DIGGING INTO THE EXTREMES

A case study of figured worlds of early literacy instruction among
homeroom teachers in more or less successful co-taught classrooms

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Abstract

Co-taught classrooms offer increased opportunities for differentiated, engaging and effective instruction. However, the inclusion of another professional in the classroom may collide with teachers' taken-for-granted perspectives on what a teacher, a student, literacy activities or a classroom in early literacy instruction are or should be. Aiming to shed light on the relationship between such perspectives and students' learning outcomes in co-taught classrooms, the present study takes a step back to investigate *figured worlds* (Gee, 2011) of the social practice of early literacy instruction, as held by homeroom teachers. In-depth individual interviews with six homeroom teachers in classes with very strong versus very poor reading development in first and second grade are investigated using a discourse-analytical approach. The extremes are found to differ in their understandings of students, teachers, classrooms, activities, organizational structures, instructional differentiation, and student engagement. Juxtaposing understandings of all of these elements shows that there are fundamental differences between those extremes in terms of their figured worlds of early literacy instruction as a complex social practice. This finding suggests that an awareness of homeroom teachers' figured worlds is required when discussing the potential for enhancing student learning through co-teaching.

Keywords: figured world, teachers' beliefs, early literacy, co-teaching, student learning outcomes, discourse analysis

1.   INTRODUCTION

Norwegian classrooms—like those in many other countries—are inclusive, and teachers are supposed to differentiate their instruction to accommodate the wide variety of abilities and needs represented by their students. Against this background, teachers, teacher unions and parents across the world have called for an increased teacher–student ratio (TSR) (Hattie, 2005, p. 210). However, previous research into the effect of an increased TSR has documented a problematic taken-for-granted assumption underlying such calls, namely that having more teachers per student will automatically lead to better instruction and better student learning outcomes. In fact, rather than confirming this assumption, previous research has proved inconclusive on that point, finding only small effects (Blatchford, 2011; Solheim et al., 2017). Still, the main focus of this research has been on class-size reduction, and Hattie suggests that the explanation for the small effects found for reduced class sizes may be that teachers fail to fully exploit the opportunities inherent in having fewer students: "they are not so equipped to adopt the more effective practices when they are given smaller classes" (Hattie, 2005, p. 417). On this basis, it may be assumed that instruction as such predominantly remains unchanged when the TSR is increased.

The Norwegian research project *Two Teacher* (Solheim et al., 2017), a randomized controlled trial (RCT), seeks knowledge about the effect on students' reading skills of an increased TSR obtained in an alternative way to class-size reduction. Specifically, by introducing an extra teacher (a general educator working at the respective school)[1] in Norwegian L1 classrooms in the first and second grades (6 to 8-year-olds) at 148 schools and across three different conditions, the project investigates individual and complementary effects of an extra teacher and teacher professional development.

The effects indicate that classrooms vary greatly when it comes to reading development during the two first years of schooling (Haaland et al., 2022). There are many possible explanations for this finding. First, we may assume that Hattie's point about teachers not exploiting the enhanced instructional opportunities offered by an increase in the TSR remains valid for the co-teaching design in question. Second, research on co-teaching has revealed that organizational issues and collaborative styles (Alexander, 1997; Friend & Cook, 2016) may vary greatly between collaborative teacher pairs or "dyads" and, further, that differences or similarities between the collaborating teachers' personal characteristics may hinder the

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[1] *The term "co-teaching" often refers to collaboration between a general educator and a special-needs educator (cf. Friend & Cook, 2016). In Two Teachers, however, the term refers to collaboration and joint work by two general educators (Solheim et al., 2017), an operationalization of co-teaching that is in line with previous research (e.g., Conderman, 2011; Krammer et al., 2018).*

development of a good collaborative relationship (Pratt, 2014). Third, as pointed out by Alexander (1997), teachers' notions of territory, ownership and autonomy may undermine collaboration among them (cf. Solheim & Opheim, 2018). Whereas the first two possible explanations are investigated elsewhere within Two Teachers (Gourvennec et al., 2021; Haaland et al., 2022), the third one represents the starting point for the present study.

In Two Teachers, it might be said that the co-teacher enters (or intrudes into) the classroom of the homeroom teacher[2]. Following Alexander's argument, we might assume that this classroom is defined in part by the homeroom teacher's persistent and more or less unconscious understandings of what early literacy instruction is, or should be. While various theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches have been used to shed light on teachers' understandings of conceptual complexes related to instruction and learning, they all call attention to how the teachers' beliefs, values, perspectives and epistemologies are related to instructional practice—and they all show that this relationship is complex. For instance, in a situation of changing beliefs, there may be a discrepancy between beliefs and practice during a transitional period (Richardson et al., 1991). Further, when a practice is changed during an intervention, this does not necessarily entail concomitant changes in epistemologies (Wilkinson et al., 2017). A possible explanation for such discrepancies might be that it is easier to reflect upon, and change, peripheral beliefs than core beliefs (Bownlee et al., 2002).

One key assumption in socio-cultural theory is that social practices and language shape and pass on humans' understanding of the world. James Paul Gee (2011, 2015) brings the concept of *figured worlds* into his theory of discourse analysis. As he sees them, figured worlds are typical stories and everyday theories, often unconscious ones, which rely upon taken-for-granted perspectives shared and passed on by a group of people. Because a figured world is a simplified model based on a group's (supposedly) shared taken-for-granted perspectives, it "often stands in the way of change" (Gee, 2015, p. 115). In the case of co-teaching, the homeroom teachers' figured worlds might stand in the way of—or, on the contrary, facilitate—changes to instruction when the TSR is increased through the presence of a co-teacher. Consequently, the figured worlds may influence the potential effect of an increased TSR on students' learning outcomes.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no previous research into the relationship between what I have tried to capture with the term "figured worlds" and students' learning outcomes in co-taught literacy classrooms. The purpose of the present study is to shed some light on that relationship.

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[2] *The teacher who would have been in sole charge of the Norwegian lessons in the absence of Two Teachers is here referred to as the "homeroom teacher" while the other teacher who is present in the classroom as an extra resource during literacy instruction, funded through the research project, is called the "co-teacher".*

1.1 The present study

In order to gain more knowledge about the complex issue of how student learning outcomes may be improved by increasing the TSR through co-teaching, the present study takes a step back to investigate the figured worlds of homeroom teachers working in more and less successful co-taught literacy classrooms, respectively. Success here refers to the reading development of the class, measured as the improvement in students' performance observed from school entry to the end of the second grade. Through its focus on the homeroom teachers' figured worlds (rather than on their professional practices), the study relies upon the assumption that a homeroom teacher's figured worlds of early literacy instruction as a complex social practice will affect not only the instruction provided but also how and to what extent the co-teacher may be integrated in the instruction and collaborate on an equal footing with the homeroom teacher. Based on an understanding of early literacy instruction as a *social practice*—or, more precisely, as a social *literacy* practice (cf. Hamilton, 2000; Ivanič, 2009; Van Leeuwen, 2008)—the study investigates the homeroom teachers' figured worlds of the social practice of early literacy instruction through their discursive representation of the main elements[3] of the practice in question. Against this background, the study addresses the following research question: "What aspects of the practice elements of *participants*, *activities*, *resources and setting(s)* in early literacy instruction are ascribed significance by homeroom teachers in co-taught classrooms with a very strong and a very poor reading development, respectively?"

