

Writing Development and Education Standards in Crossnational Perspective

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Abstract

The importance of writing ability for academic and career advancement is increasingly a focus of education research and policy globally. In response to concerns regarding students' writing competence, policymakers and curriculum designers have begun placing more emphasis on writing in nationwide academic standards. However, given the complexity of writing as a cognitively dynamic and socioculturally situated activity, representing the development of writing competence in standards that vary by grade level is challenging, and little is known regarding how educational systems vary in approaching this challenge. In response to calls for more worldwide writing research, we undertake a cross-national examination of writing standards with the aim of informing policymakers, those involved in the research and development of writing standards, and researchers interested in writing development, by comparing how three educational systems (in Denmark, Norway, and the US) have represented writing development in curricular standards. To that end, we ask, 1) How do the three educational systems variously frame writing development in grade-level distinctions for writing standards? 2) How do the developmental pathways implicated in these grade-level distinctions relate to theory and research on writing competence and its development?

Key words: Comparative education, Writing development, Writing standards, Curricular content analysis, Literacy

How writing competence develops across the lifespan depends upon dynamic interactions among writers' cognitions and the varied social milieus within which they write (Bazerman, 2009). Though people engage with writing for many different reasons—including for personal and professional purposes—one's writing competencies and habits for writing largely develop within the context of formal education (Applebee and Langer, 2013; Hillocks, 2002). Students, through opportunities to engage with writing offered in school, develop variable affinities toward and competencies in some types of writing and not others (Ivanič, 1998). As Applebee observed:

Once we accept that writing is a socially constructed set of ways of communicating, the notion of writing development becomes inescapably intertwined with notions of curriculum. Students will learn those genres, skills, and strategies with which they are given experience through their school, and are much less likely to learn those that the schools ignore, reject, or simply postpone for attention in later years (Arthur Applebee's notes, 2014, as cited in Langer, 2017, p. 13).

In this article, we take as our starting point Applebee's insight that consideration of writing development necessitates a consideration of how curricula structure developmental trajectories. Accordingly, we discuss how writing standards articulate pathways for writing development and what these pathways embrace, ignore or postpone.

Given an understanding of writing as a socioculturally situated activity, educational systems will necessarily vary with regard to 'the what, why and how writing is taught' (Graham and Rijlaarsdam, 2014: 782). In fact, differences in what aspects of writing are attended to and when in a child's schooling are large enough that attempts to crossnationally compare writing achievement as measured by common assessments have fallen short of this goal. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Study of Written Composition, which included writing achievement data from 14 educational systems, showed how inherent differences--in factors such as how students interpret writing tasks, how teachers approach writing instruction, and how raters apply scoring criteria--make performance comparisons unstable (Purves, 1992). Reflecting on the study's findings, Purves noted that though the attempt to compare student performance internationally 'ended in failure' (1992:108), it did provide insight into core problems in writing evaluation. Chief among these is the impossibility of operationalizing a unified construct of writing competence since 'whatever the division [of the construct], it is apparent that different tasks present different problems, which are treated differently by students and judged differently by raters' (Purves, 1992:112). Such differences are related to how curricula influence students' opportunities to write in school, including the amount of time spent writing. The IEA study found large variation in this regard: students in Italy and Finland, for example, engaged in four times the amount of in-class writing than did students in the US. These international study results illustrate Applebee's point regarding curriculum and development—what develops is related to opportunities provided through schooling, which in turn relate to the constructs of writing competence advanced through official and unofficial curricula.

