

Lyngstad, M. E. (2024). Critical literacy and reading in the English subjects in lower secondary school. I M. L. R. Tverbakk & T. Sommervold (Red.), *Tekster og lesere: Et nærmere blikk på ungdomstrinnet*. Fagbokforlaget (s. 163–178).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55669/oa350209>

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Critical literacy and reading in the English subjects in lower secondary school

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Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand the role of critical literacy and reading in LK20, which in this context includes the core curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2019), which is supposed to underpin all primary and secondary education in Norway, and the two English subject curricula for lower secondary school (Years 8–10) in Norway. It considers both the obligatory subject (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020a) and the elective subject, which is called “in-depth English” [fordypning i engelsk] (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020b).^{1,2} Critical literacy can be understood as “a practical approach to curriculum” which

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- 1 The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training will be abbreviated to NDET in the rest of the chapter.
 - 2 Note that the curriculum for the elective subject is only available in Norwegian. The translations throughout the chapter from this curriculum are therefore my own. (For the obligatory subject and the core curriculum, I use the official translations provided by the Directorate.)

“melds social, political, and cultural debate and discussion with the analysis of how texts and discourses work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests” (Luke, 2012, p. 5). It is, therefore, part of the expanded notion of literacy, which understands it as social practice and context-based (Street, 1984). Critical literacy can be linked to terms like “critical thinking” and “critical reflection” that are used in both the core curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 7) and the two English subject curricula (NDET, 2020a, p. 4; 2020b, pp. 4, 5). I centre my discussion on the reading aspect of literacy and pay particular attention to the role of literary texts in the curricula and as related to critical literacy.

In what follows, relevant previous research on LK20 and reading in the English subject in a Norwegian context is addressed before theoretical approaches linked to critical literacy are explored. Then, I explain how document analysis was used to analyse the curriculum texts and present the findings from my examination of critical literacy and reading in the curricula texts. Lastly, I discuss these findings, including possible classroom implications.

Theory and previous research

Previous research on the English subject in Norway

There is some research on teaching the English subject in LK20 (Brown, 2021; Burner et al., 2022; Flognfeldt & Chvala, 2020; Hoff, 2022; Holander & Høvik, 2023; Myklevold, 2022; Schipor & Hammershaug, 2022; Speitz & Myklevold, 2022), but only a few that address reading. Brown (2021) examined upper secondary pupils’ reading of multimodal and visual texts, Hoff (2022) explored literature’s role in the English subject in LK20 by focusing on its potential for working with intercultural competence (IC), Schipor and Hammershaug (2022) looked at language learning strategies and also included reading, and Holander and Høvik (2023) discussed several examples of literary texts written by Sami, Maori, and Native American authors as ways of engaging with indigenous perspectives in the English subject. Of these, Brown’s PhD dissertation (2021) is the most relevant for this chapter as it focused on critical engagement with texts. Since the studies above discuss specific aspects related to reading in the curriculum (multimodal texts, IC, language learning, and the Sami perspective) and focus on the obligatory

English subject, there is a gap in existing research on LK20: an overview of how reading features in both English subject curricula for lower secondary school is missing. This chapter aims to fill this gap.

Since LK20 and the previous curriculum, LK06, share many similarities, some studies conducted in that context remain relevant today (Bakken, 2018; Brevik, 2015; Gilje, 2014; Lyngstad, 2019). Of these, Anja Bakken's PhD dissertation (2018) is the most pertinent since she focused on the English subject in lower secondary school by exploring "English teachers' reasoning about their text practices – their choice and use of texts – in their teaching" (p. 4). Her findings indicated that "independent, reader-driven text approaches" are less dominant among English teachers and that most of the reading in English centres on "collective, text-driven procedures consisting of close reading of textbook texts, translation and vocabulary work" (Bakken, 2018, p. 87). These latter approaches are not necessarily conducive to developing critical literacy, which I will address further in the discussion.