2.   METHOD

2.1 The Norwegian educational setting

The present study draws upon data from a Norwegian educational setting, where students start mandatory schooling in the calendar year in which they turn six. 95–96% of students attend public schools (cf. Statistics Norway, 2019), and for most students this means attending the local school. In recent decades, the national curriculum has undergone frequent changes (in 1997, 2006, 2013 and 2020). Since 2006, it has included five basic skills (reading, writing, oracy, numeracy and digital skills) alongside subject-specific competence aims which have tended to be rather open for interpretation by teachers and to allow them great autonomy regarding

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[3] *Different scholars identify somewhat different elements—based on a more or less fine-grained analysis—that constitute a social (literacy) practice. However, Hamilton (2000), Ivanič (2009) and Van Leeuwen (2008) all include elements representing the participants/agents, the actions/activities, the setting and the artefacts/resources of a practice.*

instructional methods. This lack of stability and precision has required a great deal of work and prompted a great deal of discussion about the interpretation of changing educational buzzwords and about the Norwegian L1 curriculum, both in public debate and at individual schools.

2.2 Participating teachers

The present study includes six homeroom teachers, two from each of the three conditions in Two Teachers (see Table 1). Classes in all conditions (0, 1 and 2) were given an extra teacher resource during literacy instruction (360 minutes weekly—eight 45-minute sessions—per week) in the first and second grades. Teachers in conditions 1 and 2 participated in site-based professional development, using digital material. In conditions 0 and 1, the teachers had no obligations to meet in their co-taught instruction, but in condition 2 teachers had to conduct two reading conferences per semester, engage in guided reading and reading aloud once a week, and provide support to students falling behind in reading. Of the teachers interviewed in the present study, three taught classes whose reading development (both decoding and reading comprehension) was above the 80th percentile among the 148 classes in Two Teachers while the others taught classes whose reading development was below the 20th percentile.

Reading development is here measured as improvement in word recognition (decoding) and reading comprehension during the intervention. More precisely, it refers to the level of reading by the end of the second grade after controlling for emergent literacy skills[4] at school entry. To select teachers for interviews, those who were below or above the cut-off points, respectively, were first identified.[5] Then contact was made with teachers to ask whether they were willing to participate. Where there were several candidates, an attempt was made to avoid geographical concentration.

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[4] *Letter knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, early mathematical skills, short-term memory and word reading.*

[5] *Information about the students' socio-economic status (SES) was not explicitly included in the case selection. However, the effect of SES is present already before school entry—in students emergent literacy skills (Burkham & Lee, 2002; Chatterji, 2006; Strang & Piasta, 2016). By controlling for emergent literacy skills at school entry when calculating the reading growth scores, we assumed that the effect of SES was (at least partly) taken into account. On a later stage in the study, we went back to control the validity of this assumption. Analyses of SES (parents' income and level of education) confirmed that the selected classes above the 80th percentile do not represent higher SES than those below the cut-off point.*

Table 1. Overview of participating teachers and of reading development in their classrooms

Teacher	Condition	Reading development scores (percentile)	
		Decoding	Reading comprehension
Bridget	0	7.4	2
Tania	0	96.6	87.2
Brenda	1	12.2	10.1
Tina	1	85.1	81.1
Beth	2	16.9	6.8
Theresa	2	95.3	85.8

Note: The teachers whose pseudonyms start with a B taught bottom classrooms in terms of reading development scores while those beginning with a T taught top classrooms.

As all six teachers participated in the same research project—Two Teachers—they can be seen as six *embedded cases* (Yin, 2014). Further, as their classrooms represent extremities when it comes to students' reading development, they can also be seen as *extreme cases* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 13). Such cases are often dense in information; in the present study, they may offer particular insights into both especially beneficial and especially problematic aspects of teachers' figured worlds. All six teachers are female, and all are rather experienced (13 to 21 years' working experience). The schools where they work are situated in the eastern, western and southern parts of Norway, in both urban and rural municipalities.

2.3 Interviews and analytical approach

Individual in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in January and February 2019, about six months after the end of the Two Teachers intervention. The interviews were carried out by the author at each teacher's school. An interview guide was used (see Appendix); it was organized around three main topics: (i) literacy instruction and the roles of students and teacher; (ii) co-teaching and any other guidelines applicable in accordance with the respective Two Teacher conditions; and (iii) the teacher's reaction to the reading development of the class. Each main topic was introduced by at least one open-ended question. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed in line with a simplified version of Jefferson's transcription key (cf. Atkinson & Heritage, 1999). The transcriptions of the interviews constitute the primary data of the study. However, during the analysis, the interview recordings also served as an important source to consolidate and adjust the interpretation of the transcriptions.

In his method of discourse analysis, Gee includes figured worlds as a *tool of inquiry* or a *theoretical tool*. By investigating what aspects of the different elements of the social practice of early literacy instruction—*participants*, *activities*, *resources* and *setting*—are ascribed *significance* (Gee, 2011, p. 17) by the six teachers, we may

reveal underlying figured worlds of early literacy instruction that the teachers rely upon in the interviews.

In a discourse-analytical approach, the situatedness of the language used must be taken into consideration in any interpretation of the piece of language in question. This implies an approach closely related to hermeneutical interpretation in that every interview is treated as a single *text* where the individual utterances and the interview as a whole inform each other. Further, it must be kept in mind that in this study, the context of the interviewees' utterances goes beyond the interview to include the school, the municipality and the research project. The analytical approach includes an awareness of this. Nevertheless, each of the six interviews serves as the primary contextual frame for the interpretation of the utterances included in it.

The analysis was conducted as an alternation between *categorizing* and *connecting strategies* (Maxwell, 2009). Initial analysis focused on organizational coding, mapping each interview in accordance with the four main elements of a social practice as adjusted to suit the specific characteristics of early literacy instruction. Hence the *participants* included the two sub-categories of *teachers* and *students*, which are the most prominent categories of participants in the practice in question; *activities* referred to literacy activities; *resources* referred to artefacts used in literacy instruction[6]; and *setting* included the sub-categories of *time* and *place* of literacy instruction. Next, a connecting analysis was conducted for each of the interviews, where they were treated as six *texts*. In this phase, a brief description of each teacher's representation of early literacy instruction was written, focusing on the aspects of the main elements of the practice to which the teacher ascribed significance. The initial identification of these aspects relied on an inductive approach. These descriptions were then repeatedly rewritten, in close dialogue with the relevant interview and the initial coding, and during that process they developed from very detailed accounts of the aspects ascribed significance by the teachers into increasingly holistic accounts. Finally, aspects of the practice elements within early literacy instruction which were ascribed significance in several interviews were identified and compared across all six interviews.

3. SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE TEACHERS' DISCOURSE

In the interviews, the teachers' discursive figured worlds of different phenomena related to the social practice of early literacy instruction are built in various ways. They are constructed both as isolated elements and as deeply integrated elements,

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[6] *The analysis of the interviews revealed that human resources were frequently ascribed significance as resources in early literacy instruction; where this was the case, they were subsequently included in the resource element rather than in the participant element.*

both through explicit reflections and implicitly through reflections and comments about elements of early literacy instruction in particular and elements of education in general. Hence the discursive *building* (Gee, 2011) of the elements of the practice (*participants*, *activities*, *resources* and *settings*) and the ascribing of *significance* to various aspects of those elements are both processes that take place throughout each of the six interviews. In this section, the analysis and findings are presented separately for each element of the practice, concentrating on the aspects ascribed significance in several interviews, but they are presented for both groups of teachers together ("B" and "T" teachers, in charge of *bottom* and *top* classrooms, respectively, in terms of reading development).

3.1 Participants in the practice

In the following, aspects of teachers and students as participants in early literacy instruction to which the six teachers ascribe significance are presented.

3.1.1   Classroom manager

In different ways, all six teachers ascribe significance to the teacher as the person in charge of leading the classroom. Even so, their discourse about classroom leadership varies greatly.

Brenda and Beth both emphasize the teacher's role of providing the students with clear messages, rules and guidelines. For example, Beth claims that "[i]t doesn't matter if someone hears it twice, it's more important to be super-clear on what's going to happen and on what's expected" (p. 19)[7] while Brenda stresses that it is "very, very important to be a clear leader and to be in control of the group" (p. 4). Further, they highlight the students' role of acting in line with the guidelines provided, characterizing such behaviour as a prerequisite for students to feel secure. The underlying logic here is that unless the students feel secure, their learning outcome will be poor. Tina also emphasizes the significance of having the teacher take on responsibility as "the grown-up" (p. 10) in the classroom, making its workings transparent and predictable for the students. This is ascribed significance as being fundamental to what she calls "the three T's" in Norwegian, which refers to feeling comfortable, feeling secure and having a sense of belonging.

Both Brenda and Bridget depict a classroom where the teacher's role as a clear leader seems to be challenged all the time by students with externalizing behaviour. Such students may exert a strong impact on instruction in several ways. First, their

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[7] *All quotations have been translated from Norwegian by the author. The page numbers given refer to the individual interview transcripts, which comprise the following numbers of pages: Bridget 46, Brenda 26, Beth 72, Tania 38, Tina 54 and Theresa 43.*

behaviour may make the remaining students feel unsafe and insecure. Second, they demand the better part of the teacher's attention, meaning that the other students are left with less of it. A third impact emphasized by Bridget is that, as she is conscious of the risk that externalizing students may jeopardize her instructional plans, she tends to restrict her instruction to activities and methods that will reduce that risk. However, by doing so, she endangers what she refers to as core instructional values (of co-operative learning and student independence). This means that externalizing students are described as exerting an important impact on the classroom climate, on their classmates' access to good instruction and—ultimately—on learning outcomes in the classroom.

Beth and Bridget clearly foreground the teacher's preparations for lessons. However, whereas Beth finds it frustrating and problematic when classroom realities force her to change her plan, Bridget emphasizes that she does not expect instruction to unfold exactly as planned. Tania stresses this aspect further, ascribing significance to the teacher's adjustment and flexibility as keys to students' learning, to their confidence in the teacher and to their feeling comfortable.

Bridget stresses that the teacher should take on the role of facilitator but regrets that, in reality, she rather tends to act as a transmitter of knowledge. Theresa, Tina and Tania do not emphasize the teacher's role as a manager explicitly, but rather through their reflections on activity choice and student engagement. Through those reflections, all three of them depict a classroom where the teacher entrusts the students with the right to talk, serving precisely more like a facilitator than as the person holding all the answers.

3.1.2   Engaged students

In different ways, all six teachers ascribe significance to student engagement. Beth and Brenda ascribe significance to students being *active* and *engaged*; while Beth does not refer explicitly to engagement, she stresses the importance of students doing what they are told to do, preferably in an interested way. In line with this, Brenda first explicitly defines engagement by way of elimination, listing examples of what it is not: students being off task, looking out the window, showing frustration, not making any progress in their work. Then she goes on to emphasize *being active* as a main characteristic of student engagement, exemplified by a willingness to talk, to read aloud and to participate in instruction. Brenda and Bridget both link engagement to improved learning outcomes. Brenda, on her part, states that she can "feel that they learn a lot and that they are … Well, they get a lot done" (p. 3), while Bridget refers to such a link as having been established by researchers.

Brenda is alone among the three "B" teachers in addressing the teacher's role for student engagement. She states that she would like to "be engaging and positive and inspire [the students] to learn new stuff" (p. 4). Tania brings the teacher's and the students' responsibility for engagement together: the teacher should strive to provide motivational instruction, but at the same time every student is responsible

for participating in and paying attention to the instruction. Tania further emphasizes the pleasure she draws from observing engaged students, connecting such behaviour both to enhanced learning outcomes and to increased student well-being. Tina expresses that student engagement is linked to students' well-being and feeling of belonging, which, in her view, both increase when students "have got something done […] have learnt something" (p. 5). Such engagement and such feelings are particularly strong when the students act like "researchers in the classroom" (p. 5), Tina claims. One way to gauge student engagement, she proposes, is to keep track of the distribution of utterances between the teacher and the students: if she "talked less [than her students as a group]" (p. 5) during a lesson, then the students presumably engaged actively in her instruction.

Theresa goes even further, characterizing classroom management as primarily being about facilitating more in-depth student engagement. She points out that an important sign of engagement is when students use their own words to express problems, reflections and arguments. Hence, in her opinion, student engagement takes precedence over having a calm working environment; she claims that "I have these really engaged students who are lying on top of their desk while discussing: 'no, you shouldn't do it this way, because you have to do it like this'. I think it's not easy to stop them [in that situation] ((laughs))" (p. 6).

3.1.3   Student accomplishment

Theresa calls attention to the importance of challenging the students as a key to engagement. However, she stresses that they should be challenged in a setting where it is safe for them to take risks and where they may solve challenging tasks collaboratively, supported both by their teachers and by their peers. She emphasizes that in such a collaborative community, everybody has a place and everybody is a resource. Consequently, the class should celebrate important achievements by an individual student, even where they are far below other students' level of achievement.

Beth also ascribes significance to the students' experience of accomplishment, but in a rather different way. In the practice depicted by Beth, the teacher has an obligation to expose her students to manageable tasks to "make sure that everybody experiences accomplishment, preferably every day" (p. 20). This experience is considered so important that it takes precedence over the need to challenge the students; Beth states that "I must never set them too difficult tasks, ones they can't solve" (p. 20).

Brenda also ascribes significance to the joy of learning, implicitly linking the students' feeling of accomplishment to an experience of enjoying learning.

