International Perspectives on Writing Curricula and Development

A Cross–Case Comparison

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Chapter 10

School writing in Norway: Fifteen years with writing as key competence

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The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, we provide an overview description of writing instruction in Norwegian schools using official documents as our main source. Second, aided by a newly developed writing competency model, we present a fine-grained review of the language arts (LA) subject syllabi, focusing on conceptualisations of writing, how the curriculum intends writing to be taught and assessed, as well as the writing development trajectory that is implied in the syllabi standards. The result of this analysis will be discussed using Ivanič's Discourses of Writing (DoW) framework (Chapter 1, this volume). As will be shown, the results imply that teachers face a daunting task when having to translate complex and distributed standards into an instructional plan.

The Norwegian school context

In the academic year of 2018–2019, there were 636,350 students in Norwegian compulsory school (Grades 1–10) and 188,482 students in upper secondary school. The latter is non-compulsory but attracts a vast majority (98.1%) of the students leaving secondary school. There are two tracks, one called "studiespesialiserende" [*academic specialization*], which prepares students for tertiary education, and one called "yrkesfaglig" [*vocational*], which is vocational. Most (91.7%) Norwegian schools are public.

To understand the organisation of the school system in Norway, the forthcoming school reform, which is to be implemented gradually from 2020, serves as a good example: the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDET), commissioned by the parliament, drafted curricular documents which the parliament later approved. The drafting process involved teachers, researchers and other stakeholders, and drafts were made publicly available for several consultation rounds. A consultation round refers to the process where a proposal (e.g., a proposal for a new curriculum) is made public for stakeholders to comment on. Members of parliament had access to these comments when drafting the bill. The resulting curriculum is obligatory for all schools in Norway. The schools are organised at the level of

municipalities, called "school owners" in Norway, which are responsible for implementing the curriculum and for auditing the enactment of the curriculum at individual schools.

The current curriculum, *The Knowledge Promotion* (also KP06), was introduced in 2006 and revised in 2013, and consists of two parts. The first part, which was introduced in 1997, is a general description of the overarching aims of primary and secondary education in Norway. The second part deals with subject-specific matters like "content standards" (see Cizek, 2012). The first part of the curriculum, called *Core Curriculum* (CC), is a general and broad description of values and objectives. One example is the portal paragraph, which states:

> Education shall inspire an integrated development of the skills and qualities that allow one to behave morally, to create and to act, and to work together and in harmony with nature. Education shall contribute to building character which will give the individual the strength to take responsibility for his or her life, to make a commitment to society, and to care for the environment (The Royal Ministry of Education Research and Church Affairs, 1997, p. 39).

The intention of CC is not to prescribe disciplinary standards or pedagogy, but to frame the curriculum of each discipline. Research suggests that the CC has received little attention from teachers in their daily work (NOU 2014: 7 [White Paper 2014: 7], 2014, pp. 59–60), and as this chapter is written, a new CC has been passed by the parliament and will be implemented in August 2020.

The second part of the KP06 delineates subject-specific descriptions and standards for each of the 11 subjects in primary school. A subject description consists of three parts: the purpose of the subject, the main content of the subject and the subject-specific definition of the five "key competencies." These five key competencies are included in all subjects and consist of writing, reading, oracy, numeracy and digital competence. They are cross-curricular in the sense that they are included in each subject but subject specific in the sense that there is a definition of each competency for each subject. The content standards describe expected educational attainment for different stages in primary and secondary school (e.g., after two years of schooling, after seven years and so on).

Another key document is the *Framework for Key Competencies* (NDET, 2013). The background for this document is that evaluations of the implementation of KP06 showed that the key competencies were not adequately enacted nor fully understood by teachers (Aasen et al., 2012) and that there were inconsistencies across the subjects in the standards regarding progression and descriptions of the competencies. To resolve these issues, the *Framework for Key Competencies* was developed as a tool for revising the curriculum. This

Framework was later made public as a non-steering supplement to the curriculum, and it contributed to a revised version of the KP06 in 2013.

With the KP in 2006 followed, in psychometric terms, content standards (Cizek & Bunch, 2007, p. 14)—which were called "kompetansemål" [*competency goals*]. These specified the set of outcomes, or competencies, which students are expected to have developed at different stages in their education. This was somewhat of a break with traditional curriculum which had focused on the subject matter content (e.g., which authors to read; which texts to write) rather than on the learning objectives for students' learning processes.

Assessment system and grading

Assessment in Norway is formally divided into formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment has been implemented in the laws regulating Norwegian schools (Opplæringslova [The Education Act], 1998, 3rd chapter § 1–9) and teachers are obliged to make explicit to students how they are progressing with reference to the competency goals and how they might close or narrow gaps between current and desired levels of competence. This might, for example, yield written reports that summarise learning so far and what actions that are needed to progress. Until Grade 8, the progress of students is reported and discussed in teacher-parent-student conferences.

Summative assessment in its more formal sense, for example, as end-of-semester grades, occurs for the first time in Grade 8 when students are awarded a grade for each course. This grade is set by the student's teacher. By the end of secondary school (Grade 10) and through upper secondary school (Grades 11–13), students also sit for national exams, some of which are devised locally and some of which are devised externally.

All students sit in an externally devised exam in the LA subject. Although this is not a writing test per se (Skar & Aasen, 2018), it is the one exam that has criteria directly related to writing proficiency. To complete the national exam in the LA subject (i.e., "Norwegian") students must write several texts, choosing from among a number of tasks. The texts are marked by two external raters and, in case of large discrepancy, by a third senior marker. The mark is translated to a grade expressing pass or fail. There are several pass grades.

Leaving secondary school and upper secondary school, students are awarded school-leaving certificates. These comprise teacher grades and grades from formal exams. To be awarded a school-leaving certificate, the student must pass the exams, which makes them high stakes. Given its high stakes nature, it is highly likely that it impacts the day-to-day LA curriculum.

Writing education and research in Norway

One year prior to the launch of KP06, Berge (2005) called the then new curriculum—with some enthusiasm—a *literacy reform*. There has indeed been a general understanding among some teachers as well as researchers of the

curriculum as being literacy oriented. One reason for the enthusiasm was the inclusion of the aforementioned key competencies. The inclusion stemmed from a desire to rapidly increase, among other things, Norwegian students' literacy proficiency.

When reviewing results from participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Norwegian policy makers and others experienced, as it were, a PISA-shock. In reading, for example, while Norway's score was not significantly different from the average, it was significantly lower than several other countries, including its Nordic neighbour Finland (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2003). To remedy the situation, which presented a stark contrast to a popular belief that Norway had (one of) the best school systems in the world, Norwegian policymakers sought reform. One of the bases for this reform was a framework developed by the OECD called "Selection and Definition of Key Competencies" (OECD, 2005; Rychen, 2003).

