

WRITING IN THE LITERACY ERA
SCANDINAVIAN TEACHERS' NOTIONS OF WRITING
IN MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION

ELLEN KROGH

University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

Abstract

This study is part of a Scandinavian research project, *Nordfag.net*, that investigates Scandinavian mother tongue teachers' didactic profiles and conceptions of the mother tongue education (MTE) subject through an ethnographic approach. The purpose of the present study is to discuss the aims of the teaching of writing in MTE in the light of contending MTE paradigms and discourses of education tied to the concepts of Bildung and literacy. 26 teachers' diaries and interviews are examined through two analytical approaches. The first approach is a phenomenological investigation of the teachers' descriptions of their practice and their pedagogical goals, locating different teacher profiles in the material. The second approach is a discourse analysis of the teacher profiles, aiming at connecting these with larger discursive and paradigmatic notions of the teaching of writing in MTE.

Three fairly distinct teacher profiles are found, viewing writing in MTE as respectively a strategic, a ritual and a communicative endeavour. Through the discourse analysis the notions of writing as well as the positioning of teachers and students in the profiles are foregrounded, and the different discourses are discussed as possible answers to the contemporary educational challenges of MTE.

Keywords: MTE, writing, literacy, Bildung, disciplinary didactics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study presented in this article is part of a larger research project, *Nordfag.net*, investigating Scandinavian mother tongue teachers' teaching experiences and conceptions of the mother tongue education (MTE) subject¹ in the light of the rapid contemporary changes in the Nordic educational systems. The overriding research questions of the *Nordfag* project were to what extent a Nordic model for the teaching of MTE still exists, and how the teachers construe their professional identities in a time of change. Inspired by early IMEN methodology and research (Delnoy et al., 1988) the *Nordfag.net*² researchers in 2007 generated teacher diaries and follow up interviews with 26 Danish, Norwegian and Swedish secondary and upper secondary teachers. Based on a range of studies of this data, all containing comparative aspects, a general conclusion is that Scandinavian teachers appear to be facing relatively identical challenges in their MTE classrooms and that the different patterns of didactic and professional reflection found in the data are also cross national (Elf & Kaspersen, 2012). These patterns may cover a wider ground than Scandinavia, but obviously this cannot be substantiated by the *Nordfag* data. The changes met by the Scandinavian MTE teachers originate in the development of modern knowledge economies and the consequent political focus on education as a contributor to the economy and to countries' competitiveness. An important aspect of this is the global benchmarking of educational outputs and the political focus on testing, common standards for teaching and learning, measurable knowledge and accountability (Kaspersen, 2012).

As indicated in the title of this paper, from the point of view of MTE a key force of change is tied to the general educational focus on *literacy*. Literacy has gained increasing significance in educational policies across the world. The term has become a metaphor for contemporary educational thinking about practices of meaning making (Kress, 2012) and may even be seen as the new metaphor for education (Penne, 2012). In current literature, literacy has been described as a meta dimension, a literacy competence (Rychen & Salganik, 2000) covering a capacity to reflect and act on the textual worlds of the knowledge society. There are, however, conflicting applications of the metaphor. Whereas the educational policies of the OECD

¹ As found in Herrlitz & Van de Ven (2007), mother tongue education is an essentially contested concept. There is, however, at present no very good alternative concept covering the school subject Danish in Denmark, Norwegian in Norway, Swedish in Sweden. As terms like L1, standard language, home language are not known and used in the Scandinavian languages, in the *Nordfag* project we decided to stick to the traditional term.

² *Nordfag* brought together nine Norwegian, Swedish and Danish MTE researchers, aiming at exploring the educational culture of the Scandinavian countries as it presents itself in the presumably most culturally sensitive school subject, MTE. Analyses and findings are reported in Elf & Kaspersen (2012).

reflect the interest in developing the human capital of the member states, the educational policies of agents like the Council of Europe and Unesco are moved by interests in developing equal opportunities of language development and education at European and global levels (UNESCO, 2004; OECD, 2005; Council of Europe, 2009). These different approaches to literacy and education play an important role in the history of Scandinavian educational policies. There is no doubt that especially the PISA studies have contributed to a change in the ways educational cultures and educational qualities are evaluated in the Scandinavian countries. Today there is much controversy about the educational goals of equality through education and student centred pedagogy which were formerly the pride of the Scandinavian welfare states (Krogh, 2012b).

To current MTE subjects, literacy represents a core obligation, but also a challenge. Untranslatable in the Scandinavian languages, literacy represents the double MTE obligation to teach 'textual competence' as well as 'writing competence', two translations carrying somewhat different connotations. While writing competence addresses the use of writing as a semiotic resource, textual competence addresses the use of texts in cultural contexts, embracing both their production and reception. Literacy, carrying both connotations, is based on linguistic and communicative experience and learning as well as knowledge of language, writing and texts. This double conception of literacy foregrounds an integrative notion of the MTE subject which is at the core of Scandinavian teachers' visions of the subject (Elf & Kasperen, 2012).

The MTE subject, however, is under some pressure from the more functional approaches to literacy appearing in the educational policies of literacy and language across the curriculum. In the Scandinavian context, these policies have contributed to reducing the previously prominent position of literature in the MTE subjects. Also, as writing and the teaching of writing are no longer the special obligation of mother tongue subjects, but the business of all subjects, this has given rise to questions as to the role of the MTE subject in the teaching of writing as well as to the didactic meaning of writing in the subject. What is at stake is not just the MTE subject's losing its position, but more far reaching educational values and aims. Inherent in the double conception of literacy and in the underlying view of MTE as an integral subject is the idea of *Bildung* as well as a notion of teachers' professional authority and autonomy. These ideas are deeply rooted in North Western European educational history.

As the overriding obligation of education and teaching, *Bildung* is fundamental to the Northwestern European educational tradition, namely the 'Didaktik' tradition. *Bildung* is just as untranslatable to English as literacy is to non-English languages, but by way of explaining the term, Westbury (2000) says:

Bildung is a noun meaning something like "being educated, educatedness". It also carries the connotations of the word *bilden*, "to form, to shape". *Bildung* is thus best translated as "formation", implying both the forming of the personality into a unity as well as the product of this formation and the particular "formedness" that is repre-

sented by the person. The “formation” in the idea of “spiritual formation” perfectly captures the German sense.

The understanding and meaning of the term has been subject to historical transformations, as well as scholarly controversy. *Bildung* is still a key notion in preambles of upper secondary curricula and syllabi in Denmark and Norway, but the Didaktik tradition is obviously under pressure from current educational policies building on global comparison and competition, and in recent years, much more emphasis has been given to the notion of ‘competence’. As reported in another study of the *Nordfag* data, when asked directly, the teacher respondents express a variety of views on the meaning and importance of *Bildung* as an educational idea relevant to current MTE (Aase & Hägerfelth, 2012). Strong ideas of *Bildung* aims do, however, emerge in some diaries and interviews. These are bound up with a belief in the importance of citizenship, democracy and associated cultural and social values. Writing skills are viewed as integral to an understanding of language as a vehicle for both thinking and power, for participating in and contributing to one’s community, and as crucially connected with the personal development of students and their capacity to listen to others and take an interest in their perspectives.

The present study investigates the notions of writing and the teaching of writing in the *Nordfag* diaries and interviews. The purpose of the study is to discuss the aims of writing in the Scandinavian MTE subjects in view of contending paradigms of MTE and discourses of education tied to the notions of literacy and *Bildung*. The research question is: what is the task of writing in MTE from the perspective of MTE teachers in three Scandinavian countries, in what might be termed the literacy era?

In the *Nordfag* project, we did not request the participating teachers to give special attention to the teaching of writing in the diaries they produced or the interviews that we conducted with them. The teaching of writing did, however, emerge as a strong theme, reflecting the increasing focus on literacy in education and educational development. The general focus on literacy, attributing responsibility for the teaching of writing to teachers in all subjects, certainly leaves an open question about the specific contribution by MTE to the teaching of writing, especially at the secondary and upper secondary levels where writing is integrated with subject matter teaching and learning. Should the teaching of writing in MTE concentrate on supporting the training of specialized language in content disciplines, or should writing in MTE contribute to students’ writing development in different ways? The *Nordfag* data suggests that in the Scandinavian context these questions are highly relevant, and that they involve reflections on the nexus of language and literature in MTE as well as on educational aims of literacy and *Bildung*.

In the succeeding section, I bring together a range of theoretical MTE studies elucidating and contextualizing the issues of writing, literacy and *Bildung*. The two main themes of this research are roles and positioning of teachers and the didactic rationale of the joint construction of literature and language, text and writing in MTE.

