PLANNING FOR PROGRESSION?

Norwegian L1 teachers' conception of literature teaching and literary competence throughout lower secondary education

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Abstract

This article reflects on the literature teaching of lower secondary L1 teachers in Norway. We examine how teachers plan for and assess their students' literary development, and ask what they consider to be the main purpose of literature teaching, what they understand as literary development, and to what extent they experience and understand literature instruction planning as a collaborative and collegial task. Methodologically, the study is based on semi-structured interviews with L1 teachers (N=9) at one lower secondary school in a Norwegian city. Theoretically, the study builds on L1 paradigm syntheses, models of literary competence, while also lending itself to sociological studies of professions. The findings suggest that Norwegian L1 teachers consider fostering the joy of reading to be the most important aim of literature teaching. Their teaching is legitimized from a reader-oriented position, mainly supported by everyday theory and common-sense discourse rather than scholarship or theories of literary criticism, didactics, or pedagogy. Furthermore, the teachers demonstrate dissenting views on how to plan for and structure students' development of literary competence throughout the three-year course but tend to agree that the development should progress from experience-based literature teaching to more analytical and interpretative approaches. As a general trend, teachers experience difficulties assessing students' progression in literary competence, predominantly resorting to assessing students' knowledge and use of analytical concepts. Finally, the findings imply that variations in the teachers' understanding of literature teaching's purpose and in their related planning and assessment should be seen in the context of the school's professional community, especially regarding what opportunities it facilitates for discipline-specific peer networks.

Keywords: literature teaching, literary development, literary competence, teacher professionalism

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role and status of literature[1] within the Norwegian educational system have been heavily debated ever since an encompassing national curriculum reform in 2006 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010). Already before its implementation, scholars characterized the new curriculum as a "literacy reform" (Berge, 2005), and it was indeed designed in what has been referred to as "the literacy era" (Krogh, 2012)—one that is "generally characterized by global standardization and government policy that emphasizes the role of education as a contribution to economic growth" (p 22). In this context, it is hardly surprising that that extensive curricular deregulations regarding literary content have yielded concerns that too many choices are left to the individual teacher, and that literature instruction is likely to suffer when this freedom of choice resides within an educational ecology increasingly dominated by basic skills, key competences, learning outcomes and standardized tests (Brumo et al., 2017; Fodstad, 2017). Regardless of how well-founded such a concern is, it is fair to suggest that post-millennial curriculum development in Norway has left L1 teachers in a contradictory state where their autonomy from the German *Didaktik* tradition (Westbury, 2000) is challenged by an Anglo-American curriculum tradition that sees their role more like that of an employee expected to implement programs and deliver results within a top-down structure (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Krogh, 2012). Paradoxically, though, one could argue that less content-defining curriculum design increases the need for L1 teachers to exercise professional discretion which again calls for strengthened collegial networks and teacher autonomy that develop professional judgment.

International research has shown that there is no consensus about the aims of literary education (Fialho, 2019; Wintersparv et al., 2019), and teachers working at the same school having entirely different views on the aims and function of literature teaching is seen as "typical" (Witte, 2011, p. 100). Such findings can be seen as a natural consequence of what Saywer and van de Ven (2006) call L1 education's poly-paradigmatic characteristics, where it is supposed to fulfil a variety of objectives and aims, which allows for several concurrent, competing, and interleaved ideas about what L1 education is and should be. As they conclude their influential paper, the rationalities and meta-discourses considering issues of mother-tongue education "gain a degree of urgency" due to "its role in citizen-formation, in creating national 'identity' through literature" (pp. 18-19). Studies suggest, however, that little room is set aside for such discourses among the teachers themselves. On the contrary, setting aside time for collegial reflection, discussion, and collaboration—as important this may be—is something many teachers find difficult to prioritize, since

1 When using the term "literature", we refer to most written fictional texts regardless of format; in other words, the term encompasses all the major literary genres: prose, poetry and drama. This is in line with the everyday use of the word as well, as the terminological traditions of Norwegian L1 education, from primary to postgraduate level.

professional conversations are considered a "luxury" (Parr, 2011, p. 70). It may come as no surprise, then, that in a Scandinavian context, teachers use different objectives as points of departure for literature instruction (Wintersparv et al., 2019), and that their justifications for literary education tend to be vague and obscure, resting on everyday discourses rather than scholarly and theoretical knowledge (Penne, 2012). Furthermore, studies by Tengberg (2011) and Fatheddine (2018) indicate that teachers' didactical practices deviate from curricular intentions. Whether the perspective is national or global, there seems to be no consensus about either the means nor the ends of literature instruction.

Studies have shown that teachers' beliefs about content and forms of knowledge and learning, impact their instructional approaches (Davila, 2015; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Levine & Trepper, 2019; Zheng, 2009), and that different teacher approaches generate different learning outcomes (Janssen & Rijlaarsdam, 1996; Yimwilai, 2015). As Schrijvers and colleagues (2016) note, what teachers value has a major impact on which perspectives and learning activities are emphasized in literature classrooms. Writing within a Dutch context, they suggest that the general trend towards ideological and instructional eclecticism is further reinforced by the curricular freedom in the Netherlands, and the same can certainly be said from within a contemporary Norwegian context. Moreover, even though the curricular freedom is significant in Norwegian upper secondary schools, it involves yet another dimension in lower secondary, namely the issue of longitudinal development. While the former defines learning objectives for each year, all the goals for three years of lower secondary education are jointly given as a set of learning objectives after 10th grade (as students turn age 16). Consequently, teachers are given significant leeway not only regarding content and pedagogy but also around emphasis, distribution, and progression throughout the course.

Regarding L1 literature instruction, the highly flexible curricular design leaves it up to each school, team and teacher to consider what students should read at a given time, during a course or even throughout several schoolyears. These deliberations must, however, also consider literature education's genuinely nonlinear, inductive and exploratory nature within a regime of predefined learning objectives. One could indeed ask, with van de Ven and Doecke (2011b), where literature teaching fits into a world where everything is mapped out in advance, and education is conceived primarily as a matter of inculcating the requisite knowledge and skills for people to take their places in the economy. Within such a curricular framework, literature comes in danger of being linked with a sole focus on reading comprehension and proficiency on one hand, and instrumentality on the other (Johansson, 2015). Still, questions of planned progression and development in the students' literary education are unavoidable, not least within a curricular framework where teachers navigate towards rather abstract learning outputs at the end of a three-year course of teaching. Development studies show that students' understanding of what development is expected of them over a certain period is critical for their motivation and progression (Meece, 1997; Schunk, 2000). Correspondingly, lack of continuity

has negative impact on their literary development. However, cases demonstrate that teachers tend to focus on single lessons or series of lessons rather than long-term student development (Witte, 2011).

How do Norwegian lower secondary L1 teachers deal with these dilemmas? Do they prepare plans for progression in their instruction and course designs? And what are they aiming for when designing and exercising literature teaching? These are the questions that initiated the research we present here, where we analyze and discuss reflections on literature teaching among a selection of Norwegian lower secondary L1 teachers. More specifically, we pose the following research question: How do teachers plan for and assess their students' literary development throughout the course of lower secondary L1 education? This main question, however, cannot be answered without also examining what they consider to be the main purpose of literature teaching, and how they understand literary development. Additionally, we ask to what extent the teachers experience and understand literature instruction planning as a collaborative and collegial task. Combined, the purpose of asking these questions is to contribute to the knowledge about how teachers conceive of literature teaching and their role as literature teachers within the current L1 policy for lower secondary school in Norway. Our data consist of transcribed semi-structured interviews with all L1 teachers (N=9) at a lower secondary school in mid-Norway. These interviews are presented in English translation, then analyzed and discussed in the light of L1 paradigm theory, models of literary competence and theories of profession.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There has been a multitude of studies on literature education published the last couple of decades, in Scandinavia as well as internationally. Some focus broadly on L1 paradigms and discourses (Elf & Kaspersen, 2012; Krogh, 2012; Saywer & Van de Ven, 2016; Scholes, 1998; Westbury, 2000), others more specifically on literature instruction, discussing its purpose (Fialho, 2019; Wintersparv et al., 2019; Zabka, 2016), theoretical framework (Abraham, 2016; Witte et al., 2012; Yimwilay, 2015), curriculum (Gourvennec et al., 2020; Witte & Samihaian, 2013), textbooks (Rørbech & Skyggebjerg, 2020), pedagogical praxis (Fialho et al., 2012; Gourvennec, 2017; Sønneland, 2019; Van de Ven & Doecke, 2011a), or effect (Koek et al., 2019; Schrijvers et al. 2019). We will return to some of these perspectives and specific studies below, in the section on theoretical framework.

