

# MASTER'S THESIS

Teacher Educators' Perspectives on the Use of  
Literature in EFL.

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## ABSTRACT

The curriculum is the most important supplier of premises for teachers' practices. With regards to literature, both K06 and the new curriculum, the Subject Renewal, neither include guidelines on literary works or authors that teachers should work with, nor do they offer didactical recommendations on how to teach literature. This openness gives teachers great freedom but also requires substantial skills in literary pedagogy, so what happens to literature in EFL if teachers are lacking such skills? What do these open curricula demand from teachers of literature, and how can teacher education provide students with the skills needed?

This paper aims at examining the current role of literature in EFL seen through the eyes of teacher educators, and intends to answer the following question: How do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL? The findings in the study are based on qualitative research interviews with six teacher educators from different teacher training institutions around the country and are discussed and analysed using an abductive approach.

The study shows that teacher educators base their reflections regarding literature in EFL on a combination of personal and professional experiences and academic background. They are well qualified to interpret less explicit curricula and are reluctant to give up the freedom the curriculum offers. However, many of them also see the need for more explicitness, as there is a concern that some teachers will find the openness challenging with regards to what, how and why literature should be read. The teacher educators thus see it as their task to legitimise the use of literature in EFL for their students, as well as to communicate the importance of positive reading experiences. Especially challenging in this respect is the relatively new occurrence of utility-focussed students, some with little experience in reading literature. The worry that an increasing number of future English teachers may not be sufficiently equipped to manage and maintain the teaching of literature in EFL as the curriculum requires, reveals the need to monitor the effects that both curricula and teacher education have on new teachers.

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## PREFACE

Literature has always played an important role in my life, and it is still my favourite pastime; I have, in truth, never really understood people who claim to dislike reading. However, as a teacher, more often than before I meet students who claim that they have never read a single book and seem bewildered when asked why not. Many young people clearly do not consider literature to be neither interesting nor enjoyable, but instead describe it as being boring, tiring, and difficult. Consequently, the task of reading literature in class can be challenging.

There are of course many professions where you can easily get by without being a reader of literature, but is this also true for teachers? Many of my students will go on to become teachers, both some of those who read and some who do not. I started wondering if teacher education manages to convert the non-readers before they are put in front of their own classes, or if they simply go from being non-reading students to becoming non-reading teachers – and what happens to literature then? And what about literature's dwindling role in the curriculum? Is it now taken for granted that literature will more or less look after itself, or is it no longer given much importance and simply tags along as an artifact from old days? I decided that the best people to ask these questions would be teacher educators.

The work on this project has been challenging, interesting and a lot of work, but it has also confirmed my belief in literature as a natural and crucial part of EFL teaching. Even if writing a master's thesis is lonely work, there are many people who definitively deserve credit for their support during the process. Firstly, I must thank my six teacher educators for taking the time to participate; without their contributions, this project would obviously not have been possible. To my assigned supervisor, Britt Wenche Svenhard: thank you for constructive criticism and productive feedback. I would also like to give a special thank you to Professor Karen Knutsen for her kind support and assistance. My colleague Gunhild Jensen has also been my fellow student these last four years – thank you for both practical and moral support throughout. My colleagues Stian, Kjellbjørn and Jens also deserve mentioning for input and encouragement during the whole process. My children Oliver, Madeleine and Emilia must be credited for the patience they have shown an often-non-responsive mother, who has spent nearly every weekend for four years stooped over the computer in the kitchen. Last, but not least, I must thank Jan for unwavering support, for reassurance, and stern admonition when needed.

# TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF LITERATURE IN EFL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

I have spent more than half my life in the Norwegian educational system, first as a pupil, then as a student and now as a teacher. During these years, I have accepted literature as a natural part of the many syllabi I have been through without reflecting too much on why, maybe because I have always been an avid reader myself. To me, it has been a given that teachers are readers, and that both the joy and benefits of reading literature should be passed on to future generations. However, at present it appears as if many new teachers are not reading teachers, the younger generations' relationship to literature is complicated, and new curricula promote literacy skills over literary competence, thereby favouring the skills needed for reading and writing over the ability to decode and interpret literature. This raises the question: is there a need to renegotiate the position of literature instruction in Norwegian subject curricula? This paper examines the current role of literature in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) as seen through the eyes of teacher educators. The word 'literature' will in this paper be used to cover the literary genres fiction, poetry, and drama.

Literature has traditionally held a central place in the foreign language classroom, though according to Kramsch and Kramsch (2000), the role it has played has followed the fluctuations in geopolitical events and the power shifts in the disciplines. They claim that literature has gradually been made obsolete as the major discipline associated with language studies due to "the slow but unavoidable demise of philology since the late 1920s, the triumph of the sciences of education in the 1930s and the overwhelming influence of linguistics since the 1950s" (p. 552). As the subject English has been influenced by British and American institutions, as well as international developments in foreign language learning (Bakken, 2017), these tendencies are also recognised in Norwegian curriculum history.

At any given time, the existing curriculum is the most important supplier of premises for teachers' practices. It is tied to contemporary pedagogical thinking, and it also provides insight into the domineering national political and ideological landscapes (Bakken, 2017, p. 1).

With regards to literature, the current curriculum, the K06, is unique as it is the first curriculum where there are no requirements or suggestions pertaining to literary works or authors pupils should encounter, nor do we find didactic recommendations on the best approaches to teaching literature – this goes for the subject of English as well as for Norwegian. Consequently, K06 gives teachers great freedom of choice both when it comes to literary selection and methodology.

As this thesis is being written, the educational authorities are in the process of renewing the subjects in the curriculum and the implementation of the new curriculum will start in the autumn of 2020. The work seems to continue the ideal of teacher autonomy, placing great trust in the individual teacher's competence. The freedom that the curriculum gives the individual teacher can of course be seen as flattering, especially in a climate where many teachers feel that their practice is subjected to scrutiny displayed through a constant demand for documentation and accountability. However, this open landscape of didactic possibilities requires exceptionally good navigation skills and what happens if these skills are insufficient?

According to Møller, Poulsen and Steffensen (2010), a teacher's ability to reflect on literary pedagogy is a necessary condition if instruction is to promote learning for the pupils. It is important that the teacher has a clear understanding, not only of *what* to work with, but also *how* and *why* (p. 13). This requires literary competence as well as experience with both reading and reflecting on literature. In addition, we know that teachers' literary engagement is crucial in motivating literary engagement in their pupils (McKool & Gespass, 2009). However, recent studies in Scandinavia have problematised teacher trainees' competence in literature (Wicklund, Larsen, & Vikbrant, 2016; Skaar, Elvebakk, & Nilssen, 2016). The studies have revealed that even though a number of students have a positive view on literature, many of them read very little, and a worryingly large number do not read at all. Those who do read, do so for pleasure and relaxation, but have little experience with more complex literature that requires a more reflective approach to reading. Consequently, teacher education institutions cannot assume that students arrive as literary readers, or that they will be able to develop into readers on their own (Knutsen, 2018, p. 3). Dodou (2018) further claims that current academic practices rely on a narrow understanding of what schoolteachers need to know about literature and literary reading to exercise their professional judgment concerning literature in the language classroom, thus advocating a change in academic teaching practices in teacher education (p. 1).

This paper aims at opening a discussion on the current role of literature in EFL, in which teacher educators and teacher education institutions hold key positions. Firstly, because they play an important part in both the development and implementation of new curricula; secondly

because they are central in the training of pre-service teachers' skills in terms of interpreting and operationalising the curriculum. Consequently, how teacher educators view the role of literature in EFL is of great importance to how teacher trainees perceive their own future role as literary pedagogues. Hence, I pose the following thesis question:

*How do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL?*

The purpose of this study is thus to shed light on teacher educators' notions of literary reading in EFL in order to uncover possibilities and challenges in training a new generation of teachers of literature. Taking stock of the current situation, may also encourage discussions on what position we want literature to have in our education system, and how best to achieve this.

Based on semi-structured interviews with six teacher educators from different teacher education institutions around the country, the paper aims at giving answers to the following research questions:

- How do teacher educators legitimise the use of literature in EFL?
- Which strategies should be used to select suitable texts for the EFL classroom?
- How can teacher education institutions prepare their students to use the freedom of choice the curriculum allows them, regarding both texts and methodology?

The paper starts by presenting the theoretical backdrop for the study. Here, literature's place in both past and present curricula are considered, alongside a presentation of different epistemic and didactic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL. Chapter three contains a thorough description of the study's methods and materials, followed by an evaluation of its reliability, validity and generalisability. The presentation of the study's findings and the discussion of these are found in chapters four and five, followed by the conclusions in chapter six, where the main findings are brought together.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Curriculum History

Everyone working in the educational system over time, will likely encounter the introduction of a new curriculum, probably more than once in their career. The responsibility for developing new curricula lies with the national authorities, but it is important to remember that the curriculum reflects society as a whole. According to Goodson and Marsh (1996), studying the development of school subjects means studying a ‘microcosm’ of differing interests - educational, social, and political - at work at given points in time (p. 42).

Curriculum history explores how changes in the representations of school subjects are connected to social, political, and educational developments, both nationally and internationally. Curriculum history also studies how understandings inherited from subjects in the past influence current ones (Bakken, 2017). Consequently, in order to understand the development of current curricula it is useful to look at the past. As this paper focusses on the role of literature in EFL teaching, the following section will present a brief historical overview of the position literature has held in English subject curricula in Norway.

### 2.2 Literature in the English Subject Curriculum – An Overview

Bakken (2017) claims that the development of the subject English early on was marked by tensions between utilitarian and academic elitist traditions. This tension manifested itself in two contending discourses fighting for hegemony in the process towards compulsory English teaching in Norway. One discourse saw English as intended for the study of canonical texts; the other promoted English as a modern subject that would provide practical language skills for all. The subject English has also been influenced by British and American institutions, and development in foreign language learning (p. 4).

When it comes to the role of literature, Ibsen and Wiland (2000) offer a thorough analysis of literature’s position in English through Norwegian school reforms and curricula up until 1997, focussing mainly on the upper secondary school level. They claim that the study of English established its literary and historical profile with the 1899 curriculum for the ‘linguistic-historical branch’. One Shakespeare play was obligatory, either *Macbeth* or *The Merchant of Venice*, the rest of the syllabus was defined according to the choice of officially approved textbooks. In 1930 there was a change in syllabus and literature strengthened its position. From

1937-1953 slight revisions were made to update the syllabus and in 1963, more freedom was allowed in the form of a choice of sets of texts (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000, pp. 20-21).

The Reform of 1974/76, called New Structure, opened for a more flexible upper secondary school where students now could choose between study programmes like Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Music and Languages. Literature was included in the Language branch but had a less prominent position. The choice of literature still came in the form of two fixed sets that were the syllabi for the written exam. For the oral exam, other texts could be chosen. The school subject English in New Structure was meant to rejuvenate the language into a living and productive language, based on communicative principles. The struggle to find suitable texts for this purpose however, seemed to have failed by the beginning of the eighties. The Language program started to be considered less prestigious and the percentage of students specialising in languages fell (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000, p. 37). This caused political concern and a committee was appointed to analyse curriculum objectives and discuss Norway's need for language competence.

In 1984, the co-called Neumann-committee delivered their report which stated that New Structure placed too little value on literature and culture, as the curriculum guidelines were too open. The report spurred a new reform where one of the objectives was to strengthen languages. The Veierød Reform offered a choice of one out of three literary works to be tested at the written exam; specific knowledge of culture and literature was required (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000, pp. 53-54). Ibsen and Wiland (2000) claim that many teachers regarded the Veierød Model as the golden era in upper secondary literature teaching. The next reform, R94, did away with a fixed syllabus of set texts that many teachers saw as essential for a meaningful literature course (p. 82). Hence, R94 marks the end of what can be seen as a literary canon for English in Norwegian upper secondary schools.

At lower secondary and primary school level, Ibsen and Wiland point out that the situation has been fundamentally different, as the role of literature has always been viewed as subordinate to the primary objective of language learning. In this respect, L97 marked a radical change as literature was given a comprehensive and explicit place in the new plan, which was still both based in the communicative approach and emphasised culture. Both R94 and L97 suggested in detail a British-American literary canon. The question was whether the suggested canon was to be considered obligatory, or simply as a guide for teachers and textbook writers (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000, pp. 99-105).

According to Bakken (2017), when the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2001 presented the first results from the Programme for International

Student Assessment (PISA) measuring competences in core subjects, the Norwegian educational community was shaken by the revelation that Norwegian lower secondary pupils scored at mediocre levels. Other studies (Hellekjær, 2005) showed that upper secondary students did not possess the reading skills in English that would prepare them for further studies. New insight into the complexity of reading revealed the importance of purposeful reading strategies to improve reading proficiency and text comprehension (Bakken, 2017, p. 12). These findings changed the discourse about the entire Norwegian school system and the work on a new curriculum began.

The new curriculum, K06, introduced explanations of reading and other basic skills across the subjects, aligned with international standards. For English, this was the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERF), which offers descriptors of language competencies allowing for standardized assessment of language learners (Bakken, 2017, p. 12). Olsbu (2014) argues that the most significant change in K06 compared to L97 and R94 is the new rhetoric of competences and skills, echoing the CERF. K06 combines rigidly defined learning outcomes with great freedom of content and methods. Consequently, Olsbu claims that K06 represents a more reconstructionist approach to learning languages, where the focus shifts from cultural heritage to society's need for competence and knowledge (Olsbu, 2014, p. 13). Consequently, the literary text is no longer an independent category in the English syllabus and has ended up in the main subject area 'Culture, society and literature'.

Telhaug, Mediås and Aasen (2006) agree with Olsbu and argue that earlier curricula's aim at securing national and social unity has been downgraded in favour of technical and instrumental goals. Extensive testing of pupils' academic skills has become an important management tool, also described as 'output management'. The domineering neo-liberal education policy of this last phase has been criticised by both culture conservatives and the social democratic/progressive side. Culture and value conservationists claim school should not just appeal to the intellect but also to the emotions, and the social democratic progressivists regard school above all as an instrument in the effort to achieve social integration and equality. Consequently, these two fractions have not been as enthusiastic as other ideologies regarding an adjustment of Norwegian educational policy in line with international management (Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2006).

## 2.3 The Subject Renewal

Even if Norwegian curricula have been influenced by neo-liberal education policies, it is however not solely the criticism described above that initiated the current Subject Renewal taking place in the Norwegian school system. K-06 was considered to be too copious and lacking in coherence, both within and between subjects hence, clear priorities regarding curriculum content needed to be made. In addition, discussions arose on the curriculum's relevance regarding future requirements in a society characterized by continuous change, and work started on examining how the curriculum content could be made more future-oriented (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017).