Understanding critical literacy

Critical literacy "refers to use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life" (Luke, 2012, p. 5). It addresses how "there is no such thing as an impartial, objective text or neutral position from which a text can be read, written, viewed or spoken" since "[a]ll texts are ideological" (Evans, 2004, p. 11). Thus, critical literacy builds on critical pedagogy, which its founder, Paulo Freire, referred to as "pedagogy of the oppressed" in his seminal work with the same name (1970). Henry Giroux has since argued that critical pedagogy is "a way to resist the increasingly prevalent approach to pedagogy that viewed it as merely a skill, technique, or disinterested method" and that it aims to build "a formative culture shaped by pedagogical practices capable of creating the conditions for producing citizens who are critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and willing to make moral judgments and act in a socially responsible way" (2020, p. 1). Thus, there is a strong emphasis on "justice, values, ethics, and power" (Giroux, 2020, p. 1) in critical pedagogy. Critical literacy, then, bears with it these same aims and values, but focuses on the production and reception of oral and written texts. The term "critical literacy" is not used directly in

the LK20 curriculum (Brown, 2021, p. 27). However, traces of its influence are clearly present, especially in certain aspects that are elaborated on below.

Critical literacy can be linked to *Bildung*, which has historically influenced Norwegian education (Telhaug, 2011) and continues to do so today (see Christensen & Ulleberg, 2020; Lyngstad, 2021). *Bildung* – what is referred to as “danning” in Norwegian (NDET, 2020a, p. 2) – can be defined as “the individual’s development into a well-rounded citizen and the linking of the self to the outside world – something which includes both social and cultural understanding” (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 16). Wolfgang Klafki (1959–1996) outlined three branches of *Bildung*: the material, formal, and categorial, which differ from each other in how they relate to the content of teaching, including materials such as texts, and the extent to which they focus on students’ individual development and engagement with said materials (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 16). Importantly, in order for *Bildung* to happen, “learning about a topic is not sufficient” as it also “requires reflection and critical thinking” (Fenner, 2018, p. 19). Much like critical literacy and critical pedagogy, *Bildung* is a value-based approach to education as it focuses on democracy, human rights, and turning pupils into citizens who are able to participate in society, using an all-round education to get there (Biesta, 2002). One difference is that although *Bildung* has the potential to include the same aspects of power, oppression, and justice that critical pedagogy and critical literacy emphasise, these issues are not as front and centre in *Bildung*. Learning to think critically is, however, a tenet of both approaches. The emphasis on this in LK20 reflects a broader trend. According to Erik Ryen (2020), “[c]ritical thinking’ (CT) has become a common buzz phrase in education worldwide” due to its definition as a 21st-century skill by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (p. 214).

Reading, literature and critical literacy

In her book *Tales of literacy for the 21st century: The literary agenda* (2016), Maryanne Wolf argues that “reading is not just about ‘decoding’ the information before our eyes. Rather, reading is ultimately about an encounter between a reader and another mind that leads to *thinking beyond ourselves*” (p. 3, italics in original). She connects this encounter to the “literary” as opposed to the “literal”, as the literary “capacity for realisation, insight, and discovery [...] is the apex of the reading act and our goal for literacy” (p. 3).

This latter point, which describes ways of interacting with literature that focus on self-reflection and development rather than “just” learning about something, is clearly linked to critical literacy: engaging actively with texts to realise and discover things about the text and the world around us. This way of reading can be referred to as “deep reading”, as it is more than just reading comprehension: it refers to “how literacy transforms brain, mind, and culture in highly significant, deeply consequential ways” (p. 2). According to Wolf (2018), this transformation happens most frequently in encounters with texts that challenge their readers both emotionally and intellectually, especially literary texts. Similarly, Janice Bland (2022a) argued that “[d]eep reading means transactions with the literary text, alone or in dialogic participation in the text with fellow students” (p. 24) and that shifting to a deep reading framework in the classroom entails moving “from *working with literature* to the communicative process of reception, embracing *literature working on the reader*” (p. 24, italics in original). This means that reading literary texts is a particularly suitable way of addressing critical literacy, and in what follows, I will – among other things – discuss to which extent this is present in LK20.

