

## MOTIVATIONS, MATERIALS, AND MEANS

Teachers' attitudes to literature use in Nordic lower secondary schools

ANNA NISSEN<sup>1</sup>, THOMAS ILLUM HANSEN<sup>2</sup>, HEIDI HÖGLUND<sup>3</sup>,  
CAMILLA GUDMUNDSDATTER MAGNUSSON<sup>4</sup> & BIRNA MARÍA B.  
SVANBJÖRNDÓTTIR<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karlstad University, Sweden

<sup>2</sup> UCL University College, Denmark

<sup>3</sup> Åbo Akademi University, Finland

<sup>4</sup> Østfold University of Applied Sciences and University of Oslo, Norway

<sup>5</sup> University of Akureyri, Iceland

### Abstract

This study aims to reveal how Nordic lower secondary language arts teachers motivate and describe their literature instruction. It investigates what motivations for literature instruction teachers appeal to, what literary materials they use, and by what instructional means and methods they teach literature. An online questionnaire was completed by 701 teachers from a random sample of schools across the Nordic countries. Analyses showed that teachers valued using literature for various reasons, although using literature to develop students' reading comprehension and linguistic skills were prioritised. Across all five countries, the reading of narrative texts was favoured. However, genre preferences varied by country: contemporary short stories were significantly more frequently read in Norway, Denmark, and Finland than in Sweden and Iceland, while young adult novels were significantly more commonly read in Denmark than in the other four countries. The most common instructional practices included letting students answer text-based questions and discussing literary texts. A key finding of the study is that literature reading in Nordic schools seems to be a matter of reading instruction rather than literature instruction. Thus, while different types of skills are emphasised, less attention is given to literary reading experiences.

Keywords: literature instruction, language arts, comparisons, teacher questionnaire, reading

1

*Nissen, A., Hansen, T. I., Höglund, H., Magnusson, C. G., Svanbjörnsdóttir, B. M. B. (2026). Motivations, materials, and means: Teachers' attitudes to literature use in Nordic lower secondary schools. L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature, 26, 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.21248/l1esll.2026.26.1.994>*

Corresponding author: Anna Nissen, Department of Educational Studies, Karlstad University, SE-65188 Karlstad, Sweden, email: alm.nissen@gmail.com

© 2026 International Association for Research in L1-Education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a critical domain of language arts. As literary texts represent a diverse range of subject content, they can serve as both an end and a means. Literature invites readers to explore worlds, but it also fosters comprehension and interpretive skills. Inevitably, teachers' instruction varies from one classroom to the next, both within and among countries, but it is difficult for researchers—and teachers—to discern what is specific to their own teaching culture. This makes comparative research informative for educational development, particularly across countries and educational systems (Blömeke & Paine, 2008).

At a time when internationally comparative data of student achievement have become increasingly accessible, national educational systems across the world seek to capitalise on educational experiences gained in foreign contexts (Paine et al., 2016). Comparative studies have often focused on conditions in distinctly different systems (e.g., Johansson, 2015; Torell, 2002), but the extent to which educational solutions are transferable from one context to another without adaptations for suitability to the new cultural context has been questioned (Adamson, 2012). Thus, a productive method could be to compare teaching practices among culturally similar countries with a few evident national characteristics. Such is the case with the five Nordic countries (Kavli, 2018): Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland.

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of reading literacy (Ahonen, 2014; Edgren, 2021; Flink-Jensen, 2021; Imsen & Volckmar, 2014; Thavenius, 1999b) and formal education. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, compulsory and free schooling was implemented in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. However, children from all social classes did not attend the same schools (Ahonen, 2014; Blossing & Söderström, 2014; Imsen & Volckmar, 2014; Rasmussen & Moos, 2014). Educational opportunities were more limited in Iceland, where there was a strong disagreement on compulsory education until 1946, when a more structured school system was established (Sigurðardóttir et al., 2014). During the post-war period (1945–1970), a common Nordic school model emerged with the aim of providing equal opportunities for all students, regardless of social, economic, or geographic background (Telhaug et al., 2006). One of its characteristics was—and still is—a non-tracked and non-streamed system for compulsory schooling (grades 1–9, or even 10) (Klette, 2018).

For a long time, the Nordic school systems were highly centralised. Following neoliberal policies and market-led educational reforms in the 1990s, they were decentralised, and municipalities took over the state's responsibility for schools. With the introduction of a new system that allowed tax-supported funding of private alternatives, the number of Swedish charter schools increased considerably. Denmark also has a relatively high number of charter schools, but they are rare in Finland, Iceland, and Norway (Klette, 2018).

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literature has been an important part of Nordic language arts (Hamre, 2014; Hansén, 1991; Thavenius, 1999b). At that time, an important objective of literature instruction in secondary school was to expose students to works written by national authors, thereby giving them access to their cultural heritage (Fjørtoft, 2018; Sørensen, 2008; Thavenius, 1999a). However, this kind of education was only available for children whose parents could afford it (Burman & Sundgren, 2012). Even after the compulsory school reform in the early 1960s, students who intended to go on to upper secondary school received a different kind of education than those who would leave school after grade 9. In language arts, the former group studied literary texts related to the history of literature, whereas instruction for the latter group mainly focused on practical skills and basic literacy (Dahl, 1999). Thus, while literature has long held a central place in Nordic language arts as a means of transmitting national culture, access to literature instruction that focuses not only on general literacy skills has been shaped by social class and educational levels.

In the 1960s, literature written for children and young adults was introduced in Nordic language arts instruction (Dahl, 1999; Hamre, 2014; Malmgren, 1996; Sørensen, 2008). Reading literary texts related to students' own experiences became even more common with the emergence of experienced-based pedagogy in the late 1970s, when literature was used in cross-disciplinary instruction and expected to provide students with knowledge about the world (Malmgren, 1996; Sørensen, 2008). More recently, there has been an increased emphasis on students' academic achievement (Telhaug et al., 2006), and deteriorating results in international large-scale reading assessments (e.g., Jensen et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2023) have contributed to a culture of testing (Sigbórsson, 2017; Tengberg, 2017). Although Finland has long been envied for its high-achieving school system (Krejsler, 2023), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 revealed a unison decline in reading comprehension in all Nordic countries (Jensen et al., 2023), with no significant average differences among Finnish, Danish and Swedish students' performances. Norwegian students performed significantly lower than students in these three countries, but only Icelandic students performed below the OECD average (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2023).

In all Nordic countries, language arts is one of the subjects with the most teaching hours. However, the total time allotted for the subject in lower secondary school vary considerably, with the highest number of lessons in Denmark (Danish Ministry of Children and Education, n.d.; Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018; Icelandic Ministry of Education Science and Culture, 2014; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2024). The subject relies on national curricula that express similar assumptions regarding how literature should be taught (Gourvenec et al., 2020). These curricula specify a number of shared purposes for reading literature, such as promoting positive reading experiences and contributing to students' identity formation. However, since the curricula do not explain how this is to be achieved, there is a risk that

teachers focus on more concrete and measurable aspects of the curricula (Gourvennec et al., 2020). Nordic curricula also display distinct national differences. For example, Gourvennec et al. (2020) found that motivation for reading and interest in reading—used as means to enhance linguistic skills (e.g., vocabulary and the ability to use language appropriately)—were more emphasised in the Swedish and Finnish curricula than in the Danish and Norwegian ones.

All in all, the conditions mentioned above can be assumed to impact which aspects teachers prioritise in their instruction and, thus, contribute to national characteristics determining which knowledge, skills, and experiences students develop. This makes it interesting to compare Nordic literature instruction, especially since comparisons make it possible to detect even minor differences in habits and practices that remain invisible in a national context and that may have an impact on students' learning.

In the Nordic context, comparative studies on literature instruction have been rare and mostly concerned a small number of teachers in two or three of the Scandinavian countries (e.g., Penne, 2012; Sjöstedt, 2013; Ulfgard, 2012). Hence, there is a lack of large-scale studies investigating and comparing literature instruction across the Nordic countries. While recent research based on video observations from a wide range of classrooms has identified differences and similarities in Nordic teachers' literature instruction (Nissen, 2023; Nissen et al., 2021), these studies encompass a limited number of lessons and thus concern only a small proportion of the participating teachers' literature instruction. Moreover, these studies do not provide information on how teachers perceive their own instruction, which is another relevant aspect to investigate. Therefore, exploring teachers' rationales for using literature would contribute to a fuller understanding of Nordic literature instruction. The present study draws on large-scale questionnaire data and aims to reveal how Nordic lower secondary language arts teachers motivate and describe their literature instruction. It addresses the following research questions:

- What motivations for literature instruction do Nordic lower secondary teachers appeal to?
- What literary materials do Nordic lower secondary teachers use in instruction?
- By what instructional means and methods is literature taught in Nordic lower secondary classrooms?

## 2. LEGITIMATIONS FOR READING LITERATURE

At different times, various reasons for reading literature have been emphasised, and the reading of literature can be legitimised in many ways. When exploring what purposes of literature education are given explicit and implicit significance in Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish language arts curricula for lower secondary school, Gourvennec et al. (2020) identified four individual motivations (or 'cultural models') for using literary texts that appear to underpin the Nordic curricula:

- 1) Literature education is good for the development of the self or for the individual's own growth
- 2) Literature education enhances literacy skills and disciplinary knowledge
- 3) Literature education supports the development of empathy
- 4) Literature education is good for expanding knowledge about cultures.

(Gourvenec et al., 2020, p. 27)

According to Gourvenec et al. (2020), these motivations can be linked to an overarching motivation assuming that 'literature is a means to maintain and improve democratic society through the moulding and development of good citizens' (p. 27).