In 2013, the government appointed a commission to evaluate the school subjects against the demands for competence in future society and working life. The commission, led by Professor Sten Ludvigsen, developed a report called *The school of the future – Renewal of subjects and competence*, published in 2015. After several hearings, the report was developed into Stortingsmelding 28 (2015-2016) as *Fag – Fordypning – Forståelse – En fornyelse av Kunnskapsløftet* [Subjects – in-depth study – understanding – A renewal of the Knowledge Promotion] (Ekstam & Knutsen, 2018).

The report states that the renewed subject curricula are supposed to emphasise pupils' understanding through in-depth learning and consequently, the number of competence aims have decreased substantially. More room is to be given to develop the pupils' critical thinking, source criticism and ethical awareness. Three cross-curricular themes have also been introduced: sustainable development, public health and life mastery, and democracy and citizenship (my trans.), where the two latter have been assigned to the subject English (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015). In addition, more prominence is to be given to the school's mandate regarding the pupils' Bildung.

In the process working with the new curriculum, a reference group representing the central parties in the school sector was established. This reference group serves as a discussion partner for the national education authorities and is to be consulted before decisions are made during the process (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). In addition, subject groups have been appointed to execute the curricula development work, ending in proposals to the new subject curricula. These groups are also composed of a majority of teachers and educationalists. Furthermore, all members at all levels in the educational system have been encouraged to comment on the official hearing documents. There have been four rounds of hearings and the Ministry of Education and Research has received more than 20 000 accounts of feedback

(Ministry of Education and Research, 2019). In this respect, the process of developing the new curriculum can be described as being both transparent and democratic.

The implementation of the school subjects' new subject curricula will start from the autumn of 2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2015).

## **2.4 Bildung in the Curriculum**

As mentioned above, the Subject Renewal contains an explicit emphasis on the development of the pupils' Bildung. According to Lyngstad (2019), this educational aim has remained important in the Norwegian education system regardless of the many developments it has undertaken in the last 45 years. Lyngstad further claims that "When Bildung is used in pedagogical and didactic studies, it has a specific meaning; it aims to ensure the formation of well-rounded citizens through education" (p. 15).

According to Biesta (2000), the modern, humanist concept of Bildung surfaced in the era of Enlightenment. The German philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt was central in the development of modern education, where the focus was "the linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay" (Biesta, 2006, p. 58). Bildung also became connected to the notion of "an educated or cultivated human being", defined as "one who had acquired a clearly defined set of knowledge and values; it was the one who was properly socialized into a particular tradition" (Biesta, 2006, pp. 2-3). When speaking of literature, a person with *literary Bildung* is thereby understood as someone with extensive knowledge of a literary tradition, first and foremost connected to canonical qualities; a notion that historically has held a central position in western curricula.

In the new core curriculum, we read "Schools have both an assignment regarding Bildung as well as an assignment regarding education. These are connected and are mutually dependent on one another". The core curriculum then goes on to describe what is understood by Bildung in basic training: "Bildung takes place when pupils acquire knowledge of, and insight into nature and the environment, language and history, society and working life, religions and views of life. Bildung also develops through experiences and practical challenges in everyday school life" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017. My trans.). Although there are several definitions of the concept Bildung, the descriptions and intentions found in the new core curriculum can be seen to correspond with the German theorist Wolfgang Klafki's definition (1996).

Klafki (1996) divides Bildung into two main categories: *the material theories*, focussing on the content of teaching, and *the formal theories*, aimed at developing the individual's abilities and skills. In addition, Klafki introduces a third category, *the categorical theory*, in which he claims that the process of Bildung is a double-sided dialectic process between the subject (the pupil) and the object (the content). The question is then what kind of content can stimulate this double-sided process? According to Klafki, the answer lies in what he calls *the exemplary principle*. Following this principle requires that the content must give the pupil the ability to acquire overarching categories, such as terms, methods, structures and values within a field of study. Consequently, the examples chosen must go beyond themselves and point to something all-encompassing (Straum, 2018).

The Subject Renewal's intention of equipping pupils for the future by developing their ability to be critical, creative and explorative can be seen as corresponding with Klafki's definition of categorical Bildung in education. The emphasis is now on in-depth learning, where deep learning means that pupils develop a thorough understanding of concepts and contexts, where new ideas are linked to already known ideas and principles. The new comprehension is transferable to new and unfamiliar contexts. Some of the key approaches for teachers who work with in-depth learning are setting aside sufficient time and varying their teaching methods (NOU, 2015). This has in turn naturally led to a reduction in the number of competence aims for each subject curriculum.

According to Lyngstad (2019), English is today one of the subjects where Bildung is emphasised in Norwegian education (p. 20). This is also clearly expressed in the new curriculum's section on the relevance and central values in the subject, where we read: "English is a central subject for cultural understanding, communication, Bildung and the development of own identity" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017. My trans.). The two cross curricular themes assigned to the subject English, public health and life mastery, and democracy and citizenship, are also closely connected to the pupils' Bildung and are both well suited to be addressed through literature. In fact, the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum emphasises literature's particular abilities as a medium for Bildung. Nussbaum claims that literature evokes *narrative imagination* which increases a person's ability to take the perspective of others, thus it is an important key in the development of democracy and citizenship (Nussbaum, 1997).

However, the Subject Renewal is still a competence-based curriculum and Lyngstad argues that even though it is possible to combine Bildung and competences in education, the two approaches often require different foci from pupils and teachers (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 19). Whereas competence-based curricula tend to focus on assessment, these principles can be

difficult to merge with the development of pupils' *Bildung*, which is more subtle and difficult to test. Fleming (2007) argues that this criticism is especially relevant when it comes to literature teaching, as "the action-orientated competence approach adopted by the Common European Framework is appropriate for language acquisition but too crude for capturing the subtleties of the development of literary awareness" (p. 49).

The outcomes that pupils get from reading literature may seem to be in competition with more testable educational goals. Consequently, it becomes important for teachers to legitimise literature's position in EFL and to be able to read literature into the curriculum where it is not necessarily explicit. This obviously requires teachers to have an understanding of why literature should be read in the first place, however this understanding may not be common for all teachers and educators.

## **2.5 Literature in EFL**

Kramersch and Kramersch (2000) claim that learning a foreign language in the early part of the century often meant a close study of canonical texts in the target language. Literature was the key element in the traditional Grammar Translation Method, with its heavy emphasis on grammar explanation and translation exercises. Here, literary texts in the target language functioned as examples of good writing and illustrated the use of grammatical rules. After the Grammar Translation method fell from grace in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so did the use of literature in language teaching, and the focus shifted to linguistics. Literature was perceived to lack communicative functions and was thereby consigned to oblivion. However, in the mid-1980s the discovery that students of languages lacked basic skills and content knowledge prompted changes. Consequently, the reintegration of literature as an integral part of communicative language programs was expressed as a long-term objective (Bobkina, 2014).

According to Bobkina (2014), much research is being conducted at present to demonstrate the positive results of using literature in different EFL teaching areas. However, there is no consensus among language teachers and educators on approaches for incorporating literature into the EFL-classroom (p. 252).

## **2.6 Why Read Literature?**

In the overarching discussions on the purpose of literature in EFL several questions arise, such as: what do pupils learn from reading literature that they cannot learn from reading other types of texts? Should literature be read for literature's sake, or should it be used as a resource to learn

other things, such as language or culture? Another question is of course if literature has anything special to offer language teaching at all. Lyngstad (2019) suggests that the distinction between using literature as a resource to learn other things, and reading literature for its own sake lies at the center of the discussion on the use of literature in the classroom (p. 42). Although a generally accepted categorisation of the main approaches to teaching literature in EFL is still absent, there are numerous suggestions on how to classify the different methods. (Bobkina, 2014, p. 252).

Lazar (2013) suggests three possible overarching approaches when using literature with students: a *language-based approach*, the use of *literature as content* and using *literature for personal enrichment*. The approaches differ in the methodological principles underlying each one, which affect the selection and organisation of the texts they use. Advocates of the language-based approach believe in a closer integration of language and literature for students to reach their main aim: to improve in their knowledge of, and proficiency in English. Hence, literary texts are used as a resource. When literature is the content of a course, the literary text is in itself the object of the study. This means focussing on areas such as the history and background of literary movements; the social, political and historical background of the texts themselves; literary genres and so on. In this approach, texts will be chosen for their importance as part of a literary canon. When literature is read for personal enrichment, it is seen as a tool for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feeling and opinions. The belief is that when students are actively involved in learning, both intellectually and emotionally, this promotes language acquisition. Literary texts are thus chosen to suit students' interests to stimulate personal involvement (Lazar, 2013, pp. 23-27).

One way of working with literature that holds an intermediate position between a language-based approach and reading for personal enrichment is suggested by Krashen, who advocates *extensive reading*. Here students do “self-selected reading with minimal accountability” (Mason & Krashen, 1997). Krashen developed the Comprehension Hypothesis in the 1970s and 80s which states that “we acquire language and develop literacy when we understand messages, that is, when we understand what we hear and what we read, when we receive ‘comprehensible input’” (Krashen, 2003). Krashen's single pedagogical principle is to maximise comprehensible input, something that is most easily achieved by reading literature. According to his recent thinking, we need to go beyond comprehensible input to ‘compelling input’, and this again makes literature central to his approach (Cook, 2016).

In her discussion on the use of literature in L3 classrooms, Olsbu (2014) agrees with Lazar in that the varied approaches to the use of literary texts in language classes are embedded

in different views on both the nature of literary texts and language learning. In her discussion, Olsbu organises the many different approaches into, not three, but six categories outlining their main didactic and epistemic perspectives: 1) the task based approach, 2) the stylistic approach, 3) the experiential approach, 4) the intercultural approach, 5) the canonical approach and 6) the no-literature approach. Olsbu emphasises that these categories do not appear in exclusive forms in language classrooms, but that they are frequently combined and therefore best understood as prototypes (Olsbu, 2014).

Even if Olsbu's different approaches are to be seen as prototypes, they offer a clear overview of different perspectives regarding the use of literature in language classrooms. Hence, her categories work well as a basis for understanding how teachers position themselves when it comes to pedagogical reflections on why and how literature should be integrated in EFL, as well as the justifications for how texts should be selected. Olsbu's categorisation of approaches have thus been chosen as a starting point when analyzing the interviews with the teacher educators later in this paper, and a more thorough presentation of the six categories are given, including their theoretical foundations, didactic implications and role of the literary text.

Olsbu's article discusses the future of literary texts in L3, and in Norway this means other languages but Norwegian (L1) and English (L2). Olsbu claims that this terminology is specific to Norway and that most of the research referred to in her article does not consider this distinction. Consequently, Olsbu uses the more wide-ranging concept of foreign languages (FL) hence, this is also the term used in the presentation below.

### **1. The task-based approach**

The theoretical foundations of the task-based approach are found in communicative and task-based language teaching. In the everyday sense of the word 'task', all language teaching will necessarily consist of tasks, but in task-based learning (TBL) the word is used in a narrower sense. Bygate, Skehan and Swain (1990) defines a task as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain a goal". According to this definition, students are learning the language by using it, implying that learning is the same as processing (Cook, 2013, p. 285). In this approach, the literary text is seen primarily as a starting point for a variety of activities, and literature provides an opportunity to work on all the main language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing and spontaneous communication). Hence, the question of literary value is of less importance; in fact, Duff and Maley (1990) openly rejects literary value as a criterion for text selection, as they claim that often 'bad writing' can prove more useful than 'good writing'. Consequently, choosing literary texts in the task-based

approach rests on what topics of interests they offer and the tasks that can be designed from them (Olsbu, 2014, p. 3).

## **2. The stylistic approach**

In the stylistic approach, the main purpose of studying literary texts is insight into how language is used. Lazar (2013) explains stylistics as “a method which can guide students towards a more sensitive understanding and appreciation of the literary text itself” (p. 31). Stylistics has two main objectives: firstly, to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of the text itself; secondly, to expand students’ knowledge and awareness of the language in general (Lazar, 2013, p. 31). Hence, the approach does not only include simple descriptions of linguistic features but also the explanation of how linguistic features bear significance for the interpretation of the text. Because of this duality, stylistics has been seen as way of bridging the gap between language and literature studies (Olsbu, 2014). Lazar claims that although the aim of using stylistics is primarily to develop students’ literary competence, it also offers them excellent language practice (Lazar, 2013, p. 31). However, Olsbu warns that by focussing mostly on the linguistic dimension of a literary text, the cultural, personal and affective dimensions of literature may be overlooked (Olsbu, 2014, p. 4).

## **3. The experiential approach**

In the experiential approach, the emphasis is on the encounter between the literary text and the reader. As in Lazar’s category, *literature for personal enrichment*, literature is here seen as a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their own experiences, feelings and opinions. In this sense, literature can be seen as having a wider educational function as it can help stimulate students’ imagination, develop their critical abilities and increase their emotional awareness (Lazar, 2013). *Reader-response theory* in Iser’s tradition, Bruner’s theory of a *narrative-*, as opposed to a *paradigmatic mode of thought*, Rosenblatt’s distinction between *aesthetic/ and efferent reading*, and Langer’s *envisionment building* are among the theoretical foundations of this approach.

Iser (1980) argues that the meaning of a literary text is to be found in the interaction between the objective text and its subjective reader (Olsbu, 2014). Bruner’s (1986) distinction between narrative- and paradigmatic modes of thought provides distinct, yet complementary ways of viewing reality. His claim is that using both, provides fuller understandings (Langer, 2011). Rosenblatt (1978) describes the reader’s role by contrasting aesthetic and efferent reading. She claims that a literary text favors aesthetic reading, which focusses on the reading

experience itself as opposed to efferent reading, where the focus is on the information to be acquired from the text (Olsbu, 2014). Langer (2013) describes envisionment building as an activity in sense-making, where the mind works at creating its understanding of the literary work. The meaning is created through a constant interaction between text and reader (Langer, 2011, p. 15).

The value of the literary text in the experiential approach will lie in its meaningfulness, and reading literature is seen as engaging the whole person. Olsbu claims that the experiential approach “represents a wholistic view of language learning that includes a dimension of personal growth and *Bildung*”. Olsbu continues her discussion by underlining the importance of focussing on aesthetic reading, as the reading strategies promoted in the current curriculum tend to lose this perspective. However, she argues that the general education goals, such as *Bildung*, need to be operationalized into concrete activities and learning goals if they are to be more than lofty ideals (Olsbu, 2014, p. 5).

