselves "knew" place as being inherently ecological. What do I mean by ecological? One answer to this question follows in the next section, where I will develop an understanding of an ecology of place.

The *ground* for learning: Towards an ecology of place

Over the years, doing research involving human geography, heritage studies, and education, it has struck me that there are some inherent difficulties when we talk about phenomena like place, local environment or context, the outdoor classroom, the proximal landscape, the local landscape, or the home community. The concept of place is particularly slippery and fuzzy as it appears in educational settings (see Birkeland, 2012; Duhn, 2012). There is some inherent way of thinking about place which implies drawing boundaries, where we talk about places as either "here" or "there". We seem to think that places are distinguished from human beings and from each other via boundary-making practices, either physical or metaphorical (Birkeland, 2000, 2005; Gieryn,

2000; Gradle, 2007). Place is a concept that seems to carry the marks of wanting to divide the world into two. Place seems to be where things happen. Human beings act while places are acted upon. It seems that as soon as we spell out the word place, we presuppose a self, a human being, which is non-place. Place constructed in this way is a result of dualization, processes that organize everything that exists in the world as either subjects or object, culture or nature, a result of consciousness philosophy, which splits and bifurcates the human being from human environments (Stengers, 2015). This dualization is also the cause of individualist (and atomistic) and contextless views on human learning and development. Using the experience of reciprocity and interconnectedness of learning from research with teachers in Tinn, I will next discuss place as a relational and ecological phenomenon which transgresses the subject-object dichotomy and elaborate on how place can be seen as a way to teach and learn, a *ground* for learning.

An ecologically conceived understanding of place, for example, in the context of education, depends on the premise of "epistemic interdependencies", according to philosopher Lorraine Code (2006, p. ix). Knowing persons are not located outside of a world, but within it. This means the experience quoted above on reciprocity must be made visible and meaningful in relation to the circumstances of the making of this experience in that particular world. Lorraine Code argues that we need to engage in ecological thinking about humans and communities, not only about ecology or about "the environment" but also by focusing on what happens as *grounded*, describing actual relations of contact and experiences of contact. We start with "the ecological situations and interconnections of knowers and knowing" (Code, 2006, p. 5). It is the situation of place which is a constitutive and proper origin of processes of learning. This makes place more equal to a situation, a process, a becoming-place.

Consequently, the concept of place for our research project can be used to describe *our* particular way of inhabiting the world, based on *our* particular ways of doing and knowing within *that* particular world. I accordingly point out the relationships in the project group, the ways we relate to each other, and the local communities and landscapes as co-constituting these relationships, as experienced by the participants. Defining ecological thinking in this way means that, in relation to our research, we were focusing primarily on the interconnectedness of the rural communities around Lake Tinnsjøen, its connections to the municipal centre of Rjukan, networks of businesses and voluntary organizations, the landscapes of water, mountains, and farming, the built landscape, and the connections between teachers, pupils, and their parents and grandparents (Code, 2006, p. 37).

To exemplify using the context of Rjukan and Tinn: we are more focused on learning to live where we are, on the changing processes related to de-industrialization and the associated needs for the future – for example, the role of educational institutions for community cultural sustainability, for the ways learning may incite and create new narratives of place based on new and

relevant teaching plans – than with individual learning outputs which classify a school or a pupil's learning output in relation to a national standard. Learning is seen as a co-becoming phenomenon. The standard is made *there*, it is "Living with Tinnsjøen" as a grounded standard, also compatible with national curriculum (Birkeland, 2014). Place becomes habitat and a way to teach and learn.

We can talk about relationships, attachments, and reciprocities as characterizing an ecology of learning, as a continuous exchange of energy, symbols, meaning, and materials. I would like to draw a bit more attention here to the ideas of Isabel Stengers, who provides further epistemological advice for understanding an ecology of learning through the term "grasping together" (Hughes & Lury, 2013, p. 791, Stengers, 2005). With metaphors like flow and irreversibility, Stengers challenges us to construct rather than deconstruct. The grasping together refers more specifically to a thrown-togetherness of learning, where it is impossible for an individual to learn without support, without reciprocal relations. The human fate, which is shared with all Earth-dwellers and biological life, is that we are attached to the Earth, via place. Attachments are a cause, according to Stengers, and they are "what cause people, including all of us, to feel and think, to be able or to become able" (Stengers, 2005, p. 191). Place can be described as a "mutual ecology", in Isabelle Stengers' words (1999, p. 202), to a situation where nature and culture represent combinations of biosocial forces that co-produce each other.

An ecological approach is to place focus on connections and interconnections, rather than on boundaries and boundary-makings. We do not have to reduce place into an object, because we as humans already know place and feel place. Human *being* is just dwelling-in-the world, and the human task in the world is just to stay with the world, to become with the world. This means that as human beings we do not meet our surrounding world as placeless beings, as humans we are already placed (Casey, 2001). From a phenomenological perspective, place is accessible to us via the body and human perception, it is more lived than discursive (Birkeland, 2008; Buttimer, 1976; Casey, 1996, 2001; Relph,1979; Tuan, 1977). Drawing upon Merleau-Ponty, Casey shows that it is primarily and primordially through our lived body that we have access to place as a lived place, which becomes a life-world and a place-world (Casey, 1996, p. 229). It is this lived quality of being and becoming which connects us to the wider environment – including the climate system and wider social, ecological systems of the southern interior of Norway.

I imagine place as dynamic and vital, relational, living, and reciprocal. Place is not identical to space, which is a homogenous void, but "reveals itself as this vast and richly textured field in which we are corporeally immersed", a "vibrant expanse structured both by a ground and a horizon" (Abram, 1996, p. 216). The word reciprocity illustrates the important focus on interdependencies as nourishment, between what humans draw from the environment and what society gives back to its environments, materially and symbolically (Abram, 1991). Place is both concrete and universal, and human beings wherever they

live on planet Earth are "placed" or share this condition of living lives within wider worlds and surroundings in relationships, whether they are natural or man-made. It is the interaction and reciprocity between human beings as sensing, living beings and the dynamic environments that surround us that make place ecological.

An ecological approach is an inherently place-based phenomenon (Pisters et al., 2019). The concept of place, and ecological approaches to place, is a good way to talk about human-centredness and human exceptionalism with teachers. It not only helps unmake the boundaries between nature and culture in education, but it also enables us to make visible and acknowledge more-than-human agency, taking outset in distributed networks of agency (Ferrante & Sartori, 2016; Murris, 2017; Ringrose et al., 2019). In education research, more focus is now on stressing the assemblages of human and more-than-human agencies, the joining of material-discursive world-making, and the active co-constitution of bodies and environments in learning processes (Duhn, 2012; Gough, 2018; Haraway, 2016; Murris, 2017; Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017; Somerville & Green, 2011; Snaza et al., 2014). We are moving towards an understanding of a pedagogy of place which, in Iris Duhn's words, "recognizes human and more-than-human ecologies and interaction as a field of forces or a territory with porous boundaries and multiple presences" (Duhn, 2012, p. 102).

The phenomenon of place is thus important for human development and learning. Pedagogical philosopher Lars Løvlie viewed place as a condition of possibility for pedagogy (Løvlie, 2007). It means we must address place on a more fundamental and less instrumental level by stressing what comes prior to (teaching) methods. When engaging with the phenomenon of place, we may address questions like: what is education for? by responding with these questions: where am I? What am I sensing, seeing, hearing, and how do I understand what is going on here and now? What are we doing here? Place is a world-opening experience and a *ground* from which teaching and learning processes appear.

An ecological approach to place stresses that human lives are embedded as part of wider structures of networks and relationships and which are mediated by a variety of social practices, cultures, and identities (see also Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Places are hybrids, and contextual ones. You can only describe place by being there, as singular universals, contingent, contextual, and ideographic. This makes the ecology of place both pivotal and hard to grasp, according to human geographer Nigel Thrift (Thrift, 1999).

Nested networks: Place-based change for cultural sustainability

At the time of research, in 2006–2007, place-conscious and place-based education had developed in international educational research as a critical response to the effects of globalization on education. Place-conscious education can be seen as a joining of critical education and environmental education. On

one side, it addresses injustices and marginalization in large cities and rural areas, such as isolation and alienation, that followed an increasingly standardized education. On the other side, it brings into focus environmental education's ecological grounding in concepts of relationship and interdependence (Gruenewald & Smith, 2007, p. 146). The works by Margaret Somerville, David Greenwood, and David Sobel have been particularly inspiring for me (Gruenewald, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Gruenewald & Smith, 2007; Sobel, 1996, 1998, 2004; Somerville, 2007, 2008; see also Power & Green, 2014). For me, who was new to research in educational settings but had a long-time interest in people-place relations, place became a meaningful and relevant category for framing teaching and learning within the community and for exploring the local challenges and needs of the participating schools and kindergartens. Place as a concept and a tool gave opportunities for facilitation of direct and concrete learning experiences, in addition to contributing to strengthening of community bonds across the rural areas and across the level of kindergarten and primary schools, appreciation for the diversity of biological and cultural life seen together, and a general commitment to citizen engagement based on empathy, knowledge, and care for the immediate physical surroundings of young people (Birkeland, 2014). It was especially the role of empathy and care for the home area – the emotional attachments – which was important for all of us. One example is the gratitude for how human settlements in the area depended on Lake Tinnsjøen, for historical transport, for the availability of water, for fish and food, and for the farming land, as well as for a shared sense of place identity. We also saw how modern political and economic institutions separated the natural and the cultural, which transformed what modern bureaucracies classified as "nature" into a domesticated resource for economic surplus and political power. Slowly the rural communities were transformed, with less political and economic influence, and an increasingly longer distance to what was perceived to be the centre for political and economic power. The work we did created some important revitalizations of local identity, ways of being and doing, often interpreted as reterritorialization and a reconstitution of community bonds in globalization literature.

At that time, there was little academic work on place in education from phenomenological perspectives in Norway, with the exception of pedagogical philosophy (Løvlie, 2007). Spatial and regional issues in education in relation to policymaking have, however, historically been important in Norway given the geography of the country. The particular challenges of rural areas facing depopulation have for a long time been a feature of the overall regional development of Norway. This has given rise to political debates and conflicts with consequences for schooling. At the time of research, the biggest political conflict in Tinn municipality was the planned school closures in the rural areas due to strained public budgets in the context of falling population numbers. Today, there is one school left in the rural areas for grades 1–10 compared to the five when I did research there (the kindergartens are present, one of these in the most rural part has included grades 1–4).

The Norwegian school system is known to be highly centralized and since the beginning of the twentieth century has been rather ignorant of regional inequality (Birkeland, 2014). There is a long tradition of critical debate in Norway on social equity issues in education, which evolved in the 1970s in the context of a broader critique of centralization, standardization, and a lack of social relevance. This critique grew in parallel with progressive education, but without using the concept of place, which turned up in Norwegian teacher practices much later, during the 2000s. The critique from the 1970s has been in relation to social equality issues, not relating to sustainability or environmental problems (Birkeland, 2014). On the other hand, it is interesting that place issues have been directly present, although under another name – as *home place* has been an important value and starting point for educational work and teaching in Norway for well over one hundred years, where one of the aims was to "learn to see nature and human living as connected" (Harboe, 2021, p. 46).

For the past 10–15 years, the place concept has been target for more debate in international educational research. Criticism has been raised since the place concept is inherently a Western construction, with much of this criticism related to a historical association between place and problematic constructions of fixed territories, a politics of inclusion and exclusion, and a romantization of settler and colonial place relations (Country et al., 2016; Larsen & Johnson, 2016; Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017). On the other hand, there is a potential in expanding and challenging these understandings, as we also know that place has offered possibilities for a localization of place-based struggles and social movements (Escobar, 2001) and for a general rethinking of the agency of place (Larsen & Johnson, 2016) sensitive to context. There is still often a lack of reflection on the human-centric in place-based work in education (see Butler & Sinclair, 2020, for a recent large review on place studies and spatial methods in education research which does not consider this issue at all). Today, there is a proliferation of research on place-based and place-conscious education in Norway, in a variety of ways in kindergarten and primary teacher education (Hidle, 2022; Hidle & Krogstad, 2019; Horrigmo, 2022; Horrigmo & Rosland, 2021; Horrigmo et al., 2021; Krogstad et al., 2012; Myrstad et al., 2018; Skjæveland, 2020). More recently, new research in educational settings in Norway is also addressing relational approaches, but not in decolonial terms (an exception being research in Saami areas, see Nutti & Joks, 2018). Learning about the local community, landscape, and local environments are elements in the national curriculum both at kindergarten level and in primary schools, but not the word "place", which is that one concept which helps to build bridges between nature and culture, the local and the global, the self and its other.

Collaboration for Hope and interconnectedness

Since 2015, much focus has been placed on addressing climate change in education in relation to UNSDGs (see, for example, Svarstad, 2021; Verlie, 2019). How are we to develop relevant skills for responsible action when we engage

in teaching for climate change transformation without creating at the same time hopelessness and despair? This chapter has discussed one strategy associated with an ecological approach to place-conscious education.

I have described an ecological approach to place, taking outset in an explicit experience of reciprocity, seeing human beings as being in constant interaction with the environing world. Through describing the research process and its nested networks in terms of an ecological approach to place, it becomes obvious that we cannot take learning as an effect of either people or environments, culture or nature, the local or the global. Learning is an effect of particular and concrete ecological relationships. Humans are born, are influencing, changing, engaging with, and in constant contact and reciprocal relationships with their environments, a result of epistemic interdependencies which affect learning processes.

I relate this ecological approach to the need for collaborative skills in a world where teaching for climate change transformation requires us to engage with learners and each other as whole persons and the environments as natural-cultural, nested networks. Humans all over the planet are affected by and affect climate change, in different ways, some more than others, and as humans we are part of the problem, some more than others. But we are also part of possible solutions. We need to be able to grasp better the interconnectedness, reciprocity, and attachments of being human together with our others, which is a shared condition of being vulnerable, not self-sufficient. An ecological approach to place in place-conscious education is a viable strategy for educators that also offers some hope for the future. Human beings develop and live not only together with their fellow humans but also with their wider environments, with interdependencies at all levels and scales, including the global Earth and climate system. This is the mutual ecology shared among all, since climate change is global and encompasses all parts of the Earth.

An approach fostering ecologies of learning will help to foster mutual support and collaboration, one of the most important skills in twenty-first-century skills thinking (Acedo & Hughes, 2014; Fadel, 2008; OECD, 2019; Voogt & Roblin, 2012). In a rapidly changing world, what we consider skills are also changing. More and other skills than content knowledge are needed. Relational skills are required, which will be applicable in a world that is viewed as co-becoming, where we are thrown together to develop and learn together. Understanding cooperation implies understanding relationality and the processual nature of learning. As one of the four Cs of the twenty-first-century skills, collaboration as place-based work starts in the school, in the kindergarten, in the home, and in the local community. Place-based and place-conscious work fosters experiences for the inevitability of being and living together and depending upon and supporting each other, with an understanding that learning consists of collaborative and relational processes. In a world where conflict, injustice, and power games prevail at both global and local levels, where the way of relating to each other is a challenge for reaching the aims of climate

change transformation, better learning for hope and interconnectedness through collaboration in place seems very urgent.

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Part II

Activities and artifacts

7 A war souvenir as learning resource

Kerstin Bornholdt

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present a personal and historical object as a learning tool for the history classroom. My starting point is my own teaching experience with a miniature Eiffel Tower that I used in a class with Norwegian teacher students in history didactics for grades 8–13. I will show how an object such as the miniature Eiffel Tower can be used as a historical learning tool that functions as an "opener" for teaching historical content knowledge and some of history didactics' key concepts such as historical consciousness, historical empathy, and multiperspectivity.

The starting point is collective wondering and inquiry. When asking my students for their associations and thoughts about the Eiffel Tower, they answered: "tourist souvenir". As a teacher, I presented the students with the story I could narrate about the object – a story that is both emotionally challenging and an entirely normal German family story. My grandfather brought the miniature Eiffel Tower back home from France, where he was stationed as a German soldier during World War II. This was unexpected and potentially confusing for the students. In an instance, tourist memories turned into potential war crime – maybe my grandfather stole the miniature Eiffel Tower? Or could it be both? A gray zone? Could the object remind us that soldiers were young men, most of them on their first trip abroad, excited, curious, inspired – and at the same time the object could remind us of war and death? In this way the souvenir becomes an educational tool that opens up curious and creative exploration of a manifold history. A multitude of questions arise. Why would a soldier acquire a souvenir in war times and bring it back home to Germany? What do we know about the German invasion of France and the German-French historical relationship? Which memories, histories, and emotions were and are attached to the object and how could it be applied to history didactics?

This chapter explores how we can use the miniature Eiffel Tower to teach both complex historical content knowledge and history didactics. The miniature Eiffel Tower traveled in time and place. Together, we can embark on a journey, we can imaginatively travel with the object, from its origin in France,

Figure 7.1 Souvenir Eiffel Tower. Brought back from France to Germany during World War II by the author's grandfather. Picture taken by the author in the author's home in Norway, 2022.

to my grandfather's house in Germany, to its current place in Norway, and its use in the history classroom. Different historical actors and contexts lead to different historical understandings and meaning making. The historical consciousness of the soldier who bought the Eiffel Tower in 1940 is different from the teacher students in the classroom in 2022.

They have different lived experiences and educational backgrounds, leading to different historical consciousness, i.e., different ways of linking together past, present, and future to orient themselves in life (Rüsen, 2008, p. 2). Meaning making and remembrance of war changes in different historical contexts and learning settings. The way individuals and societies in specific times, places, and contexts narrate and make sense of the past affects their expectations for the future (Körber, 2015, pp. 9–11). Historical consciousness is entangled with historical thinking, historical empathy, and historical perspective-taking – to understand different actions of actors cognitively and emotionally in their own contexts. More than this, it is also to discover different positions and interpretations, acknowledge heterogeneity, and reflect critically on positionalities and biases (Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Körber, 2015, p. 107; Seixas, 2016, 2017). This has possible implications for students' present life and future orientations. Critical historical thinking skills are closely linked to the educational project of democratic citizenship education (Barton & Levstik, 2004). In this

perspective, the Eiffel Tower becomes a learning tool for understanding historical content and history didactic key concepts, and to engage students in the present to enact a better future society.

The personal object and its affordances in educational settings

History teaching relies heavily on textbooks and written sources. In museums, however, objects are used as a key educational resource, with museum pedagogy developing teaching methods around museum objects (Treimo & Huseby, 2018). Inspired by this, in schools we can find approaches like object-based learning and class museums (Frigo, 2019).

Used in classrooms, personal objects join the spheres of home/family/private to the public room of the classroom. Objects bridge the gap between private and public, between past and present. Former generations have touched them, used them. Objects hold the aura of the past; they invoke a sense of continuity between places and times. Migration studies describe these functions of objects in the life of migrants (Christou & Janta, 2019). Tourist studies describe souvenirs like the miniature Eiffel Tower as "material mementoes, touchstones of memory, that enable narratives of distant times and places to be re-told and relived in" (Haldrup, 2017, p. 53). Objects such as souvenirs afford distinctive moods, imaginations, and emotions. Haldrup describes them as "affective materialities" (Haldrup, 2017, p. 57). Of course, memories, emotions, and narratives connected to the objects can change. We transfer the object from one owner and context to another and, attached to it, histories, memories, and emotions. We might have both good and difficult memories and stories to tell. Objects might enable us to tell stories – we can hold on to the object and look at it while speaking. The gazes of the narrator and the one who listens do not have to cross each other, they can meet in the object. In this way, objects are an educational tool that helps to express and narrate emotions, difficult stories, and memories.

The Eiffel Tower allows us to imagine stories about the past. We try to imagine and start to ask questions. Where did the soldier acquire it and why would he want to get such a souvenir during the war? Which meanings and emotions did the Eiffel Tower hold and evoke back home in Germany after the War? How could the object be used in the classroom today?

Following the object I: Where did it come from?

The object as tourist souvenir

We should start with the original context of the object – France during World War II and the German soldier acquiring it. In the Western Campaign, German forces had marched through the Netherlands and Belgium into France, breaking the French line in May 1940. The German military had captured 1.5 million war prisoners on their way to Paris. The capital itself was an "open

city", the Government had fled to the south, and German soldiers did not meet military resistance when entering and occupying the French capital on 14 June 1940. Paris was not a military battlefield. Newly installed Premier Petain signed an armistice with Germany on the 22nd of June, leading to the division of France into a German-occupied zone, including Paris, and a "free zone" in the center and south-east of France. Petain transformed the Republic of France into the French State, an authoritative government that accepted the new world order under Nazi rule – the so-called Vichy Government (Gordon, 2018, pp. 2–5).

In her research on German soldiers in occupied France, Julia Torrie describes France as a comparatively "peaceful" place during World War II, a place of tourism, relaxation, and consumption for German soldiers and citizens alike. Unlike soldiers on the Eastern Front, soldiers in France "spent most of the war simply holding terrain, building defensive structures and policing the local citizenry" (Torrie, 2011, p. 310). The National Socialist (NS) regime instructed German soldiers explicitly to avoid violence against French civilians, as they wanted to present themselves as civilized men in contrast to the barbaric actions and impressions they had made in France during World War I (Torrie, 2018, pp. 4, 50). The NS system operated with different occupation systems. France was considered a developed, though slightly decadent, Western European country, which solely needed supervision and control – unlike Eastern Europe where the occupational system included deportation and mass murder from the beginning (Imlay, 2006, p. 191; Torrie, 2018, pp. 55–56). In comparison, in the early phase, the occupation system in France appeared to be like normal, regulated, and well-known war. However, from 1941 onward, occupation in France changed to become more brutal, with the execution of prisoners on a larger scale, as well as persecution and deportation of Communists and Jews (Torrie, 2018, pp. 167–180).

The book *War tourism: Second World War France from defeat and occupation to the creation of heritage* portrays how German Wehrmacht soldiers behaved as tourists in Paris. Paris was the most popular tourist destination for Germans during World War II. German forces organized tourist trips for their troops, and a bi-weekly travel guide informed German soldiers about places and events of interest (Gordon, 2018, pp. 1–2). Local French citizens were allowed to sell postcards and souvenirs. The (enforced) low exchange rate for Franc-Mark made it possible for soldiers to buy souvenirs legally (Gordon, 2018, p. 109). Young German soldiers "were provided with tourism opportunities they otherwise would not have had" (Gordon, 2018, p. 100). Gordon quotes a German soldier's travel report, characterizing German soldiers in Paris as mostly "sons of farmers" who had "never left their village prior to the war" (Gordon, 2018, p. 111).

German soldiers could feel and behave as tourists, since they were encouraged to do so. They had role models in, among others, Adolf Hitler.

In June 1940, Adolf Hitler visited Paris. Figure 7.2 depicts a famous photograph of Hitler in front of the Eiffel Tower, accompanied by NS architect Albert

Figure 7.2 Adolf Hitler visits Paris on 23 June 1940 with architect Albert Speer (left) and artist Arno Breker (right), from photographer Hoffman, https:// catalog.archives.gov/id/540179.

Speer and NS artist and sculptor Arno Breker. In the interwar years, Breker had lived for a couple of years in Paris, making friendships with French artists and being deeply inspired by the sculptor Auguste Rodin. During the NS-period, he became one of the foremost NS artists specializing in classicist sculptures. Architect Albert Speer was, among others, in charge of planning and building the (never fulfilled) new NS world capital in Berlin. Paris was a place of inspiration and admiration, as well as a symbol of the conquest of France. The dictator and his artists all seem to pose like tourists – and conquerors.

Still, a lot of questions remain. How could German soldiers comfortably act as tourists, acting as if they were rightfully occupying France? Did buying and keeping wartime souvenirs mean that soldiers held good memories, at least not regretting or feeling guilt about their actions? A witness report kept and presented by the German historical online museum *Lemo: Lebendiges Museum online*, about a German soldier and his experiences and memories of the French invasion and occupation, confirms this impression. The source is in German only (Mork, 2004). The soldier witnesses that he did not feel guilty about being in Paris. He legitimized his standpoint and emotion with his own school education: in school, Germans had learned that war had been a normal activity throughout history. France was a defeated enemy, the Germans were victors. In all times, countries had been occupied and conquered. Nothing abnormal had happened according to this soldiers' memories.

The witness story of the German soldier portrays a certain view on history. A distinct way of thinking and meaning making about the interrelation of past, present, and future – war had been the constant factor in history. War, not peace, was the normality today and for all times to come. In this way, the soldier constructs a distinct narrative about continuity which forms and expresses his historical consciousness. According to German researchers on history didactics, the concept of invariability of human nature, and the establishment of an ahistorical rule – "has been this way, is this way, will be this way", is a type of traditional sensemaking (Körber, 2016, pp. 12–16). Imagining the past, present, and future as invariable is the opposite of complex historical thinking skills. Today, historical didactics aims at teaching children to detect continuity and change, to grapple with the alterity of the past, to understand historical actions in their contexts without undermining the possibilities for individual agency, to train historical empathy and historical perspective-taking, without tipping over into presentism (Körber, 2016, pp. 19–20; Seixas, 2016). To understand how and why the German soldier made sense of the past and the present in this distinctive traditional way, it is helpful to investigate what Germans learned in schools. What did textbooks and the historical sciences of that time narrate about the past and present relationships between Germany and France, the entanglement of European territories and nation states?

Historical consciousnesses: Use and misuse of history

How could German soldiers perceive that they were rightfully invading and occupying France? In school textbooks, as well as scientific and popular writings, German *völkisch* historians had depicted a 2000-year-old antagonism between Germany and France. France was presented as the archenemy, trying to prevent German unity and steal German territory. From 58 BC until World War II, German history was depicted as an "almost 2000-year fight about the Rhine" (Kumsteller et al., 1943, p. 71). According to a textbook for second-grade students, early Germanic settlements had shaped a continuous German mindset. Even different languages and the occupation by the Roman Empire

or French kings could not prevent the German settlers and farmers in the Rhine area from still feeling "German" (ibid.).

Figure 7.3 is the reproduction of a map printed in a 1943 school textbook for second-grade students in Germany. We see a map depicting the Migration period and a border of the so-called Great Germanic realm encompassing a substantial part of European and Northern African territory. The map does not give a date but is printed in a chapter on the Great Germanic time AD 400–500. The broken line delineates a border that should mark the historical sphere of influence and interest of the Germanic people. Considering the historical context and the narration of the textbook, this map was used to legitimize German occupation and rulership in 1940 Germany. The textbook establishes a "we", the great Germanic people, fighting bravely against the others – from the East, West, and South – but who in the end had lost their rightful space ("Raum") (Kumsteller et al., 1943, p. 85). In this second-grade textbook, history is a depiction of a folk's rise, fall, and re-arising, an eternal fight for space and self-determination.
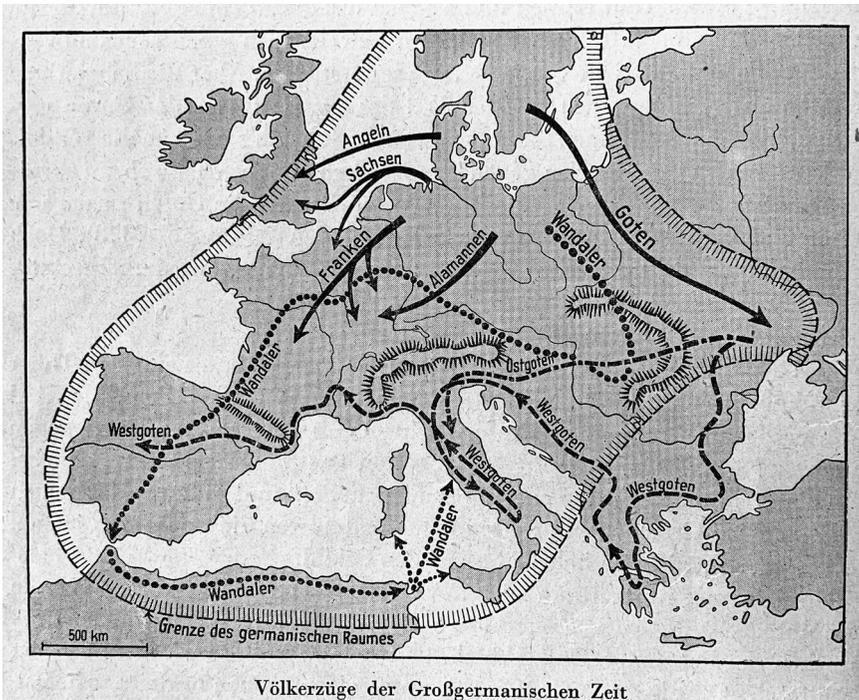
Figure 7.3 School book map for second-grade pupils from 1943, showing the Migration Period and indicating the borders of the "Germanic space" (Grenze des germanischen Raums). This is presented as the "First German Realm/ Reich" (Kumsteller et al., 1943, p. 70).

Immediately after the German occupation of France, in 1940, German historian Ernst Anrich published a book titled *The threatening of Europe by France* (Anrich, 1940). Ernst Anrich was part of a *völkisch* research project stretching back to the nineteenth century, the so-called *Westforschung* (West research). Historians, geographers, and archeologists had published maps of France depicting and arguing for the Germanness of French areas such as Alsace-Lorraine, Burgundy, Normandy, and regions in the Loire area. *Völkisch* researchers identified continuities in language and dialects, common natural features, racial closeness of these French areas, and old Germanic settlement structures. Parts of France – such was the argument and rhetoric – rightfully belonged to a Greater German Empire with longstanding historical roots. The kings of the German Roman Empire, Karl the Great and especially Otto I and Otto II, were depicted as prime examples of outstanding Germanic rulership for the benefit of the whole of Europe. Historians drew maps and suggested new borders in line with their arguments. These maps were printed in popular picture books and travel guides (Herb, 1996; Müller & Freund, 2017; Schöttler, 1997).

Historian Anrich legitimized the German invasion of France by quite a common trope of inverting guilt: from the twelfth century onward, France was depicted as Europe's most aggressive state, demanding subordination from its neighbors. According to Anrich, Germany merely wanted to protect themselves and Europe from French hegemony and the French denial to accept borders in line with old cultural and ethnic units (Anrich, 1940, pp. 15–20, 60–66). The supposed French aggression demanding Germany's and Europe's self-defense is illustrated quite strikingly on the book cover.

The antagonism between Germany and France was not only about territory. For German *völkisch* historians, France was also a symbol for the mindset of the West – rationalism, individualism, liberalism, and democracy were opposed to culture and an ethnic, spiritual organic belonging (Anrich, 1940, pp. 12–17; Müller & Freund, 2017, p. 1305; Schöttler, 1997, p. 213).

The German occupation of France went along with a project of using and abusing history for political objectives. Hitler himself actively made use of history for propaganda purposes. In 1940, Hitler not only had photos taken of himself in front of the Eiffel Tower, but he also had himself photographed beside the grave of Napoleon and at the place of the armistice ending World War I. He was re-enacting, performing, and transforming history, overwriting old pictures with new ones. Hitler enacted and demonstrated a culmination and happy conclusion of a 2000-year-old conflict. Hitler had been an infantry soldier in France in World War I and now he returned as a leader to France, "linking past losses and present victories" (Torrie, 2018, p. 44). He did what every soldier was supposed to do entering France: he was enacting a rightful happy ending to history.

In this way, soldiers could perceive the occupation of France as the rightful revanche after a long history of war and antagonism with France and, quite recently, the Treaty of Versailles following World War I. The Treaty of Versailles
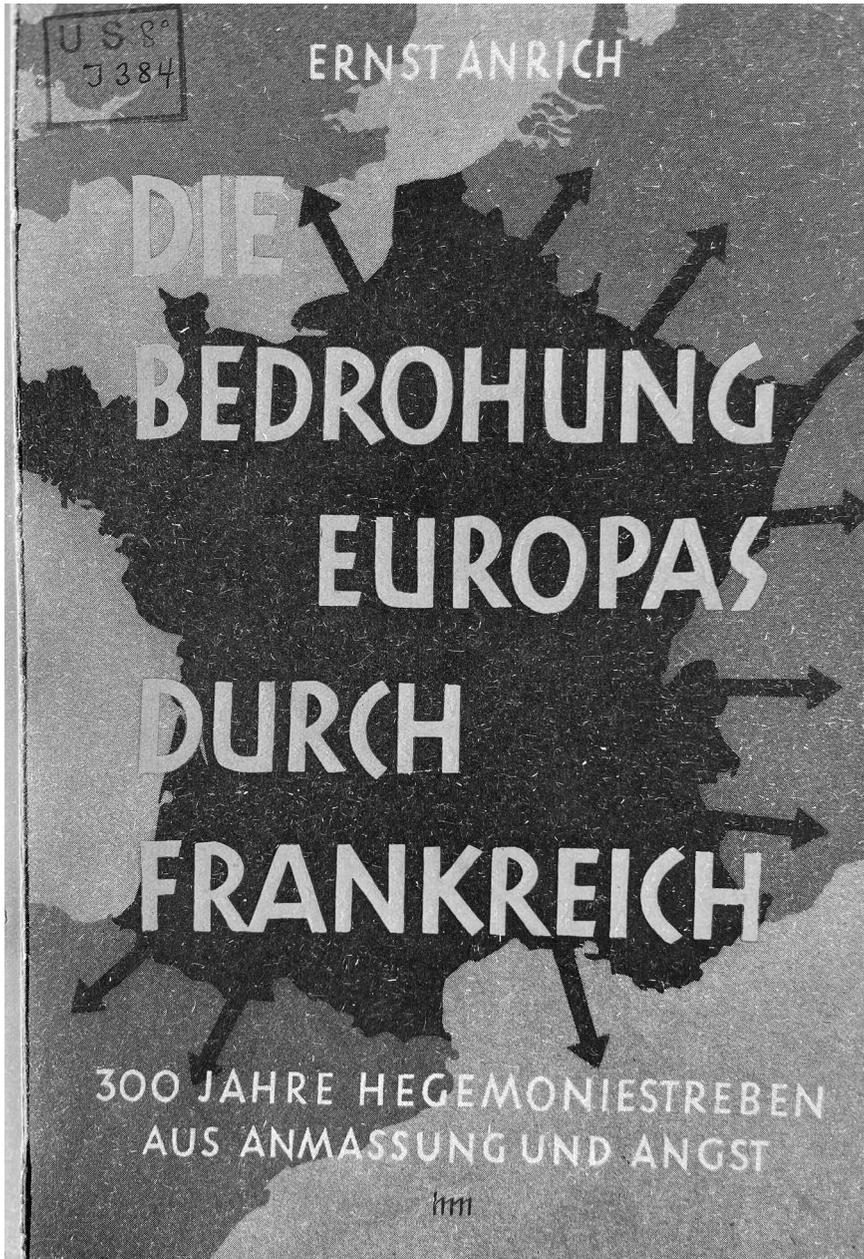
Figure 7.4 The Threatening of Europe by France. 300 years hegemonic ambition due to arrogation and fear. Cover illustration of a book by NS historian Ernst Anrich in a publication from 1940, shortly after the German invasion of France (Anrich, 1940).

forced Germany to pay a considerable amount of reparation payments and to accept the French occupation of the Rhineland provinces, which, according to German historians, had belonged to the German Reich for 1000 years. The German population was surprised and shocked that Germany was held as solely responsible for the war. In a famous speech from the beginning of World War I, in August 1914, German Emperor Wilhelm II stated that in the midst of peace, the enemy had attacked Germany (Wilhelm II, 1914). German Emperor Wilhelm II asserted that Germany's engagement in World War I was solely for defense. Thirteen years later, historians legitimized World War II in the same way: the occupation of France was an act of defense.

With this context knowledge in mind – Adolf Hitler's picture in front of the Eiffel Tower – acquiring a miniature Eiffel Tower as a souvenir was not least a powerful symbol for finally leaving the Treaty of Versailles behind and putting history right.

Learning about history today, students know that Emperor Wilhelm's speech was a wrongful legitimation of World War I. We would characterize this as a propaganda speech today. Moreover, the Treaty of Versailles had economic consequences for Germany, but the economic impact was not as enormous as feared and propagated (Boemeke et al., 1998; Rotte, 2020). And, not least, the Rhine has become a peaceful European area. European cooperation was an answer to the experiences of World War II and the long history (writing) of antagonism between France and Germany. At its starting point was the establishment of a common French-German economic cooperation in the Rhineland region. In 1957, Germany and France, together with Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, founded the European Economic Community, paving the way for today's European Union. In today's Europe, Germany's Karl the Great and France's Charlemagne have become common predecessors for the idea and practice of a united Europe.

Looking at the post-war period, we are inclined to tell a history of civilization, of building peace and growing integration via supranational organizations. It is a genetic narrative of directed development, one of peaceful economic progress and integration. This is an exceedingly different perception of history than the soldiers of World War II were taught. Due to national, geographical, and historical perspective, history can be depicted as both an eternal succession of war and conflict and as an ongoing civilization process towards pluralistic, peacefully coexisting democracies.