Notably, curriculum analyses show what kind of instruction policy documents prescribe. This does not necessarily correspond to what teachers prioritise and how they perceive their own teaching practice. However, the motivations brought forward by Gourvenec et al. (2020) capture and embrace previously acknowledged legitimations and arguments for the use of literary texts in language arts instruction. It is therefore possible to use them as a theoretical framework for understanding literature instruction on a general level. This is done in the present study.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 *Nordic teachers' motivations for using literature*

According to previous research, a common motivation for using literature in Nordic language arts instruction is to *enhance students' literacy skills*. In a study based on video observations from 102 Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, and Icelandic classrooms, Nissen et al. (2021) found that literary texts were very often used to develop lower secondary students' reading comprehension. The assumption that literary texts can be used to foster general literacy (e.g., reading skills) has also been found in other studies. In a questionnaire study reaching out to Norwegian language arts teachers ( $N = 61$ ) at all school levels, this purpose was mentioned by more than half of the respondents (Myren-Svelstad & Grütters, 2022). In interviews with nine Norwegian lower secondary teachers, some of the respondents advocated using literature as a means to attain reading and writing skills (Fodstad & Husabø, 2021), and two small-scale studies suggest that also Icelandic teachers focus on reading comprehension in their literature instruction (Haraldsdóttir, 2020; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Further, Finnish primary school teachers ( $N = 84$ ) reported using literature mainly as a tool for developing literacy skills (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019).

Letting students read and work with literary texts as this is assumed to foster the joy of reading seems to be another common reason why teachers across the Nordic countries use literature in their instruction (Fodstad & Husabø, 2021; Larsson, 2021; Molloy, 2002; Rejman, 2013; Schmidl, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Extant research suggests that Nordic teachers tend to make student-oriented choices when deciding which literary texts to use in the instruction. They select texts that they believe will

appeal to their students, or let students decide which texts to read (Fougat et al., 2023; Penne, 2012).

There may also be other reasons why teachers use literature in their instruction, e.g., to *enhance students' disciplinary knowledge*, which can involve focusing on genre features and literary devices. In Norwegian lower secondary language arts classrooms ( $N = 47$ ), literary texts were often used to exemplify genre traits and literary devices (Gabrielsen et al., 2019), and in Danish lower secondary students' written interpretations of literary texts, the presence of literary concepts was a shared feature across three classrooms (Kabel, 2021). In comparison, less attention appears to be paid to these issues in Swedish and Icelandic literature instruction (Johansson, 2015; Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2018).

Myren-Svelstad and Grütters (2022) found that Norwegian teachers would occasionally justify their choices of literary texts based on cross-disciplinary themes such as democracy and citizenship—that is, aspects that the Norwegian curriculum emphasises. Several teachers in their study argued that literature can contribute to readers' self-development (*promote the individual's growth*) and promote empathetic attitudes towards the lives of others (*support the development of empathy*). In a Swedish project that used literature as a basis for moral reflection, the participating teachers found that reading and discussing literary texts was an appropriate means to help students gain a better understanding of the world and to engage them in ethical issues (Lyngfelt et al., 2023). Further, five teachers from three schools participating in an Icelandic study emphasised that literary discussions focusing on ethical issues can not only enhance young people's understanding of ethics but also increase their interest in literature and help them understand literary texts (Sigurðardóttir, 2018). In a Finnish study, Kauppinen and Aerila (2019) noted that even though teachers recognise the personal significance of literature in fostering empathy and self-awareness, these aspects are not widely emphasised in instruction. Although Brevik et al. (2023) observed that Norwegian teachers used literary texts when working with themes related to 'life skills', using literary texts to enable students understand the world and themselves from social and historical perspectives appears to be rare in Nordic lower secondary language arts instruction (Nissen et al., 2021).

### 3.2 *Literary materials in Nordic classrooms*

Nordic language arts teachers have a great deal of freedom when it comes to deciding which literary texts to use in their instruction (Gourvenec et al., 2020; Icelandic Ministry of Education Science, and Culture, 2014). Contemporary texts appear to be prioritised in Nordic classrooms (Grütters & Myren-Svelstad, 2022; Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2018; Rejman, 2013; Tainio et al., 2019; Tengberg et al., 2022), but textbooks may guide teachers' choices of literature and create an unofficial canon (Fougat et al., 2020; Gabrielsen & Blikstad-Balas, 2020; Gabrielsen & Oksbjerg, 2022; Skaug & Blikstad-Balas, 2019). In Icelandic schools, reading literary texts that

belong to some kind of literary canon appears to be common (Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2018; Lea, 2015), and assigning full-length books seems to be central to Finnish teachers' literature instruction (Grünthal et al., 2019). According to how students in grade 9 answered the PISA questionnaire, Finnish (74%) and Danish (74%) students are the ones who are most often expected to read longer texts (more than 100 pages), whereas reading long and varied texts seems to be less common in Norway than in the other Nordic countries (Frønes & Roe, 2020).

Teachers in all Nordic countries appear to favour narrative texts. In Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, many teachers favoured the reading of short stories and excerpts from novels. Moreover, several Swedish teachers let all students read and work with the same young adult novel (Nissen et al., 2021). Video observations of nine Danish lower secondary language arts classrooms showed that teachers often used short stories and novels in their instruction (Gissel et al., 2021). According to Nissen et al. (2021), Nordic lower secondary teachers seldom worked with poetry, although somewhat more often in Norway than in Finland, Iceland, and Sweden.

### *3.3 Instructional means and methods in Nordic literature instruction*

Research on what instructional means and methods are common in Nordic classrooms seems to be scarce. However, according to the PISA questionnaire, Nordic lower secondary students perceive that their teachers often ask them to summarise literary texts or to describe main characters (Frønes & Roe, 2020). In Iceland, both practices are equally common. Summarising texts is favoured in Swedish and Norwegian classrooms, whereas describing main characters is prioritised in Denmark and Finland. Further, the most common tasks in Nordic literature instruction seem to be answering questions regarding a text and giving personal opinions on it. According to the PISA questionnaire, Scandinavian students discuss literary texts in groups more often than students in Iceland and Finland (Frønes & Roe, 2020). A Finnish study, in which 884 teachers responded to a questionnaire, indicates that reading is largely treated as an individual activity in Finnish classroom. Even when discussed in groups, assigned texts are often not actively explored in class (Grünthal et al., 2019).

When analysing tasks in 49 Swedish and Norwegian lower secondary classrooms, Nissen (2023) found that students were often asked to summarise or retell the plot or explain why certain things happened in a text. Making predictions and summarising were found to be the most commonly employed reading strategies when Norwegian students read literary texts (Magnusson et al., 2018). Questions related to literary texts often expected these students to make interpretations or reflect on content and form. Seldom did they ask the students to acquire literal understanding or locate information, and very seldom to engage critically with texts (Magnusson, 2021).

Textbooks in language arts are likely to have an influence on the kinds of tasks teachers assign their students. Ullström (2009) argued that their impact might even

be stronger than curricula. Fougst et al. (2020) found that the textbooks (and other kinds of learning materials) most commonly used by Danish primary and lower secondary teachers were characterised by a skill-based and formalistic approach to the subject. In tasks related to literature instruction, Fougst et al. (2020) noted 'a drill-based approach to the students' acquisition and use of specific analytical concepts' (p. 13) and that there was a considerably larger focus on literary analysis than on literary interpretation. This mixed methods study did not explore the actual use of learning practices, but other Danish studies indicate that teachers tend to follow the design of textbooks and other didactic learning materials closely. They often use a concept-oriented approach with many closed questions, activities at a cognitively low taxonomic level, and an IRE structure, where the teacher's evaluation of students' answers is in focus (Gissel et al., 2021; Norup, 2021; Oksbjerg, 2022; Carlsen et al., 2024).

### 3.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, this literature review shows that researchers from the five Nordic countries have prioritised various aspects of literature instruction, relying on different methods and empirical data. With a few exceptions (Frønes & Roe, 2020; Nissen, 2023; Nissen et al., 2021; Penne, 2012), their research studies have focused on national practices, which makes it difficult to establish a comprehensive and reliable picture of Nordic literature instruction. While the studies mentioned in the literature review suggest common and distinctive patterns, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these research studies, based on different types of data and conducted in different countries, are comparable. Hence, there is a need for large-scale comparative studies that systematically and consistently examine the same aspects of literature instruction across countries. The present study seeks to contribute to this endeavour.

## 4. METHODS

This questionnaire study concerns Nordic language arts teachers' literature instruction in the first year of lower secondary school. Teachers can be assumed to adapt their instruction to students' age and experiences, and the rationale for focusing on one grade was to make teachers' answers comparable between individuals and countries. The questionnaire (see Appendix) was based on what the current Nordic curricula prescribe for the teaching of literature in lower secondary school and on what previous research has revealed regarding teachers' literature instruction. During the design of the questionnaire, fellow researchers were asked to provide feedback on items, wordings, and response options. Before data collection began, the questionnaire was piloted by eleven Swedish teachers.

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked the following questions: 1) Why is it important to read and work with literature? 2) How often do you use literature for

these purposes? 3) How often do you and your students read texts from the following genres? 4) How often do your students work with literary texts in the following ways? Each question contained several different items (see Tables 3–6) and teachers responded to these items using five-point Likert scales. For one question, the response option ‘don’t know/no opinion’ was provided but distorted the mean and was thus excluded in the analysis (see Table 3 and Figure 1). The use of fixed response questions increased the comparability of answers and facilitated analyses, especially considering that respondents spoke different languages. An original English version of the questionnaire was translated into the Nordic languages (including the two official Norwegian languages) to enable all respondents to complete the questionnaire in their national languages.

#### 4.1 Data collection

*Survey & Report*, a web-based questionnaire tool, was used to collect teacher responses. An e-mail describing the study and providing a link to the questionnaire was sent to a random sample of headteachers in lower secondary schools across the Nordic countries. They were asked to forward the e-mail to language arts teachers working in their schools. While this approach helped us to reach a large number of teachers, it meant that it was neither possible to calculate the fallout, nor to tell how the respondents compared to the total population. Table 1 presents the number of schools invited to participate in the study and the number of reminders sent to the schools.