#### **4. The intercultural approach**

The intercultural approach to the use of literature in the FL classroom aims at developing students’ *intercultural competence*. According to Guilherme (2004), intercultural competence has been defined as “the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (p. 297). Central to the intercultural approach is the assumption that literature allows us to see the world from a different perspective than our own, hence it shares many theoretical perspectives with the experiential approach. Didactically and epistemically, this is also part of the justification for the use of literary texts in the development of intercultural competence. In the intercultural approach the literary text takes on the role as cultural product and it is implicit that the potential for developing cultural insight goes beyond the information accessible in a factual text on culture. However, Olsbu warns against interpreting culture in FL as being the idea of a homogenous target culture and language, and instead adopt a late-modernist view of culture where FL are placed in the contemporary globalized world of heterogeneity and multiple identities (Olsbu, 2014, pp. 6-7).

#### **5. The canonical approach**

A literary canon is traditionally defined as “an authoritative list of approved books” (Fleming, 2007, p. 31), but is more often interpreted to mean the “best” or “most valuable” literary works (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 37). The approach to literature as the work with canonical texts was part of the legacy that modern foreign languages inherited from the classical studies of Latin and

Greek. Included in the curricula were the major national contributions to the universal cultural heritage, which in practice meant the western canon (Olsbu, 2014, p. 7).

The challenge to the traditional canon has come from two main directions: from post-colonial, feminist and other theorists who questioned the dominance of white, male, bourgeois canonical texts. This criticism has been part of an agenda for social reform. The other main challenge has come from curriculum modernisers seeking to make the curriculum more relevant for young people in the modern age. The arrival of other forms of media has questioned the exclusive focus on the written text, and modern technology has given access to different forms of text. It could also be argued that the traditional canon diminishes teacher autonomy, underestimating teachers' ability to make appropriate choices for their pupils (Fleming, 2007).

As previously mentioned, Norwegian curricula operated with a fixed syllabus of set texts until the introduction of R94 (Ibsen & Wiland, 2000, p. 82). However, Olsbu claims that even after decades of canon-critique and the introduction of a more pragmatic view on culture, emblematic texts never disappeared from the FL classroom altogether, but are still present amongst others in textbooks (Olsbu, 2014, p. 7). Lyngstad (2019) agrees with Olsbu and claims that according to her studies, several textbooks show that there appears to be a form of de-facto canon in the subject English, at least with regards to certain texts. Hence, Lyngstad's findings open the question whether a subject curriculum should include what we often refer to as a literary canon, a syllabus, or a list of set texts (Lyngstad, 2019, pp. 37-38).

## **6. The no-literature approach**

When discussing the role of literature in language learning and teaching, there are also voices arguing against the use of literature. Edmondson (1995) takes the overall position that literature has nothing special to offer FL teaching, that it can in fact have a demotivating effect on students and that literature does not activate cognitive mechanisms that differ from working with other types of texts. Edmondson's theory is that the focus on handling literary texts in modern language teaching was originally part of a movement seeking to justify teaching foreign languages in schools and universities. The inclusion of literary texts was meant to show that foreign languages were educationally responsible. Edmondson further argues that this approach is old-fashioned and claims that the recognition of the value of foreign languages has never been higher hence, no other justification of the teaching of FL is necessary (Edmondson, 1995). Horowitz (1990) agrees with Edmondson and argues against the idea that a literary text provides richer opportunities for interpretation than other genres (p. 163). Paran (2008) calls Edmondson's position *isolationist* and claims that his view of language learning means

achieving competence in the L2 and nothing more (p. 468). Olsbu supports Paran in her description of Edmondson's view as *reductive* (Olsbu, 2014, p. 8).

As mentioned previously, the current curriculum, K06, is open in terms of types of text and methodology, leaving teachers with freedom regarding the choice of approaches as to working with literature. The Subject Renewal is more explicit as it no longer only uses the wider term 'text' but specifically requires the reading of literature. In the suggestions to the new competence aims from September 2019, we find that pupils are to encounter fictional literature on all levels, from basic training to upper secondary school, with the exception of Vg1 vocational studies. What literature to choose and how to work with it is still relatively open. Therefore, most of Olsbu's categories of approaches can theoretically be applied to EFL classrooms, with the exception of the no-literature approach.

However, when teachers decide on methods on how to implement literature and what to read, these are obviously not randomly chosen. As both Olsbu and Lazar argue, their choices are founded on both the teachers' view on the nature of the literary text itself as well as their view on language learning. This is also true for teacher educators. Their view of the role of literature in EFL is essential for the interpretation of what schoolteachers need to know in order to apply their pedagogical reflection of when, why and how to use English literature in the language classroom.

## **2.7 Literary Pedagogy and Non-Reading Teachers**

Literary pedagogy is often used as a collective term for teachers' consideration of goals and methods in the literary classroom and can be said to encompass three levels: the literary pedagogical level, the literary methodological level and the literary didactical level; in short, coherent literary instruction does not only entail *what* to teach, but also *why* and *how*. Hence, the instructional planning involves the connection between teachers' own pedagogical analysis of a given text and the methods and tasks chosen to reach the instructional goals (Møller, Poulsen, & Steffensen, 2010).

Møller et al. claim that one of the main purposes of teaching literature is to develop the students' *literary competence*. The term was first coined by Culler in his book *Structural Poetics* (1975) where he describes literary reading as "a rule governed process of producing meanings" (p. 126). In short, to possess literary competence means to have internalised a set of rules and conventions regarding ways of reading through repeated encounters with literature (Culler, 1975). Hence, it is to be understood that literary texts require certain skills, or ways of

reading that must be learned. If literary instruction is to promote literary competence, it needs to accept the inherent duality in literary texts: they have a structure and logic that make them coherent but also separate them from other texts, and they contain ‘gaps’ which the readers need to fill in to interpret them. When the teacher clarifies the interaction between the text and its reading, the instruction can become metacognitive. The teacher’s literary pedagogical reflection is crucial in ensuring that their teaching leads to such learning for the students (Møller, Poulsen, & Steffensen, 2010).

Møller et al. further suggest that there are three important factors that make teaching literature challenging. Firstly, there is fundamental tension between experience and analysis, enjoyment and practicing skills. The challenge is how to join the two aspects so that the pupils’ joy of reading is not killed, while at the same time making sure that they learn something new. Secondly, there is the danger of allowing old practices to solidify based on tradition and habit. How do you ensure that other teachers’ practices are not simply continued without having questioned their purpose? Finally, Møller et al. argue that teachers generally have a fundamental insecurity attached to their own practice. Teachers need to learn to relate to their pedagogical practice and view it from an external perspective, so that the choices they end up with are beneficial (Møller, Poulsen, & Steffensen, 2010).

To sum up, literary pedagogy is complex in nature, just like literature itself and teachers need both practice and training in how to use literature in the classroom. However, if teachers do not have personal experiences of neither the joy nor the benefits that reading literature can provide, will this have implications on their teaching practice?

Research shows that this may be the case. Teachers who are enthusiastic readers are more likely to use instructional activities that promote engagement (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; McCool & Gespass, 2009). McCool and Gespass claim that teachers serve as role models, and that demonstrations of their own reading preferences and passions most likely affect how their students respond to reading. However, Applegate and Applegate point to research showing that many pre-service teachers are not avid readers and predict that their lack of engagement will in turn be passed on to their students.

The occurrence of non-reading pre-service teachers can also be found in recent studies in Scandinavia (Skaar, Elvebakk & Nilssen, 2016, 2018; Wicklund, Larsen & Vikbrant, 2016). Here, Nordic teacher trainees’ relationship to reading literature has been examined through analyses of “reading histories”. In these accounts, the teacher trainees were asked to present their personal reading habits from childhood to present day. Wicklund, Larsen and Vikbrant found that students specialising to teach the grades 1-7 read noticeably less than those

specialising in grades 5-10. Whereas both groups have positive views on reading literature, and read for pleasure and relaxation, they have little experience with more complex literature and lack a reflective approach to literature (Knutsen, 2018).

Skaar, Elvebakk and Nilssen similarly discovered that a number of students in teacher training read very little and even if most students were found to have a positive attitude to literature, reading was of little importance in their own lives. First and foremost, the students evaluate literature from a utility perspective, and see it as a gateway to a number of different skills. Reading literature is connected to mastering school and a general ability to learn. Skaar et al. conclude their findings by arguing that literature instruction in schools cannot exclusively be based on the teachers' own affiliations with reading. In addition, teacher training institutions should neither assume that their students already are readers, nor that they automatically will develop into readers later in life (Skaar, Elvebakk, & Nilssen, 2016).

Both the Scandinavian studies presented above found that reading literature in their first language is challenging to pre-service teachers. Consequently, it is to be expected that this is also the case when reading literature in their second language. As teachers are likely to draw on their own personal experiences when introducing literature in class, Skaar et al. (2018) claim that their studies show an indication of a downward trend in teachers' capability to create enthusiasm for literary fiction in class. Hence, they claim that teacher education institutions need to provide their students with the literary experiences needed to develop a personal relationship to reading literature in order to secure a platform to work from to promote literary fiction (p. 320).

## **2.8 Challenges and Possibilities in the Education of EFL Reading Teachers**

As the studies described above have suggested, teacher education institutions can no longer expect their students to arrive as experienced readers of literature. In addition, the curriculum is not explicit with regards to why literature should be read. Consequently, the task of educating EFL literature teachers has widened. Penne (2012) claims that teachers in Norwegian classrooms to a large degree base their literary instruction on "everyday theories", and that didactic reasoning behind the literary instruction is often missing. She argues that literary instruction in Nordic classrooms "loses its professional dimension and is turned into enjoyment, meant to strengthen the pupils' wellbeing" (Penne, 2012, p. 248. My trans.).

Enjoyment is obviously important, but not sufficient and teacher educators need to help their students develop into *reading teachers*, which requires providing them with explicit

knowledge of what authentic literary experiences consist of, as well as developing their pedagogical reasoning when it comes to the possibilities and limitations of reading literature in class. The challenge is of course, how this can be turned into practice. The following section will present three recent articles written by Scandinavian teacher educators, all addressing challenges and possibilities in educating EFL reading teachers.

Munden (2018) claims that it is both challenging and possible to educate competent reading teachers who can foster literary experience. Among the challenges mentioned are the profession of the teacher educator, and the occurrence of non-reading students previously presented. Munden says that teacher educators are members of a profession without comprehensive professional requirements and that most of them acquire their expertise only after they start working as teacher educators; an expertise often based on collegial knowledge and collaboration. Munden further argues that there is little evidence-based knowledge about the professional development of teacher educators and that there is a need for research on the impact of teacher education on teachers' learning and their professional practice. Munden says this may be especially true in a Norwegian context, as education policy makers appear to regard the professional development of teacher educators as the responsibility of their respective institutions (Munden, 2018).

With regards to the non-reading students, Munden claims that there is a complex interaction of factors determining whether teacher students read what is expected of them or not. She asks if the assumption that they do not do so is based on empirical research or simply on "classroom experience and corridor talk", and suggests that we should be more curious about *what* and *for what purposes* young people read than simply complain that they do not read anything at all. However, what does seem to be the case is that student teachers tend to know little about reading strategies, and those they are most likely to be familiar with are not ideal for reading literary texts. In addition, these strategies are little suited to bridge gaps in language knowledge, which is a likely challenge for a learner to meet in an EFL setting (Munden, 2018, p. 8).

Munden claims that in order to enable student teachers to create coherent and purposeful lesson plans, it is important to present coherent model lessons to the students, and not only a compilation of ideas and activities. As an answer to this, she exemplifies a learning sequence based on a *pedagogy of enactment*, where the purpose is to provide students with experience of the practice of planning and teaching reading in EFL. In this sequence, the students experience an explicit change in perspectives between that of the *reader* and the *reading teacher*. The teacher educator needs to model the practice, but also guide students in a structured, didactic

and metacognitive discussion about their experiences, and the choices and possibilities available to them as reading teachers (Munden, 2018, pp. 12-17).

Dodou (2018) shares Munden's understanding of some of the challenges facing teacher educators when it comes to teaching literature and argues that reading literature is not the same activity in academia as in a school setting. She claims that the principal goal in the academic study of literature is to develop students' ability to make sense of literary texts through the tools of literary criticism. By contrast, reading in a school context links the purpose of reading literature both to the development of literacy and language skills, as well as to experience- or cultural-oriented approaches, emphasising literature's potential for pupils to make sense of the world and their place in it. Dodou says that these two aspects of reading literature should have significant implications for how you teach literature to students training to be schoolteachers of English. (Dodou, 2018).

Thorson (2002) says that teacher educators need to bear in mind both what their students need to know in the academic subject, and what their students as future schoolteachers need to be able to teach their pupils regarding literature. Hence, Dodou suggests an academic practice of teaching relying on metacognition which incorporates discussions on reading, and explicitly articulates the principles and procedures supporting professional modes of reading literature. Dodou argues that this practice is a requirement for the development of pre-service teachers' professional judgment when it comes to the uses of literature and to literary reading in the classroom (Dodou, 2018).

Knutsen (2018) supports both Munden and Dodou in advocating a metacognitive approach. She argues that both pre-service ESL teachers as well as their educators need to see themselves not only as language teachers, but also as reading teachers. Knutsen claims that teachers function as reading models for their pupils. Consequently, teacher trainees need to be aware of their own behaviours as readers to raise awareness of their role as reading teachers and future reading models for their pupils. Knutsen suggests that the introduction of *narrative transportation theory* (Gerrig, 1993) is one way of helping pre-service teachers understand the psychological reading process.

Narrative transportation theory investigates how experiences of narrative worlds alter our experiences of the real world and argues that all narratives share a core of processes that implement this transportation (Gerrig, 1993). Several of Gerrig's studies show how stories can alter people's beliefs and attitudes, and Knutsen claims that understanding how stories may manipulate readers emotionally, emphasises the need for metacognitive reading strategies in the classroom. Knutsen further argues that monitoring our own behaviour as readers and

reflecting on the psychological processes involved in pleasurable reading will facilitate the development of metacognitive skills and foster deep learning, not only in the teacher trainees, but also in their future pupils (Knutsen, 2018).

Møller et al. argue that teachers' literary pedagogical reflection is central if their teaching is to promote learning in their pupils and claim that coherent literary instruction means to be able to articulate not only what to teach, but also why and how. Common for all three articles presented above is that the authors describe the need for pre-service teachers to develop a metacognitive perspective on both what the literary experience consists of, and what teaching it entails. Metacognition and the ability to articulate assumptions about the value of literature and how and when to apply it in the classroom are seen as requirements for the development of pedagogical reasoning in pre-service teachers. Which approaches are successful is difficult to tell as Munden (2018) claims that little evidence-based research exists when it comes to the impact teacher education has on teachers' learning and their teaching practices.

