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RESEARCH

Students' Redesign of Mandatory Assignments in Teacher Education

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This article explores specific aspects of literacy practices in teacher education in Norway, building upon data collected within the research project *Digital literacy and use of learning resources in teacher education in Norway* (DigiGLU). Our main aim is to explore how teachers in different subject courses in teacher education (TE) design mandatory assignments, and how students respond to these designs. After the extensive TE-reform in 2010, in revised plans and documents guiding professional training, mandatory assignments (both form and content) were considered more important for the students' learning process. In our investigation, the concepts of design for learning and design in learning, as described by Selander and Kress (2010), are considered fruitful as theoretical perspectives. The analysis focuses on oral presentations and traditional academic texts in four different TE-subjects. Our main finding, across subjects, is that there seem to be mismatches between the intentions behind the designs on the part of the assignment designers and the actual interpretation: hence the redesigned result by the receiver of the design. The article concludes with some reflections on why these mismatches occur, and what the implications might be for the students' academic development and the possible transfer of certain literacy practices to their occupational lives.

Keywords: Mandatory assignments; teacher education; design for learning; oral presentations; academic texts; teacher students

Aim and Scope

There is a growing concern about the importance of creating a school that gives the young generations the skills needed to manage personal life and professional expectations in an ever more complex 21st century society (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012; Krumsvik, 2012; Voogt, Erstad, Dede, & Mishra, 2013). Influenced by OECDs DeSeCo-initiative, Definition and Selection of Competencies (Knain, 2001, 2005; Rychen & Salganik, 2003), which is important in the design of PISA-tests, policy makers and politicians have defined such skills through education reforms and guidance documents in several countries across Europe, emphasising skills related to the use of new technology. Traditionally educational institutions play important roles in how societies design for learning and for the distribution and preservation of knowledge. In this, producing, mediating and reflecting on texts and text practices have always been important. However, the emergence of new digital media is changing the premises for text production and reception both inside and outside the educational institutions, and we might ask whether the privileged role of these institutions will prevail in the future community.

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In Norway a new comprehensive curriculum reform was presented by the Ministry of Education in 2006, covering primary and secondary education and training (K-13). With this reform, known as the Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK-06), increased focus was placed on outcome-based education, and the guidance documents recognise five basic skills: oral skills, reading, writing, digital skills and numeracy (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012). In the subject curricula these five basic skills are integrated and adapted to each subject. The importance of acquiring digital skills is furthermore reformulated and intensified in the official government report, "Students' learning in future schools" (Government, 2014).

Higher educational institutions have also faced conspicuous challenges and changes as a result of new digital media becoming increasingly important in knowledge production and knowledge reception processes. In particular, there has been an explicit focus on the need for the students to develop a sustainable literacy competence including digital skills. Following up the Bologna declaration, the Quality Reform of Norwegian Higher Education came into effect at the start of 2003. Together with the implementation of the bachelor-master-PhD structure, the reform paved the way for the closer follow-up of students and new types of exams and assessment. This has been solved to a great extent through the implementation of mandatory assignments, which the students produce

during each of their subject courses. These mandatory assignments must be completed and approved before a student may take the final examination on a course.

In teacher education (TE) as well, students have to produce a variety of different text types during their study programme in order to ensure their familiarity with a range of different text types or communication situations. These are not necessarily limited to the specific fields of study, but also reflect text practices in students' future professional life as educators. As a result of this combination, the texts and text practices introduced in TE are of great interest.

In this article we focus on two clearly distinct designs for mandatory assignments given to the students across all subjects covered by our data material. We label them *oral presentations* and *traditional academic texts*, and ask the following questions:

1) How do the educators' designs vary across different subjects regarding the form and content of oral presentations and traditional academic texts?
2) How do teacher students respond as redesigners of educators' different types of design in oral presentations and traditional academic texts?

The text practices we focus on are mandatory assignments in teacher education at one institution in Norway in the subjects Norwegian, English, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences.