Following the object II: Where did it travel to?

The family home: Heritage and remembrance

From the soldiers' hands to the living room of the grandchildren, I grew up seeing the miniature Eiffel Tower standing in my grandparents' living room in a farmhouse in Northern Germany, arranged like a souvenir on a little white blanket. Today, this same Eiffel Tower stands in my own living room,

in another country that was occupied by German soldiers during World War II. What did the relatives learn and remember from the past, how did and do they make sense of history? For me, the Eiffel Tower always *felt* like a symbol for a young man traveling the world, although at the same time I *knew* that it was aligned with war and suffering as well. In my grandfather's house, the Eiffel Tower was positioned beside the TV, where my grandfather watched almost exclusively animal documentaries – not crime stories or films involving shooting and death, as that would remind him of the war. Innocent youthful traveling and explorations of the world, death, and war have always been entangled, silently attached to the object. The object's context changes, as do evoked memories, and the remembrance of history. It is easier to relate to a grandfather's traveling plans than to guilt and shame. Writing and narrating that my grandfather was a young soldier from the countryside on his first trip abroad is both making sense of the unfathomable and an excuse at the same time. What could he know and what choices did he have, a farmer's son with a couple of years in school?

In general, when it comes to their own family, ancestors tend to attach to them good actions, or at least not bad intentions. In Germany an unlikely high percentage describe their relatives as either actively linked to the resistance movement, or at least as being passive and innocent during war times. It is difficult for relatives to acknowledge that fathers or grandfathers have been on the wrong side of history. Historian Hartmut Welzer has investigated this topic for German relatives. He concludes that ancestors rewrite histories, since they do not seem to be able to acknowledge guilt for the ones they love. Even though the fathers and grandfathers might have told the truth about the war, the relatives did not want to hear it. Consciously or unconsciously, they would not want to grasp, to take in, to acknowledge guilt and shame as a family inheritance.

> The images formed about the beloved relative through socialization and time spent together are retroactively applied to the earlier period of his life as well, before his offspring, who are now listening and later will themselves pass on the wartime stories, were born. This ignoring of perpetrator stories occurs accidentally, as if on automatic – the tape recorder records the stories, but the family's memory does not.
>
> (Welzer, 2008, p. 297)

These questions of coping with intergenerational guilt and anger, the struggle of remembering and narrating difficult family histories, is a highly relevant topic. Some of the students in Norwegian schools will have similar family stories to narrate – from the German occupation during World War II, and from other conflicts and wars such as in Syria, Palestine, and Ukraine. All these conflicts pose questions of accountability for the actions of parents and grandparents, the handling of difficult emotions, and not least how to go on from here together, peacefully.

Bringing the object to the classroom: Historical empathy and emotions

In the Norwegian school curriculum for the social sciences after tenth grade, Norwegian students should have learned about past events such as the Holocaust and be able to reflect upon how to prevent extremist thoughts and actions in the present and future. Students shall learn not to judge the past with present-day values, morals, and knowledge. Students shall try to understand different modes of thinking and feeling of actors from the past. The school curriculum stresses both cognitive processes of understanding and discussing, as well as applying historical empathy. Students shall understand and evaluate, empathize, and build a better future. Teaching history is not only about things that have happened in the past but also about understanding today's politics – and shaping future politics (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020).

Shame, guilt, and hate are emotions that can be expected when dealing with the topic of war – shame and guilt of those who have family histories aligned to perpetrators, and possibly anger from those with family histories that are aligned to victims. Presenting the Eiffel Tower for Norwegian students, how does a teacher deal with possible emotions of guilt? In my own teaching, the unlikely and non-reproducible happened. When I presented the Eiffel Tower, narrated its history, and introduced the role of emotions and empathy in history didactics and my own complicated feelings of guilt and shame, one of my students spoke out about her experiences and difficult emotions. She told me and her classmates that she had always looked down at the floor during history classes about World War II, feeling guilty. Her family had been on the wrong side of history; they had collaborated with the German occupants. She had never talked about these experiences before. Her family history was difficult to face, and the way history was taught with clearcut winners, victims, and perpetrators made it difficult to face ambiguous stories and emotions. Seven decades after the German occupation ended, World War II is still an important and highly emotional topic in Norwegian society. The teachers' display of vulnerability in an organized structured form, embedded in a discussion about history didactics, emotions, and empathy, made it possible to narrate and discuss ambivalent and difficult emotions as a valuable resource for teaching.

How do emotions go along with a strong tradition in the historical sciences for cognitive skills such as analysis and critical thinking? According to Endacott and Brooks, historical empathy is a combination of "(…) students cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to better understand and contextualize their lived experiences, decisions, or actions" (Endacott & Brooks, 2013, p. 41). Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Empathy means to imagine thoughts and feelings of other people from their own perspective, whereas sympathy implies imagining these emotions and thoughts as our own. Historical empathy encourages and trains students to imagine different ways of feeling and thinking, while sympathy is unhistorical, imagining stable never-changing ways of feeling and thinking throughout time and cultural and social backgrounds (Barton & Levstik, 2004, p. 206). It is important

to acknowledge and recognize the other, past actors, as different (La Capra, 2018, p. 47). In this way, empathy is closely aligned with multiperspectivity.

Barton and Levstik introduce yet another concept to the history didactics toolbox, which is "care". They take a stance for the emotionally engaged historians and students, who care about the actors they study, who let themselves engage – and who are willing to engage themselves. Training students in caring – such is the hope, promise, and agenda – will enable citizens to cope with complexity by engaging in critical open dialogue with others in their daily lives as well. Barton and Levstik aim at transformative learning, a practice of history teaching that integrates emotions, caring, and cognition, thereby enabling students to become active democratic citizens. However, there is a challenging and unsolved aspect: Barton and Levstik exemplify caring for the suffering and oppressed – slaves, women, aboriginals, all kinds of minority groups. Yet how are we to deal with the oppressing and even murdering perpetrators? Should and could students care and understand? According to La Capra, empathy with perpetrators is possible and important "in the sense of recognizing the possibility of certain actions or experiences for oneself under certain conditions" (La Capra, 2018, p. 48). However, empathy is not the same as accepting, affirming, forgiving, or apologizing.

Students have emotions of guilt, shame, pride, and even hate. In her book on transgenerational trauma, Gabriele Schwarz stresses that it does not help to avoid emotions, or to declare non-responsibility for an inherited history. The best choice would be to make these emotions productive (Schwab, 2010, p. 26). In this context, the ethics and pedagogy of discomfort might be a useful tool with which to think and work. Ethics of discomfort can be traced back to Theodor Adorno and his reflection about education after the Holocaust. To avoid raising future perpetrators, children must learn radical self-reflection and an ongoing questioning of societies' taking for granted assumptions, norms, and beliefs – "A willingness to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty and to question one's own assumptions and the conceptual frameworks according to which one apprehends the world" (Knittel, 2019, p. 380). Michalinos Zembylas has translated the ethics of discomfort into a school context and has proposed the need for a pedagogy of discomfort. In recent publications, he suggests a pedagogy of shared responsibility. According to him, discomfort is not necessarily enabling actions. A focus on shared responsibility, however, breaks with binary dichotomies of victim and perpetrators and, more importantly, envisions a way to turn emotions of guilt, shame, and resentment into a collaborative responsibility to act and change injustice and discrimination and to create a better community (Zembylas, 2019).

Zembylas doubts that teaching collective guilt is a fruitful pedagogical endeavor. This view is supported by studies about political education in Germany. Lisa Jenny Krieg, for example, makes a distinction between emotions causing apathy, and emotions enabling empathy and engagement. Enforcing responsibility and overwhelming students with drastic pictures and narrations from the war and Holocaust might lead to apathy and resistance. Crying might be

an obstacle to thinking clearly, thereby disabling cognitive processes. Productive emotions are those leading to empathy, interest, and a craving for learning more (Krieg, 2015, p. 123).

Following the object III: Expectations for the future

Leaning on Hanna Arendt and Iris Maria Young's concept of collective responsibility, Zembylas proposes a new way of posing questions. Teaching about difficult, sensitive topics should lead to questions encouraging actions.

> (…) turning the question "Why do I have to feel guilt for my group and the harm others have committed?" into the following: "How am I co-responsible for the harm inflicted on my fellow human beings?"
>
> (Zembylas, 2019, p. 412)

And, more suitable for school students: "How do I bear responsibility for the oppressions and injustices in my community and the world?" (Zembylas, 2019, p. 414). Past events are taught in the present to shape the future. Zembylas stresses agency and the teaching of history for the making of a better, more just future society.

The Eiffel Tower in the hands of the Wehrmacht soldier, the Eiffel Tower in the living room of the relatives, the Eiffel Tower as a learning tool in the history classroom: the learning object can be used to teach historical content knowledge and important didactic key concepts and competencies in history. Bringing in a souvenir object from World War II as a learning resource might affect cognitive and affective processes. Students are invited to explore and understand the actions and emotions of a soldier in the context of his time, to understand different modes of understanding and narrating the interrelationship of past, present, and future, the mechanisms of use and abuses of history, historical perspective-taking, and to face difficult emotions.

Understanding the past and teaching about the past had never been a neutral endeavor. The German soldier who bought the Eiffel Tower miniature had learned a history that legitimized war and occupation. Today, the Norwegian school curriculum is normative in another way: the goal is to foster active democratic citizenship. Students are encouraged to propose answers and actions for their own and societies' present-day life: what can I and all of us do today to make our society better, i.e., more inclusive, democratic, and sustainable? In this chapter, I have argued for history teaching that encourages students to cope with gray zones, complexities, difficult emotions, and the otherness of the past. These are important skills that enable students to question critically values, norms, and (national) history narrations which have previously been taken for granted. I would argue that these skills sensitize students to detecting one-dimensional simplified political projects and rhetoric in their present lives – and hopefully engage them to participate actively in the

political project of developing a pluralistic, peaceful multicultural democracy with all its demanding complexities and ambiguities.

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8 Working with twenty-first-century skills through engaging with indigenous perspectives in teacher education

Åsmund Aamaas, Anne-Line Bjerknes and Kristin Gregers Eriksen

Introduction

During the past two decades, the Norwegian educational system has increased its emphasis on twenty-first-century skills, mirroring international trends (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2015). A main reason for this focus is the acknowledgement of the need for education to contribute towards creating sustainable futures. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education, target 4.7, emphasizes the significance of "appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (UN [United Nations], 2022). Elaborating on this connection between cultural diversity and sustainable futures in their account for twenty-first-century skills, UNESCO highlights the importance of fostering diversity related to perspectives on knowledge:

> Alternative knowledge systems need to be recognized and properly accounted for, rather than relegated to an inferior status. Societies everywhere can learn a great deal from each other by being more open to the discovery and understanding of other worldviews. There is much to learn, for instance, from rural societies across the world, particularly indigenous ones, about the relationship of human society to the natural environment.
>
> (2015, p. 30)

The emphasis on alternative knowledge systems, and particularly indigenous knowledges, is further manifested by global policy developments on matters concerning sustainability. The UN Biodiversity agreement written in Montreal, December 2022 (COP15, 2022), amounted to a historical recognition of traditional knowledge as an important factor contributing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The agreement underlines how traditional knowledge and indigenous people's presence are vital when protecting and restoring nature and biodiversity.[1] Moreover, the International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) has acknowledged the imperative of considering indigenous knowledges as a vital part of the knowledge base concerning climate change

mitigation. Analyses argue that the historical and contextual complexities of indigenous experiences are largely overlooked in climate change mitigation discourses, and that there is a need for more reflexive engagement with indigenous knowledges (Ford et al., 2016).

Critical reviews of twenty-first-century skills point out that, despite how official discourse foregrounds high values of social justice, sustainability, and diversity, implementation of the discourse into education seems to uphold power relations (Pais & Costa, 2020). Breidlid and Krøvel (2020) argue that alternative perspectives to modern western hegemonic epistemology, in particular indigenous worldviews, are almost absent from the global sustainability agenda. As they further explain, this is particularly problematic for SDG 4, as the current crisis in sustainability is largely due to superiority claims of modern western knowledge defined as the global architecture of education. In the Norwegian context, related critiques have shed light on how educational discourses are embedded in national exceptionalism, not challenging Norwegian institutions, economy, or the role of Norway towards global sustainability (Børhaug, 2014; Eriksen, 2018). National exceptionalism has also proven to be significant regarding the sanctioned ignorance of Norway's colonial legacy, rendering the colonization of Sápmi (the ancestral homeland of the indigenous Sámi) invisible. Today, this colonial legacy manifests in the disregard of the importance of Sámi knowledges in relation to sustainable relations with nature and land (Eriksen, 2021; Fjellheim, 2020; Joks & Law, 2017).

On the other hand, the Norwegian education system is legally obliged to integrate (indigenous) Sámi perspectives at all levels (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Although this is, at least formally, a recognition of indigenous people that is considered to be a leading international example, the obligations seem poorly operationalized in practice (Gjerpe, 2017; Olsen et al., 2017). The aim of this chapter is to explore collective learning through a reading circle as an avenue towards fostering twenty-first-century skills in teacher education. In this particular project, the twenty-first-century skills were related to highlighting indigenous knowledges, with emphasis on the Sámi. In our collective learning project, we set out to challenge and expand our current outlooks on knowledge through encounters with indigenous literature.

We thus address the question: how can collaborative learning through a reading circle engaging with indigenous literature contribute to enhancing twenty-first-century skills through expanding perspectives on knowledge?

In this chapter, we reflect upon our experiences from the collective learning processes in the reading circle. We document and analyse our processes of self-reflexivity and learning through the method of collaborative autoethnography (Blalock & Akehi, 2018). We argue that in order to open ourselves to the gifts of different knowledge systems, there is a need for aspiring towards changes not only in our understanding of what is experienced as "other" but also of ourselves (Andreotti et al., 2015). Hence, in our project, we have emphasized

the significance of developing strategies for enabling self-reflexivity. A main insight from our project is that this self-reflexivity may require engaging in "slow pedagogy" (Collett et al., 2018). We argue that challenging our current views and expanding our perspectives on knowledge were enabled by shared vulnerabilities and exposure of responses, described as reciprocal scaffolding (Aamaas et al., 2019). Thus, we maintain that, in order to work "efficiently" with twenty-first-century skills, we might paradoxically need to resist the neoliberal pressures in education towards productivity, performance, and individualism and engage in more unpredictable and "slow" collective learning processes.

Discussion of methodological approach: Collaborative autoethnography through a reading circle

In 2020, seven teacher educators at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) joined Dembra. Dembra is a governmentally financed programme for professional development in education, emphasizing diversity, critical thinking, and anti-racism (Dembra, 2022). The Dembra team consisted of teacher educators with different academic backgrounds, teaching social studies (including Åsmund and Kristin), natural sciences (including Anne-Line), and mathematics. Some of us had formerly collaborated, and some were new to each other, but we were all teaching in the same programme. We chose to focus our project on the integration of Sámi perspectives in our practice, as this is something that we all are obliged to consider across our different academic backgrounds and subjects of teaching. As advocated by indigenous scholars, starting from their own stories is vital for enabling indigenous peoples to become protagonists in research and education (Fjellheim, 2020; Smith, 2010). We therefore organized our learning through a reading circle on Sámi and other indigenous literature. We documented our learning processes through collaborative autoethnography (Blalock & Akehi, 2018; Francett-Hermes & Pennanen, 2019). The intentions in applying this methodology were twofold. Firstly, autoethnography allows for deep descriptions of the self-reflexive processes we sought to engage, as well as helping to situate them within the larger social context (see Eriksen et al., 2023). Secondly, a stated aim of the work was to explore working collaboratively in a reading circle as a potential teaching and learning strategy related to twenty-first-century skills in teacher education, in relation to UNESCO's statement (2015) on the need for considering different knowledge systems. We, the authors of this chapter, decided to extend this work further after we finished the reading circle. The empirical material in this chapter consists of our conversations on the process in retrospect, as well as being based on our individual notes and transcripts from recorded sessions in the reading circle.

We engaged with different genres (autobiography, non-fiction, academic, a collection of letters/poetry) reflecting the interdisciplinarity of the group, all having in common that they were written from an indigenous standpoint and

that they somehow challenged western/modern epistemologies. The books were *Braiding sweetgrass* (autobiography, non-fiction) (Kimmerer, 2015), *Towards braiding* (academic) (Jimmy et al., 2019), *Letters for the commission* (letters/poetry) (Johansen, 2020), *Sámi reindeer husbandry − Norwegian myths* (academic/scientific critique) (Benjaminsen et al., 2016), *The gentlemen put us here* (historical/non-fiction) (Labba, 2021). We chose books based on our own emerging interests and reflections in relation to diverse perspectives on indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and experiences. However, the choices of literature were much influenced by suggestions from participants in the group holding knowledge about indigenous perspectives. Three of the participants in the reading circle held extensive knowledge of Sámi perspectives in education through their research backgrounds (including writer Kristin), while the remaining four held basic to no knowledge about Sámi history and perspectives (including Åsmund and Anne-Line). Three participants had connections to both Canadian and Norwegian indigenous contexts through research visiting scholarships and teaching experiences (including Kristin). Throughout a period of one year, we selected and read literature from these two contexts. We developed a set of reflexive questions to structure our narrations:

- What does this story make me think and feel? How is this affected by my positionality, background, and experiences?
- What thoughts, ideas, and affects did I discover in myself that I was formerly unaware of?
- What does this story mean for me as a teacher educator?
- How can this story influence or inspire my practice as a teacher educator?

Our reflections were documented through dialogical autoethnography, characterized by situating the self within wider cultural and historical contexts (Francett-Hermes & Pennanen, 2019). In this case, engagement of personal experience through this reading circle permits us as auto-ethnographers to record the ways in which we understand indigenous knowledge, starting from, but also challenging, our own perspectives. In addition to transcripts from recorded reading circle sessions, the empirical material is based on autoethnographic narrations written down after the process (see Eriksen et al., 2023). Subsequently, when all books were read, the authors of this text discussed the reading process, how we experienced being part of the reading circle, what we learned, and how this method could be used for expanding the understandings of knowledge as a twenty-first-century skill.

A key ethical concern when working as non-indigenous with indigenous matters is the principle of "nothing about us without us" (Smith, 2010). Accordingly, we also established contact with the authors of some of the books we read. On two occasions, the authors joined us for discussion. The authors responded to our questions and comments but left before our own conversation started. Meeting authors gave us the possibility to talk "face to face" and

allowed us to be given permission to involve ourselves with stories that were not really "ours":

Åsmund: Here we can help each other take a step back …. Here it is important to understand the whole. As Siri (author of *Letters to the commission*) said: We need all the good friends we can have. Then I felt invited and included.

Analytic framework

In this chapter, we start from the insight that, in order to point towards SDG 4, expanding the perspective on knowledge beyond the western modern hegemony is imperative (cf. Breidlid, 2020). However, such an epistemological shift is difficult to obtain due to global and local power structures that are often aligned with a modern western epistemological discourse (Breidlid & Krøvel, 2020). As Mignolo (2012) maintains, the opportunity for critical thinking is particularly fruitful in spaces where different knowledges meet. In this encounter, what he describes as "border thinking" may take place. Border thinking may provide opportunities for radically re-thinking what is taken for granted and understanding the geopolitics and power relations of knowledge production. However, border thinking is not a meeting between equalized knowledges, but rather what happens when the inside, the hegemonic, is challenged from the outside, the marginalized or silenced perspectives (Mignolo, 2012).

We acknowledge the risk of essentializing by referring to "indigenous" and "modern western" knowledges as dichotomies. We do still argue that, in all its diversities, indigenous knowledge systems have in common that they provide tools that challenge ideas of separability and knowledge as universal and value-free, which is an underlying premise in much of modern western epistemologies. Indigenous knowledges encompass "the cultural traditions, values and belief systems concerned with the everyday realities of living in a particular place. They are imparted to the younger generation by community elders or are gained through direct experience of nature and its relationship with the social world" (Dei et al., 2000, p. 2).

In our analysis of our encounters with indigenous knowledges, we applied the conceptual framework from Andreotti et al. (2015), as displayed in Table 8.1. The framework presents three forms of dispositions towards engaging with difference and what is experienced as "other".

The concepts of *tourism*, *empathy*, and *visiting* describe different dispositions, denoting *embodied possibilities for action* (Andreotti et al., 2015). These dispositions are not to be understood as points on a progress gradient, nor as individual competencies. The performance of these dispositions is always dependent upon situational characteristics. In our work, we used the conceptual framework to map and understand our engagements with indigenous knowledges, as to a large extent they were experienced as new, challenging, or "other" to our previous understandings of knowledge. In the following, we

Table 8.1 Conceptual framework for engaging with the "other"

Tourism	Empathy	Visiting
Objectivism	Relativism	Pluralism
Spectator: Understanding the other through one's own knowledge	Native: Understanding the world from the perspective of the other	Exposure: Having one's own thoughts and feelings in a location different from one's own
Eliminating difference (Eurocentrism)	Reducing difference (Ethno-relativism)	Increasing plurality (Existentialism)

Sources: Revised version from Andreotti et al. (2015, p. 256).

share and analyse excerpts from our collaborative autoethnography, and how these different dispositions were performed in our work.

Insights and analysis

Encountering "other" knowledge systems and pluralizing epistemologies

The emotional labour of becoming comfortable with uncertainty, ambivalence, and multiple perspectives was actualized when we experienced challenges to our academic training through encounters with indigenous knowledges in the books *Braiding sweetgrass* (Kimmerer, 2015) and *Sámi reindeer herding – Norwegian myths* (Benjaminsen et al., 2016). The encounter with "other" knowledges in these two books involved a sense of confrontation with onto-logical insecurity – a sense of challenge to our self-understandings as scholars. In particular, the book *Sámi reindeer herding* … challenges hegemonic con-ceptualizations and understandings within ecology and natural sciences. The experience of confrontation was thus particularly significant for Anne-Line, trained in natural sciences, as the books explicitly challenged aspects of her academic identity. As pointed out by Breidlid (2020), indigenous knowledges are recognized by being "fundamentally relational where the unity of man, na-ture and the spiritual make up the construction of knowledge" (p. 12). Anne-Line experienced much resistance to the previously unknown perspectives on nature and relationality from the outset:

Anne-Line: I got frustrated with the story of creation that opened the book *Braiding sweetgrass*. It was a nice story, but I felt discom-fort …. Where is this book leading me? Is it about supersti-tion? But then I understood …. That the story is significant for expressing the relations with nature in First nations' cultures. That the story is a picture of how it all works, of how things are. That is where I felt resistance, it wasn't natural for me to think in that way about nature, and creation. It collided in such a deep way with how I have learned to think from my academic training. Now I see that …. In a way, there is no opposition, the knowledges both exist.

From this transcript, we see that Anne-Line gestured from a *tourist* positionality, where she approached the knowledge in the book *Braiding sweetgrass* much as a spectator, not separating from the security of her existing knowledge, gesturing towards empathy. Subsequently, she gestures towards a position where she acknowledges the existence of different perspectives, and a sense of relativism, as she states: "there is no opposition".

In the book *Sámi reindeer herding – Norwegian myths*, the authors referred critically to reindeer researchers that Anne-Line had as lecturers as an ecology student. In her classes, Anne-Line had learned common myths of the Norwegian management officials of how reindeer in the north cause overgrazing due to the management by the Sámi reindeer herders. In this book, these researchers were referred to as researchers who did not acknowledge indigenous knowledges, based on a different view of natural cycles. Anne-Line realized that the lack of indigenous knowledge could cause the current knowledge base on the topic to be misleading. As well, because she had never previously learned that Sámi indigenous knowledge had value within the epistemic logic of science, she found it difficult to understand how she could include it in her own teaching:

> *Anne-Line:*   When I taught science in high school and read about the northern lights, it also included a page about Sami knowledge. I remember I asked a colleague how she included this story in her teaching, as I felt unsure about why and how to include this together with the sanctioned, scientific explanation of the northern lights. We both gave the story as homework to read but did not use time on it in class, as we knew it would not be relevant for our students' exam. […] Now I look differently at it. […] The funny thing today, is that what we a few years ago considered to be a Sámi myth, is found to be correct in science research. The northern lights have a sound. This also shows that one needs to respect other peoples' knowledge of nature. What we think is a myth one day, may also be true another day.

Here we see not only that Anne-Line engages a *visitor* disposition, as she also acknowledges how we live in a plural world with partially different realities on one side, but also that what is regarded as "true" is related to how knowledge is measured and what is given value as knowledge. Knowledge about the northern lights, in the transcript, is a good example of how indigenous knowledge became "official" science many years later, as Finnish scientists found its sound through scientific methods (Laine, 2017). This illustrates how the indigenous knowledge about the northern lights was first recognized when the scientific method managed to validate it through its own methodologies (in this case the technical measurement of sound waves). The indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing the exact same information for centuries were not accepted as independently valid in the definition of knowledge. Through these two examples, Anne-Line learned better to acknowledge indigenous

knowledge as part of the knowledge body in her teaching and see how she can also better include this when teaching scientific method itself, by discussing what it may find when acknowledging experienced-based knowledge. She also learned that the indigenous knowledge does not have to be in opposition to what she is teaching but rather may be an integrated part, where students may recognize themselves and experience it as a tool for building love and gratitude for the subject.

Engaging with knowledge systems that may be experienced as "other" involves letting go of a sense of epistemic authority and remaining open to different interpretations from our own, described as *learning to unlearn* (Jimmy et al., 2019). However, this seems to be related not only to spectating or being confronted with new knowledge but also to exposing oneself to what is unknown in order to approach it with openness:

Anne-Line: … disagreements were also important. Where we felt great resistance, and it did not match the worldview we had …. Disagreements can also create curiosity […] Much of what I feel of resistance, is probably related to not understanding …. To not being able to understand what it is like to be indigenous. You need to understand what it means to not understand …. Curiosity creates a susceptibility for the perspectives of others.

The process of learning to unlearn includes a commitment to "try to minimize, […our] learned tendencies to seek quick solutions" (Jimmy et al., 2019, p. 29). For us, this entailed becoming comfortable with the uncertainty of not knowing and opening ourselves to a plurality of knowledge. From our experience, this was a process that needed time and effort, enabled by the collective vulnerability that emerged in the context of the reading circle:

Kristin: I also think it was important that this approach enable a setting where no one held ownership to the process more than others, no one was the "specialist".

Although some participants had more previous knowledge of Sámi perspectives than others, the focus in the reading circle was on our transformative learning processes, and collective expansion of perspectives. The fact that no one held ownership to the "truth" of the stories made the learning process more open despite the differences in background knowledge. So-called safe space pedagogy often applied as ideal in education towards diversity and anti-racism may often entail avoiding addressing emotional topics (Flensner & Von der Lippe, 2019). The reading circle did the opposite, as it proved to be a space that was experienced as "safe" through our shared vulnerabilities. The exposure of ourselves and locating our shortcomings and opening ourselves to unlearning was here seemingly dependent upon the collective approach. This was not least related to our different scientific perspectives, and how

they sparked constructive resistance that led towards new insights. Kristin, who held more of an insider-relationship to Sámi knowledges, at times found the comments from Anne-Line to be somewhat ignorant or even derogatory. However, being confronted with such discomforting questions also led Kristin to realize how indigenous knowledges may be perceived or not understood from other frameworks of knowledge, and the significance of border thinking for nuancing one's standpoints.

Working with twenty-first-century skills through slow pedagogy

Shahjahan (2015) argues that in order to enable transformative learning towards social justice, we need to reconceptualize and move beyond Eurocentric notions not only of epistemology but also of time. He suggests that academics practise slowing down and "being lazy", in the sense of depriviliging the need for a result with the passage of time. This proved significant for our learning and reflexivity as well:

Anne-Line: When we centered on the stories, and our own reflections and emotions on them, it was in a way impossible to fail …. In an academic setting where being right or correct is often emphasized, there is no room for that affective dimension …

Kristin: I think it was also about the fact that we had no pressure to produce anything. That the process was open to us, in a way, and it could take us where it wanted.

The space created in the reading circle for making possible learning processes that offered a resistance towards neoliberal desires of being productive and arriving at universal or "correct" answers proved to be a key factor for opening ourselves towards truly acknowledging epistemological diversity.

Importantly, the concept of slowing down does not necessarily have to do with speed, but rather with a thoughtful and attentive approach. The premise is that quality should not be compromised by pressure of time that prioritizes speed, efficiency, and output (Berg & Seeber, 2016). Slow in this context rather emphasizes depth of engagement, interdisciplinarity, and the importance of making practices engaging for the participants (Bozalek, 2017). The sense of something to gather around was key in our learning processes as well:

Kristin: The importance of slow learning processes that do not necessarily have a defined goal and rather keep it open …. But this project has shown how it can work in practice, and makes you dare to try it. Through this project, I have experienced that it can go well. We usually do not have time for it, because we are always urged to be productive …. Slow learning is also about involving emotions and interacting with what we learn about. […] In sum, it can enable in-depth learning…

Åsmund: There have been several times we have met in this reading circle, so it has taken a long time, but reading/listening to the text in the books has in another sense actually gone quite fast […] An important aspect was that we worked with emotions, and that the people who participated wanted to participate. And I also think the main common motivation was the topic. There were different motivations for participation, but we had something in common.

As Åsmund explains, it was vital that all participants were motivated for the learning process. As Stein et al. (2020) point out, we can ask people to engage with intellectual rigour in the more instrumental sense, but we can only offer an open invitation for engaging with "different" knowledges if learners are willing. As they further explain, this kind of learning requires a certain amount of existential surrender, and an engagement with emotions. As we have experienced, "going slow" is not valued and is seen as unproductive in the academic context (Shahjahan, 2015), and this method may therefore be neither available nor attractive to all in the academic context. However, as we experienced in the reading circle, slowing down was imperative for being "productive" in relation to deep learning. Working in conviviality rather than in competition helped us "make sense of everyday encounters and practices that transgress categorical differences and establish a shared, common humanity" (Berg & Nowicka, 2019, p. 2). We supported each other in discussing and making sense of our diverse backgrounds and experiences in a sometimes-confusing context where recognition, alienation, curiosity, anger, and surprise were part of the space for conversation:

Åsmund: That we decided to talk about what we thought and felt … where it was the starting point to get started with the conversation, which was also relevant to our own teaching practice, but where the entrance was completely different … it was so useful. It was something that worked well, and one of the best examples I have experienced in interdisciplinary discussions. Got time to try out my own experiences of the text in meeting others who may have had similar, or different, understandings of the text.

The pre-planned questions, moving from thoughts and feelings to inspiration for our own future teaching practice, allowed room to be created where colleagues of different scientific and personal backgrounds felt free to share reflections in engaging with topics relevant to our profession without focusing on academic performativity alone. The focus on hermeneutical knowledge production and accountability to oneself and the broader community allows for relationality and ethical engagement that transcends the idea of academic objectivity (Francett-Hermes & Pennanen, 2019). As stated by Anne-Line:

Anne-Line: The experience of feeling a little threatened by others having experiences I cannot understand. This is how I have sometimes

experienced it with this being inside and outside the Sami. To feel a little threatened by the fact that you cannot get access, completely …. Learning to handle that experience, and settle down with it, I think is very important. It is also about being a white majority, that you may not be used to having your world-view challenged, while the minority must experience this quite often.

In some ways, we all floated between engaging the dispositions of tourism, empathy, and visiting: however, the described gestures between the positions should not be understood in an instrumental and linear way as a progress. Rather, the process showed an enlargement of the repertoire (cf. Andreotti et al., 2015), and an increased reflexive ability, enabled by letting go of the desires towards predictability, efficiency, and linearity.

Reflections upon our learnings: Implications for fostering twenty-first-century skills

Through our work with exploring and discussing indigenous stories, we discovered the value and importance of providing time and space for open-ended professional conversations and reflections across backgrounds and competencies. We experienced the power of listening to and engaging with stories from perspectives different to our own. We found that engaging our different perspectives and backgrounds moved us to challenge each other and stimulate reflection for everyone in the encounters with indigenous stories and knowledges. We argue that this engagement and exposure of ourselves were crucial for opening ourselves to new perspectives on knowledge, as is demanded from twenty-first-century skills. However, through the project, we also experienced tensions and shortcomings in how learning processes are facilitated within modern western academic structures. These experiences shed light on a need for collaborative and slow learning processes when aiming at opening ourselves towards challenging and expanding hegemonic and universal understandings of knowledge.

As scholars have formerly argued, the individualistically oriented tradition in Western higher education has not proven very fruitful for enabling expansion of perspectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Collegial collaboration, on the other hand, can influence opinions, assumptions, and attitudes about quality in teaching (Rincón-Gallardo & Fullan, 2016). Creating collegial groups requires that everyone in the group acknowledges learning as collective practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2014, p. 131). Academic culture often urges us towards individual performativity and competition (Francett-Hermes & Pennanen, 2019). In our explorations of indigenous knowledges, conviviality was enabled through reciprocity. Working together through the reading circle opened the group to acknowledging new perspectives through learning from the readings and each other's responses. We experienced the reading circle as a different space for learning that provided a sense of detachment

from the common pressures of productivity and performance. We experienced that letting go of these learned desires was imperative for existential learning. This was related not only to a different pace but also to how the common motivation and shared exposure enabled us to work convivially. As a college of academics with different scientific backgrounds and life stories working together in teacher education, the project worked to draw us closer together in friendship as well as scholarship. Notably by offering a sense of "disarmament" towards an academic culture focused on individuality and performativity and underlining the importance of spaces for slow learning. However, this was also depending upon us taking the risk of unpredictability in the process.

In our example, the emergence of a well-functioning collective learning situation was also related to interdisciplinary collaboration that was not instrumental or top-down. We found that interdisciplinarity was enabled through an "organic" approach. As interdisciplinarity is often proposed as a goal without a clear content in teacher education, this was an important insight on how such interdisciplinary collaboration can emerge:

Kristin: When you learn with an interdisciplinary college, you need to gather together on something. It wasn't really depending upon us having a lot of knowledge, but it was vital that we shared a common experience about something.

In our group discussions, it was reasonable to make sense of our diverse backgrounds, doubts, and enthusiasm in engaging with the books, based on the pre-planned questions. At the same time, it was the collective support of each other during the conversations that made the biggest impact. Allowing slow learning and different takes on the same readings, taking time to share and acknowledge, and asking questions and challenging each other's responses made room for collective insights that transcended the total of each of our individual perspectives. These learning processes can be understood as scaffolding, as embedded, contingent, and reciprocal scaffolding (Aamaas et al., 2019). Embedded scaffolding comprised the static and pre-planned element, the books, and reflection questions. The contingent scaffolding was dynamic and situated, with authors joining the reflection group. The third aspect, reciprocal scaffolding, was when we, the learners, scaffolded each other through working collectively:

Kristin: It was also important to make room to be able to focus on emotions and feelings, because it can often be looked down on in an academic context as non-academic, or that it is not okay or professional to let emotions be expressed. So we created a room where it was allowed […] I think something that has enabled good learning processes is also the common vulnerability that arises in the meeting. Where everyone dares to challenge themselves, and goes into it together, then everyone will expose some of their vulnerability

to the group, and we take the risk collectively. And then it becomes easier to show what you think is challenging, or maybe a little embarrassed about. Everyone has something "to lose", something at stake for everyone …

As shown above, reciprocal scaffolding was enabled by our collective support in the (at times) discomforting exposure in relation to the topic. The reading circle proved to be an experience of a productive and safe space for learning through our shared vulnerabilities.

Our insights resonate with previous findings by Collett et al. (2018), showing how professional development processes informed by slow pedagogy and care ethics enhanced the sustainability of professional learning communities. This alternative academic movement was created through the acknowledgement of the significance of fostering collaboration, collective engagement, and relationality in knowledge production, resisting neoliberal discourse and practice in academia (Collett et al., 2018). A challenge in teacher education is an overloaded curriculum for students and overloaded workplans for teachers. Slow pedagogy takes time and may thus often expose learned desires in hurrying to knowledge. Baynes (2016) found that time constraints were one reason that teachers found it challenging to include indigenous knowledges in their practices, as the existing structures of time and accountability do not offer space for the complex reflection needed. However, slow pedagogies as well as careful learning are suggested as important tools in professional development, as the pedagogy may provide a shift towards thinking deeply and opportunities to articulate new knowledge more competently and confidently (Ailwood & Ford, 2021). In line with Shahjahan (2015), we experienced how slowing down enabled us to reconnect with ourselves and others and nurture relationships to improve the quality of work.

Note

1 Traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge are not the same, but they do overlap to a great extent. These kinds of knowledges are recognized by the inseparability between knowledge as theory and practice, their embeddedness in local places/land, and that they are often collective and are orally transmitted within a community. Indigenous communities are among the groups who have best protected and developed traditional knowledge.