Table 1. The number of schools invited to participate in the study and number of reminders sent to schools

	Spring 2023		Autumn 2023	
	Number of schools	Number of reminders	Number of schools	Number of reminders
Sweden	523	2	0	0
Norway	478*	2	0	0
Denmark	500	2	500	1
Finland	796**	0	0	0
Iceland	144***	2	0	0

\* All Norwegian schools with students in grade 8

\*\* All Finnish schools with students in grade 7: 93% Finnish-speaking schools and 7% Swedish-speaking schools

\*\*\* All Icelandic schools with students in grade 8

#### 4.2 Participants

A total of 701 Nordic language arts teachers responded to the questionnaire. A majority of them (72%) had been teaching for more than ten years. In terms of teaching experience, there were no significant differences among the five countries. The schools that teachers worked in were located in villages, towns, and cities of varied sizes (see Table 2). Reflecting the Nordic imbalance among language arts teachers, most teachers (85%) were female. However, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test showed that the number of male teachers was significantly higher in the Danish sample than that in the Finnish one ( $H = 10.897$ ,  $P = .028$ ,  $df = 4$ ). Furthermore, in terms of ECTS, Finnish teachers were significantly more well-educated in language arts than teachers in the other countries ( $H = 142.948$ ,  $P < .001$ ,  $df = 4$ ).

Table 2. Teacher demographic data and school location

	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Total
	<i>N</i> = 211	<i>N</i> = 114	<i>N</i> = 110	<i>N</i> = 195	<i>N</i> = 71	<i>N</i> = 701
Gender						
Female	85%	88%	77%	90%	80%	85%
Male	13%	12%	21%	5%	18%	12%
Teaching experience						
0–5 years	16%	12%	20%	12%	21%	16%
6–10 years	12%	15%	9%	13%	13%	12%
11–20 years	30%	34%	37%	35%	28%	33%
21–30 years	30%	29%	21%	30%	23%	28%
More than 30 years	10%	10%	13%	9%	15%	11%
Education in language arts (ECTS)						
None	4%	2%	9%	2%	17%	5%
0–30	3%	4%	9%	2%	20%	6%
31–60	14%	47%	31%	4%	18%	20%
61–90	38%	22%	21%	11%	17%	23%
More than 90	39%	25%	23%	78%	28%	44%
School location (village, town or city)						
Less than 3000	18%	15%	22%	11%	38%	18%
3000–15,000	33%	28%	38%	29%	25%	31%
15000–100,000	26%	44%	28%	37%	24%	32%
More than 100,000	23%	13%	12%	23%	13%	18%

### 4.3 Data analyses

SPSS Amos 27 was used to conduct statistical analyses, with 'Country' as the independent variable. These analyses were mainly descriptive. To reveal the tendencies in teachers' perceptions, we used the mean as a measure of central tendency, even though the response data were on an ordinal scale, together with distributions across the response scales (in %). The sub-samples from different countries vary in size, which affects the total mean. Consequently, the total mean is used solely to indicate which items are prioritised by the teachers participating in this study.

For all items, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test was used to examine whether differences among the countries were significant. Significance values were adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests. Further, effect sizes (Eta squared) were calculated based on H values and interpreted in accordance with Cohen's (1988) guidelines (Small:  $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$ ; Medium:  $\eta^2 \approx 0.06$ ; Large:  $\eta^2 \approx 0.14$ ) (see Tables 3–6).

### 4.4 Ethics

Before responding to the questionnaire, all teachers received information regarding the project and their rights as participants; thereafter, they consented to participate. All data were analysed at a group level, which implies that neither individual teachers nor schools can be identified from the reported results.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Motivations for literature instruction

In order to ascertain what *motivations* for literature instruction Nordic lower secondary language arts teachers appeal to, we first asked why they found it important to read and work literature in school. The answers obtained from teachers in all countries suggested that they found most alternatives important or very important (see Figure 1). According to these teachers, the reasons rated as most important for reading literature were 'Because it helps students develop their reading comprehension' ( $M = 3.79$ ) and 'Because it helps students develop their linguistic competence' ( $M = 3.76$ ). This suggests that Nordic teachers very often use literature to enhance students' general literacy skills. The least frequently selected argument for reading literature for the participating teachers was 'Because it is in the curriculum' ( $M = 2.74$ ).

Table 3. Why is it important to read and work with literature in lower secondary school?

	Total N = 701		Sweden N = 211		Norway N = 114		Denmark N = 110		Finland N = 195		Iceland N = 71		Kruskal-Wallis test			Effect size $\eta^2$
	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Df	H	Adj Sig	
Develop reading comprehension	3.79	(0.427)	3.86	(0.365)	3.75	(0.457)	3.64	(0.502)	3.80	(0.424)	3.83	(0.380)	4	22.394	<.001	0.03
Develop linguistic competence	3.76	(0.454)	3.78	(0.459)	3.75	(0.473)	3.67	(0.472)	3.78	(0.442)	3.80	(0.403)	4	7.135	0.129	0.01
Learn about other people and their living conditions	3.69	(0.572)	3.65	(0.602)	3.75	(0.592)	3.72	(0.507)	3.70	(0.560)	3.61	(0.573)	4	7.173	0.127	0.01
Give positive reading experiences	3.61	(0.560)	3.68	(0.515)	3.75	(0.432)	3.51	(0.520)	3.56	(0.601)	3.42	(0.710)	4	23.047	<.001	0.03
Develop empathy	3.58	(0.715)	3.51	(0.827)	3.65	(0.716)	3.58	(0.531)	3.65	(0.644)	3.46	(0.771)	4	9.447	0.051	0.01
Develop concentration and cognitive perseverance	3.31	(0.780)	3.06	(0.855)	3.39	(0.647)	3.08	(0.706)	3.65	(0.629)	3.28	(0.865)	4	79.225	<.001	0.11
Read literary texts by famous authors (a literary canon)	2.80	(0.857)	2.97	(0.805)	2.80	(0.811)	2.90	(0.812)	2.58	(0.881)	2.77	(0.959)	4	22.759	<.001	0.03
In the curriculum	2.74	(0.993)	2.98	(0.943)	2.81	(0.881)	2.22	(1.071)	2.87	(0.909)	2.40	(1.055)	4	48.502	<.001	0.06

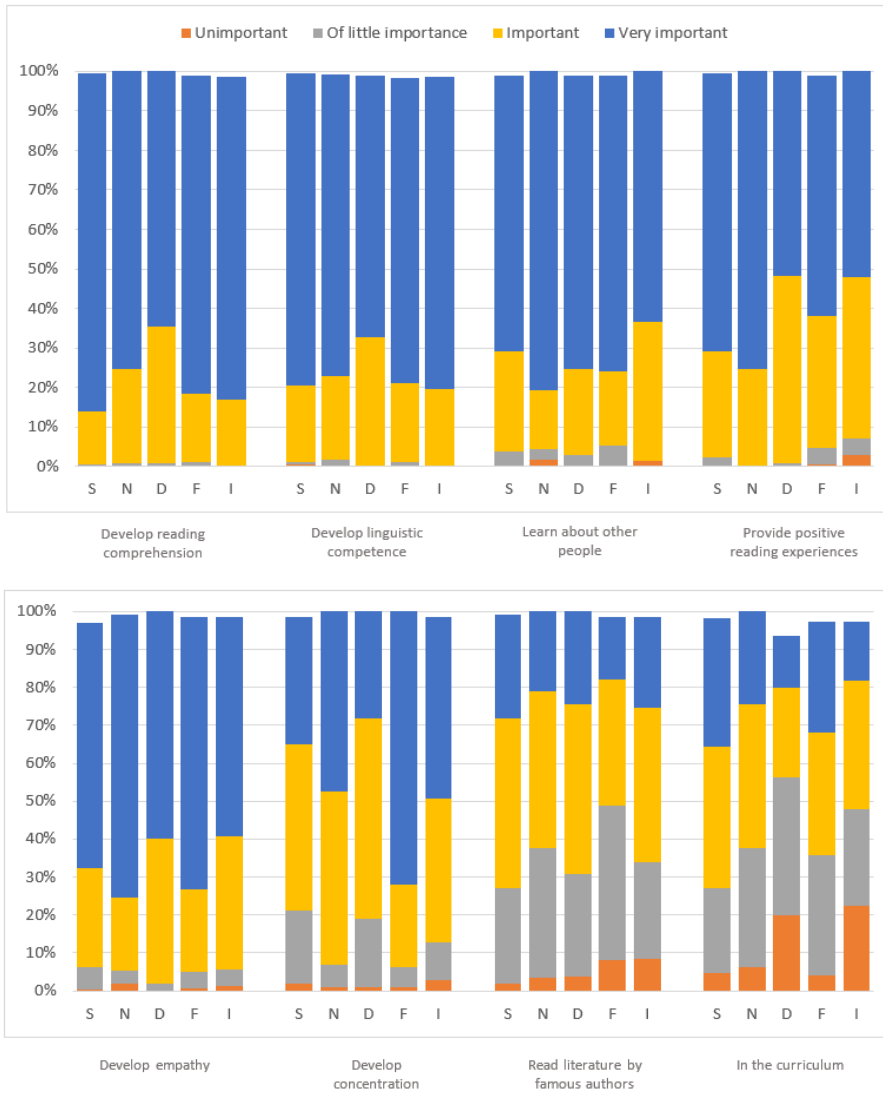
Note 1. 1. Unimportant 2. Of little importance 3. Important 4. Very important

Note 2. Effect size: Low  $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$ ; Medium  $\eta^2 \approx 0.06$ ; Large  $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$

A closer inspection of the results revealed that Swedish, Icelandic, and Finnish teachers particularly emphasised reading literature in order to develop students' reading comprehension. In comparison, Danish teachers found this somewhat less important, and differences between Denmark and the previously mentioned countries were found to be significant ( $p < .04$ ). Danish teachers prioritised reading literature to learn about other people and their living conditions as well as developing linguistic skills higher, but for these two items, there were no significant differences between countries. Norwegian teachers rated four alternatives (develop reading comprehension, develop linguistic competence, learn about other people and their living conditions, and provide positive reading experiences) equally important ( $M = 3.75$ ). They and the Swedish teachers emphasised reading literature to provide positive reading experiences significantly more than the Danish and Icelandic teachers ( $p < .03$ ).

