COGNITIVE ACTIVATION IN L1 LITERATURE CLASSES

A content-specific framework for the description of teaching quality

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Abstract

In recent years, the scientific determination of teaching quality has become a central topic and productive field within empirical classroom research. With respect to L1 literature education, there is no framework within which attempts can be made to consistently interpret domain-specific criteria of teaching quality. Against this background, this paper follows two main questions: What does teaching quality in L1 literature classrooms mean? How can teaching quality be operationalised? This paper argues that the construct of cognitive activation offers a suitable approach to integrate existing specifications of teaching quality in L1 literature classrooms and to identify and define characteristics of a content-specific view. The key result presented in this paper is a highly inferential coding system that operationalises cognitive activation for L1 literature classes. The operationalisation regards tasks in process to be indicators for cognitive activation. The theoretical conceptualisation is based on empirical data from a pilot study for the research project KoALa (Cognitive Activation through Tasks in Literature Classes). In this pilot study, six literature lessons were videotaped, involving analysis of the same short story with six different teachers and classes (107 students, grade 8, German "Gymnasium").

Keywords: cognitive activation, tasks, L1 literature classes, empirical classroom research, teaching quality

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1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding how to determine teaching quality has become a focal topic for discussion in current empirical classroom research and provides opportunities for deeper investigation (Charalambous & Praetorius, 2018; McElvany, Bos, Holtappels, Gebauer, & Schwabe, 2016). In this context, many different frameworks exist that aim to grasp the respective construct of teaching quality and what this entails. Charalambous and Praetorius (2018) distinguish between more generic and more subject-specific frameworks. They do not assume a dichotomy but a continuum between the two, including hybrid frameworks. In an analysis of twelve current frameworks for the assessment of teaching quality (generic, hybrid and domain-specific in a mathematics context), the same authors discover many differences concerning theoretical underpinnings and operationalisations (Praetorius & Charalambous, 2018). On the other hand, they can show parallels and point out common elements which the frameworks draw on; for example, classroom and time management, content selection and presentation, and socio-emotional support (Praetorius & Charalambous, 2018, p. 546f.). To sum up, these results demonstrate both the necessity and the opportunity to find a common understanding and language with respect to teaching quality.

Finding common references for teaching quality is also a desideratum in the research field of L1 literature education. In the German context from where this paper emerges, notions of 'good' literature classes have mainly been explained from a normative point of view. In the international context, there are several studies available that investigate literature teaching and its effects empirically from a more or less content-specific perspective. However, there is no existing framework that establishes what the content-specific criteria of teaching quality are in L1 literature classes. Against this background, this paper follows two main questions: What does teaching quality in L1 literature classrooms mean? How can teaching quality be operationalised?

To answer these questions, this paper suggests drawing on the construct of cognitive activation which makes it possible both to integrate existing conceptualisations of teaching quality in L1 literature lessons and to specify content-specific characteristics. As a result, a highly inferential coding system for cognitive activation for L1 literature classes will be presented. The coding system was developed in an iterative process based on pilot data in the context of an empirical classroom research project in German L1 literature education (see Section 2). The suggested concept specification and operationalisation spell out which teaching characteristics should be related to learning outcomes in the project context in future research. Moreover, it offers for discussion which aspects can be considered as representative for teaching quality in L1 literature lessons from a domain-specific point of view and how these aspects can be captured. The presentation of the coding system is preceded by the project context and theoretical background of the approach, and the research

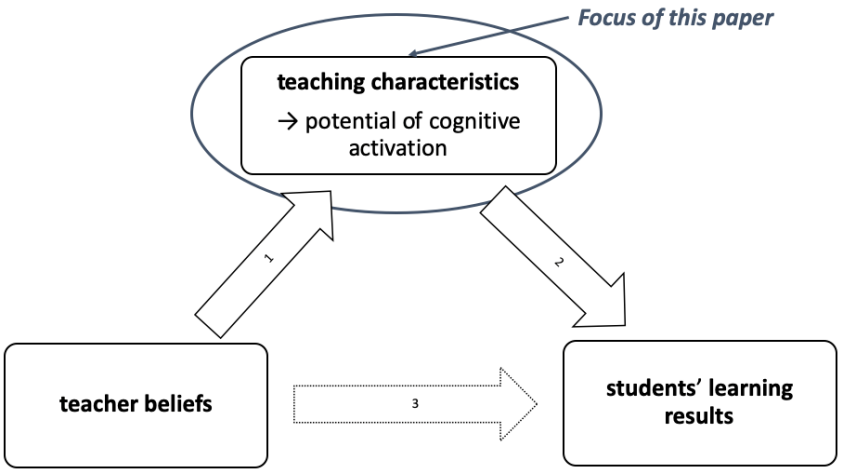
methods will be explicated. The coding system will be corroborated and discussed based on classroom examples from the pilot study.

Results based on the same data have already been published in a previous paper addressed to German speaking L1 researchers (Winkler, 2017). The current paper elaborates upon connections with international discourse around this topic and adds new results, modifications and additional information.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

The following concept specification is part of the research project KoALa (Cognitive Activation through Tasks in Literature Classes), which investigates the relationship between teacher beliefs, teaching characteristics and learning outcomes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Aspects and relations investigated in the project KoALa



With this research focus, the overall study aims at filling a research gap concerning L1 literature lessons in Germany since there are only a few empirical classroom studies available (for a summary cf. Wieser, 2019). The research gap applies to (1) relations between teachers' beliefs and teaching characteristics, as well as to (2) relations between teaching characteristics and learning results, and (3) potential indirect relations between teacher beliefs and learning results (Figure 1). The present article is based on a pilot study of the research project (see Section 4). The main study is planned for 30 classes in the 8th grade of German "Gymnasium" (secondary school with advanced track, leading to a higher education entrance qualification) and has not been conducted yet.

KoALa follows a mixed-methods design (Winkler & Steinmetz, 2016). For data collection, questionnaires, tests and videotaping are combined. In the context of this paper, it must be mentioned that in terms of the assessment of *students' learning results,* KoALa relates to results of a reading literacy test that all German 8th grade classes are required to write (IQB, n.d.). This nationwide test is constructed quite closely aligned to the PISA framework of reading literacy (OECD, 2018); it allows for results from one class to be compared with the results of other classes with similar preconditions and characteristics. Therefore, KoALa data on teaching characteristics in a class can be correlated with the level of reading literacy the class has achieved in comparison with similar classes. Furthermore, a focus on the class achievement regarding certain tasks in the reading literacy test, such as reflection and evaluation tasks, is possible.

As already mentioned, there is no framework for the determination of content-specific teaching quality in literature classes. Thus, this paper focuses on the question of how teaching characteristics can be captured in a way that is content-specific for literature classes. To answer this, the paper suggests drawing on the concept of cognitive activation. The presented framework is an important interim result of the study and builds a basis for KoALa's main study, but it also contributes to the general discourse on teaching quality in L1 literature classes.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The following operationalisation of cognitive activation (see Section 5 below) claims to be content-specific for literature classrooms and draws on an existing construct of general classroom research. Thus, the presentation of the theoretical background first concentrates on aspects of content specificity in L1 literature classes. Second, the concept of cognitive activation is described and connected to other concepts of teaching quality—in literature classes and beyond. Third, as the paper argues that tasks are proper indicators to operationalise cognitive activation, the underlying understanding of tasks in learning contexts is established.

3.1 Aspects of content specificity in L1 literature classes

This paper follows the assumption that literary texts are the main learning content in literature classes and that literary texts show certain characteristics representing the specificity of literature (Section 3.1.1). It is in terms of these characteristics that certain stances and learning objectives are considered typical or suitable with respect to literary texts used in class (Section 3.1.2).