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9 Play-based learning discourses in the Norwegian and English curricula

Aye Thida Oo and Anders Davidsen

Introduction

The United Nations has increasingly recognized play-based learning (PBL) as a specific right for all children (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2018). Essentially, learning through play fosters an effective pedagogical approach to set the basis for learning, behaviour, and health throughout life (UNICEF, 2018). Thus, since the early 2000s, PBL has become an integral part of the early education curricula across different countries and policies (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

Despite the global momentum to expand and integrate PBL into education systems, the appropriate implementation is needed to meet children's learning needs and interests. Earlier research has shown that there is debate and controversy in such applications due to differing interpretations of PBL by educators (Hostettler Scharer, 2017). On the one hand, PBL has been interpreted as more learning, early assessment, and focus on school preparedness. On the other hand, it has been seen as child-initiated and child-led free play without adult intrusion. This suggests that efforts to discuss the different understandings of the concept of play in teaching among educators are needed so that they are aware of the available choices (Hostettler Scharer, 2017).

This chapter compares the play discourses in the Norwegian and English curricula relating to children in kindergarten (nursery or preschool in England) and schools utilizing Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CDPA) (Mulderrig et al., 2019). These two nations have been selected for the curriculum comparison due to their commonalities as developed western democracies, but with disparities in historical impacts on early childhood education (ECE). Through our study, we aim to get a picture of how play discourse has achieved hegemonic dominance in the kindergarten and school contexts in the two countries. Next, we explore the consequences of these dominant discourses on twenty-first-century skills.

Play-based learning (PBL)

A child who plays capably, spontaneously, quietly, enduringly, even to the point of bodily fatigue, becomes certainly also a capable, quiet, enduring man, self-sacrificingly promoting his own and others' welfare. Is

(it) not the most beautiful phenomenon of a child's life, the playing child at this period of his life, the child wholly absorbed in his play, the child who has dropped asleep while absorbed in play?

(Froebel, 1885, p. 31)

Traditionally, the play has its meaning in being spontaneous, child-initiated, and free activity, which is, arguably, the opposite of the aim of learning that necessitates adult guidance. This is portrayed in the above quote by Froebel, in his book *Education of Man*, which discussed the goals of education. He believed that play is the most important part of a child's life yet insisted that children be sent to school and taught to read at seven years of age (p. 5). Today, the pressure to incorporate play into education is paramount all over the globe (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

The discussion about how best to describe and understand "play" in the education arena continues today (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). In the past, several famous attempts to characterize the concept of play have been observed. For instance, in 1978, when the work of one of the most arguably influential Russian psychologists in PBL history, Lev Vygotsky, was translated, it was concluded that play was an activity that is (a) "desired" by the child, (b) "always involves an imaginary situation", and (c) "always involves rules". Today, as research moves to developmental and academic benefits, researchers have yet to agree on a single definition of play (Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978).

Previously, research in PBL was concentrated on the views of teachers, parents, and children on the connections between play and learning in a range of contexts (e.g., Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019). A substantial body of empirical research also looks at play contents involved in PBL (Fleer & Fleer, 2019) and many studies set out to measure their effectiveness. Research on PBL has nonetheless rarely discussed the potential impact of various play discourses on the development of twenty-first-century skills.

Twenty-first-century skills

Considering the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, it seems appropriate to delve more deeply into the twenty-first-century skills that directly impact teaching and learning. Classroom teachers must remain abreast of these skills and incorporate them into instruction. Furthermore, reforms within the international educational system have increasingly stressed twenty-first-century skills, which have led to a rethinking of the role of play in education (Voogt & Robin, 2012). The understanding of PBL as either free play or adult-involved can have an impact in the classrooms and consequently, on the nurturing of skills needed in the twenty-first century.

Many have contended that twenty-first-century skills are very different from the skills currently valued by today's highly standardized and result-driven educational systems (Qian & Clark, 2016). The skills do vary somewhat in how they are categorized or interpreted, but there are also many similarities.

Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication are among the twenty-first-century learning skills (Binkley et al., 2012). Critical thinking requires logic and reasoning, systematic thinking, and decision-making skills (Binkley et al., 2012). Divergent thinking, innovative thinking, originality, inventiveness, and the ability to view failure as a learning experience are examples of creative thinking (Binkley et al., 2012). Collaborating means working effectively and respectfully with diverse teams, being willing to compromise to accomplish goals and taking responsibility (Binkley et al., 2012). Communication relates to conveying thoughts and ideas in various forms, communicating in diverse contexts, and using multiple media and technologies (Binkley et al., 2012).

Recently, researchers and practitioners have become increasingly interested in the link between PBL and twenty-first-century competencies (Qian & Clark, 2016). There is also a tendency in twenty-first-century skills research to pay less attention to younger children in kindergarten and school (Parette et al., 2010). Since learning starts young and the children will make up the future knowledge society, we argue that attention should be given to the development of twenty-first-century skills in ECE.

Why England and Norway?

As mentioned earlier, the two countries were chosen on the basis that they are both developed and democratic countries (Huxley et al., 2016), however, with proven differences in historical influences on ECE (European Commission, n.d.a, n.d.b; Hognestad, 2019). Additionally, the government and parliament of both countries have a long tradition of establishing and revising curricula at the national level (Westbury, 2008). However, the English education system, while exhibiting more American and "Anglo" traditions than the rest of Europe, is an extreme example of centralized control and accountability systems while following strong neoliberal market principles (European Commission, n.d.a, n.d.b). Norwegian education, by contrast, is historically influenced by theorists, such as Froebel (1885), Vygotsky (1978), Piaget (1936), and Reggio Emilia (Obee et al., 2020). Recently, these foundational theories have been combined with ecological theories, such as Kloep & Hendry (2002) lifespan model of developmental change (European Commission, n.d.a, n.d.b; Obee et al., 2020). As the lifespan model explains, learning and development involve developing resources to meet challenges along the way. Furthermore, Norway offers universal childcare until 16 years old, as well as a right to education. Their framework plans for the kindergarten and school try to resist standardized learning outcomes (Bøe et al., 2022; Utdanningsdirektoratet [UDI], n.d., 2017a, 2017b). Thus, Norway is much less influenced by the market ideology.

Considering recent curriculum changes for primary education in Norway, *Fagfornyelsen 2020*, and the Norwegian framework plan for kindergartens in 2017, greater emphasis has been placed on PBL for the youngest children

(Øksnes & Sundsdal, 2020). The United Kingdom's EYFS has overlapping goals with that of the Norwegian. The EYFS also encourages planned, purposeful play through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities (Department of Education, 2018).

The transition phase from kindergarten to school

Research into the transition from kindergarten to school has pinpointed that the pedagogical goals of kindergarten are sometimes set aside in the pedagogical work with the older children in ECE (Schanke, 2019). The attention can sometimes be on preparing children to be able to sit quietly, hold their pencils correctly, and raise their hands if they want to say something (Schanke, 2019). This is different than in most kindergartens where social, play-oriented, exploratory, and curiosity-driven practices may mostly be used (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Besides, Hogsnes (2014, 2015) in Norway, who has studied the transition between primary school and kindergarten, claims that there is not enough contact between kindergartens and schools' teachers. She suggests that joint projects start in kindergarten and continue when the children begin primary school as a solution to the problem of ensuring continuous learning in children and improving the transition process.

Using their recommendations, the current study will focus on the curricula associated with this transition period. As a result, in Norway, the targeted documents will be oriented to kindergarten (focus on children aged birth to 5) and primary school (focus on children aged 6–16) (Hogsnes, 2014). In England, the targeted documents will be concerned with the early year foundation stage (focus on children aged birth to 5) and the key stages 1 and 2 (focus on children aged 5–11) (Department of Education, 2018).

Discussion of methodological approach

The current study aims to examine critically the discourses of play in ECE policies in Norway and England. Two research questions guided our study: (a) What are the dominant discourses of play in contemporary ECE frameworks in Norway and England? (b) What do these discourses mean for the pedagogical work concerning twenty-first-century skills? Thus, we have framed our PBL with CPDA (Cummings et al., 2020), which allows us to understand the power dynamics behind the leading discourses and how different definitions of play continue to guide frameworks and curricula in the two countries (Fairclough, 2015). We will also discuss how the dominant discourses impact the development of twenty-first-century skills.

Moreover, Fairclough believes that documents demonstrating the government's policy intentions, such as white papers, curricula, and reports, work to legitimize the government's direction. He states that "Any social order requires legitimation – a widespread acknowledgement of the legitimacy of

explanations and justification for how things are and how things are done. Much of the work of legitimation is textual" (Fairclough, 2003a, p. 219). In addition, Fairclough declares that "Managerial government is partly managing language" (Fairclough, 2003b, p. vii). As such, we have analysed the official curricula documents published by the governments in Norway and England to examine the central discourses of play in the two countries.

To ensure the texts to be analysed are of the same functional equivalence, we have employed the model by Mølstad and Hansén (2013), which assesses curriculum as a governing instrument. This has allowed us to see that in Norway the frameworks for the kindergarten level and the national curricula for basic education are comparable to those of England. As a result, the documents we have selected for analysis are:

1 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2021) (England) (Department of Education, 2018)
2 The National Curriculum key stages 1 and 2 (England) (Department of Education, 2013)
3 Framework Plan for the kindergarten (Norway) (UDI, 2017a, 2017b)
4 Overall part – Curriculum for basic education (Norway) (UDI, 2017a, 2017b).

According to Mulderrig et al. (2019), Critical Discourse Analysis can enrich Critical Policy Analysis through its rigorous and systematic analytical nature in researching text-based policies. The CDPA methodology introduced in this study is that developed by Cummings et al. (2020, pp. 103–106). Their analysis of the texts is done at the level of the individual words and phrases, by exploring how the words and phrases relate to each other in the text and examining the priority given to different themes. The description of the text is analysed and its potential influence on the discourses found in the text analysis is also explored. Moreover, possible ways to work past the dominant discourse and create new narratives are suggested.

Findings

Curricula documents in England and Norway relating to children in the transition phase from early year settings to school have been analysed to find out the dominant discussions around play in learning and teaching. Initially, previous literature in the area proposed complications in defining PBL due to conflicting understandings of what "play" is (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). This laid the foundation for the two discourses we used to analyse the curricula – teacher-directed and child-directed. Consequently, when analysing the texts, we specifically looked at how (a) play, (b) the role of the children, and (c) the role of the teacher in PBL are portrayed (Fairclough, 2003b). In short, we have identified two main discourses in Norway and two in England.

In Norway, the main discourses identified in the kindergarten and school curricula are:

1 *Play is a need and a right of children*
    Both curricula not only focus on the rights of children as identified by the UN and realized play as one of them, but they also focus on play as a fundamental need of the children. This is apparent in the kindergarten framework, which states that taking care of the children's need for play is one of the main purposes of kindergarten (UDI, 2017a, 2017b, p. 19). However, a consensus on promoting children's agency can be seen in both curricula, where children's ability to contribute is promoted throughout (e.g., UDI, 2017a, 2017b, p. 8) and "play" is described as "necessary" for young children (e.g., UDI, 2017a, 2017b, p. 7). For Fairclough, this illustrates how the authors demonstrate strong loyalty and affinity to a form of established social view (Fairclough, 2003a, p. 173).
2 *Play is a useful tool for teaching academic skills*
    Although "play" is often coupled with the physical and psychosocial development of children, the curricula also link play to academic learning. For instance, the kindergarten framework states: "the children's play forms an important basis for the work with the subject areas" (p. 47). Both curricula employ phrases such as "joy in learning" (in Norwegian: læringsglede) (UDI, 2017b, p. 16) and "meaningful learning" (UDI, 2017b, p. 7), often with the same idea as "play". These texts, therefore, contain a value assumption (Fairclough, 2003a, p. 55) that play provides the "happiness factor" to learning. Fairclough (2015) discusses the meaning of metaphors in texts in this way: "The ideological significance of […] metaphors is that they tend to take dominant interests to be the interests of society as a whole" (p. 137).

In England, the dominant discourses in the curricula are:

1 *Adult modelling and guidance shape children's play and learning.*
    Both the EYFS framework and national curricula gave priority to the ideology that practitioners lead children's learning. For instance, the EYFS framework states: "Children learn by leading their play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it" (p. 16), clearly giving the authority to the practitioners or teachers in this case. Additionally, the pressure not to impose a teaching approach is seen when the curricula made statements such as (a) "This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons" (p. 16), and (b) "This framework does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. Play is essential for children's development […]" (p. 16). This is an example of what Fairclough refers to as recontextualization (Fairclough, 2015, p. 38, 2016,

p. 33). In the above statements, one can find that the texts are characterized by external goal management, in this case, the focus on academic attainment and performance. Thus, where "play" is recognized as a teaching tool, there is a need to redirect the rhetoric to focus on the teacher's authority.

2 *Play is a useful tool for teaching academic skills.*

The EYFS framework (2021), which has recently been updated, implies that play can be a useful tool for teaching academic skills and knowledge. It suggests "planning a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child" (p. 15), "igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning" (p. 8) and "promoting the interests of children" (p. 26). These phrases again reflect a value assumption (Fairclough, 2003a, p. 55) that play can stimulate and engage children and therefore is a valuable teaching instrument. It is noteworthy, however, that the national curriculum does not usually explain how to utilize play in learning; however, they recommend that teachers create engaging lessons, such as through "role-playing" (p. 22) and "dramatizing" (p. 31).

Discussion

Our aim is for the methodology to provide us with a picture of the PBL practices in the two countries through the analysis of the discourses in the Norwegian and English curriculum documents. According to our research, two main discourses dominate the PBL topic in Norwegian framework documents and two dominate English framework documents.

In Norway, there are some indications that both the kindergarten framework and the curriculum reflect the influence of Froebelian philosophy, common in Scandinavian countries with a social-democratic history (Øksnes & Sundsdal, 2020). The philosophy gives priority to the tradition of providing a good childhood, inclusive of free play. This child-centred approach dominates the education arena and the policy documents and puts weight on children's rights and child agency (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). This naturally led to the incorporation of child-directed play in pedagogical decisions, especially those relating to ECE (Ødegaard, 2011). Moreover, in the recent curriculum reform, *Fagfornyelsen* (2020), a greater emphasis on PBL has been placed on the youngest children at school (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Consequently, though some researchers have contended that the focus of the curriculum in Norway is shifting towards academic competencies (Tveit, 2014), we argue that the main discourses of PBL still consider children's agency (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018) and children as leaders in their learning.

In both curricula in England, the dominant discourses of PBL can partly be explained by the focus on academic performance and school readiness in the ECE arena. First, with the advent of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition in England in 2010, political ideology and policy direction changed dramatically. The new government redirected the goal of ECE to prepare for school, resulting in the reception year changing from being the end of EYFS

to being a preparation class to help children perform in the primary schools' "test-based culture" (Roberts-Holmes, 2019, p. 8). Next, the performance agenda means PBL also needs to meet educational goals which can generate trade-offs between freedom and structure in teaching (Roberts-Holmes, 2019). Inevitably, decision-makers must choose between prioritizing teaching methods or the national agenda. When the national agenda is performance-oriented, raising literacy standards and preparation for school readiness and standardized tests become the central themes in the "statuary frameworks". This, we believe, is echoed in the curricula documents which propose a focus on academic lessons and a level of guidance and control by the teacher when planning academic lessons.

There are also indications that both countries recognized play as a useful tool for teaching academic skills, but with different goals behind them. In England, where the general focus is on academic performance, there has been tension between utilizing free play in teaching and exhibiting the teacher's control. This suggests the concern that children might not perform when they are left to dictate what they learn through free play (Ødegaard, 2011). Norway, however, has a future focus when discussing play concerning academic skills, especially at the kindergarten level. Here, we observed that kindergarten teachers were instructed to focus on the learning processes of children instead of performance goals (Bøe et al., 2022). This may have an impact on the curricula for basic education, where tension has been observed between teaching children academic subjects and allowing "children to be children" (Tangan, 2017), in other words, incorporating free play at school. This has been reflected in the curricula where the importance of play in learning is mentioned less compared to the kindergarten framework.

The findings in the study indicate that there is controversy about what is considered play across educational institutions, and the impact of such debates needs to be addressed. Despite the government's efforts to incorporate play pedagogies in the national curricula, it is suggested that play in the classroom is still recognized as either child-directed or teacher-directed (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Play, when understood exclusively as teacher-directed teaching, can undermine the importance of free exploration and experimentation, which is often achieved through child-directed free play (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019). Likewise, when PBL is understood as child-directed, the use of PBL in academic classrooms may become limited (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019). It could then be suggested that to counter the differing discourses in PBL, both countries promote the different ways play can be employed by educators (e.g., Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

The research community recommends using a mix of PBL approaches, since learning can occur through free play, adult modelling, peer observation, guided learning, and direct instruction (Pyle et al., 2020). In Norway, where children's agency is recognized and holistic learning and development are emphasized, the education system resists standardized tests and free play has the potential to take place at the school level (Bøe et al., 2022;

Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). However, this idea naturally supports the idea that free play might be different from learning and thus challenges the approach that PBL could also be teacher-guided. In England, where test results and education attainment are the focus, there is a tendency to forget the value of free play in education. As a result, it may be advisable to counter the polarizing discourses, that is, of PBL as solely free play or adult-involved play. It is advised that governments promote the idea that there are several kinds of PBL and that they are all valuable and essential to children's learning. In this way, divergent beliefs like "learning is the opposite of playing" and "learning does not take place during play" can be challenged. Nonetheless, we recommend a longitudinal analysis of the corresponding materials behind the curricula documents to understand better how the policy and practice of each country have come about.

Implications of PBL discourses on twenty-first-century skills

The discourses identified in the curricula indicated that play is a need and right of children, can be led by adults, and is a useful tool for teaching academic skills. These policy makers' conceptions of play can affect the classroom environment and, consequently, how twenty-first-century learners are nurtured. As mentioned earlier, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) listed the essential skills for the twenty-first century, including Critical thinking, Creative thinking, and Collaboration and Communication. Research has previously pointed out that all three discourses of PBL pedagogies can prove useful in developing these skills (e.g., Qian & Clark, 2016).

Seemingly, the first play discourse identified in the document – namely, play advocating children's agency – can benefit the development of twenty-first-century skills in young children. This has been supported by prior research which claims that free play could promote twenty-first-century skills in young children (see Qian & Clark, 2016). For instance, renowned child psychologists such as Jean Piaget have reasoned that child-directed play is where a child may develop their imagination while using their creativity (Sharp, 2005). During free play, a child might freely discover why and how things are done within a certain context or test out different solutions to a problem that might not have been possible in real life (Sharp, 2005, p. 6). Free play, therefore, is necessary for children to practise and improve their creativity. Moreover, creative thinking comes into play in the first decade of life while the brain is still developing (Leggett, 2017).

Evidence shows that children between the ages of 4 and 6 have heightened creative abilities. Gardner, for example, devised a U-shaped model, in which artistic creativity peaks between the ages of 4 and 6, declines between the ages of 7 and 11, and then rises again in adolescence to the level set by the 4–6-year-olds (Gardner, 1982). Children between the ages of 4 and 6 are in a critical period for inventive thinking, shaping the establishments for later creative potential (Leggett, 2017).

Equally, the second discourse identified – play as an adult-led activity – can also aid twenty-first-century competencies development in the classrooms. Research has shown that PBL as teacher-directed play can also be beneficial to children's creative development. For example, the Vygotskian model of scaffolding claims that when play is planned by teachers, a set of roles and rules can be laid out to stimulate the children's learning, in this case, creative thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, child-directed and teacher-directed PBL has been advised as being useful for the other skills necessary for the twenty-first century, i.e., collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (see Lai et al., 2018).

The third discourse discovered constitutes play as a useful tool for teaching academic skills and is also helpful for developing twenty-first-century skills. This is especially true when we consider that the development of twenty-first-century competencies has taken the centre stage in distinctive international frameworks (Voogt & Robin, 2012). In 2012, Voogt and Robin conducted a comparative analysis of international frameworks which mentioned twenty-first-century competencies in them. They identified and analysed 32 framework documents, including the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), established by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), as well as twenty-first-century skills and competencies for new millennium learners, an initiative commenced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These frameworks are meant to impact curriculum policy directly (Voogt & Robin, 2012). Thus, given the apparent common goal across the international educational landscape, acknowledging play as a useful pedagogical tool supports the use of PBL to promote twenty-first-century skills in classrooms.

Conclusion

The objective of this study has been to identify the leading discourses of PBL in contemporary frameworks related to kindergarten and schools in Norway and England. The dominant discourses of play in contemporary ECE frameworks in Norway appear to affirm that play is an important educational tool and a child's right and necessity in the kindergarten and school contexts. In contrast, frameworks in England suggest that the dominant discourses in England also indicate play as a vital component of academic teaching, but PBL is a teacher-driven pedagogy. Further, a balanced approach of free and directed play was found to help develop different twenty-first-century skills.

This comparative case study appears to support that there might be a disconnect between educational research and policy. Forty years of research on the effects of PBL recommend that children be exposed to all different types of PBL to be provided with a variety of learning opportunities, since individual children learn and develop differently and at their own pace (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). For instance, researchers in ECE pedagogical leadership, Bøe et al.

(2022) advocate for "flexible pedagogical leadership" (p. 9), which entails a balance between listening to the children and leading them while being responsive to those opportunities as well.

Despite this, in reality, it can be said that the guidelines in the curricula are shaped by the policy makers' beliefs about what childhood is and what it is to learn and play, as well as other national agendas. There would therefore seem to be a definite need for reflecting on the purpose of the curriculum. Do the curricula support the nurturing of skills needed in the twenty-first century? (Voogt & Robin, 2012) Do the curricula reflect our visions of the future society (e.g., the knowledge society, Fagerberg et al., 2012)?

We might want to remember that preschool teachers need frameworks for making decisions about when to allow children to engage in free play and when to guide them, and these decisions can change minute by minute (Bøe et al., 2022). It is the same dilemma faced by schoolteachers who wish to use enquiry – or project-based learning (Leat, 2017) – when to let their students explore and when to intervene. Nonetheless, as critical reviewers, we suggest that a longitudinal assessment of the curricula, as well as a review of their supporting policy papers, should be done before we could decide how to counter the existing discourses and propose new narratives and arguments that could potentially close the researcher vs. reality gap.

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10 Critical thinking in the 1950s

Language dispute, textbooks, and newspaper debates in a Norwegian upper secondary school

Merethe Roos

This chapter will shed light upon a tempered debate in a local Norwegian newspaper during the winter of 1953, connected to the use of Norwegian language variants in teaching, textbooks, and teaching material in one of the country's 12 prestigious upper secondary boarding schools, Eidsvoll Offentlige Landsgymnas (ELG). Inaugurated in 1922, Eidsvoll Landsgymnas, located 70 kilometres north of the capital city Oslo, was the second of its kind, following Voss in the western part of the country, founded six years earlier (Høydal, 2003). The Norwegian *landsgymnasia* (country gymnasia) were established from the early twentieth century onwards, to offer higher secondary education to gifted students from all over the country.

The debate subjects to closer investigation here took place in the newspaper *Eidsvold Blad* and demonstrates a tension between one of the school's teachers, who can be regarded as an important intellectual, and an audience, including former students of the school. The discussion thematizes textbooks and writing standards. The Norwegian language consists of two official and juxtaposed variants, *bokmål* (book language) and *nynorsk* (new Norwegian, previously *landsmål*). The history of these language variants can be traced back to the nineteenth century, and their roots were an important part of the growth of national identity in Norway. While the history of *bokmål* can be traced back to the Danish-oriented written language that came as a consequence of the Dano-Norwegian realm, new Norwegian came to be built on Norwegian folk language. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the development of new Norwegian had been an important part of the country's nation-building process. In the first decades of the twentieth century, writing reforms were introduced in order to standardize language forms. Already in 1917, efforts were made to merge the language standards into a common language form, while a reform in 1938 proposed two levels of regulation: a textbook standard, which gave grammatical rules to be followed in schools' textbooks, and permitted non-standard forms, which could be used in students' work, but not in textbooks. There was an extensive variety of non-standard word forms, both forms which had previously been used and new forms which were regarded to be important in the future. The forms could be freely selected by the students.

The debate in *Eidsvold Blad* goes beyond the traditional teacher-student debate and bears signs of differing ideologies, each of them deeply rooted in different understandings of cultural values. A central argument is that the students who were participating in the debate view the understanding of language that is carried out in teaching, textbooks, and teaching materials at ELG as directly opposing their autonomy as well as their development of critical thinking. Their view can be connected to contemporary ideas on teaching and learning, and to an ongoing discussion on what education in the Norwegian language should be, and to which language forms could be allowed in Norwegian textbooks. Thus, by shedding light upon a historical example, the text demonstrates how linguistic forms can be standardized, and to what extent teachers can correct students' language without doing harm to students' individual development.

This chapter will have three short parts. First, I will depict the historical situation surrounding the debate in *Eidsvold Blad*. This introductory part will be followed by a presentation of the newspaper discussion, before I conclude by discussing how critical thinking is thematized in the debate, and how this can be connected to the prevailing pedagogical and intellectual ideas.

Historical surroundings

It is widely known that language symbolizes national, cultural, and social identity, and that language varieties within a nation can be a source of conflicts and national disintegration. In our own time, the conflict in Catalonia is a good example, where the Catalan language is an important part of Catalans' identity. In parts of the Netherlands and Germany, the Frisian language has contributed to uniting people across borders for centuries, as is also the case with the Sami language in Scandinavian countries. Linguistic identity markers like that appear as important parts of the cultural history of the respective area. They become part of the schools' education and also contribute to shaping and raising cultural awareness and affiliation for the coming generations.

The question of cultural identity also underlies the linguistic conflict that is thematized in this chapter. The discussion in the local newspaper in Eidsvoll during the winter months in 1952 must be seen in the context of the nation's political and cultural history. It is generally accepted that the nineteenth century was a formative period for Norwegian national identity. The development of a language standard based on local Norwegian language form was initiated in the 1850s by the self-taught Norwegian philologist Ivar Aasen (1813–1896), who collected samples of Norwegian dialects, eventually constructing a written language based on these samples. This language variant came to be called *landsmål* (country language). Even if the adherents of this movement met considerable resistance from conservative voices, as well as from more moderate ones, they made important progress in the last decades of the century, particularly after the introduction of parliamentarism in 1884.

The linguistic and cultural development in the nineteenth century also had an impact on schools and education. An important resolution in 1885

juxtaposed the Norwegian folk language (*landsmål*/country language) with the "common written and book language" (later known as book language), pointing forward to the national legislation of 1892. This legislation gave the local school boards the right to decide whether the school's textbooks should be in the Norwegian folk language or in the common written and book language (Bjørhusdal, 2014, pp. 150 ff). The fact that the right to teach the Norwegian folk language was established by law provoked ample reactions among parts of the cultural elite. One of the most pre-eminent opponents was the poet and public debater Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832–1910). In order to prevent the Norwegian folk language from gaining more ground, Bjørnson proposed a campaign for the established Danish-oriented written language, and in 1899, he launched the term *rigsmaal* (language of the realm) for this language. This term was immediately approved by Bjørnson's adherents, and in 1907, a campaign organization, Rigsmaalsforbundet (later: Riksmålforbundet, the society for the language of the realm) was established in the interest of promoting the use of this language variant, not least in schools.

There is a direct line between the language dispute at the turn of the century and "our debate". A statutory provision that allowed the local school boards the right to decide which language form to choose caused much debate and commotion in the 1950s. In general, the line of battle went between the adherents of *riksmål* (prev. *rigsmaal*) and those who defended the common language form. From the view of those who defended *riksmål*, the national linguistic policy appeared as authoritarian, not least because schools' textbooks were adapted to the 1938 textbook standard. One example was Nordahl Rolfsen's reader, which had been used in Norwegian schools since 1895 and was later published in several new editions. In Rolfsen's book, poems and Norwegian classics were now paraphrased into the new textbook standard (Gripsrud, 2017, pp. 371 ff). In 1939, the local school board in Oslo adopted a regulation on using radical language forms in textbooks used in the city's schools (Bull, 1980, pp. 203 ff).

This situation provoked both students and parents, and ten years after the Oslo-resolution, a group of parents organized themselves into the Parental Campaign, aiming to work against the radical language forms in their children's textbooks (Langslet, 1999, pp. 229 ff). The parents felt that too little effort had been made in order to obtain textbooks with moderate language forms, which the 1938 reform allowed for. The Parental Campaign included resourceful cultural profiles, which used their networks to spread their message. Pamphlets were printed and distributed, strategic public speeches were held, and campaign participants eagerly raised funds for the cause. The collected money was also used for warnings against the new textbook standard, often with headings formed as rhetorical questions ("Have you read your children's schoolbooks? Do you want your child to lose their interest in reading? Sign our campaign to support the rights to freely chose language forms in schools' textbooks") (Langslet, 1999, p. 239). Parents scrutinized their children's textbooks at home and replaced common language forms with *riksmål*. Students in gymnasia in Oslo started campaigns to boycott textbooks with common language forms.

Even if the Parental Campaign originated in Oslo, it soon spread to larger parts of the country, and nearly 500,000 signed their declarations yearly in the early 1950s. In this way, the Parental Campaign became one of the most influential grassroots movements in Norway in the post-war period. The periodical *Frisprog* (Free Language), published by the Parental Campaign from 1953, exerted important political pressure on language policymakers up to the 1990s. In the second volume of this periodical, the writer and cultural personality André Bjerke (1918–1985) published a text in which an ELG teacher highlighted in this text was accused of using his teaching in the Norwegian language to dupe students (*Frisprog*, 1953, p. 3). The fact that the Parental Campaign also placed an ad publicizing this magazine issue in the local newspaper and directly referred to the text in which the teacher at ELG was mentioned, was startling, and shows how they systematically worked in order to reach their goal (*Eidsvold Blad*, 18.6.1953).

The history of Eidsvoll Landsgymnas fits into the traditions and ideas of *Bildung* that surrounds the landsgymnasia in the early twentieth century and up to the interwar period. The historian Reidun Høydal, who has written an article on the landsgymnasia and the public *Bildung*, relates the landsgymnasia to the concepts of two cultures, which gained ground in the second half of the nineteenth century (Høydal, 2003). This theory promoted the view that Norwegian society was characterized by a schism between an elite running the affairs of the state on the one side, and regular people and particularly farmers on the other side (Hyvik, 2021). The aim of the landsgymnasia was, according to Høydal, to integrate these cultures: to transform the rural youth into civil servants and officials, and to create harmonious surroundings where the students could mature together with their fellows in a similar situation. Questions related to how to use the Norwegian language and language variant forms were closely connected to the identity of the landsgymnasia and were a part of this *Bildung* process (Myhren, 2001). However, different opinions could be found among the teachers. Some were ardent defenders of the new Norwegian, while others were fighting for the rights to use book language with local forms (Brakstad et al., 1947, pp. 34 ff). The discussions on which language form should be used in teaching also took place at Eidsvoll Landsgymnas, both at the time of the inauguration in 1922 and in subsequent years.

The teacher who participated in the debate that will be studied here, philologist Eivind Vågslid (1897–1986), had distinguished himself as an important spokesman for the use of new Norwegian, including at a national level. Vågslid, born in Vinje in Telemark, was educated as a philologist with Nordic languages as his main subject, and as a student, he was awarded several scholarships which ensured that he could continue his language studies. Vågslid, who was also awarded the King's Medal for his Master's dissertation, wanted to continue with a career at university, but when he did not get the position he applied for at the University of Oslo in 1930, he undertook a pedagogical education and continued a career in the school system. After a short stay at Bryne Landsgymnas in south-western Norway, Vågslid came to Eidsvoll

Landsgymnas as a teacher in 1934, where he remained for the rest of his working career. He frequently participated in public debates, not least on Norwegian writing standards, and strongly opposed foreign words. Vågslid also edited a periodical for the promotion of new Norwegian (*Norsk måltidende*) and he was a board member of the Norwegian Language Society. This society worked (and still works) to promote new Norwegian language in Norway.

The same year that the debate took place in *Eidsvold Blad*, Vågslid proposed a suggestion to the school board at Eidsvoll Landsgymnas, indicating that only composition exams written in new Norwegian should be rewarded with the school's prizes (Minutes for the School Board, 15.6.1953). This, he claimed, was in accordance with the nature of the landsgymnasium, which was established in order to promote the use of new Norwegian. The proposal was not approved by the school board, and Vågslid was the only one who voted for his own suggestion. Nevertheless, Vågslid uses the history of the landsgymnasia to justify his own views on Norwegian language teaching.

The debate in *Eidsvold Blad*, 1953

The debate on language variants in *Eidsvold Blad* early in 1953 must be seen in the context of these intellectual surroundings, not least the guidelines laid down by the 1938 regulation for the use of moderate language forms, both in textbooks and in teaching. The debate starts with a text in the column "Local Contributions" (*lokale innslag*), under the heading "Where will it end?" (Hvor bærer det?) (*Eidsvold Blad*, 17.2.1953). The text is published anonymously with the initials L. O., but it is easy to imagine that the text is written either by a parent or by one of Vågslid's students at ELG. The teacher remains anonymous in the first contribution of the debate, yet there are several references in the texts that make it easy for those familiar with the situation at ELG to guess the actual identity of the teacher. The writer starts by referring to the 1951 language advisory board, an institution referred to as "tragic by virtue of its existence", yet also because it seems to have a number of supporters around the country, particularly among teachers. The aim of this advisory board, to merge the language standards into a common language form, could be seen in textbooks and official documents, says the writer, and this was "just as regrettable as it was a fact". It could be seen as a hidden attempt to move the standardized book language towards a standardized new Norwegian.

The text continues with a sarcastic description of the situation at ELG. There are many indications that someone who teaches the Norwegian language could use the language forms as he or she sees fit, says the writer. This could be seen at Eidsvoll Landsgymnas, where the writer had become aware of the actual situation after having read a Norwegian essay. They had never before seen more madness and mess in the language! The student had written in book language, thus also following the writing rules of the 1938 reform. Yet what did a teacher dare to do, fanatically obsessed as he was by new Norwegian? If the text would be corrected according to the rules indicated

by the teacher through crossings-out, parentheses, paraphrases, and "recommendations", the text would have ended up being written in new Norwegian, the writer claims. Thus, the corrections could be regarded as instructions for the use of the new Norwegian language form. Subtly, but nonetheless provokingly, the writer indicates that the teacher's point of view is supported by governmental authorities: the teacher has the "obsessive Lars Moen fanatic" (*Lars-moen-fandenivoldsk*) to back him up. The name Lars Moen (1885–1964) refers to the then-current minister of church affairs, who was an ardent user of new Norwegian and defended the common Norwegian language form. By virtue of his position, Moen was also responsible for the establishment of the language advisory board in 1951 and had the superior responsibility for the schools in the country.

The writer proceeds by giving examples from the essay, depicting particularly how the teacher has corrected the writing. They conclude the presentation by accusing the teacher of acting with the aim of exterminating *riksmål*: "in that very moment the teacher plundered the text, he must have been affected by the curse of indignation, with a clearly defined final goal: extermination of *riksmål*!", they claim. The writer admits that it could be objected that, when correcting the text, the teacher had made recommendations rather than directions. Yet, one should not underestimate the psychological pressure a teacher can place on the students when giving directions as to what correct Norwegian language should be. Moreover, it should also be expected that a teacher have sufficient insight not to influence the students in a certain direction, says the writer. The writer ends with an open question, indicating that it would have been interesting to know how far a teacher would go when it came to the question of laying down guidelines on how students should use the language. Would it be possible for a teacher to force the students to use radical language forms, even though all the time the student had adhered to the guidelines of the 1938 reform?

The accused teacher must of course defend himself against these accusations. In the reply printed in *Eidsvold Blad* one week later, Eivind Vågslid starts by revealing his identity, sarcastically indicating that he wants his name to be used in case there should be others who want to instruct him on how to teach Norwegian (Vågslid, 24.2.1953). As he had devoted his life to teaching Norwegian, it is in his own interest that the textbooks he uses and his corrections to students' texts be spread widely, he says. His ambitions are also to broadcast his views on the Norwegian language extensively: he will send his text to all Norwegian papers, asking editors around the country to publish it. The text is characterized by an idealistic attitude to education in Norwegian, evidently also forming the basis of Vågslid's teaching. Vågslid's aim, as he states, has always been to teach the students a clear, good, and beautiful Norwegian language. This required that he teach *about* the language, as much as teaching the language itself. The 1938 language reform allowed much freedom and demanded teachers with a high degree of consciousness, who were ready to take the responsibility for giving the students the best possible education.