Among the options given the least priority by the teachers, Finnish ( $M = 3.65$ ) and Norwegian ( $M = 3.39$ ) teachers placed the highest emphasis on the value of reading literature to promote concentration and cognitive perseverance. For this item, Finland and Norway did not differ significantly from each other, but showed significant differences compared to the other three countries ( $p < .02$ ). Swedish and Danish teachers were the ones who most valued letting students meet literary works written by famous authors or belonging to some kind of literary canon. For this item, differences between them and the Finnish teachers were significant ( $p < .02$ ). Overall, comparatively few teachers appeared to regard the national curriculum as an important reason for reading literature ( $M = 2.74$ ). However, Swedish and Finnish teachers agreed significantly more ( $p < .02$ ) with this proposition than Danish and Icelandic teachers. The fact that many Danish teachers chose the response option 'don't know/no opinion' for this item explains why the Danish bar in Figure 1 is so much lower than the other bars.

Figure 1. Why is it important to read and work with literature in lower secondary school? Distribution of answers (%)



When asked how often they used literary texts for different purposes, teachers from different countries were not as consistent in their responses, which is evident in Figure 2.

Table 4. How often do you use literature for these purposes?

Country	Total N = 701		Sweden N = 211		Norway N = 114		Denmark N = 110		Finland N = 195		Iceland N = 71		Kruskal-Wallis test			Effect size $\eta^2$
	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Df	H	Adj Sig	
When teaching about genres, genre features and literary devices*	3.86	(0.924)	3.73	(0.899)	3.85	(0.909)	3.88	(0.761)	4.18	(0.964)	3.34	(0.827)	4	63.892	<.001	0.09
To show students how they can write their own literary texts*	3.45	(0.928)	3.65	(0.944)	3.90	(0.779)	3.28	(0.851)	3.23	(0.945)	2.99	(0.712)	4	73.869	<.001	0.10
To discuss ethics and other kinds of difficult questions*	3.42	(0.905)	3.55	(0.885)	3.62	(0.838)	3.52	(0.800)	3.13	(0.989)	3.35	(0.795)	4	26.362	<.001	0.03
To convey a cultural heritage*	3.40	(0.871)	3.29	(0.851)	3.58	(0.854)	3.23	(0.878)	3.50	(0.925)	3.42	(0.710)	4	15.932	0.003	0.02
In grammar instruction*	2.70	(0.942)	2.52	(0.968)	2.82	(0.928)	2.74	(0.865)	2.75	(0.914)	2.87	(1.013)	4	13.373	0.01	0.01
In cross-disciplinary instruction*	2.53	(1.014)	2.48	(1.040)	2.91	(0.892)	2.67	(1.063)	2.21	(0.859)	2.69	(1.166)	4	40.854	<.001	0.05

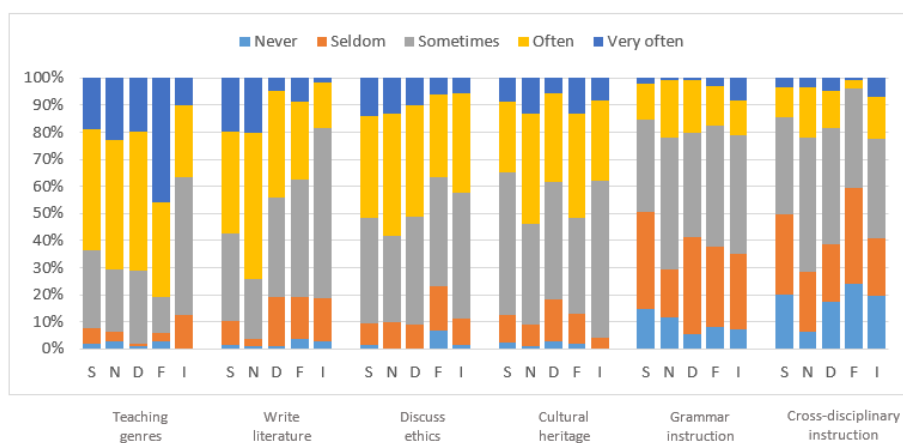
Note 1. 1. Never 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Very often

Note 2. Effect size: Low  $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$ ; Medium  $\eta^2 \approx 0.06$ ; Large  $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$

Most commonly (67 % of all respondents), teachers reported that they often or very often used literary texts when teaching genres, genre features, and literary devices ( $M = 3.86$ ) (see Table 4). Given the way this item was phrased, the finding does not necessarily mean that this is common practice in Nordic teachers' literature instruction. Even so, the analysis showed some interesting differences between countries: According to teachers' responses, using literary texts when teaching genres, genre features, and literary devices was most common in Finland, with significant differences compared to the other four countries ( $p \leq .005$ ). Conversely, Icelandic teachers reported teaching for these purposes significantly less often than teachers in the other four countries ( $p < .01$ ). More often, they would use literary texts to convey a cultural heritage or to discuss ethics. However, Norwegian and Finnish teachers appeared to be the ones who most often used literary texts to convey a cultural heritage. For this item, differences between Norway, Finland, and Iceland were not significant.

Norwegian teachers stood out somewhat when they reported using literature to teach students how to write their own literary texts ( $M = 3.90$ ), which they did significantly more often than Icelandic, Finnish, and Danish teachers ( $p < .001$ ). Using literary texts in cross-disciplinary instruction was the least common alternative ( $M = 2.53$ ), particularly in Finland ( $M = 2.21$ ), where this was significantly less common as compared to Norway, Iceland, and Denmark ( $p < .02$ ).

Figure 2. How often do you use literature for these purposes? Distribution of answers (%)



## 5.2 Literary materials

To answer the second research question on teachers' choices of *literary materials*, teachers were asked how often they let students read texts from different genres. A general result drawn from their responses was that reading narrative texts,

particularly contemporary short stories ( $M = 3.77$ ), excerpts from contemporary novels ( $M = 3.44$ ), and young adult novels ( $M = 3.30$ ) was particularly frequent. In contrast, students were seldom assigned to read classic novels or contemporary novels written for adults. Moreover, they would seldom read comics and graphic novels, picture books, or theatre plays in the instruction. Also poetry and song lyrics appeared to play a limited role in these teachers' literature instruction (see Table 5).

Table 5. How often do you and your students read texts from the following genres?

	Total N = 701		Sweden N = 211		Norway N = 114		Denmark N = 110		Finland N = 195		Iceland N = 71		Kruskal-Wallis test		Effect size $\eta^2$	
	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Df	H		Adj Sig
Contemporary short stories	3.77	(1.282)	3.23	(1.243)	4.23	(1.073)	4.22	(1.133)	4.05	(1.140)	3.03	(1.457)	4	94.009	<.001	0.13
Excerpts from contemporary novels	3.44	(1.442)	3.25	(1.395)	3.71	(1.246)	2.58	(1.321)	4.23	(1.182)	2.68	(1.511)	4	117.197	<.001	0.17
Young adult novels	3.30	(1.149)	3.13	(1.014)	2.83	(1.157)	3.93	(0.965)	3.44	(1.151)	3.17	(1.307)	4	63.613	<.001	0.09
Excerpts from classic novels	3.08	(1.350)	3.07	(1.263)	3.31	(1.337)	2.55	(1.143)	3.43	(1.408)	2.58	(1.382)	4	41.166	<.001	0.06
Lyrics	2.80	(1.212)	2.25	(1.064)	3.49	(1.221)	3.11	(1.128)	2.87	(1.113)	2.56	(1.238)	4	93.522	<.001	0.13
Contemporary poetry	2.70	(1.143)	2.25	(0.948)	3.24	(1.256)	2.82	(1.113)	2.82	(1.096)	2.59	(1.175)	4	58.292	<.001	0.08
Classic poetry	2.59	(1.153)	2.29	(0.978)	3.00	(1.309)	2.84	(1.191)	2.47	(1.090)	2.76	(1.198)	4	33.831	<.001	0.04

Note 1. 1: Never 2. Once a year 3. Twice a year 4. Three times a year 5. Four or more times a year

Note 2. Effect size: Low  $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$ ; Medium  $\eta^2 \approx 0.06$ ; Large  $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$

Teachers from different countries seemed to prioritise different genres. For example, contemporary short stories were significantly more frequently read in Norway, Denmark, and Finland than in Sweden and Iceland ( $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, young adult novels were significantly more commonly read in Denmark ( $M = 3.93$ ) as compared to that in all other countries ( $p \leq .004$ ). Norwegian teachers were the ones who most frequently used some kind of poetry in their instruction, which is depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. How often do you and your students read texts from the following genres? Distribution of answers (%)



### 5.3 *Instructional means and methods*

The last issue to be investigated was by what *instructional means and methods* literature is taught in Nordic lower secondary classrooms. When asked how often they let students work with literature in different ways, teachers answered that letting students answer text-based questions ( $M = 3.59$ ) was the most frequent of the suggested practices. Discussing literary texts in whole-class settings ( $M = 3.50$ ) or in groups ( $M = 3.34$ ) were also common practices, while rewriting literary texts into other genres ( $M = 2.18$ ) or giving oral presentations on literary texts in whole-class instruction ( $M = 2.16$ ) were generally less common.

Table 6. How often do your students work with literary texts in the following ways?

