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Educating teachers for the future school- the challenge of bridging between perceptions of quality teaching and policy decisions: reflections from Norway

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ABSTRACT

Teacher quality, or ‘the good teacher’ is not clearly defined in Norway, nor are there specific standards for measuring teacher quality. Everybody has an opinion about the good teacher, and teacher quality is frequently debated. Moreover, in Norway there is no systematic evaluation of teachers. Nevertheless, numerous reforms and popular discourses indirectly revisit and revise the formal qualification competences of teachers. This paper is an explorative journey into research, fiction and policy documents searching for how teacher quality has been, and is, perceived in Norway. The paper discusses relevant research, presents a historical contextualisation, my interpretations of selected fiction literature, and policy documents. I argue that teacher education has the responsibility of not merely translating policies into practice, but also to act as a critical bridge-builder between academic and relational aspects of teaching. Teacher education should offer a research-informed, practice-relevant education of teachers for the current and future school.

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Introduction

‘The good teacher’ is in the eye of the beholder. Everybody has had experience with teachers, many with numerous teachers. An exercise I often do when meeting new students of teaching is to ask them how many teachers they have had. Most of them count 30 or more when they have reached the level of tertiary education, and those who already have an academic degree when entering teacher education, sometimes double that number. My next question is how many good teachers they have had, and why do they remember these teachers as good. The numbers are significantly reduced, and the good teachers, perceived by the students, can often be counted on one hand. The reasons why they remember them as good are diverse, these teachers knew their subjects, were well prepared, awoke an interest in the subject, and most often the answer is – they saw me, they cared about me.

In search for what is perceived as the good teacher in Norway I have chosen to go

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beyond scientific evidence. First, relevant research on the perception of the good teacher is presented, before I briefly present the historical context of the teacher role, followed by an illustration of how teachers have been presented in three selected works of fiction. Next, the paper discusses recent policy documents and public reports and their relevance for teacher education. The last part of the paper aims to pull it all together in support of claims made.

Referring to more serious research about the quality teacher than the above reflections from my own teaching, Raufelder et al. (2016) found that German adolescents 'value teachers' interpersonal dimensions over academic ones, although they underline their bilateral association' (39). The balance between the professional level and the interpersonal level of quality teaching is described as a distinction between the teacher's role and the teacher's being by other researchers (Böhnisch 1996; Raufelder, Bukowski, and Mohr 2013). Students' perceptions of good teaching are found to be rather stable from early age and even throughout teacher education, and good teachers are characterised by being knowledgeable, caring, patient, not boring, polite, and organised (Murphy, Delli, and Edwards 2004).

Teaching is contextualised, and the position taken in this paper is that good teaching is doing the best for the student in a specific situation. I draw on Aristotle's distinction between episteme, techne and phronesis here, supported by other researchers (Brunstad 2007; Kessels and Korthagen 1996; Smith 2015). Biesta (2015) speaks of teacher judgement, which relates to Aristotle's concept phronesis or what Brunstad (2007) calls professional wisdom. Yet, exercising professional wisdom cannot be isolated from owning a solid theoretical knowledge base (episteme) and good practical teaching skills (techne). Teacher judgement based on professional wisdom requires experience and integrates the role of the teacher as well as the being of the teacher. The Finnish educator, Hanssén (2008) calls this teachership, which encompasses professional knowledge, skills and wisdom. The role of the teacher can be specified in standards and qualifications, whereas the being of the teacher is more difficult to concretise, and thereby, cannot be easily assessed. It is in the eye of the most significant beholder, the students.

Kaplan (2000), an experienced teacher who presented stories from his own teaching, concludes that good teaching is a balance between the academic and the personal level of a teacher, and he stresses the importance of listening to and seeing the students: 'Teachers don't interact with categories or kinds, they try to engage minds, and when an activity absorbs and affects a child in a productive and fruitful manner, the experience is educational precisely because it is singular' (Kaplan 2000, 402). The situational aspect is central to good teaching.