Methodological considerations

A document can be defined as “a record of an event or process” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 249) – in this case, the curriculum documents are records of the educational paradigm and regulations Norwegian schools are currently obligated to follow. In this chapter, I employ content analysis, a type of document analysis, to examine the curricula (see Silverman, 2014, p. 116). I focus on two main categories, where each has sub-categories that help explain the overarching topics:

1. Critical literacy (including the sub-categories “*Bildung*” and “critical thinking”)
2. Reading (including the sub-category “literature”)³

3 After careful consideration, I decided not to include the term “text” as a category. The reason is that the word is used in more contexts than the ones that relate to reading (e.g. writing), and including it in the analysis would not lead me to broader findings than the ones already covered by “reading” and “literature”. Although “literature” is not used a lot in the curricula documents, I decided to keep it due to the genre’s importance for developing critical literacy through deep reading (see e.g., Wolf, 2016; 2018; Bland, 2022a, 2022b).

The two main categories, “critical literacy” and “reading”, were established in advance of the analysis, whereas the sub-categories emerged from the data as I read and re-read the documents.

When analysing the curriculum for the obligatory subject (NDET, 2020a), I included the sections “About the subject” (with the sub-sections “Relevance and central values”, “Core elements”, “Interdisciplinary topics”, and “Basic skills”), “Competence aims and assessment Year 10” and “Type of assessment”. The sections that were excluded were the ones addressing competence aims and assessment for primary and upper secondary school. When examining the curriculum for the elective subject (NDET, 2020b), I looked at the entire document. The section “About the subject” contains the same sub-sections as the obligatory subject, and the document also includes “Competence aims and assessment Year 10” and “Type of assessment”. When examining the core curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2019), I looked at the entire document, meaning the sub-sections “About the core curriculum”, “The purpose of education”, “Core values of the education and training”, “Principles for education and all-round development”, and “Principles for the school’s practice”. In what follows, I present the analysis of these three documents.

Analysis of the LK20 curriculum

Critical literacy in LK20

In LK20, critical literacy features in both the core and subject curricula. The core curriculum is a value-based document that builds on the objectives clause in the Education Act, which is the law governing education in Norway. Its purpose and mandate are stated as such:

The core curriculum clarifies the responsibility of the school and training establishments when it comes to education and all-round development (Bildung) and the development of the competence of all participants in primary and secondary education and training. (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 2)

This means that the core curriculum sees the purpose of education as twofold: it “combines discussing the instrumental role of schools in turning students

into productive members of the work force with a focus on schools' role in developing students into autonomous individuals" (Lyngstad, 2021, p. 13). Thus, it focuses on *Bildung* and competencies simultaneously, and both should be addressed throughout primary and secondary education.

The specific values described in the core curriculum that should form the foundation for education are "human dignity", "identity and cultural diversity", "critical thinking and ethical awareness", "the joy of creating, engagement and the urge to explore", "respect for nature and environmental awareness", and "democracy and participation" (Ministry of Education, 2019, pp. 4–10). Of these, the value "critical thinking and ethical awareness" is the clearest link to critical literacy, as the section elaborating on this value states that "established ideas must be scrutinised and criticised by using theories, methods, arguments, experiences and evidence" (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 7) – meaning that the curriculum *wants* pupils to question the status quo. However, it also states that "teaching and training must [...] seek a balance between respect for established knowledge and the explorative and creative thinking required to develop new knowledge" (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 7), which indicates that the questioning should not go unreasonably far. In addition to this section, critical thinking is included in the section on the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 16) as well as when describing what it means to develop competence in the subjects (Ministry of Education, 2019, pp. 12–13) and learning to learn (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 14).

In the curricula for the obligatory and elective English subjects in lower secondary school, aspects of critical literacy are present in the introductory section, "Relevance and central values", when describing how "the subject shall develop the pupils' understanding that their views on the world are culture-dependent" (NDET, 2020a, p. 2) in the curriculum for the obligatory subject and focusing on "thinking critically about use of technology, social networks, aids, and learning strategies" which is supposed to be linked to "ethical awareness" (NDET, 2020b, p. 2) in the elective subject. Furthermore, the core element "Working with texts in English" in the obligatory subject states that pupils should reflect on, interpret, and critically assess texts and describes how pupils should "develop intercultural competence enabling them to deal with different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns" (NDET, 2020a, p. 3). Both of these could be argued to be related to critical

literacy: discovering, through reflection on and interaction with texts, other perspectives than those that are dominant. The focus on critical reflection and assessment of texts is also present in the sections addressing the basic skill of reading in both subjects (NDET, 2022a, p. 4; 2022b, p. 4), which will be elaborated on in the next part of this chapter.