For our present study, the most relevant perspectives are primarily those examining how teachers conceive of literature teaching's purpose and students' literary development, but also research on literature teachers' professional development and collaboration. We are specifically interested in studies focusing on lower secondary school and the ones that are methodologically based on teacher interviews. This latter category often focuses on educational paradigms and discourses, plus accounts of literature teaching's purpose and process (Levine &

Trepper, 2019; Penne, 2012; Wintersparv et al., 2019). Considering our focus, however, the question of literature teaching's purpose is contextual and hence secondary, while our primary interest is with teachers' thoughts about students' literary development, how they plan for and assess literary progression, and on this issue even international scholarship is scarce. The most notable exception is Witte et al.'s (2012) empirically grounded theory on literary development, in which they explore shared pedagogical content knowledge in a group of teachers by asking how a particular level of literary competence can be demonstrated by students. While our aim is empirically descriptive rather than theoretical, we share Witte et al.'s interest in how teachers conceive of literary competence and development.

Focusing on teacher accounts of literature teaching in a Norwegian context, Kjelen's (2013) doctoral thesis on Norwegian lower secondary literature teaching makes an important scholarly backdrop, since one of his objectives is to examine L1 teachers' conception of literary competence. We build on his findings but add to them by focusing specifically on development and progression as well as the intersection of the individual teachers' practice and collaborative peer networks. In addition, we refer to Fodstad and Gagnat's (2019) cognate examination of Norwegian L1 teachers in higher secondary school and, even more so, to the larger *Nordfag* study of Scandinavian L1 teachers (cf. Elf & Kaspersen, 2012). All these studies are based on teacher interviews and address the question of how teachers legitimize their teaching of literature. A central finding of the *Nordfag* study is that teachers struggle with proposing coherent, scholarly founded legitimations for teaching literature and that didactic competence is generally higher in regard to writing instruction than it is for literature instruction (Aase & Kaspersen 2012, p. 42). More specifically, Penne (2012) shows in her analysis that the teacher's proposed legitimations are vague and based on subjective everyday theories rather than scholarly didactics. Her findings are somewhat nuanced by Wintersparv et al.'s (2019) later study, which also emphasizes the absence of well-founded teaching objectives and approaches, but points to a lack of student perspective and concludes that Swedish upper secondary L1 teachers report a literature education that is teacher-centered and instrumental. This is also supported by a recent empirical study (Gabrielsen et al., 2019) of how literary texts are used in an extensive selection of Norwegian lower secondary L1 classes, which identify "a rather reductionist use of literature" that "align with concerns raised by scholars around the world" and poorly reflects the many strong arguments for why students should read literature in school.

These studies point to issues addressed in a paper by Røskeland in which she, much like Wintersparv et al. (2019), asks whether literature education is submitted to serving a more secondary role as a means for improving general reading skills. Røskeland poses three main challenges: 1) the teaching of literature has lost its defining role of reading instruction, 2) not a great deal of literature is being read in school, and 3) literary theory is receding as the basis for literature teaching (2014, pp. 198). The first claim draws attention to the curriculum's emphasis on basic skills

and key competencies, representing a communicative and subjective turn (Penne 2013, pp. 42) where one could wonder whether there is at all any room for literature (Skaftun 2009, pp. 12). The second claim has been confirmed by a broad empirical study of lower secondary L1 education (cf. Gabrielsen & Blikstad-Balas 2020), while the third claim has been confirmed by *Nordfag* research (cf. Aase & Kaspersen 2012, pp. 40-43). Consequently, curricular trends as well as scholarship indicate that Norwegian L1 teachers face major challenges legitimizing, prioritizing and designing literature instruction. Literature teaching is indeed challenged in "the literacy era" (Krogh, 2012) and "the age of measurability" (Wintersparv et al. 2019) that may well be polyparadigmatic but with a strong tendency towards "a utilitarian paradigm" (Saywer & Van de Ven, 2006).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When framing an examination of literature teaching—or any topic within L1 education for that matter—one can hardly do so without considering Sawyer and Van de Ven's (2006) influential paradigm theory. Building on ten Brinke's (1976) ambitious survey of possible ways of teaching mother-tongue languages, they unravel the battle between conflicting value orientations, and consider their consequences for aims, content, and teaching methods. They establish their four well-known paradigms—academic, developmental, communicative, and utilitarian—by referring to other systemic concepts such as rationality, meta-discourses and discourse-analysis. The latter approach has been taken also by Scandinavian researchers in the field, most notably by Krogh (2019), as she maps three L1 teacher profiles in the *Nordfag* data: strategic, ritual, and communicative. These synthesizing notions of mother-tongue education values and discourses lurk in the background as we analyze our data, while they will be more actively referred to in the discussion.

3.1 Literary competence and development

Our investigation does, however, also call for theoretical approaches specifically aiming at and building on literary texts and how they are being taught. Particularly, we turn towards models that intend to define and describe literary learning, competence, and development. Among these we find a quite extensive selection of accounts for literary competence. Coined by Culler (1975), the concept was a response to Chomsky's structuralist notion of linguistic competence and originally referred to a kind of literary grammar. Hence, for Culler, literary competence involves internalized conventions for reading literature, where "potential properties, latent in the object itself, are actualized by the theory of discourse applied in the act of reading" (p. 132). In her transactional theory, Rosenblatt (1995) also emphasizes the distinctiveness of literary reading with the introduction of aesthetic reading as opposed to efferent reading. Her conception of reading a "literary work of art" (p.

292), however, is far more focused on sensuous and affective aspects and, consequently, personal associations, emotions and ideas that emerge in the reader's mind during the process of reading. Later, several models of literary competence were proposed, negotiating object-oriented conventionalism and the more subject-oriented reader-response approach.

In a comparative empirical study of literature education in Russia, Finland and Sweden, Örjan Torell proposes a triadic model breaking literary competence into constitutional competence, performance competence and literary transfer competence, and he highlights the need to balance the two latter subcategories (Torell et al., 2002).[2] In other words, he sees the literary competent reader as one who manages to combine convention-based analytical skills with a more emotionally engaged experience that allows for the text to actually influence the reader's conception of himself or herself and the world. Another partly overlapping triadic model of literary competence was proposed by Sheridan Blau, who distinguishes three subcompetencies: textual literacy, intertextual literacy and performative literacy (2003, pp. 203). Textual literacy is close to Culler's concept, entailing the ability to read, analyze and evaluate, and enabling interpretation and reflection. Intertextual literacy is the ability to contextualize, e.g., by understanding genre traits, references and specific words that relate the text to other texts. Finally, performative literacy is a more cognitively oriented concept involving prolonged concentration and focused attention when facing complex texts. This requires a tolerance for ambiguity and, consequently, a willingness to embrace uncertainty and suspend conclusions. Finally, Blau relates performative competence with metacognition, which leads to the conclusion that reading literature is not only of value but also nurtures ways of thinking that are highly transferrable to other domains. What Torell as well as Blau do, admittedly with slightly different concepts and emphasis, is to suggest what skills, knowledges and attitudes constitute literary competence and, implicitly, how it can be nurtured and developed.

What most theories of literary competence are more hesitant about is presenting a taxonomy for development and assessment. This was, however, the ambitious aim of the LiFT-2 project (literaryframework.eu), which not only defined levels of literary competence but also suggested book characteristics and didactic intervention types appropriate for further development at each level. As they establish their framework of literary development, Witte et al. (2012) focus on the interaction between student and text by asking what a student with a particular level of literary competence demonstrates with a particular literary text. Their study concludes by identifying 14 indicators of literary competence applied as criteria for describing six successive competence levels. It is, however, emphasized that the developmental process should be seen as discontinuous, and that the act of reading can have various purposes, hence the competence levels "could be seen as repertoires of mental operations that a student can apply flexibly" which turns literary development into

2 Torell's model is also made available in English in a separate paper (cf. Torell, 2001).

"a cumulative process in which students expand their repertoire of reading modes" (p. 25).

An obvious risk with such a competence taxonomy is that it may well be rigidly applied as a pedagogical tool, even though Witte & Samihaian (2013, p. 19) stresses its primary function to be merely heuristic. Nevertheless, as Tengberg (2011) argues, the concept of literary competence is definitely one to be problematized, and in several recent research papers this is exactly what is done. Implicitly, it is done by the advocates of transformative reading, who consider insights into self and others to be a main objective of literature teaching, and consequently formalist and knowledge-oriented approaches to be subordinate elements, while emphasizing the reading experience (Fialho, 2019; Fialho et al., 2012; Schrijwers et al., 2016). A more explicit questioning of literary competence is Abraham's (2016) remark about how it rests on the individual, whereas experiencing, understanding, interpreting, and communicating about literature is first and foremost a collaborative praxis where meaning is negotiated based on differing perspectives. Hence, the literary competence of individual students is almost impossible to assess. A related argument is made by Zabka (2016), as he seeks to identify what distinguish competent responses to literature, highlighting openness, immersion, and reflection, claiming education "has been robbed of its proper focus on the processes through which we respond to literature" (p. 229).