The teacher–student relationship is a built-in component of the way teachers interact with the students, and the importance of quality relationship for students' achievements is widely documented as reported in the extensive review study by Roorda et al. (2017). A more detailed discussion of teacher-student relationship has been proposed by Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) who argue that a distinction should be made between learning relationships and interpersonal relationships. They claim that the latter, interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the student, is a pre-requisite for establishing a learning relationship. Only when a relationship of mutual trust and respect including a code of conduct is established between the teacher and the student, can both actors focus on the goal of complex learning activities. This is not a linear development and there

is a clear point when learning relationships can be fostered. It is more a simultaneous development in which learning takes place when the students learn to trust and respect the teacher as a person and as a knowledge broker.

It is not by chance that I started exploring the perception of quality teaching by focusing on students' point of view, because, as I see it, these are, indeed, experts of teaching. Rudduck and Flutter (2000) have been strong advocates for listening to students in the effort to improve school and education, claiming that 'In our efforts at 'school improvement' we need to tune in to what pupils can tell us about their experiences and what they think will make a difference to their commitment to learning and, in turn, to their progress and achievement' (75).

Limited research has been conducted in Norway about what students' say about good teaching. However, Ulvik (2009) found that when students in upper secondary school were invited to describe a good learning situation, only 66% had positive examples which related to being actively involved in the activity alongside engagement and systematicity from the teachers. Moreover, the students emphasise the importance of having a good relationship with the teacher and not least, that they find the learning activity meaningful. Many of the students blame the teachers for not experiencing learning due to boring, not varied and too quick teaching. Moreover, they found many teachers to be impatient, uninterested in the subject taught and using faulty teaching methods. The good teacher was described as knowledgeable and used a variety of teaching methods, was communicative, social, demanding, and had a good sense of humour. Ulvik (2009) concludes that students' expectations of teachers are manageable, they want teachers to care, communicate easily and understand the students. They expect engagement, diverse teaching methods and teachers who set high demands.

An extensive master dissertation by two Norwegian teachers, Tomines and Mathiesen (2013) examined teachers' perceptions of good teachers in a qualitative multiple case study. Their findings align, to a large extent, with the findings in Ulvik's (2009) paper. The good teacher has good class management, is clear and well-prepared. The teaching is systematic, however, the teacher is at same time flexible and able to tackle spontaneous situations as they occur. Tomines and Mathiesen (2013) conclude that formal qualifications are not good indicators for good teaching, yet the teacher should be knowledgeable and supportive. Good relations are fundamental for creating a positive learning environment. Norwegian research seems to support the claim made by international researchers that quality teaching is a balance between academic and personal dimensions which is strongly reflected in the brief historical backdrop presented in the next section.

Brief historical backdrop

In Norway the balance between the teacher's different responsibilities traditionally is made explicit with emphasis put on the *Bildung* (Norwegian 'danning') responsibility of schooling alongside knowledge goals. Thus, there is a clear distinction between the educative and the cognitive objectives of schooling, and the teacher's role and the teacher's being (Raufelder, Bukowski, and Mohr 2013) are both central to quality teaching in Norway. The 'danning' responsibility relates to the German concept 'Bildung' which Humboldt saw as the ultimate development of human powers (Humboldt Von 2000). 'Danning' describes the formation of a person's personality, behaviour and moral, and it is the person herself who has the ability

and duty to find her own way of how to live in coexistence with the surrounding world ([The Great Norwegian Encyclopaedia](#)). Thus, it is a concept which comprises concepts such as socialisation, education, schooling, moral values, cultural insights, etc.

In the general Norwegian Education Act (1998), these educative goals of schooling are explicitly expressed in the very first paragraph of the first chapter. An extract of which says: 'Education and training must be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights. Education and training must help increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions' (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 1998, ch.1, §1.1).

A further operationalisation of the above goal is provided by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training which states that the school, presented by the teacher, has the responsibility to educate the whole person and provide every student with opportunities to develop her unique abilities and talents. The educative aspects of schooling, 'danning', takes place when the students become knowledgeable and insightful about the environment, nature, language, history, society, working life, art and culture, religion and spirituality. It takes place through experiences and practical challenges students meet in school and beyond (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2020a).