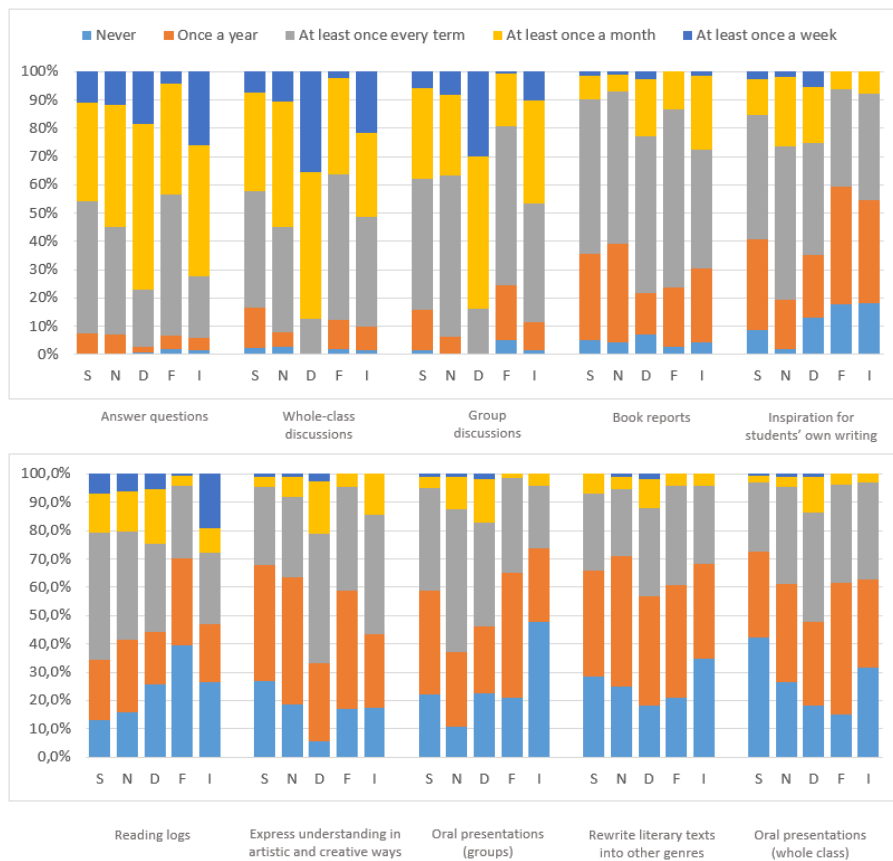
	Total N = 701		Sweden N = 211		Norway N = 114		Denmark N = 110		Finland N = 195		Iceland N = 71		Kruskal-Wallis test			Effect size $\eta^2$
	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Mean	(Std.)	Df	H	Adj Sig	
Answer questions (written assignment)	3.59	(0.802)	3.49	(0.796)	3.59	(0.786)	3.92	(0.734)	3.39	(0.734)	3.91	(0.887)	4	50.771	<.001	0.07
Whole class discussions	3.50	(0.886)	3.31	(0.888)	3.55	(0.856)	4.23	(0.659)	3.24	(0.745)	3.61	(0.967)	4	106.901	<.001	0.15
Group discussions	3.34	(0.872)	3.26	(0.830)	3.38	(0.726)	4.14	(0.670)	2.90	(0.774)	3.43	(0.866)	4	143.7	<.001	0.20
Book reports	2.80	(0.762)	2.70	(0.755)	2.64	(0.708)	2.96	(0.867)	2.87	(0.660)	2.94	(0.873)	4	20.738	<.001	0.02
Inspiration for students' own writing	2.63	(0.924)	2.68	(0.894)	3.07	(0.753)	2.82	(1.066)	2.29	(0.830)	2.35	(0.868)	4	64.683	<.001	0.09
Reading logs	2.51	(1.151)	2.80	(1.057)	2.69	(1.094)	2.61	(1.217)	1.95	(0.919)	2.74	(1.442)	4	65.937	<.001	0.09
Express their understanding in artistic and creative ways	2.35	(0.898)	2.11	(0.876)	2.27	(0.880)	2.85	(0.880)	2.29	(0.800)	2.54	(0.948)	4	52.628	<.001	0.07
Oral presentations (groups)	2.29	(0.911)	2.25	(0.877)	2.65	(0.853)	2.50	(1.064)	2.16	(0.765)	1.83	(0.923)	4	45.516	<.001	0.06
Rewrite literary texts into other genres etc	2.18	(0.889)	2.13	(0.907)	2.11	(0.859)	2.39	(0.961)	2.22	(0.823)	2.01	(0.899)	4	9.363	0.053	0.01
Oral presentations (whole class instruction)	2.16	(0.892)	1.89	(0.894)	2.18	(0.899)	2.49	(0.968)	2.27	(0.757)	2.09	(0.880)	4	36.459	<.001	0.05

Note 1. 1. Never 2. Once a year 3. At least once every term but not every month 4. At least once a month but not every week 5. At least once a week

Note 2. Effect size: Low  $\eta^2 \approx 0.01$ ; Medium  $\eta^2 \approx 0.06$ ; Large  $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$

Table 6 shows that Danish teachers were the ones who most often let students answer questions, write book reports, use literary texts as inspiration for their own writing, express their understanding in artistic and creative ways, and present literary texts in whole-class instruction. Furthermore, according to teachers' answers, whole-class discussions ( $M = 4.23$ ) and group discussions ( $M = 4.14$ ) were significantly more common in Denmark as compared to all other countries ( $p = .000$ ). Letting students answer text-based questions were significantly more common in Denmark as compared to Sweden, Norway, and Finland ( $p < .01$ ). The Norwegian teachers were the ones who most often used literary texts as inspiration for students' own writing ( $M = 3.07$ ) and let students present literary texts in groups ( $M = 2.65$ ), while the Swedish teachers more often than teachers in the other countries used reading logs in their instruction ( $M = 2.80$ ). This practice appeared to be least common in Finland ( $M = 1.95$ ). For this item, only Finland differed significantly from the other four countries ( $p = .000$ ).

Figure 4. How often do your students work with literary texts in the following ways? Distribution of answers (%)



## 6. DISCUSSION

The aim of this comparative study was to reveal how Nordic lower secondary language arts teachers motivate and describe their literature instruction in the first year of lower secondary school. The analyses showed that the teachers who participated in the study found it important to use literature in their language arts instruction for a variety of reasons. Generally, their *motivations* for using literature corresponded to the ones Gourvennec et al. (2020) identified in Nordic language arts curricula. Most importantly, using literature to *enhance students' literacy skills* appeared to be a priority. Teachers in all Nordic countries emphasised the importance of developing students' reading comprehension, which is in line with what previous studies have shown (Fodstad & Husabø, 2021; Haraldsdóttir, 2020; Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019; Myren-Svelstad & Grütters, 2022; Nissen et al., 2021; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). The teachers also rated the importance of developing linguistic skills very high. This attention to literacy skills seems to align well with the teachers' priority of *instructional means and methods*. In all five countries, teachers highlighted answering questions and discussing literary texts, which appear to be common practices in Nordic literature instruction (Frønes & Roe, 2020). However, an important prerequisite for developing students' literacy skills, such as reading comprehension, is also linked to the development of close reading through sustained and focused reading of longer linear texts (Baron, 2021). In general, the teachers in this study did not prioritise using *literary materials* that encouraged students' reading of extended texts, even though this has been found to correlate with cognitive patience (van de Ven et al., 2023) and can be expected to promote students' concentration and cognitive perseverance.

Another common trait across countries was the fact that a majority of the teachers in this study emphasised the value of using literary texts to provide students' positive reading experiences, which corresponds with what previous studies have shown (Fodstad & Husabø, 2021; Larsson, 2021; Molloy, 2002; Rejman, 2013; Schmidl, 2008; Sigurðardóttir, 2018). Given the long-standing decline in Nordic students' reading comprehension (Jensen et al., 2023) and the fact that many Nordic students do not read on a voluntary basis (Roe, 2020), the findings of the present study are not surprising. A strong emphasis on students' development of reading comprehension, linguistic competence and interest in reading can be assumed to enhance students' literacy skills, which are needed in all school subjects and critical for their participation in a democratic society. Moreover, good reading comprehension and well-developed linguistic skills make it possible for students to read and work with literary texts in ways that potentially promote the individual's own growth, enhance disciplinary knowledge, develop empathy, and teach them about culture.

Even though the teachers generally expressed positive attitudes towards the use of literature, there were some interesting differences between countries. For example, even though the Danish teachers were those who least emphasised

students' reading comprehension, they were the most frequent users of methods that can be expected to have an influence on students' reading comprehension, e.g., letting students answer questions and discuss literary texts. One plausible explanation for this could be that Danish students spend more time in the classroom—and thus have more lessons—than students in the other four countries (OECD, 2023). Furthermore, asking questions and engaging students in literary discussions may serve other purposes than promoting reading comprehension, and although teachers' use of certain methods may be in line with their ambitions for teaching literature, the fact that these methods are used does not necessarily imply that they are successful. Previous research has revealed that tasks in textbooks do not always require readers to find answers in the text (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2016; Ullström, 2007), and extended and explorative discussions about literary texts appear to be rare (Nissen, 2024). Thus, while this study contributes knowledge on by what instructional means and methods literature is taught in Nordic lower secondary classrooms, there is a continued need to explore what kinds of questions students are asked to work with in literature instruction and to investigate how teachers engage students in literary discussions. For this, other kinds of studies than the present one are needed.

Another difference between countries concerned teachers' use of literary materials. Teachers in all five countries favoured narrative texts, but young adult novels were most frequently read in Danish (and Finnish) classrooms. The Norwegian teachers were the ones who least often let their students read longer texts, which is in line with what analyses of the PISA questionnaire have revealed. According to how students answered the PISA questionnaire, many Norwegian students are not used to reading longer texts (more than ten pages), whereas a majority of Danish and Finnish students are expected to read long texts (more than 100 pages) (Frønes & Roe, 2020).

A striking difference between countries was the extent to which teachers would use literature when teaching about genres etc., which was most emphasised by the Finnish teachers. In accordance with previous research (Johansson, 2015; Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2018), this was not prioritised by the Icelandic (and Swedish) teachers. Further, while the Danish and Swedish teachers more than teachers in the other three countries emphasised the value of letting students meet literary works written by famous authors or belonging to some kind of literary canon, their answers suggested that they were the ones who least often used literature to convey a cultural heritage. This illustrates that the teachers' positive attitudes towards the use of literary texts did not necessarily correspond with the manner in which they—according to their responses—used literature in their own instruction.

### *6.1 Limitations*

There are some limitations of this study that must be acknowledged. As previously mentioned, fellow researchers provided feedback on the questionnaire before it was

piloted and subsequently distributed to teachers. However, the questionnaire was not validated, which is a drawback. Further, some items and response options may be difficult to interpret. In this questionnaire, we did not explain concepts such as 'linguistic competence', 'classic novels' and 'cultural heritage'. Therefore, respondents may have interpreted these concepts in different ways. Even though we endeavoured to formulate response options in an unambiguous and straightforward way, teachers who preferred working with literature thematically (e.g., for a series of weeks) may have found it hard to choose from response options such as 'once a month' and 'once a week', which may have rendered their responses less reliable.