The high value assigned to the key competencies is reflected in each description of the subjects, which contain descriptions of what it means to exercise the key competencies in that particular subject. For example, the following excerpt from the description of the subject mathematics explains that "writing in mathematics":

> includes describing and explaining ways of thinking and to verbalize discoveries and ideas. Writing in mathematics is using mathematical symbols and the formal mathematical language to solve problems and present solutions …. Developing writing in mathematics is characterized by a gradual move from using simple forms of expression to employing a formal symbolic language and exact terminology.

Although all subject syllabi include descriptions of what it means to write in that subject, the Norwegian LA subject has formally a key responsibility in delivering writing instruction. Aside from foreign language subjects (such as French, German, etc.), the LA subject is the only one with objectives that directly target writing proficiency and text quality. In the following analysis, we therefore focus specifically on the Norwegian LA subject.

Writing research traditions

There have been several small and large-scale research projects that have contributed to expansion of knowledge of writing and to the conceptualisation of writing in Norwegian schools. Focusing on the large-scales ones, The WRITE-project was a project surveying writing instruction in 20 schools utilising an ethnographic approach (Smidt, 2010). One of its key documents was a list of ten hypotheses of what makes good writing instruction—this document has been referred to many times by government agencies and

researchers. The NORMS-project, which targeted writers in Grades 3 and 7, sought to investigate the "hidden" writing norms among teachers and to investigate the effects of explicating those norms and introducing them as objectives. These norms were cross-curricular criteria for writing. Additionally, the project introduced a novel conceptualisation of writing (The Wheel of Writing, Berge et al., 2016), which has been important in the further development of the national exam. Another project, started in 2010, was the governmentally funded National Sample-Based Writing Test (NSBWT; Jeffery et al., 2018; Skar, 2017), that was launched with the intention to collect information about students' general writing competency. It resulted in several instruments relevant for writing instruction (e.g., assessment criteria, tasks, annotated exemplar texts); but after its discontinuation in 2016, these resources have no official status. Lastly, the ongoing intervention project "Functional Writing in Primary School" (Skar, Aasen, & Jølle, 2020) investigates effects on writing competency and writing development among students in Grades 1–2 using a "functional approach," focusing the communicative purposes of writing.

Summary

As has been shown above, the curriculum, the assessment system and recent research projects have focused on writing proficiency, and in many ways put literacy competency in the limelight. Given the concept of writing as a key competence and given that all subject matter syllabi imply or explicate writing as a medium through which knowledge should be acquired and displayed, it is fair to say that there are strong indications that writing is viewed as a valued and necessary activity across the curriculum. With that said, however, teachers are responsible themselves for using whatever methods or foci they deem necessary for students to develop the kind of knowledge and competence that the syllabus describes, in terms of purposes, main areas and objectives (see Kvithyld, 2019). Also, there is no overall policy-level definition of the construct of writing competence. As such, the descriptions and the abovementioned "competency goals" (i.e., the curricular content standards) function as proxies or operationalisations of an implicit construct of writing competence in the disciplines, which we apply in our content analysis below.

There are two challenges with the present that calls for an investigation into how writing is framed in the subject responsible for writing development. First, there are several curricular documents providing descriptions of writing as a key competence, but there is no single coherent text presenting one universal definition and there are, to our knowledge, no previous attempts to investigate how the curricular documents connect to each other with respect to defining writing. Second, there is not a single document describing what writing is and how writing proficiency develops. Given the autonomy placed in the hands of teachers, it is interesting to conduct a fine-grained analysis

that might provide insights into what might aid such interpretational work, and what might serve as obstacles.

We will now turn to a content analysis of the LA subject to present an investigation into the curricular tools that teachers have at their disposition when designing writing instruction.

Writing proficiency and development through a curricular lens

This section provides an analysis of curriculum documents aimed at answering two questions: how is writing implicitly defined in the syllabus? What do the documents say about writing development? To that end, we will use the syllabus for the LA subject, given that the latter has a certain responsibility for developing writing proficiency.

All syllabi in Norway include (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training [NDET], 2016):

- A chapter presenting the overall purpose of the subject, or "the overall competence associated with the school subject."
- A chapter presenting the main areas of the subject, which "indicates how to understand the competency goals."
- A chapter presenting key competencies and their relevance in the subject.
- A chapter presenting content standards as competency goals that describe what the student is supposed to "master after instruction in the subject."
- A chapter presenting the system for assessment in the subject that includes information about the exam for the particular subject, for example if the exam is mandatory for all students or sample-based and if the exam is local or external.

Figure 10.1 presents a depiction of the relationships between steering documents in the Norwegian educational context.

Tools for analysis

Because there is no "official" definition of a writing competency construct in Norway's current curriculum, we developed our own analytical tool based on a construct of writing and adapted it for curriculum analysis (Figure 10.2). The model emphasises aspects of writing competencies that are possible to develop within the context of writing instruction, reflecting a notion of writing proficiency as non-innate: the development of writing proficiency is far from, as it were, natural. Instead, it is contingent upon formal instruction and participation in "communities of practice" (see Lave & Wenger, 1991), as well as on a person's individual cognitions.

Writing Competence

Knowledge About Writing

Writing Process Skills

Attitudes to Writing

***Possessing* Knowledge About:**
- Language (vocabulary, grammar, text structure)
- How texts are used for different purposes in specific social and cultural contexts
- Genres and text types
- The modalities of writing (graphemes, orthography, graphical resources, relation between written text and other modalities)
- Tools for crafting written text (pen, pencil, keyboard, word processing software)

***Using* Knowledge to:**
- Analyze communicative situations to plan and formulate objectives for the writing process
- Analyze how the written utterance can be adapted to the needs of the audience
- Generate content
- Plan the text to be written
- Assess and talk about own text
- Revise own text
- Finalize text