When he corrected students' works, he always replaced what he thought were non-Norwegian language forms with Norwegian language forms, to give the students a basic education in what he considered to be good Norwegian language. Vågslid illustrates this by referring to numerous concrete examples from his own work. He provides examples of suffixes, nouns, verbs, and adjectives and shows that many of the words used in everyday Norwegian are actually foreign words. When he sees this in a student's text, he crosses out the word of foreign origin, replacing it with a Norwegian word. The school has a special responsibility to ensure that these words are replaced by Norwegian words, and his examples could thus serve as models for other teachers. Vågslid ends his text by quoting a Norwegian dictionary, published by teachers Gustav Natvig-Pedersen (1893–1965) and August Lange (1907–1970). The quote gave examples of Norwegian words that could replace loan words, referring directly to them in a sentence written in bold type. Finally, Vågslid informs the readers that Natvig-Pedersen, the current President of the Storting (Norwegian Parliament), contributed to the latest norms for spelling.

The reply from L. O. is printed in *Eidsvold Blad* a few days later. This text is now written in a more harsh and direct style, and the writer presents libellous accusations against Vågslid. Among other things, Vågslid is compared with the preacher and theology professor Ole Hallesby (1879–1961), who had shocked a Norwegian radio audience a couple of weeks earlier with his preaching on hell and the perdition of man. In the writer's response, they link textbook standards and language use to the issue of critical thinking and students' autonomy (*Eidsvold Blad*, 28.2.1953). In the introduction to the text, the writer states that practically all Norwegians want a common Norwegian language form, yet not in the way that Vågslid indicates in his teaching. What the writer reacts to is Vågslid's tendencies to standardize his own understanding of the Norwegian language. Nature is against all kinds of compulsion, says the writer, and language must also have its natural growth. It can thus be compared to a living organism, which must be allowed to grow freely to realize its true potential. This metaphor can be transferred to the rising generation and their language learning. The writer draws a dramatic picture of the consequences of forcing the child into language forms that are not natural: it will confuse the sense of language for these students, they say. They continue to legitimate the allegations by anchoring them to pedagogics:

> I assume that you are aware that it is pedagogically incorrect to force the students into using radical words and expressions that they do not want to use, or to influence them in any "language-political" direction, or to condemn any other direction.

According to the writer, Vågslid's practice of crossing out what he thinks are foreign words in the text, thus replacing them with his understanding of Norwegian words, offends the student and suppresses the student's own sense of language. Moreover, by acting the way he does in his teaching, Vågslid

suppresses the natural beauty of language in itself: the language loses its value by losing its music – its sonority, harmony, and rhythm, the writer says. Further, the linguistic Norwegianization that is proposed will contribute to a depletion of the values of spiritual life. It will destroy the intellectual properties left by writers and undermine the artistry of language. This Norwegianization of words and expressions can even be found in children's textbooks, the writer thunders. Independent thinking, autonomy, and the ability to express one's feelings require freedom and latitude and cannot be developed if the students are forced into authoritarian mindsets. To support their own view, the writer quotes the Norwegian author and poet Arnulf Øverland (1889–1968), who had made a clear mark in the language debate and was one of the most ardent defenders of *riksmål* at that time: "(…) a people who cannot find words for the great emotions will lose them, and its intellect will dry up and become barren". Among other things, Øverland had written a text in the periodical of the Society for Preservation of the Traditional Standard Norwegian (The Riksmål Society), "Fri Sprogutvikling" (Free Development of the Language), in which he had argued for the development of language as a natural process which could not be subjected to any form of external coercion (Øverland, 1967).

To provide good language development, the students should take on habits which could develop their spirituality. The writer points to the well-known schoolman Johan Hertzberg (1872–1954) and quotes from Hertzberg's book *Vårt morsmål* (Our mother tongue): "To become good at writing Norwegian essays, you must first and foremost endeavour to develop spiritual interests, – read good books, listen to good lectures, and talk to knowledgeable and serious people". And on his own behalf, the writer adds: "by reading good newspapers". What it was all about was natural motivation, where language was not learned through coercion, but through reading that was motivated from the student's own interests. The writer ends by pointing out that the president of the Storting could not be regarded to be a guarantor for linguistic quality. Pointing to him to substantiate his own arguments, as Vågslid did, falls on stony ground.

Even if Vågslid refrains from participating further in the debate after his initial text in *Eidsvold Blad*, the anonymous writer receives support from two like-minded persons in later editions of the same newspaper. One is the lawyer Knut Wilhelm Lodve (1905–1969), who supports the anonymous writer in defending students' individual freedoms and the rights to choose their own language forms (Lodve, 5.3.1953). Lodve presents himself as a former student at ELG, now living in Oslo. In a text published on 5 March 1953, he describes Vågslid as arrogant and accuses him of describing words as un-Norwegian that even renowned linguists, such as the famous professor Didrik Arup Seip (1884–1963), have referred to as Norwegian. Here, Lodve places the responsibility onto the students: they must make the teachers aware that they have full rights to decide which language forms they want to use. The other participant is the smallholder and local historian Leif Ljødal (b. 1897), who addresses the ELG rector Edvard Brakstad (1888–1982) with a question about which rules apply to the correction of Norwegian composition styles

for those teaching at ELG (Ljødal, 19.3.1953). Ljødal points out that it must be difficult for students when the teacher who corrects their Norwegian essay deletes words, crosses words out, and replaces the student's own words with words that are unnatural for them. Any form of coercion or influence is completely unnecessary, Ljødal claims, when it comes to the written language, as the Norwegianization will take place naturally as time passes. He argues that he has seen this clearly in his work as a local historian: in his own studies of 100-year-old protocols, he has noticed that the use of language has changed from generation to generation.

With this round, the debate in *Eidsvold Blad* ceases, yet the topic is brought back when André Bjerke published the previously mentioned text in *Frisprog* some months later, where he jeers at Vågslid's corrections and accuses him of paying attention to the question of language forms rather than actual errors in students' texts. In a text published in July 1953, Vågslid explains the background for his view on education in the Norwegian language and expresses his disappointment with the local newspaper for shamelessly giving space to his opponents. *Eidsvold Blad* has done this both by advertising for *Frisprog* and by referring to André Bjerke's text on Vågslid, as well as by allowing Vågslid's opponents to write in the column *Local Features* (Vågslid, 23.7.1953). Vågslid's text is to a limited degree followed up, with the only response coming from Leif Ljødal in a short notice some days later, where Ljødal repeats his request for obtaining clear guidelines for language education at ELG (Ljødal, 28.7.1953). Nonetheless, Vågslid shifts his public commitment to a national arena in late summer and autumn of that year, when he publishes a number of texts in *Frisprog* to defend his view on language education (*Frisprog*, 5.9.1953). These texts contribute to the controversy with André Bjerke.

The debate and its intellectual contexts

The debate in *Eidsvold Blad* in 1953 shows how a comprehensive national issue related to the use of language can also engage a small local society like Eidsvoll. The debate addresses an overarching issue for the schools, which provides guidelines for textbooks, teaching, and learning. The discussion in the local newspaper demonstrates a tension between the legally mandated language freedom, which is a consequence of the 1938 reform, and an understanding of language training – and Norwegian – which is consistent, and which relies on the cultural tradition against which the *landsgymnasia* must be viewed. The freedom allows for the use of radical language forms, and these forms were frequently preferred and used, both in students' textbooks as well as in teaching. As a radical representative of the Norwegianness movement, Vågslid's aim is to mediate what he believes to be Norwegian language forms, but the radicalism of his choices obviously provokes many people. The most problematic (at least when having the debate in *Eidsvold Blad* as the point of departure), however, seems to be the method Vågslid uses for presenting his view on Norwegian language education, and his teaching in general. By

crossing out words in students' essays and replacing them with words that he believes are more Norwegian, he demonstrates the authoritarian use of language that becomes problematic for many parents (and students), an authority given by virtue of his position as a teacher. This is also an important background for the establishment of the Parental Campaign in the early 1950s.

The opposition against this authoritarian and coercive style and the quest for individual freedom can clearly be seen in all the contributions in *Eidsvold Blad* discussed here, yet most thoroughly in the two texts written by the anonymous writer with the initials L. O. As I have demonstrated earlier in this chapter, this writer points to one of the great ideologists of the *riksmål* movement, Arnulf Øverland, when arguing for students' rights to develop the language freely without any constraints. In the second contribution, the writer emphasizes the right of the individual to take control over their own language and language development. The writer's frame of reference is the spiritual activity of every human being: they say, among other things, that they are worried about the country's spiritual development if the youth became forced into "authoritarian teachers' mindsets". This clearly echoes Arnulf Øverland's ideas. In his text in *Riksmålsforbundets* periodical, Øverland ties man's autonomy and the ability to independent thinking to the use of language: a living language creates itself, while being used and in interaction with others. In a time when World War II was recent history, Øverland could also draw parallels to the Nazi regime: "'Der Führer denkt für uns', someone said. This does not suit us. We will think for ourselves. In our own language" (Øverland, 1967).

Yet in addition to drawing upon the argumentation being used by those who defended *riksmål* in the writer's present time, these views also reflect contemporary Norwegian ideas on pedagogics. An important reference here is Anna Sethne (1872–1961), who holds a prominent place in Norwegian pedagogical history and has been regarded as a pedagogical public enlightener (Aagre, 2016, pp. 15 ff). Sethne, who was educated as a teacher, worked broadly to improve schooling and education in Norway, primarily through her own teaching activities at Sagene school in Oslo, but also through her active participation in the public debate on education and in organization work. She edited a pedagogical journal for over three decades and wrote several books and newspaper contributions, worked actively to strengthen gender equality among teachers, and participated in establishing the Norwegian female teacher organization in 1912, being its leader from 1919 to 1938. Sethne also enjoyed a broad international network and participated in international organizations on education and pedagogics. Most important in this regard is her work to consolidate reform pedagogical ideas in Norway. Reform pedagogy is known for its critical attitude towards the traditional school, as well as for emphasizing the child's autonomy and creative abilities. Sethne headed the Norwegian branch of the New Educational Fellowship, an international organization for the strengthening of reform pedagogy. Her work influenced the reforms of the Norwegian school system that took place in the years before World War II, among them the important Normal Plan Committee (1936–1939), the School

Plan Committee (1935–1938), and the school board of teacher organizations (Dale, 1999).

As a defender of reform pedagogy, Anna Sethne's pedagogical thoughts give substantial input to the ideas on people's autonomy that also appear in the language debate. A key theme in her writings is that children themselves learn through their activities, and that the children themselves must discover, investigate, and experience. Thus, all learning starts with self-activity, and this self-activity strengthens the autonomy of the student as well as the student's independence. Moreover, the student is central in their own learning process. Yet, although Sethne emphasizes self-activity and self-development, the students are by no means left to themselves. In several of her writings, Sethne explicitly distances herself from a school in which the authoritarian teacher sets the premises for the students' learning. On the contrary, she calls for a different role for the teacher, emphasizing the observing and compassionate caretaker, who supports students in their development and facilitates their individual development. This requires that the teacher has knowledge of the child, and that there exists a good relationship of trust between the teacher and the child. The teacher's role is to help the child on the child's own terms, and to find passable routes based on the child's individuality and personal needs. This pedagogy has strong common features with the ideas on students' autonomy that can be found among Vågslid's antagonists at Eidsvoll in 1953. Yet despite these common features, and even though Anna Sethne actively took part in the important school reform committees in the years before World War II, there is no indication that Sethne, or any other of the reform pedagogues, were involved in the concurrent attempts to standardize the language. This points to the fact that the post-war language conflicts in Norway were as much a cultural matter as they were a pedagogical matter.

Nevertheless, this understanding of the child's autonomy points forward to the emphasis on critical thinking like this, which is defined as one of the twenty-first-century skills. Critical thinking requires autonomous students who can analyse and reflect upon various inputs and apply them in a constructive way. It encourages students to discover knowledge for themselves and to ask questions, rather than blindly listening to authorities. The discussion on mother-tongue education in Norway in the 1950s demonstrates that this autonomy was already at the forefront of the school debate at that time. Children should not find themselves forced into radical language forms either in textbooks or through the teacher's instruction but should be able to make their own choices, based on who the child is and what is natural for the child.

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11 Into the woods

Forestation as education

Hege Roll-Hansen

In August 1948 the Norwegian ministry of education proclaimed an addition to the national curriculum, concerning teaching and learning of natural science and geography in the upper classes of the primary school. Forestry was now to become a part of the normal education for Norwegian children in the cities as well as in the rural areas. The purpose was, according to the publication *Norsk skuleblad* (Norwegian School Magazine), to make the children interested in the life of trees and the growth of forests and to give them insight into one of the country's main industries, forestry. Forests make the country more beautiful, the ministry stated, but above all more prosperous. "The raising of new forests in our country is a tremendous challenge. School children can also participate in this task."[1]

In the subsequent decades, the annual day (or days) of planting trees formed part of the normal school year for great numbers of Norwegian pupils and teachers, especially in the western parts of the country. This practice is interesting both as an expression of the broader forestry movement and the widespread concern for the observed decline of the forests, as well as a didactical case. The aim of this chapter is to trace the changing contexts and meanings of the forest as an educational resource, from when the idea of a mandatory arbor day was first launched at the end of the nineteenth century, to its institutionalization in the early post-war years, up to when the practice finally ended in the 1970s. In our present reality, forests remain a highly relevant educational resource – the framing as well as the didactical purpose of the resource, however, has been significantly altered due to the growing awareness of the threatening environmental crisis.

The concept of education for sustainability has over the last decades been established as a core value of the national curriculum and teaching practice in the schools of Norway as in most other countries (Eidsvik, 2020; Poeck et al., 2019; Sinnes, 2021). The last Norwegian educational reform in 2020 introduced *sustainable development* as one of three interdisciplinary themes, to permeate the teaching and learning in all school subjects. Subsequently, making use of the natural surroundings of the schools for educational purposes has been highly promoted – bringing nature into the classroom, as well as bringing teachers and pupils out of it, is seen as obvious means for obtaining

the intended goal. The potential, didactically, ecologically, and physically, of outdoor schooling is widely supported (Gabrielsen & Korsager, 2018; Jordet, 2010).

This chapter looks at how one specific form of outdoor activity – the planting of trees and the caring for forests – has been motivated and integrated into educational programs in Norway for over 120 years. I also hope by this analysis to open the question as to how this phenomenon can be linked to changing understandings of nature-culture relations, and point to the relevance of such relations for the developing curricula. In the dramatically evolving environmental situation, most people would agree that a main obligation of modern educational systems is to contribute to a fundamental change in the way human societies and individuals relate to their natural surroundings. A basic assumption of the chapter is that our present awareness of sustainability as a core ambition and responsibility for the educational system can be understood from a longer historical perspective. The motivations for making use of forests and trees for learning purposes today are closely linked to the ecological crisis, intrusively influencing the state of the forests and severely challenging the forest industry, but also our image and understanding of our natural surroundings. The history of the didactical use of forests can hopefully shed some light on the contrasting and changing understanding of forests, both as ecological systems and as economic resource, as well as on shifting ideologies of education.

For centuries, timber has been a commodity of immense importance to the Norwegian economy (Sandvik, 2018). A main perspective of this chapter concerns how economic aspects and interests have influenced the campaigning over the years for introducing forestry into the curriculum, and how economic arguments play along with national, moral, and pedagogical ones. The forestry industry is presently an important contributor behind a wide range of online learning materials and organizes activities like "forest days" and "forest olympics" for schools. The learning materials are produced by an organization financed by the forestry industry, which is also offering training programs and courses relevant to the industry itself. The office – Skogkurs (Forest courses) – cooperates both with Norwegian authorities and international organizations. The European network for forest pedagogics has since 2006 been arranging annual conferences. The international platform Learning about Forests (LEAF) is apparently supported by this network and presents didactical materials and activities in close collaboration with the national bodies.

As already stated, the mobilizing of youth and school children in the organized planting of trees can be traced back to the last part of the nineteenth century, in Norway as in many other countries. This chapter analyzes the arguments in the campaigning, as well as the described practice, traced in political debates and pedagogical writings, and in recorded activities concerning forests as an educational resource from the end of the nineteenth century up until the systematic tree-planting by school children came to an end in the last half of the twentieth century.

The didactical discussions need to be understood through the background of the history of forestry at large. The administration of forest resources has been a central political issue for Norwegian authorities for centuries, and a substantial historical literature treats the utilization and cultivation of forests and the developing forestry industry, in both an economic and a cultural historical context (Direktoratet for statens skoger, 1962; Fryjordet, 1992). Bjørn Bækkelund's comprehensive and wide-ranging study *Den menneskeskapte skogen* (The Man-Made Forest) discusses the shifting practices of forestry, focusing on the developing scientific and ecological knowledge (Bækkelund, 2020). Frode Ulvund's work on *Bergen skog og treplantingsselskap* (The Forestry Society of the City of Bergen), from its foundation in 1868 until today, demonstrates the widespread concern and engagement in the population for the forest cause. Both Bækkelund and Ulvund's works are important contributions to the cultural history of forestry, analyzing the movement in a broader cultural and social context. The mobilization of school children in the planting of trees is mentioned in both works, but the political and pedagogical aspects of this practice are not explicitly discussed.

The early history of the arbor day

When member of parliament Halvor Arneson Berg proposed in 1894 an extension to the Norwegian law of education, his motivations were manifold.[2] Berg was representing the inland rural district of Hallingdal and was affiliated with the expanding and influential rural youth movement. Five years earlier, a new law of education had been passed, generally recognized as the starting point of the modern Norwegian school system (Roos, 2016, p. 23ff). The law of 1889 instituted the right (and duty) to primary education for all children regardless of social class and background, a fundamental value of the developing welfare society. In his speech, Berg proclaimed that the existing law indeed meant a great step toward the general illumination of the population and the modernization of the country. His proposed additional clause was meant to develop further the relevance of the school system for the modern Norwegian national state: one or two days every school year should be dedicated to the organized planting of trees, for all pupils over the age of 11. The proposal had solid support, the idea of systematically mobilizing school children in the planting of trees is credited to Michael Andreas Saxlund, National Director of Forests. According to the formulated proposal, the municipal school boards were to be assigned the responsibility of planning and overseeing the practical execution of this work.[3]

The background for this suggestion was the observed situation in the Norwegian forests: "Of our fixed forest capital, considerably more is consumed each year than is added. Large stretches that were previously wooded are now completely or somewhat treeless." If the present harvesting pace was allowed to continue, a complete deforestation would be the result. Given the importance of timber to the national economy, this was of course a situation to be

taken very seriously. A far graver concern, however, was according to Berg to be found in the crucial importance of the woods for the total ecological system. Recorded experience from other parts of the world clearly pointed at the very unfavorable consequences following the disappearance of woods, as the climatic situation changed. Fierce winds and periods of either drought or heavy and devastating downpours led to declining fertility, depopulation, and desertification.

The threat of deforestation and the need for collective and preferably state-initiated action was a topic in many parts of the world in the last half of the nineteenth century. Berg's idea of instituting a yearly day of planting trees was a transatlantic import or, indeed, had already been implemented in most civilized countries, according to his argumentation in the Norwegian parliament. The first arbor day had been carried out in Nebraska 22 years earlier and was by 1894 stated in law in 30 North American states.[4] Similar practices were found in Canada, South Africa, and Australia, as well as in several European countries.

The serious state of the Norwegian forests, caused by human action and pursuit for profit, demanded serious action. By calling on the young to contribute, higher goals could also be achieved, according to Berg. The value of giving every boy and girl the opportunity to experience up close the coming into being of new life, and the results of care and maintenance in terms of steady and healthy growth went far beyond the economic aspect. For coming generations to learn that the destruction of nature was a misdeed, and to love and respect the beauty of nature, was a contribution to the building of the nation in every sense. The campaigning for a legally instituted arbor day in the Norwegian schools had, however, been viewed as being abused for economic purposes, as Berg maintained in the parliamentary debate. He therefore found it necessary to warn against voices that had suggested that one day was not enough, and that a week or even more each year should be invested in the project. This was far from the intention of Berg whose motivation was utterly pedagogical: to him the main cause was the planting of seeds in the minds of future generations rather than in the soil of the earth – the material gain was of course not to be denied but was nonetheless secondary.

While Berg's proposal was not acclaimed by parliament, it can be seen all the same as an expression of a very vital movement of forestation. The businessman and consul Axel Heiberg founded in 1898 *Det norske skogselskap* (The Norwegian Forest Society) and was for many years a central figure in this movement, to which he also contributed large amounts of money. Heiberg considered the cause of forestation to be of similar importance for the national state as the other causes he is known to have supported – the polar expeditions of Fridtjof Nansen, the National Theatre in the capital Christiania, as well as other scientific and cultural initiatives. Concerning forestation, Heiberg formulated the main principle of the movement as ensuring that no generation would harvest the forests without taking responsibility for the regrowth. The suspicion that the forestry industry was prospering at the expense of future

generations had already been a cause of alarm for several decades, and it is interesting that an idea of sustainability is thus to be found in the discourse of forestry (Ulvund, 2018, p. 14); (Warde, 2018, p. 58). As a consequence, new legislation to regulate the felling of trees, along with national coordinating of the forestry industry, was instituted.

Although the arbor day was not at this point made statutory, the practice of engaging school children in the planting of trees spread quickly and became an important part of the forestation movement, above all in the coastal areas (Bækkelund, 2020; Ulvund, 2018). By the end of the century, more than 100 municipal school boards had institutionalized the idea (Berg, 1898).

With this background, it is unsurprising that forestry was elevated to be a central theme at the 1898 meeting of the Norwegian teachers' organization. Berg himself spoke to mobilize the teachers. He maintained in his speech, which was also distributed as a printed leaflet, that the seriousness of deforestation all over the world was related to climatic changes, famine, and depopulation. The role of the school teachers was essential in winning the youth for the cause: as educators they were the closest to acknowledging the pedagogical value of the project, and Berg claimed that the effort of future generations would exercise a forming and refining influence of high value – counteracting destructive tendencies and strengthening the sense of responsibility and love for the nation. The annual arbor day was therefore of great importance economically, nationally, and pedagogically.

In the wake of the creation of arbor day, a whole catalog of books and leaflets appeared in the first decades of the twentieth century presenting songs and instructions to motivate the children and support the teachers. *Det norske skogselskap* (The Norwegian Forest Society) stood behind several volumes with instructions and explanations. This society also offered courses to the students enrolled in teacher education (Bækkelund, 2020, p. 224; Unsigned, 1907). A main theme of this genre was that arbor day should not be reduced merely to a day of work but should be celebrated as a solemn feast – "plantefest." Typical was the very devoted volume edited by Hjalmar Høine (pseudonym) *Skolernes plantefest* (The Planting Feast of Schools), distributed to schools and teachers as a guide to the planning and conducting of arbor day in local schools (Bergh, 1898). One chapter in the volume described a program for arbor day in great detail, with songs and readings for the children to perform before and during the action. The suggested program starts inside the classroom with the psalm "Deilig er Jorden" (Fairest lord Jesus) and a reading from the biblical story of creation. The program further consisted of a combination of well-known religious and national songs, as well as newly written ones commenting on the subject matter. Outside the school building the Norwegian flag was to be saluted before the departure of the procession with spades and hoes and saplings ready to be planted. The marching to the planting ground, as well as the planting of the first tree, was to be accompanied by the singing of newly written verses to the tune of the national anthem. Alongside this strong patriotism and religious vitalism, the references to the American tradition of arbor day festivities were

abundant, both in the outline of the ceremonies and in the printed texts suggested for the readings. Many of these were translated from English, for instance the piece called "Livet findes overalt" (The omnipresence of life) – taken from Georg Hartwig's book *The Subterranean World* (Hartwig 1872).

Among the many songs and anthems specially written as support for the forestry cause, the most widespread was written in 1899 by the priest Anders Hovden, a central figure in the Norwegian movement for language reform. The song "No er det plantefest" (Now is the planting feast) was reproduced for the next decades in most standard song books used in schools and youth organizations. Historian Oddmund L. Hoel underlines the connection between the forestry movement and the language reform movement, a very important popular force in Norway at the turn of the century, mobilizing against the centralizing forces and the dominating urban elites (Hoel, 2017, p. 123). The song was also reproduced in the iconic reader of Nordahl Rolfsen, which was dominant in mother-tongue training in Norwegian schools for many generations. The cover used for several editions of this standard textbook, drawn by Nordahl Rolfsen himself, points effectively at the centrality of arbor day, as well as the great symbolic value of the planting of trees.

Both the success story of arbor day in Norwegian schools and the political agitation for combatting the deforestation continued and grew after the end of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905. The dual cause, of cultivating both the soil and the minds of the future generations, was still the driving force of the project. Although the national value of the project was highlighted by all involved, the support and activity varied across the country. In Bergen, the largest city of Western Norway, the movement was particularly important, with all primary and secondary schools taking part. Between 1899 and 1912, 3500 children participated yearly. In total, teacher Arnt Øksnevad could proudly report in 1912 the result of half a million trees planted, covering 1000 previously forestless acres (Handal, 1990) – and this was just the beginning. Øksnevad himself was leading the work for several decades until his resignation in 1928. In 1921 he was assigned a municipal scholarship in order to spend four to five months in the United States to study forestry and schooling.[5] In his yearly reports to the municipal school board, Øksnevad stated that the work was conducted with great enthusiasm, but he also expressed a concern that the enthusiasm needed to be completed by the institutionalization of formal training of the teachers. The planting schools of the region, which also supplied the saplings, had agreed to organize the necessary courses until all schools had obtained sufficient competence.

Arnt Øksnevad's writings on forestry and the engagement of school children are strikingly focused on discipline and patriotism. "Norwegian girls and boys, am I not right about this? Do you not think that you become kinder and better persons by each good deed you do? And when you learn about the great importance of the forests for our nation, will you not be eager to contribute?" (Det norske skogselskap, 1904, p. 21).

The religious or vitalist aspects are perhaps implied rather than dominant in Øksnevad's texts. His descriptions of arbor day are characterized by solemn
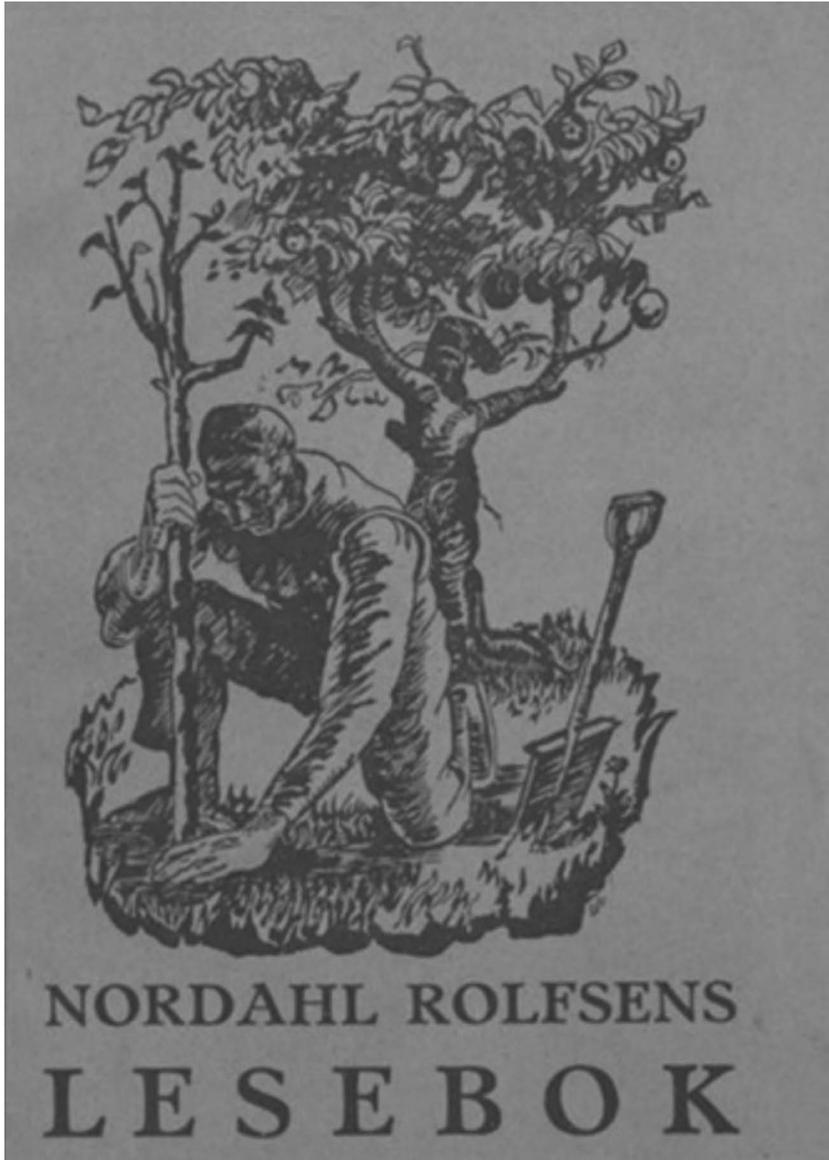
Figure 11.1 Front cover of Nordahl Rolfsen's *Lesebok*.

excitement, underlining the concentrated diligence of the children, working in strict lines overlooked by the teachers. The breaks were filled with songs and speeches honoring the nation, as well as the importance of forests. The text is accompanied by photographs of school children occupied with planting, and plantations of trees demonstrating the success of similar actions some decades earlier. The trees stand in strict lines just like the children, stressing

that the forests need to be cultivated like every other domesticated crop. The ideal of the cultivated forest raised to serve the needs of a rational and future-oriented forestry industry dominated the project, fully compatible with the nation building of the period. Hence not surprisingly, the mobilizing of school children in the service of the forests was echoed in the defense system. The forest cause was of obvious value to the national-minded officers in the years surrounding the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905. A quite high percentage of the forest candidates graduating at the beginning of the century had, interestingly enough, a military background (Bækkelund, 2020, p. 228).

The acute actuality of the cause of forestation was continued through the 1920s and 1930s. The book *The Forest and the People* received great public attention when it appeared in 1923 (Gierløff, 1923). The author, Christian Gierløff, was an influential economist and city planner. His book, and a talk held on the same subject the following year in the military society in Oslo (Det militære samfund), is said to have been of great importance for the organized mobilizing of the officers and the defense department for the forestry cause in the interwar period. Former prime minister Christian Michelsen, above all associated with the dissolution of the union with Sweden 20 years earlier and hence a national hero, claimed that no book had made a similar impression on him in a very long time.[6] *The Forest and the People* was presented and discussed in the newspapers in all parts of Norway, in both cities and rural districts. On the front page of the local paper *Namdalen*, the person who signed as J. E. Løvmo was no less concerned and impressed than Michelsen: "I read and read again (…) I do not know if any book apart from the bible offers as important truths, not only of the forests, but of so much. A sermon to the Norwegian people but even more an accusation to the rulers and the powerful, unfortunately a fair accusation." Michael Andreas Saxlund, now retired as forest director, wrote that if Gierløff's book should fail in waking the Norwegian conscience, nothing could do so, and the people were to be left to their harsh fate.[7] Saxlund had entered the state forest authorities in the early 1890s and was, as mentioned earlier, central in the idea of organizing school children in the service of the forests. Gierløff's book served as an effective reminder that the importance of this work was no less acute than it had been 30 years earlier.

In 1931 the journal of the Norwegian pedagogical association (Noregs pedagogiske landslag) printed an article by forest manager Haakon Lie (not to be confused with the even more famous politician) discussing the actuality of forests as a topic of study for teachers (Lie, 1931). His concern was practical: Norwegian teachers should receive the necessary training to prepare the Norwegian school children, in order to ensure the future collective efforts for the forests. As the forestry industry produced annually 10 million cubic meters of wood, it was of utmost importance that both teachers and pupils understood the consequences of this for the national economy and the trade balance. No less important was the understanding of the meaning of the forests from a longer historical and cultural perspective. The Norwegians had never

had to live in wretched mud huts but had been able to build themselves strong wooden houses – and not forgetting the proud ships that had allowed them to control the seas. In a pedagogical context it was impossible not to comment on the obvious metaphorical value of the matter: to Lie, the trees – the forest – symbolized steady, strong, and harmonious development and growth, satisfying both educational and cultural ideals. Observing the growing, flowering, and dying trees inspired in him the deepest philosophical thoughts. This combination of highly rational/economic thinking with poetic and solemn thinking was characteristic of the forestation movement at large, as well as for the campaigning for mobilizing school children in the project. Lie's article, originally delivered as a speech for the annual assembly of the national pedagogical association, ended by commanding the teachers to go into the woods. It could not be emphasized too strongly that books were not enough – for the knowledge of forests to grow, it needed soil. The teachers and pupils had to walk, breathe, and touch the forests, listen to the rustling, as well as to experience the heavy physical work of forestry.

Build your country – Forestry in the economic restoration after the Second World War

We have seen that both school children and soldiers were given a role in the great national forestry project of the first half of the twentieth century. A driving force for the integration of forestry into the military system in the interwar years was Captain Jon Dugstad, who was also to play a central role in diverse forestry initiatives after the Second World War. Dugstad was the leading figure in the organization *Bygg ditt land* (Build Your Country), planned by Norwegian military leaders during imprisonment during the war and launched soon after the liberation of Norway in 1945 (Myklebust, 1970). The intention of this initiative was to bring together companies, municipalities, organizations, and individuals pursuing industrial and regional development and innovation, in a joint effort contributing to the rebuilding of the country. To intensify and rationalize the utilization of the country's natural resources was a main concern of the organization. Central figures in the political, economic, and academic elites of the time were represented on the board and working committee.

Forest restoration was a main cause in the Norwegian politics of economic restoration. *Fellesprogrammet*, the joint program decided by the whole spectrum of political parties soon after the liberation in May 1945, addressed the rebuilding of the forests as a main task for collective action. The forestation project was thus a main theme of Norwegian economic politics, as well as an integrated part of education in all parts of the country, soon to be codified in national legislation.

Interestingly, it was Dugstad and the organization *Bygg ditt land* who originally suggested the abovementioned addition to the curriculum in 1948, that is introducing the mandatory arbor day. As we have seen, the forestation project had, besides the national and economic ends, a moral and character-building

Figure 11.2 Drawing of badge design by Bygg ditt land.

side to it that made it very suitable for pedagogical purposes. The inclusion of arbor day in the curriculum, and in the new educational legislation some years later, signaled a change. The association of the forestry cause with the rebuild-ing of the country's industry in the age of planned economy had in a way replaced the strong association with the nationalistic and youth movement.

To inspire Norwegian youths to participate in the rebuilding of the country and the forests, a system of badges was instituted by *Bygg ditt land*. The forest-badge could be obtained in bronze, silver, or gold, dependent on the effort invested. A jury consisting of teachers and forest experts determined the

allocation of badges. The idea was eagerly received by educators and school politicians.

The organization had also launched a contest to write a book to be used for the theoretical content of forest education. The contest was won by teacher Ole Valle who expressed that he was glad but rather surprised, as several of the contestants were specialists in the field of forestry, while he himself, originating from deforested Finnmark in north-east Norway, had hardly seen a forest in his life.[8] He wrote the final version of the book *Skog-ABC* with the assistance of experts, and in 1952 it was approved by the ministry for use in primary education, serving for decades as an important reference for theoretical and practical forest education in Norwegian schools (Valle, 1952). Practical instructions dominated the ABC. The ecological dimension is touched upon, as observed by the reviewer in *Norsk skuleblad*: "The forest is a society with trees and plants and flowers, with animals, birds and insects. All have their own task and all are useful." However, the trust in nature, as conveyed by the book, had clear limits: "Nature probably keeps a certain order in this. But in order to get a proper benefit from the forest community, it is necessary that the humans help out."[9]

Compared to the concerns expressed 50 years earlier by the campaigners of the forestry case, the Skog-ABC seems to target a far more progressive and less humble attitude and understanding of the relationship between humans and their natural surroundings. Although the economic interests of the forestry industry were of decisive importance to Axel Heiberg and Halvor Arneson Berg in the 1890s, and also present in the discourse surrounding the "planting feasts" of the early century, this was in the early years combined with an awareness of the vulnerability of the ecological systems far less traceable in the learning materials produced in the post-war years, promoting above all the resource value of the forests.

When in 1959 a new education act was passed in the Norwegian parliament, it stated that two days every school year could be invested in the planting of trees.[10] Halvor Arneson Berg's proposal half a century earlier had now entered legislation, but as we have seen, arbor day practice was at this point already well established. The golden era of tree-planting by school children came to an end around 1970. According to the reports from Bergen, 11,400 trees were planted by the pupils of this city in 1966, 5000 in 1970, with the numbers steadily declining through the 1970s and 1980s. The peak year was 1953, when the number had passed 41,000 saplings.