3.1.4 Well-informed teachers

All six teachers ascribe significance to the teacher's knowledge about the individual student as a basis for differentiating instruction and providing emotional support. However, they vary in their descriptions of how to gain such knowledge. Beth and Bridget each explicitly foreground two sources of knowledge about their students' development. They both emphasize different reading tests. In addition, Beth also devotes a great deal of attention to the written dictation tests that she administers every four weeks while Bridget mentions, as an example of how she monitors her students' learning, their own words as provided, for instance, on post-it notes written at the end of lessons. In stark contrast to this, Theresa stresses throughout her interview that she needs to update her knowledge about her students daily and in a much more thorough way than what the yearly screening tests can offer. The knowledge she seeks should cover the students' skills, knowledge, interests and development, and she considers this knowledge crucial for adjusting her instruction to suit every student in the best possible way.

Tina and Tania both stress that students are complex human beings and that the teacher needs updated knowledge of, and experience-based insight into, not only the students' literacy skills and development but also their personality, and—according to Tania—their family situation. Such knowledge is ascribed significance as a prerequisite for "engaging with" the students—by blowing on their wounds, putting them on your lap and listening to what they feel the need to share, as well as by praising their accomplishments, being specific when evaluating their work, and adapting the instruction to suit their individual needs. The different aspects of the student are presented as related on a deep level, meaning that the teachers' support should address both emotional and subject-specific aspects. For instance, Tina claims that there are no "quick fixes" (p. 17) to solve the challenges faced by a struggling student.

Theresa ascribes significance to the teacher's search for updated, research-based knowledge (subject-specific, didactical and pedagogical) about early literacy instruction and about engaging instruction, presenting such knowledge as important for her ability to differentiate her instruction, to invite her students to engage in the instruction and to enhance learning outcomes. Beth and Bridget, on the other hand, emphasize the significance of teacher experience. In Beth's discourse, the teacher's ability to make the students feel secure increases with teaching experience as well as other experience with children—motherhood, for instance.

3.1.5 Professional latitude

Different perspectives on teacher autonomy are taken in the interviews. On the one hand, Beth ascribes significance to being given clear guidelines for her instruction. In line with this, Beth and Bridget claim that they would have appreciated more and clearer guidelines for the use of the co-teacher in Two Teachers. On the other hand,

Theresa produces a very different reflection about the same guidelines (for condition 2): because the limited set of activities represented the only instructional guidelines provided by the research project, she and her co-teacher thought those activities had to be of great importance and so looked for more information about them, reflected upon them together and discussed them with their colleagues. Further, Theresa ascribes significance to the professional autonomy of teachers in several ways, stressing that it is her duty to have the courage to make priorities in her instructional choices, to challenge her students and to fight (against colleagues, headmasters or politicians) for what she, based on her knowledge and experience, strongly believes will benefit her students' development the most.

3.1.6   Summary: participants

Although there is not a simple and clear demarcation line between Bridget, Brenda and Beth on the one hand and Tania, Tina and Theresa on the other, the most striking differences in terms of the aspects of the participants in early literacy instruction ascribed significance by the teachers interviewed can be seen between the two groups of "B" and "T" teachers. First, while both groups emphasize the teacher's role as *classroom manager*, their understandings of this differ: The "B" group ascribes significance to instructional control and detailed planning to make students feel safe, while the "T" group stresses acting as facilitators rather than disseminators and adjusting to the situatedness of instruction in order to differentiate instruction and attain student engagement.

Second, whereas the concept of *student engagement* in the "B" group is understood as being on, rather than off, task –what Nystrand and Gamoran (1990) would refer to as *procedural* engagement—some of the "T" teachers tend to refer instead to *substantive* engagement (i.e., "a sustained commitment to and involvement with academic work") (cf. Nystrand & Gamoran, 1990, p. 5).

Third, through their emphasis on the importance of challenging the students at their own level, of not being afraid of the differences in skills among their students and of celebrating students' achievements together in the classroom, the "T" teachers' understanding of *student accomplishment* is linked to students successfully managing challenging tasks at an individualized level. By contrast, one of the teachers in the "B" group emphasizes the importance of avoiding risk and of ensuring that everybody is managing well all the time and thus reveals an understanding of student accomplishment as succeeding all tasks—tasks where the risk of failure is minimized.

Fourth, whereas both groups highlight the importance of the *well-informed teacher*, they differ in their understandings of what constitutes—and expands—the knowledge base necessary to differentiate the instruction. The "B" teachers tend to foreground different kinds of test results as a main source of information to guide the differentiation of instruction, alongside the teacher's years of experience. The

"T" teachers, on the other hand, foreground everything a student does during instruction as such a source, alongside updated and research-based knowledge from various other sources.

Fifth, the groups differ in their understanding of the teacher's *professional latitude*. The "B" group emphasizes the importance of having detailed guidelines for instruction, whereas the "T" group stresses instructional autonomy.

3.2 Activities in the practice

In the following, aspects of activities associated with the social practice of early literacy instruction to which the teachers ascribe significance are presented.

3.2.1   Covering the core content

Beth is preoccupied with the all-inclusiveness of the Norwegian L1 subject. She argues that there is a need to create some order in the vast area covered by this subject, to ensure that she will not forget any of its principal components. Even so, she emphasizes reading, writing and listening as the three main elements. When talking about writing activities, Beth ascribes significance to orthography and orderliness during the first and second grades, leaving more extensive and open-ended writing tasks for the third grade, when basic orthography will be in place. In terms of students' reading activities, Beth ascribes significance to guided reading sessions included in condition 2 of the research project while at the same time regretting that she often runs out of time during those sessions as she is trying to cope with all the tasks that are supposed to be performed during the 13 minutes available for this activity during station-work periods.

Further, Beth also ascribes significance to the development of listening skills as one purpose of reading aloud to the students during their lunch break. Both Beth and Brenda also ascribe significance to such occasions as ways of opening up the world of books to the students so as to make them "enjoy books and enjoy reading" (Brenda, p. 4). Bridget also refers to such reading aloud during lunch breaks. It is unclear, however, whether these reading-aloud sessions also comprise more interactive parts, or whether they are followed up through discussions or other activities during subsequent instruction.

For Bridget, one principle justifying the choice of reading aloud during the lunch break seems to be the significance ascribed by her to efficient use of the time allotted for instruction. This principle also seems to be applied during lessons: if she is working individually with one student, the other students are not left waiting but rather active in silent reading. This principle is given even greater significance by Tania, throughout her interview. Every morning, she reports, her students engage in free voluntary reading while both Tania and her co-teacher listen to each student reading his or her homework as well as, on most days, an unknown text. This morning

ritual is characterized as serving multiple aims: it allows the teachers to assess the students' reading and writing homework, it makes the students correct themselves, it challenges the students through the reading of an unknown text, and it yields updated information about the students' development.

3.2.2   Engaging literacy activities

The "T" teachers all ascribe significance to student engagement (Tina, Theresa) and motivation (Tania) as principles governing their choice of activities. Hence they emphasize activities where their students can talk, discuss with their peers and collaborate, such as problem-solving, guided reading in groups and reading conferences (Tina, Theresa), and station work and quite open-ended writing tasks (Tania).