Teacher Education in Norway: "Reform 2010"

Just a few years after the introduction of LK-06, TE underwent fundamental changes to meet the new framework for K-13. In 2010 the initial broad TE-program was split into two specialised educational pathways: National Curriculum Regulations for Differentiated Teacher Education Programmes for years 1–7 (GLU 1–7) and for years 5–10 (GLU 5–10). Key objectives for both pathways were that teacher training education should be *integrated*, meaning more oriented towards the profession, as well as of high academic standard, strictly based upon research (Government, 2010). Both pathways consist of a four-year vocational training program of 240 ECTS credits (during 2017 this programme will be expanded to 300 ECT credits). The regulations structure the two pathways with some compulsory subjects, as shown in **Table 1.**

The regulations governing both pathways aim to ensure that teacher education institutions provide integrated, professionally oriented and research-based primary and lower secondary teacher education programmes of high academic quality. The education programmes must furthermore comply with the Norwegian Education Act (Government, 2007) and the prevailing curriculum (LK-06) for primary and secondary education and training. This means that what is defined as basic skills in the curriculum reform for primary and lower secondary schools should also be highly integrated into TE programmes and practices. Regardless of what subjects the students choose as elective courses, for example, they are obliged to fulfil the requirements of providing their future pupils with educational training aimed at ensuring that their need for broad literacy competence is met. Hence, it seems reasonable to ask to what extent the design of literacy practices in different subjects in TE complies with the goals set out in plans and programmes for developing literacy competence.

Theoretical Perspectives

Our main interest in focusing on mandatory assignments in education is to explore specific dimensions of literacy practices. In our theoretical framework, we follow the notion of design as a perspective on literacy. This position was first established by the New London Group (1996) in their discussion of "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures" where they propose to understand this process through three elements: 'Available Design', 'Designing', and 'The Redesigned'.

Furthermore, we follow Selander and Kress' (2010) elaboration of design as a perspective on teaching as well as on learning. The extended context surrounding the learning process, like the National Curriculum, local study plans, the number of students in the class, the physical environment and other aspects influencing the planning and organisation of the learning activities – none of which the teacher can control – are elements included in *available design*. The *available design* is shaped by different interests, institutions and (semiotic) technologies, but still the teacher is the most visible designer since *designing* does not exist without agency (Kress 2008), as the teacher has a choice in relation to which aspects are given most attention, resulting in *the redesigned*. The focus on digital skills is an example of an aspect of education that

	Programme 1–7	Programme 5–10
Year	**Subjects**	**Subjects**
1	Pedagogy and Pupil-related Skills (PPS) 15 ECT Elective school subject I	Pedagogy and Pupil-related Skills (PPS) 15 ECT Elective school subject I
	Obligatory subjects: Mathematics Norwegian	Elective school subject II
2	Same as 1	Same as 1
3	PPS and bachelor's thesis 30 ECT Elective school subject II 30 ECT	PPS and bachelor's thesis 30 ECT Elective school subject II 30 ECT
4	Elective school subject/exchange	Elective school subject III/exchange

Table 1: Teacher Education Programme.

is highlighted in the curriculum, but may be given less attention in the classroom (Krumsvik 2006; Erstad, 2013). Following Selander and Kress (2010), all the elements mentioned above are considered *design for learning*, while the learner as an active participant in re-designing her own learning activities and learning resources *designs in learning*. Sørensen and Levinsen (2014) apply the same binate design principle, distinguishing teachers' and students' 'Didactic Design'.

Just as the teacher has a choice for the design *for* learning, likewise the learner has a choice when designing *in* learning. The learner is presented the available design and uses what she finds relevant and appropriate in her designing process. In this situation too, the agency of the individual designer may result in a mismatch between the intention of the designer and the actual interpretation by the receiver of the design. This might be seen for example as when the intentions of the creators of the curriculum are not always fulfilled by the teachers, so the intentions of the teachers in their design of mandatory assignments are not always responded to by the students either. Regarding our research questions, the first relates to design *for* learning, while the second question relates to design *in* learning.

Design and redesign in mandatory assignments

The mandatory assignments analysed in this article are, as mentioned in the introduction, *oral presentations* and *traditional academic texts*. Both assignments require basic skills, and neither of them are new types of assignments. What has changed over the last decade is that digital skills are needed to fulfil both assignments. Digital skills used in the Norwegian context implies more than basic functional abilities (Erstad, 2013), and we will prefer to use the concept of digital literacy. When working on a European Framework for Digital Literacy, Martin (2006) includes the following literacies as part of digital literacy: ICT, information, media and visual literacies. With this understanding of digital literacy, students must be able to not only use the software required, but also know how to find information and consider its reliability, and how to present the information in a proper way. In relation to our study, oral presentations are frequently related to the design of a PowerPoint-presentation, while the written texts are prepared on a computer, using software for word processing.