A more radical take on the dilemma of competence and development is to claim that a planned and structured progression in literary development, runs the risk of promoting didactics of socioeconomic instrumentalism which—one could argue—is essentially anti-literary. Biesta (2014) has made the claim that such global trends postulate an education based on evidence and measurability that is hence predetermined and standardized and has the intention of disseminating best practices in a one size fits all-manner. Opposed to this utilitarianist approach and heavily influenced by Deleuzian philosophy, Ola Harstad in his doctoral thesis launches the idea of "a minor literature teacher", i.e., a teacher who uses literature to challenge a concept of reading that develops linearly and can be reliably assessed and who provides resistance not by ignoring centrally defined objectives but rather finding "cracks and cavities within them, initiating a subversive movement" (2018, p. 278). Harstad argues that this is where we find literature's educational legitimacy; e.g., not as a means by which to attain future and external goals, but with the autonomy of art, thereby enabling aesthetic experiences (2018, p. 291). Teachers have always initiated these subversive movements; they have done so more or less deliberately, Harstad argues, when interpreting policy documents in ways that produce hidden curricula and tacit canons. Such behavior has often been considered problematic, not the least because it causes friction during the implementation of curricular revisions. Harstad, however, makes the case for valuing such friction, which again poses questions about teacher professionalism.

3.2 Teacher professionalism

Literature teaching constitutes a so-called "ill-structured knowledge domain", Witte & Samihaian (2013, p. 19) notes in a comparative analysis of several European literature curricula that are characterized by their polyparadigmatic designs. Consequently, European policymakers generally give schools and teachers a fair amount of space to make their own priorities, which in turn yields diverse and even diverging approaches to literature teaching, possibly resulting in fragmentary knowledge and poor conditions for conscious and deliberate development. This ill-structured and polyparadigmatic nature of mother-tongue education is why it makes sense to speak of the need for a specific L1 teacher professionalism.

Traditionally, profession studies have considered professions to be institutionalized rationality in the form of pursuing the practical application of science (Parsons 1939, pp. 467), a conception that has excluded teachers and other "semiprofessions" whose purpose is "to communicate rather than to create or apply knowledge" (Etzioni 1969, pp. xiv). Following "the practice turn" in social sciences (Savigny, Schatzki & Knorr-Cetina 2001), this positivist distinction between pure, semi- and nonprofessions was disbanded for more practice-oriented approaches that focus not on "objective truth" but on the execution of discretion, based on a certain knowledge, and within a peer network that facilitates reflection and development. Hence, there is comprehensive sociological scholarship on teacher professionalism that studies teachers' knowledge base of, leeway for and execution of discretion. As suggested by Brumo, Dahl, and Fodstad (2017), L1 teachers seem to represent a branch within the educational system that is suitable for studying discipline-specific teacher professionalism in light of three criteria proposed by the OECD: a distinct scholarly knowledge base, professional autonomy that allows for discretion, and peer networks that develop high standards by facilitating the exchange of experiences (2016, pp. 32-36). In studying Norwegian L1 teachers' reflections on literary development, specifically addressing the issue of individual versus collegial deliberations, we combine literature didactics with an exploration of a specific Norwegian L1 professionalism.

4. CONTEXT

4.1 National curricular context

In Norway, schooling starts at age 6 and has a duration of 13 years, subdivided into primary (1–7), lower secondary (8–10), and upper secondary grades (11–13). Norwegian L1 curriculum and classes are common for all students throughout lower secondary, while split into academic and vocational tracks in upper secondary. It is a compound language arts subject including topics and skills such as reading, writing, literature, literary and cultural history, media, rhetoric, critical literacy, etc.

Consequently, it accounts for more lessons than any other subject, with approximately five hours per week.

Initially, at the beginning of the 19th century, Norwegian L1 instruction was based on grammatical-rhetorical traditions, where literature was broadly defined with the main purpose of providing stylistic examples for students' own thinking, speaking, writing, and ability to make aesthetic judgments (Steinfeld, 2005). Throughout the century, following national independence and cultural construction, literary history has constituted an increasingly important role in educational institutions' formative mission, culminating with the introduction of a final oral exam in the 1880s, making literary history one of the curriculum's main components. However, the tension between literary history and analytical skills continued to assert itself at that very same time; furthermore, the reform pedagogies of the 1970s added an additional tension between text-oriented and reader-oriented theories and trends that still characterizes the field (Claudi, 2019; Rødnes, 2014).

Conflicting interests were further emphasized with the wholesale curriculum reform of the new millennium, as the concept of literature was widened or even replaced by the concept of (oral, written, verbal, iconic, and multimodal) text, while reading instruction downplayed cultural literacy based on fiction's traditionally privileged status in favor of skills, strategies and competence. When it defined reading as a key competence[3], the 2006 reform emphasized how skills and cultural competence are mutually dependent in reading development (cf. Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010, p. 5). After a revision, however, this perspective was replaced by a foregrounding of engagement and empathy through reading. Additionally, formulations were added that described how students' reading skills are developed; such development requires frequent, comprehensive and varied reading and systematic work with purposeful strategies. Finally, the development of reading skills was described as progress from the "basic decoding and understanding of simple texts, to comprehending, interpreting, reflecting on and evaluating ever more complex texts of different genres" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, p. 5).

With the latest national curriculum revision that was finalized in 2019 and implemented from 2020 onwards, the extended text notion is continued, while the conceptual dyad of "literature" and "nonfiction" is also more emphasized than in the former literacy-driven policy documents (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019).[4] As a recent comparative study of Nordic lower secondary L1

3 The Norwegian curricular concept 'grunnleggende ferdighet' has caused much confusion, debate, and competing interpretations since it literally means basic skills but refers to OECD's DeSeCo project and the concept of key competencies. Hence, we choose this latter option when translating Norwegian policy documents; this is a decision which is, of course, not without a certain political bias.

4 Our data was collected prior to the implementation of this last curricular revision. However, the teachers were well aware of the ongoing work and were familiar with some of its main principles.

curricula shows, literary texts are clearly given significance in this latest revision, while simultaneously, teachers are given "considerable freedom of choice" when selecting texts (Gourvennec et al., 2020, p. 19). In addition, the study concludes that with regards to purpose, the latest Norwegian curriculum allows for several possible interpretations but mainly sees the reading of literature "as a way to enhance general and discipline-specific literacy and to develop empathy and an understanding of other people's and other cultures' perspectives" (2020, p. 20). Consequently, the curriculum seems to find literature teaching's legitimacy in socioeconomical notions of skills and competencies as well as a more disciplinary conception of literacy in both the reader-response tradition (Rosenblatt 1995) and in promotion of democracy (Nussbaum, 2010), while the perspective of national cultural heritage is subdued but still present.

As shown, post-millennial curricular trend has been towards less specified content and methods, while learning objectives have been emphasized in ways that suggest a more streamlined and skill-oriented reading instruction rooted in a broad conception of literature and an idea of planned and structured learning progression. Such progression has, however, been scarcely described in policy documents, which is probably why the white paper leading up to the latest reform stressed that when reading the curriculum, "teachers must easily be able to extract the expected progression from it and plan their instruction in accordance with it" (Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 43). Here, progression is to be understood as students' development over time, i.e., as a learning course within a discipline. Nevertheless, as the current curriculum is designed for lower secondary school, with learning outcomes being defined only at the end of 10th grade and no guidelines being provided for interim progression, the full responsibility of designing courses that ensure progression through three years is left to the local level of schools and individual teachers. In contrast, the higher secondary L1 curriculum is broken down in yearly learning objectives in a way that dictates, albeit not the content or method of literature teaching, at least the progression of the outcomes.

4.2 Local context

Our data is collected from a (sub)urban lower secondary school in Norway. For Norwegian standards, the school is rather large, with a total of approximately 450 students evenly spread over the three grade levels. It is located in a predominantly white middle class residential area, characterized by ethnic, cultural, socioeconomical, and linguistical homogeneity, where median income and education rank among the highest in the larger urban area. Furthermore, the school is involved in university and teacher education partnerships, with most teachers having finished further educational courses in student guidance and developmental work and making visiting researchers and teacher training students a common feature.

Each grade level is organized into three groups of approximately 50 students, led by a team of three teachers, of which one teaches Norwegian language arts. Yearly planning and organizing is mainly done within these core teams. In total, this means there are nine L1 teachers at the school, each being responsible for their student group, working closely with two other teachers responsible for other subjects, but with little allocated time for L1-related work across the groups and class levels.

5. METHOD

5.1 Collecting the data

In alignment with phenomenological principles, we seek to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of our participants. As we search knowledge about human accounts for, reflections on and opinions about personal literature teaching experiences, our investigation is based on qualitative, semistructured research interviews. The method is expedient as it allows for insight into the interviewees' thoughts on their own practices and for follow up on statements that are made throughout the process. Still, we do not consider the qualitative interview simply to be a neutral research tool but rather a social practice (Talmy, 2010), dependent on the interactional contingencies (Rapley, 2001).

Our group of respondents consisted of six female and three male teachers aged 29–64 years when the interviews were conducted during October and November 2018. For the purpose of validity, our intention was to interview all L1 teachers at one school, including individuals with different teaching philosophies, practices, experiences, and motivation for participating. The idea was to get a glimpse into an entire team of L1 teachers, specifically to be able to analyze the relation between individual statements about literature teaching and collaboration and professional networking. Hence, the participating teachers constitute a so-called strategic selection (Tjora, 2017, p. 130). This selection can also be considered as an exemplifying case, epitomizing a broader category of cases, with the objective of capturing "the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (Yin, 2009, p. 48) by providing "a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered" (Bryman, 2012, p. 70).