Tania emphasizes the great potential of station work as a setting for useful and engaging activities. During station work, the teacher can spend more time with each student and so gain more knowledge about the individual students' skills and development. This also allows the teacher to observe the students' joy at being able to communicate in writing from the very start of the first grade, to engage in literary discussions with the students, and to observe their engagement and their experience of gaining mastery throughout the session. In addition, this setting is ascribed significance for activities intended to develop basic reading, writing and language skills.

3.2.3   Variation and rituals

Brenda and Bridget implicitly emphasize variation through their listing of a great variety of different activities, organizational forms associated with particular activities (such as station work and guided reading) and different approaches to reading and writing instruction.

Tina and Tania ascribe significance to ritual activities but also make it clear that there is a tension between the choice of engaging (Tina) and creative (Tania) activities, on the one hand, and predictable, repeated activities, on the other. Tina explicitly addresses this dilemma while raising the question of at what point creativity and variation may become a threat to all students' learning.

Tania ascribes particular significance to repeated instructional designs—such as always introducing new letters in the same way and the daily morning reading sessions—as important for struggling readers. Throughout her interview, Tania foregrounds repeated activities with struggling readers, involving exercises in letter knowledge, decoding and reading comprehension, which are carried out whenever possible by any teaching staff available.

3.2.4   Summary: activities

There are some clear differences regarding the aspects of the activities in early literacy instruction that are ascribed significance by the homeroom teachers in classrooms with very poor and very strong levels of reading development, respectively. Whereas the "B" teachers tend to list various activities included in their instruction, and Beth is preoccupied with *covering the content* of the vast L1 subject, the "T" teachers tend to reflect more on the principles guiding their choice of activities, highlighting *engaging literacy activities* where students' reading, writing and oracy are combined. In line with this, it can be noted that both Bridget and Tania foreground the instructional effectiveness of keeping the students at work when the teacher is working with individual students, but whereas Bridget stresses the work itself, Tania instead emphasizes how such a session design enables differentiated activities and provides the teachers with an opportunity to update their knowledge about the students' skills, engagement and motivation. Finally, the "B" teachers stress *variation* in terms of instructional activities whereas the "T" teachers ascribe significance to the challenge of striking an appropriate balance between *predictable ritual activities* and *creative varied activities*.

3.3 Resources in the practice

In the following, aspects of resources in early literacy instruction to which the teachers ascribe significance are presented. Resources as a main element of a social practice typically include artefacts. Here, however, the co-teacher and other professional staff are also frequently ascribed significance as human resources.

3.3.1   Material resources

The "B" teachers all ascribe significance to a range of material resources. Beth emphasizes the value of resources providing support and guidelines which make it easier to structure the comprehensive L1 subject—be it a municipal reading plan or a well-organized textbook. Brenda and Bridget draw attention to the considerable digital resources available through iPads or other digital devices, increasing opportunities to vary literacy instruction and "try out new stuff" (Brenda, p. 17).
Theresa emphasizes the value of resources that communicate research-based knowledge and provide support for the teachers' reflection upon the possible instructional implications of such knowledge. She repeatedly mentions *Language Tracks* (an on-line professional-development programme)[8], lectures provided by

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[8] *This programme provides the digital material for site-based professional development in Two Teacher-conditions 1 and 2. However, it should be noted that the programme is open-access and part of a national strategy for language, reading and writing initiated by the Norwegian Ministry of Education.*

research project and resources available on websites such as that of the Norwegian Reading Centre. According to Theresa, these sources of knowledge are examples of resources that support informed, "educated" instructional decision-making among colleagues—as opposed to decision-making a feeling of what may work.

Tina and Tania hardly pay any discursive attention at all to material resources during their interviews.

3.3.2   Human resources

All six teachers foreground other participants in the practice, or people surrounding it, as important resources for literacy instruction. However, the teachers justify their importance in different ways and to a different extent.

The "T" teachers ascribe significance, in positive terms, to the pedagogical human resources available during instruction. By contrast, the "B" teachers' discourse about these resources is ambiguous. Beth foregrounds both the efforts made by her co-teacher to help her out and the good chemistry between them. Even so, the presence of other adults—like the co-teacher and other teaching staff—in the classroom is ascribed significance mainly as a source of disturbance. In fact, to Beth, rather than facilitating instruction, these adults seem to represent yet more participants competing for her attention and making the task of maintaining instructional coherence and holding students' attention harder—meaning that the instructional resources available per participant are actually reduced.

Both Brenda and Bridget explicitly ascribe significance to the additional teaching resource represented by the co-teacher, noting that the presence of the co-teacher yields "two brains" (Brenda, p. 9) or "two pairs of eyes and ears that may see and listen to the children" (Brenda, p. 10). This allows more time to be spent with each student, facilitates better adaptation of the instruction and, according to Bridget, enables a closer relationship between teacher and students. Brenda further emphasizes that the co-teacher is a colleague with whom she may discuss issues relating to the students and the instruction, also pointing out that the co-teacher reduces her workload, freeing up time for her to be more creative and to look for good ideas and instructional examples.

Bridget also ascribes significance to the opportunities offered by the additional teacher resource when it comes to dealing well with students who exhibit externalizing behaviour. With more human resources in the classroom, there are better opportunities to strike an appropriate balance between taking action to meet such students' needs and respecting the other students' right to a safe working environment and a feeling of security.

The "T" teachers all perceive the co-teacher resource as a great opportunity for strengthening instruction. Tania particularly emphasizes the opportunities that this offers for the students' reading development. Throughout her interview, she depicts a classroom where all available pedagogical human resources are engaged in

instruction from the moment they enter the room until the end of the lesson, paying a great deal of attention to each student and providing targeted reading training to the most struggling readers.

Further, the "T" teachers all ascribe significance to the co-teacher as a colleague who adds to their own experience, knowledge and personality both during instruction and in conversations taking place outside the classroom. Tina and Tania both emphasize their co-teacher as a resource fostering their own professional development, through experience in the Norwegian L1 subject (Tina) or substantial experience from elementary instruction (Tania). Tania was in fact less experienced teaching at the elementary stage herself, but the co-teacher's presence made her more confident about the instructional decisions that they made together.

Theresa and Tina also foreground other colleagues at their respective schools, characterizing their knowledge, experience and ideas as important resources available to them through shared discussions and, at Tina's school, through resources shared systematically in digital archives.

3.3.3   Summary: resources

In summary, the teachers ascribe significance to both material and human resources. When it comes to *material resources*, the "B" teachers foreground artefacts available during instruction which facilitate organization and variation of instructional content, whereas Theresa foregrounds resources that may enhance her own and her colleagues' professional knowledge. All teachers ascribe significance to the co-teacher as an important *human resource*, but there are clear differences in their understanding of this resource as revealed in their discourse. For the "T" teachers, the presence of the co-teacher enables more differentiated instruction as well as a reciprocal professional exchange and development. The "B" teachers mainly emphasize that having access to enhanced human resources is a good thing in and of itself as it provides more time or teacher presence per student.

3.4 Settings in the practice

In the following, aspects of the setting for early literacy instruction—its time and place—to which the teachers ascribe significance are presented.