Oral Presentations

Oral presentations has a long history as an important method used in all levels of the educational system. It is intended to accustom pupils or students to participating in discussions and to giving formal oral presentations on a particular subject matter to different intended audiences. It thus complements and extends the skills acquired through different kinds of written exercises such as reports and argumentative texts by emphasising the importance of developing the techniques of oral communication.

Technological developments have, over the last couple of decades, provided new digital presentation tools meant to complement oral presentations. PowerPoint is a tool with an extensive use in higher education, and many researchers have studied learning potential related to the use of PowerPoint in lectures (Cladellas Pros, Castelló Tarrida, Badia Martin, & Cirera Amores, 2013; Hashemi, Azizinezhad, & Farokhi, 2012; Savoy, Proctor, & Salvendy, 2009), but students' use of PowerPoint has not received the same attention. Regarding the actual use of PowerPoint among students, in a national survey on the use of ICT in the Norwegian higher education system, the *ICT-monitor 2011*, 90 % of the students reported that they use "tools for presentation of content", and 29 % said that they used these tools on a weekly basis (Ørnes, Wilhelmsen, Breivik, & Solstad, 2011: 43). In the updated version of this *ICT-monitor* from 2014, 56 % of the students answer that they use presentation programs such as PowerPoint and the like at least monthly (Norgesuniversitetet, 2015: 77). We may conclude that PowerPoint is used extensively by students in higher education in Norway, but we do not know much about how it is used.

Traditional Academic Texts

Academic literacy practices are highly diverse. However, what might be labelled 'traditional academic texts' are extensively used in all aspects of higher education. The opinion that standards of student 'literacy' are insufficient is expressed on occasion, both within the education system and in public media (Lødding & Aamodt, 2015). In particular, the concern is directed towards the students' lacking competence in writing what is recognised to be the most essential of academic texts, the academic essay, which they have not been explicitly or sufficiently exposed to in school (Berge, Evensen, Hertzberg & Vagle, 2005; Eide & Samuelsen, 2015; Hoel, 2008; Rienecker, 2007). Within higher education, classes in academic writing are frequently offered as introductory courses, in order to improve students' writing skills and prepare them for writing academic texts. Learning in higher education places a deal of emphasis on textual practices when assessing students, and the traditional academic essay is often given genre-specific preference. However, reading and writing practices could differ quite substantially within disciplines, also in terms of content within a specific genre. This is what is often referred to as tacit knowledge: the kind of knowledge you have only if you already possess quite advanced knowledge and experience with the phenomenon in question. Hence, it becomes interesting to explore how students design their knowledge in different disciplines on the basis of the same genre.

Regardless of discipline, all students are familiarised with these kinds of texts through the content of their curriculum. In addition, they are often obliged to produce different kinds of academic texts themselves during their different subject courses. Common features of traditional academic texts are that they are relatively formal, which calls for language precision and thematic and methodological accuracy. Academic texts are, furthermore, characteristically complex linguistically, explicit about the relationships in the text, hedged and responsible – the author needs to provide evidence and justification for views and statements made in the text. All these features make these kinds of texts valuable for both summative and formative assessment in education, and typically call for the implementation of feedback practices.

Methods and Limitations

This article builds upon data material collected in the research project "Digital literacy and use of learning resources in teacher education" (DigiGLU). The data was collected at three main Norwegian TE institutions following the organisational reform of 2010, and the project aimed to investigate TE students' reception, production and reflections on multimodal texts and digital media. In the DigiGLU-project, all kinds of students' mandatory assignments from various subjects and from both pathways (GLU 1–7 and GLU 5–10) were collected. In order to understand the processes and practices behind the texts produced by the students, course plans, reading lists and learning resources made available through universities' LMS were collected. In addition, focus group interviews with students from each of the selected courses were conducted (Kvåle & Tønnessen, 2016). All data gathering is approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, and all students and institutions related to this project are anonymised.