Simultaneously, it was essential that this intention did not compromise research ethics by applying undue pressure on any potential participants. Hence, communication went through school management as well as the head of the L1 section before individual consent was obtained. One single teacher abstained from participation, emphasizing that she was newly graduated and recently employed at the school and was consequently without the relevant experience. Otherwise, all the L1 teachers responsible for each of the nine classes of L1 education at the school agreed to participate. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that their motivations for participation varied, which was implied in their different approaches to scheduling their interviews. After receiving a common email invitation, three

teachers actively initiated making appointments, while the remaining six interviews were scheduled after written or oral personal communication. An overview of the participating teachers is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Overview of participants.

Participant	***Age***	***Lower secondary teaching experience***
Miriam	*27*	*3-6 years*
Daniel	*29*	*3-6 years*
Ingrid	*29*	*3-6 years*
Kristin	*32*	*3-6 years*
Magnus	*37*	*10-15 years*
Geir	*44*	*15-25 years*
Siri	*45*	*15-25 years*
Reidun	*47*	*15-25 years*
Frida	*64*	*40 or more years*

For the purpose of conversation structure, we prepared an interview guide that was pilot tested with a teacher at a different school. The interviews were planned to last for approximately 45 minutes and were organized along the following five fundamental questions:

1) Can you explain how you teach and work with literature in your class?
2) How do you attempt to achieve progression in literary reading throughout the three-year course?
3) How does your literature instruction develop from grade to grade?
4) What differences are there between the literature you select for the different grades?
5) What should, as you see it, be the main purpose of literature teaching in lower secondary school?

As the questions demonstrate, we planned for a progression throughout the interviews from classroom practice in general, via three-year progression issues, to a more fundamental question about legitimacy. However, the semi-structure allowed for the interviewees to respond freely, with digressions and recursive occurrences, while also allowing for follow-ups, both prepared and triggered by the respondents' answers (Morse, 2012). When conducted, all the interviews started with information about the purpose of our study and about how the data would be collected, stored and applied, followed by the signing of a consent form. All the interviews were carried out by the second author.

5.2 Processing the data

A significant chain of abstractions lies between the actual interviews and the data represented in this article. First, the interviews were audio recorded; thus, they were decontextualized and detached from all nonverbal communication. Then, through transcription, the verbal language was further distanced from its origin as potentially

meaningful signals in voice and intonation were lost. To minimize this loss, the transcriptions were performed almost immediately after each interview, with the intention of providing transcript that were as detailed as possible, although in the form of standardized written Norwegian, with the exception of dialectal vocabulary that was difficult to translate without disturbing its meaning. Finally, the excerpts that are cited in the article were translated from Norwegian to English. The issue of translation is of course of major importance in qualitative research and researchers tend to deal with it in various ways, trying to "domesticate" the research at different points (Venuti, 1998). Our decision to delay translation into English for as long as possible is based on recognition of the ontological and epistemological importance of the first language for the participants as well as the researchers. This way, nothing got lost in translation between Norwegian and English during the analysis, while much effort could be put into translating the quoted passages as accurately as possible. Still, the problem of representativity caused by recontextualization and remediation in written interview quotes is enlarged by translation, as the participants' words are literally not their own (Temple, 2008).

When analyzing the data, our approach was inductive, letting codes emerge through an open-ended procedure based on first impressions. Coding procedure was executed in line with the stages suggested by Harding (2013), starting by identifying and noting preliminary categories based on transcript readings, followed by examination of codes and revising the categories accordingly, and finally looking for themes and results in each category. Gradually, key words were generated and accompanied by sample quotes, in line with the principles of open coding as breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In alignment with Charmaz (2005), codes were generally made short and simple, aiming at defining the experiences and practice described by the interviewees. Mostly, the codes were not quantified, but qualitatively analyzed with respect to mutual and contextual relations. However, exception was made for the theme of literature teaching's purpose, where coding was further developed to quantifiable categories (cf. figure 2).

The data analysis was not conducted with one specific tool but rather according to a bricolage approach combining multiple so-called ad hoc techniques. Miles & Huberman (1994) suggest a whole range of such strategies, of which we first and foremost applied three: noticing patterns and clusters, making comparisons, and arranging the data in general and particular categories. During this whole process, hermeneutic interpretation was the core of the work. However, due to the scale of our data, it was necessary to compress it for the sake of manageability. This process was inspired by Giorgi (1975), but less comprehensive than the procedure he outlines. Simultaneously, the interview sequences were categorized to enable increased meaning construction and to compare utterances from different participants. Through a gradual process moving from open towards more narrow and finite categories, this method was essential for the thematic structuring of the analysis.

6. HOW NORWEGIAN L1 TEACHERS CONCEPTUALIZE THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

Each teacher's opinion about what constitutes Norwegian L1 education and what the purpose of its literary component should be is likely to affect their three-year course planning. As Torell (2002, pp. 12-13) suggests, all literature instruction is based on certain expectations about what the students should learn and an implied notion of literary competence. Hence, in the following analysis, we will focus on the interviewees' thoughts about and reported experiences with literature instruction. The main research question about literary development and progress will be addressed in section 6.2, while 6.1 and 6.3 present results regarding the purpose of literature teaching and collegial collaboration in literature teaching respectively. Some references to previous research will be made in this commentary on results, while a more thorough discussion is conducted in the concluding section.

6.1 Purposes of literature teaching

Examining what goals the teachers have for their literature teaching enables us to make assertions about their overall perspective on literature as a component of the Norwegian L1 curriculum. Additionally, it makes sense to consider how they conceive of literature teaching's general purpose, since this works as a premise for their notion of literary development. Hence, we will start by presenting to what extent and why the participants believe literature should be a central element of Norwegian L1 instruction. Figure 2 shows what they think the goals of literature teaching should be in lower secondary education.

Figure 2. Responses to the question "What do you think should be the goal of literature teaching in lower secondary school?"

	Siri	*Miriam*	*Geir*	*Reidun*	*Daniel*	*Kristin*	*Magnus*	*Ingrid*	*Frida*
Enriching life through literature	X		X				X		X
Joy of reading		X		X	X			X	X
Literature as reflection of society			X					X	
Fostering empathy				X					
Developing as a human				X		X			X
Life skills				X					
Cultural literacy						X			
Own fictional writing						X			
Entertainment						X			
Reading skills							X	X	

6.1.1 Student-oriented approaches

As shown by the figure, experiencing and fostering the joy of reading is a dominant response among teachers when asked about the goal of literature teaching. This aligns with the findings of Fodstad and Gagnat (2019) in their interview-based study of upper-secondary teachers. For example, Siri says that her main goal as a literature teacher should be to "reveal to them that reading literature is a very nice thing (…) to have in their lives". The statement implies the idea of literature generally being edifying for people, resonating with what Persson (2012) refers to as the myth of the good literature—that literature itself is good, and that, consequently, reading it makes people better. Consequently, the main issue is not what the students read but rather the bare activity of reading, as Siri expresses when saying "Actually, I find I am indifferent to what they read" and naming pulp fiction and comics as possible genres as long as the reading is adapted to each student's reading skills.

The inherent view of literature teaching demonstrated by Siri is certainly student-oriented rather than text-oriented. However, when concretizing what she thinks should be the students' main outcome from the literature instructions, she emphasizes more performance-related issues, especially the notion of fictionality and metaphorical reading. This position aligns with central ideas of two leading Scandinavian scholars of literature didactics, namely, Steffensen's (2005) concept of doubled reading in the search for figurative meaning and Penne's (2013) related emphasis on deeper understanding through what she calls fictive reading. Hence, Siri's reflections on literature teaching's purpose and goal seem somewhat ambiguous, as she both highlights the general benefit of literary reading in a clearly

reader-oriented manner and relates the students' reading development to more formal and text-oriented skillsets.

Student focus is even more strongly advocated for by Ingrid, Daniel, and Miriam. Similar to Siri, Ingrid is opposed to presenting her students with literary texts that are too demanding, as she worries doing so will thwart their joy of reading and, consequently, their motivation. The stance seems logical and rooted in classroom experience as well as common sense. It is, however, contested by several new studies on students' encounters with challenging texts, like Johansen (2015), Gourvennec (2013) and Sønneland (2019), who all conclude that students' engagement and motivation for literature reading is boosted by demanding texts, both in middle, lower secondary and higher secondary school, as long as these texts are framed as authentic problems without clear answers or blueprint interpretations. The discrepancy between Ingrid's notion and the scholarly notion of what impact difficult texts may have on motivation demonstrates a main point made in Penne's (2012) study of Scandinavian L1 teachers' legitimization strategies for literature teaching, i.e. that they resort to individual-focused discourses and aim for positive experiences. Ingrid exemplifies a similar trend in our data, especially the trend of falling into what Penne calls "everyday theories" and "metaphors of care" when dealing with unmotivated and low-performing students (p. 51). Selecting texts for the purpose of not threatening these students' sense of accomplishment can certainly be seen as application of such a discourse of care.