Danning (Bildung), as presented above, has been at the heart of Norwegian education for a century, and it is the pillar of the comprehensive school (enhetsskolen) in Norway which started in 1860. The comprehensive school has two main dimensions, first, it includes all students independent of geographical and social differences. Second, there is a continuation in the school system which means that completing one level opens for a higher level. From 1950 there is 10 years obligatory schooling in Norway, followed by 3 years upper secondary school open to all, but not compulsory. Academic and vocational education is placed in the same system, and many upper secondary schools offer both academic and vocational education. Thus, all students have an equal opportunity to complete 13 years of schooling which qualify for further tertiary education or a vocation. Today the more common term is 'felleskolen' translated to 'public school' in English. It is based on the same principles as the comprehensive school, however, it stresses, to a much larger extent, diversity. Students with special needs or with minority backgrounds are included in the same school system, the same class. Students should learn to live with a diverse community from an early age, and each student has the right to be educated according to his or her talents and needs (NOU 2014).

Next, the article will briefly look at how teachers are presented in three works of fiction as a mirror of the Norwegian society at the time when the novels were published. The three works are selected because they reflect various centuries of the Norwegian society and are still often referred to in current discussions about the purpose of education and the role of the teacher.

Descriptions of teachers in three Norwegian works of fiction

Interestingly, teachers in Norwegian literature are mostly described negatively, and the characters are often anti-thesis to what a good teacher is perceived by students. However, I have also looked for a more positive description of teachers. The three works chosen are

authored by Alexander Kielland (1849–1906), Jens Bjørneboe (1920–1976, and Inge Eidsvåg (1947–), and they represent various eras in Norwegian history. Two of the works are novels, and the third is a book about teachers for teachers.

Alexander Kielland is one of the Four Greats in Norwegian literature, alongside Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, and Jonas Lie. Kielland was a realistic writer, and one of his most famous works is the novel *Gift* (Poison) published in (1883). The book is a strong critic of the strict, often hypocritical, morality of the Norwegian society at that time. However, of interest to this paper is the way Kielland presents the way the Latin school educated students. Learning by heart was the only teaching goal either it was remembering rivers in France or learning Latin glossaries and grammar rules by heart. Independent thinking on part of the students was discouraged and suppressed without the slightest chance to develop. Kielland's description of the behaviour of the principal, as well as the teacher, is cruel and especially in the way they treated the fourteen-year-old Marius. Marius was the son of an unmarried woman and low on the social ranking. Marius was not a strong student, however quite successful in Latin which mainly consisted of conjugating Latin words. 'There was not enough space in his head than for Latin'. As Latin was one of the main subjects in the Latin school, Marius' skill was acknowledged by the principal who persuaded his mother to push Marius to continue studying Latin. However, Marius, had a blackout during the exam and failed, and when the teacher humiliated him, verbally abused him, and made him the laughingstock of the class, Marius fainted. He was taken seriously ill and finally died- conjugating the Latin word he failed during the exam, 'Mensa rotunda' (the round table). His friend Abraham, with an independent mind, came from a family of high social status, tried to defend Marius during the exam, and he called the teacher a devil. The teacher then freezes out Abraham who starts to see himself as a bad person going against social norms, and he conforms to the rules of the school and becomes obedient and submissive. All his critical independent thoughts have been removed.

Kielland, through his book, presents a cruel picture of the teacher in the Latin school who uses his power to ridicule a student to the extent that it leads to death, and conform an independent, moral student protecting his weaker friend, into a submissive person whose own personality is suppressed. Kielland has described the anti-thesis of what a good teacher should be; 'Teachers were the same, a withered peevish flock who throughout the years created their own parody because their lonely life was to sit at the cathedra and spread dust on students who did not understand' (Kielland 1983, 59, author's translation). Kielland's novel has been in the centre of educational discussions in Norway for a century, especially in relation to the 'darning' obligation of the school and of teachers. In today's perspective it is an anti-thesis to both teacher's being and teacher's role, however, it was quite representative of the Norwegian school and society nearly 140 years ago.