Forestation and education in times of ecological crisis

The large effort of the forestation campaigners and the several generations of Norwegian school children has proved not to have been in vain. The growth of the Norwegian forests in the last 100 years has been immense. Compared to the situation when the systematical registration of forests (carried out by Statistics Norway) started in 1919, the volume of trees has tripled.[11] Looking back, however, the success story has a significant ambivalence to it. In
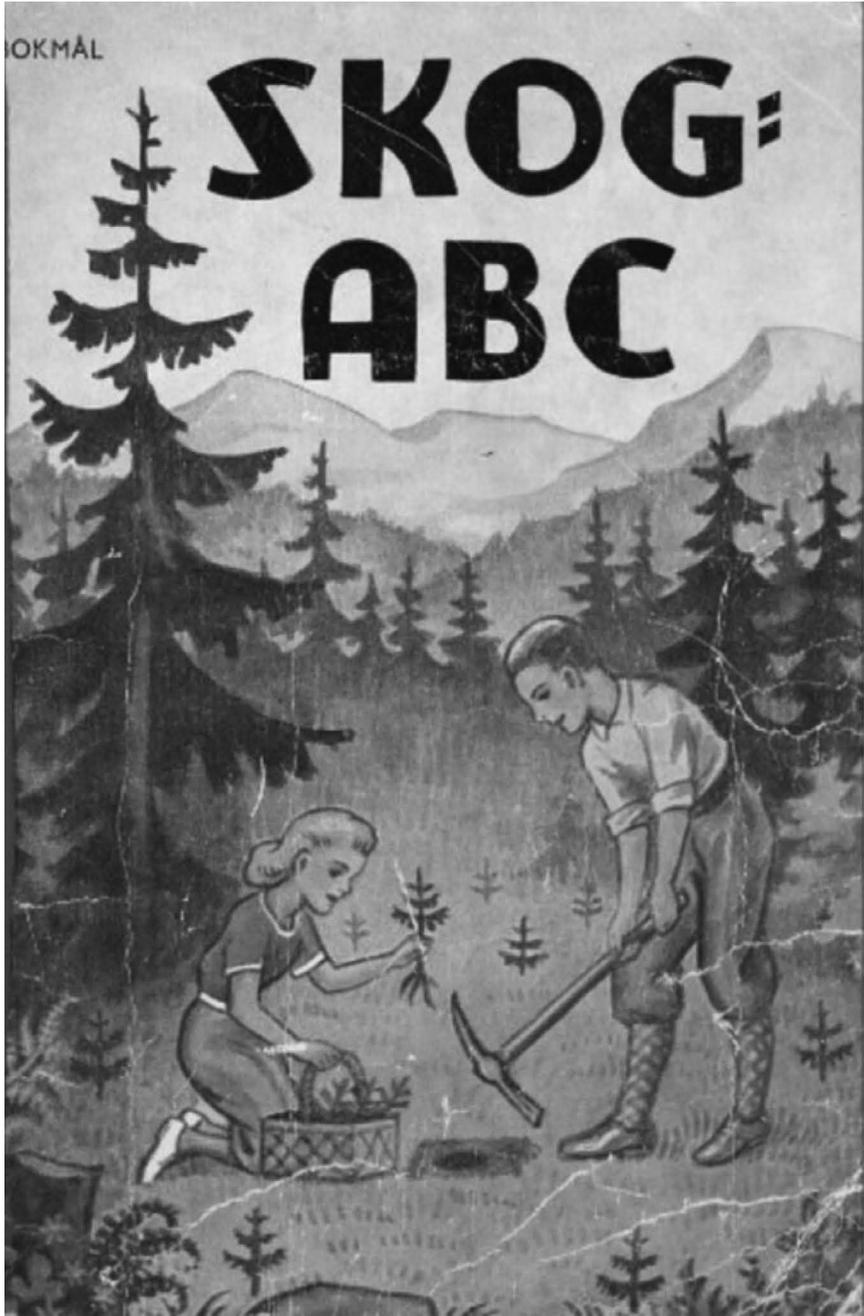
Figure 11.3 Front cover of Skog-ABC.

the post-war decades, a dominant part of the planted forests consisted of the imported sitka spruce, a botanic species found to be particularly suited to the harsh Norwegian climate. Today the spreading of sitka spruce is considered a major threat to species diversity and ecological systems of Norway and is placed on the "red list" of Norwegian environmental authorities (Nygaard & Olsen, 2021). The fate of the sitka – from being the symbol of the successful project of forestation as modernization to the more gloomy symbol of the destructive forces of human intervention in nature – presents an interesting and alarming storyline. The forestation project in which generations of Norwegian school children participated supported a mode of production in the forestry industry which is today considered by experts to be harmful to the survival of natural forests (Nygaard & Øyen, 2020).

Three distinct didactical figures can be identified in the material: the ecological – teaching the children about the vulnerability of nature; the nationalistic – forestation as a means of creating feelings of community and pride; and the economic – promoting the immense prosperity of the modern forestry industry. Despite the different contexts, the analysis suggests interesting similarities between the ecological understanding in the late nineteenth century and the present-day arguments for education for sustainability. The militaristic nationalism of the early twentieth century seems to have been replaced by the dominant economic interest in the post-war period, regarding forests above all as an industrial resource. While the last two of the three figures share a common optimism, promoting as an educational ideal the unlimited possibilities in cultivating and disciplining the forests, the first one gives rise to the question of the damaging limits of this project, for humans and nature alike.

The threatening environmental crisis has since the 1960s represented an important influence on educational systems worldwide. In an article discussing the concept of *educationalization*, historian Daniel Tröhler compares the "Sputnik shock" in 1959, resulting from the surprising success of Soviet space technology launching the first satellite into orbit and the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, symbolizing the start of a new environmental awareness (Carson, 1962). Both exemplify, according to Tröhler, how the school systems are increasingly expected to deliver solutions to pressing social and economic challenges (Tröhler, 2017). The scientific journal *Education for Sustainability* has since 1969 been important for the discussions among pedagogues, teachers, and teacher educators as to how to use the school system to educate responsible and environmentally conscious citizens. In Norway an important initiative was taken in the early 1970s when a research project was launched at the pedagogical institute of the University of Oslo, aiming at formulating a practical ecological pedagogy, combining modern didactical and curricular theories with the insights of the emerging ecological philosophy (Bjørndal et al., 1975). The term educationlization usually signals a criticism of what is perceived as normative tendencies in educational politics, and a problematization of the ethical sides of designing teaching and learning systems in order to obtain politically desirable citizens. These objections have

also been presented with respect to the diverse "education for sustainability" programs (Ideland & Malmberg, 2015). These discussions present important perspectives and concepts in discussing the purpose and ideology of education and the school system as a political tool, as well as a political field. Of course, the importance of a critical scrutiny of the ideological structures surrounding the educational systems does, however, not imply a rejection of the fundamental motivation of educators – the belief that education can make the world a better place. As historian David Bridges states, without this idealism not much would be left of the education system (Bridges, 2008). The accelerating climate crisis accentuates the imperative need to discuss the content and purpose of education. As mentioned earlier, the ideas of environmental citizenship and education for sustainability are defining values in the current national curriculum in Norway, as in most countries. In this context, forests and trees have gained renewed attention and importance (Kowasch et al., 2022).

Although the forestry industry, in Norway as well as worldwide, presents itself as the world's most sustainable industry, the modern practices of forestry are subject to serious criticism for endangering species diversity and prioritizing financial gain over ecological sustainability. This criticism has also been directed at the diverse didactical initiatives supported by the forestry industry, which have been subjected to critical scrutiny. In a 2018 article, Siw Elin Eidissen analyzes an environmental didactical project produced by *Learning about Forests* and finds what she perceives as serious weaknesses (Eidissen, 2018). Contrary to the purposes stated by the European network of forest pedagogy, the activities she has analyzed do not fulfil the needs for an ecologically informed education. For instance, the distinction between natural forests and cultivated forests is not stressed in the material, which therefore tends to omit the severe criticism of the dominant approach to forestry. The forest is not presented as a functional ecosystem – for example, the essential importance of dead wood for the ecosystem is not satisfactorily explained. As a consequence, the learning resource, according to Eidissen, does not contribute to the awareness of the crucial importance of species diversity, necessary for an understanding of the environmental crisis.

The topic of this chapter has been to examine and analyze the changing didactical approaches to forestry, and the main shifts in the purposes and justifications for bringing forests to schools and schools to forests. I have examined selected examples from the political debate, the produced learning materials, and the described practices of organizing school children in forestation, in the decades before and after the legal codification of arbor day in 1959. I have tried to identify the main arguments and involved interests behind the mobilizing of children in the planting of trees, as well as behind the mobilizing of trees and forests as educational resources. The utilization of forests as an educational resource has also been discussed briefly in a present context, where the Norwegian practice is embedded in a broader global discourse of education for environmental citizenship, needed to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 Norsk skuleblad, no. 35, 1948, p. 701.
2 Document no. 11. from Kirkekomiteen [the parliamentary church committee] 1894, p. 1.
3 Stortingsforhandlinger [printed parliamentary negotiations] 1898/99, p. 1282.
4 Tilleg 2 til dok no. 11 [addition to document nr. 11 from the church committee] p. 2.
5 Arbeidet, 2.6.1921, p. 3. Stavangeren 21.3.1921, p. 2.
6 Morgenposten 19.11.23. p. 2.
7 Nordlandsposten 5.6.24, p. 1.
8 Vestfinnmark Arbeiderblad, 12.8.1949, p. 2.
9 Norsk Skuleblad, no. 49, 1952, p. 951.
10 *Lov om folkeskolen frå 10. april 1959.* [Elementary school law of 1959] (1963).
11 Landsskogtakseringen (national forest assessment) Landsskogtakseringen (ssb.no).

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12 Songs in English-language education

A well-known resource used in the twenty-first century

Ragnhild Elisabeth Lund

Introduction

This chapter deals with songs and singing in foreign-language education, specifically in the teaching and learning of English. A dictionary tells us that the word *song* can refer to "a short musical composition of words and music" as well as "the act or art of singing" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This chapter deals with both: how songs with lyrics can be utilized as a resource for language learning purposes, and how singing in itself can influence the atmosphere in the English-language classroom. Since the chapter refers to an investigation among teachers of English for young learners, the songs mentioned are ones that can appeal to children and young adults.

The use of songs in foreign-language teaching and learning is nothing new. It was especially common during the era of the Audiolingual method, from the 1950s through the 1970s. This method emphasized repetition and drill, and songs could make such work less tedious (Degrave, 2019). Since then, research has pointed to many other affordances of songs as a resource for foreign-language learning. Opportunities for vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, and the lowering of foreign-language anxiety and stress are just some of the key words here. Today, the potential of songs as a resource in the foreign-language classroom is clearly on the increase. Because of digitalization, teachers have access to an endless variety of recordings, often with visuals and even educational materials attached. This means that the size of their own repertoire and their self-confidence as singers need no longer decide the degree to which they use songs in their classrooms.

However, research indicates that foreign-language teachers use songs only to a limited degree, and more often as an entertaining activity than as a resource for language learning (Degrave, 2019). This indicates that the degree to which the potential of songs will be exploited depends on the teacher's insights and skills. Against this background, it seems pertinent to investigate teachers' awareness of the affordances of songs. This chapter presents a study among 110 English teachers in Norwegian compulsory school. The study addresses the following research question: what are teachers' views and reported practices when it comes to using songs as a resource in the English-language classroom?

Theoretical background and previous research on the use of songs

Although foreign-language teaching and learning is a complex process, it can be summarized in the two terms of *input* and *output*. On the one hand, students must be exposed to the foreign language in a way that gradually makes them increase their understanding of it. On the other hand, they have to produce language themselves and practice it in a variety of different contexts. Repetition and extensive practice are key words here (Harmer, 2015).

Singing can play a role in both respects. Songs can be used as input when students listen to songs or read lyrics. They can be used as output when learners sing, and they can be used as the starting point for other language practice activities.

Song lyrics can in principle be used for the same type of work and follow-up as any other text. However, lyrics often contain relatively simple language, with many repetitions. They are also often conversation-like and occur at a slower speed than spoken discourse (Murphey, 1992). Because of this, they can represent easily accessible and especially relevant input for the learners.

Moreover, singing has qualities that can make it especially useful in foreign-language teaching and learning. Research indicates that there are connections in the ways that the brain processes language and music (Patel, 2003). The support that the learners get from melody, rhythm, and rhyme, combined with the fact that songs are often sung over and over again and even memorized, seems to make them particularly suitable for learning pronunciation, words, and structures (Brewer, 1995; Willis & Paterson, 2008). Several studies show that songs are particularly effective when it comes to promoting vocabulary acquisition (Davis, 2017). Other studies have indicated a potential benefit of singing for pronunciation and grammar learning (e.g. Busse et al., 2020; Moradi & Shahrokhi, 2014). Many studies show how melody and rhythm aid learners' recall of text (Engh, 2013; Shbeitah, 2016).

Songs are bearers of culture and can give the learners valuable exposure to the target cultures in question. Learners can get to know about songs, artists, and composers as parts of a country's or community's cultural heritage. Young learners can get to experience central expressions in children's culture. Songs offer insights into the stories, myths, values, and frames of reference of different societies. They can provide information about historical events, customs, and celebrations, as well as about a given community's values and attitudes toward issues such as love, friendship, and marriage (Shen, 2009).

Many people use background music to reduce stress, and the use of music and song in the classroom has also been found to reduce foreign-language anxiety (Dolean, 2016). The link to something pleasant and familiar is one aspect of this. Another aspect is the fact that when learners sing together with others, they can produce language and get valuable practice without having to expose themselves. This can lead to a sense of accomplishment and boost the learners' self-confidence as language users. Moreover, collective singing

can be used to enhance a sense of community, social harmony, trust, and co-operation. In this way, singing can enhance a group's sense of togetherness, make the learners more at ease, and thus more receptive to language learning (Engh, 2013).

Many learners have a positive relationship to songs and music outside the classroom, and this can have a clear motivating effect in the language teaching and learning situation as well. In English-language education, songs can help bridge the gap between informal and formal learning of English (Engh, 2013).

Another motivating factor is the fact that most learners like to sing, and that they experience singing as a natural and authentic activity – even in a language learning situation (Dzanic & Pejic, 2016). Many teachers link singing to the use of gestures and movements. This can give the learners an extra connection with the language, and it can appeal to their multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999).

While there are many studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of using songs in the foreign-language classroom, there is a dearth of research on how teachers actually use songs and how they justify their practices. A study among 74 teachers of Finnish as a foreign language found that the teachers were positive to and well aware of the benefits of singing, listening to songs, and reciting poems. Nonetheless, they used these techniques very rarely in their classrooms, and the learners hardly ever sang or recited poems. While the researchers speculate whether one reason for this might lie with the teachers' own reluctance to singing, they also point to teachers' education and the fact that issues related to the use of songs and singing are not covered there (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017).

Other studies also indicate that, although teachers have a positive attitude to the use of songs, they use them mainly with young beginners and mostly merely as a fun break from the ordinary, rather than as a resource for language learning (Degrave, 2019). Therefore, calls have been made from different parts of the world for teachers to get more explicit training on how to select appropriate songs for the learners in question and how to use them in the classroom (Bokiev & Ismail, 2021; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020).

Discussion of methodological approach

All the 110 participants in the present study were experienced English teachers. Some had taught English for more than 20 years, while most had done so for 6–10 years. Ninety-five of them taught English at the time of the survey. However, none of the participants had studied English as part of their teachers' education. Because of this, they were enrolled in an in-service course which was initiated in response to the authorities' new regulations for teacher qualifications. The course provided the necessary competence to teach – or, for most participants, to keep teaching – English in years 1–7 in Norwegian compulsory school.

Thus, referring to the participants as "English teachers" could seem a bit misleading. However, before the recent in-service training initiatives, it was quite common for teachers in Norwegian schools to teach English without having the formal qualifications to do so. In 2019, this was the case for approximately 50% of the English teachers in years 1–7 (Perlic, 2019).

The affordances of songs were part of the course content. In addition to course readings and a lecture, there were links to relevant online resources in the group's Canvas room. The links varied from YouTube channels with songs for different age groups to examples of how specific songs can be used for different language learning purposes. In addition, the participants engaged in a session where they discussed their experiences with and thoughts about the use of songs.

The participants responded to the survey at the end of their studies. While parts of the survey addressed their new insights, its main focus was on the teachers' established thoughts and practices related to the use of songs. Still, as the course had made them more aware of the affordances of songs, this could well have influenced the ways in which they reported their previous practices.

The teachers were asked to indicate how much classroom time they devoted to songs as well as to other rhythmical activities such as poems, chants, and tongue twisters. One section listed different reasons for the use of songs, and the respondents were to mark whether "This is usually my main reason", "This is usually one of my main reasons", "This is usually NOT my main reason", "This is just a nice side effect", or "I never thought of this". There were nine statements in this section, such as these, and the teachers could tick off several of them:

- I use songs to create a good and relaxing atmosphere
- I use songs to create a sense of community
- I use songs to practice vocabulary.

The participants were also asked to indicate how often they used different activities in relation to songs (always, most of the time, sometimes, never). This section contained statements like these:

- I link the song to work with vocabulary
- I use the song as a conversation starter
- We just sing.

In addition, the participants were asked about their educational background, for example whether they had studied music as part of their teachers' education, and about their relationship to singing and music in general. One section addressed possible hindrances to the use of songs, such as these:

- I'd like to, but I don't have the necessary self-confidence
- It is difficult to find suitable and relevant songs.

Here, the possible responses were organized as a five-point Likert scale (Agree strongly – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Disagree strongly).

There was an open space for comments after each section in the questionnaire. At the very end of it, the respondents were asked to recommend some songs for others to use and also provide their reasons for recommending them. Fifty-two teachers made use of the opportunities to comment on each section, and 47 recommended some songs at the end of the survey.

The survey was conducted in Google Forms, which generated the results in terms of percentages. The data were also analyzed using SPSS, focusing on the relationships, for example between teachers' attitudes to singing and their propensity to use songs, and whether there was a correlation between having an educational background in music and the use of songs. I coded the open-ended responses in terms of the main issues that they raised and the key words that were used. The comments fell into these categories: general experiences with textbooks (7 entries), information about classroom proceedings (8 entries), and views on the affordances of songs (37 entries). Finally, I analyzed the recommendations at the end of the survey in terms of which songs and justifications were mentioned most often.

Results

Among the 95 respondents who taught English simultaneously with their studies, the majority (62%) did so in years 1–4. One-third (34%) taught years 5–7, and only a handful taught older children. The 15 respondents who did not teach English parallel to their studies, but had previous experience as English teachers, followed the same pattern, although more of them (14%) had taught older children or adults.

Most of the teachers had used songs "a little" (41%) or "quite a bit" (31%) when they taught English before they started the course they were attending. They also reported that their colleagues used songs "quite a bit" (21%) and "a little" (55%) in their English lessons. However, almost all of them (96%) agreed/agreed strongly that *The English course this year has made me more aware of how and why songs can be used in the English lessons*, and 72% reported that they will use songs more in their English-language classrooms in the future. One teacher who used songs every day commented that "After attending this course, I feel that I should not feel guilty about music taking up so much time in my lessons, – quite the contrary".

Fifty of the 95 teachers who taught English parallel to their studies reported that they spent 0–10% of the time in the English lessons on songs. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not have an option for those who did not use songs at all, so this group could, in fact, be quite diverse. Thirty-seven devoted 10–40% of the time to songs, while four said that they spent 40–60% of the time, and one teacher spent 60–80% of the time on songs. A majority (70%) said that they used other rhythmical activities such as poems, chants,

and tongue twisters "quite a bit" or "a little", while the rest used such activities "very little" or "not at all".

The majority of those who reported spending more than 10% of the English lessons on songs taught years 1–4, which indicates that the one factor that influenced the amount of time spent on songs was the year level taught. The same thing can be said about those who reported using other rhythmical activities "a little" or "quite a bit". The few who taught years 8–10 used songs and other rhythmical activities "very little" or "not at all".

Other factors, such as the teachers' educational background and experience with music-related activities, seemed to have less influence on their inclination to use songs and other rhythmical activities. Most of those who spent more than 10% of the time on songs had no education in music, and they had not been active in a choir or a band. The teachers' attitudes to singing and music, however, did have an impact on their practices. Not surprisingly, the ones who agreed or agreed strongly with the statement *I dislike to sing* spent little or no time singing in the classroom. However, this was a small group (14%). The great majority of the teachers were positive to music and singing in general, and most agreed that *I am interested in music* and *I listen to music a lot*. Almost 90% agreed or agreed strongly with the statement *I like to sing along when I listen to songs/music on the radio/other media*.

What were the teachers' reasons for using songs, then? The results show that most teachers utilized songs primarily for language learning purposes. Table 12.1 presents the reasons that most teachers claimed to be their main one (*This is usually my main reason* and *This is usually one of my main reasons*), with general language practice and vocabulary training receiving the highest score (95% for both). Many (83%) used songs for pronunciation practice, and quite a few (70%) said that they use songs to practice structures and chunks.

The statement *I use songs in order to activate the pupils* is ambiguous in the way that the activity does not necessarily have to be related to language learning. However, the 77% who stated that this was an important reason for them may well have interpreted it in this way. Exposure to culture got the highest

Table 12.1 Percentage of teachers who reported that *This is usually my main reason* or *This is one of my main reasons*

What are your reasons for using songs in the English classroom?	Main reason (%)
I use songs for general language practice	95
I use songs to practice vocabulary	95
I use songs to practice pronunciation	83
I use songs in order to expose the learners to English culture	77
I use songs in order to activate the pupils	77
I use songs to practice structures/chunks	70
I use songs to create a sense of community	64
I use songs to draw the students' attention and make them focus	52
I use songs to create a good and relaxing atmosphere	35

score of the reasons not directly related to language learning (77%), while fewer teachers reported that they use songs primarily to create a sense of community (64%) and a good atmosphere (35%).

Quite a few teachers (48%) found the fact that singing can create a good and relaxing atmosphere to be *a nice side effect*, but there were also some (14%) who stated that *This is usually NOT my main reason*. The few teachers who used the option *I never thought of this* marked this for the statements *I use songs to practice structures/chunks* (9%), *I use songs to create a sense of community* (7%), and *I use songs in order to expose the learners to English culture* (6%).

Most of the 33 teachers who commented on this section mentioned a variety of reasons, such as "It is engaging, and they learn vocabulary at the same time" and "I use songs for motivation, diction, for fun learning and to vary my lessons". Many emphasized the fact that singing is "an inclusive activity: everyone can chime in (or not)", and that singing "gives the pupils a feeling of mastery because it gives them an opportunity to use and learn the language and still 'hide' in the crowd". Some had experienced that "pupils remember a lot more language when they have a melody/song to link it to". The reason that was mentioned most often, however, was that singing is an enjoyable and motivating activity. Fourteen teachers used the word "fun", while six more wrote variations of the phrase "The children love it".

When it comes to using language learning activities in connection with the songs, this was less common. Many (42%) said that they *just sing*, and even more (62%) reported that they use the song simply as an introduction to or as motivation for the topic they are working with. However, approximately half the teachers (51%) reported that they "always" or "most of the time" link songs to work with vocabulary, while 36% said the same thing about pronunciation. Few teachers use songs as a conversation starter (14%) or as the basis for listening activities (13%). These activities were also the ones that most teachers reported never using (19 and 23%, respectively).

Most of the teachers seemed to experience few hindrances to the use of songs in the English lessons, as a large majority of them disagreed or disagreed strongly with most of the statements related to this. The statements covered issues such as the teachers' own and the pupils' attitudes to singing, and the impact that the availability of technical equipment might have. Overall, 80% disagreed/disagreed strongly with the statement *I don't like to sing*, and 78% felt the same way about the statement *The pupils don't like to sing*. Equally many (78%) disagreed/disagreed strongly that *It's a hassle with the necessary technical equipment*.

To some, finding suitable songs seemed to be a challenge, as one in four agreed/agreed strongly with the statement about this (*It is difficult to find suitable and relevant songs*). However, many teachers commented how easy it is to find songs nowadays, "thanks to YouTube, Spotify, and similar online resources". They were quite divided in their response to the statement *The textbook we use doesn't encourage singing*. One reason for this could be that many reported not using a textbook at all.

One in five felt that they lacked the necessary self-confidence, and 38% felt that they would have sung more if they knew how to play the guitar. One in four agreed/agreed strongly with the statement *I don't like to sing so other people can hear me*. One teacher, however, commented that "I do not like to sing in front of others, but in the classroom, I really do not care. We start each English lesson with a song related to the day's topic". There was no question about this, but the teachers' frequent references to YouTube channels and to contemporary, popular songs could indicate that many use recorded materials as support when they sing.

The 47 teachers who responded to the section that asked them to recommend different songs and explain what they could be used for, emphasized how singing was enjoyable and motivating. Many said that they select songs from online resources such as *The Singing Walrus*, *Super Simple Songs*, and *Fun Kids English*, because "the children love them". They referred to a variety of resources and websites, ranging from the British Council's site to *Kor Arti'*, a web-based collection of songs – many in English – especially recorded for use in Norwegian schools. Among the specific songs, *Head, shoulders, knees and toes* was mentioned most often. Many other songs that encourage movement were also referred to, and the benefit of letting the children move and have fun was a recurring theme in the comments. Songs such as *Old MacDonald*, *I can sing a rainbow*, and *The days of the week* were linked to vocabulary learning.

Quite a few recommended using songs that the children listen to in their spare time, for example by popular artists such as Marcus & Martinus and songs from Disney movies. Some teachers of older learners mentioned that they like to link songs to different topics, such as Cyndi Lauper's *True colors* to discussions about identity and Bruno Mars' *Count on me* to discussions about friendship.

Discussion

The present study supports the results of previous research in different ways. First of all, as pointed out by Degrave (2019), the teachers use songs and other rhythmical activities primarily with the youngest learners. Those who taught English in years 1–4 spent considerably more time on songs than those who taught older children. Second, the teachers linked singing to language practice and, in line with previous findings, primarily to vocabulary work and pronunciation practice. Finally, the teachers claimed that the course they attended had made them more aware of the affordances of songs in the English classroom, and that they would like to use songs more in the future. This also corresponds to previous research, which has pointed to the lack of focus on the affordances of songs in teachers' education as a main reason for the limited use of songs in English-language classrooms.

Since most of the respondents already taught English, one can wonder why they had not already implemented their new insights about the use of songs. One explanation could be that they responded to the survey in April,

while the work they did on songs as part of their studies happened only a month before. Whether or not they will actually use songs more in the future is therefore an open question, although there are some indications that they might do so. One of them is the fact that the teachers were overwhelmingly positive to music and to singing in general. Almost all of them reported that they like to sing along when they listen to songs, and they were quite aware, as many pointed out in their comments, that "The children love to sing". They also reported few hindrances to the use of songs, such as challenges with technical equipment or with access to suitable and relevant songs. Many commented that they made regular use of the many online resources available, especially when it comes to songs for younger learners. However, half the teachers felt that guitar playing skills would have made it easier for them to use songs more often.

What about the effectiveness of the use of songs for language learning, then? It is worth noticing that nearly all the teachers said that they linked singing to work with vocabulary. However, many fewer (51%) reported using vocabulary learning activities in connection with songs. There were corresponding figures related to work with pronunciation. While 83% reported that this was their main purpose, only 36% used pronunciation activities in connection with songs. Unfortunately, the survey did not capture the teachers' understanding of "activities" here. Perhaps some of them work explicitly with the language and the content of the lyrics but do not see this as an activity connected to the song.

It must also be mentioned that some of the online resources that the teachers mentioned present songs in a format that includes explicit language practice. In the video *The days of the week* on *The Singing Walrus* channel, for example, a narrator (a lobster) introduces the song in this way:

Hi kids!
Here is a fun song to help you learn the days of the week.
Mother Hen is going to sing it for us.
Let's listen.

As Mother Hen sings, the weekdays are shown in writing. The lobster then asks the children to repeat the words after Mother Hen, first at normal speed, then loudly, then quickly. After each round, the lobster cries *Great job! Fantastic!*

Many teachers (62%) reported using songs as an introduction to or as motivation for a specific topic. When the language in the song is followed up in other types of work, this is obviously one way of reinforcing vocabulary as well as pronunciation. Still, the results indicate that songs are often simply sung, and that explicit work on aspects of the lyrics is less common. Some of the teachers' comments pointed in this direction, when they emphasized that the greatest advantage with songs is that singing "is fun, motivating and engaging" and that "everyone can participate".

Surely, singing can provide valuable language practice in itself, especially when the song contains relevant language and when it is sung often enough so

that the language is reinforced and the pupils remember it. There is substantial research to support such a view, and this may be what the teachers had in mind when almost all of them reported that their main reason for using songs in the English-language classroom was "general language practice". However, there are limits to how many times a song can be sung before it loses some of its learning potential. As pointed out by Krashen (1982), learners need to be exposed to new input in order to develop their proficiency. Singing a specific song again and again "because the children love it" could therefore well be what Degrave (2019) refers to as "a break from the ordinary", rather than an effective language learning activity.

The teachers' frequent use of the word "fun" in their comments could also be a cause of concern. Surely, lowering the learners' affective filter (Krashen, 1982) is an important task in the classroom. But songs, just like other resources, should still be chosen and utilized with language learning, and not simply enjoyment, as the main objective. The teachers' awareness of the affordances of songs and conscious deliberation of the effectiveness of classroom activities are the decisive factors here. As pointed out in earlier research, it is possible to be positive to songs, yet not use them – at least not to their full potential – in the language classroom. It is worth noting that few teachers in the investigation used songs as a conversation starter or for listening activities, for example. The fact that nobody referred to specific objectives in the national curriculum in their comments might also indicate that songs are not seen primarily as resources for effective language learning.

Quite a few (77%) responded that exposure to English culture was a main reason for the use of songs. However, nobody mentioned this in the comments or in connection with the songs that they recommended. While many of the specific songs and songs in the collections mentioned are traditional songs, none of the teachers pointed to this. Rather, the main concern when selecting songs seemed to be related to the relevance of the language in the songs and whether they were specifically geared toward children.

Some teachers emphasized the need to link up with songs that the children listen to in their spare time, and songs from various Disney movies were obviously popular. Artists from the English-speaking world such as the Beatles and Bob Marley were mentioned, but so were Norwegian and Swedish artists who sing in English. Here, the songs clearly contribute to bridging the gap between the learners' everyday life and their school experience, as well as between their encounters with English in- and outside the classroom.

It is worth noting that none of the teachers expressed awareness that a song represented a particular country or culture or provided insight into a specific cultural tradition. Perhaps songs with English lyrics are increasingly seen simply as parts of an international – or at least Western – tradition. The availability of such songs and the great extent to which learners listen to and enjoy them, together with the increased understanding that English is an international, rather than certain countries' national, language, might contribute to the development of such an understanding.

Conclusion

The respondents in this investigation had considerable experience as English teachers, despite the fact that none of them had studied English as part of their teachers' education. This is the situation for many English teachers in Norway, especially in years 1–7. To some extent, then, the respondents can be seen as representative of other teachers at this level.

The study shows that teachers are positive toward the use of songs and other rhythmical activities in the teaching and learning of English. They underlined the easy access to a great variety of relevant and enjoyable songs, not least via different YouTube channels. In line with previous research, however, the study also shows that teachers use songs primarily in the lower grades, and that songs are not exploited to their full potential as resources for language learning.

The understanding could be that singing in itself provides valuable practice. Provided that the song contains relevant language and is used with a focus on effective language learning, this can certainly be true. However, the teachers signaled that songs were most often used as "motivation" and a "fun" activity. Many commented on specific songs that "the children love" and that were obviously sung again and again. When this is the case, songs can function more as entertainment than as a resource for language learning. While it is important to use songs to create a good atmosphere and lower the learners' level of anxiety, it seems a pity if the other affordances of songs are not exploited in the language learning classroom.

The respondents took part in an in-service course which contained a small module on how and why songs can be used for language learning. The teachers claimed that this had increased their awareness of the affordances of songs, and most of them expressed the intention to make more use of songs in the future. Their positive reactions to the module support the argument forwarded by several researchers that more explicit work on the affordances of songs must be included in language teachers' education.

The hope for the future, then, is that more attention will be paid to songs in foreign-language teachers' education, and that teachers who learn about the potential of songs as a resource for foreign-language learning will implement their new insights in their classrooms. The increasing availability of relevant and easily accessible songs in today's digitalized society is an important factor that can contribute to a wider repertoire of songs being used, more often and for more specific language learning purposes.

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Part III

New media

13 Teaching about pornography

A historical perspective on educational resources

Kari H. Nordberg

Introduction

In Norway, the number of youths who have watched pornography on the internet has increased in recent years. In 2020, almost 50% of youths between ages of 13 and 18 have watched online pornography, and most of these had been exposed to pornographic images before they were 13 years old (Medietilsynet, 2020). Such numbers and the lack of digital regulations have raised concern and have led educators to focus on how the school's sexuality education can address pornography as a topic. Pornography is often characterized as being explicit, affronting, and transgressing norms. This makes it a tricky topic for educators – especially regarding the development and use of educational resources. However, pornography is not a new topic in Norwegian sex education, and I want to place today's discussion on education and pornography in a historical perspective. How have educators dealt with pornography as a topic in sex education? What dilemmas might they meet in developing and using educational materials for teaching about pornography?

I will discuss two cases. The first is from the 1980s when pornography was introduced as a topic in Norwegian school sex education. The sources I use are the first "official" teacher's manual on sex education that included a thorough chapter on pornography (Egeland & Skarstein, 1984), newspaper material regarding a case where a teacher had displayed pornographic material in order to discuss pornography critically, and archival material from a governmental committee on learning materials on pornography (Undervisning om pornografi, 1986). I will then discuss a contemporary case: in 2021, Jeanette K. Frøvik and Ragnhild D. Torstensen, activists in the organization *Light Up* in Norway, authored a book called *Pornoprat*, a guidebook for teachers and parents on how to talk about pornography with children and youths. Together with educational researcher Beate Goldschmidt-Gjerløw, they have also written a chapter on pornography and critical thinking in a book for educators on how to approach and teach controversial topics (Eriksen et al., 2021). The book and the chapter are used to discuss today's opportunities and dilemmas in teaching about pornography.

Pornography was introduced as a topic in Norwegian school sex education in the early 1980s, and I will look at the background for this introduction, how the subject was approached in a sex education guide for teachers, and a governmental initiative to create educational material on pornography in the mid-1980s. This serves as a point of departure for presenting and discussing dilemmas which educators might encounter in developing and using educational resources to teach about pornography. I then bring in the contemporary case that especially highlights today's digital society and its impact on youths and pornography. By comparing the cases and discussing the problems of finding and developing "appropriate" resources for such teaching, questions of why and how the school can approach pornography are raised. Although rapid change and generational differences are often highlighted in debates on pornography, youths, and education, I emphasize two continuities: (1) the problem of representation – especially regarding visual educational media, and (2) the framing of the youth as vulnerable and in need of protection in discourses on pornography and education.

Pornography, education, and youths

In research on pornography and sexuality education, one may make a distinction between the use of pornography to learn about sexuality and teaching about pornography (Albury, 2014, p. 173). The first is clearly not discussed here, as this will primarily address adults and is not likely to be a part of state-sponsored sexuality education. Teaching about pornography may however be integrated into comprehensive sexuality education.

It is difficult to give an agreed, clear, and consistent definition of pornography or sexually explicit material (SEM) (Litsou et al., 2021). A broad definition is that pornography or SEM is "seen as any kind of material intended to create or enhance sexual feelings or thoughts in the recipient and at the same time containing explicit exposure and/or descriptions of genitals and sexual acts" (Hald & Malmuth in Litsou et al., 2021, p. 244). The material is produced with the purpose of being exciting. McNair (2002) emphasizes how pornography's seductive power relies on its representation of "the secrets of private sexual desire in all their taboo-breaking, transgressive exoticism". Pornography, in this sense, is "a violation of public morality and taste – an affront to community standards in the sphere of sexual representation, whatever that may be" (p. 42).

The definitions of pornography as intentionally arousing, explicit, and affronting hint at some of the challenges one may meet in teaching about it. The educator cannot display SEM produced with the purpose of being exciting, and s/he cannot present "a violation of public morality and taste" to young students. However, the large number of youths who have encountered online pornography has led educators to discuss questions of whether and how pornography may be handled as a topic in sexuality education (Goldstein, 2020,

p. 59). It is often considered difficult and uncomfortable for teachers to teach about pornography, and it has been described as a controversial and sensitive topic (Eriksen et al., 2021). Thus, "a number of creatively 'indirect' strategies have been adopted by adults aiming to deliver porn education to young people, in the context of broader sex and relationships education programs" (Albury, 2014, p. 177).