2. DISCIPLINARY DIDACTIC PARADIGMS AND DISCOURSES

In their 2006 analysis of paradigms in European MTE Sawyer and Van de Ven ask: “Who actually owns mother tongue education?” Drawing on Kuhn’s theory of scientific paradigms, the authors conceptualize the field in terms of four paradigms that have dominated certain historical periods, but all of which still feature in MTE. They conclude that paradigms variously reflect the interests of political groupings, as well as communities of academics and teachers.

The 19th century *academic paradigm* was promoted by teachers whose academic education reflected a philological approach to language and literature. This paradigm is constituted by the combination of a national literary canon and grammar. The teacher is a disciplinary expert. Writing is skills oriented with a focus on normative grammar and linguistic standards.

The child centered *developmental paradigm* of the early 20th century was promoted by supporters of educational reform and researchers engaged in language research. They emphasized that education should stimulate the language development of the individual child. In this paradigm the teacher is an expert in pedagogy. The teaching of writing should enable children to express themselves individually on matters that are of significance to them. Rather than a standard against which their efforts to express themselves might be judged, literature provides a resource on which they can draw in order to communicate their thoughts and feelings in writing.

In the 1960s and 1970s a *communicative paradigm* was promoted, representing a social turn in MTE and supported by the general critical and emancipatory movement in teacher education and in schools. The disciplinary focus is on functional communication in real life situations and on critical reflection on texts and language. Reading as well as writing includes a broad range of texts. The teacher’s approach is dialogic, promoting students’ own language and experience. There is also an aspect of meritocratic thinking in this paradigm, however, as efficient communication and the raising of school standards are promoted to meet the need of well educated citizens in increasingly complex societies.

In the 1980s a *utilitarian paradigm* gained dominance, stressing the meritocratic aspect of the communicative paradigm. This paradigm is embedded in a technical-rational knowledge regime, and is promoted by institutions interested in psychometric studies of learning and in developing national tests. Language education and the teaching of writing are framed within a narrow notion of communication and aimed at developing competencies relevant to modern knowledge economies. The teacher is viewed as the manager of a societal rationality.

A main point in Sawyer’s and Van de Ven’s study is that MTE is polyparadigmatic. The four paradigms are not just historical phenomena, but can be found in a variety of forms in current curricula and educational practices. Their study can be related to the growing importation of Anglo-American educational ideas and policies into Northwestern Europe over the past few decades, which again must be

understood as part of the adaptation of educational policies to the global competition of the 'new knowledge economies'. It seems fair to say that the 'Didaktik' tradition of Northwestern Europe, including the Nordic countries, has a different history and a different ideology of education than the Anglo American curriculum tradition. One main difference concerns the role and positioning of teachers. As shown by Westbury (2000), in the Didaktik tradition the teacher has been seen as an autonomous agent. Even though he or she works within an environment defined by state regulated curricula, there is room for reflecting on how that curriculum should be implemented, and how students might connect with the culture and knowledge embodied in the idea of Bildung. In the Anglo American curriculum tradition, on the other hand, the teacher is to a much larger extent seen as an employee who is expected to implement curriculum programs developed by academic experts and bought and adapted by local authorities. In recent years, clearly new political attitudes to schools and teachers are setting the agenda in the Scandinavian countries, in response to PISA results and other global comparisons, which are in line with the latter approach to curriculum and pedagogy. Nordic teachers currently have to position themselves within these contradictory discourses of education.

In my own previous research in the upper secondary subject Danish I pursued historical tracks documenting developments parallel to those described by Sawyer and Van de Ven (Krogh, 2003, for a similar account see also Scholes, 1998). In the Danish case, the academic upper secondary subject was assigned the role as the major nation building Bildung subject in the beginning of the 20th century. This status was lost when other paradigms gained strength during the last decades of the century, and yet another loss of status took place with the increasing educational focus on literacy across the curriculum in the first decade of the 21st century when Danish lost its position as the subject with major responsibility for the teaching of writing. Concerning the loss of position as the major writing subject, the pressure for justification deriving from this has currently led to highly formalized assignment genres and a narrowing of the spectrum of writing tasks at the cost of especially expressive and reflective writing. In my analysis, this development challenges the Bildung potential of writing in Danish.

Following Scholes (1998), I locate the disciplinary didactic potential of MTE (which is Danish in my case) in the integration of text consumption and text production. According to my analysis, the didactic focus of Danish as a school subject lies in its understanding of *perspective* as a disciplinary approach to both the consumption and production of texts. In MTE, students must learn that interpreting texts as well as writing texts always imply taking a perspective, and that this is an essential disciplinary requirement of any hermeneutic activity and a core aspect of MTE as a humanistic endeavour. Thus, the teaching of writing should offer opportunities for students to experience and reflect on the fact that writers always position themselves in relation to what they write about, and in relation to the discourse in which they are working, and that positioning and the construction of 'voice' in texts can be learned, just like genre and content knowledge.

Other Nordic MTE researchers also highlight the joint construction of language and literature and the integration of content and productive forms of practice when discussing the didactic obligations of MTE (cf. Penne, 2001, 2010; Smidt, 2004; Høegh, 2009; Elf, 2008; Aase, 2005). With reference to Sawyer and Van de Ven, this didactic approach to MTE obviously presupposes both an academic education that underpins the self knowledge and autonomy of teachers and a concern for students' learning and personal development based on pedagogic and didactic knowledge. The utilitarian paradigm, which hands over the 'ownership' to test institutions and politicians who are narrowly focused on test results, is not an integral part of this disciplinary didactic approach. On the contrary, the MTE research can be seen as critically responding (cf. Ongstad, 2004) to the instrumental trends of the utilitarian paradigm and to the limitations imposed on the disciplinary and didactic teacher autonomy inherent in the importation of ideas from the Anglo-American curriculum tradition. An essential theme in the research on which I am drawing is the capacity of MTE to address students' needs for both *Bildung* and literacy competencies. A characteristic feature is that writing competence and textual competence, text production and text consumption, reading, writing and dialogue are viewed as integrated aspects of MTE. In this literature the teaching of writing appears as a coherent and integrated disciplinary didactic project.

The paradigm analysis of Sawyer and Van de Ven as well as the Scandinavian research in mother tongue didactics provide theoretical categories and historical perspectives for current Scandinavian mother tongue education. They don't, however, tell us how MTE teachers experience and reflect on their teaching, on students, on their own professional identities, and on the mother tongue subject. In the present study, this insight is provided by the empirical data. Thus, these theories can be viewed as backdrop hypotheses for the empirical investigation. They will be addressed in the discourse analysis and the final discussion.

3. DATA AND METHODS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

The *Nordfag* project is a qualitative, cross cultural comparative study, applying an ethnomethodological approach (Bryman, 2008). The project involves three Danish, three Norwegian and three Swedish researchers. The research design was inspired by the "Portraits of mother tongue education" concept, developed by IMEN in the late eighties (Herrlitz & Van de Ven, 2007). 9 Danish, 9 Norwegian and 8 Swedish teachers, teaching the last year of secondary or the first year of upper secondary classes, were invited to participate in the project. When inviting respondents, the national research groups aimed at variation in ages, gender and educational programs, but as the number of respondents were restricted, it was not possible to maintain systematic cross national principles for selection. The respondents were asked to keep a diary of six lessons in the period October-December 2007, according to a common guide which asked for approximately one page for each lesson, structured according to the basic didactic questions, WHAT, HOW, and WHY: The

respondents were asked to state the subject matter and the program for the lessons, to describe what actually happened, and to give the reasons for their selection of content and lesson program. Subsequently, semi structured interviews of approximately one hour were conducted, taking their points of departure in the diaries. The interview guide focused on the context of the diary, school and student cultures, respondents' professional history and identity, and their visions and reflections on the MTE subject. The interviews were transcribed by the researchers, and all data was shared on a common electronic platform.

The present study is based on all the *Nordfag* data: diaries from six lessons and follow up interviews with 26 teachers of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. 23 diaries report lessons in the first year of upper secondary school (ages 16), and 3 diaries report lessons from the last year of secondary school (ages 15). The 26 diaries give access to a richly contextualized insight into the disciplinary and didactic *priorities* of MTE teachers, as well as into how they understand the significance of an episode in their teaching when a spotlight is cast on it and they are invited to report and comment on what occurred. Furthermore they provide insight into the disciplinary didactic and writing didactic *discourses* with which these Nordic MTE teachers identify, and which appear as general patterns in the material.