Nearly a 100 years later we still find the same critical presentation of teachers in Jens Bjørneboe's novel, *Jonas*. However, Bjørneboe, a teacher himself for 7 years, said in an interview many years later, that these 7 years were the best in his life, claiming that you cannot be a teacher unless you love children. He mainly enjoyed working with the challenging students, having been one of those himself. As Kielland's novel, *Gift* (Poison), also Bjørneboe's novel *Jonas* arouse waves in the Norwegian educational debate when it was published in (1955) and up till today. Jonas, who suffered from reading difficulties, did not get the support from the teachers who Bjørneboe ironically called

'salamanders'. They have no empathy nor love for children, just mockery and scorn. The four named teachers in the novel just want to get rid of Jonas, to get rid of the problem by transferring him to a special school, 'The Idiot School'. Jonas soon became the object of the other students' bullying. Jonas' saviour was the school principal, Jochumsun, who had chosen to work with younger students in protest of the test regime and student ranking according to grades and social class in secondary school. He told Jonas' four teachers that as long as he was the principal, Jonas would stay in the school. Jochumson's pedagogical vision was that children should be allowed to be children, also in school, and some children think with their bodies, stomach, feet and fingers, not only their head. This does not mean they are less intelligent. However, Jochumson dies and one of the four teachers, Strange, becomes the new principal. The first thing he does is to move Jonas to the 'Idiot school'. Jonas, wetting his bed at night, stuttering and without reading skills, runs away from home on a ship at the age of 8. A second saviour is one of the sailors on Jonas' escape ship, a previous secondary school teacher who had left teaching due to his disagreement with the system. He finds Jonas and helps him get a place in a private school with teachers holding a pedagogical view that understands Jonas, his difficulties, and detect his talent for drawing which becomes his means of expression. This was the kind of school that Bjørneboe himself had worked in. Bjørneboe's criticism of the post 2nd World War school in Norway is as harsh as Kielland's was a century earlier. However, when Kielland did not offer any alternative to the system and its teachers, Bjørneboe does, which is a reflection of the post war Norwegian society opening up for schools with different pedagogical visions. The novel, *Jonas*, created a hectic uproar in Norway when it was published, and in a later publication Bjørneboe defined the good teacher as follows:

'This is the teacher's real subject: To like children. To love them. He shall love beautiful and ugly children, strong and weak children, kind and bad children. That is his metier' and he continues. "His call is to work with whole, live children, and not only small heads. Therefore, the teacher's call requires that he himself shall meet the students as a whole and living human being, not only as a somewhat bigger head. So simple, and so difficult is it to be a teacher" (Bjørneboe 1962, 744, author's translation).

The third piece of literature I will briefly relate to is authored by Inge Eidsvåg, a teacher himself and a principal of Nansenskolen ([The Nansen Humanistic Academy](#)) which was founded in 1938 in response to the totalitarian ideologies developing in Europe. The schools' vision is built on social-humanistic values, and it focuses on peace education through dialogues. Eidsvåg has been, and still is, heavily involved in the public discussion of the Norwegian school, and he has published numerous books and essays. The book discussed below is a ([2000] 2018) publication called *Læreren- betraktninger om kjærlighetens gjerninger* (*The Teacher- Reflections on Deeds of Love*). The book was first published in 2000, and in 2018 a new version came out. In the foreword of the 2000 version Eidsvåg writes that it is not a book about pedagogy, there are no lesson plans, curricula, teaching techniques, neither is it about school history nor school reforms. The book is about the essence of teaching, enthusiasm for learning and the pleasure of working with and the love for children. In the 2018 version he adds to the foreword that he wants the book to be a counterbalance to the current educational view which increasingly values achievements, competitions and measurable quality. The book is a collection of Eidsvåg's and others' experiences as students and teachers used as backdrop for exploring relevant philosophical, literary and religious texts. Eidsvåg's

educational vision shines through in every line of the book, likewise the stress he puts on the danning (Bildung) aspect of the teacher's being. In the chapter called 'It is in the hands' he talks about the scholarly 'dumb' peers from his own schooldays in a rural island community. The 'dumb' students, placed at the end of the classroom and seldomly talked in class, became unrecognisable outside the classroom where they handled the axe, the tractor or the fishing boat with confidence and the expertise of an adult. The school stressed academic skills, and those who did not master them, were 'dumb'. Today we more politely talk about the weak students, but in what perspective are they weak? Eidsvåg argues that the classroom must open up and give room for practical and ethical skills and not only require the same level and meagre mix of academic skills of all students.

Eidsvåg presents in another book of his, *Den gode læreren i liv og diktning (The good teacher in life and poetry)* 10 commandments for teachers which are still frequently discussed in many teacher education sessions. In his 10 commandments Eidsvåg acknowledges the importance of the teacher being knowledgeable, care for students and enjoy teaching with high expectations and demand of himself and of the students. In agreement with Hansén (2008) teachership goes beyond the classroom, as it is extended to collaboration with colleagues and acting as an agent for the teaching profession.