We learn about sex in different ways, and sexual images can provide learning and knowledge – however, both sexuality and learning are complex phenomena. What we find attractive, what arouse us, and what we think of as healthy and/or normal may be influenced by a multitude of different factors. It is linked to biology, our bodies, and feelings and is shaped by culture and society (see, for example, Pedersen et al., 2021; Weeks, 2000). Not only what we learn but also what we find affronting, triggering, and arousing will of course vary, and different forms of pornography may trigger secret (and sometimes shameful) desires and fantasies in the viewer. Pornography is often offensive and can also – and often simultaneously – have emotional and bodily effects such as shame and arousal. Sex educators often need to draw a strict line between pornography and sex education. Learning materials that are applied for sex education should not be considered arousing or triggering emotions, although both sex education material and pornography are produced in historical settings and can be interpreted in very different ways by a variety of receivers in differing contexts. In her study on a "delicate" subject, namely sex education films, Björklund (2012) refers to scholars who have problematized the complex relationship between science (that can be used to legitimize sex education) and pornography. Often seen as opposites, pornography's pursuit of visibility links it to "a scientific will-to-knowledge as it seeks to unveil the truth of sexual pleasure" (pp. 24–25), and the genre has therefore also been regarded in light of Foucault's (1976) *scientia sexualis.* Baudrillard (1987) puts forward a critique of a culture obsessed with letting "everything be said, gathered, indexed and registered: this is how sex appears in pornography, but this is more generally the project of our whole culture (…)" (p. 21).

Ambiguities regarding the effect which educational materials might have on students seem to be a continuing issue in the discussions on sex education – and this is especially acute when it comes to teaching about pornography. Visual images, and especially moving images, may illustrate a phenomenon very clearly, but the effect it might have on the viewer may not be as intended. Moving images could perhaps also influence the viewer in a more thorough way than other media (Björklund, 2014, p. 246). This is linked to one of the earliest debates on sex education, namely the tension between the "desire to shape sexual activity and the fear of stimulating it, between the wish to enforce some form of sexuality and the dread of accidentally fostering others" (Carter, 2001, pp. 216–217). Sex education can often be described as an ambivalent endeavour – and this ambivalence is likely to be very present in teaching about pornography.

Not only the pornographic content but also the media technology and circulation of pornographic images and films have changed over the years. In the 1980s, the VHS (video home system) made porn films accessible to larger groups, and of course the internet has been crucial to the acceleration of the circulation of the pornography that is seen today. In recent years, pornographic films have become available and free of charge on streaming services such as Pornhub. The accessibility of pornographic images in today's digital society has raised concern, as pornography is often considered a sexual risk for youths that are online and seen as

> … a powerful corrupting force that causes widespread and far-reaching threats such as risky sexual behaviour, poor mental health with reduced self-esteem and self-objectification, degraded peer relationship functioning, restricted choice of professional aspirations and increased sexual aggression ….
> (Spišák, 2020, p. 1250)

Within such discourses of risks, we often find that children and youths are framed as formative, vulnerable, and in need of protection, and the school sex education hence has a protective function.

Not only pornography but also sexualized media content are often seen as threats to healthy sexual developments, although there are also studies (such as Spišák's) where the youths are framed as critical and capable of interpretation, and that might counter the discourse of vulnerability and risks (Albury, 2013; Egan & Hawkes, 2010). Spišák refers to scholars who emphasize critical skills and how youths interpret different forms of representation, including sexual representations. The impact of the media cannot be seen independently of the larger context, especially of the family (Buckingham and Bragg (2004) in Spišák, 2020, p. 1250). The impact of the media cannot be seen independently of the larger context, especially of the family (in Spišák, 2020, p. 1250). In Goldstein's (2020) study of undergraduate students, she criticizes models that are constructed in a manner where youths "come to the same porn in the same way". Often, we simultaneously find "a top-down model of education where the teacher passes their knowledge down to students, emphasizing 'correct' readings or interpretations of porn and its practices" (p. 61). In a study on girls and pornography, Spišák (2017) stresses how pornography has different functions: "as a site for satisfying curiosity, as an educational resource in terms of the information it provides on anatomy, sex, and sexual techniques, and as a pleasure technology that facilitates masturbation and sexual pleasure" (p. 370). This is in accordance with Goldstein's research (2020) which points to the different types of engagements with porn that very different types of youths may have. It is also supported by earlier research on Nordic teenagers, where pornography for many is seen as "an integrated part of everyday-life", and as a source of "knowledge, entertainment, pleasure, and sexual innovation" (Graugaard & Roien, 2007, pp. 314–315). Being a part of everyday life, many youths requested some

form of regulation and more communication between generations on the topic, and Graugaard and Roien emphasize how

> … pornographic material seems to present educators with a unique chance to study and debate crucial themes related to sexuality, body, gender, intimacy, love, social interaction, and societal development – and to establish an educational situation that places the youngster as an "expert", while at the same time accommodating his or her questions, doubts and insecurities (pp. 314–315).

However, they also stress the challenges educators consequently often meet – both ethical and didactical. In the next two sections of the chapter, I bring forth two cases to illustrate how educators have approached these issues.

1980s: Introducing teaching about pornography – And a failed attempt

In Norway, broader sex and relationship education programs were introduced into schools in the 1970s, when a new national curriculum was implemented. Historians of education have described the curriculum as inspired by the antiauthoritarian generation of 1968 (Telhaug & Mediås, 2003, p. 220). Gender equality was highlighted, and the school sex education was thoroughly revised and became more like what we today call comprehensive sexuality education (see, for example, UNESCO, 2018).[1]

In an international and historical context, the Nordic countries have been regarded as liberal and progressive when it comes to sexuality. This includes both sex education and SEM. In 1955, Sweden introduced compulsory sex education in schools, and the Swedish approach to sexuality education has been regarded as progressive in an international setting (Lennerhed, 1994). In 1967, Denmark received attention as the first country in the world to legalize pornography, followed by Sweden in 1971. Nonetheless, the image of Scandinavia as a region of sexual liberation may need to be nuanced, as Norway has had a more restrictive approach to both sex education and pornography than the neighbouring countries. However, there has been much exchange of ideas and materials over the borders, and the development in Sweden and Denmark had an impact on Norway (Nordberg, 2014).

In Norwegian school sex education, pornography did not receive much attention in the 1970s. The official teachers' guide to sex and relationship education mentioned that pornography was not in accordance with the school's Christian and humanist values. The guide stated that sexual relations should not be dominated by "impersonal consumer-relations", which accordingly was often the case in pornography (Grunnskolerådet, 1975, pp. 62, 80). However, the rising feminist movement would bring pornography onto the agenda, and these discussions would influence the content and form of sex education. In

Norway, feminists representing the organization *Kvinnefronten*[2] received attention when they staged a protest by raiding porn shops and setting fire to the magazines on the streets (Hellesund, 2013, p. 94). By the end of the 1970s, the Norwegian joint action against pornography consisted of not only feminists but also Christian activists, conservatives, and other organizations joining forces in the grassroots movement *Fellesaksjonen mot pornografi og prostitusjon*[3] (Korsvik, 2020). Prostitution and pornography were regarded as expressions of misogyny, and as a threat to gender equality and to values that the schools were to promote.

In the light of these changes, it is not surprising that the sex education material developed in the early 1980s included pornography as a topic. In a new teachers' guide to sex and relationship education, pornography was defined as sexual descriptions in which sexuality was detached from "a larger human context" (Finstad & Høigård, 1984, p. 298).[4] Content analyses of pornography that could be bought in Scandinavia had disclosed that the material included descriptions such as

> … promiscuity, group-sex, sexual intercourse between humans and animals, children exploited for sexuality, focus on urination and excrements, the body tied up in uncomfortable and tight suits of leather and rubber, tied up with ropes or chains, whipping, abuse with sharp objects, humiliation of women, naziporn, abnormity-porn….
>
> (Finstad & Høigård, 1984, p. 298)[5]

In the teachers' guide, children and youths are represented as insecure, as "teenagers with faltering values and a limited perception of reality", and at a developmental stage where pornography could be dangerous (Egeland & Skarstein, 1984, pp. 87–88).

Although pornography was included in this guide for teachers, the need for more thorough educational material would soon be addressed, especially after a delicate case reached the newspaper headlines.

In the mid-1980s, at an upper secondary school in Kvæfjord in Northern Norway, porn magazines had been brought into the classroom with the intention of critically discussing pornography (Undervisning om pornografi, 1986). The incident received public attention, and although this initiative to teach on the topic was welcomed by some anti-porn activists, the use of porn magazines as educational media was largely disapproved.[6] The government not only referred to this as a "very unsuccessful" way to teach but also acknowledged the need for educational resources to make it possible to teach about pornography without exposing the students to pornographic content. The Ministry of Education appointed an interdisciplinary committee with the intention of developing educational resources on pornography. It was important to develop a critical attitude towards pornography and make the students capable of revealing how the porn industry abused women and children (Undervisning om pornografi, 1986). The task was challenging, not least as pornography

consisted of visual images. How could one teach about a problematic and negative phenomenon without representations of the phenomenon?

Norwegian schools were (and are) largely state-governed. The state's involvement and "sanctioning" of sex education in schools has made it possible to reach many adolescents with the necessary teaching. However, if the teaching was problematic in any way, it could easily lead to political debate (Nordberg, 2014). In this period, textbooks needed authorization by the governmental Committee for Textbook approval (Bratholm, 2001). Teachers' guides and other educational resources did not need such approval, but the material developed by governmental bodies would have an "official status". This was a dilemma for the working group, who expressed doubts about their own endeavours.

> The special character of this subject makes it, in our opinion, difficult, or impossible, for a governmental body to produce learning material for the students. There is a great danger that it will either become too careful and ornamental to capture the interest of the students, or so outspoken that it will be forbidden in large parts of the country.
>
> (Undervisning om pornografi, 1986)

The group reached the conclusion that it was not possible to make educational material on the subject directed at *students*, but recommended that *teachers* needed guidance, and they made a sketch for a teacher's guide. This was outlined as a collection of ideas on how teachers could work with attitudes against pornography in different school subjects. The group made a direct link to the schools' work on gender equality, as pornography was "only the top layer of the iceberg of misogyny and reification that are incorporated in the culture" (Undervisning om pornografi, 1986). Although the teachers had to be informed on what was considered "grocery-porn", the pictures that they planned to print in the educational resource should only be read by the teachers, and not the students.

Although it was considered easier to develop material directed at the teachers, this initiative was also interrupted. The expert body of the ministry did not applaud the work and recommended that such teaching could rather be integrated into other subjects and teaching. There were parallels with education on narcotics, which in a similar vein was something almost everyone agreed upon as being bad for the students. To prevent the use of narcotics, it was not considered efficient to show the drugs and inform students about the negative consequences. Instead, an indirect approach, where the students practised making independent choices and were trained in decision-making, was emphasized. To guide youths away from the spell of pornography, the teachers had to work on their attitudes – information itself was not enough. (In the case of pornography, it was also very difficult to *present* the information – and hence this was maybe also a more *convenient* approach for the bewildered educators.)

There was an agreement among those involved in this work that pornography was harmful to youths. The comparison with narcotics is typical in this regard. Although the group did not manage to produce the material, there were some possibilities for teachers who wanted to discuss pornography in the classroom. As mentioned, the teachers' guide included a chapter on the subject, and the organization *Fellesaksjonen mot pornografi og prostitusjon* had developed material used in study-groups and workshops throughout the country. The organization had also been represented in the governmental working group. The role of NGOs and activists in raising the issue of pornography in sex education, and in developing educational material, is still important in teaching about pornography. I will now turn to a contemporary approach about how teachers can include pornography in sexuality education.

A contemporary case

Sex education has been a field where different organizations and activists have played a large role, and this is also the case when we look at pornography as a topic in such education. In the 1980s, conservatives and feminists joined forces in the fight against both pornography and prostitution, and the organization *Fellesaksjonen* was both a driving force for raising the issue in educational policy and in developing courses and educational materials on the subject. Organizations and activists also play a role in today's teaching about pornography. *Pornoprat* (2021) is a manual on how grown-ups (teachers, parents) can talk about porn with children and youths. The authors, Jeanette K. Frøvik and Ragnhild D. Torstensen, are activists in the organization *Light Up* in Norway, an international organization that works against pornography and trafficking. In their work, they also refer to work on pornography developed by the *Save the Children* organization (Berggrav, 2020). To activists, the school can be an important arena where one reaches many children and youths in what is commonly regarded as formative and vulnerable stages of life. Together with educational researcher Beate Goldschmidt-Gjerløw, Frøvik and Torstensen have also authored a chapter on how educators can teach about critical thinking and pornography as a so-called controversial issue (Frøvik et al., 2021).

In *Pornoprat*, Frøvik and Torstensen (2021) not only offer advice on how grown-ups and children can talk about pornography, but they also criticize the schools for not being up to date and not taking seriously how pornography has become a part of many children's and youths' daily lives. The "great values of the Education Act" do not comply with a situation where children can "freely consume dehumanizing porn and depictions of sexual violence in the classroom, in the school yard or at their homes all over the country. The lack of education about pornography does not make the situation any better" (p. 44). The rhetoric has similarities to that of the 1980s activists and educators, when activists also raised feminist values and warned against trafficking

and prostitution, as well as pointing out links between prostitution and the porn industry (Hellesund, 2013; Korsvik, 2020). Today, human rights are also called upon by the activists. Pornography is framed as potentially harmful for youths, and it is seen as important to work on developing a critical attitude toward pornography – hence, the educational framework of critical thinking is emphasized in the contemporary approach.

Digital technology is an important context for contemporary attempts to raise pornography on the educational agenda. Both pornography itself and the use of learning materials have changed because of new technology, and it is a paradox that it seems difficult to use digital resources to teach on a topic that has both been shaped by and, not least, become more pressing due to our digital age. Examples from the huge amount of pornographic visual media accessible to children and youths in today's digital society cannot be used in a school setting. When Frøvik et al. (2021) discuss the use of educational resources in such teaching, they state that pornographic material can of course not be put on display for children, and that this will be considered a criminal offence according to Norwegian criminal law (p. 123). They rather recommend using *fiction* as an educational resource in teaching about pornography. They refer to Nussbaum's concept of *narrative imagination* – to take the position of the other and relate to the other's feelings and needs (Nussbaum, 2006 in Frøvik et al., 2021, p. 123). They then show how educators can use a Norwegian picture book on the topic of pornography, children's book author Gro Dahle's *Sesam Sesam* (2017), in this regard. It is an explicit book, and they argue that it is suitable for lower and upper secondary school, as most teenagers will already then have been exposed to pornographic images and will be able to reflect critically on the book's topic. Frøvik et al. describe how *Sesam Sesam*'s main character's feelings when he watches pornography are characterized by not only a tension between good and normal sexual feelings but also a feeling of discomfort. Frøvik et al. argue in favour of the critical teacher who knows that it is important that the students regard such feelings as part of many people's sexuality. However, after recognizing this, the teacher can turn to critical thinking and discuss questions regarding human trafficking, violence, and human rights (pp. 125–127).

The use of pornography is intimately linked to and may have concrete effects on bodies. It might be arousing, it might be repulsive – and often these feelings appear simultaneously, making it a conflicting experience. How pornography triggers sexual feelings and conflicting emotions can be of concern to educators.

The students can experience feelings of shame after seeing porn, and maybe because they like to watch porn. It is therefore important that the teacher create a bridge between the students' emotional life and the teaching such as the students do not close themselves for conversation. This entails to recognize the range of feelings that might evolve in

meeting pornography – both good feelings, such as excitement and lust,
and less good feelings linked to discomfort and guilt over seeing porn.

(Frøvik et al., 2021, p. 123)

Frøvik et al. (2021) emphasize that it is adults who are responsible for not
letting children get access to pornography and refer to the criminal law of
Norway. If the teacher emphasizes adults' responsibility in this regard, "the
teachers might help the students in processing feelings linked to shame and
guilt", according to the authors (p. 123).

Sex education is a means for shaping sexual subjects, and pornography may
interfere in this process, as it often contradicts the values and norms educa-
tors want to strengthen. Hence, teaching about pornography will often in-
clude strategies for criticizing and revealing the porn industry and its (lack
of) values. There are many challenges for teachers. On the one hand, they are
supposed to frame sexuality as healthy and not evoke shame for watching por-
nography in the students. On the other hand, they are supposed to teach the
students how pornography is a violation of human rights, and that they need
to be critical of the industry.

It is an art of balance for you as a teacher to create room for discussion
on pornography without covering the subject with shame and simulta-
neously making the students' practice critical skills. On the other hand,
shame is not necessarily negative and sometimes it can be an ethical
guide telling one that what one is watching is not in accordance with
human dignity and human rights.

(Frøvik et al., 2021, p. 112)

One is tempted to ask whether it is possible to teach about pornography
in a way that is critical and that promotes human rights and develops the
students' critical skills, while simultaneously not producing (some types of)
shame in youths who consume pornography in their daily lives. Maybe it is
not only an "art of balance" for the individual teacher but rather an example
of the ambivalences that surround sexuality, education, and pornography in
our culture.

Ongoing ambivalences?

In both the 1980s and today, organizations and activists have played a role
in promoting and developing education about pornography. Although there
have been changes within the field of pornography, the problem of *representa-
tion* is still present. Another historical continuity concerns how the framing
of the *vulnerable* and *formative* youth is the main point of reference in the
discourse of risks that surrounds the field of pornography and sex education.

There are similarities between today and the 1980s. Pornographic pictures
and movies cannot be used to exemplify, and the ambiguities regarding the

effect educational materials might have on students seem to be a continuing issue in the discussions on sex education – and this is especially acute when it comes to teaching about pornography. The dilemmas regarding developing and using learning materials, especially visual learning materials, on pornography are linked to the assumed effects that technology and media might have, not only on the students' knowledge and values but also on their bodies and desires. The problems regarding representation seem to be especially acute within the discourse of risks that surrounds the field of pornography, youths, and education.

When pornographic material was brought into the classroom setting in the mid-1980s, this caused quite a stir. Although the intention was to apply this in critical discussions of pornography, it became very clear that pornographic material could not be used as an educational resource. But how could one teach about a very visual subject without visual representations? In the teachers' guide, pornography is described as degrading and affronting, and there are short descriptions of the content. The teachers needed some knowledge on what contemporary porn looks like. Today's digital society has also had a tremendous impact on pornography, especially when it comes to accessibility and spread. To control what the youths may watch is even more difficult today than was the case when VHS technology made pornography accessible to larger groups. Now it can not only be watched discreetly in private homes but also discreetly at school premises. Pornography has once again become a more pressing topic to educators, and as the authors of *Pornoprat* emphasize, parents and teachers cannot take their own experiences with pornography in adolescence as a framework for their conversations about pornography with today's youths, because contemporary (online) pornography is often more violent and extreme than what was displayed in magazines and pornographic films produced before the age of digitalization (Frøvik & Torstensen, 2021).

It is a paradox that educational resources that are regarded as innovative and efficient in education in general can be very problematic in teaching about pornography. The potential of moving images as an effective educational resource has been emphasized for years. In a famous statement from 1913, Thomas A. Edison claimed that books would soon become "obsolete in the schools" and scholars would be "instructed through the eye". He predicted that the school system would be completely changed in ten years as it was "possible to touch every branch of human knowledge with the motion picture" (quoted in Diesen & Svoen, 2011, p. 55). While his technological optimism about an educational resource might seem naïve today, in the 1970s, simultaneously as progressive pedagogical approaches to teaching were developing, film as an educational resource achieved a breakthrough in Norwegian schools (Diesen & Svoen, 2011, p. 67). Today, digital resources and visual media play an important role in much education. At the same time, the choices teachers are left with are not manifold. In the digital age, many resources that in other areas would be regarded as effective and innovative are not considered appropriate in this teaching. Frøvik et al. (2021) recommend using children's picture books, although they do this with a caution.

In the failed attempt of the 1980s, the framing of the child or student was that of a vulnerable victim to disturbing images. It was clearly a discourse of risk, and the parallels to teaching about other dangerous phenomena, such as drugs, illustrate this. It was implied that pornography was potentially dangerous for the youth. However, the need for the individual to develop a critical attitude was also regarded as important, and hence the teacher needed to work on attitudes. Today, the large number of youths who use pornography and pornography's place within the digital (and sexualized) culture, which many youths are part of today, makes it difficult – and problematic – to dismiss pornography as harmful per se, and although curricula and research today often frame the youth or student as competent and with an ability to critical thinking, s/he is simultaneously seen as formative, vulnerable, and in need of protection. The contemporary case I have discussed emphasizes the students' potential as critical consumer – that through critical reflection on the porn industry they can use their consumer-power and work against pornography. Yet, does this imply that the youths are framed as individuals with agency? Today the Norwegian curricula emphasize critical skills, and this is a frame of reference in the contemporary example which highlights the students' potential for critical reflections. The assumption that students will respond with critical reflection to a critically based education on pornography might be optimistic. Historical studies have problematized the assumption that sex education as classroom knowledge will strongly influence the students, and that they will respond in a rational manner to the dissemination of sexual knowledge (Moran, 2000; Zimmerman, 2015). An education on pornography that manages to make distinctions between "good" and "bad" feelings of shame and that develops students' critical skills is probably very difficult to put into practice. Pornography is seductive and triggers emotions and feelings that might be subconscious, at odds with our self-image and our own values. Pornography might also serve very different functions for different people. In this area of uncertainties, educators have to develop and use materials that take this complexity into account. That is not to say that a critical approach should not be applauded, but perhaps we also should discuss the limits of teaching. Despite the changes within the fields of youth, pornography, and sexuality education, teachers are still mostly left with "indirect" approaches to teaching about this sensitive and controversial topic.

Notes

1 UNESCO and other organizations as well as educators today often use the term "sexuality education" to emphasize a broad understanding of the subject. Sex education has been used as a term for a long period, and in this chapter I use both terms since some of the sources are contemporary and others were written at a time when sex education was a common name for teaching.
2 English translation: Women's Front.
3 English translation: Joint Action against Pornography and Prostitution.
4 The presentation of the 1980s case is based on the same sources that I used in *Ansvarlig seksualitet* (Nordberg, 2014).

5 All quotes from the source-material are translated from Norwegian to English by the author.

6 *Fellesaksjonen mot pornografi og prostitusjon* supported the teacher and school for dealing with an important yet difficult theme (Harstad tidende, 1985b, p. 2) and the school accused the media of making a "scandal" out of the teaching (Harstad tidende, 1985a, p. 3). The incident led to letters to the editors in both local and national newspapers concerning moral decay in schools and society (Aftenposten, 1985; Nordlys, 1985, p. 5).

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14 Gamers' perspectives on the First World War

Developing historical consciousness using video games in teacher education

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Introduction

It is reasonable to assume that historical video games influence and shape the historical consciousness of those who play them. Over the past few decades, video games have come to play a central role in the lives of many children and young people, allowing them to play and explore many alternative realities and historical pasts. The video game industry itself has for a long time embraced and engaged with history through different representations and interpretations of temporality, often with the tagline: "Inspired by historical events and characters". Today, there is a growing awareness among both scholars and educators that historical video games offer a promising arena in which to explore the subject of history in all its complexities (Chapman, 2016b; McCall 2011). Hence, the goal of this chapter is to examine how digital historical games could be part of the educators' toolbox and used to nurture historical consciousness among students in higher education, specifically teacher-students.

In this chapter we analyse how the First World War (1914–1918) as a historical event and topic in modern history is depicted in three video games and how playing and studying these games in a learning context can contribute to the development of historical consciousness. We show how the emergence of historical consciousness, as a pronounced centrepiece in the curriculum of many Western European countries, dovetails with the rise of historical video games as arenas for learning about the past. In bringing together perspectives and research on historical consciousness and video game studies, we reflect on and propose several avenues on how to remediate the game into a tool for the student's historic reflection and deeper understanding. While several games have the First World War as their main theme, we have selected games that represent three different genres of video games: strategy games, first-person shooters (fps), and adventure games. We analyse how they are biased towards certain gamic actions and how an educator can plan pro-actions that enhance historical consciousness and learning experiences.

Historical consciousness and education

The term historical consciousness comes primarily from German writings on the philosophy of history (Rüsen, 2004). It is based on an idea that history is continually present in our own time, as recollections and interpretations of the past. Likewise, the future is present in our time as hopes and expectations. Historical consciousness is concerned with the dialectic interplay between these three existential entities of human existence: past, present, and future. A student of historical consciousness will be interested in exploring how our interpretation of the past influences our understanding of the present and our expectations about the future, as well as the reverse interaction: how our present-day understandings and beliefs in the future impact how we interpret the past (Rüsen, 2004).

Historical consciousness has gradually become ingrained in school curricula and come to play a significant role in the education of pupils across Western Europe (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015). In Norway, the core curriculum states that "[u]nderstanding that the world has changed and that the present and future may be different is an important underpinning for active participation in society". Furthermore, the subject of history is meant to "help the pupils to develop the ability to think critically and scientifically so they can acquire knowledge and understand how knowledge evolves and how representations of the past are both used and abused" (Utdannings-direktoratet, 2021). The emergence of a more clearly defined historical consciousness approach in public education can be understood as a recognition of a need to educate pupils on more than historical facts and to focus attention on the flexibility of historical interpretation. Indeed, Peter Seixas and others have for a long time argued for the need to bridge the gap between how historians think and understand the past and how pupils relate to history in school (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015). This is an acknowledgement that almost three decades after Sam Wineburg's groundbreaking study on how pupils read and understand a historical text, pupils still struggle with understanding the past as not only "a set of factual claims, but also an understanding of the warrant for those claims" (Wineburg, 1991). Consequently, it has been argued that true historical insight is not reached until pupils are taught to "do the discipline" of history and learn to "think historically" (Wineburg, 1991).

How, then, are we to impart this skill and understanding to the next generation of teachers? In this chapter we introduce video games as a complement to more traditional approaches to history didactics, i.e. textbooks and classroom teaching, which we regard as insufficient. Developing historical consciousness requires active thought and an exploratory approach to the subject, as well as inquiring critically into the sources that are already used to form historical narratives. For millions of people today, a major source of historic insight is the narratives and virtual worlds of digital games with historical settings.

Historical and gamic consciousness

Just as we understand history as something one *does* and the development of historical consciousness as something which needs to be built actively among those who study the past, playing a video game also requires an active player or operator. Just as historical insight is built on facts but not given by them, a video game narrative is constructed by the player within structures developed by a game designer. Therefore, we find it useful to bring in game studies in the form of Alexander R. Galloway's theory of *gamic action* (Galloway, 2006).

Galloway sees gamic actions as performed by either the *machine* or the *operator* (i.e. the player), and as *diegetic* or *non-diegetic*, i.e., actions that transpire within or outside of the game's narrative (Galloway, 2006). In the context of historical consciousness, the first division suggests that things happen in a world where the player or operator has agency. Sometimes the player's act is simply a response necessitated by circumstances beyond their control, understood as machine actions. At other times, their act changes the world in ways that the computer (and other players in the case of a multiplayer game) must respond to or at least relate to within the game world. The second division is an invitation into meta-cognitive reflections on how our understanding of history is formed, and sometimes transformed, by structures (be they narrative or algorithms) external to the events per se.

Jörn Rüsen's typology of four types of historical consciousness is such a meta-cognitive structure built to explain different ways of thinking about history (Rüsen, 2004). The four types express a development in narrative competence, starting with the *traditional type*, bent on the affirmation of traditional orientations. The next stage is the *exemplary type*, which sees history as a set of rules we may learn from. Third is the *critical type*, in which the deeds of the past, the sources from which we know them, and the previous narratives about them should be subject to criticism and counter-narratives. The fourth and final one is the *genetic type* which represents a change of patterns of temporal orientation. In this perspective, the meaning of historical events, and thereby history itself, is seen as evolving and being understood differently by people at different times. Consequently, differing positions, such as those represented by type two and three, can be integrated into an embracing perspective of plurality of viewpoints and temporal change.
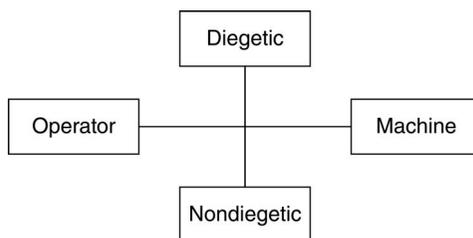
Figure 14.1 Model of Galloway's theory of gamic action. Based on Galloway (2006).

If gamic action, as Galloway postulates, consists of *operator acts* and *machine acts* that may be *diegetic* or *non-diegetic*, and the game itself narrates history in ways that may be biased towards a *traditional*, *exemplary*, *critical*, or *genetic* understanding of history, then teachers who want to use an entertainment game in class need to understand how these factors contribute to players' experience and plan their teaching accordingly. On this basis we propose game-based learning as requiring *pro-action* on behalf of the teacher. What we mean by pro-action is, in other words, a teacher's planning of game-based learning activities which responds to the gamic action taking place. It should also be built on a thorough analysis of the game's narrative and focused on connecting gamic action with curricular topics or considerations to build students' historical competency with respect to historical consciousness.

Three games, three approaches to the past

While historical events and characters have been a staple source of inspiration for game developers for decades, the First World War has quite rarely been used as a scenario in video games. This could be because the Great War, with all its complexities, does not lend itself easily to a clear-cut narrative of heroes and villains. An investigation conducted by Adam Chapman in 2016 discovered that the most common type of video game to be set to the First World War is the flight simulator (Chapman, 2016a). The focus on simulation, flying, and shooting allowed game developers to leave behind the messier stories about the conflict. In his article on games depicting the Great War, Chapman lists at least 19 titles of this kind, which constitutes 1/3 of all First World War games existing in 2016. Our decision not to include a flight simulator in this study should not be understood as a claim that no flight simulator makes any statement worth investigating for learning purposes. Nor do we claim that flight simulators cannot tell refined stories about the First World War. Cinemaware's Wings (Cinemaware, 1990), which relied heavily on narrative elements in addition to flight simulation, is one such example. Nonetheless, flight simulators are more about playing with early flight technology and early 3D-graphics of computers, than they are about depicting the war as a complex political and social event.

Instead, we have chosen games which are representative of three other genres: strategy games, adventure games, and first person shooter (fps). In the following we will analyse one example of each, focusing on their design and how they instigate gamic action, and ending in a reflection on how they may be used in class as tools and artefacts to learn about history and historical consciousness.

The exemplary war of a turn-based strategy game

In 1992, the German game developer Blue Byte launched a First World War computer game titled *History Line 1914–1918* (released as *The Great War 1914–1918* in the United States). The game consists of a series of maps that

are intended to portray different battles of the war. *History Line* is a turn-based tactics game in the vein of traditional strategy games which emphasize strategic, tactical, and logistical challenges that the player must overcome to win against another player or a computer AI. The game engine for *History Line* is a refined and expanded version of Blue Byte's sci-fi war game *Battle Isle* (Blue Byte, 1991) and the game is played on a hexagonal grid map against one other opponent. The map offers both players a bird's eye view of the battlefield, and there is no fog of war to obscure or hide an opponent's units or movement, much like a chess game. On the map, players control both combat units and support logistics units. The different units have various weapons and can gain experience as they engage in combat with other enemy units. Each unit is represented on the map by a graphical symbol of, for example, a tank, a truck, or a group of soldiers. Each unit has an information card, which includes a picture, and its strength is depicted by six identical symbols, e.g., an artillery piece or an individual cavalryman. Players also control different buildings, where units can be repaired and sometimes produced.

In *History Line*, the player can choose to play either as Imperial Germany or the Allied powers (represented initially by France). The game takes the player through various battle scenarios that are intended to represent non-specific battles of the war. These maps are played chronologically, from the outbreak of war in August 1914 to the armistices in November 1918, increasing in both size and complexity as the game progresses. Each map provides the player with a set number of units to control, which in the early maps consist primarily of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. As play proceeds, new, and more technologically advanced units become available.

While the game's goal and mechanics can be said to be biased towards an *exemplary* modelling and discussion of strategic issues, and the impact of different war machines and innovations, a pro-active teacher's use of the game in education can highlight *critical* perspectives to expand on students' understanding. This could be done by focusing on elements of a different narrative in the game itself, for example, buildings that can be seen in the game. What was their use before the war? Perhaps a photo of a village-turned-battlefield from the war could be used as sensitizing artefact. Or why not a discussion on the game's own graphics in the form of medieval fortresses used as headquarters (Figure 14.2)? A way of playing along with the games action, however biased on military strategy, could be to initiate discussions about similarities and differences between depictions of the war and earlier or later wars. How does this war mirror other wars and how does it differ?

The critical first-person perspective of doubt and death

Battlefield 1 is a first-person shooter game developed by DICE/Electronic Arts and released in 2016. The game is part of the successful *Battlefield* franchise, which is a series of first-person shooter games that usually focus on large, online multiplayer battles set in different historical time periods. In addition to

Figure 14.2 Screenshot from History Line showing medieval fortress as military headquarters.

soldiers, the player can take control of tanks, airplanes, and other vehicles that may have participated in these historical battles. Players can choose between several different play modes, which include both a single-player campaign and online multiplayer. While *Battlefield 1* offers both modes, here we will focus on single-player experiences, which we see as best fit to classroom experiences and discussions. In this mode, the player takes control of different characters and is introduced to different battlefields of the First World War. The gameplay takes place in the Middle East, on the Western and Eastern Fronts, Gallipoli, and the Alps. These different maps are framed by the personal war experiences and stories of one or more characters, which the player conducts through missions focused on destroying or capturing a specific enemy objective – for example, in the chapter "Through mud and blood" in which the player assumes the role of Daniel Edwards, a British soldier serving as part of a tank crew during the battle of Cambrai in the later part of the war (Electronic Arts 2016). Gameplay itself is concentrated on experiencing frontline combat, with chaotic and complex game elements intended to mimic the actual warfare of the First World War.

Battlefield 1 is an immersive game and lends itself to classroom discussion on the individual experience of modern industrial warfare. A pro-active teacher could, for example, ask students to explore the lives of the different characters in the game prior to the war and then rewrite dialogue or reimagine visual traits to incorporate more of the characters' personality in the game. A *genetic* approach would allow us to consider the wholeness of human experiences, allowing us to dive into the lives of the characters and have an opportunity to reflect on how we in the present understand and view their war experiences.

Figure 14.3 Screenshot from Battlefield 1 showing fighting at the front line.

This also implies a *critical* stance towards the artificial entity constituted by the beginning and end years of a war. These essays and dialogues could also investigate how life might be for the characters after the war, perhaps by offering real-life examples of reflections made by soldiers who lived through the war (e.g., Englund, 2012). How does the trauma of war and frontline fighting influence an individual, and the potential struggles when integrating back into a civilian, non-war, life and society?

An adventure game's genetic form of commemoration

Unlike a strategy game, which is focused on reaching a predefined win-state by playing tactically, and a first-person shooter, which seeks immersion by allowing the player to see through the main character's gaze and to act by operating a weapon with the muzzle pointing out in front of him, an adventure game is biased towards telling the player a story where the narrative itself may be more important than focusing on specific goals or mechanics.

Valiant Hearts: The Great War (Ubisoft, 2014) is such an adventure game which also shares the features of a platform puzzle game. The player controls five different characters throughout the game, and the gameplay at its most basic is about moving through the scenes solving some simple puzzles. However, the characters are of different nationalities and are affected by the outbreak of the war in different ways. Thus, the superficial advancement of the game becomes the engine that narrates and intertwines the stories of these characters with each other and in relation to the greater political context of the war. The epilogue of the game ends with these words: "Even though their bodies have long since returned to dust, their sacrifice still lives on. We must strive

to cherish their memory and never forget…" (Ubisoft, 2014). The game has the explicit goal of commemorating the humans who had their lives destroyed by the war and, as a player, you get to control a handful of these humans. The game tells the story of Karl who is a German citizen living in France and married to Marie who is French. As France, anticipating war, begins to deport Germans living on the French side of the border, Karl is separated from Marie and their child and is drafted into the German army. Marie's father Emile is drafted into the French army. Later, the two meet again in a German camp where Emile is a prisoner-of-war. From here, the game's storyline unfolds with several more separations and reunions for the characters, and we also get to know and play the American volunteer Freddie, the Belgian student Anna, and the German Dobermann Walt. All characters pursue personal and humane goals while being victims of an international conflict that they care little about. The player gets to control these characters in a gameplay that is focused on solving simple puzzles and a narrative which encapsulates many sides of the war while commemorating the humans who had their lives severely affected or taken by the First World War.

While the game itself takes a critical stance to traditional nationally focused narratives, by placing a strong emphasis on personal and inter-personal perspectives, it can be useful for students to connect this story with the "bigger" history of nations and battles. A pro-active teacher could, for instance, have the class play the final scene of the first chapter, which depicts the bombed cathedral of Rheims, and compare the action and the images in-game to information they may search out online. Furthermore, the game's Western European perspective also lends itself to a *critical* reflection on the global impact of the war, and its portrayal in both the game and history.