Assigning numerical values to Likert categories, which was done in the present study, is not unproblematic. Because Likert data are ordinal, the intervals between response options cannot be assumed to be equal, making the use of the mean methodologically questionable (Jamieson, 2004). Nevertheless, we chose to use the mean rather than the median as a measure of central tendency. As already mentioned, we aimed to capture tendencies in teachers' perceptions. For this purpose, the median would have been too crude a measure to reveal meaningful variation.

The questionnaire was not back-translated, which may be considered a shortcoming. This was discussed among the authors, but since the Scandinavian languages (i.e., Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish) are closely related, we did not consider back-translation necessary. All authors (including those from Finland and Iceland) speak at least one Scandinavian language, which reduced the risk of translation inconsistencies.

When the questionnaire was distributed to schools across the Nordic countries, the head teachers who received our e-mails acted as gate keepers, with the power to decide whether or not to forward the information to teachers working at their schools. As already noted, this means that it has not been possible to draw any conclusions about whether our sample is representative of the Nordic countries. Moreover, although a large number of language arts teachers from schools across the Nordic countries responded to the questionnaire, the sub-samples vary in size. This is a further limitation of the study. In the analysis, we considered using weighted means, but since the populations of the Nordic countries differ substantially in size, (ranging from approximately 390,000 inhabitants in Iceland to 10.56 million in Sweden), this would have introduced other problems.

## *6.2 Conclusions*

This study shows that literature is largely used to enhance Nordic lower secondary students' literacy at a general level: While different types of skills are emphasised, less attention is given to literary reading experiences. Accordingly, although literature seems to play a significant role in Nordic classrooms, the focus on reading comprehension and linguistic competence suggests that reading literature is more a matter of reading instruction than of literature instruction. This aligns with previous

research in Nordic contexts (e.g., Haraldsdóttir, 2020; Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019; Myren-Svelstad & Grütters, 2022; Nissen et al., 2021) and indicates that Nordic teachers to a large extent treat literature as ‘texts like any other text with no particular potential compared with other types of texts’ (see Gourvennec et al., 2020, p. 26).

Exploring literary form and paying attention to stylistic features in a literary text can contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the text (Hansen & Gissel, 2021). In the present study, many teachers reported that they often used literary texts when teaching genres, genre features, and literary devices. There is, however, a risk that literary texts are used to exemplify generic genre traits rather than to teach students how to use this knowledge and develop literary interpretations of individual texts (Gabrielsen et al., 2019). Nevertheless, a focus on stylistic features can promote close readings of literary texts and enhance students’ understanding of the text at hand, especially when teachers encourage them to pay attention to what is actually expressed in the text rather than associating it with their own experiences and basing their interpretation on guesses (Johansson, 2015). At the same time, readers’ ability to connect the text to their own knowledge and personal experiences is important for their understanding of the text (Torell, 2002). In order to turn reading instruction into literature instruction, teachers need to take advantage of aspects that make literature ‘exceptional texts with the potential to provide something that other texts cannot’ (see Gourvennec et al., 2020, p. 26). Moreover, they should teach their students to pay attention to aspects related to the literary text (i.e., both content and stylistic features)—and to draw on their own experiences and contextual knowledge.

## REFERENCES

- Adamson, B. (2012). International comparative studies in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(5), 641–648. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.02.003>
- Ahonen, S. (2014). A school for all in Finland. In U. Blossing, G. Imsen, & L. Moos (Eds.), *The Nordic education model: “A school for all” encounters neo-liberal policy* (pp. 77–94). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3>
- Bakken, J., & Andersson-Bakken, E. (2016). Forståelser av skjønnlitteratur og sakprosa i norskfagets oppgavekultur [Understandings of fiction and non-fiction in Norwegian language arts task cultures]. *Sakprosa*, 8, 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.5617/sakprosa.3669>
- Baron, N. S. (2021). *How we read now: Strategic choices for print, screen, and audio*. Oxford University Press.
- Blossing, U., & Söderström, Å. (2014). A school for every child in Sweden. In U. Blossing, G. Imsen, & L. Moos (Eds.), *The Nordic education model: “A school for all” encounters neo-liberal policy* (pp. 17–34). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3>
- Blömeke, S., & Paine, L. (2008). Getting the fish out of the water: Considering benefits and problems of doing research on teacher education at an international level. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(8), 2027–2037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.05.006>
- Brevik, L. M., Gudmundsdóttir, G. B., Barreng, R. L. S., Dodou, K., Doetjes, G., Evertsen, I., Goldschmidt-Gjøløw, B., Hartvigsen, K. M., Hatlevik, O. E., Isaksen, A. R., Magnusson, C. G., Mathé, N. E. H., Siljan, H., S. R. B., & Suhr, M. L. (2023). *Å mestre livet i 8. klasse: Perspektiver på livsmestring i klasserommet i sju fag. Rapport 2 fra forsknings- og evalueringsprosjektet EDUCATE ved Institutt for lærerutdanning*

- og skoleforskning [Mastering life in 8th grade. Perspectives on life mastery in the classroom in seven subjects. Report 2 from the EDUCATE research and evaluation project at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research]. University of Oslo.  
[https://www.uv.uio.no/ils/forskning/prosjekter/educate/rapporter/educate\\_rapport-2\\_2023.pdf](https://www.uv.uio.no/ils/forskning/prosjekter/educate/rapporter/educate_rapport-2_2023.pdf)
- Burman, A., & Sundgren, P. (2012). Inledning: Kampen om bildning [Introduction: The struggle for Bildung]. In A. Burman & P. Sundgren (Eds.), *Bildning: Texter från Esaias Tegnér till Sven-Eric Liedman* (pp. 11–30). Daidalos.
- Carlsen, D., Reusch, C., Lorentzen, R. F., & Oksbjerg, M. (2024). Hvad karakteriserer elevers læsepraksisser i danskundervisningen med digitale fagportaler? *Acta Didactica Norden*, 18(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.10782>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dahl, K. (1999). Från färdighetsträning till språkutveckling. In J. Thavenius (Ed.), *Svenskämnets historia* (pp. 35–89). Studentlitteratur.
- Danish Ministry of Children and Education. (n.d.). *Timetal (minimumstimetal og vejledende timetal) for fagene i folkeskolen: Skoleåret 2025/2026* [Number of hours (minimum and recommended) for subjects in primary and lower secondary school: School year 2025/2026]. Retrieved December 27, 2025, from <https://uvm.dk/media/rrklzbjd/241218-timetaloversigt-for-skoleaaret-2025-2026-pdf.pdf>
- Edgren, H. (2021). The reformation and its aftermath. In M. Roos et al. (Eds.), *Exploring textbooks and cultural changes in Nordic education 1536–2020* (pp. 13–15). Brill.  
[https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004449558\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004449558_002)
- Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. (2018). *Statsrådets förordning om ändring av 6 § i statsrådets förordning om riksomfattande mål för utbildningen enligt lagen om grundläggande utbildning och om timfördelning i den grundläggande utbildningen (793/2018)* [Government Decree amending section 6 of the Government Decree on national educational objectives under the Basic Education Act and on the allocation of hours in compulsory education (793/2018)].  
<https://www.finlex.fi/sv/laki/alkup/2018/20180793>
- Fjørtoft, H. (2018). *Norskididaktikk* (3rd ed.). Fagbokforlaget.
- Flink-Jensen, M. (2021). Teaching and educational reforms in Denmark and Norway c. 1500–1750. In M. Roos et al. (Eds.), *Exploring textbooks and cultural change in Nordic education 1536–2020* (pp. 16–28). Brill. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004449558\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004449558_003)
- Fodstad, L. A., & Husabø, G. B. (2021). Planning for progression? *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 21, 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2021.21.02.06>
- Fougst, S. S., Bremholm, J., & Buch, B. (2020). What learning materials reveal about Danish L1 as a school subject: Background, methods and results from a collaborative mixed methods study on learning materials in Danish L1 education. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 20(2), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2020.20.02.04>
- Fougst, S. S., Neubert, K., Kristensen, R. M., Gabriellson, R. H., Molbæk, L., & Kjeldsen, C. C. (2023). *Danske elevers læsekompetence i 4. klasse: Resultater af PIRLS-undersøgelsen 2021* [Danish students' reading literacy in Year 4: Results of the PIRLS 2021 survey]. Aarhus University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.3850481>
- Frønes, T. S., & Roe, A. (2020). Hva skjer i norsktimene? [What happens in Norwegian lessons? Students' perceptions of Norwegian language arts teaching at school]. In T. S. Frønes & F. Jensen (Eds.), *Like muligheter til god leseforståelse?* (pp. 196–221). Universitetsforlaget.  
<https://doi.org/10.18261/9788215040066-2020>
- Gabrielsen, I. L., & Blikstad-Balas, M. (2020). Hvilken litteratur møter elevene i norskfaget? En analyse av hvilke skjønnlitterære verk som inngår i 178 norsktimer på åttende trinn [Which literature do students meet in Norwegian language arts? An analysis of which literary works are used in 178 Norwegian lessons in eight grade]. *Edda*, 2(2020), 85–99.  
<https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1500-1989-2020-02-02>
- Gabrielsen, I. L., Blikstad-Balas, M., & Tengberg, M. (2019). The role of literature in the classroom: How and for what purposes do teachers in lower secondary school use literary texts? *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 19, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2019.19.01.13>