In the competence aims after Year 10 of both subject curricula, it is in the verbs outlining what pupils are meant to be able to do where elements of critical literacy can be located. Pupils are supposed to “explore” and “reflect on” in both subjects (NDET, 2020a, p. 9; 2020b, p. 5) and “discuss” and “interpret” in the obligatory subject (NDET, 2020a, p. 9). These types of verbs mean that pupils are expected to be “active agents” in the learning process (Brown, 2021, p. 27), which is a central part of critical literacy.

Reading in LK20

In this section, I discuss the curricula’s focus on reading and literature. In the core curriculum, there are only a few references to these terms: the only section that explicitly mentions reading is the one introducing the five basic skills (Ministry of Education, 2019, pp. 13–14), but this section does not go into detail. Literature is not mentioned at all in the core curriculum. For this reason, this section focuses on the two subject curricula (NDET, 2020a; 2020b). When examining these, what becomes immediately evident is that the term “read” is more frequently used than “literature” – perhaps not surprisingly. “Literature” is mentioned once, and the comparable term “fiction” is also used once – both in the curriculum for the obligatory subject. In both cases, it is used in combination with “read”.

In both the curriculum for the obligatory English subject and the elective English subject, reading is emphasised as one of the four basic skills the subject is supposed to cover. These sections are somewhat different in the two curricula, though. In the obligatory subject, this section reads as follows:

Reading in English means understanding and reflecting on the content of various types of texts on paper and on screen, and contributing to reading pleasure and language acquisition. It means reading and finding information in multimedia texts with competing messages and using reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information. The development of reading

skills in English progresses from experimenting with phonemes and speech sounds, spelling patterns and syllables to reading varied and complex texts with fluency and comprehension and being increasingly able to critically reflect on and assess different types of texts. (NDET, 2020a, p. 4)

Importantly, it describes how reading in English does not just mean “understanding” (which could be understood as decoding, as in the instrumental approach to reading) but also “reflecting on the content” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4). Furthermore, reading is supposed to contribute “to reading pleasure and language acquisition” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4), which means that throughout the paragraph describing the basic skill of reading, there is a dual focus on instrumental and *Bildung* purposes. This section also describes how reading in English means to read “various types of texts on paper and on screen” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4). Literary texts are not mentioned specifically but can, of course, be part of the text selection.

Further, this section states that “reading and finding information in multimedia texts with competing messages and using reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4) is part of what it means to read in English, and that reading in English should progress “from experimenting with phonemes and speech sounds, spelling patterns and syllables to reading varied and complex texts with fluency and comprehension and being increasingly able to critically reflect on and assess different types of texts” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4). This is in line with Maryanne Wolf’s understanding of reading development: “when we read, we begin by learning to decode print and to derive information from cracking this code and then over our life span learning to connect the act of reading to our most sophisticated comprehension processes” (Richardson, 2014, p. 14). In LK20’s obligatory English subject, interpretation of complex texts is considered important, but the curriculum does not define what “complex” means. Although many types of texts can be considered complex (including, for example, multimodal texts), literary texts can offer a particular kind of complexity linked to “being able to read between the lines and beyond the lines and interpreting metaphorical messages” (Bland, 2022a, p. 19).

The section on reading as a basic skill in the elective subject contains some of the same phrases and sentences as the comparable section in the obligatory subject but is significantly shorter, as some parts have been removed:

Reading in in-depth English means understanding and reflecting on the content of various types of texts on paper and on screen. It means reading and finding information in multimedia texts with competing messages and using reading strategies to understand explicit and implicit information. The development of reading skills in in-depth English is to be increasingly able to critically reflect on and assess different types of texts. (NDET, 2020b, p. 4, my transl.)

The most important difference between this section in the elective subject and the comparable one in the obligatory subject is that the phrases “reading pleasure” and “reading varied and complex texts with fluency and comprehension” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4) are not included in the elective subject. This could initially seem like a significant difference between the two curricula. However, in the curriculum for the elective subject, there is an explicit reference to “reading” in the section addressing the core element of intercultural competence (a section which is not part of the obligatory subject): “Reading a variety of texts in English can promote a joy of reading, contribute to developing language competences and increase intercultural competence” (NDET, 2020b, p. 3, my transl.). “[J]oy of reading” is comparable to the notion of “reading pleasure”, which is part of the obligatory subject, and “a variety of texts” is comparable to “varied texts” in the obligatory subject. The phrase “complex texts” is missing from the elective subject, but since the obligatory subject does not define what this means, the difference is not that great. This means that overall, the introductory sections of the two subject curricula provide a very similar combined focus on the development of reading competency and the development of *Bildung* through reading texts.