In the literature presented above it can be noted that measurable aspects such as formal qualifications, covering the curriculum or achievements are not discussed as central to quality teaching or the good teacher. The knowledgeable teachers' being, relationships they create, and professional agency are central. These are, however, difficult to measure in a list of competencies. Teaching is perceived as a call, filled with love for the children and the subject(s) taught, and good teachers act beyond the classroom- in the near community and the wider society. However, in the research literature discussed, there is also a claim for teachers to be knowledgeable, to act on their professionalism and stand up for what they think is best for the students. Formal credentials are not directly addressed, whereas qualifications are central in the steering documents discussed in the next section.

Recent policy decisions and their impact on teacher education

It would be beyond the scope of this article to give an extensive view of the many educational reforms and policy documents in Norway the last 50 years. Thus, only what I personally find most relevant is included, such as White Paper (2008-2009) which is the backdrop for major reforms in teacher education, and the most recent curriculum plan from 2020. These are discussed in relation to two reports commissioned by the Ministry of Knowledge, about the teacher role (Dahl et al. 2016) and about the future school (NOU [2015] 2018).

In Norway, as in other countries, the processes of change/reforms in education are often triggered by international trends and quality measures, e.g. by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and development (OECD) and tests such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Based on the Norwegian results and policy perspectives,

a White Paper is published which again leads to a reform in teacher education which directs new frameworks for teacher education. An example of this is given below.

In (OECD 2005) OECD published the well-known document *Teachers' Matter*. In the document OECD supports the standpoint that measurable qualities for teacher quality such as qualification and academic ability matter, alongside affective qualities such as creating a learning atmosphere and building relations with students, colleagues, and parents (OECD Teachers Matter Overview, 2). The report expresses concern about low entrance requirements to teaching and the quality of teachers' academic knowledge. In Norway a White Paper (2008-2009) called *The Teacher- Role and Education*, resonances the claim about the importance of teachers: 'The teacher is decisive for students' learning in school. Good teachers practice a structured and engaged instruction. They are competent in their subjects, give relevant feedback and adapt their teaching to the students and the subject', (9, author's translation). In this official document it is further stressed that teachers' role goes beyond the classroom, and thus it aligns with the OECD document. The Danning (Bildung) mandate is solidated in this White Paper, referring to the General Education Act mentioned above. Academic qualifications of teachers are emphasised as important for their own confidence and essential in providing differentiated (adapted) teaching.

This White Paper (2008-2009) led to a reform in teacher education for classes 1–10 implemented in 2010 when elementary school teacher education still was a 4 year programme. A great emphasis was put on teachers' subject knowledge, thus differentiating the education of teachers from class 1–7 and from 5–10 (2 years of overlapping). The two levels were completely separated, meaning that a student could not transfer from 1–7 education to 5–10 education or vice versa during the education without having to start from the beginning. The strong focus on formal subject credits created a need for a wide in-service education of practicing teachers. The teacher education institutions offer courses financed by the Government and teachers are given till 2025 to upgrade their formal competences. This has naturally been heavily criticised by teachers and teacher unions, claiming that long successful experience and familiarity with the curriculum replace the formal requirements. They have, however, not been heard, and the requirement is still in force.

Furthermore, the practicum was extended, and the reform stressed that all school-based teacher educators should have mentor education, and teacher education institutions were to have compulsory partnership agreement with the practice schools. Universities and colleges offer mentor education financed by the Government.

The law about the new teacher education came in March 2010 (Norwegian Ministry of Knowledge 2010). The intentions expressed in the White Paper (2008-2009) were translated into a direct order for teacher education institutions in a New Framework for teacher education. A formal change, till then unfamiliar in Norway, is the long lists (31) of learning outcomes expressed as knowledge and skills required of all teachers, with the addition of subject-specific requirements.

When the rather radical reform described above was introduced in 2010, meaning that the first cohort would graduate in 2014, the politicians already informed about their plans to upgrade all teacher education to a five-year master programme. Two international trends are likely to be the backdrop for the upgrading, firstly Norway looked at Finland and its educational achievements, and secondly, the international inclination of moving

towards a research-based teacher education. This is also expressed in the White Paper (2008-2009) which says that teacher education shall provide the students with research and development skills to critically reflect on their own the school's practice. The Government declared it would provide resources for national research schools in teacher education to support teacher educators' engagement in doctoral work qualifying teacher educators to supervise research-based master thesis.