3.1.1 Literariness

As Schrijvers and colleagues have discussed, literariness cannot be described as "a fixed, universal concept" (Schrijvers, Jansssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019, p. 5).

How literariness is determined depends on social conventions and readers' prior knowledge. Usually, literariness is connected to certain text features that distinguish literary texts from others. Miall (2007), drawing on Czech structuralism and Russian formalism, points out that foregrounded features are the characteristics of literary texts that differentiate them from non-literary texts. Foregrounded features are those that "stand against the background of common usage. Such features as assonance, metre, syntactic inversion, or metaphor, are effective in attracting attention; they serve to defamiliarize the reader […]" (Miall, 2007, p. 18). In KoALa, we assume that literary texts challenge readers to construct meaning under the following conditions: indirectness (e.g., metaphoric language), indefiniteness (lack of information, e.g., on intentions of characters), dense interrelations between text characteristics (content information, form), and ambiguity (Zabka, 2006). Regarding indefiniteness and ambiguity, Iser (1970) emphasises the appellative structure of literary texts, that is, reading literature raises readers' questions. Langer (1995) even indicates questions as "part of the literary experience" when she describes the effects of literary ambiguity and openness on the reader: "the literary experience involves the raising of questions; questions are necessary and normal when a person is exploring horizons of possibilities" (Langer, 1995, p. 58). This feature of understanding literature will be picked up below in the presentation of the content-specific operationalisation of cognitive activation (see Section 5.2.1).

Different characteristics of literary and factual texts are reflected in distinguishable constructs of literary literacy and factual reading literacy. Frederking and colleagues (2012) provide empirical evidence that literary literacy, that is, the ability to understand literary texts, can be distinguished from factual reading literacy for expository texts. According to their results, literary literacy is a two-dimensional construct consisting of semantic and idiolectal literary literacy. Semantic literary literacy stands for the ability to comprehend the content of a literary text, considering typical features as openness and ambiguity. Idiolectal literary literacy means "the ability to analyze the formal characteristics of a literary text with respect to their aesthetic functions" (Frederking et al., 2012, p. 4).

3.1.2 Stances towards literature and aims of literature education

The previous remarks indicate that making meaning with texts is a process of active construction. During this process, reader and text interact in the form of concept-driven top-down processes and data-driven bottom-up processes (e.g., Kintsch, 2013). This paper follows a socio-cognitive model of reading, that is, in the classroom context, reading as a meaning-construction process involves reader, text, classroom community, and teacher (Ruddell & Unrau, 2013). Thus, it is the teacher who has an essential influence on the focus and objective of dealing with literature in the classroom.

Due to the ambiguity and indefiniteness of literature, an open approach without any bias is considered adequate regarding literary texts in literature classes. For

example, Langer (1995) discusses “exploring horizons of possibilities” as a key concept of literature education (see also Section 3.1.1). For literature teachers, the respective openness is connected to the challenge of initiating and maintaining active communication to develop understanding of literary texts without obstructing the students’ independent thinking by either using overly open or directed prompts (e.g., Härle & Steinbrenner, 2004; Zabka, 2015). With respect to this challenge, Zabka (2015) speaks about the ‘art’ of conducting literary conversations in class.

Rosenblatt (1938/2005) prefers to speak about the transaction between reader and text instead of interaction, highlighting the fact that during the reading process the reader and the text are not static entities. She introduces a basic distinction between an efferent and aesthetic stance towards reading. The efferent stance focuses primarily on given facts and logical aspects (public aspects) of meaning whereas the aesthetic stance takes into consideration mainly personal and affective aspects (private aspects) of meaning. As Rosenblatt points out, the two stances are poles of a continuum, and both stances can occur regarding literary and factual texts.

It is quite common to assume a more reader-oriented, personally involving approach to literary texts in the classroom on the one hand and a more text-oriented, analytical approach on the other hand. Dressman and Faust (2014) have analysed articles on teaching poetry in the *English Journal,* “the oldest practice-oriented journal of literacy education in the United States” (Dressman & Faust, 2014, p. 39) with respect to the prevailing orientation towards teaching poetry. The authors agree that most of the papers are predominately related to either a “populist” orientation (with emphasis on personal responses) or “formalist” orientation (with emphasis on cultural knowledge and text analysis). Whereas both orientations were represented to a remarkable extent until 1970/71, the populist orientation has, since then, clearly dominated.

Witte and Sâmihăian (2013) conducted a comparative analysis of formal literature curricula for the 7th and the 12th grade in six European countries through the lenses of four paradigms of teaching literature that developed in Europe during the last century: cultural, linguistic, social, and personal growth. Again, the four paradigms can be related to the two above-mentioned approaches to literature—a more content- and text-oriented approach (cultural, linguistic) and a more student- or reader-oriented approach (social, personal growth). As the authors have demonstrated, curricula of most countries of their sample are poly-paradigmatic, but there seems to be clear cultural differences concerning the prioritisation of the approaches and paradigms.

Traditionally, the reader-oriented and text-oriented approaches to teaching literature have been seen as conflicting positions. For example, Dressman and Faust diagnose “relatively little *communication* between holders of the two points of view” (Dressman & Faust, 2014, p. 49). Frederking and Albrecht (2016) presented an intervention study in German literature classes (grade 10, Gymnasium) that made a deliberate conceptual distinction between both approaches. The study scrutinised the effects of two different types of literary classroom talk; cognitively oriented

communication (KOKIL) and aesthetically oriented communication (ÄSKIL). Under ÄSKIL conditions (*N* = 17 classes, 344 students), the classroom talk started with and built upon students' personal written responses to a poem (emotion and irritation evoked by the text) with the teacher acting more as a moderator than a guide. Under KOKIL conditions (*N* = 12 classes, 237 students), text-oriented comprehension (writing a summary) was the starting point and the teacher conducted a text-oriented talk. The study included a control group (*N* = 5 classes, 118 students). The KOKIL group surpassed the ÄSKIL group in terms of idiolectal literacy. In regard to semantic literacy, no differences between both groups occurred (Frederking et al., 2012). The ÄSKIL group, however, reached higher scores than the other groups concerning emotional understanding of the poem's first-person speaker, personal involvement as to classroom talk and topic, and experience of ambiguity (Frederking & Albrecht, 2016).

In an intervention study with 226 students in 9th grade in secondary schools with basic track, Henschel and colleagues (2016) revealed comparable results. They investigated the effects of reader-oriented tasks stimulating both cognitive and affective processing on the one hand and text-oriented tasks with a focus on cognitive-analytic processing on the other hand. The text-oriented group surpassed the reader-oriented group in content-related and form-related understanding. The reader-oriented group was more interested in tasks; empathy for main characters increased slightly in the reader-oriented group and decreased slightly in the text-based group (Henschel, Meier, & Roick, 2016). The results of Frederking and Albrecht's study (2016) as well as Henschel et al.'s study (2016) can be interpreted as evidence for the assumption that reader-oriented and text-oriented approaches to literature should be combined and complement each other in literature classes.