In the obligatory subject, there are three competence aims after Year 10 that specifically mention reading: pupils are expected to be able to “read, discuss and present content from various types of texts, including self-chosen texts”, “read, interpret and reflect on English-language fiction, including young people’s literature”, and “read factual texts and assess the reliability of the sources” (NDET, 2020a, p. 9). These competence aims elaborate certain aspects of the basic skill section, including outlining certain types of texts that need to be included: “self-chosen texts”, “English-language fiction”, “young people’s literature”, and “factual texts”. Teachers can, of course, include other types of texts as well, but these *must* be used in the classroom. Comparably, in

the elective subject, no competence aims explicitly mention reading. Instead, pupils are – among other things – supposed to “reflect on variations in ways of thinking, communication patterns and ways of interacting in the virtual and real world”, “explore and compare the use of language and devices in different media and contexts”, and “explore and reflect on how point of view and sender can affect a message” (NDET, 2020b, p. 5, my transl.). All of these aims can be linked to reading, but none of them *require* reading. As reading is clearly highlighted earlier in the curriculum as one of the basic skills this subject is meant to help develop, it is perhaps odd that the term is not used at all in the competence aims.

Lastly, in the curriculum for the obligatory subject, the section on formative assessment after Year 10 specifies that “[t]he teacher shall facilitate for pupil participation and stimulate the desire to learn by using a variety of strategies and learning resources to develop the pupils’ reading skills and oral and writing skills” (NDET, 2020a, p. 9). Similarly, in the curriculum for the elective subject, the section on formative assessment after Year 10 states that “The teacher shall give advice about further learning and adapt the teaching so the pupils can use this advice to take part in their own learning, develop reading skills, writing skills, and oral and digital skills in the subject” (NDET, 2020b, p. 6, my transl.). This means that teachers need to focus on formative assessment to encourage the development of pupils’ reading skills in both the obligatory and elective subjects.

Concluding remarks

The analysis of the curriculum shows that critical literacy, and especially critical thinking, is a central component of all three documents examined above. In the core curriculum, critical thinking is mainly linked to *Bildung* perspectives, whereas in the two subject curricula, it is mainly linked to intercultural competence and working with texts. Reading features heavily in both subject curricula for English in lower secondary school but plays a less explicit part in the elective English subject curriculum than the obligatory English subject curriculum. The focus on reading in LK20 combines the development of *Bildung* and competencies. It gives teachers great freedom regarding which texts and genres to bring into the classroom as long as there is a varied selection.

Discussion and classroom implications

The findings from the analysis of the curriculum show that critical literacy and reading are central components in LK20, even if the former term is not used directly, and that the curriculum combines an instrumental development of specific skills with critical perspectives on texts. This section will further elaborate on the role reading has in the context of critical literacy, thus combining the two more directly than was done in the analysis.

The LK20 curriculum is quite clear in that pupils should develop the ability of “critical thinking” (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 7) and that they should “critically reflect on” different texts (NDET, 2020a, p. 4, 9; 2020b, p. 4, my transl.). This could be argued to be achievable if one is engaging with theories and approaches related to deep reading which leads to “thinking beyond ourselves” (Wolf, 2016, p. 3). However, previous research on reading in the English subject in lower secondary school suggests that teaching practices focus more on “textbook texts, translation and vocabulary work” (Bakken, 2018, p. 87). These kinds of practices are, I argue, not conducive to developing the critical engagement with texts that is necessary to develop critical literacy, especially because the development of critical literacy takes time (Brown, 2021, p. vi).