Similarly, Miriam states that the goal for her literature instruction is to make students enjoy reading by offering experiences, creativity and the ability to reflect, ultimately contributing to forming their identities. The idea of identity formation through literature is interesting, considering Penne's (2012) findings that teachers generally have little faith in any related causality, which might also be why none of our other participants explicitly make the connection. In addition, it is worth noting that Miriam's concept of identity, similar to that of Penne's interviewees, is strictly oriented towards the individual rather than the curriculum's notion of collective culture. Again, the focus on individual readers is sharp, which also characterizes Miriam's attempt to legitimize literature teaching. "Well, it's sort of much about that entertainment factor," she says, adding to the statement with assertions about "creativity" and "inspiration" being promoted by fiction reading. In her discussion about the literature's role in Norwegian L1 education, Marianne Røskeland highlights the idea of literature as entertainment as one of the well-known challenges of literature instruction (2014). In addition, Miriam exemplifies a central claim made by Aase and Kaspersen (2012) based on *Nordfag* material, i.e. that teachers' legitimation of literature teaching tends to be rooted in their own cultural positions rather than didactic assessment and deliberation.

Along the same line as that expressed by Ingrid and Miriam, Daniel argues that nurturing the joy of reading should be the main goal of literature teaching in lower secondary school and that this implies letting students come to terms with their own literary preferences. He considers fiction to be a more expedient path to the joy of

reading than non-fiction but says his students might as well read the latter if that is what brings them joy. Hence, for Daniel, reading literature is legitimized as a means by which to achieve a more general joy of reading, and this joy is likely to increase students' reading interest, which is likely to help them be successful in the long run. Even though headlining the concept of joy, his legitimation of literature can be seen in relation to what Røskeland (2014) has pointed out, i.e. that it is often used as a tool for developing functional skills.

6.1.2 Combination strategies

Similar to Miriam, Kristin mentions entertainment when asked about the goals of literature teaching, but she does so in combination with other key words such as cultural heritage, the ability to speak and write about texts, and triggering one's fantasy. In other words, she combines a subject-oriented approach with a more collective and cultural approach, advocating some form of cultural literacy. Interestingly, Kristin and Ingrid—who supplements her discourse of care with the aim to make her students able to "understand the text and its historical context"—are the only respondents who specifically articulate ambitions of cultural literacy, even though several claim they teach literary history. When elaborating the issue, Kristin highlights literature as a source of gaining knowledge about historical phenomena such as Norway's bilingual situation, the constitution and national romanticism. Hence, her notion of cultural heritage seems to entail a teaching philosophy along the lines of what Bäckmann (2002) characterizes as teaching *through* literature, where the reading and exploration of literary texts is not an end as such but rather serves as the means for achieving, for example, historical knowledge.

Overall, what characterizes the five teachers we have presented so far is mainly a student-oriented legitimation of literature teaching that highlights joy and entertainment and is dominated by a discourse of care. Nevertheless, most of them apply combination strategies, where the dominant discourse of care is added to by either a more collective notion of cultural heritage or more individual abilities such as developing creativity and fantasy, reading skills and student writing. The latter complies with one of the major findings of Ida Lodding Gabrielsen and Marte Blikstad-Balas in their study of actual L1 lessons in Norwegian lower secondary schools (2020).

Likewise, Geir and Magnus suggest legitimations along the same lines. Geir mainly sees fiction reading as an escapist pastime and wants the students to "experience the entertainment value of the discipline", but, like Ingrid, he also values literature's ability to reflect and debate societal affairs. Magnus's subjective take on literature is also related to it being a medium for entertainment. Furthermore, he thinks it enriches students' life through literary transfer from text to life, which he sees as beneficial for mental health. What he truly stresses, however, is that fiction reading contributes to developing reading skills in general. What separates Geir and

Magnus from the former five respondents is that they do not take literature's central position in the curriculum for granted; rather, they question whether its dominance should be challenged. They do so on the basis of an instrumental utility discourse, i.e., by seeing literature as one of several paths to entertainment as well as improved reading skills, Magnus is opposed to giving it a privileged status, while Geir refers to the literature's limited relevance in a labor market and civic life dominated by other genres. According to Røskeland (2014), such notions of literature as a means of developing skills as well as a source for entertainment and positive reading experiences are widespread.

6.1.3 Against instrumentality

Reidun and Frida stand out among the nine teachers by expressing enthusiasm and engagement on behalf of literature teaching. They both consider it to represent the essence of L1 education, and for Reidun—in stark contrast to Magnus and Geir—it is not so much a question of legitimizing literature's position as it is of seeing literature as the main purpose of the L1 construct. She states that "I would claim that if you don't include a lot of literature in Norwegian L1, then it's not actually a discipline. It doesn't have legitimacy, I think. What else is it? It's not an instrumental subject. Right? So, I will say it's a major part of Norwegian L1's identity." Her goal is for the students to engage in reading, become wiser and develop empathy. Hence, she argues along the lines known from Nussbaum's (1990) ethics of fiction, foregrounding literature's potential for developing engagement and empathic understanding through narrative examples and thereby strengthening democracy by nurturing active citizens. Likewise, this position on literature's purpose and impact seems to coincide with Fialho's (2019) concept of transformative reading.

Frida also considers literature to be the most characteristic part of L1 education, as she describes it as an "oasis" in an instrumentally and functionally dominated school system. When asked to legitimize literature teaching, however, she gradually falls into a more combinatorial and pragmatic line of thought:

> Uhm, my main message when telling them to read is that if they someday start enjoying reading, they will have so much fun. It's so much more enjoyable than to sit by the computer. Guaranteed! But to achieve this, we have to practice. And while I'm at it, I'll add that in school, I think, we do it perhaps to include something else. When you read literature, you might simultaneously learn something else. The students improve their writing. They get better at silent reading as well as reading aloud. When you read out loud to another audience, you become a confident reader. So, reading is important to you, your experience, and your life.

Frida's point of departure is the joy of reading and the notion of literature enriching students' lives. Like Siri, she advocates the idea of literature being generally good, but Frida adds to this with a comparatively stated skepticism towards digital media, which she shares with Miriam. When elaborating, however, she drifts away from this perspective and seems to enter the very same utilitarianism she initially distanced

herself from, foregrounding general skills and individual confidence. Consequently, her legitimizing attempt ends up being highly ambiguous.

6.1.4 Summary

According to Penne's (2012) interview-based research as well as Gabrielsen and Blikstad-Balas's (2020) video study, engaging in the literature often has to yield to other Scandinavian L1 components; based on our material, this assumption seems also to be valid for the lower secondary school we are studying herein. Several respondents tend to support literature's central curricular role by suggesting instrumental legitimations, advocating teaching *through* literature as a means of achieving more general skills. This is not so much the case in Fodstad and Gagnat's (2019) similar study of higher secondary teachers, in which the respondents agreed on the importance of cultural literacy and reading joy but did not explicitly consider general reading skills to be an important purpose of literature teaching. One consequence of the lower secondary teachers' instrumentalist position seems to be that all forms of literature are considered equally valuable, thereby downplaying notions of quality and cultural importance while emphasizing individually customized difficulty and relevance. Related to this, a majority of the respondents see the development of reading joy as a main goal, which in some cases is closely related to entertainment. In generally student-oriented goals and purposes, there is a noticeable absence of analytical skills, while some teachers address aspects such as empathy and citizenship.

In his doctoral thesis, Kjelen (2013) maps two legitimizing strategies among Norwegian lower secondary L1 teachers: a reader-oriented position that foregrounds the student's interaction with the text, and another position that is dominated by tradition, canon, and textual analysis. A majority of our respondents combine these strategies, but their positions are clearly dominated by the former. In addition, a majority of the respondents include a more skill-oriented utilitarianism, which is actually more of a common denominator than Kjelen's second position of tradition and canon. This also applies to Frida, even though she considers herself a strong advocate for literature, while Reidun is the only one who consequently distances herself from it. Furthermore, our data confirm Penne's (2012) findings about most teachers seeing literature as a core element of L1 education but resorting to everyday theories rather than didactical principles and scholarship when supporting this general stance.

6.2 Planning for and assessing literary development

As stated in the introduction, recent policy documents emphasize learning progression as a central concern for Norwegian education. Furthermore, the official report on future schools and curriculums—the so-called Ludvigsen committee—stresses that facilitating suitable progression in a given discipline requires didactical

know-how (Ministry of Education 2015, p. 42). However, according to curricular structure, the responsibility for systematizing this progression lies on each team or teacher, especially in lower secondary school, where learning objectives are formulated at the end of a three-year course. Herein, we shall see what our interviewees have to say about how they plan for and assess their students' literary development.

Overall, six out of our nine teachers say they make some sort of plan for the students' progress. When taking into account how they reflect on the issue, what they mean by a plan differs significantly, and some of those who say they do not have a plan prove more able to elaborate on the issue than some of those who say they do. Hence, a qualitative analysis of their statements makes more sense than a simple count.