This is a position that seems to be a growing consensus, at least among researchers in the field of L1 literature education. As Peskin emphasises, both approaches "need not be pitted against each other" (Peskin, 2011, p. 48). From a theoretical point of view, Zabka (2016), for example, stresses the interdependent relevance of both immersion and reflection: "The reader's response to the text, inextricably bound up with his or her emotions and judgements, produces the object of reflection, analysis and interpretation" (Zabka, 2016, p. 228; for the German context see also Spinner, 2006; Winkler, 2015). Several studies deliver empirical evidence that a balance between text- and reader-orientation should be reached in the literature classroom. For example, in an intervention study (*N* = 138 students, 2 classes each in grades 6, 9 and 12), Peskin (2011) showed that explicit guidance in focusing on symbols in poetry both increased students' performance in symbolic interpretation of poems and their enjoyment ratings of poems. In both cases the intervention group surpassed the control group, who talked about different poems and wrote their own poems, but did not receive specific scaffolding in symbolic interpretation.

Focusing on readers outside of the classroom context, a think-aloud study conducted by Janssen and colleagues (2012) makes it clear that 'good' adolescent readers (*N* = 10) respond to literary stories cognitively as well as affectively in a flexible way. In contrast, 'weak' readers (*N* = 9) stick to unvarying patterns of response

(Janssen, Braaksma, Rijlaarsdam, & van den Bergh, 2012). Schrijvers and colleagues have recently presented a review of thirteen intervention studies interrogating if and under which conditions literature education fosters students' insight into human nature (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019). The concept 'insight into human nature' covers three facets: insight into oneself, understanding of fictional others, and understanding of real-world others. For the categorisation of classroom conditions, these authors agree with Murphy and colleagues (2009), who suggest a modification of Rosenblatt's concept of stances. Murphy and colleagues rename Rosenblatt's aesthetic stance as 'expressive stance' to stress the emphasis on affective responses to the text. Additionally, they introduce a third stance, the 'critical-analytical stance', that combines text-oriented and personal responses:

> Such a stance encourages a discussion in which the reader's querying mind is engaged, prompting him or her to ask questions, and promoting a more subjective, critical response toward the text. (Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey, & Alexander, 2009, p. 742)

Summarising their results, Schrijvers and colleagues highlight "that taking both an expressive and critical-analytical stance toward texts seems most promising for fostering students' insight into human nature" (Schrijvers et al., 2019, p. 32f.). Similar results are reported from a quasi-experimental classroom study that Schrijvers and colleagues conducted in person (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, de Maeyer, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019). In this study with 15-year-old students, so-called Transformative Dialogic Literature Teaching (TLDT) conditions (N = 166), fostering an expressive as well as reflective view on literary texts, were compared with regular literature teaching (RLT; N = 166) with emphasis on analysis of literary texts. TLDT conditions not only had positive effects on the students' insight into human nature but also on their aesthetic awareness, for example, concerning style and language.

Against this background, the present paper assumes that relating personal and analytical approaches to literature in the classroom is a promising way to reach accepted aims of literature education, such as gaining insight into human nature, interpreting and evaluating literary texts, and enjoying literature.

3.2 Cognitive activation

3.2.1 Concept description

The construct of cognitive activation is part of the German framework of the 'Three Basic Dimensions' of teaching quality. In addition to cognitive activation, classroom management and student support pertain to these three basic dimensions (e.g., Kunter & Voss, 2013, Praetorius, Klieme, Herbert, & Pinger, 2018). Classroom management incorporates aspects such as behaviour management and time on task. The dimension of student support applies to teacher-student relations and classroom climate. Cognitive activation refers to relations between students and learning

content. With respect to cognitive activation, it has consistently been claimed that content-specific operationalisation is necessary (e.g., Klieme, 2006; Klieme & Rakoczy, 2008; Praetorius et al., 2018). However, the overall framework of Three Basic Dimensions is categorised as a generic framework of teaching quality. The three-factor structure has been confirmed in several studies, though the basic dimensions were operationalised heterogeneously (Praetorius et al., 2018). The framework in these cases was mainly used for studies in mathematics and science classes. Summarising the results, the Three Basic Dimensions have proven empirically to be predictors of students' learning outcomes and motivational characteristics (e.g., Klieme, Schümer, & Knoll, 2001; Klieme, Pauli, & Reusser, 2009; Lipowsky et al., 2009). However, the evidence is not homogeneous (for a summary cf. Praetorius et al., 2018).

Cognitively activating teaching is generally described as challenging for the students, inspiring them to reflect deeply on the taught content. Lipowsky and colleagues explicate the construct as follows:

> Cognitive activation is an instructional practice that encourages students to engage in higher-level thinking and thus to develop an elaborated knowledge base. In cognitively activating instruction, the teacher stimulates the students to disclose, explain, share, and compare their thoughts, concepts, and solution methods by presenting them with challenging tasks, cognitive conflicts, and differing ideas, positions, interpretations, and solutions. The likelihood of cognitive activation increases when the teacher calls students' attention to connections between different concepts and ideas, when students reflect on their learning and the underlying ideas, and when the teacher links new content with prior knowledge. (Lipowski et al., 2009, p. 529)

First, the quotation exemplifies that perspectives on what is called cognitive activation do not distinguish accurately between instructional offers and their effects. The present paper follows the model of supply and use of instructional offers according to Helmke (2014). The core idea of the model makes a clear distinction between learning opportunities on the one hand and the students' use of these opportunities on the other hand (for a summary in English see Brühwiler & Blatchford, 2011). Against this background, teaching characteristics with potential for cognitive activation must be distinguished from actual learning activities. Second, the quoted description indicates that cognitive activation lies under the surface of teaching. This means that neither cognitively activating teaching characteristics nor the resulting mental activities of learners can be directly observed; therefore, these cannot be concluded simply from surface structures of teaching, for example, forms of classroom organisation (Oser & Baeriswyl, 2001; Seidel, 2003a). Indicators must therefore be set by researchers.

Depending on the particular research perspective, different teaching characteristics have been described as aspects of cognitive activation. A relatively widespread approach to operationalise cognitive activation is based on the characteristics of the tasks worked on in class (Batzel et al., 2013; Kunter & Trautwein, 2013; Kunter & Voss, 2013; Neubrand, Jordan, Krauss, Blum, & Löwen, 2013). Additionally, the quality of content-related classroom talk is considered (Lipowsky et al., 2009).

Generally speaking, cognitively activating tasks are those that motivate learners to productively link new ideas or information with their prior knowledge, including personal experiences (Baumert et al., 2013; Kunter & Trautwein, 2013; Neubrand et al., 2013). Classroom talk is regarded as cognitively activating when it addresses learners personally and encourages them to give reasons, elaborate on ideas, link knowledge and reflect (Kunter & Trautwein, 2013). These general characteristics of cognitive activating tasks and classroom talk already show reference points regarding the accepted features of literature teaching, namely the deliberate connection and further elaboration of personal as well as analytical views on the taught content.

3.2.2 Studies and frameworks with overlap to the concept of cognitive activation

A number of classroom studies show an explicit or implicit connection to the concept of cognitive activation. The following overview concentrates on studies with a focus on L1 literature classes as well as on studies with interdisciplinary orientation and potential for transfer to literature education.

Lotz (2016) investigates cognitive activation in reading lessons in 1st grade classes in German primary schools; to achieve this, she chooses an operationalisation via tasks and the related classroom discourse. However, literature-specific challenges are not considered in her investigation.

Frederking and Albrecht (2016) refer to aspects of cognitive activation at least terminologically, but they reveal a reduced understanding of the concept. In their intervention study on the effects of different types of literary classroom talk in German literature classes (for details see Section 3.1.2), the authors consider the KOKIL conditions (emphasis on text-oriented comprehension) to be aligned with the concept of cognitive activation. This means that a pivotal aspect of cognitive activation, as discussed above, is ignored, namely the building of connections between prior knowledge and experiences on the one hand and new information on the other. Besides, the study assumes that certain forms of classroom organisation shape the quality of literary understanding processes. Thus, the crucial distinction between surface and depth structures of learning is not accounted for.