- Having faith in own ability to master the writing process
- Being motivated to complete the writing process and perceiving writing to be a relevant medium for communication
- Having interest in as well as knowledge and skills for engaging in learning processes
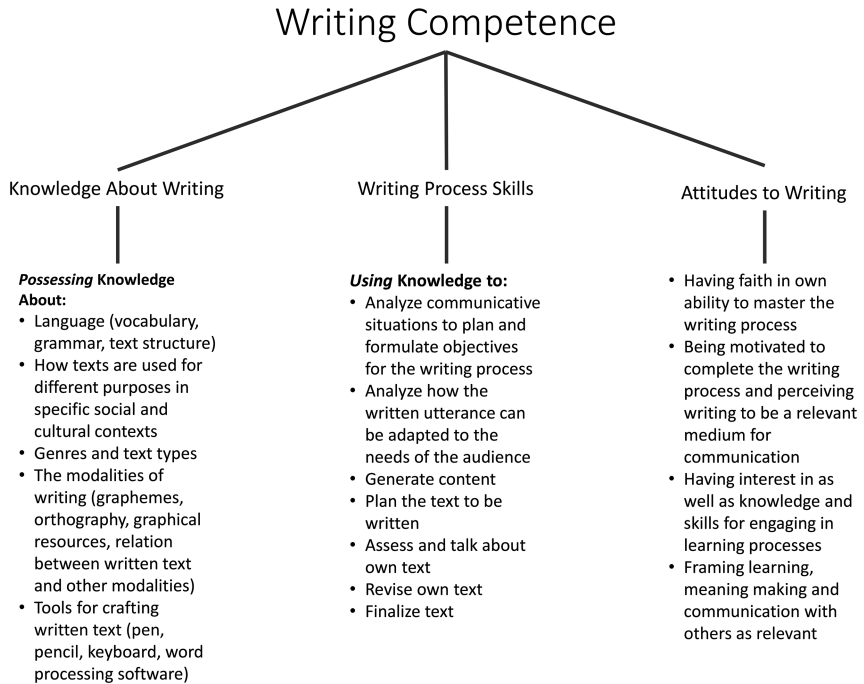- Framing learning, meaning making and communication with others as relevant

Figure 10.1 Writing competence seen as three interrelated aspects: knowledge about writing, skills related to using that knowledge and attitudes playing a vital role in deciding what knowledge about writing to use

Our writing competency model (WCM) is based on the three core elements of *competency* (Baartman & de Bruijn, 2011): knowledge, skills and attitudes, which we have articulated as three questions:

- What knowledge enables a writer to write?
- What process-skills-capacity enables a writer to carry out writing?
- What attitudes towards writing support a writer's' capacity to use writing as a tool for learning, communicating and self-reflection?

In response to the first question regarding "Knowledge About Writing" (Figure 10.1), we used Bachman's (1990) framework of communicative competence and "The Writing Wheel" competency model (Berge et al., 2016), which include knowledge about semiotic resources in texts and the different purposes of writing in different contexts (genre).

We based our answer to the second question regarding "Writing Process Skills" in process theories of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graham & Harris, 2005; Hayes, 1996; Kellogg, 2008), which
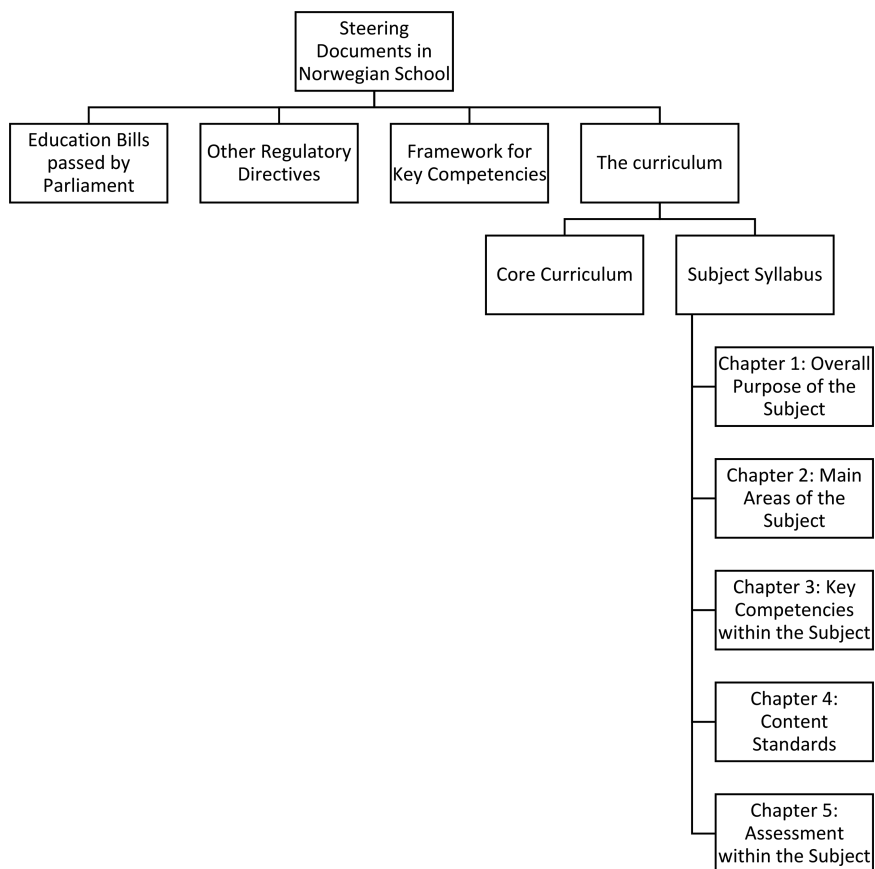
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Figure 10.2 Relationship between steering documents in the norwegian educational context

emphasise the ability to execute writing, employ writing strategies, generate content, and consider relevance of context and readers in writing situations.

For the third question regarding "Attitudes to Writing," we applied research on attitudes, (Boscolo & Gelati, 2018; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994), which address motivation, self-efficacy, persistence, conscientiousness and metacognitive strategies. We also based the model on the comprehensive Writer(s)–Within–Community Model of Writing (Graham, 2018), which merges contextual, communicative, cognitive and motivational aspects of writing.

The three aspects of writing competency were used as a starting point for devising codes to analyse the syllabi. In an iterative process, we read curriculum documents, coded, revised codes and re-coded until the codes could be applied to all relevant parts of the curriculum. In essence, the "stop criterion" for the revision of codes was that the code semantically would represent

instances of a phenomenon delineated in different ways in the syllabi. We were cautious to maintain the integrity of the WCM in the process of transforming it into a code list. Most changes were expansions to the model. Some changes were more or less cosmetic; the curriculum is obviously unable to itself possess competence, such that the implied subject having or using competence in the model was changed. For example, the model's "Knowledge about Writing" was changed to "Focus on Knowledge about Writing and/or Focus on the Written Product." Table 10.1 presents a list of all codes, including explanations.