Governed by my research interest in these teachers' notions and visions of writing in MTE, I initially conducted a systematic recording of the writing activities mentioned in the diaries, supplemented by the parts of the interviews in which the teachers commented on these. I have not included writing activities which are not *explicitly* mentioned but that obviously took place, as for instance when it is stated that students worked in groups and subsequently presented their results to the class. Though it seems likely that students would have taken notes during group work, I have omitted this type of activity in my recording because my focus is on the writing activities mentioned explicitly by the teacher respondents to which they obviously ascribed significance.

I shall regard this data as a case, allowing deeper understanding of the circumstances of Scandinavian MTE teaching. The case can be regarded as critical (Bryman, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2010), offering a participant insight into the problematics addressed in the theoretical studies. The case is critical mainly due to its complexity and heterogeneity, but also because writing and written work was not a focused theme in the interview guide. When the respondents chose to talk about writing in the interviews, accordingly, this can be viewed as a sign of something to which they give priority. If overall patterns can be observed in this case, it may reasonably be expected that teachers of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish will recognize these patterns and identify them as Scandinavian MTE practices and didactic approaches.

4. ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES AND HEURISTICS

The case was analyzed through two approaches. At first, I conducted a phenomenologically inspired (Bryman, 2008; Jacobsen et al., 2010) analysis of the *writing*

didactic profiles of the teachers as they can be construed from their priorities in the diaries and their expression of didactic intentions in diaries and interviews. Subsequently, through a discourse analytic approach (Foucault, 1969; Gee, 2005; Ivanič, 2004), I identified the *writing didactic and disciplinary didactic discourses* in the case. While the first analysis directs the eye towards the teacher respondents as acting and reflecting persons, the second analysis is governed by the interest in overall discursal patterns which can be detected in utterances, but are not tied to individual respondents.

The phenomenologically inspired analysis of the writing didactic profiles rests on two studies. Firstly, I recorded the assignment genres and writing acts (Evensen, 2010; Krogh, 2010) mentioned in the diaries, in order to identify the writing functions and purposes teachers can be assumed to aim at. Secondly, I examined each set of diary and interview in order to locate the didactic intentions *expressed* in connection with the writing activities; also I was interested in the ways writing was positioned, that is whether writing was described as separate activities or integrated with text work and other disciplinary activities. The purpose of this second study was to identify the Bildung aims of the teacher respondents. Building on the research presented above, I assumed that a distinction would be found between teachers who integrated writing with other activities and those who practised writing as a separate activity, and that this distinction would frame differences as to the balance between literacy and Bildung aims.

The categorization of writing functions and purposes drew on the "Wheel of writing"³, a model developed by the Norwegian researchers who are responsible for the national assessment of writing proficiency (Thygesen et al., 2007; Evensen, 2010). The model illustrates relations between writing acts and purposes or functions of writing.

In the model six basic writing acts and related purposes of writing are identified:

- To keep in contact (Cooperation)
- To ponder (Identity formation)
- To describe (Knowledge organization)
- To explore (Knowledge development)
- To imagine (Creation of textual worlds)
- To convince (Persuasion).

In the analysis of teaching profiles the assignment genres and writing acts recorded in the diaries are connected with these six basic writing functions. Writing is a complex activity, and writing acts can be governed by different purposes. In many cases I had to interpret the purpose on the basis of the context of the writing act or the assignment.

3

[http://www.skrivesenteret.no/files/article/4821/WritingWheel_Static_\(rev_03_2012\)_2.pdf](http://www.skrivesenteret.no/files/article/4821/WritingWheel_Static_(rev_03_2012)_2.pdf). Accessed 070712.

The wheel of writing provides general analytical categories of the functions of writing, but it does not take into account the specific conditions of writing within the domain of schooling. In his analysis of the traditional school essay in the MTE subject Norwegian, Berge (1988) provides categories for the analysis of school writing which in this study were helpful in the analysis of teachers' didactic intentions. Actualizing a Habermasian inspired sociological framework, Berge develops a distinction between 'strategic', 'ritual' and 'communicative' purposes of MTE essay writing. Writing essays at school is basically governed by *strategic* purposes such as getting a good mark and passing the exam. The reason for writing lies in the function or external goal, whereas less importance is attached to content and form. As a strategic act the school essay further has a *ritual* purpose, training to become an adult and writing like an adult. In this case the reason for writing lies in *participating*, and the activity as such is viewed as training or as playing a game, i.e. as focusing on the form rather than on content or function. Eventually the school essay mimes *communicative* acts out of school. Communicative acts have the content and the message in focus, construing meaning through communication, even though the addressee may be the writer him/herself. Content and message, however, cannot be isolated from form and function in writing, so writing for communicative purposes tends to activate questions of relevant form as well as the function of writing. According to Berge, these purposes are all inherent in MTE school writing, as school is a place for assessment and training, but also for communication of genuine messages. Each of the purposes, however, may be stressed more or less in the teaching of MTE writing.

Analyzing the teacher utterances about writing I sought to detect which purposes appeared to be predominant. Simultaneously, the analysis would shed light on the positioning of writing as separated from or integrated with text analysis and other disciplinary activities. When the purpose was communicative, writing tended to be integrated with textual work and class dialogue.

According to the teacher diaries students are brought to express themselves in a broad spectrum of writing assignments and writing activities. Based on the above, three writing didactic teacher profiles⁴ were identified:

- Strategically and ritually motivated writing with a relatively narrow writing competence profile
- Ritually motivated writing with a somewhat broader writing competence profile
- Communicatively motivated writing with a broad writing competence profile.

⁴ In the two cases of BJØRG and ØYSTEIN diaries were categorized as belonging to two profiles. One diary/interview can't be categorized as writing is not mentioned at all.

5. WRITING DIDACTIC PROFILES

5.1 *Strategically and ritually motivated writing*

In these diaries two writing acts are predominant, 'keeping lesson notes' and 'answering teacher questions', but examples of other activities are found too. Writing is primarily used as support for text studies, and written activities do not take up much time. When written assignments are mentioned, they appear to be separated from other teaching activities. Writing is mainly viewed as support for cognitive operations, and the predominant writing function is knowledge organization. The didactic intentions with writing as they are expressed in diaries and in interviews, are strategic and ritual. Students' writing is not viewed as processes of thinking, but as a means to achieve overall aims such as exam results or general education or simply as training.

Five diaries have been categorized under this profile. In ILSE's diary the only writing activity mentioned is *teacher directed notes on blackboard*. The aim of these is strategic:

Yes, I am very much a blackboard teacher; I certainly use computer labs and that kind of things, but my experiences with exams are so good when they have got good lesson notes.

HEGE also emphasizes note taking. In the description of a lesson in which she presents a power point presentation about the 'new realism' she writes: *It is important that students take notes*.

JESSICA enters in her diary:

Now was time for language history and I gave a survey with a time line on the white board. Began 4 mill. BC with the upright walking man and got as far as 1526 and the Bible of Gustav Vasa when it became obvious that the students hardly had the strength to write more notes.

5.2 *Ritually motivated writing*

In these diaries writing has a central function, as support for other disciplinary activities and as independent assignments, but primarily as training in linguistic and organizational skills. The expressed didactic intentions of the written work are predominantly *ritual*. Activities are generally motivated with training aims rather than exam scores. The content is most often selected in order to support the exercises, not the reverse, and thus may appear relatively arbitrary. Competency aims are stressed significantly rather than overriding Bildung aims. When Bildung aims of writing are thematized, in these diaries and interviews they are associated with participation and ideals of democratic citizenship, ideals of social activity in which subject content is irrelevant. Communicative intentions appear undermined by the strategic intentions of exercising and by the artificial or simulated nature of the activities.

Eleven diaries and interviews have been categorized under this profile. HELLE reports about a mandatory whole day *basic course of writing*. She has decided to introduce her class to the 'Discussing article' assignment genre, one out of several new exam genres introduced in one Danish upper secondary program in 2005, requiring students to account for the viewpoints in one or two texts, discuss these and reflect on their wider importance. In the lessons the students go through preparation for writing such an assignment. In the previous lesson they have learned about argumentation and the rhetorical strategies, and in their textbook they have read about two acts of writing, 'to give an account' and 'to discuss'. In the reported lesson the class try out quick writing and a 'share-and-steal'-session, and the students work with ideas for introductions and conclusions. HELLE's didactic intentions with the lesson are tightly connected with her strong criticism of this specific exam genre:

The reason is self-evident: This genre is awfully difficult to identify for the students as all the exam genres of the reform appear both next to artificial and quite strained – and this one most of all (to teachers as well). But we TRY to rely on the definition of the genre in the instructions from the Ministry and to take these as the point of departure of our narrowing down of the genre.