In international classroom research, 'dialogic teaching' is an umbrella concept (Kim & Wilkinson, 2019) with relevance for the conceptualisation and operationalisation of cognitive activation. The term 'dialogic teaching' labels a bundle of features of classroom talk. For a summary of these features, Kim and Wilkinson (2019) refer to Alexander's (2017) framework of dialogic teaching because they consider it to be the "most comprehensive" and "most influential" framework in this field (Kim & Wilkinson, 2019, p. 71). According to Alexander (2017), dialogic teaching is characterised by five features: It is collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, and purposeful. Research on corresponding teaching approaches supplies increasing evidence "that dialogic teaching improves performance in students' content knowledge, comprehension, and reasoning" (Kim & Wilkinson, 2019, p. 71).

The overlap between characteristics of dialogic teaching and cognitively activating classroom talk mainly consists in the enhancement of content-related and elaborative student thinking and the purposeful consideration of students' perspectives. Prominent indicators for dialogic teaching are, among others, authentic and challenging teacher questions, uptake, and student questions. For example, in a large empirical study of more than 200 social science and English Language Arts (ELA) classes (8th and 9th grade), Nystrand and colleagues identified uptake, student questions, and high-cognitive level teacher questions as the most significant indicators for so-called "dialogic spells" and discussion (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2001, p. 34). In an earlier study, Nystrand and Gamoran (1991) captured "substantive engagement" of students—characterised by a close interplay between learner and content—by focusing on aspects of classroom discussion close to dialogic teaching (high-level evaluation and uptake of student answers, authentic teacher questions). The authors reported strong evidence for a positive correlation between substantive engagement and students' literary achievement. Applebee and colleagues (2003) used similar variables as Nystrand et al. (2001) to capture the extent of discussion-based instruction in 64 middle and high school English classrooms. They have shown positive effects of discussion-based approaches on the students' literacy performance which was assessed by a writing task related to a recent personal reading experience (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand & Gamoran, 2003). Concerning literature classes, the TLDT teaching concept of Schrijvers et al. (2019; see Section 3.1.2) also builds on aspects of dialogic teaching.

With respect to the investigation of teaching quality in L1 literature classes, two prominent frameworks must be mentioned, known as CLASS and the Protocol for Language Arts Teaching Observation (PLATO). Different versions of CLASS exist, and among the studies referred to above, Applebee et al. (2003) and Nystrand et al. (2001) have used the CLASS framework. Praetorius & Charambalous (2018) assign CLASS to the generic frameworks of teaching quality. In CLASS, three domains are distinguished: emotional support, classroom organisation, and instructional support. Every domain is subdivided into several dimensions (Pianta, Hamre, & Mintz, 2012). The domains show clear similarities with the German framework of Three Basic Dimensions (Praetorius et al., 2018). The CLASS framework can provide input for a content-specific operationalisation of teaching quality, but it cannot substitute it.

The PLATO framework refers to concepts closely aligned with the idea of cognitive activation. PLATO was developed to investigate teaching quality across subject domains in ELA classes and to ascertain interrelations between teaching quality and student achievement (Grossman, Cohen, & Brown, 2015; Grossman, Loeb, Cohen, & Wyckoff, 2013). PLATO builds on existing general classroom observation tools, such as CLASS, and aims at providing a subject-specific observation protocol for ELA.

> The protocol highlights thirteen elements of high-quality teaching in English language arts, organized into four underlying factors: (1) the disciplinary and cognitive demand of classroom talk and activity; (2) representations and use of content; (3) the quality of

> instructional scaffolding; and (4) classroom environment. (Grossmann et al., 2015, p. 304; see also PLATO, 2013a)

For the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project (Kane, McCaffrey, Miller, & Staiger, 2012), a short version of PLATO (PLATO Prime) was used, focusing on six out of the thirteen elements, clustered into three factors (Grossman et al., 2015; PLATO, 2013b). Concerning cognitive activation, the factor "Disciplinary Demand of Classroom Talk and Activity" is particularly interesting, including the elements "Intellectual Challenge" and "Classroom Discourse". As Klette and Blikstadt-Balas (2018) point out, a strength of PLATO consists in the precise technical terms and the clearly comprehensible indicators for each element and the degrees of its evidence (discriminated on a four-point scale for each element). However, probably a subject-specific rather than a content-specific profile is continuously recognisable. This can be seen in the fact that, via PLATO, teaching quality is captured *across* the content domains of ELA (writing, reading, language skills; literature is integrated in reading) with the result that teaching quality differs between the content domains (Grossman et al., 2015).

To sum up, there is no study or framework that consistently figures out content-specific aspects of teaching quality in literature classes. However, general characteristics and frameworks of instructional quality with a certain overlap to the concept of cognitive activation can be adapted and specified from the KoALa view that capitalises on aspects of content specificity of literature teaching.

3.3 Tasks

This article conceives that learning tasks initiate, navigate and support students' content-related learning processes. Based on the assumption that learning tasks in classroom settings are assigned purposefully, three types of learning tasks are differentiated according to their general didactic goal (Winkler, 2011). These are: *Investigation tasks* that aim to investigate content-related questions; *exercise tasks* which place emphasis on practising processes and strategies; and *evaluation tasks* which target self-regulated learning, that is, they raise the question if solution strategies and results are adequate with respect to the task. This distinction is a heuristic one, accounting for overlaps between these three types. Nevertheless, looking for an operationalisation of cognitive activation, this paper focuses on investigation tasks in literature lessons which serve potentially as 'bridges' between learners and content.

Tasks can be presented in written form, for example, in textbooks and teaching materials, but they can also occur in the teacher's oral questions or prompts. Teachers have a major influence on which kind of learning tasks are assigned and how learning tasks are processed. It can be supposed that the teacher's choice of tasks depends on their professional beliefs (Winkler, 2011). For a further description of tasks, the distinction between surface and deep structures of learning, again, is an important one. Thus, this paper distinguishes tasks in general and investigation tasks in particular concerning the mental processes that are stimulated and required

(locating information, connecting, reflecting, evaluating, etc.) no matter which kind of material product is requested (oral answer, written text, mind map, role play, etc.) and which form of classroom organisation (plenary talk, group work, etc.) is chosen. From this perspective, the selection of suitable multiple-choice answers can draw on quite complex mental activities of meaning construction and reflection, for example, whereas formulating an open answer can result from repeating and enumerating what a student knew before.

This approach, which focuses on mental processes elicited by specific tasks, is based on the assumption that cognitive and emotional activities are connected and can only heuristically be distinguished. It is inspired by revisions of Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956; Bremerich-Vos, 2008) as well as the classification of PISA tasks (OECD, 2018). It must be distinguished from a more global understanding of tasks that puts prior emphasis on visible activities of task solution. For example, Schrijvers and colleagues (2019) make a difference between tasks with respect to the medium students are required to use to follow the given prompt (written or oral answer). However, an important finding of their review study is that relevant and effective prompts are those that stimulate the students to connect their prior knowledge, emotions, experiences on the one hand with characteristics of the text on the other hand—independent from the expected medium the answer should take (Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019).

4. METHOD

In order to assess cognitive activating teaching characteristics, the analysis of videotaped lessons is considered the means of choice (Kunter & Ewald, 2016; Minnameier, Hermkes, & Mach, 2015; Reusser & Pauli, 2013). For the KoALa pilot study, six literature lessons (90 minutes each) on Julia Franck's short story *Streuselschnecke* were videotaped with six teachers distributed among six different classes (*N* = 107 students, grade 8, Gymnasium). The teachers (5 female and 1 male) were between 40 and 51 years old with teaching experience ranging from 6 to 29 years who have worked at different schools across the German Federal State of Thuringia. To find volunteers for the study, all 8th grade Thuringian teachers of German at Gymnasium in spring 2014 were addressed generally via an Internet platform that the teachers use when their classes participate in the nationwide assessments of students' competencies (IQB, n.d.). The six participants volunteered for the study.