This first area (Knowledge about Writing/the Written Product) was comprised of 15 codes (in alphabetical order and set with fixed space typeface). The next category, Focus on Processing Skills in Writing, had 11 codes, and the last category, Focus on Attitudes to Writing, contained four codes. While some codes are self-explanatory, others require further elaboration, which we provide in Table 10.1.

The unit of analysis was the sentence level. The purpose was to relate aspects of writing competency, as defined by the model presented in Figure 10.1, that were manifested in different parts in the curriculum to each other to explore relationships. Based on the assumption that content standards indeed have a steering function, we sought to explore, through a comparison using our coding framework, how those standards related to the framing and understanding of writing in other parts of the curricular documents. While frequency distributions might yield interesting patterns, we found it, in this initial stage, interesting enough to explore potential overlap or discrete mentioning of aspects.

To convey a better understanding of the coding procedure, we provide the following samples of coded content standards (translated by the authors of this chapter, which is the case for all other standards exemplified below as well) for the LA subject (Table 10.2)

All coding was first done individually by each of the chapter's two authors, which are both former LA teachers, now working in teacher education, then in tandem. In the latter process, we resolved any discrepancies from the individual coding, such that the final coding represents a consensus view. Given the abductive process of generating codes, there were no aspects left uncoded.

We align the outcomes of the analysis with the model of Ivanič (2004) used in this volume by noting the aspects of writing that are highlighted in the curriculum, and how these relate to the discourses or approaches to writing proposed by Ivanič.

Results

The answers to the two questions—how is writing implicitly defined in the syllabus? What does the documents say about writing development?—will be presented using two curricular guidelines as organising structure. First, we will turn to the *Framework for Key Competencies* and then we will turn to each of the subchapters in the LA syllabus.

Table 10.1 Areas, codes and explanations

Area	Code	Explanation
Focus on knowledge about writing and/or focus on the written product	`Communicative Clarity`	refers to text quality and to the extent that a reader can understand the content
	`Grammar Skills and Knowledge`	
	`Knowledge About Situated Text Use`	refers to text quality, and more specifically to the extent that a text adheres to the textual conventions associated with the communicative situation or otherwise is produced in such a manner that it is acknowledged as a (relevant) *text*, rather than an (irrelevant) *utterance* (Berge, 2012)
	`Letter Combining`	refers to the knowledge about how to connect letters to each other in handwriting and using digital tools
	`Modalities of Writing`	refers to knowledge about how to combine different modalities (e.g., writing and pictures)
	`Morphology`	
	`Punctuation`	
	`Rhetorical Devices`	
	`Sentence Combining and Text Structure`	
	`Spelling`	
	`Syntax`	
	`Text Type Knowledge`	refers to text quality and to generic structures of different types of texts such as argumentative texts, descriptive texts, instructive texts. This text type knowledge is what Martin refer to as *genre knowledge* (Martin, 2009)
	`Transcription Competencies`	
	`Vocabulary`	
	`Written Form of Norwegian`	refers to the special situation in Norway where there are two parallel and, by law—equivalent—forms of Norwegian, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*. Bokmål is based on Danish and reflects the influence Denmark had on Norway through centuries of occupation. Nynorsk was introduced as a written form that more closely mimicked spoken Norwegian (especially in rural parts). All students have a primary written form (i.e., mainly using either Bokmål or Nynorsk) and a secondary written form. For the majority of students, Bokmål is the primary written form and Nynorsk the secondary

(*Continued*)

Table 10.1 (Continued)

Area	Code	Explanation
Focus on processing skills in Writing	`Analyze Communicative Situations`	refers to the process of analysis, i.e., the strategies a writer employs in order to assess how to respond to the communicative situation. It does not refer to text quality (although the ensuing text would have some of the features discussed above)
	`Digital Literacy`	refers to the processing skills of using digital tools
	`Finalize Text`	
	`Generate Content`	
	`Generate Content Based on Reading`	
	`Outline the Text`	
	`Peer Assessment`	
	`Physical Tools of Writing`	refers to the usage of pen, paper, keyboard and so on
	`Revise`	
	`Self-Assessment`	
	`Writing to Learn`	
Focus on Attitudes to Writing	`Motivation for Communicating and Cooperating with others`	
	`Motivation for Writing`	
	`Motivation to Use Writing as a Learning tool`	
	`Self-Efficacy.`	

Table 10.2 Example of coding

Content Standard	Code	Explanation
write simple narrative texts, describing texts and argumentative texts	`Text Type Knowledge`	This was coded as `Text Type Knowledge` as it foregrounds (generic) text types rather than, say, the process of writing them. Had the standard also included a named genre (i.e., text label), for example "Letter to the editor," in conjunction with any of the text types, we would have double coded the standard adding the code `Knowledge About Situated Text Use`
experiment with writing in the secondary written form	`Written Form of Norwegian`	This was coded as `Written Form of Norwegian`, as it foregrounded the written form. Had this standard included, say, experimenting with text types, the text type code would have been applied

Framework for key competencies

According to the key sentence of *Framework for Key Competencies* (see Figure 10.2) to be able to write is to "be able to express oneself in a comprehensible and purposeful way about different subjects and to be able to communicate with others" (p. 14). The *Framework* goes on to describe writing as a tool for learning, and to describe the special competencies of planning, crafting and revising texts. The content can thus be related to two overarching WCM categories: focus on knowledge about writing/focus on the written product and focus on processing skills in writing. Writing is framed as a tool for action, and its definition conveys a communicative competence perspective on writing (Bachman, 1990) and more loosely a sociocultural perspective on writing (Prior, 2006) since it foregrounds writing as a situated act, highlighting how writing competence is a (subject) specific rather than a generic competence.

The *Framework* also contains four areas relating to writing: "Planning and Revising," "Producing," "Communicating" and "Reflecting and Assessing." Table 10.3 contains the areas and a general comment on how they were coded using the analytical tool. Table 10.4 summarises all codes that were used.

This *Framework* was used as a tool for a revision of the KP in 2013 and for the new curriculum that will be implemented in the fall of 2020.