This criticism is further elaborated in the interview, this time from a disciplinary viewpoint:

Yes, and sometimes it says [in the exam assignments, EK] that students are to "analyze" in a "Discussing article", this would never be done, really, "investigating" is what would be done, this is a reflective genre.

On these grounds she finds it necessary to train students in the exam genres from the beginning of their upper secondary education. The immediate expectation would be that HELLE would exert a strong strategic emphasis on students' learning to meet the exam demands, but her anger and frustration about the exam genre makes her focus more on the training aspect, almost as a common task:

The goal of my taking up this difficult genre as early as now is that the students get accustomed to the genre from now on so that they get training both in journalistic discourse and in hitting the genre.

HELEN brings up a theme which is also touched upon by ØYSTEIN and other respondent teachers, namely that a special didactics is needed when teaching vocational classes:

Once I was told that a typical thing for vocational school teaching, I believe it was a teacher from htx (higher technical exam) who said this at an in service course, that if for instance you were to teach them about impressionism, in stx (the Gymnasium, focusing general subjects) you would give a theoretical presentation on impressionism, while in htx you would pick a text and ask them to describe, i.e. create one themselves: write an impressionistic text. This is about use and application, typical of the teaching of vocational students, I expect.

The case data contradicts HELEN's statement as this kind of creative forms of learning is also reported by teachers who do not teach vocational classes – indeed, KARSTEN, who teaches in the general upper secondary programs, reports good experiences with having students write precisely impressionistic texts. None the less HELEN's lessons have a recurring practically oriented profile which – supported by ØYSTEIN – may be characterized as typical in vocational classes.

HELEN reports a course on easy and difficult language, starting with having students study the language of geometry problems through solving different problems and comparing them. The whole course ends in an assignment in which the students investigate and afterwards re-write a recipe so that a child will be able to make the dish. In another course on short stories students learn about narrators and viewpoints through writing stories from the viewpoints of the different characters in a comic strip. In the interview HELEN justifies this teaching approach by her strong belief that students learn by doing as opposed to listening to the teacher. In the diary this didactic intention is stated as the overriding motivation for the written assignment about the recipe:

The idea is that they are to use everything they have learned about language in the previous weeks. (...) This is a kind of repetition assignment having them apply all the disciplinary concepts in one assignment. Furthermore this is an application assignment in which they (and I) will get to see whether they have understood the different concepts. Whether they are able to use the different concepts, will be documented by this assignment.

Danish HELEN teaches a vocational program which also prepares for higher education. While she asserts the quality of what she views as a vocational didactics, as opposed to the didactics of general programs, this opposition forms an open conflict in Norwegian ØYSTEIN who teaches both general classes preparing for higher education and vocational classes preparing for vocational education. In his diary ØYSTEIN reports a course in his general class, aiming at providing the students with disciplinary tools for analysis, both for investigating and for writing short stories. To ØYSTEIN, the major Bildung function of Norwegian is to develop and expand students' language. But he finds it difficult to realize integrated Bildung aims in the vocational classes. In these he operates with more functional and freestanding exercises: an exercise focusing on the specialized vocabulary of the vocational subject of the class, a letter to the editor and a role play taking its point of departure in job applications and writing a cv. His intentions with these exercises are primarily ritualistic, to train specific skills. The need to find motivating content makes him compromise his wish to integrate texts and themes of the Norwegian syllabus:

We would prefer that discussions have to do with the fulfilling of aims, with disciplinary questions. But as often as not you do not manage to draw them into disciplinary discussions, but just their being able to express their opinions; that is part of education. And when they had this Steinfeldt text [the author of a 2007 letter to the editor of a Norwegian newspaper, complaining about today's young people, EK] it somehow hit the students, and they became extremely committed. But obviously they are not as engaged when they are asked about Ivar Aasen and Knud Knudsen [19th century Nor-

wegian linguists and 'fathers' of respectively New Norwegian and Book language⁵. (...) But just for the commitment, I feel that is important. Just skills of discussing and arguing, not necessarily always stressing disciplinarity so much. Perhaps this is so much more about their competence, developing competence of expressing their opinions and viewpoints.

For ØYSTEIN, however, this still raises unsolved questions about Bildung aims of Norwegian as a subject and about applying core parts of his university education.

I see that the students do not understand what it means to express an opinion or an attitude in writing. And then I think that ... in that way, especially for the vocational students, there is a general Bildung ... a personal gain in their understanding how important these things are. While in the general classes, in a way it is easier to widen their horizon, to look further into literature and language history and how language changes and all the things we are absorbed in at the university while getting our education.

Several Norwegian teachers report having to teach New Norwegian as if it were a foreign language, applying foreign language training methods. TRINE, however, does not make a problem out of this. She reports a writing project aiming purely at linguistic training. The content apparently is arbitrary, and the genre chosen also seems to have no other function than as an occasion for the language exercise.

Their writing is so boring, the clause connectors are repetitious. They were given cues about the Tibetan Spaniel.

They were to write an article about the Tibetan Spaniel, departing from the cues. I collected the articles, wrote an article myself, showed it on the overhead projector. Emphasized the clause connectors. Then their articles were returned, and they were to analyze their own work.

Several students saw that they had started with the same words too often. Saw that there was no variation. They were to re-write. This they did without grumbling.

5.3 *Communicatively motivated writing*

In this group of diaries written work is ascribed great importance, and writing is typically integrated with text reading and other disciplinary activities, thematically as well as didactically. The most paradigmatic diaries of this profile report teaching in which productive student activity is the leading didactic principle, and in which written work is consequently tied to Bildung aims. Strategic and ritual aims are expressed as well, but the respondent teachers strive to realize these through teach-

⁵ *There are two official forms of Norwegian: bokmål [book language] and nynorsk [new Norwegian]. Bokmål was greatly influenced by Danish, which was the dominant language of officialdom when Norway was under Danish rule (1397–1814). Nynorsk stems from the native Norwegian dialects that evolved from Old Norse (uninfluenced by Danish), and it is therefore very different from bokmål. Developed by Ivar Aasen, nynorsk was introduced by him in 1853 as part of a nationalistic desire to have a purely Norwegian language for the country. It is based on rural dialects and spoken principally in rural areas. Both bokmål and nynorsk are employed by the government, the schools, and the mass media, but bokmål is by far the more widely used of the two, especially in education and literature.*

ing which is organized according to communicative principles. Thus, there is much emphasis on the disciplinary and personal meaning of writing, not with the intention of pleasing students, but rather to challenge them. In these diaries and interviews a wide spectrum of writing activities and assignment genres can be found. A characteristic feature is the use of many different types of “in-texts” (Liberg, 2008), functioning as tools for thinking, support for other disciplinary activities, or as steps toward a full paper. These typically cover a whole spectrum of writing competencies, in some cases even in one individual diary.

Eleven diaries and interviews have been categorized under this profile. The following is an investigation of diaries and interviews by Danish NINA, Swedish INGA, and Norwegian IDA who realize this profile in paradigmatic, although different ways. In their descriptions of lessons, communicative Bildung perspectives, as well as wide writing competencies are evident. I have chosen this approach to be able to give a more in-depth picture of this profile which must be considered both the most convincing answer to the challenges of the literacy era, and the most obvious practical realization of the visions of MTE found in the theoretical literature.

Danish NINA teaches at a private school in large part attended by socially privileged students. She is 44 and holds an administrative position as the leader of pedagogical development at her school, while still teaching classes. She is also the deputy chairperson of the board of the association of teachers of Danish and the author of textbooks.

NINA describes integrative teaching processes in which productive work is prominent: *I want them to write in each lesson*. The basic instructional pattern emphasized by NINA herself, is the constant switching between class dialogue and individual concentration:

I want the class to learn to listen to each other and contribute to joint insight, at the same time I have sensed that this wears them down, and that they have difficulties in doing this. Therefore I try working with class discussion alternating with totally quiet, individual concentration on something very specific which they will need for later use. I want them to be able to contribute with words on the topic and on the subject, therefore I ask many questions and write their words on the blackboard and ask them to write notes.