- Gabrielsen, I. L., & Oksbjerg, M. (2022). Læremiddelbruk i litteraturundervisningen: En sammenligning av dansk og norsk grunnskolepraksis [The use of teaching materials in literature teaching: A comparison of Danish and Norwegian elementary school practices]. *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 106(1), 56–68. <https://doi.org/10.18261/npt.106.1.6>
- Gissel, S. T., Buch, B., Carlsen, D., & Skov, L. I. (2021). Læremidler og læremiddelbruk i L1 i Danmark: Læreres ibrugtagning, didaktisering og redidaktisering af didaktiske, semantiske og funktionelle læremidler i danskundervisningen [Teaching materials and teaching material use in L1 in Denmark: Teachers' adoption, didactisation and redidactisation of didactic, semantic and functional teaching materials in Danish language teaching]. *Learning Tech—Tidsskrift for læremidler, didaktik og teknologi*, 9, 80–119. <https://doi.org/10.7146/lt.v6i9.124762>
- Gourvennec, A. F., Höglund, H., Johansson, M., Kabel, K., & Sønneland, M. (2020). Literature education in Nordic L1s: Cultural models of national lower-secondary curricula in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 20, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2020.20.01.07>
- Grünthal, S., Hiidenmaa, P., Routarinne, S., Satokangas, H., & Tainio, L. (2019). Alakoulun kirjallisuuskasvatusta kartoittamassa: Lukuklaanin opettajakyselyn tuloksia [Surveying literature education in elementary schools: Results of the Lukuklaan teacher survey]. In M. Rautiainen & M. Tarnanen (Eds.), *Tutkimuksesta luokkahuoneisiin* (pp. 161–181). Suomen ainedidaktisen tutkimusseuran julkaisuja.
- Grüters, R., & Myren-Svelstad, P. E. (2022). Kanontekster i norskundervisningen: Fra skjult til dynamisk kanon [Canon texts in Norwegian language arts teaching: From hidden to dynamic canon]. *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Pedagogikk og Kritik*, 8(1), 328–346. <https://doi.org/10.23865/ntpk.v8.3594>
- Hamre, P. (2014). *Norskfaget og skjønnlitteraturen: Ein studie av norskfaglege normtekstar 1739–2013* [Norwegian language arts and literature: A study of standard texts in Norwegian language arts 1739–2013]. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Bergen]. <https://bora.uib.no/bora-xmlui/bitstream/handle/1956/8667/dr-thesis-2014-P%C3%A5I-Hamre.pdf?sequence=2>
- Hansén, S.-E. (1991). *Tradition och reform: Uval och konstruktion av modersmålsämnetns läroplanstexter från 20-tal till 80-tal* [Tradition and reform: Selection and construction of mother tongue subject curriculum texts from the 1920s to the 1980s]. Åbo Akademi University Press.
- Hansen, T. I., & Gissel, S. T. (2021). *Tilbake til teksten* [Back to the text]. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Haraldsdóttir, H. (2020). *Þetta snýst um að kveikja einhvern neista. Viðhorf kennara og nemenda á unglingsstigi til bókmenntakennslu í grunnskólum* [It's about sparking a spark. The attitudes of secondary school teachers and pupils towards literature teaching in elementary schools]. [Master's thesis, University of Iceland]. <https://skemman.is/handle/1946/36747>
- Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. (2014). *The Icelandic national curriculum guide for compulsory schools—with subject areas*. [https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnnsk\\_greinask\\_ens\\_2014.pdf](https://www.government.is/library/01-Ministries/Ministry-of-Education/Curriculum/adalnnsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf)
- Imsen, G., & Volckmar, N. (2014). The Norwegian school for all: Historical emergence and neoliberal confrontation. In U. Blossing et al. (Eds.), *The Nordic Education Model: "A school for all" encounters neo-liberal policy* (pp. 35–57). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3>
- Jamieson, S. (2004). Likert scales: How to (ab)use them. *Medical Education*, 38, 1217–1218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2004.02012.x>
- Jensen, F., Pettersen, A., Frønes, T. S., Eriksen, A., Løvgren, M., & Narvhus, E. K. (2023). *PISA 2022: Norske elevenes kompetanse i matematikk, naturfag og lesing* [PISA 2022: Norwegian students' competence in mathematics, science and reading]. Cappelen Damm Akademisk. <https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.205>
- Johansson, M. (2015). *Läsa, förstå, analysera: En komparativ studie om svenska och franska gymnasieelevers reception av en narrativ text* [Reading, understanding, analysing: A comparative study on Swedish and French upper secondary school students' reception of a narrative text]. [Doctoral dissertation, Linköping University]. <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:856465/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

- Kabel, K. (2021). Year 8 students' interpretations of short stories in the Danish L1 literature classroom: Distinct ways of writing and knowing. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 21, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2021.21.02.09>
- Kauppinen, M., & Aerila, J.-A. (2019). Luokanopettajien lukijuus ja sen merkitys oppilaiden lukuinnon kasvattamisessa ja kirjallisuudenopetuksen kehittämisessä [Class teachers' reading skills and their importance in promoting reading among pupils and developing literature teaching]. In M. Rautiainen & M. Tarnanen (Eds.), *Tutkimuksesta luokkahuoneisiin* (pp. 141–160). Suomen ainedidaktisen tutkimusseuran julkaisu.
- Kavli, A.-B. (2018). TIMSS and PISA in the Nordic countries. In D. Reimer et al. (Eds.), *Northern lights on TIMSS and PISA 2018* (pp. 11–31). Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://doi.org/10.6027/TN2018-524>
- Klette, K. (2018). Individualism and collectivism in Nordic schools: A comparative approach. In N. Witoszek & A. Middtun (Eds.), *Sustainable modernity* (pp. 59–78). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315195964>
- Krejsler, J. B. (2023). The Nordic dimension as a metaspace for educational research. *Nordic Studies in Education*, 43(1), 8–24. <https://doi.org/10.23865/nse.v43.5421>
- Kristjánsdóttir, D., Jóhannsson, J. Y., Pórarinsdóttir, B., & Jónsson, K. J. (2018). Bókmenntir og bókmenntakennsla [Literature and the teaching of literature]. In K. J. Jónsson & A. Angantýsson (Eds.), *Íslenska í grunnskólum og framhaldsskólum* (pp. 83–134). Háskólaútgáfan.
- Larsson, M. (2021). *Viktig läsning? Svensklärare i gymnasiet om läsundervisning i en performativ kontext* [Important reading? Upper secondary Swedish teachers on reading instruction in a performative context] [Doctoral dissertation, Dalarna University]. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1587711/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Lea, K. (2015). *Intellectual practitioners: An exploration of professionalism among upper secondary school teachers with Icelandic mother tongue teachers as a contextualized empirical case* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Bergen]. <http://hdl.handle.net/1956/10286>
- Lyngfelt, A., Sporre, K., Lifmark, D., Lilja, A., Osbeck, C., & Franck, O. (2023). Bridging 'as is' and 'as if' by reading fiction in ethics education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 53(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764x.2022.2075323>
- Magnusson, C. G. (2021). Reading literacy practices in Norwegian lower-secondary classrooms: Examining the patterns of teacher questions. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 66(2), 321–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2020.1869078>
- Magnusson, C. G., Roe, A., & Blikstad-Balas, M. (2018). To what extent and how are reading comprehension strategies part of language arts instruction? A study of lower secondary classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 54(2), 187–212. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.231>
- Malmgren, L.-G. (1996). *Svenskundervisning i grundskolan* [Swedish language arts in elementary school] (2nd ed.). Studentlitteratur.
- Molloy, G. (2002). *Läraren, litteraturen, eleven: En studie om läsning av skönlitteratur på högstadiet* [The teacher, literature, the student: A study of reading fiction in lower secondary school] [Doctoral dissertation, Stockholm Institute of Education].
- Myren-Svelstad, P. E., & Grütters, R. (2022). Justifications for teaching literature: A survey study among teachers of Norwegian L1. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 22, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.21248/l1esll.2022.22.1.494>
- Nissen, A. (2023). Cognitive activation as an aspect of literature instruction. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 23(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.21248/l1esll.2023.23.1.447>
- Nissen, A. (2024). Whole-class discussions about literary texts: Engaging in dialogue and eliciting literary competence. *Nordic Journal of Literacy Research*, 10(1), 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.23865/njlr.v10.5720>
- Nissen, A., Tengberg, M., Svanbjörnsdóttir, B., Gabrielsen, I. L., Blikstad-Balas, M., & Klette, K. (2021). Function and use of literary texts in Nordic schools. *L1—Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 21, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.17239/L1ESLL-2021.21.02.10>
- Norup, M. S. (2021). Læremidler i brug i danskfagets litteraturundervisning: En empirisk undersøgelse af litteraturanalyse og litteraturfortolkning i udskoling [Teaching materials used in Danish literature