However, one field that has been thoroughly researched is the field of *teacher cognition*, examining the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that teachers have about teaching and learning. The following section will describe some of the findings in studies on teacher cognition and which questions these may raise for teacher educators and the development of professional literary teachers.

## **2.9 Teacher Cognition**

According to Borg (2003), teacher cognition “is the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (p. 81), which naturally in turn influences what they do. In Borg's opinion, the importance of teacher cognition relates to the fact that teaching is more than behaviour. Early studies in teacher education focussed on finding behaviour that led to learning and the idea was that once this behaviour was discovered, teachers could be programmed to behave accordingly; thus, learning would be guaranteed. However, it turned out that teachers are reluctant to being programmed into behaving a certain way, and it became evident that if the intention is to fully understand what teachers do, it is not enough to focus on their behaviour, but also to understand their beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and feelings. Borg claims that this has become especially true when we look at large-scale educational reforms that do not seem to have the desired outcome, no matter how much time and money are invested in trying to change teachers' behaviour (Borg, 2012). This is an interesting view, especially as we in Norway are at the beginning of the process of introducing a new curriculum.

In his review of 64 studies in the field of teacher cognition in language teaching, Borg (2003) found that teachers' prior language learning experiences establish thoughts about learning and language learning which form the foundation of their initially constructed concepts of L2 teaching during teacher education, and that these may continue to influence teachers throughout their professional lives. The impact teacher education has on language teacher cognition is characterised by variable outcomes and individual developmental pathways, and there is also a distinction between behavioural change and cognitive change during, or as a result of teacher education where change in behaviour does not always mean cognitive change (Borg, 2003).

According to Kjelen (2018), the discourse on the professional teacher is complex. Evans (2008) talks about *extended* and *restricted* professionalism, where a teacher with restricted professionalism is “essentially reliant upon experience and intuition and is guided by a narrow, classroom-based perspective which values that which is related to the day-to-day practicalities of teaching” (Evans, 2008, p. 10). The more a teacher approaches an extended professionalism, the more (s)he integrates experience-based knowledge with theoretical perspectives.

Kjelen (2018), like Borg, claims that both teachers and students have theories on what teaching and learning is, but that these are neither cognizant nor articulated. These theories will also be present in the case of literary teaching and Gee (2005) uses the term *discourse models* about them. He explains discourse models as theories that people use to make sense of the world and their experiences in it, and that these are always oversimplified to allow us to act in the world without having to think overtly about everything at once (Gee, 2005, p. 59). Kjelen argues that a goal for the instruction on literary didactics in teacher training must be to make teachers able to challenge such discourse models and develop their professionalism. This means that the choices of the literary teacher need to be more anchored in professional and research-based models, and not only in the conceptions and beliefs that the teacher may have about teaching and learning (Kjelen, 2018, pp. 32-33).

Teacher educators need to take into consideration that their students most likely arrive with presumptions about literary teaching based on their previous experiences, and that these presumptions may be resilient to contrary input in teacher training. Hence, it is essential that teacher educators enable their students to both articulate, as well as question their current beliefs and assumptions in order to develop their professionalism as future literary teachers. It is also important to remember that teacher educators are also teachers; consequently, some of the findings in the studies reviewed by Borg may be valid for them as well. In addition, teachers' perceptions must be seen “as a function of place and time, through interaction and negotiations

with social and historical contexts” (Burns, Freeman, & Edwards, 2015, p. 589); hence, teachers’ notions of literature in EFL are also based on their present and previous frameworks.

The thesis question for this paper is: *How do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL?* In the interviews conducted with the intentions to answer this question, we get a glimpse into what six teacher educators know, believe and think about the role of literature in EFL and how best to teach it. In one way, it can thus be said that this is a small-scale study in teacher cognition. However, the findings in this paper will hopefully also provide insight into the current challenges and possibilities with regards to the training of future literary teachers, and potentially raise the question whether there is a need to clarify the position of literature in EFL-teaching.

### 3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The aim of this paper is to investigate teacher trainers’ knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the use of literary fiction in EFL, which leads to the following thesis question:

*How do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL?*

To operationalise the work, the thesis question has been divided into the following research questions:

- How do teacher educators legitimise the use of literature in EFL?
- Which strategies should be used to select suitable texts for the EFL classroom?
- How can teacher education institutions prepare their students to use the freedom of choice the curriculum allows them, regarding both texts and methodology

In order to answer these questions, semi-structured interviews with six teacher educators from different Norwegian teacher training institutions were conducted. An issue-focused approach was used in organising the material thematically, emphasising the study’s individual topics. The interpretation and discussion of the findings were based on abduction; an approach enhancing the dialectic relationship between theory and data (Thagaard, 2003).

This chapter presents and discusses the methods and materials used in the study. Firstly, the method of using qualitative research interviews for collecting data is discussed. Secondly,

the study's participants, procedures and materials are presented, followed by a description of how the data was analysed. The chapter ends with an evaluation of the study's reliability, validity, and generalisability.

### **3.1 The Choice of the Qualitative Research Interview**

According to Thagaard (2003), qualitative studies can be directed towards a wish to gain insight in social phenomena as they are understood by the people that the researcher is studying. Thagaard further claims that a conversation is a good starting point to obtain knowledge in how an individual experiences and reflects on his/her own situation (p. 11). Brinkmann and Kvale describe the qualitative research interview as an attempt "to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 3). They also suggest that if a research question can be formulated using the word *how*, there is a good chance that qualitative interviews are relevant (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 127). Qualitative interviews can be either structured or semi-structured, and both types cover a chain of themes and have specific questions. However, unlike structured interviews, semi-structured interviews allow an openness to changes of sequence and questions that enables the interviewer to follow up on the specific answers given by the interviewee during the interview (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 156). This flexibility is important to enable the interviewer to go in depth into the themes in the study.

As this paper aims at exploring how teacher trainers legitimise the use of literary texts in EFL and their understanding of how it should best be taught, the choice was made to use semi-structured research interviews to collect data for the study that the paper is based on.

### **3.2 Participants**

The six participants in this study, four women and two men, are all currently working as teacher educators in Norwegian teacher training institutions, where they either teach or have taught literature. They have been selected to show variation in age, gender, geographical location, and to represent both types of institutions responsible for teacher education in Norway: universities and university colleges (higher education institutions). The teacher educators come from four universities and two university colleges located in five different counties.

The participants are between the ages 34 to 51 and all except one have PhD's in English; three of them have their degrees in literature, and three have degrees in other educational related topics. One of the participants is a native speaker of English and has her education from her

country of origin. The teacher educators have between 2-13 years' experience in teacher training. All the participants also have experience from compulsory education and/or upper secondary school before moving into teacher education. Combined, they work in all areas of English teacher training, from *grunnskolelærerutdanningen* (GLU); the program for the students aiming at becoming teachers in compulsory education, the bachelor and master programs, English didactics in *praktisk pedagogisk utdanning* (PPU); the 1-year program in educational theory and practice, and in *Kompetanse for Kvalitet* (KfK); the state sponsored skills development program for practicing teachers.

As this paper examines the views of professionals who represent a small and transparent community, precautions needed to be taken to ensure their anonymity. Consequently, the participants in the study are not presented in detail and any references regarding their research and publications have been modified. In order to distinguish between the different teacher educators in the text, each of them has been given an alias. The aliases have been randomly chosen and are referred to throughout the discussion of the findings. The table below provides a brief overview of the teacher educators' backgrounds, where they work, and their aliases.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Years of experience in teacher training</b>	<b>Location of UH-institution</b>	<b>Alias</b>
Female	1-3 years' experience	Vestlandet	"Kari"
Female	5-10 years' experience	Østlandet	"Anne"
Female	5-10 years' experience	Østlandet	"Berit"
Female	more than 10 years' experience	Midt Norge	"Susan"
Male	more than 10 years' experience	Østlandet	"Knut"
Male	5-10 years' experience	Midt Norge	"Per"

Table 1

How many interview subjects are needed for a qualitative interview study is a common question and it was also a topic in the planning of the study at issue. The decision was made to interview six teacher trainers. The participants then covered the variations described above and, in addition, the time and resources available for the study had been taken into account. Too many participants would not leave enough time to make in-depth analyses of the interviews, whereas too few could make it difficult to trace incongruence (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 140).

### **3.3 Materials and Procedure**

In preparation for the interviews, an interview guide was designed. A list of open-ended exploratory questions was generated based on the thesis question and the accompanying

research questions, (Appendix 1). A well-experienced teacher educator agreed to function as first respondent, so that the questions could be tried out and adjusted before the actual interviews were performed. The answers provided in the preparatory interview are not included in the study.

When the first respondent interview was completed and evaluated, the search for suitable informants began. Invitations were sent out both to heads of departments at different higher education institutions, as well as directly to teacher educators themselves. Of these two approaches, the latter turned out to be far more successful and contrary to initial worries, enough willing participants were not too difficult to find.

As the interviews were to be audiotaped, national data protection regulations require that the project had to be reported to and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) before any of the interviews could be conducted. An information- and consent form was designed based on an NSD template (Appendix 2) and this form and the actual project itself were both officially approved by NSD on 14.10.2019 (Appendix 3). The form was sent to the participants to inform them of the project's background and intentions, and to explain how any personal information, and the data they would provide would be handled concerning issues of privacy. The form also stated that the participants could pull out of the project at any time. None of the participants chose to use this option. To give permission for the interviews to be audiotaped, and for the information provided to be used in the project, the participants needed to sign and return the form.

The six interviews were conducted between late October 2019 and mid-January 2020 and lasted between 40-90 minutes. Five of the interviews were held using Skype and one was carried out face to face. Whereas the latter is to be preferred, time and logistics made it difficult to travel to the different teacher training institutions. However, none of the participants who partook in the Skype-interviews seemed to mind the online option. The teacher educators were also given the choice between being interviewed in Norwegian or English and only one chose English, as she is not a native speaker of Norwegian. The reason for giving the participants the choice of language, was to make them feel at ease in the situation, but also to ensure that they felt that their opinions and beliefs were communicated as accurately as possible.

The interviews were audiotaped, using a sound recorder, used solely for this purpose, and later transcribed using a transcription service which were instructed to transcribe the interviews verbatim (Appendix 4). The quotations and examples used in the text that were originally transcribed in Norwegian have been translated into English. A confidentiality contract was signed to ensure that the information provided by the interviewees was treated

according to privacy regulations. In accordance with the NSD guidelines for the treatment of such data, the sound files were deleted immediately upon the project's completion.

### **3.4 Data Processing**

The processing of the data material collected for this study is influenced by an *issue-focused approach*, where the aim is to go in depth into the study's individual topics. The approach is based on comparing information from all the informants, instead of writing a case study for each person who was interviewed. This can also be referred to as a *cross-case analysis* (Thagaard, 2003).

The data processing started by coding the interviews and initially, ten codes were used to organise the transcripts thematically. The ten codes were grouped into three overarching categories corresponding with the research questions. Summaries of the interviews were then written and arranged according to the overarching categories, and these summaries were in turn organised into descriptive matrices (Appendix 5). The intention behind these procedures was to get a systematic overview of the material.

According to Thagaard (2003), one concern regarding qualitative analyses is that they do not provide a full perspective and this concern is first and foremost directed at issue-centred approaches. When extracts of texts from different informants are compared, the extracts are removed from their initial context. To preserve a comprehensive perspective, it is therefore important that information from each individual informant or situation is placed in the context that the extract was a part of (p. 153). Consequently, when the process of interpreting the data commenced, it was important not to rely solely on the summaries and descriptive matrices, but that the information was traced back to the actual interviews. Hence, to protect the broader perspective, the interviewees are frequently quoted in both the presentation and discussion of the findings. This approach intends to give an impression of the interview content, as well as to exemplify the material used for the analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 313).

The interpretation of the data material began by tracing congruence and incongruence found in the descriptive matrices. The aim was to explore how the teacher educators legitimise the use of literature in EFL, and how their views in turn affect their belief in how to best prepare teacher trainees to become teachers of literature. The findings were analysed and discussed using an *abductive approach*, which means alternating among the empirical material, theory and other research to allow for a greater 'repertoire of interpretations' (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 273).

### **3.5 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability**

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), the *reliability*, *validity*, and *generalisability* of a study are all closely connected to the craftsmanship and credibility of the researcher and permeate the entire process. Whereas reliability is often used to determine whether a finding is reproducible by other researchers at other times, validity in social sciences is related to the evaluation of whether a method investigates what it is intended to investigate. The generalisability of a study addresses to which extent the findings are transferable from one situation to another (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 282-284). In order to evaluate a study's reliability, it is amongst other things crucial that the study's methods, procedures and materials are described in detail, something that was attempted to achieve earlier in this chapter.

When determining the validity of a qualitative interview study, one should ask if the respondents really say what they mean and give true representations of the situation, and if they would give the same responses, regardless of who the researcher is. Consequently, the validity of such interviews is closely connected to the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. According to Brinkmann and Kvale, a research interview typically involves a power asymmetry in favour of the interviewer. However, the study in question can be seen as an example of what Brinkmann and Kvale call 'interviews with the elites'. Elites are defined as "persons who are leaders or experts in a community" and the inbuilt power asymmetry of the interview situation may be cancelled out by the position of an elite interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

The interviewees in this study are well-educated, experienced, and work in high-level educational institutions. Hence, it can easily be argued that they belong to an elite within the Norwegian educational system. In addition, the interviewer in this study is a student within the same system, which could lead to a reversal of the power asymmetry in favour of the interviewee. As the interviewer was aware of this issue, efforts were made to prepare thoroughly before the interviews took place to be able to demonstrate solid knowledge of the topics of concern and thus, regain a degree of symmetry in the interview situation. The interviewer's impression is that this was mostly achieved. However, the interviewees are researchers themselves, hence the perspectives that they wanted to communicate were naturally influenced by their own research and fields of interest. The interviewer could have worked harder in the interviews to get beyond their promoted viewpoints and challenged their statements more but was reluctant to do so, due to a perceived inbuilt imbalance in the situation.

In conclusion, even if the interviewer could have questioned certain viewpoints to a larger degree, all the interviewees were asked the same questions and, due to their status, there

is reason to believe that they have communicated what they really believe. In addition, the interviewees were given the opportunity to read through their own answers in the findings before the completion of the paper. This was done both to ensure that the participants felt that they had been understood correctly and that their views had not been misrepresented in any way. Hence, the choice of introducing the participants to the findings was made both for the validity of the study, as well as for ethical purposes. However, the participants did not read the interpretations and discussions of their statements, as this could have worked against the initial intentions and compromised the study's validity and generalisability. None of the interviewees had any objections to the way their answers had been reported, and it is therefore likely that the interviewees' replies would have been the same in a different situation with a different researcher; hence the findings in the interviews should be evaluated as both comparable and reliable.