3.4.1   Time and place—resources or setting?

It is somewhat unclear where to draw the line between resources and settings when it comes to the teachers' discourse about time and place. In the interviews, time is almost exclusively emphasized as a resource which is increased by the presence of the co-teacher. However, the amount of the time resource designated for a specific activity sometimes constitutes an important part of the setting for that activity, such as when Beth (cf. 3.2.1) discusses how the limited time allocated for the guided

reading sessions during station work restricts that activity in and of itself. Besides this, however, the teachers pay little discursive attention to time, only mentioning it as a characteristic of rituals—such as the morning reading session (Tania) and the lunch-time reading-aloud sessions (Bridget and Beth).

In a similar way as for time, place is also ascribed significance as a resource by Beth, also mainly in terms of the shortage thereof. Specifically, since there is no room suited for small-group activities available within a short distance of her classroom, the setting limits her opportunities to divide her students into smaller groups. In this way, the lack of resources exerts an influence on the instructional setting.

A different approach to place is taken by Tina, who ascribes significance to the use of more informal settings in between activities to "expand" the classroom and her instruction by using a few minutes before and after the lesson to chat with the students in the classroom, in the corridor and on the stairs. She says that exploiting such settings gives her greater opportunities to acquaint herself with her students as "whole people" (pp. 8–9) and to create an environment where everybody feels comfortable and secure and has a sense of belonging.

Both Brenda and Tina ascribe significance to settings made possible by the fact that the TSR increase, enables more flexible organization of the students (e.g., whole class, station teaching, parallel teaching). Although they both have mixed experiences with different organizational forms during the two years of the intervention, they both ascribe particular significance to the opportunities offered by organizing the student group into two groups, a larger one of more advanced readers and a smaller one of less advanced ones, each led by one teacher. Brenda emphasizes the opportunities offered by these settings for differentiating instruction and devoting more attention to each student. Tina highlights their benefits for struggling readers but also reflects that the intensity of the instruction received by those students makes it impossible for them to "hide" among other students to take brief pauses from their work.

Theresa adds to these reflections about the implications of dividing the students into groups. On the one hand, she constantly emphasizes the importance of the co-teacher's repeated work with the most struggling readers. On the other hand, she mentions that there may be a dilemma when a student is taken out of the classroom during a common, engaging project, foregrounding this as an aspect of trying to strike an appropriate balance between targeted reading instruction and participation in common projects.

3.4.2   Work environment

The "B" teachers all ascribe significance to a safe and calm instructional setting, where students are not afraid of their peers and are not disturbed in their work. At the same time, Bridget emphasizes the importance of making sure that those students who threaten the safety of the setting in her classroom are included in the

student group. This dilemma becomes more acute in conjunction with the move from the first to the second grade, as the setting is then expected to shift from more play-like instructional approaches to more traditional instructional tasks taking place in a more silent setting. This makes it even more difficult to balance concern for poorly adapted students with the interests of the remaining students.

Tina depicts a development which, to some extent, goes in the opposite direction. In her discourse, there is also a dilemma associated with the working environment, identified as striking a balance between engagement and informal talk, on the one hand, and predictability and calm, on the other. As she sees it, that balance shifts progressively as the students grow older and more mature. At the beginning, students are mainly seated at individual desks, in order to create a calmer working environment. However, later on in the first grade and during the second grade, exceptions from this become increasingly frequent and students are invited to walk around in the classroom in order to search for information on posters hanging from the walls, yielding a setting characterized by "constructive noise" (pp. 5–6) to which Tina ascribes significance as a feature of good-quality lessons.

In line with this, Theresa depicts a seemingly chaotic instructional setting in her classroom. When describing it, she discursively distances herself from the scene, trying to take an outsider's perspective. From this point of view, it is a chaotic and noisy place: students talking over each other, lying on their desks, moving around the room. Then, returning to her own perspective, Theresa simultaneously sets a different contextual frame, allowing the same scene to be understood as strongly influenced by students deeply engaged in literacy activities and problem-solving.

3.4.3   Summary: settings

In summary, the teachers all foreground how the setting, may influence instruction. Both "T" and "B" teachers partly understand time and place as *resources*, but whereas Beth emphasizes how a lack of time and appropriate rooms may restrict opportunities for instruction, Tina instead foregrounds the expansion of the instructional time and space. Both groups also highlight the opportunities for more flexible organization students offered by the enhanced teacher resource. However, Theresa additionally reflects on how organizational structures that support the most struggling readers may also deprive them of other important instructional and community-building projects. Further, both groups ascribe significance to a good *work environment*, but they understand this differently. Whereas the "B" group emphasizes a calm and safe environment, Theresa and Tina foreground how student engagement may yield a rather noisy and seemingly chaotic classroom. Further, interestingly, Bridget and Tina describe opposite expectations of how the classroom setting should develop during the first two years of schooling—shifting either from more play-like to calmer and more disciplined settings (Bridget) or from clear rules to freer settings leaving the students with more freedom and more responsibility (Tina).

4.   DISCUSSION: FIGURED WORLDS OF EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION AS THEY
EMERGE IN THE TEACHERS' DISCOURSE

We have seen that there are individual differences among all homeroom teachers in the present study when it comes to the specific aspects of *participants*, *activities*, *resources* and *settings* to which they ascribe significance within early literacy instruction. Analysed from this perspective, their discourse reveals the contours of different understandings of students, teachers, classrooms, activities, organizational structures, instructional differentiation and student engagement, among other things. Comparison of those understandings shows that the clearest demarcation line is to be found between the "B" and "T" teachers, that is, between those whose classrooms manifested poor and strong levels of reading development, respectively, during the Two Teachers intervention. Table 2 juxtaposes overviews of the understandings held by the two teacher groups, as revealed through their discourse.[9]

The teachers' understandings of every single aspect outlined in Table 2 really deserve to be discussed based on a wide range of previous theoretical and empirical research in the fields of education, psychology and reading—such as research on student engagement, feedback, classroom management, early reading instruction or teachers' professional development. However, in the following, I will concentrate on the complex, more holistic figured worlds of early literacy instruction that emerge when the individual teachers' understandings of the various aspects are gathered together. Since there are individual differences among and across teachers in both groups, this part will focus on Beth and Theresa. Although these two teachers both represent condition 2 of the research project, meaning that they belong to the category of teachers who received the most extensive guidelines within that intervention, their figured worlds are actually the most different among the six teachers interviewed. To this it should be added that they generally position themselves the farthest from the centre of the various scales where the "B" teachers and "T" teachers tend to be at either end.