The short story, *Streuselschnecke* (the name of a certain form of pastry), is quite frequently used in German textbooks for teaching literature at the lower secondary level. The short story has a manageable length of 480 words and describes the slow process of rapprochement between the narrator and her previously absent father from the perspective of a teenage girl. Following Koopman and Hakemulder's (2015) classification, *Streuselschnecke* is a fictional as well as a narrative and a literary text, and the pastry, after which the story is named, develops a strong symbolic meaning

in the text that is, overall, characterised by indefiniteness, interrelations, indirectness and ambiguity (Zabka, 2006).

The six teachers were given a choice of 21 tasks related to the text *Streuselschnecke*, which were mainly collected from common textbooks. For the videotaped lesson, teachers were free to choose from this selection or to formulate their own tasks.

The development of the KoALa coding system presented in this article was an iterative process. First, a theory-based category system (according to research on tasks, teaching literature, etc.) was developed. In a second step, these categories were used to analyse the pilot data (content analysis, case observation). These data analyses effected the restructuring and adapting of the coding system. The restructured coding system had to be proven in the data analysis once again. All codings were validated communicatively among the research team. As a result, and with respect to the main study, this iterative and interpretative process led to a coding system that makes possible the concept-oriented rating of teaching characteristics and thus the quantitative procession of information (Kleinbub, 2016; Reusser & Pauli, 2013).

5. CONTENT-SPECIFIC OPERATIONALISATION OF COGNITIVE ACTIVATION

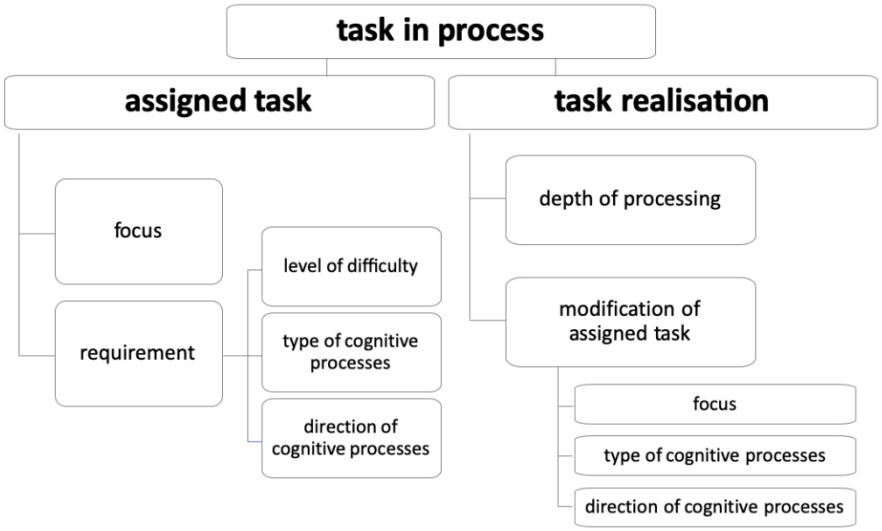
In this section, an operationalisation of cognitive activation in L1 literature classes is presented. As pointed out above, the suggestion follows a common approach that examines tasks as indicators for cognitive activation (see Section 3.2.1). From a content-specific point of view, there is one main reason for this decision: Learning tasks can be considered as 'bridges' between learner and content, that is, they initiate, direct and scaffold content-related learning processes. For the operationalisation of cognitive activation in class, attention is turned to *tasks in process*, which refers to tasks that are assigned and worked on in class as opposed to *tasks as plan*, for example, tasks in textbooks (Legutke, 2006). Tasks in process can significantly differ from tasks as plan. For instance, Winkler (2005) showed that four teachers, using the same textbook tasks in their literature classes (four classes, grade 9 and 10, "Gymnasium"), put the textbook tasks into practice in a very different way. An important distinction concerning tasks in teaching processes must be added. The characteristics of an *assigned task* can crucially differ from the characteristics of the *realised task* (including task processing and solution). For example, complex and difficult tasks can be narrowed and simplified during the working process as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has already shown (Klieme et al., 2001).

In KoALa, an assigned task is determined by an *unknown content-related aspect* that has to be figured out during task processing. In other words, to characterise a task, the following questions related to the possible task solution(s) must be answered: Which gap of understanding must be bridged or which aspect of meaning must be constructed? Also, what kind of mental processes are necessary for this purpose? A task in process, therefore, consists of the assigned task that brings up an

unknown content-related aspect, a task-based working process and a solution (Hugener & Drollinger-Vetter, 2006).

As previously mentioned, in the understanding of KoALa, a task can be assigned both by written and oral prompts or questions. It can also be brought up implicitly, that is, without explicit verbalisation. The coding of tasks is carried out based on events. An event is determined by a task in process, which may be an explicitly or implicitly assigned task and its realisation. The distinction between assigned task and task realisation is fundamental for the proposed operationalisation. The corresponding coding system (see Figure 2) mirrors this basic distinction in its superordinate categories.

Figure 2. Cognitive activation through tasks—overview of the category system



The following sections explain how these superordinate categories are concretised and differentiated in subordinate categories. Figure 2 provides an overview of the whole category system and, simultaneously, an outline of the following explanations.

5.1 Assigned task

Assigned tasks are evaluated in regard to the kind of mental processes that should be triggered by the task (cf. Drollinger-Vetter, 2006, p. 149). For the differentiated evaluation of the task in this respect, the variables *task focus* and *task requirement* are discriminated. These variables and their relevance are explained in the two following sections.

5.1.1 Task focus

The task focus is a core category from a content-specific view of literature education. It builds on the basic distinction between more text-oriented and more learner-oriented objectives and approaches of literature teaching. As discussed above (see Section 3.1.2), this former dichotomisation can be regarded as outdated. From a normative, as well as from an empirical point of view, the discourse on L1 literature teaching agrees widely upon the fact that literary learning should be about connecting both poles and bringing into balance personal involvement and text analysis. This position can be easily connected to the interdisciplinary discourse on cognitively activating tasks (see Section 3.2). Cognitively activating tasks prompt learners to connect new ideas or information with their prior knowledge and experiences and to draw inferences from these connections (Baumert et al., 2013; Kunter & Trautwein, 2013; Neubrand et al., 2013). If one wants to specify these task characteristics against the outlined background of L1 literature education, the following assertion can be made: The more a task stimulates learners to relate their beliefs, emotions and knowledge with characteristics of the literary text, the higher the potential for cognitive activation from a subject-specific point of view.

KoALa follows the assumption that tasks can focus more on either the text characteristics or the reader characteristics or address the aforementioned interplay. This assumption leads to the sub-categories of *task focus* listed in Table 1 (Winkler, 2015; Winkler & Steinmetz, 2016): Focus on text, focus on reader, or mixed focus. Tasks with *focus on reader*, according to our understanding, do not show any consideration of text characteristics, but draw exclusive attention to the student reader's personal experiences. These types of reader-focused tasks appear in the KoALa pilot data. In this respect, the KoALa terminology is slightly different from other studies. For example, "reader-oriented tasks" according to Henschel and colleagues (2016) or "reader-based instruction" according to Langer (1991/2000) stimulate both text- and reader-driven processes of meaning construction. The corresponding emphasis on the interplay between reader and text is considered in the KoALa sub-category *mixed focus*. Moreover, the *mixed focus* of tasks is very close to what Murphy et al. (2009) call "critical-analytical stance", encouraging "a discussion in which the reader's querying mind is engaged, prompting him or her to ask questions, and promoting a more subjective, critical response toward the text" (Murphy et al. 2009, p. 742).