In the present article, we focus on data from one of the institutions investigated in the DigiGLU-project. At this institution, oral presentations were mandatory assignments in the subjects Pedagogy and Pupil-related Skills (PPS), Norwegian, English and Social Sciences (Kvåle & Tønnessen, 2016: 38). Since the oral presentation in PPS only included what was called a 'story from the practice period', we have excluded these from the data in the present article. Written assignments were mandatory in the subjects Pedagogy and Pupil-related Skills (PPS), English, Norwegian, Social Sciences and Natural Science. Since the written assignments in PPS and English were of very limited scope, we have also excluded them from our data in this article.

To answer our first research question, we have worked with the course plans and the other information given on the university's LMS. When working with our second research question, we have mainly analysed the mandatory assignments handed in by the students, but we also refer to the focus group interviews when relevant. For the oral presentations, we only have access to the presentations we collected from the students participating as informants in the project. Since we have also observed different oral presentations as part of the data gathering process, we have seen that the presentations handed in are similar to the other presentations. For the traditional academic texts, we have access to the texts that were handed in digitally on the university's LMS, since it was required to hand in these texts.

The qualitative data used here can hardly be rendered representative. This is applicable both with reference to the current student group at the TE institution investigated, and in TE in Norway on a more systemic level. These are important limitations regarding generalisation value and the prediction force of the study outcome. Our data will primarily provide us with a snapshot of chosen cohorts of TE students at one major educational institution. Another limitation in the material is that subjects investigated are spread across all four years of TE study programme, meaning findings that might be explained by subject specificity as well might be explained by students' maturation or more general development as text producers. Therefore, in a qualitative study like this, variation in textual and educational practices are as important as similarities and general patterns.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' design for learning in 'oral presentations'

We have collected data from oral presentations (assignments) in three different courses: Norwegian, English and Social Sciences. The students are both from GLU 1–7 and GLU 5–10, and they are at different stages in their course of study. Mapping the design for learning, our findings include both the form and scope of the assignment. In all three cases, the oral presentations are in groups, and these are defined by the teacher. Both in English and in Social Sciences, the oral presentations are related to the compulsory practice period, and the groups are the same as in the practice period. In Norwegian, the students are set up in pairs or groups of 3 or 4. The following table shows how teachers have defined the form of the oral presentations.

As seen in **Table 2**, all three oral presentations have to be carried out with the help of PowerPoint or similar programs. Since PowerPoint is a common tool for teachers, it is important that teacher students receive training in its usage. Though PowerPoint is required for the presentation, it is only in Social Sciences that this is a required hand-in.

As far as the content is concerned, the topic is provided for all three tasks. Moreover, two of the three assignments, English and Social Sciences, are related directly to the compulsory practice period, while the presentation in Norwegian is primarily related to the course syllabus as a preparation for the final oral exams.

As we can see in **Table 3**, the presentations related to the practice period include references to instances of self-reflection, while the Norwegian presentation is the only one with at least some evaluation criteria. The three assignments are mandatory, and common assessment practice seems to be an informal feedback in class after the presentations where both teachers and students participate. The comparison of the designs for learning in the three subjects, Norwegian, English and Social Sciences, does not show important differences; the variations in the design are related to elements that are not explicit in the description of the tasks, but may be thought of as more or less tacit knowledge, such as the

	Norwegian	English	Social Sciences
Group/individual	Pairs or group	Practice group	Group
Time	10 minutes per person	10 minutes	Not defined
Presentation tool	PowerPoint or a similar tool	PowerPoint, overhead or a similar tool	PowerPoint
Hand-in material	Not required	Not required	Yes

Table 2: Design for learning: Form of oral presentations.

reception of feedback after the presentation and when and how the assessment will be effected. The most important difference is between the purpose of the presentation in Norwegian and in English and Social Sciences, where the first relates to the course syllabus, while the latter two are related to the practice period.

Teacher students' design in learning in 'oral presentations'

The teachers' design for learning is the students' available design, and in this section we will look at how the teacher students respond to this design. Regarding the form of the presentations, students in all three subjects follow more or less the formal criteria of time, group and tool. All students used PowerPoint, except one group that used Keynote, which is the presentation program common among Mac-users. The teachers provide the opportunity to use other programs in the presentations and they also give the students the freedom to design their presentation the way they want. The students respond by designing more or less conventional presentations with the most common tool: PowerPoint. This way the students show that they know the conventions about how PowerPoints are normally designed in higher education.