In this article, we examine one domain of variability in how writing competence is conceptualized: developmental pathways articulated in grade level distinctions for writing curricula. This endeavor is possible, for good or ill, due to the rising prominence of outcomes-based education policies worldwide that require specifications regarding what students should know and be able to do at each juncture in their education. The IEA study, conducted in the

1980s, pointed to an absence of developmental frameworks for writing (Saari and Purves, 1992). However, since that time, the trend of holding school leaders and teachers accountable for more explicit educational standards has grown across the globe, particularly in Europe (CEDEFOP, 2013; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2012) and in the US (No Child Left Behind, 2001; Race to the Top, 2009; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). One result of this tendency is that educational systems in these contexts are more likely to produce developmentally differentiated curricular frameworks, including grade level expectations for writing, than existed thirty years ago. These expectations present varied conceptions of how writing develops that influence students' experiences with learning to write in school and, potentially, their longer-term development as writers. To begin shedding light on these varied conceptions and their implications for research and policy, here we compare writing standards in three educational systems (Denmark, Norway, and the US) and examine their basis in theory and research regarding writing development. One reason for focusing on these educational systems is that in Nordic countries and in the US, there has been a growing interest and increase in writing research, including research on writing development. For example, in a Nordic context a database of writing research, www.skribbib.no, has been established that includes bibliographical information on 1733 publications in Nordic languages and English including two 2002 *Written Communication* issues devoted to writing research in Norway (see Igland and Ongstad, 2002a; 2002b).

To compare frameworks for writing development crossnationally, we conducted a curriculum analysis, which aims at exploring 'what should count as knowledge' (Deng and Luke 2008:66) by attempting to make more explicit the presuppositions and framings for teaching and learning writing in different nationally-embedded school settings, focusing on *institutional*, *programmatic* and *classroom* levels (Doyle, 1992). To contextualize our analysis, we discuss briefly how our research has been shaped by nationwide policies with regard to standards, curricula, and evaluation, based on our involvement with large-scale writing studies in different national contexts (*Writing to Learn, Learning to Write* in Denmark; *Standards as a Tool for the Teaching and Assessing of Writing* in Norway; *National Study of Writing Instruction* in the US). We then undertake a comparison of writing standards for the L1 subject (e.g., English language arts in the US) in three educational systems¹, highlighting theoretical underpinnings as well as their bases in writing development research. Before doing so, we provide a brief overview of structural variation in European and US education so as to provide a broader frame for our crossnational comparison.

European and US Language Curricula

While substantial variety exists among European educational systems, as a group these differ structurally from US systems in two important respects. First, the European practice of sorting students into vocational and university tracks in early or lower secondary school produces separate targets with varying emphases. For example, in the Netherlands students are directed into one of three secondary tracks (Figure 1) at the end of primary school (approximately age 11) based on a combination of standardized test scores, teacher assessments, and parent or guardian consultation.

[FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE]

Figure 1. Education Trajectories in the Netherlands (Education System The Netherlands, 2015).

In Nordic countries such as Denmark and Norway, sorting students into vocational and university tracks takes place at the end of lower secondary education (approximately age 15) (Education System Norway, 2015). In contrast, in the US tracking is not an official policy and vocational education is not consistently available. Such differences between European and US school structures create challenges for crossnational comparisons since European target outcomes often diverge between vocational and university tracks at the secondary level, while US outcomes do not.

A second key difference between US and European educational systems is the extent to which multilingual expectations are included. While European frameworks include both ‘mother tongue’ (L1) and Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001) foreign language targets (L2 and often L3), foreign languages are not included in US educational policy. In the US some states have even limited access to certain aspects of multilingual education (e.g., Arizona, California), while in others access to bilingual education is protected (e.g., New Mexico). In this article we focus on standards for writing in the L1 while acknowledging both structural variation in approaches to multilingual education and the crucial role of multilingualism in students’ writing development.

Contexts for Writing Standards: Denmark, Norway, and the US

Writing Education in Denmark

Danish Standards for Writing. Consistent with worldwide tendencies toward curricular standards, in Denmark the curriculum for compulsory (primary and lower secondary) school ‘exemplifies a general international trend of basing school curricula on learning outcomes and key competences’ (Bundsgaard, 2016:112). Within this broader international trend, standards for writing have been made increasingly more explicit in curricula on all levels of compulsory school and further on into the upper-secondary education system. The most extensive research project on writing education in Denmark has been *Writing to Learn, Learning to Write* (WLLW), which was funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research. WLLW is a qualitative, longitudinal study of school writing cultures spanning 2009-2013, which explores students’ writing development in the transition from compulsory school to upper-secondary education (Krogh, Christensen, and Jakobsen, 2015; Elf, 2017). WLLW research demonstrates that there has been an increase in research attention to practice regarding the development of students’ writing.