Table 10.3 Skill areas

Skill Area	Comment
Planning and Revising	These skills relate to planning and revising texts, and according to the framework to use reading material as basis for content generation. We used codes such as `Revise`
Producing	Producing is in the *Framework* defined as being able to use "orthography, grammar, syntax, text structure on paper and on digital devices together with other semiotic tools such as pictures, figures and symbols in a meaningful way." Given its breadth this skill area taps into several subcategories within "Focus on Knowledge About Writing and/or Focus on the Written Product." For example, orthography relates to `spelling`, using semiotic tools in a meaningful way relates to `Knowledge About Situated Text Use`
Communicating	Communicating is explained as "being able to express opinions, discuss questions, share knowledge and experiences by adapting own texts to an audience, to the content, and to the communicative purpose." This skill, therefore, relates to the code `knowledge about situated text use` or how to use writing as a meaning making tool in particular settings.
Reflecting and Assessing	Reflect and Assess is explained as the ability to "use writing as a tool for monitoring and developing awareness of own learning." This too, then, points to writing as a meaning-making tool, but more in the context of writing to learn

Table 10.4 Aspects of writing across LA syllabus chapters

		Key Competencies	Main Area Writing	Purpose	Standards
Focus on Attitudes to Writing	Motivation for Writing		X	X	
	Self-Efficacy			X	
Focus on Knowledge About and Product of Writing	Communication Clarity				X
	Grammar Skills and Knowledge	X	X		
	Knowledge About Situated Text Use	X	X	X	X
	Modalities of Writing		X		X
	Morphology	X	X		X
	Punctuation	X	X		X
	Rhetorical Devices				X
	Sentence Combining and Text Structure	X	X		X
	Spelling	X	X		X
	Syntax	X	X		
	Text Type Knowledge	X	X	X	X
	Transcription Competencies				X
	Vocabulary		X		X
	Written Form of Norwegian	X		X	X
Focus on Processing Skills in Writing	Analyze Communicative Situations	X			
	Digital Literacy				X
	Finalize Text	X			
	Generate Content	X	X		
	Generate Content Based on Reading			X	X
	Outline the Text	X			
	Peer Assessment				X
	Physical Tools of Writing				X
	Revise	X			X
	Self-Assessment	X			X
	Writing to Learn	X		X	

Note: Aspects of writing expressed in the different chapters of the LA syllabus. An X denotes mentioning of the aspect. Two aspects are mentioned in all chapters (`Text Type Knowledge` and `Knowledge About Situated Text Use`).

The language arts subject syllabus: The purpose chapter

The *Purpose chapter* highlights seven aspects of writing, from all three main areas in the WCM (see Table 10.4). The Purpose chapter focuses on attitudes towards writing by mentioning self-efficacy and motivation for writing as key areas and paints a broad picture of what kind of knowledge about writing and what kind of written products the LA subject is supposed to develop: knowledge about text types, about situated text use and written forms of Norwegian. The Purpose chapter also focuses on processing skills in writing by mentioning writing to learn and to generate content based on reading.

The language arts subject syllabus: The main area chapter

The Main Area chapter deals with additional aspects of writing. As can be inferred in Table 10.4, these largely expand the definition in the Purpose chapter by adding aspects related to "Focus on Knowledge about writing and focus on the written product," such as Morphology, Spelling and Vocabulary. The Main Area chapter also focuses on "Attitudes to Writing"—by mentioning motivation for writing—and on Processing Skills in writing, when mentioning generation of content.

The language arts subject syllabus: The key competency chapter

The Key Competency chapter bears a strong resemblance to the *Framework* discussed above, as is evident in Table 10.4. It also becomes evident that Attitudes to Writing has been left out when describing writing as a key competence.

The language arts subject syllabus: The competency goals chapter

The last chapter of interest presents the content standards, or "competency goals." There are 28 competence aims that explicitly relate to writing, and we used 18 codes in analysing them. All codes from the "Focus on Knowledge About and Focus on Product of Writing" were used with the exception of the general Grammar Skills and Knowledge, which is superfluous given the specificity of the other grammar codes. For "Focusing on Processing skills in Writing" all codes but Analyse Communicative Situations and Writing to Learn were present. There were no codes related to "Attitudes to Writing," which probably reflects the difficulty into turning Self-Efficacy, for example, to a competency goal.

Summary

Reading the curriculum guidelines as intended, as one coherent text, provides a comprehensive view of writing tapping into all areas of the WCM outlined above (Figure 10.1). Put differently, the curriculum presents writing as a multi-faceted phenomenon, related to if not all then most of the discourses Ivanič (2004) proposes surrounding writing, although the emphasis is on topics relating to the skills, creativity, process and genre discourses. A more pragmatic reading of the curriculum, for example concentrating on standards or purpose, presents a slightly less expansive view of writing. Most notably, while the Purpose chapter suggests that the LA subject should foster motivated writers with high self-efficacy, the Standards chapter focuses on the written product and on processing skills. Learning the latter may indeed lead to motivation and self-efficacy (Graham, 2018). At the same time, we also know that students' motivation for writing tends to decline through the grades (Boscolo & Gelati, 2018), also in Norway (Skar et al., 2021). Given that teachers are free to design writing instruction as they choose, one would need some sort of evidence linking the mere presence of standards focusing on the written product and the processing skills to motivational increase. To our knowledge, there is no such Norwegian data to date.

Writing development

The competency goals describe competence rather than detailed knowledge. The following competency goal from standards for Grade 7 (i.e., for 12–13-year-old students) is a case in point: "master central rules for grammar and orthography and write texts with varied sentence structure and functional punctuation." (North, 2003, p. 41) distinguishes among abstract, concrete and objectively worded criteria. The abstract criteria present the degree of some aspect (e.g., little variation, OK variation, great variation), while concrete criteria present characteristics for different levels without trying to establish a "semantic continuum." Objective criteria highlight (easily) measurable traits, for example awarding an A grade to three spelling errors or less, B grade to four to six spelling errors and so on. The competency goals would, in the nomenclature of North, best be described as concrete (but far from objective). Contrasting the Grade 7 objective with one targeting partly the same aspects for Grade 2 makes this evident as this competency goal states that students should be able to "write sentences with capital and small letters and dots using handwriting and keyboard." In other words, there is neither a variation in degrees of the exact same aspect, nor inclusion of easily measurable traits.

While the criteria at some level, then, can be called concrete, it is obvious that they express in general terms what a competent writer may be able to do. However, with reference to the competency goal for Grade 7: they

leave both student and teacher to operationalise which rules are "central" and what it will actually mean to have "functional" punctuation. There are no official exemplar texts, tasks nor portfolios aiding the interpretation of the criteria. There are no official, publicly available documents describing the process of establishing the standards (and thus, no records of the rationale behind them). In short: while the criteria describe the kind of competence students are expected to develop, using them requires extensive interpretive work.

The curricular guidelines about writing development

Inherent in any document describing writing standards from second to Grade 10 is a notion of a writing development trajectory. Expectations of writing development can stem from several sources. Fulcher (2010) lists three common bases for standards: experience (i.e., experienced criteria developers' "intuitive" expectations of development), empirical investigations and writing development theory. Given that the Norwegian standards neither clearly match empirical investigations nor neatly map onto any writing development theory, it is plausible that they are experience-based. In other words, they ultimately reflect how subject matter experts (i.e., the ones who drafted the standards) and policy makers (i.e., the ones approving the curriculum in the parliament), based on experience, expect students to develop. To our knowledge, it has been a common practice for writers of standards to base them on experience (see Knoch, 2009).