A common objection to interview research is that there are too few subjects for the findings to be statistically generalised. However, *analytical generalisation* is one form of generalising that can be used in case studies. Analytical generalisation contains a reasoned judgment about the degree to which the findings in one study can be used as a model for what might occur in a similar situation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 295-297).

When evaluating the generalisability of the findings in this study, we ask if the presented perspectives are representative of teacher educators in general. There are some issues that need to be addressed with regards to this question. Firstly, interviewing is an active process where interviewer and interviewee produce knowledge together (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 21). Consequently, the meaning that is constructed from the empirical material in the study can be seen as exclusive to a specific time and a place (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Secondly, the study is based on only six representatives from the Norwegian teacher trainer community and is thereby a small-case study. Therefore, other teacher educators might hold different perspectives on literature teaching in EFL than those presented here. However, the interviewees are all part of a specific community with its own discourse and according to Fairclough (2003), the social structures that govern how communities of speakers talk are relatively constant. It could therefore be argued that aspects of the teacher educators' reasoning found in this study could be recognised among the wider community of Norwegian teacher educators.

## 4. FINDINGS

The presentation of the findings from this study is organised into four sections. The first section provides a description of the teacher educators as readers. This section is meant to function as an interpretative backdrop for the teacher educators' reasoning. The three next sections correspond with the research questions designed for the study and discuss the following: how the teacher educators legitimise the use of literature in EFL, which strategies they believe should be used to select suitable texts, and how they, as teacher educators, best can prepare teacher trainers to become teachers of literature.

### 4.1 The Teacher Educators as Readers

The teacher educators have experiences from literary training both as learners and teachers and have thus been subjected to a range of classroom approaches and justifications for reading. These experiences, along with other contextual factors will most likely impact their own perspectives regarding the use of literature in EFL. Hence, to provide an interpretative context for the teacher educators' reasoning, they were initially asked to describe themselves as readers, as well as to describe their own experiences from their literary education, both as pupils and as students. They were also asked to what degree they believe that their previous experiences from literary training have influenced their own approach to using literature in the classroom.

Five of the six teacher educators say that they have always been enthusiastic readers and that literary fiction has been a natural and important part of their lives. Even though half of them admit to reading less than they would have liked to, they still believe that they read more than average and can list a variety of genres that they read, both for work as well as for personal pleasure. The exception is "Per", who also has a different background from the others as he is the only one who entered higher education from vocational studies. He describes himself like this: "I have actually never been interested in reading. I was one of those boys who was never especially good at reading, because my parents weren't readers – more like the kind of working-class parents where the bookshelves weren't at all decorated with literature." "Per" says that the very first book he ever read, was a crime novel for a book project in VG1. When he started his five-year 'lektorutdanning' he was met by an extensive literary reading list full of old classics and decided that if he were to pass the course, he had to sit down and "try to discover the joy of reading" by himself, something he succeeded in. "Per" went on to read everything from Dan Brown to Orwell, Brontë and Austen, and now claims to be a keen reader.

Having portrayed himself as a previous reluctant reader, it is perhaps not surprising that “Per” describes his experiences from literary education in compulsory and upper secondary as negative. He claims that the purpose of reading seemed to be to write either an analysis or a summary of the work in question, resulting in the absence of any personal engagement with the texts. It is perhaps more surprising that the other teacher educators, who were experienced and enthusiastic readers, do not necessarily think positively about their literary training either. “Susan” was educated in an English-speaking country and was early singled out as an advanced reader and placed in classes for ‘gifted pupils’, something she liked. However, even then she claimed to be “reading further than they were teaching” and didn’t feel properly challenged until high school, where “they started showing me proper literature”. Among the other teacher educators, we find some who remember very little from their literary training, some who liked it when they could choose for themselves what to read, and some who made clear distinctions between reading for personal pleasure and reading for school. However, several of the teacher educators remember enjoying the literary training they experienced when they entered higher education. “Anne” remembers a skilled teacher who made the students “write tasks where we really invested ourselves, got the impression that it was our interpretation that mattered, that there were no set answers you were supposed to find that the teacher was thinking of.” “Kari” in turn says, “I am a theorist, right, so the way that I was taught at university suited me really well” referring to traditional academic teaching, where you read a text, then you come to the lecture where an analysis is presented by a lecturer.

So, in what way, if any, have the teacher educators’ experiences from their literary training affected their own approach to teaching literature? As their previous experiences vary, so do the ideas and approaches that the teacher educators have either continued or avoided in their own teaching. “Kari” explains, “I think what I have continued the most is to expose students, and teach them to expose their pupils for as much literature as possible; to give them both freedom of choice and (the experience) that reading is something completely natural, something which should be experienced as positive, but also something that is sociable and unifying in a classroom.” “Anne” talks about raising her students’ awareness regarding literary pedagogy: “(I try to) make teachers think through what they want and why they do things; to become more conscious of what you do, that it is not just ‘this is how we teach literature, and you should do it like this’”. “Berit” underlines the necessity of giving pupils a choice of what to read “(...) since I don’t have positive experiences from having been pushed into reading a specific piece of literature, it has made me reluctant to push specific works of literature on pupils. But there is a big difference between that and pushing them to read literature.” “Per”

stresses the importance of meeting both the pupils' interests as well as their language levels, whereas "Susan", who has mostly positive memories from her literary training, claims that her experiences permeate how she teaches her own students.

## **4.2 How Do Teacher Educators Legitimise the Use of Literature in EFL?**

This section will look into the use of literature in EFL and will thus examine the teacher educators' epistemic perspectives. This means looking into which theoretical understandings that support their justifications for using literature in English teaching. Firstly, the interviewees were asked to give their opinions on why literary fiction should be a part of the English classroom. They were then invited to give their interpretations of what the curriculum communicates regarding the role of literature. As this study is conducted in the middle of the process of renewing the curriculum, the teacher educators will be giving their opinions on both K06, as well as the Subject Renewal.

### **4.2.1 Is Literature a Natural Part of EFL?**

As all the teacher educators teach, or have previously taught literature in teacher training, the answer to the above question is predictably a unanimous yes. The teacher educators also have several different reasons in common for believing so. All of them agree that reading literature assists the development of intercultural competence, helps pupils/students understand other people and cultures, and supports Bildung. "Kari" sums up her views like this:

(...)for me, the subject English, in the same way that it is a subject where you learn a language and how to communicate, it is also a 'danningsfag' (subject of Bildung), and this is where I think literature has a very important role to play. And I don't then mean the canonical literature, but the act of meeting someone a little different, someone who can challenge us, something that can make us see things in a different light, and so on.

While there is an overall agreement that literature is an important part of the development of Bildung, the ideas of what constitutes Bildung may differ somewhat from interviewee to interviewee. More than one connects the term with empathy; to be able to see things from another person's point of view, which again seems to be closely connected to the idea of 'the development of self'. "Knut" relates the term to having a common frame of references,

something that functions as ‘the glue of society’, but also serves as a backdrop for how we understand ourselves and the society we are a part of. This idea is shared by “Per” who refers to reading literature as “taking part in a cultural context”.

All the teacher educators also mention the more instrumental aspects of reading literature and emphasise the many benefits of extensive reading. It is commonly expressed that the exposure to vocabulary and complex sentence structures that come with extensive reading will in turn affect both the pupils’ reading and writing skills, as well as their general understanding of the language. Some of the teacher educators also express a belief that literary fiction is more suitable for extensive reading than factual texts. It is also argued that the concept of extensive reading can be connected to the curriculum’s requirement for teaching reading as one of the five basic skills.

Another functional aspect connected to the reading of literature is the development of critical thinking. Three of the teacher educators mention the processes of analysing and interpreting fiction as ‘learning how to think’ and ‘to identify patterns’. “Per” also makes the connection between reading skills and critical thinking and claims that to be able to be critical, for instance to information on the internet, there is a need for knowledge about the world, and such knowledge is acquired by reading. “Susan” shares the views above but takes it even further. She claims that the process of reading literary fiction is in general “a matter about learning”, and that theoretically, all subjects should be using narratives as a part of the learning process, not just language subjects. When asked the question if she sees literature as a natural part of EFL, “Susan” answers, «A natural and critical part. I really don’t understand how teachers, teaching students that are going to be language teachers, can do it without literature».

#### **4.2.2 The Curriculum**

In a way, the curriculum is society’s work instructions to teachers and as this paper is being written, the current instructions are in the process of changing. Even if the new curriculum is not implemented until the autumn of 2020, its development has been going on since 2015 and most of the teacher educators in this study have actively taken part in this process. Consequently, it became difficult to speak about the present curriculum in the interviews without referring to the new, and vice versa. Therefore, the following section will deal with both K06 as well as the Subject Renewal.

The majority of the teacher educators claim that with regards to literature, K06 has an inbuilt discrepancy between the intentions in the curriculum’s purpose section and the

competence aims. This seems to be especially evident when it comes to the phrase ‘joy of reading’. As “Kari” puts it:

It (the purpose section) is about taking part in cultures from English speaking countries, and that should absolutely be joyful in many ways, but it turns out – you can’t measure these things, and then I think the use of competence aims becomes a bit difficult as it is often the competence aims we look at. You are supposed to be able to express opinions about what these texts convey – but what has then become of ‘joy’?

The inconsistency within the curriculum itself is thus explained by the requirement for a constant assessment of competence. “Per” connects this focus on assessment with the introduction of basic skills, “(...) when reading became one of the basic skills, there was a great focus on reading, and literature became just a tool for working on reading skills”. Many of the teacher educators agree with “Per” and believe that much of what can be learned from reading literature cannot be measured and therefore, it often loses out to more quantifiable skills. Two of the teacher educators mention national tests and exams as concrete examples. They argue that if you have national tests concentrating on assessing text comprehension, the focus of your teaching will be on reading strategies and for this, you do not necessarily have to read fiction. In addition, if literature is never a part of written exams, teachers will prioritize more exam relevant topics.

“Susan” is the teacher educator who appears to be most skeptical towards the development of competency-based curricula: “I think that the pressure behind the ‘læreplan’ is to make a clear relevance in a context that the society cares about. So, they push texts and stuff like that to make it more about business, more about commerce, about communication to exchange globally. And I don’t think that’s the right path to go (...)”. “Susan” wishes therefore that the word ‘literature’ should be included in the curriculum, to ensure that fiction is read. She also claims that the word signalizes “a text of such quality that it can be critically considered, analysed and reflected upon, more than, let’s say, a text”. “Susan’s” wish for literature to be more explicit in the curriculum, especially in the competence aims, is shared by several of the other teacher educators.

One aspect of K06 that most of the teacher educators claim to appreciate however, is its openness regarding both methodology and text selection. This leaves endless possibilities for enthusiastic teachers. Nevertheless, the teacher educators also point out the dangers of the lack of guidelines for those teachers who are not so enthusiastic or lack confidence. “Susan” sums

it up: “we’re giving openness to the teachers, so that means that the teachers who are very well read, teachers who are more prepared to talk about literature, in any language – even Norwegian, they will bring it in. Those teachers who aren’t, will not”. “Anne” supports this view and adds “(...) as long as you don’t have that enthusiasm and you don’t have the obligation in the curriculum; you focus on other things. This leads to very different types of teaching, and the pupils may end up with very different outcomes”. The concern that the curriculum’s openness to variation may lead to too much variation in the pupils’ teaching outcome is shared by several of the teacher educators.

Most of the teacher educators have been involved in the development of the Subject Renewal, some more actively than others. So, what changes do they see, if any, when it comes to the place given to literature in the new curriculum?

Several of the teacher educators mention the core element ‘Møte med engelskspråklige tekster’ (encounters with texts in the English language. My trans.), where we find the only reference to literary fiction in the new purpose section. It is apparent that the teacher educators’ opinions on this core element vary greatly. “Anne” is slightly disappointed in the new section, “I think it’s moving in the wrong direction, because I really like the purpose section, at least the bit about literature, in the one we have now; this has been shortened down and compressed in the present suggestion”<sup>1</sup>. Others, like “Knut” do not see many changes, “(...) the place (literature has) today is so far not very different from K06. It is ‘encounters with different types of texts from English speaking countries’, plain and simple”. Whereas “Susan” on the other hand, is provoked by the word ‘encounter’, “This new phrase is bothering me so much, this ‘encounter’ – for God’s sake, what does that mean! (...) encountering doesn’t mean reading, thinking, expressing, reflecting”.

The teacher educator who is the most positive to the role of literature, both in the core element, as well as in the Subject Renewal in general, is “Berit”. She claims that the Subject Renewal is more specific with regards to literature than K06, and argues,

Everyone is now very comfortable with the core element ‘Møte med engelskspråklige tekster’ which is introduced with the Subject Renewal (...) One thing is that literature is important, another thing is that it is now explicit in the Subject Renewal. And, I think

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<sup>1</sup> «Anne» was interviewed before the final version of the new English curriculum was established; hence her comments are based on the proposal that was being discussed at the time.

this is explicit both in the competence aims, in the core element and I believe we can unproblematically read it into the cross curricular theme ‘Folkehelse og livsmestring’.

The teacher educators thus seem to disagree on the explicitness of literature’s role in the new core element. “Per” sums it up like this: “But, in the last suggestion to the curriculum it seems as if there is a lot of focus on the reading of texts, and not necessarily literature, but texts in general. So, it is up to the teachers to fill this term with content, whether it be literature, factual texts, poems or something digital.”

However, in the Subject Renewal, literary fiction is now specifically mentioned in all the competence aims in English after year two and upwards, except for VG1 vocational studies. Hence, teachers will still need to be able to select literary texts suitable for their pupils.

### **4.3 The Selection of Suitable Texts**

As mentioned above, K06 as well as the Subject Renewal give teachers great freedom of choice when it comes to choosing texts for their classes. What is considered a ‘suitable text’, will depend on teachers’ (and teacher educators’) epistemic and didactic perspectives on the use of literature; why and how should you teach literature? The following section will present what criteria the teacher educators believe should be used for selecting texts for pupils/students. In addition, the question of a literary canon is raised.

#### **4.3.1 Criteria for Selecting Suitable Texts**

As mentioned earlier, the teacher educators appear to have many reasons in common for why students of English should read literature. Therefore, they also agree on several criteria that can be applied when teachers select literature for their classes. There also seems to be a general agreement that some of the literature should be chosen by the pupils/students themselves, and some should be chosen by the teacher.