Subsequently, a five-year teacher education at a Master-level for all teachers (besides preschool teachers as for now) was introduced in 2017, only 3 years after the first cohort of the 2010 reform graduated. Already in 2015 teacher education institutions started to work on their Master programmes, and many colleges had difficulties in meeting the formal requirements measured in the percentage of professors and teacher educators with a doctoral degree. This created tension in the system as colleges with long traditions in teacher education felt they were not trusted, and that quality teaching was replaced by measurable criteria of the staff's academic achievements (publication and titles) (Smith 2018). The system suffered from reform fatigue as the institutions had not yet graduated the first cohort of the 2010 reform stressing subject knowledge, before they had to engage in planning a five-year program at a Master level, including upgrading the staff, ensuring that teacher educators would be competent to supervise research-based Master thesis required by all student teachers. Research competence became a new criterion for teachers which required research competent teacher educators.

The major reforms in teacher education underlined the formal aspects of the revised programs with little time to discuss how to model quality teaching with relevance to schools. Teacher education institutions were required to implement policy decisions to be accredited to offer teacher education. The traditional role of the teacher with focus on 'danning' (Bildung), the being of the teacher (Raufelder, Bukowski, and Mohr 2013) was over-shaded by external measurable criteria in forms of required content ECTSs, research and forthcoming master-level. Being heavily involved in teacher education as a leader and teacher educator, I was one of many who experienced frustration over the many reforms, the unclarity of our roles, and what kind of teacher we were expected to educate.

Public reports

The Government addressed the frustration and commissioned an expert group of researchers and educators in 2015 to examine the role of teachers. The rich report provides theoretical, historical and research perspectives on the role of teachers in Norway (Dahl et al. 2016). The authors claim that teachers' practices can be seen at a micro-macro level, representing internal and external professionalism. The daily practice relates to the microlevel with the students in focus, the inner professionalism, and the macro level, e.g. policy decisions, reflects external professionalism. Thus, a tension is easily created, especially since there is an 'increased attention on achievements, quality indicators and use of incentives and sanctions- performance assessment' (Dahl et al. 2016, 19, author's translation), and this might suggest a decreasing trust in teachers. Furthermore, the authors indicate that teachers' working day have become more intense, leaders and the society have higher expectations of teachers regarding collaboration, preparing for national and international tests, school-based assessment accompanied by documentation with more attention to measurable achievements.

In Dahl et al.'s (2016) report teachers do not believe that a good teacher can be measured by student achievements. Good teachers want to develop good relations with students and others, be able to manage the class, communicate well, and see the individual student. Moreover, they find that additional responsibilities and team development work take up time many teachers would like to spend on the essence of their job, teaching.

Norwegian teachers appreciate the methodological autonomy they have and find it central to being a good teacher. 'You have to use the experiences you gain about what works and does not work' (Dahl et al. 2016, 193, author's translation). Teachers find their own ways and are less likely to teach according to researched best practices. 'This profession is learning by doing' (Dahl et al. 2016, 195). When asked about the way teacher education prepared them for teaching, teachers experienced the practice shock, not related to content knowledge, but more associated to the 'being of the teacher' (ref), teachership (Hanssen 2008). The education was too abstract and too theoretical (Dahl et al. 2016), and not sufficiently related to the school of today.

In response to how they foresee the teacher role in the future, several teachers believed there will be much less transmission of knowledge and more support the learners in getting access to and use online information.