This basic pattern holds both a collective and an individual Bildung perspective. NINA wants to establish a communicative community of subject knowledge by teaching the students to learn to listen to and use each others’ textual readings. This is a great challenge for her students:

Another point in my “upbringing” of the class is that they must learn to build on each others’ insights. I want them so much to listen more to each other and to develop a disciplinary interest in each others’ readings. As of now they are terribly self-centered, and the dialogue is mostly between the individual student and the teacher. They will log on and off the teacher and don’t listen to each other. This is fatal for the classroom culture.

Inherent in this approach are disciplinary as well as didactic aims. The students must learn to listen to each other, but they must also learn to read and apply knowledge from literary history and learn to put questions based in analysis:

One of the requirements is an analysis of one of the texts in the text compendium, and doing this they have to use knowledge from history, from what they learn in "Litteraturens veje"⁶ and from the lessons. (...)

In the lesson we did as follows: free writing about "Niels Klim"⁷, putting questions to wonder about the text in pairs, the questions to wonder were written on the blackboard, and we discussed whether these were dealing with the WHAT, HOW AND WHY of the text, and whether they could be answered by analyzing the text or by reading theory/secondary sources beyond the text. Most questions were WHY-questions requiring sources beyond the text. I had them form groups on selecting a WHAT/HOW question and requested that all groups started by establishing a survey of the course of events of the text and considering its genre.

The wish to challenge students to move from reproducing to independently structuring and knowledge developing readers and writers entails both competence and Bildung aims. To the students independence means sticking to one's own ideas in the class dialogue, but NINA confronts this understanding, emphasizing that independence involves listening, applying and responding to what is said by classmates.

There are not many strategic or ritual deliberations in NINA's diary and interview. The organization of the lessons, focusing students' learning to process the class dialogue, may, however, be said to have a ritual touch. A specific competence is trained here. But NINA ascribes communicative meaning to the activity when relating this to developing independence and classroom culture. NINA's overriding focus is on the development of disciplinary competence and identity, individually and collectively. Her diary and interview bear witness to a highly experienced and professional teacher who teaches according to overriding plans, but in the concrete lessons is able to act spontaneously on the demands of the situation, without losing sight of her disciplinary and didactic aims.

Swedish INGA is 45. She has only taught for a few years as she has had a previous career as a journalist. She teaches in a vocational program, and her class is un-

⁶ Fibiger, Johannes (2004). *Litteraturens veje (The Roads of Literature)*. Århus: Systime.

⁷ Holberg, Ludvig (1741). *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (Niels Klim's Journey Under the Ground)*. Edition and publisher not stated in the diary.

der a special scheme because the students have extensive difficulties, especially in Swedish, but in other subjects too. Therefore, they are provided extra lessons in Swedish, and their writing is supported, both by INGA and by a special teacher, in separate lessons named “The Knowledge Portal”.

INGA’s overall intentions are strategic, to train the students so that they will pass the national exam in Swedish B – and on the part of some students even the lower level of Swedish A. They must be trained in basic skills so that they can speak, read, and write Swedish at a certain level:

The reason for reading, talking as well as writing is that they need exercising all these parts since many of them will speak another language all the time, except at school. If they are to stand the chance of passing the national exam this spring, they need much exercise in analyzing, in other words, using language as a tool for learning. They have two written assignments a week in Swedish apart from report and project writing. This way they work simultaneously with language exercises, content and analysis.

A distinctive feature, however, of the reported lessons is that training for the exam and ritual aims of learning are systematically attempted through engaging in genuine meaning making activities for communicative purposes. This meaning making is either the overriding goal of teaching sequences or a systematically integrated part of these. Teaching literature, INGA reads aloud in specially organized “reading sessions”. In the interview she says that she has had to give up having students read aloud because they read incoherently, stress the wrong syllables etc., so that the understanding gets lost. The reading sessions also involve talking about the text, aiming at supporting the subsequent reflective written assignment:

During reading sessions we will sit in a small room with lovely easy chairs. Most of the time I will do the reading, but if there are students who want to read aloud, they will read too. During reading I will comment upon words, expressions and content in the text. Afterwards we will make a summary, trying to analyze text and content a little more, equipping them so as to make it easier for them to write a reflective text on their own. They will spend the next lesson in the Knowledge Portal reflecting on the text, supported by a few questions from me.

The interviewer is concerned with the question of easy as compared to demanding writing for students facing the big disciplinary challenges that INGA’s students face. She asks about the widespread idea that writing narratives is easier than writing analytically. But INGA finds this issue didactically irrelevant for her students. To her the issue is not whether the task is easy and difficult, but what makes sense for students of this age and level of education:

Interviewer: Is it easier to write recounting texts?

INGA: ... In a way they have been doing that before, and I feel that if they are to go on with this fairytale writing and narrating about themselves forever and ever and ever ... They also need to feel that they are adults

Interviewer: But do you think that this would have been easier for them?

INGA: I am not so sure about that. I think that there is a sickness in many students, coughing up a recount or narrating about themselves. But I have insisted a lot, on the

contrary, that they must reflect on things. We have read texts, and afterwards they have had to reflect in writing, getting help in the X-portal writing those texts. They may have had support by me through questions guiding them into twisting what we have been handling. So they have been doing extremely much of this.

INGA views these written reflections as a space for the students' feeling *that they are adults*. The demand to rise above the spontaneous identification with the texts and reflect on their reading is associated with identity formation, with developing what may be termed an adult voice.

The meaning-making that INGA seeks to encourage in her students' writing is to a high degree tied to this Bildung aspect. An important part of feeling like an adult is self-awareness and being ready to seek out knowledge. This is thematized in another diary entry. INGA has decided on the course in question because she is worried about the students' lack of self-awareness when it comes to requirements for written assignments. INGA ponders whether she herself has contributed to this lack of self-awareness by being too accommodating with students, and always being concerned to boost their self esteem, instead of posing challenges that might extend them:

Many of my students have poor self-awareness. (...). Perhaps I have contributed to this by being much too positive and encouraging in my cheers and assessments. Perhaps I have also tried to adapt language and level too much. Perhaps they need more challenges?

INGA subsequently organizes a course in which the students study the requirements for the national exam and read and assess four student papers, justifying their marks according to the criteria specified:

I presented syllabus content and assessment criteria for the B course on OH. Explained some difficult words, explained that we are already working with this content to achieve the goals and referred to examples and exercises that we have done and will do in the future. Of course they were allowed to ask and discuss (I always strive for dialogue). They appeared attentive and keeping up. Afterwards I handed out a previous national exam assignment, and they got four student papers; they were to guess how these had been marked, according to assessment criteria. Also, they were to argue for their marks. I believe this opened their eyes. They understood that an almost faultless language (spelling and grammar) is not the main thing, but that a structure is required, a thread and a distinct message, in order to pass the exam. This was a good exercise for them. Unavoidably cruel? But in a way I feel that this fits into the aims of student participation and democracy and must be a part of the course.

In INGA solicitude and an urge to protect conflict with her sense of disciplinary and didactic responsibility. But she maintains that reflective writing should be an integral part of text reading and views this as a major dimension of students' disciplinary learning and personal identity formation. Even though requirements may be experienced as cruel by the students, she insists that feeling like an adult requires participating and making an effort, as well as taking a reflective view on texts and being able to express oneself and argue.

Norwegian IDA is 27 and has only taught for a few years. In her diary, she reports teaching in both vocational and general educational programs. According to her selection of diary entries, her instruction is genre and process oriented, and the leading didactic practice appears to be what might be termed 'productive teaching and learning', implementing the didactic intention of framing students' learning through integrated processes of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The diary entries mention her promotion of oral presentation, contributing to debates, report writing based on logs from workshops, poetry writing, short story writing, designing and writing newspaper front pages. IDA's overriding Bildung aim is to establish opportunities for students to develop and expand their language resources as tools for thinking and widening their horizons, as well as for critical reflection and abstraction.

IDA's lessons are organized according to a basic pattern showing her disciplinary didactic reflection and long term planning. The elements of this didactic pattern are listed below:

- Activating student experience and previous knowledge
- Working with theory from a textbook or from other sources
- Having students study and assess model examples
- Scaffolding students' commencement of their written assignments in lessons
- Framing students' mutual response

Clearly, IDA's teaching is to a high degree informed by pedagogical and disciplinary didactic theory. This is apparent in her systematic process approach, but also in reflections on students' learning in general and on writing instruction:

I think that retrieving old knowledge will be profitable no matter what topic is brought up in the subject. This is about reviving the knowledge which must be at the base of new learning.

Through using a "prime text" from the textbook as the starting point of a check list on the blackboard, and after that studying a text which was not quite by the book, I thought that the students would feel more confident about how their own texts were to look.