When designing the PowerPoint, none of the students have used the default blank template. They have all chosen one of the other templates, and some have made modifications to the colours of the text and so on. With the exception of these modifications, the students tend not to have explored the affordances of this tool. They have used common bullet lists, mostly with keywords and a few sentences. They might also have included a couple of illustrations and images on some of the slides, but only as illustrations of the content written with the keywords.

Related to the content of the presentations, the students have followed the given topics, which they tend to relate directly or indirectly to their practice period. The focus is mainly on the experience of practice, and less on the theory, even when the teacher's design requires it. 'School relevance' seems to be the most important consideration for the students, not the particular subject they are studying. That lived experiences and practice are more important than the theory might also be signalled by the lack of bibliography on the presentations. In light of this, the students may be expressing a perception as future teachers: that what you do in the classroom is more important than what you may know about general or subject didactics, and the specific content of the subject you are studying.

Teachers' design for learning in 'traditional academic texts'

As mentioned earlier, we focus on the subject 'Norwegian' (second term of TE programme, first term with Norwegian), 'Natural Sciences' and 'Social Sciences'. The

	Norwegian	English	Social Sciences
Theory	Yes	Yes	Not explicit
Given topic	Yes	Yes	Yes
Topic	Related to the syllabus	Adapted education Student diversity	Digital skills and social sciences education
Reflection	Not explicit	Yes	Yes
Related to practice period	No	Yes	Yes
Related to oral exams	Yes	No	No
Feedback	In class Teacher and students	In class Teacher and students	Not explicit
Evaluation criteria	Yes	No	No
Assessment	In class	Not explicit	Not explicit

Table 3: Design for learning: Content of oral presentations.

	Norwegian	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
Group/individual	Individual	Group	Group and individual
Limitations	7000 signs	1500–2000 words	Individual: 3 pages Group: 7–10 pages
Tools	No	No	Individual: no Group: SurveyXact
Hand-in material	Yes, both digital and on paper	Digital	Digital
Sources	Yes, with links to styles	Yes, with reference to styles	Individual: Not specified Group: Yes

Table 4: Design for learning: Form of traditional academic texts.

students are both from GLU 1–7 and GLU 5–10, and they are at different stages in their course of study. **Table 4** shows how teachers have defined the form of the traditional academic texts.

In the subject 'Norwegian' (Norwegian linguistics and literature), the students write three assignments, of which two could be called traditional academic texts. In a standardised document on the university LMS, the teachers provide quite substantial instructions on formality issues concerning the texts: they should be independent products, transcripts and copying are explicitly defined as highly unacceptable, the use of sources should be made explicit and in accordance with accepted standards, and reference to specific instructions on the use of sources is included.

In Natural Sciences, two out of three mandatory texts are lab reports. The third text is a more traditional academic text, but this one is also oriented towards practical field work. All three assignments are designed as group work by the teacher; there are no requirements to write individual texts on this course at all. We will concentrate on the academic text here, leaving the two lab reports out. The students are instructed to use sources from their own curriculum, together with other sources they must find themselves. They are reminded to consider these sources critically, and to comply with academic standards for source referencing. Finally, the teacher has included two internet references on the bottom of the page, where the students can find links to relevant sources. In Social Sciences, the students produce one individual written text and one group-based text, and both are related to didactic work in school.

As far as content is concerned, there are different requirements, as we can see in **Table 5**.

In their first assignment in Norwegian, the students are asked to write an argumentative text, followed by a suggestion to use the five paragraph method.[1] The students choose one of six given subjects from their curriculum in Norwegian linguistics, and are asked to come up with a suitable problem question which they themselves will address. The second assignment is concentrated on a literary text. Four aspects of the text are highlighted in the assignment: the narrator, realism, structure and themes. To each of these aspects, several questions are formulated for the student to answer.