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[9] *Not all aspects included in Table 2 are representative of all three teachers in each group (please refer to the Results section for a more comprehensive account).*

Table 2. Teachers' understandings of different aspects within early literacy instruction

Practice element	Aspects	"B" teachers: classrooms with poor reading development	"T" teachers: classrooms with strong reading development
Participants	Teacher as classroom manager	- control and detailed planning to make students feel safe	- facilitate more, disseminate less - adjustment to differentiate instruction and engage students
	Student engagement	- on task versus off task	- substantially engaged vs. procedurally engaged
	Student accomplishment	- success at all tasks through minimization of risk	- success at challenging tasks at individualized level
	Well-informed teacher	- through test results - through teaching experience	- through everyday targeted instruction and tests - through updated research-based knowledge
	Teacher's professional latitude	- detailed instructional guidelines	- great instructional autonomy
Activities	Covering the core content	- demands a variety of activities and instructional effectiveness through keeping everybody at work	- demands engaging and differentiated literacy activities and keeping everybody at work with targeted activities
	Variation and rituals	- variation in activities	- balancing between predictability and variation
Resources	Material resources	- available instructional artefacts facilitating variation and organization	- resources supporting the teacher's professional development
	Human resources	- potential time resource	- enabling more differentiated instruction, professional exchange and development
Setting	Setting as resources	- a resource that is given or restricted in advance - enhanced organizational flexibility offered through enhanced teacher resource	- a resource that may be expanded by the teacher - enhanced organizational flexibility offered through enhanced teacher resource - settings supporting struggling readers may deprive them of other important instructional settings
	Work environment	- calm and safe	- seemingly chaotic and noisy when students are engaged

In the interview, Beth relies upon the following more or less implied understandings in her figured world of early literacy instruction: Teachers' previous experience with teaching and motherhood increases teaching quality. More experience is better than less. Teachers should receive clear guidelines for their instruction. A good teacher in early literacy instruction is responsible for, and in control of, everything during

instruction. To ensure students' literacy development, the teacher should prepare the instruction in detail and follow through the plan. It is possible to plan instruction in every detail. The risk that students and other human resources present in the classroom will interfere with the instructional plan represents a threat to good instruction. The classroom should be a calm and safe place. Students need the messages and instruction they receive to be clear and repeated to feel safe. Students need to feel safe to learn. Students are either well adapted or not. A well-adapted student listens carefully to the teacher and is on task. A poorly adapted student is off task. Being engaged means being on task. Poorly adapted students may jeopardize the instructional plan and the status of the classroom as a calm and safe place. Students experience accomplishment when they succeed at a task. Experiencing accomplishment is important for students. Challenging tasks come with a risk of failure. A lack of material resources may reduce opportunities for providing good instruction. Having more resources is good, having less is bad. Teachers should monitor students' skill level through different kinds of tests. Students are acquainted with the world of books through reading-aloud sessions. Reading-aloud sessions enhance listening skills. Students need to have mastered orthography and orderliness before engaging in free-writing tasks.

Theresa relies upon the following more or less implied understandings in her figured world of early literacy instruction: Teachers' updated pedagogical and subject knowledge increases teaching quality. Teachers gain such knowledge through research-based resources and discussions with peers. Teachers should be trusted with great professional autonomy. Good teachers assume responsibility for the instruction they provide. Activities should be engaging and challenging for all students. Engaging in challenging or problem-solving tasks is more valuable than doing specifically and exclusively what one is told. Engagement may seem chaotic and noisy to outsiders. Engagement is more important than discipline. Teachers should not always provide all the answers. The people in the classroom make up a community of teachers and different children. Students are aware of their differences. All students contribute to the community. The community should celebrate individuals' achievements together. Achieving is succeeding at a challenging task—in the short or long term. All students need differentiated instruction. The teacher should continually monitor students' skill level during instruction. Instructional decision-making should be informed by research-based knowledge, experience gathered through instruction in general, and knowledge about the individual students gathered from a multitude of unique events. Struggling readers need extensive targeted instruction. Differentiation sometimes entails dilemmas which may involve choosing between different important instructional considerations. Material and human resources may be used differently and for different purposes. More resources, if used wisely, increase opportunities to provide good, differentiated instruction. Additional teachers represent a resource both during instruction and for the homeroom teacher's professional development.

When these understandings of the different elements of the social practice of early literacy instruction are juxtaposed, fundamental differences in Theresa's and Beth's figured worlds of this complex social practice become apparent. The most striking difference concerns whether instruction is something that can be defined in advance and controlled while instruction is being provided, or whether this is instead an emerging and permanently evolving practice. The first case reflects a figured world of early literacy instruction where there is no risk and where risk should be avoided at all costs. In Beth's discourse, however, that figured world is challenged by the existence of poorly adapted, off-task students and by pedagogical human resources which fail to act in accordance with the homeroom teacher's plan. If such participants exist, instruction free from risk is an impossibility. By contrast, the second case reflects a figured world of early literacy instruction which is characterized by risk—or, rather, which is characterized by being created as and when participants, activities, resources and settings interact in unpredictable and hence risky ways. This is in line with the dialogical ideals underpinning Theresa's various understandings—ideals of instruction as engaging and challenging, of the classroom as a community, of students and colleagues as contributors and discussion partners. It is also in line with the idea of the *weakness* of education that Gert Biesta pleads for: "any engagement in education—both by educators and by those being educated—always entails a *risk*" (Biesta, 2013, p. x).

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The possible implications of the present study are manifold, since teachers and their conscious or unconscious perspectives have an impact on such a broad range of topics related to education. However, given that the background to the study specifically involves the challenge of optimizing the exploitation of a TSR increase obtained through co-teaching, and given that conditions for such optimization are likely to vary greatly between the extreme cases presented in the study, we will conclude by looking at the possible impact of the study findings on two areas of relevance in that context.

The first of those areas relates to the concrete ways in which a TSR increase is implemented in early literacy instruction. In the figured worlds built through the homeroom teachers' discourse throughout their interviews, the scope for their co-teachers to interact with students, engage in instruction and collaborate with the homeroom teacher clearly differs. The different figured worlds seem to either facilitate (in Theresa's case) or hinder (in Beth's case) the co-teacher's professional engagement. In this way, the homeroom teacher takes on the role of a gatekeeper who may or may not invite the co-teacher into such engagement. Specifically, two key elements of those figured worlds seem to broaden or narrow the co-teacher's scope for professional latitude. First, whether the co-teacher is or is not seen as a versatile *resource* for both the students and the homeroom teacher may affect the co-teacher's opportunities for professional engagement in all parts of teaching.

Second, the use of different principles governing the choice of *activities* may broaden or narrow the co-teacher's opportunities for professional interaction with the students. Further research into the collaboration between co-teaching teachers in early literacy instruction, both within the Two Teachers project and more generally, should take this into account and investigate both teachers' views on their collaboration in order to gain knowledge about how those views may influence the effect of increasing the TSR through co-teaching.

The second area concerns guiding principles for professional development. If we assume that the goal of early literacy instruction is for every student to attain an adequate level of decoding skills and reading comprehension, there is a pressing need to establish the best ways for the research community and schools to help teachers provide effective reading instruction. The obvious way to change early literacy instruction for the better is to make teachers replace less effective instructional activities with more effective ones. Obtaining this by simply telling teachers what methods to use would be in line with Beth's call for clear guidelines for her instruction. However, if we consider the influence that teachers' figured worlds are likely to exert on the instruction they provide as well as the persistence that often characterizes such taken-for-granted perspectives, core beliefs or epistemologies (Alexander, 1997; Bownlee et al., 2002; Wilkinson et al., 2017), it is a fair guess that it will never be possible to change early literacy instruction for the better with any kind of quick fix in terms of the implementation of enhanced teacher resources or of specific instructional methods unless we also try to reveal and influence teachers' unconscious perspectives guiding instruction before undertaking more traditional professional-development activities.