Table 1. Sub-categories of task focus *in KoALa*

Sub-Category	Description
1 Focus on text	The task is primarily focused on analysing the text. It can be answered in the light of the literary text and through task-based support.
2 Focus on reader	The task relates primarily to the reader's experience. It can be solved without reference to the literary text, taking into account personal experience or prior knowledge, and through task-based support.
3 Mixed focus	The task stimulates the interplay of reader and text. It explicitly makes it necessary to correlate text and reader experiences/prior knowledge for the solution.

Tasks with *focus on text* and *focus on reader* should not be held in lower esteem. However, it is essential that the connection of both reader and text takes place during the teaching unit. Besides, it must be emphasised once more that cognitive activation through tasks in the understanding presented here is not seen as a contrast to being emotionally affected by literature, but can be included in this (see also Section 3.3; cf. the concept of 'aesthetic distance' that brings into balance emotional and intellectual reactions to literature, Scheff & Bushnell, 1984; Winkler, 2015).

5.1.2 Task requirement

The *task focus* alone does not necessarily suggest anything about the challenge presented by a task, nor its potential for cognitive activation. For example, there can be challenging tasks for the *focus on text* and simple ones for a *mixed focus*. The *task focus* denotes the object of reflection, not the quality of reflection. For a more differentiated evaluation of the potential for cognitive activation, KoALa therefore also takes into account the *task requirement* as a further variable (Seeber, 2016). To evaluate the task requirement three characteristics are coded, namely the *level of difficulty*, the *type* and *direction of cognitive processes.*

In order to estimate a task's *level of difficulty* (Seeber, 2016), we adapt three characteristics of text comprehension tasks that are known for their influence on difficulty (Artelt, Stanat, Schneider, Schiefele, & Lehmann, 2004; Jonassen, 2000; OECD, 2018): the structuredness and complexity of the given problem as well as the precision required to solve the task.

- *Structuredness*: Tasks are similar to problems, determined by (1) an initial state (given information and knowledge), (2) a goal state (finding of unknown aspects, solution), and (3) procedures to bridge the gap between initial and goal state. Accordingly, the structuredness of a task depends on how well-defined the initial state, the goal state and solution paths are (Jonassen, 2000). The ill-structuredness of a task increases the level of difficulty. Coding the structuredness of

a task, we take into consideration, inter alia, the following aspects: the number of possible solutions (one vs. many), the ambiguity of solutions (clear vs. ambiguous), the extent of support offered by the task (detailed hints as to how to solve the task vs. no hints) (Artelt et al., 2004; Jonasson, 2000).

- *Complexity*: The complexity of a task depends on the number of pieces of information and knowledge that have to be connected and the number of connections that are necessary to solve the task (Jonassen, 2000; OECD, 2018).
- *Degree of precision*: The degree of precision is a measure of how accurately task and text have to be read for finding an adequate solution (superficially vs. in-depth) (Artelt et al., 2004).

Structuredness, complexity and required precision of any assigned task are each coded on a four- point scale (1 = low, 2 = rather low, 3 = rather high, 4 = high). Concerning structuredness, the scale is reversed, that is, the degree of ill-structuredness is coded. The values assigned to the three variables are added up and divided by three, so that the total level of difficulty equals a value between 1 and 4. For each variable and each of the four rating values, indicators were determined as precisely as possible (Seeber, 2016).

The *type of cognitive processes* is classified on a nominal scale based on the PISA reading framework that differentiates between three sub-dimensions of cognitive reading processes: access and retrieve; integrate and interpret; reflect and evaluate (OECD, 2018). The *direction of cognitive processes* is also coded on a nominal scale. Three directions of cognitive processes are distinguished (Winkler, 2011), namely (1) generating (the text comprehension result is missing and has to be generated), (2) reconstructing (the text comprehension result is given and has to be reconstructed), and (3) evaluating (the text comprehension result is given and has to be evaluated).

5.2 Task realisation

As already mentioned, task characteristics can change during task realisation. Thus, the assigned task does not indicate enough about the kind of learning processes that are stimulated among learners. This aspect is considered in KoALa under the super-category *task realisation*. Concerning the task realisation, we evaluate the following:

(1) How the assigned tasks are processed or discussed in plenary phases (depth of processing) and
(2) To what extent the assigned tasks are modified during the realisation (task modification).

Phases in which learners work on assigned tasks without the teacher (particularly group and partner work) are not considered in detail for the time being.

5.2.1 Depth of processing

The quality of classroom discussions on assigned tasks is captured under the variable *depth of processing* (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). As explicated above (Section 3), there

is a clear overlap between (1) characteristics of cognitively activating classroom talk, (2) normative expectations concerning classroom talk on literature, and (3) characteristics of classroom talk on literature that proved to be effective with respect to objectives of literature education. The common denominator consists in an open dialogue, offering possibilities for the students to bring in their personal views on the taught content, to give reasons, elaborate ideas, draw connections and reflect (e.g., Kunter & Trautwein, 2013; Schrijvers, Janssen, Fialho, & Rijlaarsdam, 2019; Zabka, 2015). With a similar understanding of succeeding classroom dialogue, Nystrand et al. (2001) have concluded that uptake, student questions, and high-cognitive level teacher questions are the most significant indicators for an intense dialogue. Teachers who practise uptake "ask students follow-up questions to pursue points and lines of inquiry introduced by students" (Nystrand et al., 2001, p. 32). Doing so, they recognise the importance of students' contributions. This is the reason why Nystrand et al. (2001) consider uptake as conceptually important. With respect to a high level of student engagement in classroom dialogue, however, "the most important and consistent index seemed to be the prominence of student questions" (Nystrand et al., 2001, p. 18). As Dillon (2004) points out, students' questions are "exceptional event[s]" (Dillon, 2004, p. 12) because the pattern of initiation, reply and evaluation (Mehan, 1979) dominates classroom discourse, and questions are usually asked by the teacher. This is one reason why students' questions can be seen as both prerequisites and indicators for "cognitive processes that operate at deep conceptual levels" (Graesser & Person, 1994, p. 105). From a content-specific perspective, the relevance of student questions must be highlighted further, as asking questions is considered to be the adequate reaction to ambiguity and the 'appellative structure' (Iser, 1970) of literature (see Section 3.1.1).

Against this background, the depth of processing is captured by focusing on teacher uptake and student questions. In our specification, teacher uptake is determined by the extent to which a teacher encourages students' task-related mental processing, but also the degree to which he or she involves and connects students' views. The coding of teacher uptake is carried out with the help of a four-point scale adapted from the PLATO Prime element 'Classroom Discourse' (PLATO 2013b; Grossman, n.d.).

A student question in KoALa is defined by three features (Hesse, Allerdt, Heinrich, & Winkler, in press): (1) It is a student who utters the question; (2) The student articulates a knowledge gap concerning subject matter (not concerning classroom procedures); (3) With his or her question, the student aims at dealing with the knowledge gap. We differentiate between two relevant types of student questions: questions about the text and common ground questions (Graesser & Person, 1994). Analysing the pilot data definitely provides evidence that students' questions are a good indicator for cognitive activation (as an effect of teaching) but also for a dialogue-friendly climate in the classroom. Actually, the occurrence of student questions seems to be a kind of 'rapid test' for cognitive activation.