First aspect: Point of view

These three different First World War games provide three different narratives or historical interpretations of the conflict. Each game is an opportunity not only to explore and deconstruct both how the war is represented but also to employ Jörn Rüsen's stages of historical consciousness as an analytical tool (Rüsen, 2004).

While *History Line*'s game engine and AI received contemporary plaudits for its novel approach to the genre and has later been recognized as a classic, the game is in many respects a traditional strategy game with similarities to war-gaming tabletop games. The player assumes the implicit role of a person with complete and perfect information into what is happening on the battlefield. This role is underlined by the bird's eye view of the map and other game mechanics that encourage the player to consider the overarching strategic consequences of decisions, rather than the faith of individual units. From a teaching perspective, this top-down view of the game lends itself to explore the question of how our understanding of the world is dependent on our situated position within said world, our *Weltanschauung*.

In *Battlefield 1* the futility of the First World War dominates both game-play and cut-scenes, as soldiers are presented as the victims of forces outside of their control. The tone is set from the start of the game where a young African American man, a Harlem Hellfighter, asleep in a hospital bed, dreams, and relives his experiences of frontline fighting: chaotic hand-to-hand fighting with German soldiers and ruined buildings in the background. The disturbing combat scene is replaced by a black screen with the following message from the game developers:

> Battlefield 1 is based upon events that unfolded over one hundred years ago. More than 60 million soldiers fought in "The War to End All Wars". It ended nothing. Yet it changed the world forever. What follows is frontline combat. You are not expected to survive.

Similar on-screen messages and cut-scenes play a significant role in the game experience. They are employed to emphasize the horrors of frontline fighting, the destructiveness and impact of the First World War, and contribute to offering the player a personal and emotional experience of the war. This approach is strengthened by a gameplay which allows the player to experience the game through the eyes of avatars who participate on different battlefronts.

In line with the way *Valiant Hearts* gives bias to the story rather than the game's actions, the game is also set in a third-person view. The player, in addition to solving puzzles rather than relating to real dilemmas in the situations, is also placed outside the situation looking in, as if they were watching a movie or theatre play. While this may be said to reduce the immersion into one person's psyche if compared to a first-person perspective, it also moves the focus to an intra-personal level, making the story more about the relations between people. The story is thus focusing partly on a family in which the individuals are affected in different ways, and partly on relations between characters who meet in the war. It is also consistent in the game that groups of enemy soldiers act as parts of the war machinery and are not portrayed as individuals, and officers (most notably the fictional German commander Baron Von Dorf) are portrayed as caricatures.

Didactics – Player and protagonist's perspective

History is an ever-evolving process in which current events become "history", be it individually or collectively. In this process, some elements of the past are discarded or forgotten, while others are kept and integrated into our understanding of the world and ourselves (Dahl, 1986). Like more traditional historical narratives, all three videogames presented in this chapter view the First World War as a historical event from a certain point of view. This view or perspective not only reflects the experiences of a specific set of historical actors but is also an expression of our interpretation in the present, our historical consciousness. Rüsen argues that historical consciousness can be compared to

the present time peering into a mirror of "past actuality" to learn something about the future (Rüsen, 2004, p. 67). In this case it allows a teacher to explore how these games view the mirror that is the First World War, and who is being reflected in said mirror.

History Line is not a fast-paced game that attempts to connect emotionally with the player and is best suited to being played on a large screen in front of a class or a large group of students. This collective approach would provide a teacher with an opportunity to encourage students to think critically about the depiction of the war in order to explore and reflect on how the bird's eye view of the battlefield might both influence our perception and narration of the conflict. Key questions to explore would be: what would a historian, assigned to chronicle the events of the war, focus on? What kind of story would she construct from the sources available through observing the war? Who would be the protagonists in this story, and who would be absent? The next step would be to ask teacher-students to reconstruct and tell their own story of what they perceive to have played out in the game, asking them to pay attention to whose story they are retelling and compare and reflect on whether these stories are influenced if gameplay changes? Taking a pro-active stance, the teacher-student could be given the challenge to propose a modification of the game where elements they have identified as being absent are introduced (such as the civil society, agricultural machinery, and weather). How could such elements alter the gameplay? This approach would allow students to use Rusen's principals of historical consciousness to explore and compare how these changes might give different representations of the past.

In *Battlefield I*, while taking more of a critical stance than *History Line*, the player is presented with what can be said to be a narrow Anglo-American interpretation of the war where there is no room for a French perspective or characters, never mind Austrian-Hungarian, Serbian, German, or Russian characters and their war experiences (Winter, 2006). Why is this so? How does this story (or stories) compare to other narratives of the war, both contemporaneous and today? An interesting exercise would be to have pupils or students retell one or more stories from *Battlefield 1* through other mediums, such as a podcast, a digital story, a radio, or a newspaper interview. Again, students would be encouraged to use Rüsen's different stages of historical consciousness to evaluate and challenge their own interpretations of the past, as seen through their understanding of *Battlefield 1*. Are they able to cross the threshold between a traditional and exemplary understanding, to reach a more critical understanding of the past? This approach permits the student to initiate a deconstruction of both traditional narratives of the war, as presented in the game, thereby allowing a re-evaluation of the value system of the past (Rüsen, 2004, pp. 75–76).

Valiant Hearts also offers the player a more personal experience of the war, although less immersive and more Eurocentric than *Battlefield 1*. The game's primary characters, whose lives are disrupted by the war, are confronted with a set of life choices that challenge their loyalties to both people and nations. During the game, the story of the First World War is told through these
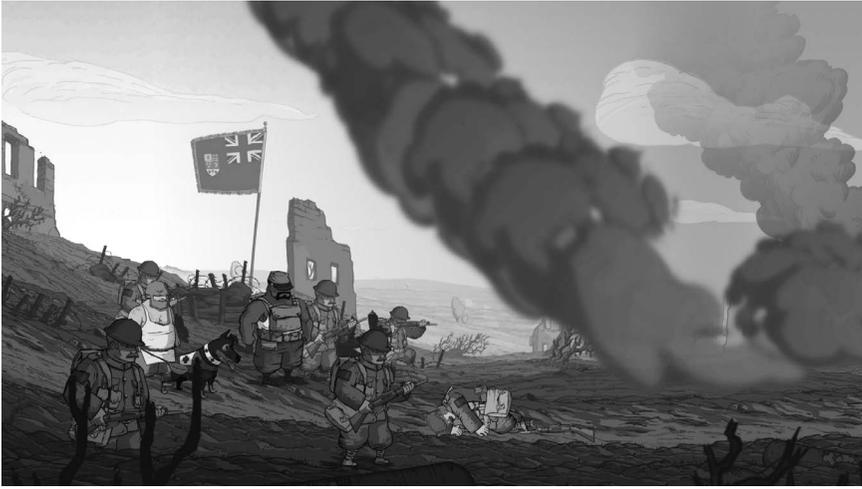
Figure 14.4 Screenshot from Valiant Hearts showing different characters in a war-torn landscape.

characters and collectables that the player discovers, in the form of dialogues with non-playable characters (NPCs) or different items that carry with them short facts about the war, e.g., a specific battle, equipment, or other relevant items. By paying close attention to these collectables, students could use them to reflect on whose narrative of the war is reflected in the different items. This approach would allow students to adopt Rüsen's critical approach to historical consciousness and to examine their own preconceptions, challenging or expanding on the narrative that is being presented in *Valiant Hearts*. What other or alternative items, for example, would the students have considered to include among the collectables, and how would that influence and change the perspective and narrative of *Valiant Hearts*?

Second aspect: Actions

Galloway's previously introduced framework of gamic actions considers video games as actions, or as an exchange between the operator (player) and machine. This interplay creates the potential for four different experiences that make video games into complex, active media that could be used to investigate representations of the past. In a teaching perspective, this would primarily focus on moments that involve the actions, planning, or input of the operator, the non-diegetic operator acts, and the diegetic operator act. In these approaches, the player either manipulates objects within the game world or outside of said world, for example, using menus (Galloway, 2006).

In *History Line*, such an approach, both diegetic and non-diegetic, allows students to reflect on how time passes within and outside of gameplay. In gameplay, the player does not experience real time or what is sometimes

referred to as the continual flow of time, as it would not be possible or desirable to recreate this in a game designed for play. Instead, time is reconstructed or sequenced. In the real world, the movement of units from one location to another might take hours, even days, or months, but in a game, it takes merely a fraction of second by pushing buttons. Time and actions in *History Line* are both compressed and, sometimes, moved outside of gameplay. In-game time is also structured in a way that differs from our ordinary experience of time, as it is sequenced or "temporal segmentation", a discrete temporal structure that limits, synchronizes, or coordinates player activity (Zagal & Mateas, 2010; Zagal et al., 2008). In *History Line*, this temporal segmentation takes the form of turn-based actions, which divide time into different phases: a move phase and an action phase. This reordering of time gives a particular meaning to the constitution and construction of historical time in the game. It also offers a teaching opportunity for exploring our understanding of temporality.

Like other FPS, gameplay in *Battlefield 1* is built around realistic or realist time, a 1:1 temporal relationship that matches the actions of the player and the subsequent actions of the avatar that the player controls. This gives the impression of the avatar being in real time and can be understood "as part of the aim to show the past as it is claimed to have appeared to agents" (Chapman, 2016b). This is a diegetic operator act or what Galloway has labelled move, act, fire (Galloway, 2006). At the same time, the game itself responds to these actions by acting out its own actions through NPCs or avatars, or diegetic machine action. These game mechanics allow *Battlefield 1* to appear as a real time and realistic simulation of the past by giving agency to both player and machine. The game provides a form of a distilled version of war, or "combat in a bottle", with little or no regard to the passage of time outside of gameplay. In a teaching setting, this temporal approach offers a valuable point of departure to reflect on and explore time as a key component of historical construction and reconstruction.

Strategy game developers and theorists have held the general view that meaning in a game derives from what the player gets to do, not from what the player sees, hears, or reads in the game (Johnson, 2012). Sid Meyer famously defined games as "a series of interesting choices" (Smith et al., 2013, p. 43). In *Valiant Hearts*, the choices are few (or none) and the in-game puzzles are of limited value from the perspective of learning history. One may wonder if the puzzles have been kept simple so as not to remove the player's attention away from the story, as that is where the immersion into history takes place. The game also offers an extensive database of short texts giving a factual basis for the events happening in the game. Thus, the historical learning content of the game is to be found diegetically in the story and displayed non-diegetically in a facts-layer on top of the game world, like a textbook that pops up to be read in contexts where the information matters to the game story. The game itself is, however, a product of historical research, as it is based on letters from soldiers at the western front. It is also a product of commemoration, as it was

made for the centennial of the outbreak of the war (Ubisoft, 2014). This may constitute a basis for use of the game in history class. What traits of commemoration does it display? Who does the game honour, and how? What critical or genetic aspects does the game display? To the latter we may certainly place the cartoony graphics.

Didactics – Actions

Historical narratives are made up of actions performed by a specific population of actors. These actions together with the passage of time are both an essential building block of history, the construction of historical narratives, and video games. The subject of history and historical narratives, including historical consciousness, is always a process in which time and space are compressed and simplified into a digestible format. The retelling of the First World War through a video game must also heed these constraints along with the technical limits of the game. Hence, all three games presented in this chapter offer an opportunity to both explore and reflect on temporal consciousness. Each of these games treats and represents time in three distinct ways. In *Battlefield 1*, time seems to flow continually from the point of view of the player and stands in marked contrast to gameplay in *History Line*, where time appears to be highly structured in sequences, as in *Valiant Hearts*.

All three games raise the question of how people experience and understand time. This allows students to explore key questions in all three games, such as how the protagonist and military units are transported to the battlefield, what happens in between scenarios or maps and – last but not least – why this passage of time is not included in the game. These questions could offer students an opportunity to explore other aspects of the life of a First World War soldier – preparation for battle, training, boredom, waiting, illness, and so on. Furthermore, it would allow for reflection on the passage of time, both for a historical character and for how students experience time in the present day. Furthermore, if game sequences from all three games are viewed simultaneously through a comparative lens, it is easier to recognize the different representations of temporality, and it offers an opportunity to draw pupils' and students' attention to reflect on the topic of time.

Galloway's theory of gamic action underlines the equilibrium between actions performed by the operator (player) and machine. While attention so far has focused on the operators' actions, it is also didactically interesting to consider more closely the diegetic actions of the machine. These actions are beyond the control of the player and are the product of algorithms. This experience of being "at the mercy of abstract informatic rules" holds an opportunity for students to explore how historical actors are affected by different societal structures, sometimes outside of their control and knowledge (Galloway, 2006, p. 20). It allows students to examine the reactions of their avatar in game, but more importantly perhaps, to look more closely at their own reactions and experiences.

Conclusion: Narrative competence and narrative construction

The aim of this chapter has been to explore video games as an arena for the development of historical consciousness among students. The theoretical framework has been Jörn Rüsen's four stages of historical consciousness and Alexander R. Galloway's four moments of gamic action, which has allowed for an examination of similarities between history and video games. This combined theoretical approach has functioned as a prism with which to view three different video games that approach the First World War in different ways. It is an approach that has allowed for an examination of how teachers and students might use video games, or parts of video games, to improve their understanding of historical narratives and historical consciousness and to develop a better narrative competency.

Jörn Rüsen has pinpointed the lack of a diverse and robust narrative competency in educational institutions as a crucial point in the argument for strengthening the understanding of historical consciousness. He sees such a competency as an important part of the ability to recognize the notion of temporal change to gain self-understanding and, as an extension, an understanding of one's own historical identity. This essential need for temporalization and the need to understand change as an essential human quality, as Rüsen argues, dovetails with video games in general, and historical video games in particular, as they show, through gameplay, how narratives are continually or permanently in transition within an algorithmical framework.

Continual change is an integral part of video games, as players are given agency through gamic actions to create their own narrative(s). Consequently, players construct their own narratives, in a similar manner to how historians construct narratives of past events. However, as Galloway has argued, these narratives are not created exclusively by the player but are an interplay or exchange between player and machine, or structures of code. This interplay between actors and structures mirrors, to a large extent, how historians view the interplay between historical actors and broader societal developments that influence historical change. In a similar manner, narratives in video games are continually evolving and changing within a framework of both algorithms and different constructs of time, in much the same way that historical narratives are continually changing and developing to reflect our past, present, and future.

In this chapter we have introduced the notion of *pro-actions*, an attempt at describing a teacher's stance in this relationship between player and machine, as well as between their pupils and the historical narratives of different stages of historical consciousness that they may encounter. By understanding how the machine acts and predicts the player's action and/or response, the teacher may take the role of a mediator between the game and the player. This could be done by making preparations that take into account both the gamic action(s) and the historical consciousness expressed in a game narrative, to ensure that the act of playing a historical video game feeds into reflections on the game's historical consciousness, and thereby building that of the student.

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15 Roles in peer interaction in comment sections in educational blogs

Kari Anne Rustand

The advancements in digital technology in the twentieth century have given us access to multiple digital tools as resources for learning. The context for using web-based tools is global initiatives to incorporate twenty-first-century competencies into education, which in general have provided legitimacy to investigate digital educational experiences (Ananiadou, 2009; van Laar et al., 2007; Voogt & Roblin, 2012). The organization *The Partnership for 21ˢᵗ century skills* support these efforts by stating that "Every aspect of our education system […] must be aligned to prepare citizens with the twenty-first-century skills they need to compete" (Partnership-for-21st-Century-Skills, 2008). Students' exposure to using social media (SoMe) in an educational context can impact both their personal online conduct and their future professional practices in more formal settings. In addition, being aware of the responsibilities and benefits of reaching a large and diverse online audience is important. The idea of an active audience and collaborative content creation is central to the Web. 2.0 paradigm (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). This aligns with the constructivist learning perspectives that view learners as active knowledge creators and learning as a social negotiation and construction process (Alvesson & Skjöldberg, 2008; Berger & Luckmann, 2011). In Norway, oral and written communication skills are considered a *democratic competence* and are recognized as a crucial interdisciplinary component in the national curriculum (Rustand, 2014; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020b) [The Norwegian Directorate for Education].

With this context in mind, I find it relevant to explore the content of comment sections in blogs used in education. *Blogs* are "easy- to-update website[s] characterized by dated entries displayed in reverse chronological order" (Stefanac, 2006, p. 230). A *comment section* is a vertical list of comments written by individuals and connected to a blog post written by the blog owner. The objective of the teacher-initiated blog writing in this study was to foster cooperation through thought, reflection, and learning in the subject of Norwegian language and literature. This aligns with the expectations set by the Norwegian national school curriculum to develop written competencies, encourage students to find their own voices, and expand their thoughts and critical abilities (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2020a). The curriculum justifies why

pre-teachers in higher education should benefit from experiencing blog writing so that they are prepared for future teaching. Investigating the language in comment sections could be applicable to written web-based interactions on different topics and platforms, as well as for research on language learning in second (L2) and third (L3) languages in educational contexts.

My delimited optics in this study is based on three sections of comments written in three different blogs. A total of 20 comments were authored by 13 pre-teacher students between 19 and 23 years of age in a Norwegian university's first language (L1) class. Each student in the class had their own personal blog, which together formed a learning community. The focus of the analysis is on the interactions among peers and the roles that students adopt as they express themselves through comments. This may include offering suggestions, providing evaluations, reflecting, or conveying thoughts and attitudes. The tone of a written utterance may also be shaped by these roles. I understand *interaction* in line with Meredith et al. (2021) as "any communication which takes place within a digital environment which is designed to facilitate interaction" (Meredith et al., 2021, p. 7). In this study, *interaction* is understood as all written constructions which are directed towards a recipient. My research questions are:

What sort of roles are constructed in three written comment sections and how can a framework be constituted from subject-related interactions of educational blogs?

The analysis of the construction of the roles adopts a functional, language-based approach, drawing on theories from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and social semiotics (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). I am interested in identifying and analysing the various written *roles*. These roles are presented and described in "Findings". Then, I will discuss a possible methodological framework for the interactions among students that a comment section in an educational context might encompass, carried out in the "Summary and discussion" part. The study has the potential to provide valuable information for both educators and students to be able to navigate the use of comment sections in educational blogs. Examples of roles taken on by the students can, for instance, be "a seeker of information", "being a supporter", "one to initiate reflection", "a sharer of knowledge", or "one that gives advice".

The concept for this study is inspired by prior research on web-based learning resources in higher education (Deng & Yuen, 2011; Deng & Yuen, 2013; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). There has been extensive investigation into the utilization of blogs in education from various perspectives (Deng & Yuen, 2012; Downes, 2004; Hall & Davison, 2007; Nygard, 2017; Williams & Jacobs, 2004). Several studies have shared similarities to this study. Previous studies often include the comment section as part of a larger study (Yang & Chang, 2012); hence, it is important to acknowledge the tight connection between posts and comments on a blog. But for the purpose of this study, my assumption is that having a basic

understanding of the content in comment sections can improve our comprehension of the opportunities and restrictions present.

SFL is frequently used as a framework for language-based studies to highlight meaning-making. Tran and Ngo (2018) conducted a language-based SFL-study of news comments on Facebook and discovered that comments evolve in various directions and that there are intricate patterns of support and opposition that emerge. Several *microanalyses* (Meredith et al., 2021) have been performed on comment sections in social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, using conversational analysis (CA) techniques as the method of analysis. A few such examples are Rintel et al.'s (2001) investigation on how comments were technically *organized*, Garcia and Jacobs (1999) studied *turntaking*, and Meredith and Potter (2014) found that it is possible to maintain coherence even in seemingly disordered interactional contexts. Furthermore, Stiler and Philleo (2003) conducted a study to investigate the use of blogs to enhance reflective thinking in pre-service teacher education. They discovered that the utilization of blogs had a positive impact on the level of depth and scope of student reflection. Hall and Davison (2007) studied the value of blogs as a tool for reflective learning and peer support, and their findings indicated that interactivity provided an opportunity for forming connections and participating in discussions. Du and Wagner (2007) confirmed that blogs could promote collaborative knowledge construction through knowledge sharing, and Loving et al. (2007) underlined that interaction in blogs enables sharing of resources and ideas.

I believe that my contribution through the present study will add to previous research on student perspectives, such as their views on reflective learning, motivation, attitudes, or engagement (Hall & Davidson, 2007; Yang & Chang, 2012) and social network analysis (Blood, 2002; Rettberg, 2014). In the next section, I will introduce the theoretical framework.

Theoretical framework

Collaborative learning through the use of a Web 2.0. tool

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and both globalization and internationalization of the economy are transforming the way we learn, live, and work (Gee, 2013; Gee & Hayes, 2011; Voogt & Roblin, 2012). OECD underlines that students need to develop "reading skills to navigate the technology-rich 21ˢᵗ century" (OECD, 2021). Hence, *learning resources* is a concept reflecting the text practices we find in schools. A great deal of research on learning resources has been performed in the Nordic countries. The Danish researcher Thomas Illum Hansen uses the concept *learning materials* (2015, p. 21) and divides it into three categories: (1) *learning materials* produced for the purpose of teaching, such as textbooks, (2) *semantic learning materials* brought into teaching but not made for the purpose, such as films, artefacts, and fiction books, and (3) *functional*

learning materials such as tools used to handle a content, like digital tools, mobile phones, and whiteboards. *Functional learning materials* is an applicable concept for defining blogs, and the comment sections examined in this study. According to Voogt and Roblin (2012) international curriculum frameworks highlight learning skills as "creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration" (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). I understand the blog comments as non-fictional texts mediated digitally. Non-fictional texts are texts which the addressee has reason to perceive as direct utterances about reality (Blikstad-Balas & Tønnesson, 2020, p. 14).

Systemic functional linguistics

I find concepts from the theory of SFL applicable to exploring roles in the comment sections (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This is a theory of verbal language, grounded in social semiotics. Social semiotics is the wider, interdisciplinary field where studies of meaning-making and communication through various social and cultural practices belong. As I comprehend it, Halliday proposes that meaning is produced through the utilization of language in actual communicative scenarios, which relies on the choice of vocabulary and grammar. However, these linguistic resources are partially pre-determined and are not solely formed during the act of communication (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 4). In this set of data, there is functional use of language within an educational context. In this case, s*peech acts* (written, as in these data) are defined as utterances targeting recipients. In Halliday's descriptions of language, all utterances realize three types of meaning at the same time: *the ideational metafunction* as the meaning that people make about the world; *interpersonal metafunction* as the interaction between people; and *textual metafunction* related to the construction of texts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 30). The interpersonal metafunction is the most interesting one in this study, since interaction in comment sections is the object. The grammatical SFL-terms *mood* and *modality* realize meaning within the interpersonal metafunction in sentences. Halliday presents the fundamental two speech roles as (1) *giving* and (2) *receiving* (demanding), and he states that "[…] the *speaker* adopts for himself a particular *speech role*, and in doing so assigns to the listener a complementary role that he wishes him to adopt in this turn" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 134/135). These speech roles will be examined in this study. To clarify, when I use the term *speech roles*, I am referring to *giving* and *receiving*, and when I refer to the concept of *student roles*, I am referring to roles, such as *advising*, *supervising*, and *inspiring*. The term *comment* serves as a broad term that covers all *utterances* (within a comment).

Another equally fundamental distinction connected to speech roles is the one between the commodity being exchanged: "goods-&-services" or "information". According to Halliday & Mathiessen (2014), the choices that are open to the listener (reader, in this case) when it comes to exchange of "goods-&-services" are to accept or reject the offer. Exchanging information

is more complicated than exchanging "goods-&-services"; hence, in the former, the listener is being asked not merely to listen and act, but also to act out a verbal role – to affirm or deny. Halliday's primary speech roles are *offer*, *command*, *statement*, and *question*. The speech roles are "matched by a set of desired responses: accepting an offer, carrying out a command, acknowledging a statement and answering a question" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 135).

There are two types of mood, *indicative* and *imperative* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 143–144). *Indicative* is used for exchange of information and is realized by subject and finite, as shown in the following example: "John (subject) had (finite) a red and black book (residue)", where "John had" represents the mood. (It is worth noting that, in this example, "had" is a fused finite + predicator.) Indicative can be either *declaratives* (narratives, as in the previous example) or *interrogatives* (questions). There are two types of interrogatives, namely:

1. *yes/no-interrogatives*, where the finite comes before the subject and the recipient can respond with agreement or disagreement (yes/no), for example, "Are you considering …?"
2. *WH (what, who, where)-interrogatives* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 143), for example, "Where will (finite) you (subject) live (predicator)?". An offer is an exchange of goods-&-services where the desired response is to accept or decline, for example, "Shall I give you this book?". *Imperative* is the mood for exchange of goods-&-services. The sender demands goods-&-services, and the receiver can choose to accept or not. The subject in an imperative is usually "me or you" or "you and I" and often remains implicit in the utterance. Rather than a finite element, a verb is being used in a verbal group that is conjugated in the imperative form. Imperatives are often formed as a command, request, or consent: "Come here! Let us run away! Do not be afraid!". The selection of theoretical concepts will be applied to analyse the sections of comments.

With this framework, I can delve into the specifics and ascertain the significance attributed to the roles depicted.

Discussion of methodological approach

Participants and context

In this study, 18 third-year pre-teacher students from a five-year teacher education program at a Norwegian university participated. The students were between the ages of 19 and 23 and attended a course in Norwegian language and literature for two semesters. As part of their course work, the participants of this study wrote and commented on blogs. In total, the blogs had 334 posts and 530 comments. The data in this study, as further presented below, are excerpts from the total number of comments. The use of blogs was a

supplement to traditional classroom lessons. Blogging provided a platform for creating a shared community that emphasized a participatory, collaborative, inquiry-based learning culture where dialogue, creativity, and knowledge creation were central (e.g. Wegerif, 2007). In 2022, platforms, such as Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok, account for most of the dialogic exchange in students' personal lives (Medietilsynet, 2022). However, none of these platforms provides the full range of features needed for the desired educational objectives, such as the ability to connect with a community, publish various types of texts, and engage in commenting.

The students had few guidelines other than exploring topics, text types, etc. within the subject of Norwegian in the blog posts and comment sections. The students were instructed to engage in both formal and informal writing, following two main teaching approaches to writing (Thaiss & Porter, 2010). *Writing across the curriculum* (WAC), also known as *writing to learn*, involves informal writing exercises aimed at enhancing students' understanding (Behrens & Rosen, 2021; Emig, 1977). *Writing in the discipline* (WID) refers to more formal writing activities that adhere to the specific style or format of the discipline (Cullick & Zawacki, 2011). In the comment section, students were encouraged to motivate one another, evaluate their peers' texts/posts, exchange ideas, academic literature, and opinions, respond to each other's claims and reflections, and ultimately aspire to improve their own and their classmates' outcomes. The students were instructed to submit 1 post after each of the 15 lessons over the 2-semester-course, but 15 of the students wrote more than the required amount, with a maximum of 24 posts. They were also instructed to leave comments on a minimum of 3 other blogs in the community after each of their 15 mandatory posts. The total number of comments (530) can be seen as an indication of their heightened commitment.

The blogs were based on the platform http://www.blogger.com with Google as the search engine. This is a pre-designed semi-finished product made easy to use. The platform offers a variety of templates to choose from, thereby enhancing a sense of ownership. To comprehend the significance of the comments, it is crucial to understand the meaning-making in relation to the context. The comment sections are associated with individual blog posts and blogs and belong to a specific community of pre-teacher students within a certain subject. The community is part of a comprehensive university program aimed at preparing individuals to become teachers for children. In this context, the written blogs can be seen as a digital learning resource, with the comment sections playing a role as part of the larger picture.

Dataset, collection, and ethical reservations

The dataset consists of three comment sections, each serving as a response to a separate blog post authored by the anonymized authors named Gina, Chris, and Lisa. Gina's section contains a total of 9 comments, made up of 30 utterances, while Chris' section includes 4 comments consisting of 25 utterances.

Lisa's section comprises 7 comments, totalling 53 utterances. Within the context of this study, an utterance is defined as a written self-contained entity in the form of a sentence or a sequence of a sentence culminating in a period, exclamation mark, or question mark. Overall, the dataset in this study includes 20 comments and 108 utterances.

The dataset was manually selected and coded. It is not feasible to provide enough data in this chapter to verify all the diversity and typicality of the overall comment sections. However, these six guidelines were used to determine the selection: (1) each selected comment section should have more than just two or three comments; (2) the comments should preferably include multiple utterances or at least one meaningful statement, beyond simple assessments like "good" or "fine"; (3) the selection should include at least one example of interaction between the blog author and peers, to demonstrate some of the typical writer-reader dynamic present in the overall data; (4) the comment section should feature contributions from multiple individuals; (5) the dataset should be limited in size to allow for in-depth analysis; and (6) the selection should aim to exhibit a wide range of meaning-making of what can be interpreted as roles. An ethical reservation was that each blog was made unsearchable. The students were given the option to use a pseudonym, their first name, or their full name on their blogs. The teacher had access to information about which student was responsible for each blog. Given that the address was available, remote readers could still have access. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data gave approval for the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants who agreed to have their texts studied.

Content analysis

This study follows a qualitative methodology, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011): "[…] qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). For this study, the data being analysed and interpreted are texts obtained from comment sections; thus, the method employed is text analysis. The approach taken is abductive, which involves a cyclical process among the dataset, research questions, and theory. The analysis and discussion primarily involve inductive reasoning based on the data. Steps of the content analysis are as follows: (1) analysing the roles the speaker adopts by the concepts of *questions*, *statements*, *offers*, and *commands* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014); (2) deriving role categories from the findings; and (3) discussing how possible roles can be constituted from the findings.

Findings

The comment sections can be viewed as communicative events, where messages are exchanged among participants in the blog community. These messages represent a written dialogue, which includes various roles that will be

Table 15.1 Speech roles

Speech roles	Gina	Chris	Lisa
Questions	6	3	10
Statements	19	22	39
Offers	3	0	3
Commands	2	0	1

further clarified, analysed, and elaborated on. Halliday uses the term *speaker* as a cover term for both *speaker* and *writer*, and *listener* as a term for both *listener* and *reader* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 134). And, according to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), "[…] the *speaker* adopts for himself a particular *speech role*, and in doing so assigns to the listener a complementary role that he wishes him to adopt in this turn" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 134). Halliday's four speech roles are more or less present in this data: *questions*, *statements*, *offers*, and *commands* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 135). Table 15.1 is an overview of categories found:

In the following, I will analyse and elaborate on these roles. The following section includes Table 15.2, to present examples of questions, to clarify corresponding responses visually. Responses are not provided for statements, offers, and commands. Therefore, examples of these categories are given in the main text.

Speech roles – Questions, statements, offers, commands

When asking a **question**, the *speaker* is seeking information and demanding the *listener* to supply the information. Table 15.2 shows various examples from the data:

The first question in Table 15.2 is an example of a genuine request for clarification about the choices a student intends to make in an upcoming paper.

Table 15.2 Examples of questions/claims and answers

Questions/claims (my translations)	Accepted/denied:
[1] Are you considering connecting your text to this grade/class?	DENIED: I am not considering connecting my text to first grade or any of the lowest classes.
[2] Isn't it smart to choose one grade/class since there is a huge difference connected to motivation in fifth and seventh grade?	ACCEPTED: Yes, I will think about this. It can absolutely be an idea to choose one level/class.
[3] Perhaps (young) students should be taught about the unique experiences that can be gained from reading a book, which cannot be obtained through other means.	(No explicit exchange of views)

The listener is providing the requested information by denying and adding an elaboration: "(not) any of the lowest classes". The roles in this dialogue can be interpreted as neutral exchanges of information, and as a clarification of choices. The second question in Table 15.2 is also a suggestion and a manifestation of a fact, in this case indicating a probable motivational difference between fifth and seventh grade. Precise descriptions of the difference are neither provided by the speaker nor demanded from the listener (in this case the blog author). The inclusion of the adverb "smart" subtly implies a sense of manipulative expectation. The listener has to take a stand and preferably make the "smart" choice. The third question in Table 15.2 has no question mark. It is formed as a thought and can be interpreted as a utterance suitable for activating the retriever's reflection. The utterance is a proposition within what Halliday refers to as the modality system Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, pp. 176/177). The speaker takes on a gentle role by using "perhaps", possibly to lead the listener to an idea. The last question is not answered or further discussed by peers. There are no examples of WH-interrogatives for this segment of the analysis.

These types of questions reflect mostly positive speaker roles, politeness, and helpfulness. The listener can accept or deny without negative consequences and do not seem to be put in awkward situations when answering.

Statements are predominant in all three comment sections, and several of them express feelings, acceptance, and general acknowledgement. Most of these utterances are incomplete, without subject and finite, but the listener/ reader can still interpret the meaning within the context. Such speaker roles can be understood as supportive ("good luck", "agree", "very relevant"), inspirational ("a clever question", "nicely written"), and motivative ("exciting topic"). In these data, there are also repeating instances where the speaker makes direct solicitations to the receiver: "[…] but you can think about it!".

A typical example of discipline-related statements where information is offered is "To generate a relevant research question, it may be helpful to focus on a particular level", "I read that it is recommended that teachers set a positive example for their students by reading books and discussing them with their students", or an expression that can be comprehended as an embedded declarative: "Remember that there is a difference between learning and reading strategy", but it is an imperative ("command", directive). Some of the concepts referred to in these utterances are theoretical in nature, such as *semiotic systems*, *inner motivation*, *reading and learning strategies*. By using and applying these concepts correctly, the speaker may be serving as a role model for fellow students, demonstrating how theoretical concepts can be integrated into their own language and thinking. These statements are instances in which students assume an advisory role.

Sometimes when a speaker offers informational statements, it suggests that they are assuming a listening role. Grammatically, listening indicators are realized by subject and finite combinations like this: "as you say", "I can perceive that you […]", or "as Philip mentions". These indicators appear frequently,

indicating that assuming these roles is an integrated part of student behaviour online. And this seems to be in line with Brownell's statement: "Listening isn't a function that communicators turn on and off at will, but an integral part of a larger process, or system, in which you strive to share meanings with your friends" (Brownell, 2002, p. 41).

There are also statements of confirmation in these data, such as when students acknowledge or agree with their peers' contributions: "By doing this, the idea will become more concrete" or "The fact that the practice teacher has offered to assist you further in the process is positive". In these instances, the speaker's role is to provide support, reassurance, or confirmation for the blog author's statements or expressions of attitudes, actions, or choices. Some statements can be interpreted differently, for instance "Fun to notice that we have [chosen] almost the same topic [for our paper]". This type of statement can serve a variety of purposes, such as confirming the importance of a topic, expressing hope for collaboration, or highlighting an inspiring discovery. There are statements that serve a primarily expressive function, and it can be argued that the speaker assumes a vulnerable role by exposing themselves. For example: "I find it hard to do assessments of the concept of reading comprehension", which demonstrates a very honest student role.

Offers are formed as questions in these data, for instance: "Would you like me to provide you with academic literature?" and can be interpreted as a culture which values sharing. Cultivating a generous role between peers seems to be the norm. **Commands** are of the short and friendly type to be found in these data: "Think about it!" and "Yes. Do that!" and contribute to a positive tone of inspiration.

Student roles in these data

The primary focus of my first research question was to find and describe the different roles that students play in the comment sections. The data indicate that there is significant diversity in the roles that the students assume as described especially by their questions, statements, and offers. These roles include assuming different listening roles, acting as advisors or tutors, or providing support to others. Statements demonstrate that students are recognizing the efforts of others, serving as role models for fellow students by sharing their experience and knowledge and helping. It is apparent that several graphic emoticons are being used, presumably as a way for the speakers to express their thoughts and convey positive emotions. Research by Kiesler et al. (1984) and Derks et al. (2007) suggest that people may use emoticons to bring on intent, a positive emotional state and to compensate for the absence of non-verbal cues in written communication.

Four utterances reflect multiple roles, which means that the total number of utterances (112) are higher in the following table than the actual count of 108. To highlight the roles that I have inductively generated from the data, I present roles and examples here:

Summary and discussion

My first aim was to investigate what sort of roles are constructed in three written comment sections, and the second was to investigate how a framework can be constituted from subject-related interactions in comment sections of educational blogs. Further, I delved deeper into discussions of the findings, relevant for the research questions.

In this community of blogs, seen as *functional learning materials* (Hansen, 2015), my research reveals a diversity of comment types, in line with Meredith & Potter's (2014) findings referred to earlier in this chapter. Commenting enables students to take on various roles, with providing support, inspiration, and suggestions being the dominant characteristics in the comment sections. It is prominent that negative, challenging, and provocative comments are lacking in the comment sections. My assumption is that all the pre-teacher students in the class had gained polite face-to-face relations and seemed focused on learning, but an interview could reveal more information on this. Based on the comments in Tables 15.2 and 15.3, it appears that the students adopt dependable and conscientious roles. Some of the interrogatives (questions asked) are not followed up by discussions. The level of depth and scope when it comes to active participation in developing knowledge or testing out hypotheses upon research and theory is lacking. This finding is not consistent with Stiler and Philleo's (2003) research, which suggests that pre-service teachers' engagement in blogs promotes deep reflection.