6.2.1 Individual statements on development and progression

At the time of the interview, Ingrid had just entered the final year of her first three-year run of L1 teaching, and her limited experience is reflected in her thoughts on progression. She has few specific examples of progression indicators but says she expects more reflection and ability to delve into texts by the end of 10th grade. Furthermore, she is explicitly concerned with reading strategies, namely, that they should be introduced in 8th grade, used in 9th grade and that the students should understand the benefit of them in 10th grade. This approach seems to align with the curriculum, where reading strategies are explicitly mentioned, but it also corresponds to the curriculum's lack of specificity regarding different strategies' potential relevance for literary reading. Ingrid only refers to strategies on a general level and, consequently, her ideas about progression remain rather unclear in this regard.

Like Ingrid, Miriam has a relatively limited teaching experience, and she explicitly states that she does not know how to systematize her students' literary development while she also has rather vague conceptions of what progression she actually facilitates. Simultaneously, she claims to operate with a three-year plan but clarifies that this first and foremost consists of "rough sketches of themes throughout each year". When elaborating, she wishes for her students to advance from young adult to adult fiction and from authorship study in 9th grade to closer reading with a focus on literary devices in 10th. Nevertheless, she gives few concrete examples of progression planning, and when asked about increased difficulty in the selected texts, she admits to "really picking whatever I have a feel for and whatever fits into the method I think to apply." Hence, Miriam confirms Penne's (2012) finding that L1 teachers' legitimations quite often are grounded in personal thoughts and opinions rather than in didactical deliberations. Despite rather vague conceptions and few examples, Miriam seems to envision a development towards increased analytical and interpretative competence, specifically through the study of literary devices.

Kristin links progression planning mainly to text selection, specifically the main genres, starting with what she refers to as simple stories in 8th grade, introducing poetry in 9th and then introducing drama in 10th. Even if these are the main features, a lot more are included, she says. When asked to elaborate, she says she would not introduce canonical texts such as Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil* in the first year, since it would require more mature students, but she follows up with a rather informal phrase about making text selections mainly based on her "*Gefühl*" (feeling/intuition). Apparently, Kristin's statements reveal an idea about literary reading requiring practice over time, but she does not present a plan for how the students' learning trajectory should or could be structured and facilitated.

Daniel is the fourth of the young respondents with relatively limited experience as a L1 teacher, and he admits he does not have a clear image of how he wishes to systematize the progression through the three-year period. Nevertheless, he suggests a gradual transition from experience-based to more analytically-oriented approaches. His main concern, however, is to support and nurture the students' joy of reading, which is why he is skeptical about demanding commentative work or written assignments. Generally, Daniel seems to value individual experiences tightly connected to subjective interpretations and preferences and based on questions such as "What did they like?" and "What did they not like?" Consequently, it is fair to say that his idea of progress from experience to analysis is challenged by a strong subjective orientation.

Magnus is a more experienced teacher but says he has not been "good enough" at planning for systematized progression. This is, however, something he is aware of and says he would like to improve. Nevertheless, his stance on literature teaching has clear similarities with that of Daniel, as he is concerned with not making it too "schoolish". Hence, he suggests starting with comprehensive pleasurable reading and slowly adding to it with some sort of reflection of deeper meanings. This should also include a gradual supplement of disciplinary discourse; however, in contrast to a majority of his colleagues, Magnus recommends withholding literary device instruction until the last year. Like Daniel, Magnus suggests a development towards textual literacy while also insisting on a highly subject-oriented approach of literary transfer.

Siri suggests progression along several different parameters. First, she wants the students to engage early in literary conversations and for them to gradually become more autonomous in these conversations. Second, she recommends progressions towards texts that require more interpretative effort. Third, she refers to increased disciplinary demands, thereby taking the students from experience-based and author-based focuses in 8th and 9th grades to more analytical perspectives in 10th grade. Finally, she wants her students to be able to relate the literary texts to the outside world, i.e., supplementing close readings with text-external perspectives. In summary, Siri does not refer to a specific three-year plan or structure but has a rather detailed notion of how to facilitate the progression of her students' literary reading.

This notion clearly involves nurturing literary transfer competence as well as developing textual literacy.

Geir presents a specific method for literary progression that is distinctly different from those suggested by most of his colleagues. Opposite to advancing towards more demanding and perhaps more canonized texts, he has a set of "core texts" that he employs and frames in different ways throughout the three-year course. The purpose of this approach is to guide the students by experience, through analysis, and towards an interpretative competence that is closely related to his view of literature as a reflection of society. Gradually, Geir is aiming for his students "to recognize that texts are created in face of the reader, not the writer, which takes a lot of practice". This method implies a teaching philosophy closely related to transactional theory, and Geir specifically refers to the practice of reflecting on how old texts can be related to contemporary issues and themes that the students are engaged in. Like Siri, then, Geir seems to envision a progression that develops literary transfer competence as well as textual literacy.

Reidun explicitly states that she has no clue how to systematize progression in her literature teaching. At the same time, she seems to have clear ideas about her own practices, revealing what seems to be advanced tacit knowledge on the matter. A possible interpretation of this ambivalence, specifically keeping in mind her ideas about the purpose of literature teaching, is that she opposes what she considers to be an instrumentalist—and, consequently, anti-literary—approach to literature. Her position echoes Harstad's Deleuzian idea of the "minor literature teacher", namely, someone who is influenced by events and rhizomatic structures rather than defined by a preprogrammed linear progression towards defined learning outcomes. Indeed, Reidun acknowledges that students must go through some sort of development, but she finds the curricular subdivision of knowledge and competences highly problematic. The basics of her philosophy are that the students need to read a lot of literature, that they have to be patient when confronted with new and difficult texts and that they gradually learn to apply disciplinary terminology. During the final year, she wants her students to demonstrate higher-order competencies such as reflection and intertextual comparison. When elaborating, she reveals a progression plan that is quite similar to Geir's, i.e., it changes the focus from experience in 8th grade, to the analytical application of relevant terminology in 9th, and finally to reflection in 10th grade. In contrast to Geir, however, Reidun also recommends a corresponding development in regard to what the students read, progressing them from self-selected books, via theme-based literature, to more demanding, especially canonical, literature. In summary, Reidun is the teacher who attends to the whole variety of subcompetencies in a complex conception of what makes literary readers competent. Without using the terms explicitly, her reflection involves literary transfer competence as well as textual, intertextual and performative literacy.

Reidun's emphasis on canon literature is shared by Frida, who suggests a transition towards older and more demanding literature throughout lower secondary school. This implies a focus on individual reading experiences in 8th grade,

the gradual acquisition of analytical tools in 9th grade, and finally, the ability to apply all these tools by the end of 10th grade. In parallel with this approach, she expects an increasing level of reflection. Except for these general principles, Frida does not refer to specific progression planning.

6.2.2 Identifying some general trends

As demonstrated, the teachers' opinions about how to structure and plan for progression throughout the three-year course of literature instruction differ significantly in many ways, although some similarities can also be detected. "We do it very differently", Reidun says, "but at the end we all arrive at the same goal". This statement is optimistic on behalf of her colleagues' ability to thrive within the significant leeway given by the curriculum while they still manage to manoeuvre all the students towards the same competency. Kristin, on the contrary, considers the diversity in plans, structure, methods, text selection, etc. as highly problematic. She says it would "be preferable if perhaps our students finish their lower secondary education having learnt approximately the same information as those who attend a school in Bærum [in the vicinity of Oslo]". Apparently, Kristin suspects that the highly flexible and interpretative curriculum results in substantial national inconsistencies with respect to didactical practice and outcomes. Our findings suggest that her worry is well-founded even at a single school with only nine L1 teachers.

Three main points stand out in the respondents' reports on progression in their literature instruction. First, there is a gap between the teachers who demonstrate thoughtful progression plans and those who find such a progression difficult to account for. The most clearly verbalized thoughts on this matter apparently come from some of the most experienced teachers (Reidun, Geir, Siri, and, to some extent, Frida), while the less experienced teachers (Ingrid, Kristin, Miriam, and Daniel) express few or vague opinions. With reservation to the small data set, it seems likely that experience is a central factor for developing long-term progression plans, which is also a point explicitly addressed by some of the teachers.

Second, there are several different notions about how to systemize literary development. With regard to specific progression criteria for literature teaching, several of the interviewees emphasize content-based components such as theme-oriented or text-oriented plans rather than a plan for the development of the students' literary competence. A common denominator seems to be an experience-focused approach from the outset. Based on our findings in the first analytical section, the teachers see supporting and developing reading joy as a main goal for their practice; consequently, most of them find it necessary to begin focusing on this goal by emphasizing individually selected books and subjective experiences. This is interesting when considered alongside existing research on L1 teaching preceding lower secondary school. When studying teachers' accounts of textual practices in Norwegian middle school, Siri H. Ottesen and Aasfrid Tysvær conclude that developing the desire to read through individually customized text selection is the

teachers' main concern, which consequently results in a predominantly privatized reading experience (2017, p. 62). Our findings indicate that this practice is deliberately continued into lower secondary school, particularly in 8th grade but also, in some cases, throughout the three-year course.