5.2.2 Modification of assigned task

During task realisation, the characteristics of an assigned task can be modified. First, contributions of students and teacher during classroom discussion influence the *level of difficulty* of a task. Whether an assigned task is processed and discussed according to its (theoretical) level of difficulty can be approximately determined by capturing the depth of processing (e.g., when a teacher accepts one single student answer without further uptake though the assigned task is ill-structured with ambiguous possible solutions). Second, the mode (not the level) of the required cognitive processes can be modified during task realisation. These changes of *task focus*, *type* or *direction of cognitive processes* are recorded under the category *modification of assigned task*. The sub-categories to be coded here correspond to those explained in Section 5.1. An example of this kind of task modification will be given in the following section.

6. THE CODING SYSTEM ON THE TEST BENCH: SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Using examples of two teaching sequences from the KoALa pilot sample, it will be demonstrated how the category system can be applied to the data and how the data provides impulses for the further development of the category system. Furthermore, the sample analysis can illustrate to which extent the suggested framework of teaching quality can be seen as content-specific and which questions remain open.

In all six classes of the pilot sample, a 90-minute lesson about Julia Franck's short story *Streuselschnecke* was conducted (see Section 4). For the following analyses, two events were chosen: Both Class 1 (14 students; female teacher, aged 46, teaching experience 16 years) and Class 4 (23 students, female teacher, aged 51, teaching experience 29 years) from the pilot sample deal with a very similar task—at least when the assigned task (not the realised task) is taken into account. In both classes, the assigned task focuses on the question of how the relationship between the narrator of the story, a teenage girl, and her previously unknown father develops. In both classes, the assigned task requests the students to visualise their understanding. Table 2 shows the two variants of this task assigned in the chosen examples.

Table 2. Assigned tasks—examples

	Class 1	Class 4
Assigned task	So then [...] the relationship between girl and man. Examine how the relationship between the two develops. Together, look for a way to illustrate this in a schema.	Determine if and how the relationship between the characters develops. Find evidence for your view in the text. Try to illustrate the relationship between the characters and possible changes in their relationship over time (still pictures, charts, network of relationships...).

The suggested procedures of visualising are closely related to a concept of literature teaching that is prominent in German classes, which is known as "action- and production-oriented literature teaching" (e.g., Haas, Menzel, & Spinner, 1994). The two sub-tasks (generate understanding and illustrate understanding) are regarded here as one task because the unknown aspect behind them is the same: the visualisation requires the presentation of the mental result of understanding.

In both variants, the *task focus* relies on the text because a close text examination with respect to given information as well as underdetermination is necessary to come to a solution. The *level of difficulty* is high in both cases: The task is rather highly ill-structured because there is no further advice provided as to which text passages are relevant for the solution; additionally, concerning the visualisation, several solutions are possible although the process of rapprochement between the characters can be reconstructed quite clearly. The task complexity is high because the whole text must be taken into consideration. Finally, the necessary degree of precision is also high because text details must be focused very carefully to solve the task. Regarding the teaching context, in Class 1 the task assignment is preceded by information that reduces the task's ill-structuredness in comparison with Class 4 (Seeber, 2016). In this respect, the example draws attention to the fact that event-based coding must not neglect the greater teaching context. In both task variants, the *type of cognitive processes* can be coded as "integrate and interpret" (OECD, 2018), and concerning the *direction of cognitive processes*, it is necessary to generate a text comprehension result. In summary, the requirement of the assigned task is very similar in both examples. However, the examples show why it is essential to differentiate between assigned task and task realisation.

In both classes, the students work on the assigned task in partner or group work and then present and discuss the results in the plenary. The following analyses of task realisation focus on the presentation and discussion of solutions in the plenum. In Class 1, this event takes 5:40 minutes, and in Class 4, it takes 6:30 minutes. Table 3

contains the corresponding transcript excerpt from Class 1; the transcript from Class 4 is presented in Table 4 (transcription according to Seidel, Kobarg, & Rimmele, 2003; abbreviations: "S" means "student", "T" means "teacher"; omissions are marked by "[…]").

In Class 1, two students, S11 and S15, present the first part of their results, which contains their understanding of the characters' relationship over time (lines 1–8). Afterwards a discussion of the proposed solution develops.

Table 3. Task realisation—Class 1

	Class 1
	S11: So, um, the daughter had already thought about meeting her father before the meeting. And, in a way, she also hoped that it would happen sometime. And, uh, she desperately () And both are very shy. But there is such a light bond—so to speak.
	S15: Yes, and after two years, they are still a bit strange to each other, probably because the
5	father is relatively shy. And, um, that he—well—they don't talk so much or do so much with each other. Nevertheless, the girl worries about her father. And then she doesn't give him any morphine. And she is also afraid for him. And um, she also did quite a lot for him, she visited him and also brought flowers. And um, in the end there was already a relatively strong bond to him.
10	T1: Mm [yes/no]. What do the others think? Did you also read it that way? So, at the very end—you said a quite strong bond—do they have a relatively strong bond shortly before his death?
	S3: From what did you conclude that she hoped that he wanted to meet with her back then?
	S11: (I don't know.) Um, well, because she says—at the beginning it says: "I have often imag-
15	ined such meetings."
	S3: I have already heard a lot about it. Yes, but...hmm…
	T1: No, that's an important question! You both interpreted it that way and saw it that way. But as it was before. There are so many things that are not clearly expressed. S10!
	S10: It's true, in the end the relationship is good, but not necessarily so strong.
20	T1: Mm [yes].
	S10: I think so.
	T1: And what makes you think that? That it's not like that—you said relatively strong. You say not so strong.
	[...]

The task realisation in this example is classified as follows: The *depth of processing* as explicated above (Section 5.2.1) is estimated to be high because of the following indicators: The teacher shows a high level of uptake because she encourages the learners to explain or reflect on their answers (line 10), and she connects answers by fostering discussions on differing interpretations (line 22f.). Additionally, she marks doubts and questions as important (line 17) which is an indicator that the students have space for bringing in their personal views. From a content-specific perspective, the teacher considers the ambiguity of literary text at this point (line 18). The students ask questions themselves (line 13)—the question of S3 is an example for a common ground question aiming at a shared information basis for understanding. A *task modification* happens when the teacher sets an impulse for reflection (line 10f.;

Zabka, 2015), that is, the direction of cognitive processes changes from generation of understanding to reflection of a text comprehension result.

In Class 4 (see Table 4), after an introductory summary, three students (S2, S3 and S11) present their understanding of the characters' relationship in three still pictures, in which the characters verbalise their perspective on the situations (lines 1 to 17: end of introduction and first still picture). The peculiarity of this lesson is that the students rely on an incomplete version of the short story *Streuselschnecke* throughout the entire working and discussion phase. In the beginning of the lesson, the teacher has handed out a text version without the end of the story because she wants the students to anticipate how the story might end. However, the explicit information, that the man the narrator meets is her father, is given only in the very end; that is, in Class 4 during the event shown in Table 4, the students do not have the information available disclosing that the characters are father and daughter. This information is not revealed until the very end of the lesson. Thus, during the whole lesson, the students do not have the possibility to review their first interpretations and to reflect upon how the words resonate differently when considering the end.