- classes: An empirical study of literary analysis and interpretation in upper secondary education]. *Learning Tech – Tidsskrift for læremidler, didaktik og teknologi*, 9, 40–70. <https://doi.org/10.7146/lt.v6i9.124193>
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. (n.d.). *Timetall* [Timetable]. Retrieved December 27, 2025, from <https://www.udir.no/lk20/nor01-07/timetall>
- OECD. (2023). *Education at a glance 2023: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>
- Oksbjerg, M. (2022). Lærerenes redidaktiseringsstrategier: Forståelser af egne strategier og undervisning med et litteraturlæremiddel [Teachers' redidactisation strategies: Understanding one's own strategies and teaching with a literature teaching material]. *Learning Tech – Tidsskrift for læremidler, didaktik og teknologi*, 12, 75–102. <https://doi.org/10.7146/lt.v7i12.131699>
- Paine, L., Blömeke, S., & Aydarova, O. (2016). Teachers and teaching in the context of globalization. In C. A. Bell & D. Gitomer (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (Vol. 5, pp. 717–786). American Educational Research Association. [https://doi.org/10.3102/978-0-935302-48-6\\_11](https://doi.org/10.3102/978-0-935302-48-6_11)
- Penne, S. (2012). Hva trenger vi egentlig litteraturen til? Politikk, didaktikk og hverdagsteorier i nordiske klasserom [What do we really need literature for? Politics, didactics and everyday theories in Nordic classrooms]. In N. Frydensbjerg Elf & P. Kaspersen (Eds.), *Den nordiske skolen—fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske morsmålsfag* (pp. 32–58). Interface Media AS.
- Rasmussen, A., & Moos, L. (2014). A school for less than all in Denmark. In U. Blossing, G. Imsen, & L. Moos (Eds.), *The Nordic education model: "A school for all" encounters neo-liberal policy* (pp. 57–76). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3>
- Rejman, K. (2013). *Litteratur och livskunskap: Modersmållärarens berättelse om undervisningen i årkurs 7–9* [Doctoral dissertation, Åbo Akademi University]. Doria. <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-765-721-1>
- Roe, A. (2020). Elevenes lesevaner og holdninger til lesing [Students' reading habits and attitudes towards reading]. In T. S. Frønes & F. Jensen (Eds.), *Like muligheter til god leseforståelse? 20 år med lesing i PISA* (pp. 107–134). Universitetsforlaget. <https://doi.org/10.18261/9788215040066-2020>
- Schmidl, H. (2008). Från vildmark till grön ängel: Receptionsanalyser av läsning i åttonde klass [From wilderness to green angel: Reader reception analyses of reading in eighth grade] [Doctoral dissertation]. Makadam. DiVA. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:171585/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Sigbórsón, R. (2017). Testing or transforming practice: Probing an Icelandic national initiative to improve literacy education. *Literacy*, 51(2), 65–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12107>
- Sigurðardóttir, A. K., Guðjónsdóttir, H., & Karlsdóttir, J. (2014). The development of a school for all in Iceland: Equality, threats and political conditions. In U. Blossing, G. Imsen, & L. Moos (Eds.), *The Nordic education model: "A school for all" encounters neo-liberal policy* (pp. 77–94). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7125-3>
- Sigurðardóttir, Þ. B. (2018). Siðfræði í bókmenntakennslu [Ethics in literature teaching]. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. [https://netla.hi.is/serrit/2018/bokmenntir\\_listir\\_menntun/11.pdf](https://netla.hi.is/serrit/2018/bokmenntir_listir_menntun/11.pdf)
- Sjöstedt, B. (2013). *Ämneskonstruktioner i ekonomismens tid: Om undervisning och styrmedel i modersmålsämnet i svenska och danska gymnasier* [Subject constructions in the age of economism: On teaching and control mechanisms in the mother tongue subject in Swedish and Danish upper secondary schools] [Doctoral dissertation, Malmö University]. DiVA. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1404393/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Skaug, S., & Blikstad-Balas, M. (2019). Hele tekster versus utdrag—hvilke tekster velger norsklærerne? [Full texts versus excerpts—Which texts do Norwegian language arts teachers choose?]. *Nordic Journal of Literacy Research*, 5(1), 85–117. <https://doi.org/10.23865/njlr.v5.1566>
- Swedish National Agency for Education. (2023). *PISA 2022: 15-åringars kunskaper i matematik, läsförståelse och naturvetenskap* [PISA 2022: 15-year-olds' maths, reading and science literacy]. <https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=12177>
- Swedish National Agency for Education. (2024). *Timplan för grundskolan* [Timetable for elementary school]. <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundskolan/laroplan-och-kursplaner-for-grundskolan/timplan-for-grundskolan>

- Sørensen, B. (2008). *En fortælling om danskfaget: Dansk i folkeskolen gennem 100 år* [A story about Danish language arts: Danish in elementary schools over the past 100 years]. Dansk lærerforeningens Forlag.
- Tainio, L., Grünthal, S., Routarinne, S., Satokangas, H., & Hiidenmaa, P. (2019). Primary school pupils' literary landscapes: What do Finnish- and Swedish-speaking pupils read at school? In H. Höglund, S. Jusslin, M. Ståhl, & A. Westerlund (Eds.), *Genom texter och världar: Svenska och litteratur med didaktisk inriktning – festskrift till Ria Heilä-Ylikallio* (pp. 217–233). Åbo Akademi.
- Telhaug, A. O., Mediås, O. A., & Aasen, P. (2006). The Nordic model in education: Education as part of the political system in the last 50 years. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 50(3), 245–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830600743274>
- Tengberg, M. (2017). National reading tests in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden: A comparison of construct definitions, cognitive targets, and response formats. *Language Testing*, 34(1), 83–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532215609392>
- Tengberg, M., Nissen, A., & Skar, G. B. (2022). Undervisningskvalitet i svenskämnet [Teaching quality in Swedish language arts]. In M. Tengberg (Ed.), *Undervisningskvalitet i svenska klassrum* (pp. 193–250). Studentlitteratur.
- Thavenius, J. (1999a). Modersmålet – redskap eller bildningsmedel [Mother tongue – a tool or a means of education]. In J. Thavenius (Ed.), *Svenskämnets historia* (pp. 21–34). Studentlitteratur.
- Thavenius, J. (1999b). Traditioner och förändringar [Traditions and changes]. In J. Thavenius (Ed.), *Svenskämnets historia* (pp. 11–20). Studentlitteratur.
- Torell, Ö. (Ed.). (2002). *Hur gör man en litteraturläsare? Om skolans litteraturundervisning i Sverige, Ryssland och Finland* [How do you make a reader of literature? On literature teaching in school in Sweden, Russia and Finland]. Institutionen för humaniora, Mitthögskolan.
- Ullgard, M. (2012). Den polyparadigmatiske modersmålsläroaren: Inte "antingen eller" utan "både och." Om den komplexa legitimeringen av modersmålsämnet [The polyparadigmatic mother tongue teacher: Not "either/or" but "both/and." On the complex legitimisation of the mother tongue subject]. In N. Elf Frydensbjerg & P. Kaspersen (Eds.), *Den nordiske skolen – fins den? Didaktiske diskurser og dilemmaer i skandinaviske morsmålsfag* (pp. 122–145). Interface Media AS.
- Ullström, S.-O. (2007). Läroboken som lärare: Uppgiftskulturer i läromedel för gymnasieskolan [The textbook as teacher: Task cultures in textbooks for upper secondary school]. In A. Sigrell, J. Einarsson, R. Hedqvist, L. Kåreland, B. Lundgren, & K. Munck (Eds.), *Fjärde nationella konferensen i svenska med didaktisk inriktning: Tala, lyssna, skriva, läsa, lära—modersmålsundervisningen i ett nordiskt perspektiv* (pp. 125–145). Umeå University.
- Ullström, S.-O. (2009). Litteratursyn i några läromedel i gymnasieskola och lärlingsutbildning [The view on literature in a number of textbooks in upper secondary school and apprenticeship]. In L. Kåreland (Ed.), *Läsa bör man...? Den skönlitterära texten i skola och lärutbildning* (pp. 118–143). Liber.
- Van de Ven, I., Hakemulder, F., & Mangen, A. (2023). 'TL;DR' (too long; didn't read)? Cognitive patience as a mode of reading: Exploring concentration and perseverance. *Scientific Study of Literature*, 12(1), 68–86. <https://doi.org/10.61645/ssol.176>
- Wagner, Å. K. H., Strand, O., Støle, H., Knudsen, K., Hovig, J., Huru, C., & Hadland, H. (2023). *PIRLS 2021 – Kortrapport: Norske tiårings leseforståelse* [PIRLS 2021 – Summary report: Norwegian ten-year-olds' reading comprehension]. Lesesenteret. [https://www.udir.no/contentassets/8528b7f40b9f47b086e781cfc49ae011/20230515\\_endelig\\_pirls\\_rapport\\_2021\\_nettsversjon-1.pdf](https://www.udir.no/contentassets/8528b7f40b9f47b086e781cfc49ae011/20230515_endelig_pirls_rapport_2021_nettsversjon-1.pdf)

## APPENDIX A. TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Fill in the following information about yourself and your school. I work as a teacher in

Sweden  Norway  Denmark  Finland  Iceland

Gender

Female  Male  Other  Prefer not to tell

Teacher experience

0–5 years  6–10 years  11–20 years  21–30 years  More than 30 years

Education in language arts (ECTS)

None  0–30  31–60  61–90  More than 90

The number of inhabitants in the village, town or city where my school is situated is

A small community with less than 3000 inhabitants  A

town with 3000 to 15 000 inhabitants

A town or city with 15 000 to 100 000 inhabitants  A city

with more than 100 000 inhabitants

This section is about what kinds of texts you use in your instruction (in Grade 7). All items concern reading as a joint experience, i.e., situations in which all students in a class read the same title (or titles related to the same theme).

How often do you and your students read texts from the following genres?

	Never	Once a year	Twice a year	Three times a year	Four or more times a year
Teenage novels (whole books)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contemporary novels written for adults (whole books)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classic novels (whole books)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chapters or excerpts from contemporary novels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chapters or excerpts from classic novels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contemporary short stories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classic short stories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picture books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairy tales, myths and /or tales	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comics and/or graphic novels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contemporary poetry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classic poetry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lyrics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theatre plays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Room for comments

How often do your students work with literary texts in the following ways?

	Never	Once a year	At least once every term, but not every month	At least every month, but not every week	At least once a week
Whole class discussions about literary texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group discussions about literary texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students answer questions about the literary text (written assignment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students write reading logs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students write book reports (e.g., reviews, presentations and analyses)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students present literary books orally (in whole class instruction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students present literary books orally (in small groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students use literary texts as inspiration for their own writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students rewrite literary texts in other genres, or from other perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students express their understanding of literary texts in artistic and creative ways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Room for comments

**How often do you use literature for these purposes? (in Grade 7)**

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often
In cross-disciplinary instruction (e.g., in cooperation with history, geography, religion or social science)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When teaching genres, genre features, and figures of speech	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In grammar instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To convey a cultural heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To show students how they can write their own literary texts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To discuss ethics and other kinds of difficult questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Room for comments**

**Why is it important to read and work with literature in lower secondary school?**

	Do not know/ do not have an opinion	Unimportant	Of little importance	Important	Very important
Because it is in the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because reading literature gives students positive reading experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because reading literature helps students develop their reading comprehension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because reading literature helps students develop their empathy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because students learn about other people and their living conditions when reading literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because reading literature help students develop their linguistic competence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because it is important that students meet works written by famous authors (and other texts that belong to some kind of literary canon)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Because reading literature helps students practice their ability to concentrate and their cognitive perseverance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Room for comments**