Third, when suggesting ways to systematize the progression of literature teaching, the majority of our respondents relate it to the development of disciplinary terminology, analytical skills, interpretative ability, and reflection about the text, the reader, and society. This is quite remarkable when considered alongside their opinions about the goal and purpose of literature teaching, where joy and subjectivity dominate while the development of analytical skills is conspicuously absent. On this point, our data indicate an incongruity between the goal the respondents are aiming at on behalf of their students and how they are planning to guide their students towards it.

6.2.3 Assessing literary development

When asked about how they assess and evaluate the students' literary development, the teachers offer answers that on the whole align with their thoughts on systemization and planning. Siri, Reidun, Magnus and Frida all refer to the acquisition and relevant application of literary terminology and discourse. In addition, Magnus, Frida and Reidun want their students to demonstrate higher-order reflection. Along with Kristin and Ingrid, Magnus also says he expects his students to develop the ability to perform deeper reading, including metaphorical and symbolic interpretation. Kristin suggests a distinction between paraphrasing and accounting for content as a basic competence, whereas a more advanced competence involves thematic interpretation. Miriam and Daniel express difficulties with assessing literary development, while Geir refers to curricular learning objectives without specifying how these can be operationalized as assessment tools.

In his dissertation, Kjelen claims that the focus on general reading skills in lower secondary Norwegian L1 education constitutes a major challenge and that it is caused by unclear conceptions of what literary reading truly is, which again has consequences for the literature instruction (2013, p. 200). He suggests revisiting the skills approach to literary reading but basing it on a more specific or specialized approach of fictive or aesthetic reading. Kjelen posits that if literary competence is lifted up to be considered a goal of literature teaching, the issue of assessment will also become more manageable. This idea corresponds with our findings; even if the teachers do not see a specific literary competence as the goal or purpose of their literature teaching, they generally tend to let their planning, course structure, and assessment be influenced by a more or less well-defined version of it.

6.3 Professional network and collaboration

The teacher is often referred to as the determinant for providing high-quality learning, and this also applies for policy documents. According to Norwegian white paper no. 11, "The Teacher—The Role and Education", it is a "basic precondition that teachers have a deeper understanding of their own role and the societal importance of their school and that they execute their role in accordance with the school's policy documents and fundamental values" (Ministry of Education 2009, p. 12). The document outlines three main relations of being a teacher: relating to parents and others, meeting the students, and being part of a professional community. This final part of our study will focus on the latter as we ask to what extent our participants experience the planning of literature teaching as a collaborative and collegial task. White paper no. 11 states that "teaching and education is a teamwork" (2009, p. 14), and it emphasizes the importance of collaborative development of competence. One could also argue that this is even more essential within a curricular policy that expands the teachers' leeway by reducing methodological and content-defining guidelines. Hence, it is no surprise that collegial collaboration is explicitly mentioned in the Official Norwegian Report on future education, where it is not only considered decisive for developing didactic competence and teaching methods but also a precondition for ensuring that planning and execution of instruction is based on scholarly and experiential knowledge (Ministry of Education 2015, p. 73).

Several of our respondents talk about the local curricular work as a progression plan, whereas the actual document they refer to is a collaboratively designed effort among the school's L1 teachers at operationalizing the national curriculum. Through the interviews, however, widespread variation is revealed among the teachers regarding how, if at all, the document is influencing the literature instruction. Moreover, the interviews show that L1 disciplinary collaboration mainly takes place within each grade, which is why we structure our analysis in accordance with what grade the respondents teach before we expand the scope to cover the whole group of L1 teachers.

6.3.1 Collaborative practice

Geir, Reidun and Daniel teach 8th grade. The two experienced teachers have worked together over a long period, while Daniel recently joined the team. They all describe their collaboration as very limited; Geir calls it "almost nonexistent", and Reidun says "we are not eminently cooperative", while Daniel does not feel they have had much teamwork thus far. Both Geir and Reidun seem rather satisfied with the situation and have compliant explanations for it. As Geir says, they all have a lot of experience and all wish to teach in their own way. This, however, refers to the team as it was a few months earlier, including a newly retired teacher who was replaced by Daniel. Interestingly, Daniel himself has a somewhat different opinion about collaboration and teamwork, as he expresses a desire to strengthen the teamwork going forward.

To the extent that this team is collaborating, such collaboration seems, according to Reidun, to be restricted to coordinating when to work with certain themes, but she adds that "we do it very differently".

Miriam, Siri and Magnus all report some collaboration across their 9th grade team in regard to the literature instruction, but they highlight slightly different aspects of it. Miriam emphasizes how they share teaching methods and exchange ideas about how to proceed within certain thematic areas. Siri, on the other hand, explains that they coordinate in regard to when to teach what thematic areas but that they also, unlike the 8th grade team, often collaborate on finding relevant texts. This assertion is supported by Magnus, who characterizes their teamwork as being more about "what we do than how we do it". The team has weekly meetings, Siri says, and if they are about to enter a period that includes literary reading, they "browse together" in search of suitable texts. Nevertheless, they all emphasize the significant room for manoeuvre they have with regards to text selection as well as teaching methods, while at the same time they seem to agree that they learn a lot from each other.

The 10th grade team reports a somewhat similar practice and desire for sharing experiences and inspiring each other. They hold meetings every other week and, according to Kristin, cooperate about "content as well as methods", even though—being two young teachers and one who is about to retire—they "work quite differently".

In summary, the prevailing practice of L1 disciplinary collaboration in this lower secondary school seems to be limited to grade-based teamwork, with the exception of the 8th grade teachers, who barely collaborate at all. The existing teamwork comprises the exchange of ideas about text selection and learning activities within thematic areas specified in an annual plan. None of the teams report any collaboration or discussion about why they teach certain literary texts or about issues or literature in general. Neither does anyone indicate that they have team-based discussions about what they are aiming for in regard to their literature teaching. Furthermore, collaboration does not appear to be regulated by school management but is dependent on voluntary initiatives from teachers. Hence, the time spent on L1 collaboration is what Dahl et al. (2016) characterize as "unbound time" (p. 186).

6.3.2 L1 teacher professionalism

When defining teacher professionalism, OECD stresses the need for "peer networks of knowledge sharing, collaboration and support" and emphasizes how such networks represent "a form of internal accountability, which exists independently of externally imposed accountability" (2016, p. 34). In the general section of the Norwegian national curriculum, a similar statement is made: "the professional practice of teachers is founded on common values and a common base of scholarly and experiential knowledge" (2018, p. 17). Based on the reports from our

participants, however, their disciplinary peer network seems mainly restricted to small grade-specific team units where concrete ideas of learning activities and material are exchanged. A larger group of professionals within a discipline is likely to constitute a broader scholarly and experiential knowledge base for developing better teaching practice. This would also enable a widening of the collaboration from the exchange of content and methods to the inclusion of collegial debates on more principle didactic issues such as the purpose and goals of literature teaching and possible ways to achieve those goals.

Such a collegial forum actually exists at this school, namely, the Norwegian L1 section meetings. According to the interviewees, however, these meetings are "infrequent" (Reidun) and "sporadic" (Daniel). Furthermore, Daniel says that literature teaching and "other such issues" often have to yield to designing annual plans or discussing larger projects. This lack of discussion of literature and literature teaching in section meetings is confirmed by all the other teachers. Some of them question the general outcome of the meetings, such as Ingrid, who says, "It has been kind of blurry, uhm, like what the purpose of that forum is meant to be, because the daily matters are taken care of by us on the grade team and that is mostly what we focus on, so what is that forum supposed to be?" Along with Miriam and Daniel, she requests a more continuous forum for experiential exchange across the teams, where issues of literature instruction could also have been debated.

The description of team-based collaboration focusing mainly on "daily matters" corresponds with a claim made by Dahl et al. (2016, p. 183) that team hours are rarely used for systematic developmental work or professional renewal. Since several teachers express a desire for more collegial debates about literature instruction, one could argue that the problem might also be of structural or administrative character rather than motivational. This implies setting aside nonteaching hours resources for common developmental efforts, with school management taking a mentoring role, but at the same time securing the idea—as Elstad, Helstad & Mausethagen (2014) stress when discussing professional development in schools—that the teachers experience the collaboration as relevant and driven by actual needs. This is not a simple task, as Helstad's (2013) doctoral dissertation shows, since, paradoxically, teachers tend to request more collaboration while neither finding the time to prioritize it nor the possibility of doing so (p. 28). Our data do not give us accurate information about the range, structure or quality of collaborative development at this specific lower secondary school, but they do explicitly report the teachers' experience of it being very limited.

This teacher experience is consistent with what we see as we compare our results with earlier findings. As the collaborative practice between the L1 teachers seems restricted to practical and activity-related matters, it might not come as a surprise that there are limited as well as divergent thoughts among the colleagues in regard to purpose, goals, progression planning and assessment. Generally, the data testify to an entire community of Norwegian L1 teachers facing, interpreting and handling the principle dilemmas of literature teaching as individuals rather than a professional

community. This complies with the conclusion of Aase and Kaspersen (2012) that most Scandinavian L1 teachers are not included in a professional culture that is interconnected by a common conceptional framework. Furthermore, it supports Kjelen's (2018) argument that fundamental questions of literature didactics require professional L1 teachers who are capable of decision-making based on disciplinary and scholarly models. Thus, facilitating disciplinary networks seems vital for such complex and ambiguous matters as legitimizing, structuring and assessing literary development and literature teaching within a national curriculum regime that leaves most this to local deliberations and implementation.