Even though she does not explicitly mention Vygotsky in diary and interview, it is fairly obvious that his idea of learners' zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) constitutes a basic inspiration for IDA. In her comments and reflections she constantly balances two considerations, on the one hand challenging her students to meet high demands of quality, and on the other hand accommodating their needs to experience competence and success. This approach is widely promoted in current international research on writing instruction in school settings, such as the very influential Australian genre school, but while the focus in this research is primarily on functional genres, relevant for content subjects (cf. Schleppegrell, 2004; Macken Horarik, 2002; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), IDA expands this range of didactic interest by incorporating literary genres and thereby integrating the genre and process approaches in a MT didactics. Introducing poetry reading and teaching short stories as a genre, IDA combines literature and language, aiming to open

students' eyes to poetic language and narrative as ways of seeing and construing the world. In both cases, her point of departure is an analysis of her students' prior understanding, most notably their preconceptions that poetic analysis is difficult and boring, and that creative, narrative writing is an easy endeavour which does not require disciplinary knowledge. IDA plans her lessons in order to challenge these prejudices and to scaffold students' experience of literary language and composition as a step towards a new understanding and an interest in poetic and narrative ways of construing the world.

In the first lesson I divided the class into six groups. Each group was given a pile of words which they were to put together in a poem. (...) The poem contained word forms which are unusual in everyday speech. At the end of this lesson the groups would read aloud their answers, and at last I read aloud the original poem. (...) Many students find poetry analysis difficult. To have a pleasurable introduction to the topic was important, I thought. Since the poem I chose had some 'lyrical word forms' I thought that there was a good chance that the student poems would be fine. This might enhance their awareness of poetic language.

We talked a little about literary quality, what works well and what works less well in literature. I had the class read two different descriptions of similar situations and consider which of the descriptions they found the best. (...) Going on, I set up a list of what the students were to consider ahead of their writing (...) The aim of the lessons was to make students consider and plan even creative writing processes. This could be achieved, I thought, by transferring some of the knowledge of the analytical work and applying this as guiding principles when they themselves were writing.

IDA's reflections demonstrate both competence and Bildung aims. She aims at teaching students to analyze poetry, but is also focusing on their growing awareness of lyrical language. And, while her aim is to train students' genre competence regarding short stories, her ambition is also to have students develop a sense of quality and ambition in creative writing processes. Yet another example of this is found in a lesson on professional language in a vocational class.

Opening with a conversation on workshop practices and on the language of the profession I thought that the students themselves would have the opportunity of showing some of what they had learned in the workshop by talking about this. At the same time I wanted to make them become aware that language, written and oral, may be a power factor in meetings with people who are less capable than they are.

IDA's didactic approach reflects a range of integrative processes, connecting language and literature, speech and writing, theory and practice, production and reflection, competence and Bildung aims. The ritual function has a strong position. IDA's instruction is imbued with practising, including grammar exercises and language games, but the ritual function is an aspect of her communicative aims, not an aim as such. The same is true of the strategic aims:

Aims: Learning to write reports, an improved linguistic awareness in relation to the language of their profession and in meeting with other people.

Language and the use of language is an explicit focus of IDA's instruction. Thus, the overriding aim of her teaching is to enhance the students' linguistic registers and their general capacities of reflection and thinking.

I think that relating to language is generally important. I believe that ... I mean I often think that what I can be there to support, is developing writing and developing speech and thereby improving their thinking. I believe in this (...) using language in a range of ways can be good for thinking as such, developing reflective power, being able to abstract and reflect and not always being so specific.

To IDA, this aim is tied to human development. In vocational classes, however, the aim is harder to maintain than when teaching general classes. In the vocational classes instruction tends to become oriented towards practical use as, for instance, when the students need to learn to write CVs. She continues on from the previous quotations:

After all, I see that when they need to write CVs they come to me, and in that situation it is great to be a Norwegian teacher, helping them with their CVs and helping them putting together words which need to be put together and all this, and they need to learn this too, but there are some aims which are ... There are aims which are difficult to explain, relating to developing as a human being in general.

Teaching these students is more demanding in other ways too. From pure impotence many students in vocational classes resort to copying from internet sources:

They have no strategies. And today it is so easy for them to cut and paste from texts by other writers. And even though I talk sternly to them about the use of sources and these things, you end up getting these texts which are a patchwork of bits from Daria, School Forum, bits of their own thoughts, bits of Wikipedia. And in the end one has to go over, explaining that they must be honest, write their own words. And in many ways this simply is the weak classes. In a way this is compensation for lack of imagination.

To IDA the problem appears to be lack of strategies and of imagination. She finds it difficult to identify with this experience:

Yes, I don't remember standing there knowing neither what to write nor how to find out how to write. Because that is the paralyzed condition of some students which is terribly hard to help them overcome. I don't recognize this. I don't quite understand it.

INGA and other *Nordfag* respondents report similar experiences. Both INGA's and IDA's diaries and interviews document that communicative strategies and didactically reflected instruction pose a demanding challenge when the social and cultural gap between teacher and students is big. Both have doubts and experience feelings of impotence when facing students who are struggling in the ways that IDA has just described – the students who are in most need of teaching. While this is presumably a paradox of schooling as such, in the specific context of writing in Scandinavian MTE subjects, two inferences can be drawn from this observation. One is that there are no pre-packed solutions to the challenges described by INGA and IDA. On the other hand it must be assumed that any solution demands teachers who possess disciplinary and didactic qualifications which will give them a platform for keeping

these problems open for constant reflection and further development of the disciplinary didactics of MTE.

Apparently NINA challenges her students more than both INGA and IDA, and generally she seems more confident of her didactic aims and ideas than her two Scandinavian colleagues. The obvious background for this is the fact that NINA teaches socially privileged students with a cultural capital similar to NINA's. She does not experience the gap between her and the less privileged students that we find in INGA's and IDA's cases. What is interesting, however, is that, notwithstanding the differences of student groups, ages, and career among these three teachers, they still hold so very similar views on writing in MTE. All three of them report communicative deliberations which result in integrative, process oriented didactic forms of practice, connecting students' developing writing competence with individual and social identity formation and critical reflection.

6. WRITING IN MTE IN THE LITERACY ERA, CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

I began this essay by describing the present historical moment as "the literacy era", as one that is generally characterized by global standardization and government policy that emphasizes the role of education as a contribution to economic growth. In Scandinavian curricula the teaching of writing as a core competence in education has recently been strengthened, becoming a responsibility for all school subjects, and this development has left MTE subjects with many questions concerning the task of writing within MTE. I indicated that possible answers to these questions would need to take into account the ideas of both literacy and Bildung, representing two approaches to writing in MTE that to a certain extent cover the same ground, but belong to different educational traditions.

How adequately do the pedagogies that I have just described respond to the challenges of the 'literacy era'?

In the *strategically and ritually motivated writing didactic profile* writing is viewed as a separate activity and as a tool for knowledge reproduction and for activating students. Writing is not ascribed importance as a tool for thinking and communication. The teacher position is that of the master, personalizing the discipline, while the students are positioned as apprentices who are supposed to do as the master and identify with him/her.

Referring to the paradigm theory of Sawyer and Van de Ven, this profile may be understood as reflecting a decline of the academic paradigm under pressure from the utilitarian paradigm. Writing is realized as the training of skills, is ascribed fairly low status as compared to literature studies, and there is a strong focus on students' linguistic deficiencies. According to Ivanič (2004), a "skills discourse" is foregrounded in times of 'moral panic' about standards and the state of the nation. The strategic discourse of writing in MTE may be viewed as a response to the panic following recent international tests in which Danish, Norwegian and Swedish students tend to perform below average. In the various teacher comments can be found

expressions of loss, frustration, and resignation, but also expressions of active opposition to the high literary ambitions of the academic paradigm. At the discourse level, the interesting common feature is that the discourse relates to the academic paradigm.

This is most prominent in the positioning of teacher and student. In the strategic discourse these are positioned in relations characteristic of the Didaktik tradition, the teacher as master and expert offering his or her own understanding to students who will identify with the teacher as the embodiment of Bildung. But as writing is not conceived as Bildung, there is no content justifying and giving substance and meaning to this relationship. So the teacher position stands out as an unsubstantiated claim, a promise of strategic success, demanding acceptance by students to function in the teaching situation. Any student rejection of assignments or tasks will be a challenge of the teacher's authority, and poor results the sole responsibility of the teacher.