Table 10.4 above indicates that the writing proficiency that is supposed to develop from first to Grade 10 is quite broad. Taking a comparative perspective one can notice, however, that different aspects of writing are emphasised in different years and, in fact, that some areas appear quite late in the school system, while others disappear. Figures 10.3–10.8 are visual representations of similarities and differences of standards from Grade 2 to 10. To offer a deeper understanding of how writing development is presented in the syllabus, we comment on relevant patterns in the standards.

Transcription competencies is a standard occurring first in Grade 2, and disappearing after Grade 7. In Table 10.5, the similarities and differences are visualised, with bolded typeface for add-ons and italics for similarities.

As can be seen from Table 10.4, the differences between transcriptions competencies at various stages are quite subtle, and the authors of the standards have refrained from describing the competence as one which is steadily mastered in new performance levels and have instead framed competence as qualitatively different at various stages. To grasp the standard for Year 2, one has to contrast it with the standards for Grades 4 and 7 which, respectively, add functional, then personal, to the description. According to the standards, to develop handwriting transcription competence is far from writing in an increasingly aesthetically pleasing way, but rather progressing from being able
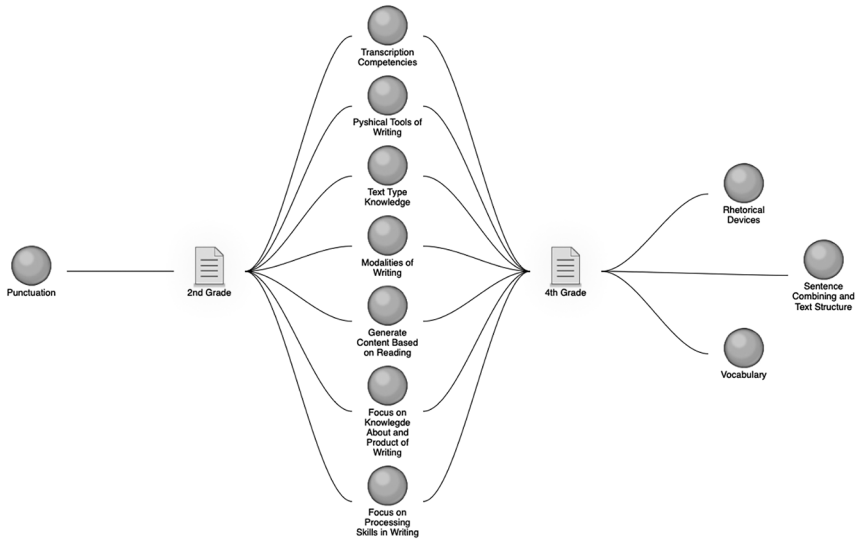
Figure 10.3 Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 2nd and 4th Grades

Note, for example, how Punctuation occurs only in 2nd grade standards, while Vocabulary only occurs in 4th grade standards.
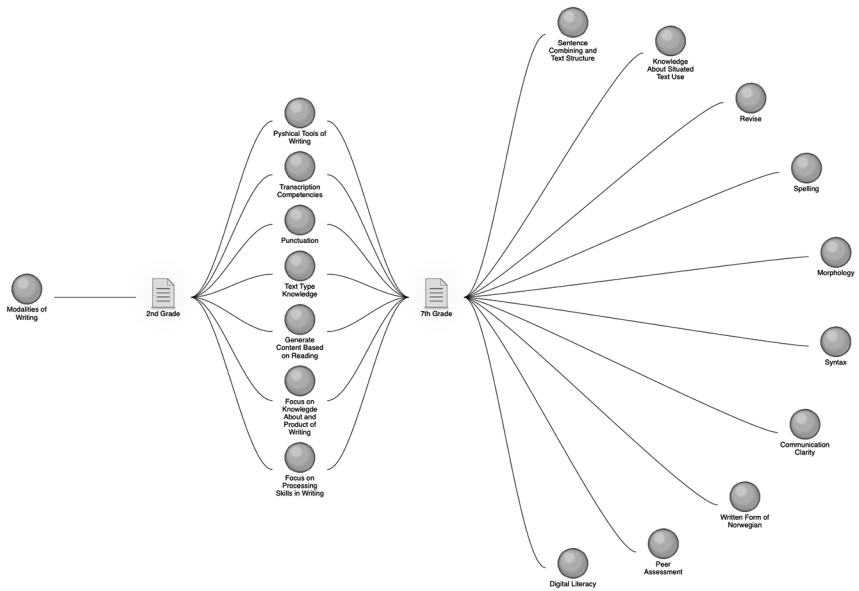

Figure 10.4 Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 2nd and 7th Grades