When the pupils/students get to choose for themselves, the teacher educators claim that it is important that teachers are updated and know ‘what’s out there’. Colleagues, libraries, and bookstores are mentioned as potential sources of information. In addition, the teachers need to know their pupils, so that both their fields of interests and language levels can be met. A couple of the teacher educators highlight the importance of not being negative or condescending towards certain genres, and to open up the text concept to include multimodal texts, audiobooks, graphic novels and other types of illustrated literature in order to accommodate as many pupils

as possible. In order to find out what pupils would like to read, some of the teacher educators suggest having talks with the pupils to get an impression of, not necessarily their reading habits, but their interests in general. “Berit” puts it like this:

We will probably have to endure shelving the aspect of Bildung. Not because Bildung shouldn’t be maintained, but so that it is not the most important element. We then have to try to connect the pupils’ interests to reading literature and try to find out what they are interested in. And then we can’t ask: what do you like to read? Because they might not necessarily like reading.

There is a general concern amongst the teacher educators that there isn’t enough available literature in schools, and some suggest that it is again vital to go to the pupils themselves to find out what literature to purchase instead of simply guessing what they would like to read.

When it is the teacher who decides what to read, the teacher educators point to the importance of maintaining the cultural and intercultural aspects. There is a strong belief that literature should reflect diversity. “Kari” explains, “We have looked at the different syllabi being used, and it is often very Anglo-American. Often there is a white middle class boy who is the protagonist, and one tries to challenge this a little; one should think: how do I find someone who is not like myself or, how do I find someone who can tell a different story?” The need for pupils to be able to see themselves reflected in the literature is also mentioned, as “Susan” argues, “I very, very much respect that we need to include authors that very clearly represent students, because nothing is more damaging to the development of children than not seeing themselves socially reflected. So, it should be African Americans or black writers, LGBT writers, native writers or Sami writers”.

Other questions that are suggested that teachers ask themselves when selecting texts for their classes are: what are the students supposed to learn from reading this? Can this text be analysed and reflected upon? Is this text appropriate for my pupils with regards to topic and language level? On the question of topics, a couple of the teacher educators claim that it is also important to think about the overarching principles in the core curriculum and to include the cross curricular themes, as literature is seen as a good way to approach these.

In conclusion, the teacher educators seem to believe that in order to increase the pupils’ motivation for reading literature, it is important that they sometimes choose for themselves what to read. Other times, the teacher must choose to make sure that requirements from the curriculum are being met. In both cases there are several challenges that teachers face when

attempting to find suitable texts. Consequently, the teacher educators were asked about their views regarding the use of a literary canon to assist teachers' choices.

#### **4.3.2 The Use of a Literary Canon**

As mentioned earlier, both R94 and L97 suggested in detail a British-American literary canon. However, K06 did away with literature as an independent category and introduced the more open concept of 'texts'. Several of the teacher educators express regret over the lack of explicitness regarding literature in both the current, as well as the new curriculum. In addition, they admit that the process of selecting literary texts for pupils can be challenging, especially for teachers with a lack of literary competence. Hence, they were asked if reintroducing a canon or set-text syllabi could be an answer. "Anne" answers:

This is a question where I never agree with myself. Because, I know that as a teacher, both in upper secondary and in teacher training, I appreciate the freedom I have in being able to form the syllabi and to shape the pupils and students. And to keep updated, because that too is a danger with a set syllabus; that it gets outdated. And maybe you then have the same people who make the decisions, which always leads us moving in the same direction, and then the question is constantly: what is left out? That is the big question; not what is there, but what is left out?

The potential loss of freedom as a consequence of a canon/set syllabus is a concern among most of the teacher educators. They worry that this could curb enthusiasm, for teachers as well as pupils. It is also argued that a set list of texts could result in a lack of diversity, both with regards to authors as well as topics; the phrase 'dead, white men' occurs more than once. However, whereas several of the teacher educators argue that a set syllabus is limiting, they believe that constantly updated lists of suggestions could be an option. As "Berit" puts it: "I am not against lists; I am just against how lists are used. I worry that if we make lists, it ends up with the teachers feeling obliged to use them, and then they don't have time for anything else." Many of the teacher educators speak more in favour of making reading lists for your own classes.

"Knut" seems to be the only one amongst the teacher educators who partly supports reintroducing a canon. He explains this based on his concerns about the loss of common frames of reference:

I think we should do both. I think things have gone too far in the other direction, so a way that makes sure that we have some texts that everyone should read. And this is because we should have a common frame of reference. We constantly speak of ‘the glue of society’, trust in society, common frames of reference - and this is important. So, I believe it is valuable to include some classics, or canon as we call it, in addition to being able to choose freely.

Even if “Per” is reluctant to the use of a canon with pupils, he too argues that a canon has its advantages, as there is a reason why certain literary works are listed as canonical. Hence, “Per” claims that “all teachers, whether you teach kindergarten, or PhD students, should know canon.” The idea that teachers should in some way know canonical texts, seems to be shared by more teacher educators, as most of them claim to have included classics on their reading lists for their courses, at least for the students on the ‘lektorprogram’. So, even if the teacher educators are hesitant towards a canon in the classroom, there seems to be an idea that canonical works should in some way be part of teacher training.

#### **4.4 Preparing Teacher Students to Become teachers of Literature**

This part of the study explores how the teacher educators believe they can prepare their students to use the freedom of choice the curriculum allows them when it comes to using literature in the classroom. The first part of this section will examine what skills the teacher educators view as necessary if their students are to become competent teachers of literature. They have also been asked about their awareness of the so-called non-reading students described in recent studies, and to what extent they pose a challenge. Lastly, the teacher educators will describe how they approach training their students for a future as practicing teachers of literature.

##### **4.4.1 What Skills Do Literary Teachers Need?**

There is a commonly expressed argument that teachers of literature need to be able to select suitable texts for their pupils, and strategies to do so were discussed in section 4.3. Some argue that teachers should be able to identify genres, know literary terms and be capable of literary analysis. This is linked to the ability to think critically, which is highlighted by several as an important skill. As “Kari” claims, “I think the most important thing is that they (teachers) have the ability to think critically and have the ability to develop critical thinking in others.”

That teachers have an understanding of why it is important to read literary fiction is also mentioned, and preferably teachers should be avid readers of fiction themselves. Some of the teacher educators underline the importance of teachers keeping themselves updated on what is being published, both when it comes to new literature, but also on recent research on reading. “Anne” says, “This is really important when it comes to literature as well, that you’re with it, that you don’t end up like one of those who only teach what they did 30 years ago, and keep doing that – the same texts.”

With regards to methodology, the ability to show variation is mentioned by several and this seems to be closely connected to creativity; to be able to see the didactic possibilities in a text. “Susan” claims, “You are the biggest, most creative resource in that classroom, you know what to do if you try. You have to be brave and creative and you have to find ways to do things yourself, you will find what works in your career.” More teacher educators agree with “Susan” in that teachers must have confidence and believe in themselves, not least because much of the legitimisation regarding literature is not expressed clearly in the curriculum but is left up to the teachers.

The view that the curriculum lacks explicit references regarding the legitimisation of literature can also lead to an entirely different interpretation of what it specifically demands of teachers. When “Knut” is asked what the curriculum requires from teachers in order to be successful literature instructors, he answers: “It is not really all that much. It really isn’t (...) it is like – as long as the pupils read texts from English speaking countries, then you have (it covered).”

The teacher educators’ list of what skills they perceive to be necessary for an effective literature instructor is extensive; the curriculum’s list of requirements is, according to “Knut” remarkably short. Either way, developing into a competent literature teacher is obviously challenging, not least for English teacher trainees with little enthusiasm for, and/or experience with literature themselves. The next section will investigate the occurrence of non-reading students and what potential challenges they pose both in teacher training and as practicing teachers.

#### **4.4.2 The Non-Reading Students**

As mentioned earlier, recent Scandinavian studies examining literary competence in teacher trainees have found that many of them read very little and a large number do not read at all.

The teacher trainers were thus asked whether they have noticed these non-reading students on their own courses.

All of the teacher trainers claim to have non-readers on their courses except “Berit”, who says that it is not her impression that her students do not read literature but she admits that she does not have enough insight to claim that they do. There seems to be a common understanding that you find the largest proportion of non-readers in the GLU programs, which is explained by the students’ young age and a lack of practice and motivation when it comes to reading literature. Some of the teacher educators claim that many students go through a development regarding reading literature over the duration of the program, still “Anne” admits, “(...) but I do believe that we have students who, when they are finished, have only ever read summaries of books.”

Many of the teacher educators argue that the situation is different in the KfK programs. Here you find the more mature students who often have many years of teaching experience, have applied for additional education themselves and are highly motivated. “Kari” however has a different experience from her institution, as she claims that the GLU students who have chosen English do not have major challenges connected to the language. This means that those who are not experienced readers can find methods to cope. “Kari” claims that out of her students, it is the KfK students who are challenged the most by the amount of literary reading required. She explains this with the fact that many of her KfK students have not applied to additional English studies themselves but have been appointed by their respective headmasters. Therefore, they may not have read much English since upper secondary school and reading literature could be a challenge connected to language more than literary experience.

The teacher educators’ experiences differ with regards to whether the non-reading students express reluctance or negativity towards working with literature. Half of the teacher educators say that most students accept the fact that literature is a natural part of teacher training. “Berit” argues: “I have still never come across a teacher student who has said, “No, honestly – literature is not something we do””. The other half have the impression that many of the non-readers to a large degree are motivated by grades and are simply looking for the easiest way to get through. “Susan” says, “I’ve had students that say, “what do I need to get a C so I can pass?” (...) They pass but they are glad to be done, and I instead hold on to the students who really love it and come back”. In “Susan’s” experience, the students who have no personal connections with literary reading and simply scrape through the literature courses, end up as teachers who either overlook literary instruction or rely on the textbook material. “Berit” on her part, is more optimistic:

I think it is quite interesting really, if we have teacher students who don't have a personal relationship with literature. I don't think they need to become bad teachers of literature for that reason, and it may well be that they can get students or pupils to read literature by saying that "I don't really read much myself, is there anybody else here who is like this?".

One obstacle mentioned concerning working with literature is the fact that many of the teacher educators understand their students to be utility focussed; that they are characterized by instrumental thinking. "Knut" explains it like this: "(...) when they start their teacher training they have, for some reason – I don't know where it comes from, the expectation that everything they read, do and hear should have a direct relevance to the school. So, if you read something and you can't use it with your pupils, then it's a waste of time. This way of thinking is not very constructive." When this is the case, it becomes the teacher educator's job to convince students that literature is useful, which is predictably expressed to be more difficult to do with the non-readers. Susan says, "(...) there are some students that I believe I've convinced, but certainly never all".

The majority of the teacher educators believe that it is of importance that a teacher of literature is an enthusiastic reader him/herself. It is therefore good news that all of them are optimistic when asked whether they believe it is possible to learn to become a keen reader. "Per" is himself a self-taught reader of literature and stresses that in the process of becoming so, it is vital to early on meet a person's language level to ensure mastery. Another factor mentioned to assist in the process is finding the right genre, and using science fiction, fantasy and young adult (YA) literature are cited as having been successful approaches with students who are less experienced readers. The significance of positive reading experiences is a recurring theme with all the teacher educators, whether they talk about reluctant readers in schools or in their own courses.

#### **4.4.3 Didactics**

The sections above have described what skills the teacher educators believe are important for teachers of literature to possess and by doing so, they have given themselves an instruction. In this final section, the teacher educators will discuss what didactic principles they apply when preparing students to become future teachers of literature, as well as giving their opinion on

whether they experience a common agreement in teacher education when it comes to teaching literature.

Four out of the six teacher educators claim that *modelling* is a central part of how they teach literature to their students. By using modelling, the teacher educator uses his/her own teaching to demonstrate variations in texts, approaches and methods, and the students become the pupils. After a session, the methods can then be discussed so that both the effects and the principles behind the methodology are explored. The idea is to equip the teacher trainers with tools, procedures and principles that can later be applied with their own pupils. “Per” also argues that modelling provides students with role models:

We put great emphasis on modelling, that teacher educators must appear as good role models to the teacher trainees because we, the teacher educators, are their closest experience of the teacher. Unless they think back on good teachers from their own secondary training, because it is often those who are used as models when they are off to teach themselves. So, we must give them both theoretical and practical content, so they have some pegs to hang things on.

There is a general perception that the student base in the different study programs vary greatly when it comes to abilities and maturity. In addition, there are distinct requirements connected to the levels the students are training to teach and so, this is reflected in the choices of didactic approaches. “Anne” says that in her higher education institution, the idea of linking literature and didactics through modelling is mostly used in GLU 1-7 and 5-10 (students training to teach basic education), whereas in the ‘lektorprogram’ they run more academic literature courses. Here, they also read the classics in addition to contemporary literature, and provide insight in literary analysis, history and culture. When it comes to the selection of texts, all the teacher educators claim that, regardless of which program students attend, they use both texts that can be applied directly into the classroom as well as texts that are selected by the students themselves.

“Susan” on her part, is sceptical of what she calls ‘formulas’, “But just giving a formula - I don’t believe that works, and I kind of think that it takes away from a teacher’s ability to bring herself into the classroom. To make a formula I think is dangerous. Much like a teaching plan (laughs), so I improvise a lot”. “Susan” says she alternates between using ‘literature as culture’ and approaching texts through analyses, and she believes one of the most important tasks concerning her students is to “allow them to see what’s possible” - to stimulate creativity.

Many of the teacher trainers argue that teacher training should be research based. “Berit” believes we must start by looking into what research says about reading in today’s classrooms. “Per” says that the teachers he wants to educate should be familiar with current research on how we can stimulate reading comprehension, reading competence and how to promote literature’s aesthetic dimension. In addition, he wants teacher trainees to learn how to keep themselves updated on new studies.

Finally, all the teacher educators were asked whether they feel there is collegial agreement with regards to working with literature in EFL and all of them claim that there is general agreement between those working with literature within their own institutions. However, the teacher educators express uncertainty whether this is the case in teacher training institutions as a whole. “Berit” says that she believes there is a common understanding amongst teacher educators that fiction should be read, but that there is disagreement on how to teach literature. When asked if she believes it is necessary for teacher educators to agree, she answers: “I think we should agree in the principle that pupils should read literature - this I believe it is healthy for us to agree on, but apart from this, I think it is quite ok if we have different perceptions of what this entails.”

“Per” says that his understanding of literature’s position in EFL and how to work with it is developed through collaboration with his colleagues, and that this understanding is supported in research, as well as through previous experiences in teaching. “Per” warns however, that as teacher educators get older, the distance between them and the actual classrooms increases; hence, there is a constant need to make sure that you know what is going on ‘in the field’.