The strategic discourse, then, obviously does not offer a sustainable answer to the question of writing in MTE in the literacy era. The understanding of literacy in the discourse is narrow, focusing skills and writing competence and separating these from aims of textual competence and Bildung. According to the MTE research, the narrow understanding of writing as well as the separation of writing from textual activities constitutes major didactic problems in this discourse.

The *ritually motivated writing didactic profile* embodies a discourse about writing that comprises playing language games that train students how to handle specific genres. The focus is on linguistic features of form in these genres. The content of students' writing is considered less important as this is primarily viewed as a vehicle for students' genre training. The predominant teacher position is that of the disciplinary coach while students are positioned as trainees who are expected to develop specific competencies.

The ritual discourse may nonetheless be viewed as deriving from the developmental paradigm identified by Sawyer and Van de Ven. The focus is on creative activity, i.e. on students' language and language experiments, but this activity is reduced to formal experiments within the context of an apprenticeship or training. So there is a focus on students' experimenting with language that produces in turn knowledge about language. When Bildung aims are expressed, they are connected to language practices associated with citizenship and democratic participation. There is, however, an obvious problematic tied to the lack of communicative meaning in the ritual discourse. When the content is arbitrary, and everything the students do is conceived as simulated, the notion of writing being used for authentic communicative purposes is rendered problematical, and the meaning of writing gets lost.

In the *Nordfag* teacher comments and reflections the ritual discourse manifests itself in fairly frustrated reflections on vocational students' lack of interest in literature, prompting the teachers to think that only isolated genre training can provide an answer. Some also defend this approach as the right answer to the needs of

vocational students. What is reflected here may be a movement in Scandinavian educational policies towards positioning teachers as employees who are expected to deliver results, but not to develop curricular and didactic ideas relating to the whole human being. The position as disciplinary coach with an interest in training rather than content does not provide the teacher with a background for developing a justification of the MTE subject beyond meeting the demands posed by the workplace.

As opposed to the strategic discourse, the ritual discourse, however, does offer an answer to the question of the aim of writing in MTE. The answer connects with the functional ideas of writing predominant in the general ideas of literacy in the literacy era. The ritual discourse construes MTE writing as an activity primarily aiming at general and functional writing competence. The specific MTE feature of this approach is the focus on creative methods and the disciplinary aims of language knowledge.

In the *communicatively motivated profile* writing is integrated with reading, speaking and listening and is ascribed individual and social Bildung perspectives. The leading Bildung parameter is students' productive activities. The teacher is positioned as a disciplinary didactician designing frameworks for learning and Bildung, and students as *students* who are to learn to independently master both their studies and their lives, but also to take on social responsibilities, to take different perspectives and to critically handle social and political questions. The key notion is reflection, viewed as a Bildung aim for the students as well as an aim for the teachers' approaches to teaching. This profile reflects the communicative paradigm identified by Sawyer and Van de Ven. But it may also be said to relate to both the academic and the utilitarian paradigm. It could be viewed as a communicative modification of the academic paradigm in its insistence on the integrated view of the dimensions of a language education and on the constitutive nature of literature and textual competence as indispensable parts of the literacy aims of writing in the MTE subject. As to the current general pressure on MTE by the utilitarian paradigm, the frustrations expressed by teachers when facing students who appear out of reach might be interpreted as signs of doubt about the communicative Bildung aims in the face of utilitarian discourses.

Obviously, teachers subscribing to this discourse need a disciplinary didactic platform of knowledge and reflection and a confidence in the relevance of their approach, resting on a belief in the importance of the Bildung aims of writing in the MTE subject. In the three so called paradigmatic teacher cases exemplifying this discourse, both IDA and NINA appear to possess and apply this didactic platform, whereas INGA appears to realize a more delimited disciplinary knowledge and competence when teaching her special students. Still, INGA is an especially interesting case because, in spite of these challenges, she insists on the importance of Bildung aims for this group of students as a scaffold for developing their identities as students and adults, and for participating in education and society. The alterna-

tive would be to position them as basically in a deficit and dependent way, as though they are still children.

Frustration and doubt is found in statements by both INGA and IDA, documenting that communicative strategies and didactically reflected instruction pose demands in situations when the gap between teacher and students appears most difficult to overcome. Still, a distinctive feature of the descriptions and reflections by the whole group of teachers categorized as belonging to this profile is the disciplinary didactic resources available to them, providing both pedagogic imagination and energy and a platform for analytic reflection that enables them to establish a reflective distance from the frustrations they experience. They endeavor to make these problems the subject for constant reflection and further development of MTE.

The discourse of communicatively motivated writing is characterized by integration at all levels. Strategic and ritual aims are inherent in school writing, but in this discourse these are integrated in an organization of writing intending to establish communicative meaning for students. The double understanding of literacy as writing competence and text competence is also part of this approach. The discourse, however, clearly documents that the idea of *Bildung* entails but extends beyond the idea of literacy. Competence aims are a prerogative for *Bildung* aims, but these do not provide ongoing reflections on students' perspectives, and they do not meet the constant challenge of balancing student and knowledge orientation which is the basic characteristic of the *Bildung* reflections expressed in this discourse.

What, then, may be concluded and learned from this study of MTE writing and of Scandinavian MTE teachers' ways of managing writing?

In my view, only the communicatively motivated writing profile appears to respond appropriately to the current challenges in educational policies and to the analyses provided by the MTE research. The strategically and ritually motivated profile actualizes a narrow and purely skills oriented written practice that meets neither current literacy challenges nor *Bildung* aims. The ritually motivated profile employs a considerably broader writing practice, directed towards genre competencies and aims of democratic participation. For that matter, an answer to current challenges is provided by this profile, but the answer does not rise above the disciplinary frames and genre norms set by the current curricula, and neither does the answer relate to specific content knowledge of MTE. The communicatively motivated profile, however, provides a comprehensive disciplinary as well as didactic reflection and motivation. Even though quite different approaches to MTE teaching are reported in these diaries and interviews, we still find a distinctive integrated disciplinary didactic writing practice, and this practice is generally motivated in statements marked by personal and independent reflection and underpinned by disciplinary arguments.

Thus, the analysis suggests that qualified answers to students' current needs for education and *Bildung* can be found among Scandinavian MTE teachers. An inter-

esting observation in this context is that the communicatively motivated profile is a fairly strong presence in the data. Even though valid quantitative conclusions naturally cannot be drawn from a case study involving 26 respondents, in the context of standardized measures and political pressures for taking utilitarian perspectives in education and in MTE, this pronounced emphasis in the material provided by the teachers is still interesting. I find it reasonable to say that this emphasis indicates that essential features of the Scandinavian educational tradition survive in the MTE subject, and still offer vital and rich answers to students' language and literacy needs. Furthermore, from a case study perspective, the analysis of the three paradigmatic teacher profiles can be said to have elaborated and strengthened the critical quality of my inquiry. The empirical argumentation is strengthened by the fact that three teachers addressing very different student groups and in rather different national educational systems, still engage in parallel writing pedagogies, drawing on the same disciplinary area to justify their approach.

Furthermore, this study suggests that, viewed from the teachers' point of view, a Scandinavian MTE culture with relatively strong common features can be found. In spite of fairly big differences of curricula, educational backgrounds and the practical organization of instruction in schools, teachers apparently meet relatively similar challenges when we listen to their reports and reflections on MTE teaching, just as they seem to handle these challenges in relatively similar ways.

Despite the challenges that MTE educators are facing in the era of literacy, my study indicates that they still have rich resources available to defend the position of MTE within the education of young people. MTE is not simply a matter of inculcating into students the skills necessary for them to take their place in the economy. The idea of *Bildung* reminds us that education should be directed towards the education of the whole person, and that full participation in a democratic community requires far more than functional literacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article is published in Danish (Krogh, 2012a) and the present English version is published with kind permission of the publishers Novus. I present a shortened and revised version which takes into account the editors' and the reviewers' comments. I would like to express my thanks to the anonymous reviewers and especially to the special issue editors who have offered most helpful support in the revision process.