In Natural Sciences, the assignment is directed at a major subfield of Natural Sciences, singling out two main issues to be dealt with in the student text. The students are asked to concentrate on different aspects in their writing: they should cover aspects that are important for their knowledge as future teachers, aspects that are important as background for their own future teaching, and in addition paying particular attention to what might be interesting for children to deal with. They are also specifically directed to take into account what is stated in the curriculum, which is made available on the university LMS, and to think of possible activities to be played out in a classroom setting, describing advantages and disadvantages provided by these activities. The teacher does not specify what kind of tools should be used, but requires the students' design to include different modalities. More specifically they are obliged to illustrate what they are writing about by using their own photographs or other self-produced illustrations.

In Social Sciences, both assignments are related to the Primary School Curriculum (LK06). The individual task focuses on social sciences methods by asking the students to produce a questionnaire in SurveyXact and then reflect on how to use this kind of method in a didactic setting in primary school. No topic was given as such. The group task was very explicitly directed towards reflecting on the importance of one of the main subject areas in the subject curriculum in LK06.

Teacher students' design in learning in 'traditional academic texts'

In all the assignments of this type in our study, *Word* is the default choice. In Norwegian, both assignments are individual. However, the students more or less always cooperate,

	Norwegian	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
Theory	Yes	Yes	No
Given topic	Yes	Yes	Yes
Topic	Related to curriculum 1) linguistics (different subjects) 2) literature (aspects of a specific short story)	Related to species and ecology	Individual: related to study plans Group: practice research methods
Different modalities	No	Yes, photos or illustrations	Individual: No Group: Tables and diagrams
Reflection	Not explicit	Not explicit	Yes
Related to teaching practice	No	Yes	Yes
Feedback	Yes, written comment	Not explicit	Not explicit
Evaluation criteria	No	No	Individual: No Group: Yes
Assessment	Approved	Approved	Approved
Self-assessment	Yes	No	No

Table 5: Design for learning: Content of traditional academic texts.

and this is very conspicuous in their texts. Whilst the teachers explicitly ask for broad theoretical grounding, the students mainly use syllabus sources, followed by a variety of different sources found on the internet, often on didactic oriented web sites made for use in schools. Most students present visually uncluttered layouts, with conventional paragraphs. None of the students presented bulleted lists (which they are also specifically asked by the teachers to avoid), and no one presents quotes without following academic standards. Apart from this, none of the students include other modalities in their texts, like photographs, tables, drawings or other visual illustrations.

In Natural Science the students are asked to work in groups and hand in their texts as group work products. However, the students always divide the work between them and work individually, before putting the different parts together, often on Google Docs or in a group on Facebook. There are no requirements on what theoretical sources to use, but the students only use syllabus sources, apart from sources found on the internet. These are almost always didactic sites related to school practices, and they are in accordance with what the teacher has already provided them with in advance.

In Social Sciences, Word is the default text editing tool for the individual as well as for the group task; in the case of the latter, handling the online-based questionnaire system was necessary to meet the specified requirements. It was stressed that the main purpose of the group task was to learn how to use this specific tool to investigate typical socially related issues, and therefore the students were free to choose a target area themselves. After conducting the questionnaire, the students were to write a scientific report based on their findings. The students' reflections differed regarding the learning outcome. Those students who put their main focus on learning to conduct the questionnaire as such were more satisfied than students who focused more on the content of the investigation. None of the students used subject-specific syllabus sources apart from methods literature. However, they all used syllabus sources from other subjects in TE, as well as sources found on the internet and/or made available on the university's LMS by the teacher.

There are both similarities and differences between these three subject courses. The topic is given in all tasks presented to the students, and in all task designs, the use of sources and source criticism is stressed as important. In addition, several of the assignments come with some kind of genre definition: to write an argumentative text, a lab report, etc. However, there are big differences when it comes to the more specific requirements. Whilst none of the tasks in Norwegian have specifications regarding the use of different modalities (verbal text, pictures, diagrams, etc.), such requirements are verbalized in all the assignments in Natural Sciences (also the two lab reports that are not included in our study), e.g. "must be illustrated with your own pictures or other self-produced illustrations", "present, illustrate and explain with words, and graphically", "fill out your own data in tables" (which are given). In Social Sciences, the required modalities are tables and diagrams.