The levels of student reading development seen in the six extreme cases included in the present study were no doubt deeply affected by the respective homeroom teachers' figured worlds of early literacy instruction, through the influence which those figured worlds are likely to have exerted on the instruction provided in the classrooms. By taking a step back to investigate the homeroom teachers' figured worlds, and thus shedding light on the relationship between homeroom teachers' figured worlds and student learning outcomes in co-taught classrooms, this study therefore adds one possible explanatory piece to the complex jigsaw puzzle of explaining why a TSR increase does not necessarily lead to enhanced student learning outcomes. However, it must be borne in mind that there could be other explanations for the great differences seen in reading development within these six cases during the two years of the Two Teachers intervention

The findings of this study must indeed be used with caution, considering that they rely upon six individual interviews. It is possible that the analysis of additional data, for instance from the six teachers' everyday conversations with colleagues or from their classroom discourse, would have further nuanced the figured worlds discursively constructed through the interviews—or might even have revealed contrasting or conflicting figured worlds. However, an awareness of the situatedness

of the in-depth interviews is a fundamental characteristic of the analyses performed in the present study.

Further research should investigate whether the relationship suggested by this study to exist between students' learning outcomes and their teachers' figured worlds is also to be found elsewhere, and whether that relationship may be explained by other contextual factors—such as the characteristics of students or school management, or the quality of the collaboration between the homeroom teacher and the co-teacher. The co-teachers' perception of the homeroom teachers' gatekeeper role would be a topic of particular interest.

ACKNOLWEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

[Warm-up—make sure you obtain information about whether the two teachers worked together in both years and whether they are still working together, and also possibly try to find out something about why they chose to become teachers.]

Introduction

It's been six months since the end of the [project name] intervention—since you were two teachers sharing responsibility for reading and writing instruction within the [project name] context. The reason why we'd now like to interview you, [co-teacher's name] and other dyads of teachers who worked together in [project name] is that we know that a lot of things influence how co-teaching works, how it's experienced and to what extent it leads to enhanced learning outcomes for students. In these interviews I meet teacher pairs whose classes benefited differently from the presence of two teachers in Norwegian classes, enabling us to learn more about the complexity of working together. I'd like to hear about your experiences with teacher collaboration and with [project name], but first of all I'd like to hear a little bit about you as a teacher.

Theme 1: Teachers' figured worlds with regard to good instruction and to the roles of students and teachers

1) Do you remember a Norwegian lesson you were particularly pleased with? Would you like to tell me about it? 10
    a) What was it about that lesson that made it good?
    b) Are the characteristics of that lesson in line with your idea about what good instruction is? What characterizes your ideal of good instruction?
    c) Do you remember anything similar from beginner instruction/year 1 or 2?
2) How would you describe the roles of the students and the teacher in your instruction?
    a) What do you think is your role in the classroom?

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10 *The interviewer always asked all numbered questions (1–5) within each of the three themes—to the extent that they were applicable to the interviewee's project condition. By contrast, the items marked with* characters *(a–h) or* Roman numerals *(i–iii) were intended as guidance for possible follow-up questions and so were asked only as appropriate.*

      b)   What kind of place do you expect and want students to have and take in the classroom?

      c)   What aspect of the division of roles in your class are you the most pleased with? And what do you think is the most challenging aspect?

3) How would you describe your work on reading and writing instruction in your teaching?

      a)   [Link this to all the teachers have said about his or her more fundamental views.]

4) [For conditions 1 and 2]: During the two years of the intervention, you worked with *Language Tracks*. Would you like to tell me a little about that work? Is there anything about working with Language Tracks that you remember particularly well? Please tell me about it.

      b)   The work with *Language Tracks* was supposed to take the school's own experienced needs as its starting point. Do you remember what needs were identified and how you followed up on them? (For example, did you come back to this later on to evaluate the work so far, was it mentioned as having guided the choice between work packages 2 and 3, …?)

      c)   Did your work with *Language Tracks* change the way you think about teaching and instruction in any way? Please tell me about it.

      d)   In what ways did you and your co-teacher, as a team, process and adapt the work you did with *Language Tracks*? Did it make experimentation in instruction easier?

5) [For condition 2]: For those of you who were in group 3 in [project name], your schools committed to following specific guidelines (that is, to carry out reading conferences, guided reading at least once a week, sessions where students read aloud to teachers at least once a week and extra support for students struggling with letter knowledge and/or lagging behind in reading). Did these mandatory working methods—and your duty to use them—change your instruction in any way? Please tell me about it.

      e)   Did you perceive this as useful/instructive/liberating, for example because it required adaptations on the part of school management—or did you experience it as a straitjacket depriving teachers of instructional ownership…?

Theme 2: Co-teaching

1) Now I'd like to hear a little about your experience of co-teaching with [co-teacher's name] in first and second grade. [Pause.] How did you experience teaching together with [him/her]? What's the best part of your experience being two teachers in the class? Please tell me about it.

a) Could you give me an example of something you were very pleased with?

b) Could you give me an example of a time when collaboration did not work as you expected/wanted.

c) How did you divide work and roles during planning and during instruction? Could you describe your role and [co-teacher's name]'s role?

    i. How did you distribute roles during instructional planning?

    ii. How did you distribute roles during instruction: what organizational approach was used in the class and how did you perceive the distribution of roles? Did the distribution of roles change over time?

    iii. How much time/how many lessons did the co-teacher spend in the class in addition to the lessons funded by [project name]? Did the homeroom teacher spend a lot more time with the students because she taught almost all subjects while the co-teacher was present in the class only for the dedicated lessons?

d) Did co-teaching make it possible to meet individual students' needs better? What kinds of needs?

e) If you disagreed about priorities or about how to do something, how did you manage such disagreement (of a subject-specific, didactical or pedagogical nature)?

f) How would you describe the "chemistry" between the two of you? How important is good chemistry when co-teaching?

g) How did you perceive the role of school management in the project? Did they follow the project closely? Did they appreciate the project? Did they encourage experimentation?

h) Did you change your views on co-teaching based on your experience from [project name]? Did you develop a more positive/negative attitude? Why?

Theme 3: Teachers' understanding of students' literacy development and the roles played by various factors for that development

1) You've now followed a class for [two or three] years. How would you characterize that class compared with your previous classes? (The students' (literacy) development as a class/group, any gaps within the group.)

2) [Show the two graphs representing the classes' development in (i) decoding and (ii) reading comprehension.] Here you can see how your class has developed in word reading/decoding and reading comprehension from the

start of first grade to the end of second grade, compared with other classes who had two teachers in [project name]. [Explain how to read the graph.]

    a) Looking at the development of your class compared with other classes in [project name], we can see that their reading development is a lot [stronger/weaker] than average.

        i. Does this surprise you?

        ii. What do you think may explain this result? [Possible follow-up questions: school management, school culture, collaboration between school and parents, the students' backgrounds and circumstances (in a broad sense), co-teaching, methods of instruction, relationship between the students and the teacher…]