Another report commissioned by the Government is the *The School of the Future* (NOU [2015] 2018) which was submitted in 2015. This is yet another extensive and interesting report, and the main message is that the future curriculum should focus on four basic competences (NOU [2015] 2018, 9);

- subject-specific competence
- competence in learning
- competence in communicating, interacting and participating
- competence in exploring and creating

These come in addition to the previous curriculum which defines reading, writing, calculation, oral and digital competences as the basic competences (Norwegian Ministry of Knowledge 2006) with the emphasis on learning strategies, interpersonal skills and exploring the unknown in creative ways. Teaching will be less transmission; "... flexible teaching is required, where teachers are able to make changes if the methods or work forms they have chosen do not give the desired results in their pupils' learning outcome" (NOU [2015] 2018, 12). The report, furthermore, addresses the school's social responsibility which "compromises more than the sum of the competence objectives in the subjects. School should, for example, support the identity development of the pupils and assume responsibility for the interpersonal relations and the social environment in school (NOU [2015] 2018, 20). The 'danning' (Bildung) responsibility of the school, and hence the teachers', is frequently attended to in the report. The report urges teachers to strengthen their content and didactical competence and activate students in the instruction using a variety of methods. The report states that 'The competence and professional qualities of teachers are decisive for realising the content of the school of the future' (NOU [2015] 2018, 81). They argue that teachers must be given autonomy to act on their professionalism, however taking 'responsibility involves a *responsibility* for making well-reasoned and research-based choices of methods and approaches in their teaching' (NOU

[2015] 2018, 85). As I understand the main message of the report, teachers should be knowledgeable, but also creative and empathetic when exercising professional agency.

The NOU report (NOU [2015] 2018) initiated the planning of a new curriculum for schools which is put into force from this autumn, 2020.

Recent documents

In 2017 the Government issued a new strategy plan for teacher education in which goals for teacher education till 2025 were presented (Norwegian Ministry of Knowledge 2017). Four main goals are presented, first to create demanding and enriching study programmes, emphasising student entrance requirements, increasing diversity in the student population, developing research-based teaching and a creating a strong cohesion in the programs. The second goal relates to academically strong and well-organised teacher education environments with high academic competence, practical and digital competence, strong leadership and functional structures. The third goal points at the competence of relevant partners for research and development activities and communities of practice. The practice field shall be involved in developing policies for teacher education. The fourth goal focuses on collaboration between teacher education institutions and the practice field characterised by mutual responsibility and respect in joint research and development (R&D) projects and supervision of student teachers' bachelor and master thesis. This is supported by a recent report on Norwegian teacher education written by an international expert team, however, in this report there is also a strong recommendation to reduce the detailed governing of Norwegian teacher education, providing more autonomy to the respective institutions (Cochran-Smith et al. 2020).

What seems apparent is that these recent documents talk about the structure of teacher education, qualifications for teachers and teacher educators, and research-based teaching. There is little mentioning of how to educate a good teacher relating to the affective aspects of the teacher's role.

New curriculum (2020)

In the New Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2020b) the overall aims of school 'danning' (Bildung) is repeated emphasising respect for all people, support students' identity development in a multi-cultural society. The school shall trigger students' curiosity and ability to critical thinking and encourage creativity and entrepreneurship. Environmental responsibility is addressed in addition to the school's role in educating democratically active citizens. The curriculum states that school has a 'danning' (Bildung) as well as cognitive development task, and that social and academic knowledge and skills are to be stressed. In addition to the subject knowledge which repeats the core skills, reading, writing, maths and oral skills, there is now a focus on learning how to learn (self-regulation, self-efficacy and self-assessment), as well as on cross-disciplinary subjects. Examples are Public Health and Life Mastery, Democracy and Citizenship, Sustainable Development. The New Curriculum stresses the importance of in-depth learning, collaboration, and creativity. There is also a renewed focus on adapted teaching to the individual learner.

These expectations of the school impact the role of the teacher. With a stronger focus on collaborative learning strategies, in-depth learning and creativity, the transmitter of knowledge will no longer be the teacher's main role. In the implementation of the New Curriculum, teachers are likely to be planning for and facilitate students' exploration and use of knowledge. The New Curriculum stresses the teacher as a role model who cares for the individual student, accentuating students facing difficulties in life. So, if looking back at the insensitive teachers described in the two books *Gift (Poison)* and *Jonas*, the New Curriculum places a clear responsibility with the teachers for students' well-being. The affective aspects of teaching are repeatedly addressed in the New Curriculum, and teachers are requested to seriously 'reflect on their pedagogical practices and how they meet the individual student and student groups' (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2020a, 17, author's translation).

Interestingly, teachers' professional wisdom (Brunstad 2007) and acting on their internal professionalism is strongly underlined in the New Curriculum, supporting recommendations from Dahl et al.'s report (2016).