The students follow formal criteria set by the teachers regarding length (number of words), answering specific part questions, listing sources etc. They do not include modalities which are not explicitly mentioned by the teacher. For instance, the only kinds of tables, pictures and illustrations used are completely in line with what the teacher has suggested as possible alternatives – they make little effort in adding other kinds of illustrations and exemplifications. Furthermore, little effort is put into actively using, for instance, alternative colours or experimenting with fonts as meaning-making resources. None of the assignments in Norwegian specify that it is possible to use pictures, tables, etc. Close to none of the students include such modalities in their texts (apart from one student writing about 'linguistic pressure from English in Norwegian', who brings in a diagram from one of the curriculum texts).

It is quite conspicuous that the students in all assignments make very little use of other sources than those listed in their curricula or found on the internet. This is confirmed in the focus group interviews, where the students openly express that they rarely use the library, or 'real books'. They tend to go to the library only when they need to check something thoroughly – they rely more on published books and articles than on what they find on the internet, which are not regarded as published, even though they choose to use the latter. Only a couple of students address the fact that you cannot really always rely on all you can find in the library either. In all cases, the students express that what is considered relevant for their future profession as teachers is the most important outcome of writing the texts, and not necessarily their personal knowledge construction and learning related to the particular subject they are studying. Hence, they do not put much effort into the design of their texts – it is a matter of passing or failing.

The tasks in Norwegian are all related to theoretical topics in the course syllabus, whereas the assignments in Natural Sciences are directed towards presenting the results of practical tasks, while the tasks in Social Sciences are in between both, being related to practical tasks and theoretical topics. In all cases, the students seem to adapt to what they imagine their teachers' expectations to be: In Norwegian the students pay much more attention to formalities, such as grammar in general, writing norms, writing coherent texts without bulleted lists, and so forth. They also in general use many more sources, which is perhaps no surprise, given the fact that the Natural Sciences tasks concern the presentation of results of their own practical experiences. In the group task in Social Sciences, the students use a couple of internet sources related to the topic they investigated with SurveyXact, while in the individual task the only source used by the students is the subject curriculum.

Concluding Remarks

Studying our findings regarding our first research question, it is quite obvious that the different course instructors have made efforts trying to vary what kind of assignments the students encounter, by designing the mandatory tasks to make them differ. In relation to our second research

question, our data suggests that the students do not put much effort into their own redesign process when working with their mandatory assignments. This seems to cover both situations mentioned above: the possible redesign of the scientific (knowledge) content of study subjects, and the possibility of the more effective employment of different modalities in presentations and written texts, i.e. developing their digital literacy during the whole process whilst complying with assignments.

When it comes to the development of digital literacy, the teachers' design seems just to include digital tools to support traditional instruction where teachers and students provide and present learning content. However, this is very much in line with the more general findings of the *ICT Monitor 2011*. This monitor also emphasises that there is a need for more and improved documentation concerning the potential value of ICT in teaching and learning for the students. The findings in *ICT Monitor 2014* (Norgesuniversitetet, 2015) do not challenge this conclusion and our findings do not challenge them either.

These findings might be explained by different factors: First, the students are not sure what the requirements are; often these are not specified enough or students lack competence translating them. Second, the students might lack competence in designing different kinds of texts – not just subject-specific genres but also factual texts/writing in general. If these two points are accompanied by lecturers not putting enough effort into giving information and instruction on different ways of solving the different tasks, the learning potential seems to be minor. Third, the students do not put a lot of effort into their assignments, given the fact that they are not graded, but only subject to being passed or failed, always with the chance for resubmittance, and also because students report that they get no or very little feedback (except for in Norwegian and English). Here, the educators' low expectations with regard to the products handed in by the students – operating more as system administrators than knowledge authorities – makes room for "just enough" time being devoted to the tasks by the students.

Taking the factors above into consideration, and assuming that such experiences with text practices in TE to some extent will be reflected in students' future professional lives as educators, even more is at stake. Hopefully, the findings reported in this article might inspire TE educators' and their students' didactical reflections upon such possible mismatches between the (lack of) intention of the designer and the actual interpretation (redesign) by the receiver of the design. Moreover, investigating Norwegian "Reform 2010"-educated teachers' focus on basic skills in their *design for learning*, while preparing, supervising and assessing assignments applied to their own students, should be of interest in the years to come.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Note

[1] In Anglo-American context referred to as The Five Paragraph Essay, Norwegian educators usually labels it "den gyldne hånd" (the golden hand).

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