“Susan’s” understandings of collegial agreement are connected to her experiences with recent developments in teacher training institutions, as well as the educational requirements for teacher trainers. Through mergers and the introduction of the KfK program, “Susan” has gone from being the only literature instructor in her department, to being one of 25 teacher trainers. Amongst these 25, there are four associate professors specialising in literature, and “Susan” says, “the four of us, we have a very clear vision that we can teach literature at a higher level.” However, she claims that it is problematic that higher education institutions do not often hire people who have expertise in teaching literature, and that there are many people in faculties who are teaching literature but have never studied it at a higher educational level.<sup>2</sup> It is

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<sup>2</sup> Whereas there are no formal requirements for teacher trainers beyond a higher degree in the subject they are to teach, teacher training institutions apply for teacher trainers within the specific field they need covered. However, practicalities may sometimes require teacher educators to teach disciplines outside their specialities.

“Susan’s” understanding that, in the Norwegian system, a degree in English will formally qualify you to teach any course within the English subject and “Susan” claims this is unfortunate, as literature teaching requires a different methodology than, for instance, linguistics.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In this study, it is likely that an essential factor in order to understand the teacher educators’ positioning on the use of literature in the EFL classroom is that they are avid readers of literature; most of them have had a love of literature from an early age. In addition, they are all university trained and more than half of them have their degrees in literature studies. Hence, the teacher educators express an understanding of literature in EFL both from an academic, as well as from a personal point of view. This balance between academic perspectives and personal experiences can be found throughout the study.

### 5.1 The Personal Perspective

Literature is seen by the teacher educators to be important, both regarding personal development as well as acquiring knowledge about others and the world around us. Consequently, all the teacher educators support, what Olsbu (2014) calls, the experiential and the intercultural approaches regarding the use of literature in the FL classroom. According to Olsbu, these approaches both represent a more wholistic view of language learning and include a dimension of personal growth and *Bildung*. These aspects of language learning are difficult to measure and the fact that the teacher educators emphasise these perspectives suggests that the personal benefits of reading literature represented in the two approaches are self-experienced. The majority of the teacher educators seem to share Nussbaum’s (1997) view that literature is especially suited as a medium for *Bildung* as it increases a person’s ability to take the perspective of others. This argument is also applied for using literature as a way of developing intercultural competence, as well as linking it to the new cross-curricular themes assigned to the subject English.

The experience of having benefitted personally from reading literature could also partially explain the strong belief the teacher educators all share in the advantages of, what

Krashen (2003) calls, extensive reading. Extensive reading is an approach which ultimately has more instrumental goals, like the development of language and literacy, and the teacher educators refer to research supporting this approach. Even if all the teacher educators agree that different genres of texts can be used in extensive reading, half of them share the belief that literary texts are better suited than other types of texts and this belief could be linked to the fact that they are experienced readers themselves. Their opinion seems to be based on the idea that literary texts will be a more suitable genre for keeping pupils' attention for long enough for the reading to qualify as extensive. This idea is also partially supported by Krashen, as his pedagogical principle of maximising 'comprehensible input' recently has shifted to 'compelling input'. The support for literature as 'compelling input' can also be regarded as a way of legitimising the use of literature in the classroom, as such legitimisation is viewed as an important aspect of being a teacher educator, something that will be discussed later.

## **5.2 Providing Positive Reading Experiences**

All the teacher educators place great importance on ensuring positive reading experiences for pupils and students alike, and some refer to the phrase 'joy of reading' from K06 in this context. The same teacher educators express disappointment that this phrase now has disappeared from the curriculum and feel that it has not been replaced by anything that supports the enjoyable aspect of reading literature. The emphasis on positive reading experiences could also be a consequence of their own early literary training, as several of the teacher educators claim that they disliked literary instruction in compulsory education, arguing that there was too large a discrepancy between reading literature in class and reading for personal pleasure. They agree that pupils and students should ideally learn to enjoy reading literature and it is to be promoted as natural and positive, implying that for some pupils and students, this is not necessarily the case. Therefore, all the teacher educators believe that the selection of literary texts should not always be left to the teachers, stressing the need to give room for the pupils' personal interests and the freedom to choose for themselves what to read.

The emphasis on the pupils' motivation for reading literature is understood to sometimes come into conflict with other aspects of literature teaching. "Berit" claims it may become necessary to "shelve the aspect of Bildung", and some of the teacher educators see working with canonical, or more complex texts as problematic if the aim is to safeguard the pupils' enjoyment. This tension between pupils' enjoyment and the practicing of skills is described by Møller et al. (2010) as one of the factors that make teaching literature challenging. In addition,

the teacher educators recognise the time aspect; the number of English lessons per week is limited and the curriculum does not explicitly focus on literature; hence, the balance between facilitating both the pupils' enjoyment and their learning outcome within the time available makes it necessary for teachers to carefully prioritise when planning literature work.

### **5.3 The Questions of Autonomy and Canon**

Both K06 and the Subject Renewal give teachers great freedom regarding literature. This appears to pose a dilemma for the teacher educators between the wish to keep the autonomy that the curriculum offers teachers, and the worry that not all teachers will be able to utilise this independence. Most of the teacher educators argue in favour of autonomy, not least from their own experiences in teaching, but also see that teachers lacking such experience may struggle, or at worst, avoid working with literature. "Kari" puts it like this: "I think there is a certain difference between having freedom of methods and in having almost complete freedom of interpretation".

The result of this dilemma is that some teacher educators call for more details in the new curriculum, others argue that literature can unproblematically be read into both the purpose section, the cross-curricular themes and the competence aims. Hence, the teacher educators are divided in their view of how explicit the curriculum should be in terms of methodology, text selection, and terminology. One example is the use of the open term 'text' instead of 'literature'. Some want the word 'literature' to be included in the curriculum like for instance "Susan". For her, the word signifies texts containing certain qualities that make them suitable for analysis and reflection. Others believe the word could be restricting as it could be interpreted to mean canonical texts, thereby excluding genres that widen the definition of a literary text.

On the issue of canon, many of the teacher educators appear to disagree with themselves. On the one hand, the debate regarding a canonical approach to the use of literature seems to be regarded as closed. Most of the teacher educators use the phrase 'dead, white men', referring to the western canon that was previously seen to be a natural part of foreign language studies. The traditional canon was accused of being excluding and selective, lacking in relevance for young people, and curbing teacher autonomy (Fleming 2007) and interestingly, these arguments are all used by the teacher educators against the reintroduction of canon. The word 'canon' thus seems to be regarded as having a dated and elitist ring to it, and the teacher educators prefer the word 'reading lists' when talking about set-text syllabi. The teacher educators are not principally against reading lists, as they can assist less experienced teachers, but argue that such

lists should ideally include suggestions on what to read, rather than instructions, thereby protecting teacher autonomy.

On the other hand, many of the teacher educators speak fondly of ‘the classics’, meaning texts belonging to the traditional canon which are often taught in traditional literature courses. These texts are regarded as timeless and part of a cultural heritage that teachers preferably should know. This view is hardly surprising as the teacher trainers are all university trained and are hence, part of an academic tradition where canonical texts have had a natural place. Several of the teacher educators also mention the personal pleasure they have experienced from reading these texts and being familiar with the classics seems to be part of the teacher educators’ professional identity. However, in the same way most of the teacher educators view the classics to be largely inaccessible to pupils, they are also evaluated as too demanding for many teacher trainees, especially in the GLU programs. Consequently, a canonical approach to literature teaching is mainly to be found in the ‘lektorprogram’ in many of the teacher training institutions represented by the teacher educators in this study.

#### **5.4 Legitimation of Literature in EFL**

A perceived lack of explicitness in the curriculum regarding the legitimation of literature is a reoccurring issue with many teacher educators and they claim that, as a result, coming up with arguments in favour of literature is left up to the teachers. The teacher educators therefore see it as an essential part of their job to communicate to their students why reading literature is important, as they all agree that this understanding is essential. This understanding is naturally seen as more difficult to communicate to students with little personal experience in reading literature, than to those who already read. Their legitimation of the use of literature in EFL is based on several different sources also outside the current curriculum. Many refer to tradition, claiming that literature has always been a part of English subject curricula. The same can be said for the link between literature and Bildung, where the understanding of the concept both includes the more traditional idea of literary Bildung, as well as referring to Bildung as the education of a “well-rounded citizen” (Lyngstad 2019). The mentioning of the term ‘common frame of reference’ can be understood as a remnant from previous curricula aiming at securing national and social unity, with R94 and L97 as the most recent examples. All the teacher educators also point to studies supporting both instrumental as well as personal benefits of reading literature and many of them underline the importance for teacher education to be anchored in research. Bakken (2017) argues that understandings inherited from subjects in the

past influence current curricula. This argument seems to be transferable also in the case of teacher educators' understandings of literature's role in the English subject.

### **5.5 The Challenge of Non-Reading and Utility Focussed Students**

As shown above, the curriculum's openness regarding literature leads to variations in interpretations of why, how, and what to teach. The same can therefore be said for its expectations to the skills needed to teach literature. However, most of the teacher educators share the understanding that teachers should ideally have a personal relationship with literature themselves to be able to teach literature and promote positive reading experiences in their pupils; a notion which is also supported in research (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; McCool & Gespass, 2009). Where this notion is questioned, there is still an expectation that teachers should understand the importance of reading literature in order to explore ways of becoming a reader together with their pupils. Hence, it can be concluded that an important task in teacher education is seen to, if not help all students to become avid readers, then at least communicate the value of literary experiences.

As previously mentioned, studies investigating literary competence in teacher trainees show that Norwegian students believe literature to be important, but many do not read literary texts regardless (Skaar, Elvebakk, & Nilssen, 2016). The majority of teacher educators claim to have these non-reading students in their courses but seem to be more puzzled than frustrated by them. The non-reading students are instead seen as part of a broader challenge: the utility-focussed students, who are either mostly interested in learning what they can transfer directly to their own future classrooms, or simply what they need to pass courses. These students are found both among those who read and those who do not. This group of students is understood to be a relatively new occurrence. "Knut" claims that this focus on the instrumental not only makes teacher education difficult but challenges the whole teaching profession. He underlines the importance of knowledge and skills that are "indirectly useful" and argues the point that "teachers are supposed to be on a much higher level in order to understand things that their pupils don't". This focus on the instrumental is regarded by many of the teacher educators to be a result of tendencies in society, which again are reflected in current curricula. As most of the teacher educators' students probably have their basic education from K06, this is understood to have a connection. Telhaug et al. (2006) claim that criticism of the neo-liberal education policies of the current curriculum has targeted the emphasis on technical and instrumental goals, hence some of the arguments presented in this study seem to coincide with these claims.

With regards to didactical approaches, it is unclear whether special measures have been taken in order to accommodate the non-readers and the utility-focussed students. The adjustments seem to be more connected to study programs, where the level of academic teaching increases with the age of the pupils that the students are training to teach. There are no didactical practices shared by all the teacher educators, but they all seem to agree with Dodou (2018), who argues that reading literature is not the same activity in a school setting as in academia. This understanding is reflected in their approaches to teaching literature to their students; all teacher educators describe approaches where literature teaching and didactics are integrated, whether it be through modelling, communicating principles, or introductions to tools and methods.

### **5.6 The Question of Collegial Agreement**

The participants in this study all agree that there is a collegial agreement amongst teacher educators concerning literature teaching within their own faculties or sections. This understanding is described either as having been developed together with colleagues, or adopted upon entering teacher training at a specific institution with an already existing approach to literature teaching. This supports Munden's (2018) argument that teacher educators' expertise is often based on collegial knowledge and cooperation. Munden further claims that the professional development of teacher educators in Norway is much left up to the individual institutions. When asked if a common understanding of literature teaching stretches across different teacher training institutions nationwide, the teacher trainers express doubts, but admit to relying on speculation more than actual knowledge about the matter. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that there is little insight in what other teacher training institutions do, with regards to the development of course plans and didactic approaches. However, not all the teacher trainers see a collegial agreement, either locally or nationally, as an absolute necessity, as long as there is shared understanding of the importance of reading literature. Such an understanding is viewed as essential for purposeful literature teaching by all the teacher educators in this study.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, the purpose has been to shed light on teacher educators' notions of the use of literature in EFL based on qualitative interviews with six teacher educators from different teacher training institutions around the country. The question that the study set out to answer was: How do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL? By examining the current role of literature from the teacher educators' perspectives, new questions appear about the future of literature in EFL, both with regards to the curriculum as well as in the training of new generations of teachers.

With regards to the study's reliability and validity, the methods, procedures and materials used are accounted for and, as experts in the field in question, there should be no reasons to believe that the teacher educators have not shared their true opinions and beliefs. As this is a small-case study, other teacher educators may have different views than those presented here, something which could question the generalisability of the findings. However, the interviewees are part of a relatively small community with a shared discourse, therefore chances are that aspects of the teacher educators' reasoning could be recognised by the broader community of Norwegian teacher educators.

As mentioned above, this study can be seen as a small-case study in teacher cognition, which has to do with what teachers know, believe and think about teaching (Borg, 2003). The teacher educators in this study base their reflections about literature in EFL on a combination of personal and professional experiences, academic background, and research. As experienced readers with solid academic training, they are thus especially well equipped to interpret less explicit curricula and apply the use of literature where it is not necessarily specified. This raises the question: is a similar background a prerequisite for a teacher of literature in the current curricula?

K06 and the Subject Renewal are both open when it comes to literature; neither why, what, nor how you should teach literature are specified, placing great trust in the individual English teacher. For experienced and highly qualified teachers, like the participants in this study, this is described as encouraging and motivating and most likely, this was also one of the intentions in the curriculum. The teacher educators are thus reluctant to give up this freedom, however, many of them still call for more explicitness in the curriculum, as there is a concern that many new teachers will not find the current openness regarding literature motivating, but limiting, as they may be lacking the skills, experience and confidence needed to make suitable

choices. Hence, there is a worry that literature teaching will be very different in terms of both quantity and quality between schools, as well as between teachers. This is an argument the teacher educators are well qualified to make through their work with the new generation of future teachers. Consequently, this concern should be explored if the ambition is for pupils to receive literature teaching of a certain common standard.

The teacher educators describe a student group where a significant proportion is characterised by instrumental thinking. In addition, a considerable percentage of students start their teacher training with little experience in reading literature. These new students have, in general, received their basic education under K06; a curriculum that has been criticised for favouring technical and instrumental goals. As K06 also did away with the literary text as an independent category, one can ask if the current curriculum's openness combined with rigidly defined learning outcomes have given literature unfavourable terms, thereby increasing teacher education's challenges when training new generations of literature teachers.