The New Curriculum is in more alignment with research reporting on the importance of academic and personal/relational aspects of quality teaching (e.g. Roorda et al. 2017) than the above-mentioned steering documents.

In what ways the New Curriculum will change the perspectives of the role and the practice of teachers in Norway are still to be explored; likewise, its impact on teacher education. Even though the New Curriculum is not yet another teacher education reform, it will have a direct bearing on the education of teachers for the future school.

Concluding remarks

To me this paper has been a personal, demanding, and educational journey into my personal understanding of the perception of quality teaching and the good teacher in Norway. By going back and re-read literature I met in school (*Gift*), and in my own career as teacher (*Jonas*) and teacher educator (*The good teacher in life and poetry* and diving into policy documents, I have become even more aware of the complexity of teaching, of the role of the teacher, not only in Norway, but globally. More specific to Norway is the clearly stated double aim of education in Norway, 'danning' (Bildung) and cognitive learning, which has bearings on the understanding of the good teacher. It has become clear that quality teaching cannot be defined in relation to student achievements only, which is not unique for Norway. International research (Raufelder et al. 2016; Murphy, Delli, and Edwards 2004) supports the perception that the good teacher is the empathetic teacher, the one who sees and cares for the individual students. The teachers in the two novels presented above, represent antithesis to the caring teacher. The importance of relations is central in Eidsvåg's commandments for teachers, in addition to the knowledgeable and organised teacher. A classroom filled with trust and respect, is a prerequisite for enhanced learning (Tobbell and O'Donnell 2013).

Whereas there has been a strong prominence given to teacher qualifications in Norwegian reforms in the last decade stressing the structure of teacher education, the New Curriculum continues to point at the need for content knowledge and competence. However, there seems to be a renewed emphasis on teachers' social, inter-personal, and empathetic skills. Adapted teaching which has been a key word in Norwegian education

for a long time, is readdressed in the New Curriculum acknowledging multiple forms of diversity. Teacher education has, in the role of educating teachers for working with the New Curriculum, an opportunity to shift focus from meeting top-down structural requirements to educating competent teachers prepared for the many affective aspects of teaching, for enacting external as well as internal professionalism – teachership (Hanssen 2008). As I see it, the role of teacher education is to act as a bridge between measurable governmental requirements as reflected in the steering papers and the relational aspects of teaching emphasised in the research, criticised in the fiction literature, and evident in the commissioned reports and now, also in the New Curriculum. Teacher education should strive to educate good teachers in the eye of the students who feel they are seen, and in the eye of the policy makers who frame qualification criteria.

Teacher education bridges between the officially expressed educational aims and the practice field and serves two masters in educating teachers with an explicit responsibility for forming the student's personality (danning) as well as communicating content knowledge.

There is little mentioning of how to educate a good teacher relating to the affective aspects of the teacher's role in the steering documents. The focus is on formal requirements and program structures, However Dahl et al. (2016) report that teachers felt pressured by additional documentation and increased focus on student grades in secondary education reflecting expectations from leaders, parents, and policy makers. Many teachers choose the profession mainly due to altruistic and intrinsic motifs, which is supported by international (Richardson and Watt 2016) and Norwegian research (Rones 2011). It does not, however, always agree with increased external pressure and multiple demands. It is the relational as well as the subject aspects of teaching that attract people to teaching, and the challenge of teacher education is to foster both aspects in preparing teachers for the future.

Relevance of the paper

When writing this paper, I have repeatedly asked myself what interest it might have to the international reader. Relying on the aim of this special issue, presenting quality teaching and teacher education globally, this paper presents my understanding of the Norwegian context. The perspective presented is formed by exploring relevant research, works of fiction reflecting the century in which they were published, and recent public documents such as steering documents and public reports. The conclusion, the key message, that quality teaching and 'the good teacher can probably never be described, only experienced' (Eidsvåg 2006, 13) is not unique for Norway. The question posed to my students of teaching presented in the very beginning of this paper, has been asked to student teachers in various parts of the world. The answers are similar, 'the good teacher sees me, the good teacher is organised and knowledgeable'. How this is perceived in practice, is, however, in the eye of the beholder, students, parents, teachers and policy makers. They do not always have the same understanding of what quality teaching is. It is, though, more than producing countable achievements. That is, I dare say, international and the main challenge for those of us whose job it is to educate teachers for the future.

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