REFERENCES

- Aase, L. (2005). Norskfagets dannelsespotensial i fortid og samtid [The potential for *Bildung* of the subject of Norwegian in past and present]. In J. Aasen, & S. Nome (Eds.) *Det nye norskfaget [The new subject of Norwegian]* (pp. 161-188). Oslo: Fagbokforlaget, LNU.
- Aase, L. & Hägerfelth, G. (2012). Dannelse/bildning i et skandinavisk perspektiv [Bildung in a Scandinavian perspective]. In N.F. Elf & P. Kaspersen (Eds.) *Den nordiske skolen, fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske modersmålsfag [The Nordic School, does it exist? Didactic*

- discourses and dilemmas in Scandinavian mother tongue subjects*] (pp. 168-189). Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Berge, K.L. (1988). Skolestilen som genre. Med påtvungen pen [The school essay as a genre. With forced pen]. Oslo: LNU/Cappelen.
- Berge, K.L. (2006). Perspektiv på skriftkultur [Perspective on writing culture]. In S. Matre (Ed.) *Utfordringer for skriveopplæring og skriveforskning i dag [Challenges for current instruction and research in writing]* (pp. 57-76). Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk forlag.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (1993). *The Powers of Literacy. A Genre Approach to Teaching*. London, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401644>
- Council of Europe (2009). Languages in Education, Languages for Education. A platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education. Retrieved July 7, 2012 from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/langeduc/LE_PlatformIntro_en.asp
- Delnoy, R., Herrlitz, W., Kroon, S., & Sturm, S. (Eds.) (1988). *Portraits in Mother Tongue Education*. Studies in Mother Tongue Education 4. Enschede.
- Elf, N.F. (2008). *Towards semiocy? Exploring a New Rationale for Teaching Modes and Media of Hans Christian Andersen Fairytales in Four Commercial Upper-Secondary "Danish" Classes. A Design-Based Educational Intervention*. PhD dissertation. Faculty of the Humanities. The University of Southern Denmark.
- Elf, N.F. & Kaspersen, P. (Eds.) (2012). *Den nordiske skolen, fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske modersmålsfag* [The Nordic School, does it exist? Didactic discourses and dilemmas in Scandinavian mother tongue subjects]. Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Evensen, L.S. (2010). En gyldig vurdering av elevers skrivekompetanse? [A valid assessment of students' writing competence?]. In J. Smidt, I. Folkvord, & A.J. Aasen (Eds.) *Rammer for skiving. Om skriveutvikling i skole og yrkesliv [Frames of writing. On the development of writing in school and working life]* (pp. 13-31). Trondheim: Tapir.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2010). Fem misforståelser om casestudiet [Five misunderstandings about the case study]. In S. Brinkmann, & L. Tanggaard (Eds.) *Kvalitative metoder. En grundbog [Qualitative methods. A textbook]* (pp. 463-487). København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Foucault, M. (1969). *L'archéologie du savoir* [The archeology of knowledge]. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Gee, J.P. (2005). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis. Theory and Method*. 2nd edition. New York and London: Routledge.
- Herrlitz, W., & Van de Ven, P.-H. (2007). Comparative research on mother tongue education: IMEN's aims, points of departure, history and methodology. In W. Herrlitz, S. Ongstad, & P.-H. Van de Ven (Eds.) *Research on mother tongue education in a comparative international perspective. Theoretical and methodological issues* (pp.13-42). Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.
- Høegh, T. (2009): *Poetisk pædagogik. Sprogrytme og mundtlig fremførelse som litterær fortolkning. Forslag til ny tekstteori og til pædagogisk refleksion* [Poetic pedagogy. Language rhythm and oral performance as literary interpretation. Proposal for a new text theory and for pedagogical reflection]. PhD dissertation. The Faculty of the Humanities, University of Copenhagen.
- Ivanič, R. (2004). Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write. *Language and Education*. 18, 3, 220-245. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09500780408666877>
- Jacobsen, B., Tanggaard, L., & Brinkmann, S. (2010). Fænomenologi [Phenomenology]. In S. Brinkmann, & L. Tanggaard (Eds.). *Kvalitative metoder. En grundbog* [Qualitative methods. A textbook] (pp. 185-205). København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Kaspersen, P. (2012). Introduktion [Introduction]. In N.F. Elf & P. Kaspersen (Eds.) (2012). *Den nordiske skolen, fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske modersmålsfag* [The Nordic School, does it exist? Didactic discourses and dilemmas in Scandinavian mother tongue subjects] (pp. 11-27). Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Kress, G. (2012). Making meanings material: thoughts on literacy, reading and writing in the context of multimodal communication. *Viden om læsning* 12. Retrieved September 31 2012 from <http://www.videnomlaesning.dk/wp-content/uploads/Making-meanings-material-by-Gunther-Kress.pdf>.

- Krogh, E. (2012a). Skrivning i modersmåsfagene i skriftkyndighedens æra [Writing in the mother tongue subjects in the literacy era]. In N.F. Elf & P. Kaspersen (Eds.) *Den nordiske skolen, fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske modersmåsfag [The Nordic School, does it exist? Didactic discourses and dilemmas in Scandinavian mother tongue subjects]* (pp. 59-91). Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Krogh, E. (2012b). Literacy og stemme – et spændingsfelt i modersmåsfaglig skrivning [Literacy and voice – a field of tension in MTE writing]. In S. Ongstad (Ed.) *Nordisk morsmålsdidaktikk. Forskning, felt og fag [Nordic Mother Tongue Didactics. Research, Field, and Subject]*. Oslo: Novus forlag.
- Krogh, E. (2010). Skriftligt arbejde i fagene [Written work in the disciplines]. In E. Krogh (Ed.) *Videnskabsretorik og skriveidaktik [The rhetorics of science and the didactics of writing]* (pp- 13-153). *Gymnasiepædagogik 77*.
- Krogh, E. (2003). Et fag i moderniteten. Danskfagets didaktiske diskurser [A subject in modernity. The didactical discourses of the subject of Danish]. PhD dissertation. The Faculty of the Humanities, University of Southern Denmark.
- Liberg, C. (2008). Skrivande i olika ämnen – lärares textkompetens [Writing in different subjects – the textual competence of teachers]. In R.T. Lorentzen, & J. Smidt (Eds.) *Å skrive i alle fag [Writing in all subjects]* (pp. 51-61). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2002). "Something to Shoot For": A Systemic Functional Approach to Teaching Genre in Secondary School Science. In A. Johns (Ed.). *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives* (pp. 17-42). Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- OECD (2005). *The Definition and Selection of Key Competences*. Retrieved July 7, 2012 from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf>
- Ongstad, S. (2004). *Språk, kommunikasjon og didaktikk. Norsk som flerfaglig og fagdidaktisk ressurs* [Language, communication and didactics. Norwegian as interdisciplinary and disciplinary didactic resource]. Oslo: Fagbokforlaget, Landslaget for Norskundervisning.
- Penne, S. (2012). (project leader). *Literacy. The Didactic Challenge of New Literacies in School and Teacher Education*. Retrieved September 31, 2012 from <http://blogg.hioa.no/literacy/>.
- Penne, S. (2010). *Litteratur og film i klasserummet. Didaktikk for ungdomstrinnet og videregående skole* [Literature and films in the classroom. Didactics for secondary and upper secondary school]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Penne, S. (2001). *Norsk som identitetsfag* [Norwegian as a subject of identity formation]. Oslo: Universitetsfaget.
- Rychen, D.S. & Salganik, L.H. (2000). Definition and Selection of Key Competences. Fourth General Assembly of the OECD Education Indicators Programme. The INES Compendium. Retrieved September 31, 2012 from <http://www.deseco.admin.ch/bfs/deseco/en/index/02.parsys.69356.downloadList.26477.DownloadFile.tmp/2000.desecocontrib.inesg.a.pdf>.
- Sawyer, W., & Van de Ven, P.-H. (2006). Starting Points. Paradigms in Mother Tongue Education. *L1 Educational Studies in Language and Literature 7*, 1, 5-20.
- Schleppegrell, M.J. (2004). *The Language of Schooling. A Functional Linguistics Perspective*. Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0047404504263059>
- Scholes, R. (1998). *The Rise and Fall of English: Reconstructing English as a Discipline*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Smidt, Jon (2004). *Sjangrer og stemmer i norskrommet – kulturskaping i norskfaget fra småskole til lærerutdanning* [Genres and voices in the room of Norwegian – creation of culture in the subject of Norwegian from primary school through teacher education]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Thygesen, R. et al. (2007): *Nasjonale prøver i skriving som grunnleggende ferdighet [National tests in writing as a basic skill]*. End report, Stavanger: Nasjonalt senter for leseopplæring og leseforskning. Universitetet i Stavanger.
- UNESCO (2004). *Literacy: A Unesco Perspective*. Retrieved July 7, 2012 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001318/131817eo.pdf>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press.

Westbury, I. (2000). Teaching as Reflective Practice: What Might Didaktik Teach Curriculum. In I. Westbury, S. Hopmann, K. Riquarts (Eds.) *Teaching as Reflective Practice. The German Didaktik Tradition* (pp. 15-39). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.