The analysis and the overview in Table 15.3 can be viewed as a framework generated from the data. This framework gives insight into some strengths of comment sections, and information on some of the possible roles. There is evidence of active participation based on the number of utterances (108) and the variety of roles in the comment sections. The students' level of engagement surpassed the researchers' expectations. This underlines that interaction in blogs enables the sharing of resources and ideas within Norwegian language and literature, equally as it did in Loving et al.'s (2007) study on interactional blogs applied in mathematics. The students also seemed to perceive each other as symmetric work partners, even if some of the students took on an expert role in some of the comments. Differences in achievements can, as such, inspire everyone within a blog community. The listening indicators are one of the signs showing that students are able and willing to recognize each other, an important sign of factual online collaboration in line with practicing twenty-first-century skills (Partnership-for-21st-Century-Skills, 2008). The benevolence exhibited by the pre-teacher students through the roles they assumed can be perceived as an indication of thoughtfulness, goodwill, and their ethical consciousness and proficiency in demonstrating socially responsible conduct online. This is a crucial role to embrace and impart to the students in their future work life.

The dataset contains statements presented as objective facts (Table 15.3) by students who have assumed the roles of experts. However, since other students

Table 15.3 Student roles

Students' roles	Number of utterances	Examples from the dataset (my translations from Norwegian to English)
ADVISORY ROLE – topic-related	17	Isn't it smart to choose one grade/class since there is a huge difference connected to motivation in fifth and seventh grade? Remember that there is a difference between learning and reading strategies.
SUPERVISORY ROLE Overview, input for reflection	14	I read that it is recommended that teachers set a positive example for their students by reading books and discussing them with their students. Does the teacher find these to be good tools? Do they [the tools] give slightly improved reading comprehension? This is pertinent for both studying texts in one's native language and for your future role as a teacher. If you are interested in meeting new people within our discipline beyond your practice teacher, it's highly recommended to have a conversation with this pleasant lady.
INSPIRATIONAL, ENTHUSIASTIC, AND SUPPORTIVE ROLE (general comments)	28	Good luck, very relevant, a clever question, nicely written, exciting topic. Emoticons. Fun to notice that we have [chosen] almost the same topic [for our paper]. (Personalized features in the comment sections/an audience)
CONFIRMATIONAL ROLE	19	This is pertinent for both studying texts in one's native language and for your future role as a teacher. Agree! Very relevant. Fun to notice that we have [chosen] almost the same topic [for our paper].
NEW KNOWLEDGE critical thinking, ideas on academic literature/research	8	Perhaps (young) students should be taught about the unique experiences that can be gained from reading a book, which cannot be obtained through other means. In what ways can a teacher utilize registration forms to assess a student's comprehension of a given text?
NOVICE ROLE	6	I find it hard to do assessments of the concept of reading comprehension. Encouraging children to develop an interest in reading can be a difficult task […]
EXPERIENCIVE AND 'EXPERT' ROLE	8	Role models in use of concepts: *semiotic systems*, *inner motivation*, *reading and learning strategies*
THE ROLE OF A LISTENER	12	As you say, I can perceive that you […], as Philip mentions. I can perceive that you have visited first grade.

09/10/2013, 7:37 PM

Fint skrevet! 😊 Og så fint at bibliotekaren hadde så mye kunnskap å dele! 😊

Svar

10/10/2013, 10:59 AM

Jeg ser du har vært i 1. klasse. Tenker du å rette oppgaven mot dette trinnet? Eller tenker du et høyere klassetrinn da dette går mer på den viderekommende leseutviklingen? =)

Svar

10/10/2013, 11:01 AM

Et lurt spørsmål! 😊 Jeg tenker ikke å rette oppgaven mot 1. klasse, eller noen av de laveste trinnene. Dette er fordi, som du skriver, at leseglede er noe som kommer mer inn i den viderekommende lese- og skriveopplæringen. Jeg tenker å rette oppgaven mot mellomtrinnet, 5-7. trinn. Er dette noe jeg kan trekke inn i problemstillingen? Dette vil jo bidra til å gjøre den mer konkret?! 😊

Svar

10/10/2013, 11:04 AM

Spennende lesning, hva med å bruke en problemstilling som dette: Hvilke metoder kan man bruke for å skape motivasjon for lesing på mellomtrinnet? 😊

10/10/2013, 11:06 AM

Er det ikke lurt å velge et trinn, da det kan være stor forskjell på motivasjon i 5. og 7.? =)

Svar

10/10/2013, 11:07 AM

Jo, dette skal jeg tenke på! Det kan absolutt være en idé å velge ett trinn 😊

Svar

Figure 15.1 An excerpt of a comment section (in original Norwegian).

are still in the learning process, there is an underlying assumption that these students may not necessarily be entirely accurate. Therefore, questioning the roles that have been revealed can raise awareness about the responsibilities of a speaker (writer) as a helper, learner, and future teacher. The speaker provides guidance and shares their knowledge with their peers, but it is important for listeners to approach the information critically. In this regard, understanding the various roles that are present can be beneficial. The statements in the data can be prevailed as engagement to take on the role of helping each other forward. Holt and Brockett (2012) highlight helping students to set goals for themselves as one of the dimensions of the twenty-first-century skills (Holt & Brockett, 2012). If writing activities within an online tool can release engagement, there is always a possibility for learning to take place, and writing skills can improve. This confirms the use of comment sections as part of a learning resource, allowing pre-teacher students to learn skills required of a teacher.

The comment sections exhibit an informal and non-academic tone, reinforced by the colourful templates and students' use of emoticons. This informal tone may prompt students to adopt a more personal, social media-like persona. The tone of the text is not conducive to encouraging pre-teachers to practice their academic writing skills through text testing, which can be seen as a disadvantage. However, it should be noted that there are also discipline-oriented utterances present in the comments, as demonstrated in Table 15.3.

In summary, my primary conclusions are that the students' active participation in the dialogue within the comment sections resulted in the adoption of various roles. Their construction of roles is clear and relatively uncomplicated. The roles are associated with favourable attitudes towards peer interaction. A framework of roles is lifted forward (see Table 15.3), through a generated overview of roles and examples arising from the data. The implications are that students and teachers will have a basic understanding of all the roles selected from this dataset and thereby will be able to improve their comprehension of opportunities and restrictions of interaction in comment sections. The implications are that by having a fundamental comprehension of all the potential roles available, students and teachers will be better equipped to understand the limitations and possibilities of online interaction and subsequently enhance their overall understanding.

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16 Redesign as method in critical literacy education

Marthe Øidvin Burgess

Introduction

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams, 1992), the answer to "the question of life, the universe and everything" is, famously, 42. The characters of the science fiction narrative realise upon receiving this answer that they have no idea what the actual question is. Just like answers, the texts we are surrounded by every day – news items, social media posts, movies, literature, commercials – cannot appear out of a void. They are responses to the situations and the intentions of the person(s) who produced them. Therefore, a critical approach to texts is needed to navigate through the complex textual world: We need to find out what the question was. We need to ask about the interests and motivations behind a text in order to know what exactly it might be trying to tell us and why, whether or not we can trust it, and what it might *not* be telling us. We need *critical literacy* (Janks, 2010; Luke & Freebody, 1997). In this study, I shall explore two empirical sets of data collected in two different research projects on Norwegian didactics that I have been part of. The aim of the present study is to gain a fuller understanding of the term *redesign* and an understanding of how redesign can be a method for working with critical literacy in the classroom.

In order to take part in, make sense of, and influence society, students need to develop a capacity for critique. Norman Fairclough calls this capacity "critical language awareness" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 532), and in our multimodal society this critical awareness must also include other semiotic modes than the verbal (Fairclough, 2006, p. 146). Making multimodal and digital texts such as films, webpages, presentations, and posters has become a natural addition to purely linguistic text production in the language subjects in both primary and secondary education (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019; Matre et al., 2021, p. 47). Secondary school students today have access to advanced tools for complex digital meaning making and use these with relative ease and as a matter of necessity. This is how they communicate with each other in social media, how they create and submit tasks at school and how they access news, information, and entertainment. Digital meaning making is a natural part of their literacy. *Literacy* is defined as the ability to *identify, understand,*

interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use texts (UNESCO, 2004, p. 13). The data sets I will be looking at have been collected in two different research projects with different aims and at different times. However, they have in common a focus on literacy. Both sets were also collected in Norway in classrooms at upper secondary level (ages 13–15) in the subject of Norwegian as a first language. However, the findings of the present study will also be valid for both first-language tuition in other linguistic communities and for a variety of other subjects, including both languages and social sciences. The theoretical framework of my analyses and discussion relies firstly on the social semiotic understanding of textual communication formulated by, among others, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2021/1996), and Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (1988). Social semiotics is based on Michael Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Secondly, I base my analyses on critical literacy theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003, 2006, 2010; Foucault, 1999/1970; Grue, 2015; Janks, 2010; Skrede, 2017), as this is the tradition where the term *redesign* originates in the sense in which it is used here. My studies are also anchored in an understanding of learning as a socially constructed productive activity (Boeriis, 2009; Burgess, 2016; Løvland, 2006; Selander & Kress, 2010).

In this study I pose the following overarching question: *How can redesign be a classroom method for critical literacy?* In order to answer this, I look at the two sets of empirical data and ask two further questions of each of them. Firstly, *In what way is this an example of critical literacy work?* Secondly, *What elements are necessary for this type of redesign project to improve students' critical literacy?* But first, in the following section, I shall explain what the social semiotic perspective on text and communication involves, then move on to unpack further the term *redesign* as it appears in critical literacy research.

Redesign in social semiotics and critical literacy

Social semiotics and multimodality

A social semiotic understanding of communication involves the realization that meaning is created in a cultural and social context, and thus that texts carry traces of their contexts in them. Any text is a product of choices made by the author, and those choices are made based on the author's interests – in other words, what they want to say. Analysing a text in its context and looking for its potential effects on society will therefore enable us to make assumptions about the interests and motivations that underlie the text. That all readings of texts are social and that interpretations are shared in discourse communities is an important premise for social semiotic research (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Gee, 2015; Halliday, 1978).

Social semiotics uses a wide definition of *text*, including modes of communication other than the linguistic (Hodge & Kress, 1998; Kress, 2009; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). A semiotic system, which we could also refer to

as a *mode*, is a more or less conventionalised system of semiotic resources for meaning making, and in mass media, on the internet, in public spaces and in the classroom, you would struggle to find a single text that is not multimodal (Kress, 2009; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021/1996). Semiotic systems let us create meaning potential in ways that are different for each system. *Modal affordance* is a term that is usually credited to Gunther Kress (for example 2009), and which refers to the abilities of semiotic systems to express certain meaning potentials. Affordance relates both to the modal and to the material side of expression. A semiotic system involves conventions for what kinds of meaning are usually expressed in what ways, and the physical manifestation of the text dictates to a certain extent what is and isn't possible to express (Ledin & Machin, 2018, p. 19). The term is relevant to the topic of this study as the redesign process often involves multiple semiotic modes with different affordances. Kay O'Halloran has shown how differences in the affordances of semiotic systems shape how we can interact with texts. For example, it is impossible to read a written text productively without following its temporal organization, and equally impossible to view an image without being guided by its spatial layout (O'Halloran, 2016, pp. 204–206). Moving images as a semiotic system involves a combination of temporal and spatial organization. Like language, a film unfolds temporally, but at the same time it can express multiple events occurring simultaneously.

Choosing the term redesign

In this study I use the term *redesign* to refer to the reworking, reshaping, and reformulating of a meaningful content. A redesign is a new text, but based on an existing one. In one of the data sets I look at, the redesigned texts are films based on literary short stories; in the other they are fictitious Instagram posts inspired by existing Instagram posts and by characters from Old Norse mythology. Some similar terms do exist, so I will briefly explain my choice to use *redesign* in the present study. In previous work I have used the term *resemiotisation* to refer to the transferring of a content of meaning from one semiotic system to another (Burgess, 2016; Iedema, 2001; O'Halloran et al., 2016) and, as I see it, this term has an almost identical definition to redesign. The difference lies in how *resemiotisation* focuses on creating meaning through semiotic systems (Iedema, 2001), whereas *redesign* focuses on doing the same through design (Janks, 2010). The term *resemiotisation* was coined by Rick Iedema in 2001. Related terms, such as *transmutation* (Jakobson, 1959) and *transduction* (Bezemer & Kress, 2008), can be interpreted as referring to a translation-like procedure, where the meaning potential remains unchanged, which is why these terms are not chosen for this study. The term *redesign* is chosen both because it is an accessible term for teachers and educators outside of the field of social semiotics (which resemiotisation might not be), and more importantly because it emphasises the visual aspect of the process through the use of the word *design*. In addition, it ties this study to the research field

of critical literacy where it has been used by, amongst others, Hillary Janks in her works on power and diversity, for example *Literacy and power* (2010). According to Janks, *design* is a concept that is used to refer to multimodal text production (Janks, 2006). This means that many of our classroom text production processes can be referred to as design. The concept of "learning by design" has been developed by, amongst others, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis who understand design as a type of activity that creates awareness of the epistemological moves that bring about texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Understanding how design works means learning to see what choices have been made creating a text, and what influenced those choices (Janks, 2010; Mills, 2010; Sjøhelle, 2013; Tønnessen, 2010). Janks' argument for using re-design as a method is that "All texts are constructed and that which has been constructed can be deconstructed" (Janks, 2010, p. 181). She consequently visualises redesign as a cyclical process with three phases: construction/design, deconstruction, and reconstruction/redesign. Each new design is the product of the interests and intentions of the text creator and their ideological values, which is why we say that no design can be neutral. Deconstruction involves analysis and understanding of the choices that lie behind the design and their effects, while reconstruction then involves construction guided by a new set of interests. The redesigned text must then be seen as a new design and deconstructed again (Janks, 2010, pp. 180–183). Redesign as a classroom method therefore necessarily contains both analytical and productive work. Redesign starts with an existing text or several existing texts that are analysed in the deconstruction phase, and reconstruction then involves using some elements from the original texts to create a new text with a different perspective. Importantly, the new design must then be analysed, and it is this going back and forth between text production and analysis which results in critical awareness in a way that analysis alone may not (Janks, 2010, pp. 155–161). Once one becomes aware of the interests and motivations behind someone else's choices, it becomes necessary to look at one's own choices and turn the deconstructing, analytical gaze upon one's own text.

Redesign and critical literacy

Critical literacy refers to an approach to teaching and learning which builds on the critical traditions of social sciences and linguistics, seeking to uncover and explain the use of power (Fairclough, 2003; Foucault, 1999/1970; Grue, 2015). The idea that communication is always, and must always be, ideological is at the core of this way of thinking. *Ideologies* are here understood as models of explanation and sets of views and values, rather than complete political ideologies. Thus, literary works of fiction, adverts, social media texts, academic texts, and movies are all ideological because they are created by people who make communicative choices based on their views of the world and their values. According to Janks, the key question for critical literacy is "Whose interests are served?" We need to ask this question of all texts, including our own, and

we need to develop students' ability to answer this question in order to enable them to navigate the textual world in an informed way. Redesign as a method rests on the assumption that it is possible to say something about the interests and motivations behind a text by analysing its elements (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Janks, 2010; Machin & Mayr, 2012). *Critical* in this context means both analytical and evaluative, so that students need to be able both to pick apart and understand the functions of textual elements, and to draw conclusions about the power relationships at work. Redesign as a classroom method may improve students' critical literacy by making them aware of the perspectives, the interests, and the power constructions behind text production. If education is to prepare students for the future, bearing in mind we can never know exactly what literacy will look like in the future, then teaching students to have a critical approach is of great importance for enabling them to navigate and take part in a complex digital textual world (Janks, 2010; Mills, 2010; Skrede, 2017).

Two examples of redesign as method in the classroom

In the following section I shall describe more closely the two sets of data exemplifying redesign used as a classroom method. First, I will outline each data set and describe the relevant findings of each research project as these emerge in the original studies, paying special attention to one example of data from each project. These examples are chosen for their relevance to the theme of the present study but nevertheless appear as representative examples of their respective bodies of data. I will then move on to discuss how the examples shed light on the potential of redesign as a classroom method.

Table 16.1 shows the empirical data summarised.

Table 16.1 The empirical data summarised

	Brief description of research project	*Data re-examined for this study*
Data set 1: Film adaptation, From PhD thesis (Burgess, 2016)	Students (year 9) create short films based on short stories. Project aim: To analyse the process as multimodal text production and the products as meaning making.	Script, storyboard, and finished short film of one group of students. Teachers' evaluation sheet. Classroom observations. Findings of analysis of 22 student groups' texts.
Data set 2: Hand-drawn Instagram posts From Article (Undrum et al., unpublished)	Students (year 8) create Instagram posts for Old Norse gods. Project aim: To analyse the texts as multimodal meaning making across dimensions of knowledge, and as identity constructions in a critical literacy context.	A fictional Instagram post created by a student. The students' analysis of their own texts. Findings of analysis of 31 students' texts. Interview with teachers.

Film adaptation: Redesigning a narrative

The thesis, *Fra novelle til film*, studies the production of films as multimodal texts in grade 9 (Burgess, 2016). The data collection was conducted in 2010, and in this project students in four parallel classes made short films based on fictional short stories. The students read and analysed the short stories in class and proceeded to make scripts and storyboards, record videoclips, and edit these into short films. The thesis explores the context for the text production, including the cultural, institutional, and situational contexts. It also looks at the students' production processes in terms of temporal management, order of text events, and construction of narrative: Finally, it looks more closely at the products of two groups of students and the functional choices they made. The thesis prefers the term *resemiotisation* because it points to sign-based meaning creation rather than "translation" as discussed, but in the present study I will refer to the process as redesign for reasons stated above. The objects that are being redesigned are the narratives of the short stories that the students have read. The students deconstructed the original texts, trying to grasp the narrative, and then reconstructed the narrative with new semiotic resources to create a film. Some attempted to stay as close as possible to the original narrative, while others deliberately altered the narrative (Burgess, 2016, for example, p. 166), but in either case the meaning potential of the redesigned text is necessarily different from that of the original text, due to the different affordances of the semiotic resources. The students worked in groups, and each group's redesign process can be traced in the texts they submitted in class along the way: the manuscript, the storyboard, and the finished film. The original analysis shows that student groups typically either planned their film in advance and then went on to produce a script, a storyboard, and a film that communicate more or less the same narrative, or they used the three stages to explore different filmic solutions, slightly altering the narrative in each version. Both these strategies involve an exploration of the affordances of film as mode, and the deconstruction of the original text for the reconstruction of the new. Findings from the thesis suggest that certain types of meaning were challenging for students to redesign because of how the affordances of written language differ from those of film. There are two main types of content which appear to have been the most challenging. The first is when the written text contains material processes that are impossible, difficult, or unpleasant to recreate for film, such as someone jumping out of a high window, fighting, or getting a drastic haircut. The second is when the written text contains mental or internal verbal processes that, for example, communicate someone's emotions or intentions, and inner dialogue or memories. The project finds the students to be creative facing these challenges, which means that they first had to understand the written text properly and what it is trying to convey, and then what options other sign systems offered to recreate or alter that meaning (Burgess, 2016, pp. 162–163). For example, many groups used music to convey the sadness felt by a character, and shifts in closeness or perspective to convey deliberate actions (Burgess, 2016, pp. 86–89, 166–197).

One group of five students that are referred to as Group A in the study (Burgess, 2016, pp. 166–181) redesigned the short story "Kniv" (the title translates to "Knife") by Erna Osland (2003). The story is frequently used in the Norwegian language subject for this level, and it follows a young person who is bullied at school as they decide to bring a knife with them and put a stop to the bullying. At the narrative's climax, they lose their nerve, and the knife stays in their bag. The story thematises bullying, violence, and the ethical questions surrounding these themes. Group A disliked the ending of the narrative, as they felt the underdog in the story failed, so in their redesign they wanted to change it. They agreed that they would explore what might have happened if the protagonist had pulled the knife on the bullies and wrote this into their script. They used the script and storyboard to explore how they could make it clear that the protagonist is the underdog and that the bullies are threatening, and that the bullying has been going on for some time. They chose to use a voice-over monologue to explain the girl's plan, and they mainly used costume, make-up, and embodied resources to communicate the power relations and social hierarchy of the characters.

In what way is this an example of critical literacy work? The project design described in the thesis, which I have drawn upon above, does not focus explicitly on critical literacy, and improved critical awareness is not expressed as a goal for the intervention. The project aims to get the students to actively explore what they can and cannot express through film as a semiotic mode, rather than teaching it to them by modelling. The question is whether this can result in improved critical literacy and what it would take for it to do so.

The group described above definitely displayed critical awareness in their reasoning for the narrative change in the story. They wanted to change the main action performed in the narrative, to change the values inferred. They disliked the fact that the bullies won and wanted to reverse the power relationship, and they certainly managed to do so. In their finished film the protagonist chases the bullies off with a big knife and then walks away smiling, dropping the weapon to the ground. In the evaluation phase of the film project, the teachers graded the groups' efforts and gave them written feedback on their films, but the films were not discussed critically, nor were the students asked to reflect on their own design choices or the effects of these. In other words, the cyclic aspect of Janks' redesign model was missing; the students were never asked to deconstruct their own (re)designs. This means that Group A were never asked what values their film communicated, for example what solutions to bullying it offers and how this could affect viewers. So, although we can definitely see signs that the students are seeing ideological implications in the text they are redesigning, this case is inconclusive as to whether they would be able to do the same with their own text, for example by discussing the moral inferences made regarding the use of a knife to overcome school bullies.

Construction and reconstruction will not automatically lead to critical awareness, and it is likely that some student groups in this project had no

critical approach to their short story, as they were not made aware of the ideological nature of texts, nor asked to look for ideological implications. The students were, nevertheless, made explicitly aware of how the choice and use of semiotic resources affect the message, and they practised analysing the effects of others' choices in filmmaking before going on to make their own. This awareness can, however, be said to have been multimodal more than critical. The example outlined here shows that the students are able to analyse a narrative to understand which values are implied and to reconstruct it in a way that implies alternative values that sit better with what they want to say. For this to have happened in more or all of the student groups, the classes would have had to have been made aware of the ideological nature of texts and of their own ideological position as text producers. This is what Janks refers to as empowering (Janks, 2010). It will not be obvious to students at this age that even fictional short stories are written with certain interests in mind and that they can be seen as ideological, but fiction communicates values and views of the world as much as non-fiction. The explorative approach to redesign that can be found in this data set is definitely suited to encourage critical thinking, as the students become aware that what they want to express is both limited and made possible by the resources at hand. However, improved critical literacy depends entirely on the framing of and meta-perspective on the text production in the classroom. The students need to be explicitly made aware of the concept of ideology and of how they too are working from an ideological point of view when creating texts.

Norse gods on Instagram: Redesigning identity construction

The second example of redesign as a classroom method is from the research project *Critical Literacy in a Digital and Global Textual World* (henceforth CritLit[1]). The project "aims to advance new learning and pedagogical models for critical literacy at lower secondary school level (students in year 8 or 9, age 13–15) to enable students to become critical readers and creative producers of digital texts" (Veum et. al., 2022). For the present study I have looked at a data set which was collected in two parallel classes at the same school, consisting of texts produced by students, the students' analysis of their own texts, and interviews with their teachers. The data set was analysed for a forthcoming article with the title "Norse gods on Instagram: Imitating Social Media as a Method for Practicing Critical Literacy" (Undrum et al., unpublished[2]). The task given to the students was to create Instagram posts by gods from Old Norse mythology. Instagram posts typically consist of an image and a short verbal text. The students worked individually, drawing images by hand or making digital collages. They represented a god of their choice and worked from an empty template that resembled the layout of Instagram for smartphone. The study finds that in their redesigns the students have used elements from different dimensions of knowledge (i.e., knowledge about Old Norse mythology and culture, and knowledge about present-day culture and social media discourse)

and combined these in ways that alter the meaning potential of each element. Prior to the productive work, the students had worked in groups analysing real Instagram posts by celebrities, influencers, and public institutions (such as the Norwegian military). The students were asked to discuss how images represented the sender and in what way. They were also asked to analyse the values communicated by the texts and their potential effect on society. After the redesign phase, the students analysed their own texts in the same way. In the 31 texts studied, it is clear that the vast majority of the students are very familiar with the template provided by Instagram and the discourse that appertains to it. Equally, they show familiarity with Old Norse mythology and the traditional ways of depicting the gods. In the following I shall render the names of the Norse gods with Norwegian spelling (i.e., Tor and Frøya.), following the practice of the article I am referring to.

One student created an Instagram post for the god Tor using digital collage. In the image we see a picture of the Australian actor Chris Hemsworth who plays the character Thor (based on the Old Norse god) in the superhero movies by Marvel Studios. The character is shown in front of a modern-day bedroom interior where the iconic hammer from the movies is lying on the bed. He is shown wearing an oversized white hoodie and holding a can of the energy drink Red Bull. Behind him is a banner with the words "Saturday is for the boys".[3] Underneath the username in the post, it says "paid sponsorship by Red Bull", and the hashtags "#redbull" and "#sponsored" are added to the verbal text following the image: "I simply love Red Bull. Buy Red Bull now to get as strong as me". The fictitious post also contains comments from other gods from Old Norse mythology: Tor's wife Siv and Frøya the goddess of love.

In what way is this an example of critical literacy work? The example described above shows that the student is able to understand and reproduce text norms from social media. The text uses sponsorship, clothes, product placement, hashtags, emojis, and reference to a superhero character to construct values such as male companionship, stereotypical masculinity, toughness, and fashion awareness. Assigning these values to the Old Norse god of thunder can be seen as a way of redesigning Tor as a modern-day influencer or celebrity. It can also be seen as a humorous comment on how we communicate on social media.

As opposed to the first data set examined, this project had a clear aim of improving critical literacy. Thus, the analytic and deconstructive part of the assignment was explicitly critically framed. The students were asked to look for ideological implications in Instagram posts by celebrities, influencers, and social institutions. In the analysis of their own text, the student wrote that the implied ideological value of the post was that "it is important to spend time with one's friends", and the potential social effect was that "more people might buy Red Bull". These answers show that even in this data set the cyclic aspect of Janks' redesign model may not have been completed fully, despite the critical framing of the project. Most of the students in the data set gave vague answers as to what values and social effects their texts

might postulate, and this may be because the texts they had produced were fictions, and they were being asked about values and social effects as if the Instagram posts were real. Rather than being asked actively to deconstruct their own texts with critical questions, the students were asked vague, open-ended questions. Although they were asked to point out the effects of the semiotic choices they had made and were able to do this, they were not asked to discuss these effects critically. For instance, the example described above constructs an idea of what masculinity is and should be, which could have been discussed.

Interestingly, however, the students also found it hard to criticise the ideological values implied by the real Instagram posts that they had analysed prior to the text production phase. In an interview their teacher said that the students didn't really understand the significance of that question, as the students did not really believe that Instagram posts were made with any strategy, not even when made by artists or influencers. This suggests that even though the students were effectively copying strategies from social media discourse in their texts, they were not quite aware of how *all* texts are strategic and what that means.

Redesign as classroom method for improving critical literacy

I will now move on to discussing the potential of the empirical examples described above as classroom methods for improving students' critical literacy.

Redesign should create critical awareness of text strategy in the students, but what does it take for this to occur? The idea, as described earlier, is that by going back and forth between analysis and text production, students can be made aware of how their own text production is *always* strategic in that it is always guided by whatever interests they have, whether that is convincing a reader of a particular political viewpoint, making an audience laugh, or getting a good grade. Realizing this about one's own texts is a step towards realizing that *all* texts are in fact similarly guided by interests, and that analysis gives us the tools to find out what these interests might be.

As I have stated, the two projects described differ in aim. The first looked at multimodal text production, whereas the second explicitly sought to work with critical literacy. However, it is clear from the examples described in detail that both data sets show potential for improved critical literacy. In the first example, we see how a group of students are able to criticise the values expressed by a written text and redesign it as a film in a way that expresses different values. In the second example, we see how a student is able to draw from two areas of knowledge, namely social media and Old Norse mythology, to create a text that can be read both as a construction of identity for the god Tor and as a comment on how people behave and communicate on social media. However, in both cases it seems that the students do not deconstruct their own redesigns fully. In the first example, the redesign was treated as a product and was simply graded and given verbal feedback. The

students were at no point asked critical questions about their own texts or asked about their interests and motivations. In the second example, the student was asked to analyse their own text and write about the values it expressed and the potential social effects it could have. However, these two questions appear to have been too vague and too far removed from the redesign activity for the students to be able to use them to discuss their own work critically. It is not possible to determine whether or not the redesign process has actually led to improved critical literacy in either of the examples, but it seems quite clear that what could have led to such an improvement in both cases is the going back and forth between analysis and text production, as prescribed by Janks (2010).

In order to carry out this classroom method for working with critical literacy, the activity needs critical framing and a critical meta-perspective. This necessarily involves the supervising teachers modelling the critical approach through two important steps:

1 Introducing critical literacy as a framework for working with texts explicitly in the classroom.
2 Guiding the students through the analysis of their own text before, or indeed instead of, evaluation.

The teacher's role has not been the focus of this chapter but is something that requires further research into how teachers interpret *critical literacy*, how they go about working with critical literacy, and what is required of the teacher in critical literacy work in the classroom.

Summary and concluding remarks

In this study I have unpacked and explained the term *redesign* as used in critical literacy research. The term has proved fruitful for describing a method for critical literacy work, due to its focus on visual communication, something which is central to the digital textual world. I have looked at two examples of how redesign can be employed as a method for working with texts in the classroom. The aim of redesign as a method is to improve the critical literacy of the students, and the two examples show that redesign did enable the students both to reconstruct content and gain analytical insight into how meaning is created with the semiotic resources they had access to. However, both examples show that in order for improvement of critical literacy to take place, the students need to be made aware of how both their own and others' text production is guided by certain interests and motivations, and that this means that every text is ideological. Redesign offers a method for doing this in the classroom, but it is essential that the method is seen and performed as cyclic, meaning that there is movement from analysis to text production and back to analysis. The critical meta-perspective must be supplied by the teacher throughout the redesign process.

Notes

1 A collaborative project, funded by the Research Council of Norway, among the University of Southeast Norway, the University of Agder, and the Australian Catholic University (2020–2023). https://www.usn.no/forskning/forskningsgrupper-og-senter/humanistiske-fag/sosialsemiotikk-sfl-og-multimodalitet/critlit/
2 In the present study I refer to data analysis carried out for an early draft of the article, and all data and analyses may not be referred to in the published version. Expected date of publication is 2023.
3 This and all quotes from the student text are translated from Norwegian by me.

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Afterword

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Our initial interest concerned the practical use of diverse educational resources within a range of educational settings and subject/disciplinary traditions. We challenged researchers and educators to present and explore concrete examples from their scientific or teaching experience, addressing how educational resources – in a broad understanding – have been used, can be used, and are being used in different educational settings. Pedagogical reflections, educational policies, and societal contexts play a role in these explorations. The recent pandemic had also raised our awareness as to how teaching practices and didactical thinking are adjusted and transformed in changing situations. The main intention behind this volume was to display the use of resources in education across the humanities and social sciences, from different social, political, and historical contexts, and all educational levels, in order to make new connections and inspire future interdisciplinary cooperation. This book is not intended as a handbook on the use of learning materials but as an invitation to critical reflection about how, why, and when we use different resources and to what end. In drawing together examples and chapters from a wide range of subjects, this volume allows for a fruitful interdisciplinary and didactical discussion of these topics.

How, why, and when to use different resources are fundamental questions to everyone involved in teaching. The chapters are a reminder of how these questions should be at the heart of our reflections on the role of education and can hence be seen in relation to the north-west European *Didaktik* tradition (see, for example, Krogh et al., 2021). Although the term didactics may be used with different connotations in different national and historical contexts, we want to emphasise that our reflections on the use of educational resources are rooted in our pedagogical thinking and adapted to the specific subjects and levels of education, as well as in resonance with the social and cultural contexts and the individuals – both teachers and students – involved in the concrete educational practices. Many of the chapters of the volume are grounded in *subject-specific or disciplinary didactics*. Subject-specific didactics can be seen as involving both constructions of knowledge and teaching practice (Schneuwly & Vollmer, 2018).

Considering this, we would also like to highlight alternative ways this book can be read and used. We believe that the structure we have chosen is the best

for this volume, but we appreciate that there are also other links between the chapters. Thus, the next sections will outline some of the alternative constellations of chapters, methodological approaches, perspectives, and ideas that can be a source of inspiration.

The methodological approaches of the chapters in this volume represent different academic traditions. The chapters of Ruud and Kennedy are based on *ethnographical* studies and present fieldnotes and reflections on how the encounters between students and a museum or site of heritage may play out in concrete educational practices. Sensory experiences, curiosity, bodily movements, and interactions between the participants may be explored in such field studies of how educational resources are actualised. Aamaas, Bjerknes, and Eriksen's chapters on reading circles and slow learning illustrate how an *autoethnographic* approach especially enables the educators' reflections on their own learning process as a collective process.

Several authors use *textual analyses and/or historical source* material to explore how educators have reflected on learning materials and especially different learning activities in different historical and/or social contexts. Roos explores how critical thinking played a role in discussions on language use in a Norwegian school in the 1950s, Oo and Davidsen use critical discourse analysis to study approaches to play-based learning in government documents in Norway and the UK. The source material gives the authors an empirical base for discussions and reflections on how pedagogical thinking is applied and addressed in different social contexts. Another example of how context, and its material expression in buildings, is important may be found in Mork's historical chapter on the relationship between Bildung and architecture in the comparative study of two Scandinavian upper secondary schools. Roll-Hansen and Nordberg similarly use different sources to explore how politically motivated goals and ideals for education may be translated into such diverse educational practices as tree-planting and critical reflections on pornography. The chapters serve as examples of not only the possibilities but also the possible pitfalls in using 'untraditional' educational resources and hence show the potential of historical approaches to these reflections.

To many of the authors the theoretical didactical reflections, inspired by the possibilities in new approaches to specific resources – street names, video games, personal memorabilia, or songs – represent the main interest. This applies to the chapters by Alvestad, Brazier and Sandberg, Bornholdt, and Lund. The first three of these texts combine concrete examples and described teaching experiences with careful theoretical discussions on central themes from current didactical literature, as to how to work towards historical empathy and historical consciousness, whereas Lund's chapter presents a survey on how teachers of English as a second language value and conceptualise the use of songs and singing.

Many of the texts draw on examples from the authors' own professional experiences, in the form of reflections and observations, surveys, or student products. The research materials of Burgess and Rustand result from the use of new digital media in educational settings, subjected to systematic analysis. In

the chapters of Birkeland and Brinch, reflections on teaching activities are being used as a starting point for theoretical discussions, combining pedagogical theory with insights from their respective academic fields.

We have chosen a thematic structure of the volume: places, activities and artefacts, and new media – however, there is also diversity within and between these parts, not only regarding methodological approaches but also if we look at the level of education the examples are drawn from: with a range from kindergarten and play-based learning (Chapter 9) to explorations of place-based writing at PhD level (Chapter 5). We have deliberately chosen not to emphasise the levels of education in this book as we think it is important that the different activities and resources that are presented may be inspiring to readers practising on all educational levels. Neither have we chosen to structure the volume according to historical chronology nor do we imply that today's use of resources is necessarily more 'innovative' than former practices. Singing (Chapter 12), visiting museums (Chapters 1 and 2), and tree-planting (Chapter 11) are examples of how different activities have a long trajectory in Scandinavian schooling. We have also chosen not to structure the volume according to the represented teaching subjects, such as history, languages, and geography. Although all the examples are taken from the humanities and social sciences, we stress the importance to think beyond narrow subjects. This inter-disciplinary approach is in line with today's Norwegian curricula and fits the examples in the volume very well: several of these demonstrate how different skills, competencies, and knowledges are intertwined in the learning processes that are taking place. As mentioned, the chapters are largely grounded in discipline-specific methodological and theoretical approaches, such as historical consciousness, semiotics, place, and social choreographies. To us, this illustrates the need to ground our didactical reflections in subject knowledges – in order to have a solid basis for developing new educational practices.

When we started working on this volume, we were interested in how educators used educational resources to promote knowledges relevant to the humanities and social sciences. On the background of the international discourse on education and competencies, we find it necessary to ground our reflections in academic and didactical traditions. We also want to emphasise the value of interdisciplinarity, and the inspiration to be drawn between different subjects – and also between different levels of education: from kindergarten to higher education. We hope that the contributions of this volume can inspire researchers and educators both inside and outside our Scandinavian context.

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