The teacher educators also present an extensive set of skills they see as advantageous for teachers of literature to possess, many which imply both experience with, and enjoyment of reading literature. This is not an issue with the students that are already readers, but for the students who do not have many positive reading experiences from before, it becomes the task of teacher education to provide these, in addition to didactic training. As articles previously presented in this paper have pointed out, this situation reveals a need for new didactic approaches in teacher training, and many of the interviewed teacher educators describe using methods that resemble the approaches recommended in said articles. Whether or not these methods have the intended outcome requires further research. This paper thereby supports Munden's (2018) claim that there is a need for research on the impact of teacher education on teachers' learning and their professional practice - in this context, with regards to new teachers' approaches to literary instruction. By studying how new teachers choose texts to use with their classes and how they legitimise their approaches regarding the use of literature in their teaching, it is possible to find out if their practices extend beyond the instrumental and thereby embrace literature's wider educational functions, or if new teachers continue the tendency of utility-focus. Such research would be of value for teacher education institutions to align their methods of training new teachers with the actual needs and challenges in the field.

The assumption regarding literature in the current curriculum is that English teachers in Norway are experienced readers with a high degree of literary competence and can be trusted to manage and maintain the teaching of literature in EFL classes. The teacher educators in this study express the belief that a large number of the students they educate will likely become

such teachers. However, there is a worry that an ever increasing number of students belonging to the future generation of English teachers may not be sufficiently equipped to take on this responsibility and, at worst, this could lead to a gradual disappearance of literature with each new generation of teachers. This may of course not happen, but it would be unwise not to monitor the development of the effects that both curricula and teacher education have on new teachers.

As the finalized version of the Subject Renewal now includes the word 'literature' in the competence aims on most levels, from basic education to upper secondary school, reading literature is not something that can be avoided and hopefully, with the outcome that pupils will be reading more literature in general. The implications of this on teacher training would ideally be that students enter their studies with more literary experience than today. Whereas it is positive that literature now has been given more prominence in the curriculum, the language used still mostly describes instrumental functions. Both the legitimation for reading literature and an emphasis on positive reading experiences are indistinct, consequently these aspects will still be left up to teachers to clarify. If anything, the new curriculum amplifies the need for teachers with pedagogical skills in literature, and at the core of literature pedagogy is the question: why read?

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Interview Guide

### Interview guide

#### 1. Introduction

- General information about the project: I am looking into how the role of literature in EFL and the curriculum is interpreted by teacher-educators.
- Information about the interview: I have some specific questions I will be asking, but the interviewee is welcome to provide input at any time.
- Let the interviewee ask questions.

#### 2. Personalia and professional information

- Inform that I do not need the interviewee's personal information.
- Ask the interviewee about age, experience (=school (age groups), college, university), education (level, subjects, institutions).
- How does the interviewee classify him/herself as a reader (avid, dormant, reluctant)?

#### 3. Epistemic and didactic perspectives

- Do you remember your own literary training? Has this affected your own approach to literature/view on literature in the EFL classroom in any way?
- Do you consider literature to be a natural part of EFL? Explain.
- (If no, why not? Should it in some way be included anyway?)
- Is there a collegial agreement when it comes to the view on literature in EFL?
- What criteria should be used for choosing appropriate texts? Canon?
- How do you interpret the current curriculum's view on the role of literature?
- Do you see any changes in the Subject Renewal?
- The curriculum as steering document – opinions.
- What skills do teachers need to fulfill the curriculum's requirement?
- Do the new 'non-reading students' pose a challenge?
- Do you see a need for new didactical requirements from teacher-training institutions/upper secondary schools/primary- and lower secondary schools?

## **Consent and information form regarding master's thesis written by Marianne Brekke, supervised by Britt Wenche Svenhard - Hiof.**

### **Background for thesis**

I am currently writing my master's thesis as a student at Høgskolen i Østfold (Hiof). In my thesis I have chosen to investigate teacher trainers' reflections on the use of literature in EFL.

Literature has played an important role in English language syllabi for well over 100 years even if its role has changed drastically through time. The current curriculum K06 gives teachers great freedom of choice both when it comes to literary selection and methodology, placing great trust in the individual teacher's literary competence.

Teacher trainers play a crucial part in developing such competence in new teachers, by helping them interpret and operationalize the curriculum. In addition, many of you are central in the development of new syllabi. Consequently, your positions regarding the role of literature in EFL is of importance and my research question is: *how do teacher educators position themselves regarding didactic and epistemic perspectives on the use of literature in EFL?*

### **Who is responsible for the project?**

The responsible persons for this project are Marianne Brekke, master student at Hiof and supervisor Britt Wenche Svenhard, Teaching Professor at Hiof.

### **Why have you been asked to participate?**

Teacher trainers from different Norwegian teacher trainer institutions have been asked to participate in the project. You have been invited to the project to show variety with regards to gender, professional background, field of competence and the institutions' geographical locations.

### **What does your involvement in the project entail?**

The teacher trainers will be interviewed one-on-one in the months of November 2019/January 2020 using a semi-structured interview format. The interviews will last for no longer than an hour and will be recorded. The recordings will later be transcribed, and the identities of the interviewees will be anonymised.

### **Voluntary participation.**

You can at any time choose to withdraw from the project without giving a reason. Your recording and all the data will then immediately be deleted.

### **Your privacy – how we store and use your information**

Your information will only be used for the purposes explained in this form. I will treat your information confidentially and in accordance with privacy regulations.

- *The information will only be available to Marianne Brekke and Britt Wenche Svenhard.*
- *Your name and contact information will be coded and kept on a list separate from the data in question. The information will be stored electronically in a file accessible only by password. Only Marianne Brekke will know the password.*
- *The interviewees' personal information in the project will include age, gender and a general presentation of education, field of competence and experience.*

### **What happens to your information when the project is completed?**

The project is scheduled to be completed in May 2020. All information will then be deleted.

### **What are your rights?**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability),
- and send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data"

### **What gives us permission to handle personal information about you?**

We handle information about you based on your consent through this form.

### **Where can I learn more?**

If you have questions regarding the project or want to use your rights, contact

- *Marianne Brekke (master student and responsible for project),*  
[marianne.brekke2@bfk.no](mailto:marianne.brekke2@bfk.no)  
Phone number 97 14 48 42,
- *Britt Wenche Svenhard, Høgskolen i Østfold (supervisor),* [britt.w.svenhard@hiof.no](mailto:britt.w.svenhard@hiof.no)  
Phone number 69 60 83 48, or
- *Martin Gautestad, Høgskolen i Østfold (Data Protection Officer),*  
[martin.g.jakobsen@hiof.no](mailto:martin.g.jakobsen@hiof.no)  
Phone number 69608009
- *NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, e-mail* ([personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no))  
Phone number 55 58 21 17

Yours sincerely,

Marianne Brekke  
(student and responsible for project)

---

### **Statement of consent**

I have received and understood the information above and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I hereby consent to

- participating in the interview
- the interview being recorded and transcribed
- the information given in the interview to be used in the thesis

I give my consent for the information in question to be stored until the completion of the project, ca. end of May 2020.

---

(Name of participant, date)

# Masteroppgave i fremmedspråk Hiof

## Referanse

448643

## Status

Vurdert

## NSD Personvern

14.10.2019 16:09

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 448643 er nå vurdert av NSD. Følgende vurdering er gitt: Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg den 14.10.2019, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

### MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: [nsd.no/personvernombud/meld\\_prosjekt/meld\\_endringer.html](https://nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html) Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

### TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 31.05.2020.

### LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

### PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: - lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til

behandlingen - formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål - dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet - lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

#### DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20). NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13. Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

#### FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32). For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

#### OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet. Lykke til med prosjektet! Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

A: Kanon har sine fordeler, det er en grunn til at enkelte verk er opplistet som kanon, det har jo en del verdier i seg som går på tvers av tid, sted og rom. Shakespeare tar jo universelle tema som kommuniseres og fra en veldig tidlig tidsepoke, da, så er det utrolig hvordan noen av de konfliktene som tas opp i Romeo og Julie fremdeles utspiller seg som plott i flere litterære verk på tvers av tid, så det er jo en grunn til at samtlige universiteter har egne seksjoner eller folk som er spesialisert i Shakespeare, så det viser at det har en verdi og en betydning. Men, sett fra et leseperspektiv så er ikke Shakespeare i sin originale form nødvendigvis den beste kilden for å fremme leseglede og lesemestring hos en del elever. Det er klart at der har du en masse adaptasjoner som du kan ta i bruk, altså, du kan ta i bruk Shakespeare eller Romeo og Julie som graphic novel, du finner jo masse sånne easy readers også, så du kan ta i bruk Eller, adapted readers hvor liksom språket er skrevet om eller tilpasset det leksikalske nivået til elevene. Og du har masse filmer, masse serier, så det er så mange nye innganger til for eksempel Shakespeare som innbyr til sånne her tekstbegrep, så er en TV-serie som tar for seg Romeo og Julie- Kunne det vært tolket som en tekst?

I: *Ja, hva synes du? Kan det det?*

A: Med det nye tekstbegrepet så ville jeg absolutt vurdert det, ja. Nå er det jo ikke jeg som skal ha noen definisjonsmakt her, da, men jeg ville absolutt ha tatt det seriøst. For, når vi ser på vurderingsformen så kommer det i den nye skolen, altså, eksamen er jo ennå ikke bestemt, hva om elevene skal nå plutselig lage videoer i stedet for å skrive tekster, eller, lage video sammen med å skrive tekster eller lage et spill, lage en app, lage et eller annet fysisk produkt- 3D-printe noe. Så, denne tekstlige modaliteten blir mye mer utfordret i fremtidens skole som gjør også at vi må se mye bredere på tekstbegrepet.

I: *Men sånn som du ser det, tenker du at litteratur er en naturlig del av EFL? Altså, er litteratur fremdeles en naturlig del av engelskfaget, synes du?*

A: Ja, absolutt. Ikke bare fordi at det fremmer lesekompetanse og leseglede, men også at det fremmer dette kulturelle og samfunnsaspektene i de ulike verkene som blir lest, da. Så, jeg fikk jo- Igjennom min egen leseopplevelse så fikk jeg jo innsikt i mange ulike land sine kulturer og samfunnssjikt, for når jeg gikk fra å lese alle disse romanene i engelsk og besto første året mitt på lektorutdanningen i engelsk, så gikk jeg jo over historie hvor vi hadde en sånn murstein som var hovedboken vår i historie, som vi hadde igjennom hele året.

## Appendix 5: Example of Descriptive Matrix

### 1. How do teacher educators legitimise the use of literature in EFL?

	Why is literature a natural part of EFL?	Quotes
Respondent 1	Experiential, intercultural, critical thinking, «volume training», Bildung	«...for meg er engelskfaget på like stor linje som at det er et fag der du skal lære et språk og lære å kommunisere, så er det et danningsfag, og der mener jeg at litteraturen har en kjempeviktig rolle. Og da tenker jeg ikke den kanoniske litteraturen, men det å møte noen som er litt annerledes, noen som kan utfordre oss, noe som kan få oss til å se det i et litt annet lys, og så videre.»
Respondent 2	Development of language skills, develop empathy, develop yourself, see the other's perspective, Bildung, intercultural skills, tie to social sciences	«Litteratur er en veldig god måte å jobbe mot- altså, dannelse og alle de aspektene, det får man veldig mye gratis, på en måte, og det skal jo fortsatt være en veldig viktig del av engelskfaget, så det er først og fremst der jeg legger inn støtet og bruker det som argument.»
Respondent 3	Part of the subject's aspect of Bildung, basic skills: read, the cultural aspect, develop empathy, tie to the new cross-curricular topics.	«Men, det betyr at først så har vi de grunnleggende ferdighetene som er en grunn til å lese litteratur, vi kan ikke bare lese faktatekster eller andre typer tekster. Så har vi det kulturelle aspektet, å lære om andre kulturer og om andre mennesker. Også har du da det empatiske; det å forstå deg selv og andre mennesker gjennom litteratur.»
Respondent 4	Gain insight in history and culture, common frame of references, see things from the outside/the other's perspective – Bildung. Extensive reading and development of reading strategies.	(Om dannelsesaspektet)»Jeg tenker at det henger sammen med referanserammer, da. Det handler om danning det og. Det handler om å forstå selv i dag hvorfor ting har blitt som de har blitt.»
Respondent 5	Promotes competence in reading and joy of reading, promotes the cultural aspects in what's being read, Connections to academic achievements, a way to acquire knowledge, extensive reading	«Ja absolutt, ikke bare fordi at det fremmer lesekompetanse og leseglede, men også at det fremmer dette kulturelle og samfunnsaspektene i de ulike verkene som blir lest, da. Så jeg fikk jo – igjennom min egen leseopplevelse, så fikk jeg innsikt i mange ulike land sine kulturer og samfunnsskikt.»
Respondent 6	Extensive reading – a matter of learning altogether. Should be required.	«A natural and critical part. I really don't understand how teachers, teaching students that are going to be language teachers can do it without literature.»

## REFLECTION NOTE, MASTER'S THESIS

I knew early on that I wanted to write my master's thesis on literature and attending the course 'Method and Project' helped me narrow down the choices for a suitable project. Whereas I then conducted a focus group interview with four teachers on their use of literature in EFL, I now wanted to turn my attention to teacher educators. Initially, I intended to interview teacher educators from all fields of English teacher training but after the first respondent interview, I decided to concentrate on those who had experience in literature teaching. By testing out my interview guide in advance, it became clear that this would be the most suitable approach to best answer my thesis question.

I was pleasantly surprised to discover that it was not too difficult to find teacher educators willing to participate - one of my initial worries. The interviews all took place within two and a half months but in hindsight, I should have conducted the interviews over a shorter time span for the sake of continuity. Ideally, I would have liked to have conducted all the interviews face to face, as I believe communication works better this way. I would also have preferred to transcribe the interviews myself, given that I like to have full control over my own work. However, as a part-time student I have taught my own classes alongside my studies, and time and logistics have been issues throughout the project. Consequently, I have had to make compromises.

One of the things that made the project challenging was the fact that I was constantly reliant on other people for making progress in my work, something which applied to my interviewees, my supervisor as well as my transcriber. In addition, I was also dependent on an NSD approval, as the interviews were recorded. This involved a lot of waiting, organising and coordination, all of which took time and added stress. However, I think this would have been difficult to avoid, as such factors will always be present when dealing with other people with their own schedules.

Working with this project has strengthened my belief in literature as a vital part of EFL and it has made me even more determined to use literature with my own students. By interviewing the different teacher educators, legitimising literature has become clearer and easier to articulate. On a more practical note, having immersed myself in the new curriculum has given me a head start concerning where and how I can implement literature into my own teaching and my interviewees have also provided me with ideas and approaches. When it comes to the bigger picture, I hope that my project will be of interest to others who work with literature

in the education system and that it may contribute to encourage further studies into the effects that literature teaching in teacher training has on new teachers of English.