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The Norwegian L1 teachers in our study all agree that their literature teaching should, in some way or another, support and develop students' joy of reading and that it is important to enable positive reading experiences in school. When discussing the purpose and goals of literature teaching, they hardly touch upon questions of cultural heritage or cultural literacy, even though several emphasize literary history and canonical literature. A similar, yet stronger, ambiguity asserts itself with respect to disciplinary terminology and analytical competence; even if the general trend is to consider the transition from experiential to analytical and interpretative reading as the main feature of literary development, relevant terminology and analytical skills are almost absent from the teachers' legitimized strategies and verbalized goals for their literature teaching. Consequently, there is a small degree of correlation between suggested purpose and goals on the one hand and reported practice throughout the three-year course of lower secondary education on the other hand.

The findings may come as no surprise provided that previous research has shown that there is no consensus about the aims of literary education (Fialho, 2019; Wintersparv et al., 2019). Rather, they confirm Witte's (2011) claim that even teachers working at the same school are likely to have deviant opinions about what literature instruction should aim at and what its function should be. Furthermore, our participants' reflections on literature teaching demonstrate the poly-paradigmatic character of mother-tongue education. With reference to the paradigm theory of Saywer and Van de Ven (2006), all our participants share, to some extent, a subject-centered developmental paradigm. However, it varies how dominant this paradigm is and what other paradigms it is combined with. Generally, the less experienced teachers are most likely to combine it with a utilitarian paradigm, while the more experienced tend to lean towards the communicative and/or the academic paradigm. In addition, the previous group generally tend to be vague and obscure when asked about the purpose of literature teaching, in line with the findings from first year in Scandinavian higher secondary school by Penne (2012).

When discussing literary development and progression, the teachers suggest a variety of ideas about what principles the long-term structure of instruction may follow. Among these, two common denominators stand out. First, the majority of

our respondents account for a development from mainly experiential reading towards more analytical and interpretative approaches. This is in line with Witte et al.'s (2012) taxonomy of literary competence, which has experiential reading as its basic level. Furthermore, considering experiential reading the fundament for literary development seem congruent with some of the recent empirically based theories of transformative reading. Fialho (2019) explicitly claims that "the purpose of literature lies in the experience itself, in its power to prompt us to connect deeply and conscientiously with our emotions, deepening our senses of who we are, what we are in this world for, and how we are in a relationship with others" (p. 11). Second, several participants advocate a progression towards more difficult—and, to some extent, canonical—text selection. This notion of progress is in accordance with the aforementioned LiFT-2 project's ambition of identifying certain characteristics of books corresponding to different levels of literary competence (Witte et al., 2012).

However, although all the respondents to a certain extent account for ways of facilitating literary progression throughout the three-year course, these accounts vary significantly with respect to how thoughtful and well-founded they appear, with the less experienced teachers generally offering the least verbalized and processed lines of thought. The variety of the conceptions of progression and the incoherence in regard to the purposes and goals is also manifest in what appears to be differing opinions about practices with regards to assessment. Several different indicators are mentioned, such as the acquirement and application of relevant terminology, analytical skills and interpretative ability, higher-order reflection, and engagement; however, there is lack of consensus, other than a general idea of literary conversations representing a suitable activity for assessing literary competence, which in itself is a stance well supported by research (Schrijvers et al., 2016). The teachers appear to have diverged opinions about what characterizes literary competent readers, and this inconsistency seems closely related to the diverging accounts for the purpose of teaching literature and their paradigmatic position as L1 teachers. Whether a teacher predominantly leans towards an academic, developmental, communicative, or utilitarian paradigm is likely to influence how they consider the importance and the purpose of literature, as well as the aspects of literary reading they value and emphasize the most, be it literary conventions, analytical skills, critical literacy, the ability to immerse themselves and feel empathy, historical awareness, metacognitive reflection etc.

The national curriculum ensures Norwegian lower secondary L1 teachers a significant amount of interpretative leeway when designing, structuring and executing their literature instruction. This is a deliberate policy maintained with the curriculum renewal of 2020, which is pointed out in the premise of white paper no. 28, which emphasizes that "a significantly stronger definition of specific content of education is problematic" (Ministry of Education 2016, p. 44). Such a statement expresses a great deal of trust in teachers' abilities to make professional deliberations. Our study, however, indicates that many Norwegian lower secondary L1 teachers base their literature teaching practices on inconsistent or even missing

conceptions of literary development. Hence, it seems crucial to develop their knowledge base within their professional networks to facilitate their discipline-specific discussions. By exchanging experiences and scholarly knowledge within a professional community, the individual teachers will be better prepared to deal with the dilemmas and ambiguities of literature instruction. In times where the literary component of L1 education is under pressure, such continuous discussions of purpose and goals seem more urgent than ever.

When questioning the lack of consistent strategies for legitimizing literature instruction and structured progression planning based on scholarly knowledge, we do not suggest that all teachers should unify in one evidence-based and optimized method or a consensual interpretation and implementation of the curriculum. Such a meticulously planned and structurally streamlined literature teaching would not take into account the very aesthetic and subversive nature of literature as art or the fundamentally unpredictable and nongeneralizable event of certain students facing specific literary texts. Additionally, such a practice would imply the presence of quasi-professional literature teachers who are accountable for following externally given directives instead of fully professional literature teachers who are responsible for manoeuvering the significant curricular leeway by making thoughtful and well-considered choices based on both their didactic knowledge and their perpetually ongoing exchanges and discussions with peers.

For this to happen, school leaders must provide a sufficient structural framework for discipline-specific networks. Such a framework would possibly enable the L1 teachers to engage in experience- and research-based discussions about literary competence and development. It would not necessarily mean agreeing on a common understanding—be it a taxonomic (Witte et al., 2012), a conceptual (Blau, 2003; Torell, 2002), a transformative (Fialho, 2019), or a rhizomatic (Harstad, 2017) understanding—but it would imply an increased awareness of the why, the what and, consequently, the how of literature teaching. For many years researchers have argued that professional discussions and development should be central to L1 and literature teachers' work (Reid, 1984; Boomer et al., 1992; Thomson, 1992). There seems to be an agreement that literature teachers should give this priority, even if it implies less time for other demands. However, as Parr (2011) points out, the question is just as relevant decades later: Should we consider the time spent in professional dialogue with colleagues a fundamental part of teaching literature, or is it rather a luxury or an indulgence?

Obviously, there is divergence between what teachers want, intend, plan for, experience and report on one hand and what happens in the classroom—between the so-called perceived, operational, and experiential curriculum (Goodlad, 1979). The International Mother Tongue Education Network (IMEN) states that language education research should focus on the complexities of teachers' work, and that researchers should avoid evaluative judgements about the professional accomplishment of participants (Van de Ven & Doecke, 2011a. Such judgements are not just undesirable but would not be possible within our research design.

Nevertheless, the study allows for the analysis and internal comparison of how a Norwegian L1 community conceives of the purposes, goals, progression and assessment of literature teaching and how this relates to their views on disciplinary collaboration in a lower secondary school. A peer network not only represents an arena for professional development but also an interpretative community that provides knowledge-based negotiations and implementations of the national curriculum. Based on our material, we find it highly likely that a more structured and committed disciplinary network across grade-specific teams could provide more coherent literature instruction based on consensual notions of what literary competence is, why it matters, and how it is achieved and assessed.

As noted by ten Brinke (1976), strategic choices in L1 teaching "are very often determined by what we call value orientation" (p. 13). Corresponding points more specifically about educational impact are made by Janssen & Rijlaarsdam (1996), Yimwilai (2015) and Schrijvers et al. (2016), namely that different teacher approaches generate different learning outcomes. In other words, what teachers value has major impact on which perspectives and learning activities are emphasized in literature classrooms. Nevertheless, when we study how teachers plan for literary development, how they structure and assess progression, with reference to how they understand the purpose of literature teaching and account of their collegial collaboration, the results come with obvious limitations and reservations. First and foremost, we have not studied teaching practice as such. Besides, our data are limited to a single lower secondary school within a certain socio-economical context. Furthermore, the inner life of this particular school is only accessed through the participants accounts, while a methodical triangularization certainly would have complemented and possibly adjusted the contextual framing and, ultimately, our interpretation of the teachers' narratives.

Moving on, we would welcome longitudinal case studies of how literary development is planned, executed and assessed. Moreover, possible correspondences between reports on literature teaching purposes, teaching philosophy, and instructional practice should be explored in detail. Also, studies on L1-specific teacher professionalism are still scarce, especially in the intersection of collegial networking, discipline-specific professional development, and the practice of teaching literature. Finally, there is room for systematic comparisons between elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary school, between different cooperative structures, and between teachers with different teacher education and experience.

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