Furthermore, although critical literacy arguably has an important role in LK20, the curriculum lacks specificity concerning some of its aspects. Although the curriculum requires pupils to be critical in their interactions with texts, it does not specify *how* pupils should be critical or of *what* they should be critical. This means that the aspects of critical literacy that relate to “naming, exposing, and destabilising power relations” (Ives & Crandall, 2014, p. 203) and focusing on “justice, values, ethics, and power” (Giroux, 2020, p. 1) are not explicitly present in either the core curriculum or the two subject curricula for English in lower secondary school. Moreover, the curriculum does not specify *which texts* pupils should read critically, which means that pupils will encounter different texts depending on which school they attend and perhaps even which teacher they have. This is not necessarily bad, since “a curriculum that encourages freedom of choice is ideal if the wish is to inspire teacher and/or student autonomy” (Lyngstad, 2019, p. 40). For teachers, though, it is important to make conscious decisions concerning text choice:

LK20 requires “various types of texts” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4; 2020b, p. 4), but it also requires “complex texts” (NDET, 2020a, p. 4) and texts that can “increase intercultural competence” (NDET, 2020b, p. 3, my transl.) – arguably, this means that teachers need to choose texts that pupils can be challenged by, as well as texts that can help pupils gain a deeper understanding of other cultures and ways of thinking.

Having established what the curriculum does and does not specify concerning critical literacy and reading, as well as how teachers’ practices are not necessarily in line with the curriculum’s requirements concerning critical literacy, it makes sense to turn to what teachers *should do* in light of these findings; namely, consider moving towards practices suggested by Brown (2021) and Bland (2022a; 2022b). Bland has developed a deep reading framework which consists of four steps: “Step 1: Unpuzzle and explore”, “Step 2: Activate and investigate”, “Step 3: Critically engage”, and “Step 4: Experiment with creative response” (2022b, p. 23). Step 3, in particular, focuses on developing critical literacy, since pupils are encouraged to link the text to their own lives (p. 23). This step also aims to have pupils read critically and “against the text” (p. 23), which means to “discover how certain worldviews have been, often unconsciously, imported into a text” (Bland, 2022a, p. 22). This is clearly in line with critical literacy according to both Evans’s (2004) understanding that “[a]ll texts are ideological” (p. 11) and Luke’s (2012) definition of the term: “the analysis of how texts [...] work, where, with what consequences, and in whose interests” (p. 5). Moreover, Brown (2021) explained that when teachers allow pupils to “be active co-constructors of meaning [...] through collaborative dialogue with others, the learners produce more complex and multifaceted knowledge” (p. vi). In turn, this led to pupils understanding how “meaning making resources [...] are related to social and cultural contexts” (ibid.) – which is an important part of critical literacy. Although Brown’s study focused on upper secondary pupils, these approaches could also be adapted to and utilised in the lower secondary classroom. In sum, focusing on deep reading and collaborative dialogue in the classroom can lead to the development of critical literacy in line with LK20’s requirements. However, since this approach requires work with texts to be more reader-driven and critically oriented, as opposed to focusing on textbooks, vocabulary, and translation (Bakken, 2018, p. 87), this would mean a change in practice for many teachers.

Conclusion

Developing critical literacy through reading in English is an important task in Norwegian classrooms, and successful critical literacy practices require pupils to engage deeply with texts and not only read to understand but also read to “be inquisitive” and allow “established ideas” to “be scrutinised and criticised” (Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 7), like the core curriculum suggests. Deep reading allows teachers and pupils to focus on reading and understanding the texts in question and also allows “*literature working on the reader*” (Bland, 2022a, p. 24, italics in original). Importantly, including texts in the classroom that allow pupils to interact critically with both the text, the teacher, and their fellow pupils will encourage deeper reflection and help develop the pupils’ understanding of their own and others’ places in the world. Since both the obligatory and the elective English subjects focus on critical literacy and reading, I argue that employing a deep reading framework in both subjects in lower secondary school can help teachers reach these aims. Importantly, though, developing critical literacy takes time (Brown, 2021, p. vi); teachers and schools need to create spaces for reading and engaging with texts if we want to achieve this.

Therefore, further research in this area could explore the classroom implications of using the deep reading framework to develop critical literacy. Conducting action research and/or lesson study projects where researchers and teachers together develop ways of integrating the critical literacy approaches that the curriculum demands while also making room for everything else that needs to happen in a lower secondary English classroom could be particularly fruitful. Additionally, comparative perspectives that combine the English and Norwegian subjects – which are both meant to further critical literacy – would be interesting and necessary for a holistic approach to the curriculum and the teaching that pupils encounter.

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