Note, for example, how Punctuation reoccurs in 7th grade standards, while Modalities of writing does not.
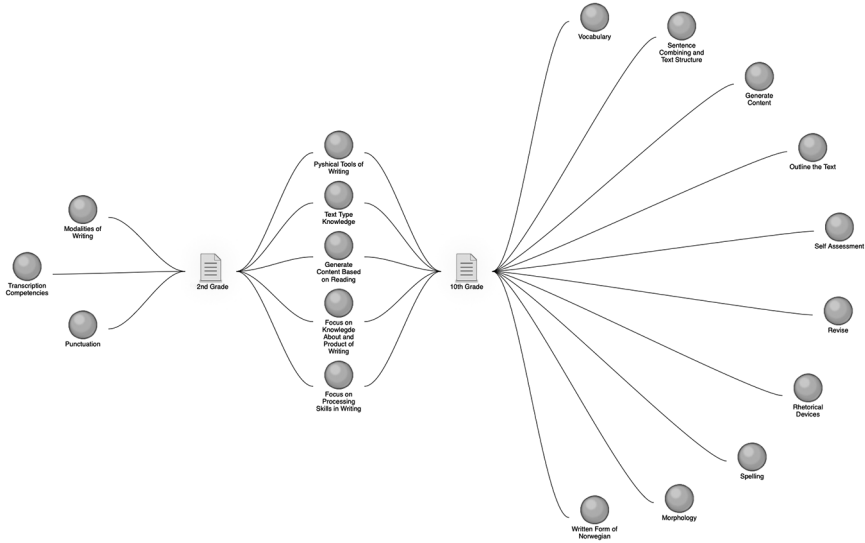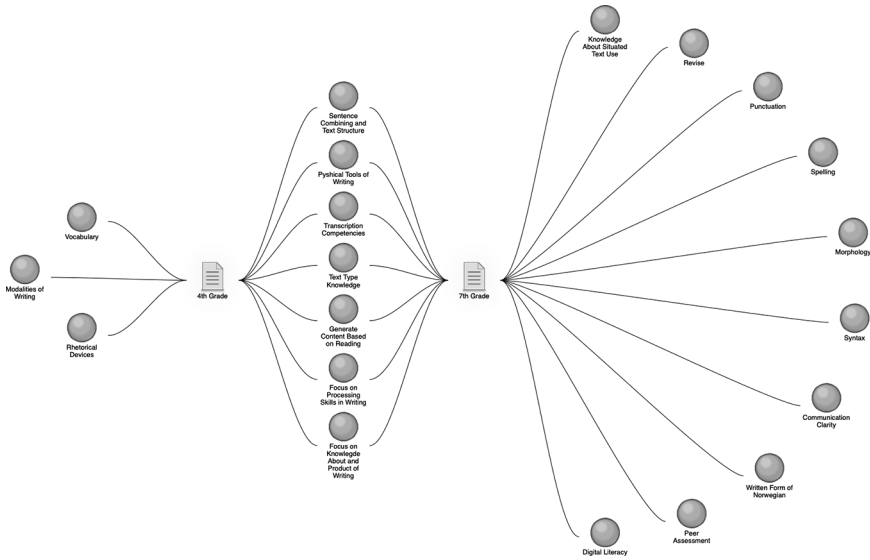
Figure 10.5 Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 2nd and 10th
Grades

Note, for example, how Punctuation again is unique for 2nd grade.

Figure 10.6 Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 4th and 7th
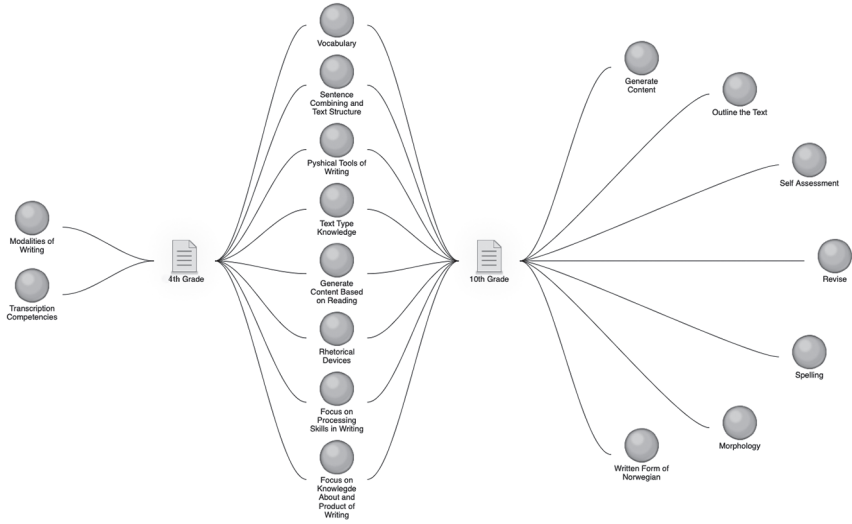Grades

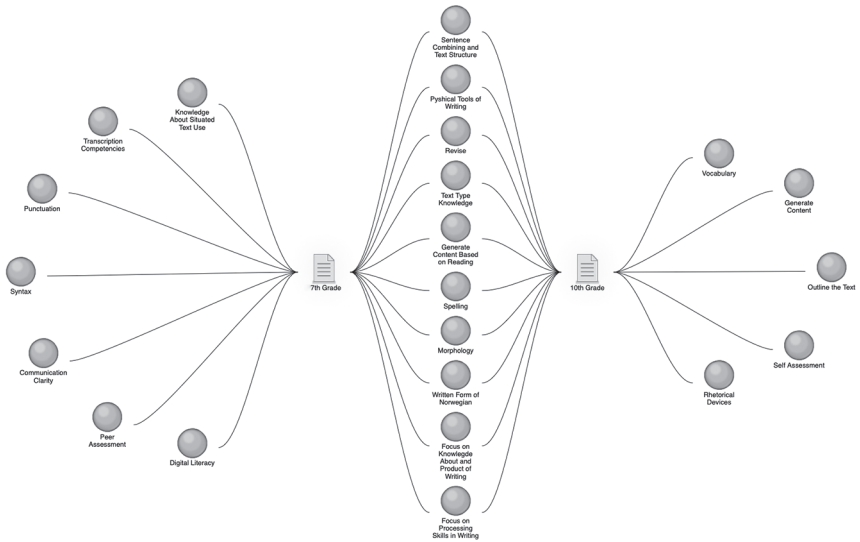*Figure 10.7* Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 4th and 10th Grades

Figure 10.8 Common and unique aspects of writing in standards for 7th and 10th Grades

Table 10.5 Similarities and differences across grades

Grade 2	Grade 4	Grade 7
Using small and capital letters in handwriting and on keyboard	Write with **connected letters in functional** *handwriting* and on *keyboard*	Write with *connected letters in a* **personal**, *functional handwriting and on keyboard* **in a purposeful way**

to make visual representations of phonemes, to writing with connected letters, to developing a personal handwriting style.

Another example is "text type knowledge." Throughout school students are supposed to develop proficiency in writing different text types. For the different grades, the competence is described in the following way:

- Grade 2: Write simple descriptive and narrative texts
- Grade 4: Write simple descriptive, narrative *and argumentative texts*
- Grade 7: Write narrative, descriptive and argumentative text *using model texts and other sources, and adjust text to purpose and audience*
- Grade 10: Write *creative, informative, reflective* and argumentative texts *in the primary written form and secondary written form using backing for opinions and adapting texts to audience, purpose and media.*

From Grades 2 to 4, the leap is additive; from two types of simple texts to three types of simple texts. The leap is contingent upon learning how to convey arguments in a text. From Grades 4 to 7, the leap seems to be more qualitative than additive with students expected to write the same text types but now basing them on model texts and actively engaging a presumed reader in the writing process. The last leap means that the student should be able to master new text types (creative, informative and reflective, which are not further defined in the LA syllabi) and engage in an even more sophisticated writing process, using backing (evidence) of various sort when supporting arguments and adapting text to audience as well as medium.