Table 4. Task realisation—Class 4

	Class 4
	S11: [...] In the beginning they were just more strange to each other and then they got closer, probably became friends, the man probably fell in love with the girl, but the text says that they were still a bit strange to each other. And now we have prepared some still pictures for three text passages and now we would start with the first one.
5	S2: We are now at the point when the man calls her.
	S11: S3, how are you feeling right now?
	S3: Well, as already mentioned, I'm also shy, I'm reserved. I'm calling for the first time now and I don't know how she is going to react.
	S11: And S2, how do you feel?
10	S2: Well, I think it's pretty odd because I don't know the man. But I am also a bit curious because I want to know why he is calling and what he wants from me.
	S11: S2, don't you think that's a little daring of you?
	S2: Yeah, sure, you always hear in the news that something like that—that people go missing after doing so. But I'm very curious and want to know who he is.
15	S11: S3, what are you thinking?
	S3: I think to myself that I am ill. That I know it myself, that I'm probably trying to win her over, that I—that she, too () that I don't have to die so lonely.
	S 11: Okay, let's go to the second scene. This is the scene when the man introduces the friends (to her).
20	[...]
	{A student raises his hand}
	S8: It says here that the call came from the man, so unknown. How did he get the number? There is something odd about that.
	S?: Ey, seriously!
25	{Whispers}
	S3: We don't know who wrote the text. It also has something to do with (the authorship).
	T4: We—maybe the end will give us some hints. We also thank this group. Questions have been answered.

If one estimates the *depth of processing* according to the indicators presented above, one first comes to the assumption that the assessment is "high". During the presentation the students have plenty of space for contributions, and they explain their understanding and ask each other for explanation; that is, uptake is realised as student uptake. The coding becomes controversial because the learners deal with only a fragment of the text at a time. They therefore generate inferences assuming a love relationship between the girl and the man (lines 2, 13f.). In doing so, they follow signals which the available section of the text offers to them. By pointing to a concrete passage in the text, S8 complains that the interpretations of the relationship put forward by the group do not fit (lines 22f.) and asks a question about the text, thus triggering resonance among the learners (interjection, whispers; lines 24f). The teacher, however, postpones or ignores the question raised by S8 (line 27f.). Nevertheless, due to the characteristics of the class discussion, the learners seem to show in-depth task processing—in the sense of the above-mentioned criteria relating to the process of discussion.

However, it should be noted that—compared to the assigned task—the task realisation demonstrates a shift of focus against the background of the lesson context. It is hardly possible to encode *focus on text* here, as the text is ultimately not the target or centre of the activities shown. The learners do not know the (very short) text completely, and thus they lack the decisive information. All comprehension processes are therefore based on a false assumption and more reliant on extra-curricular knowledge than on the text. Even unproven assumptions made in relation to the present fragment are not commented upon by the students or teacher (line 16: the man is not introduced as ill). The clarification of the text-related objection of S8 is broken off by the teacher. With the presentation of the 'speaking' still pictures in the center of attention, neither the text nor the reader seems to be the focus here, but rather the action-oriented fulfilment of the task itself as a process.

7. DISCUSSION

The present paper claims that the task focus is a core category of a content-specific coding system of teaching quality in L1 literature education. This position is based on the discussion on stances and approaches in literature education—an analytical, text-oriented approach on the one hand and a personally involving, reader-oriented approach on the other. Furthermore, it is based on the empirically underpinned consensus that these approaches should be balanced. However, as the analysis of the example in class 4 reveals, there seems to be an additional focus or approach towards literature teaching. Not only in the discussed example, but in several passages in the pilot data of KoALa, the task realisation is not characterised by the tension between reader and text, but by the fulfilment of established patterns of action.

Based on a classroom example from grade 9, Pieper and Scherf (2019) have shown that students act in general roles, not individually, when they are prompted to take an expressive stance towards a literary text in class. Instead of telling their

personal feelings, the students in Pieper's and Scherf's example seize the given prompt superficially by enumerating possible, but stereotype answers. By this performance, they meet the teacher's expectations. Apparently, in these cases, procedural engagement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) and the fulfilment of classroom scripts (Schank & Abelson, 1977; Seidel, 2003b) are independent. Further discussions on content-specificity of literature teaching should consider this observation. Concerning the presented coding system, a provisional subcategory "Other" must be introduced under *modification of introduced task-focus*. Further analyses must show whether it is possible to speak of an additional, 'choreographic' focus here. Thus, the example from class 4 also shows how, in an operationalisation process such as the one discussed here, the view of the data and the view of the categories influence one another.

The examples discussed above emphasise another open question, namely how content quality of the statements made in classroom talk can be represented more clearly in the coding system. A domain-specific framework for the assessment of teaching quality has to deal with the tension between two demands, namely both content appropriateness and transferability. A thorough analysis of the teaching content as the (implicit) background of all coding processes was always a matter of course in the KoALa project, but this is not made explicit in the coding system so far. Uptake and student questions can be adequate and specific regarding a literary text as can be demonstrated in the example from class 1. However, simply registering the occurrence of uptake and student questions on a linguistic surface is not enough, as the example from class 4 has shown.

The sample analyses have demonstrated how the coding system—similar to a magnifying lens—makes possible a precise analytical view of instructional quality relevant for L1 literature teaching. Nevertheless, the presented differentiations of task characteristics might seem to be over-detailed. The examples were chosen to illustrate that the proposed criteria of task analysis offer a close description of content-related mental processes triggered in class. With respect not only to a single event, but to a more extensive teaching unit (one lesson or even more), conclusions on classroom 'culture' of dealing with literature can be drawn.

Generally, the extent of cognitive challenge set by teachers' questions has been shown to be relevant for students' learning (e.g., Nystrand et al., 2001). From a content-specific point of view, it seems to be helpful to understand the characteristics of given challenges in a more specified way. With regard to literature education and its objectives (Section 3.1.2), it is relevant to observe which kind of challenges dominate a literature class, for example, if tasks mainly prompt the retrieval of information or if tasks consider the reflection upon text characteristics; if tasks are more or less complex (e.g., by focusing on global or local understanding of a literary text); if—with respect to the ambiguity of literature—tasks allow more than one possible solution; if tasks ask for evaluating a text comprehension result. As explicated above, the understanding of 'task' in this paper includes both written tasks and oral prompts. Thus, the presented distinctions can help to characterise both assigned

tasks from textbooks and teachers' questions and impulses during classroom talk (Zabka, 2015).

In the KoALa context, another advantage of the presented categories is that the coded characteristics of learning tasks can be compared very accurately with the results of a class regarding certain tasks in the reading literacy test which is applied to assess learning results (see Section 2).

8. CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper has been to propose a content-specific framework for the close description of teaching quality in L1 literature classes. In terms of this objective, the paper focused on two questions: What does teaching quality in L1 literature classrooms mean? How can teaching quality be operationalised?

The summary of theoretical as well as empirical research results on literature education led to the conclusion that enhancing a balance between personally involving, reader-oriented approaches and analytical, text-oriented approaches can be seen as a content-specific, key concept of teaching quality in literature education. This key concept can be used for a domain-specific concretisation of the concept of cognitive activation that comes from general classroom research. By linking these concepts, a further step towards a common understanding and wording with respect to teaching quality might be done. As the paper has demonstrated, the connection of both concepts contributes to sharpen the profile of each concept through the lens of the other.

With respect to the discourse on teaching quality in L1 literature lessons, the paper has offered a quite detailed operationalisation based on tasks in process. The suggested focus on tasks has rarely been considered thus far pertaining to the discussion of teaching quality in literature lessons in an international context. With the understanding of tasks as 'markers' for unknown content-related aspects and as prompts for certain mental activities to decipher these open aspects, the paper adds a new perspective to this discourse. In the particular project context of KoALa, the presented operationalisation of cognitive activation in literature classes is an important interim result which needs to be proven in the main study. In the larger context of literature education research, further discussion on the suggested framework is necessary.

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