The competency aims present writing proficiency as a multi-faceted construct with two types of development. For one, experience and age is presumed to make students write with increasing quality. The "simple" argumentative text in Grade 4 is presented as qualitatively different from the more elaborated argumentative text mentioned in the standards for Grade 10. To get a notion of the progression from Grades 4 to 10 requires the reader of the standards to infer that the texts in Grade 4 (presumably) are "simple" in relation to the texts that students are supposed to write in Grade 10.

The other type of development is additive, where students are expected to develop new competencies throughout the education. To grasp the broad, comprehensive and far from linear writing development implied by the general standards readers (e.g., teachers) would need to consult all standards so as to tease out features unique for Grade 2 by comparing and contrasting these with other grade-level standards. Further, readers would need to have vast experience with writing across a multitude of grades to be able to understand how these standards manifest themselves in actual student writing.

Applying Ivanič's (2004, p. 223) model, "A multi-layered view of language" (see Chapter 1, this volume) to the documents analysed above indicates a comprehensive view of writing in Norwegian school with focus on the text itself (e.g., `text type knowledge`), the cognitive processes (e.g., `revise`),

Table 10.6 Mapping curricular documents to Ivanič's (2004) framework

Origin	Instance	Discourse
Standards for 2nd grade	"The student displays understanding for the relationship between language sound and letters"	A Skills Discourse
Purpose Chapter	"Through … written communication, the students can express their own ideas and present beliefs and opinions"	A Creativity Discourse
Standards for 7th grade	"Students … can revise their own texts based on feedback.	A Process Discourse
Standards for 10th grade	"The student can write different types of text using exemplar texts as models"	A Genre Discourse
Purpose chapter	"The students shall themselves produce different texts by using suitable tools and adapt language use and form to different purposes of writing, different audiences and different media."	A Social Practices Discourse

the event and implicitly to some extent the sociocultural and political context (Knowledge About Situated Text Use).

Conducting the same exercise using the notion of "Discourses of writing and learning to write," as proposed by Ivanič (2004, p. 225), also depicts a Norwegian understanding of writing proficiency as a multi-faceted construct. To get a clearer view, we have searched the documents analysed above for instances that map onto Ivanič's discourses. As can be seen in Table 10.6, there are examples related to all but sociopolitical discourse.

To say that the Norwegian curriculum can be mapped onto all discourses requires a comprehensive reading, not focusing on a single chapter or standards for just one year, and disregarding the frequency of aspects as well as the emphasis put on them. And as we saw above, interpreting the different chapters oftentimes require a critical reading technique comparing and contrasting the content in chapters and standards to get a complete overview.

Should one, notwithstanding the obvious problems with such an approach, use the purpose chapter as a guide to what is emphasised in Norwegian writing education one finds the following categories: Motivation for Writing, Self-Efficacy, Knowledge About Situated Text Use, Text Type Knowledge, Written Form of Norwegian, Generate and Writing to Learn. This indicates a view on writing leaning towards the genre discourse and the social practice discourse in two senses. First, that writing is a meaning making tool, and second, that the goals of learning to write are not to acquire skills in orthography or grammar, but competency enough to trust in oneself as a writer, using writing as means for communication and learning in private and public life.

Discussion

There is nothing inherently beneficial or detrimental about complex curricula, but if it is plausible to think that the users of the curriculum mainly pay attention to parts that specifically target their context (i.e., in this case, grade-level standards), it is also plausible to think that the comprehensive view of writing presented in the curriculum might not be perceived by the end user. A potential drawback, should this be the case, is that writing might be understood very differently across grades, which in turn might not benefit students' learning trajectories and guarantee students a consistency across grades.

Returning briefly to a subject presented above, testing of writing, it is interesting to note that there are no systematic investigations into students' writing proficiency in the form of national writing tests. The analysis of the writing standards only to some degree describes expected development in writing proficiency. And, the additive character of many of the writing standards is merely descriptive of what genres or processes students are supposed to manage, rather than of writing proficiency levels.

The combination of having no national tests of writing, along with standards that are vague regarding proficiency levels, presents a difficulty for both schools and school owners to get information about the quality of the writing education or the proficiency levels of their students. In other words, it is difficult to assess to what degree the standards are being achieved.

The absence of official guidelines for teaching writing in the subjects makes teachers responsible for designing writing instruction as they see fit. To our knowledge, there are no large-scale empirical investigations of writing instruction across subjects, but it is reasonable to suspect that the responsibility put on teachers in this regard will yield quite diverse writing instruction across Norway (see Graham et al. [2021], which presents an investigation of writing instruction in Grades 1–3). While some teachers likely engage students in explicit writing instruction in all kinds of subjects, others may refer to the curriculum and to the vast responsibility and authority given to individual teachers as justification for assigning writing tasks, but not necessarily teaching or developing students' competence in writing. Although all teachers, as it were, overnight were expected to become teachers of writing, evaluations of the curriculum indeed indicated several instances where classroom practice were not in accordance with the intentions of the curriculum (P. Aasen et al., 2012).

In light of this, it is also interesting to note that students' college and university readiness in writing is an issue in Norway. Reports from academic staff in higher education indicate that 13 years of schooling leaves many students insufficiently prepared for mastering disciplinary norms of writing (Lødding & Aamodt, 2015). This issue is also present in reported needs from upper secondary schools contacting The Norwegian Centre for Writing Education and Research with questions about how to provide students with better education

in academic writing. The problem is not specific to the Norwegian context (see Hort, 2020), and further research on this topic is necessary in order to gain more understanding about how to improve students' academic writing in upper secondary schools, how to design learning processes in transfer skills regarding academic writing, but also how writing education in higher education provides students with opportunities for understanding and appropriate disciplinary norms for writing proficiency.

In this chapter, we have presented an analysis of the LA syllabi and demonstrated both breadth and complexity. We have, by answering two questions found a LA subject that lays the ground for a strong focus on writing and acknowledging the use of writing for learning and communication. However, the analyses also yield a picture of curricular guidelines demanding a fair bit of interpretation on behalf of its readers.

Perhaps apart from syllabi containing scripted lessons, there will almost always be a difference between an intended curriculum and the enacted one. What we have shown, though, is that it is a fairly daunting task to understand just what the curriculum authors have intended. The situation is potentially unfortunate; it is clear that the curriculum reflects views in which writing is highly valued while it at the same time there are clear indications that writing instruction in Norway does not fulfil the curricular promises. In contrast to context and situations where writing is narrowly understood or regarded as a less important proficiency, there are good prerequisites for writing instruction in Norway.

To realise the potential that lies within the curriculum, we suggest a strong research programme aiming broadly to investigate teachers' views and practices as well as students' proficiency in order to generate material to amend the curriculum as to make it clearer.

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