Key competencies in the Danish national curriculum, referred to as the Simplified Common Standards, include L1 (in the subject Danish) standards for what is referred to as ‘Fremstilling’, which could be translated into *production*, including a multimodal understanding of writing. They also include specified common objectives in the shape of end and form level targets following grades 2, 4, 6 and 9 that establish a national aim for the direction and goals of writing production (UVM, 2015). The standards and common objectives are now a vital part of the compulsory school’s writing culture (Christensen, Elf, & Krogh, 2014). Specifically, production/writing is targeted as a core skill in the L1 subject Danish on primary and lower-secondary levels, while this is not the case in other ‘content area’ subjects, such as science (Krogh, in press). While writing as a key skill in content areas is targeted in the Norwegian curriculum from primary to upper secondary education, this is not the case in the Danish curriculum until upper secondary education (age around 16). Broadly speaking, Norway has a longer history of integrating standards for writing on all levels than other Scandinavian countries

(see also next section). In an illustrative comparative study of writing in Scandinavian content areas, researchers found differences in the ways compulsory and upper-secondary education target and assess writing in content areas (Dysthe, Hertzberg, Krogh, & Brorsson, 2016).

The current situation in Denmark is linked to the 2005 Danish upper secondary curriculum plan, in which writing was defined as a ‘study preparatory competence to be addressed in all subjects (Dysthe et al., 2016: 229). So, disciplinary writing was made mandatory in all subjects, and crossdisciplinary writing projects were to contribute not just to students’ academic writing competence but also to, as it would be termed in a Nordic-German context, *Bildung* aims. These refer to aims for personal formation and identity building related to an individual’s engagement with and in the world, such as experience with immersion in and explorative approaches to knowledge (see Gundem, 2000). Research evaluations of the implementation of the reform suggest, however, that upper-secondary teachers across all subjects struggle to implement these new goals for supporting students’ writing development, and that content area teachers tend to identify least with this goal (Elf, 2017).

Writing Assessment in Denmark. Considering how writing is linked to assessment in contemporary curricula, in Denmark ongoing assessment and evaluation procedures have been upgraded in process-oriented ways and made into a high-stakes issue at final examinations. In compulsory school, for example, a provision was introduced almost a decade ago requiring a ‘student plan’ for all students at all form levels. The plan should reflect how each student meets standards and common objectives, including production/writing, and should also set up plans for improving student performance. In grade 9, students must attend a final written examination in Danish as a subject and write an extended text, as one WLLW study illuminates (Krogh, 2018; see also later). After the most recent reform of compulsory education in Denmark, this has become a high stakes examination. If a student gets a low grade at the exam, (s)he will have limited access to upper-secondary education.

In upper-secondary education, ‘a hallmark in Scandinavia is that language arts exams (as well as social science and science) at the end of Upper Secondary school ask for extended writing [and] multiple-choice questions are almost non-existent at all levels’ (Dysthe et al., 2016: 230). Extended writing examinations take place predominantly in grade 12 and include 5-hour individual examinations, which position students as disciplinary writers that should structure texts, deal with sources and argue particular points, thus demonstrating disciplinary writing competence and a foundation for further education.

Writing Education in Norway

Norwegian Standards for Writing. Though Norway’s educational system has also aligned with outcome-based international trends, the situation for writing standards in the country is far from straightforward. There are no curriculum standards that exclusively focus on writing, although writing is mentioned in all school subjects. In 2006, a Norwegian school reform defined writing as one of five *grunnleggende ferdigheter* [basic skills]. As was done in Hertzberg and Roe (2016), we have chosen the term ‘competencies’ rather than ‘skills’ because the former better reflects the ambitions of the curriculum reform, which is based in the OECD ‘key competencies’ framework (see DeSeCo, 2005). In addition to writing, the other five key competencies are numeracy competence, digital competence, oral competence, and reading competence (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012). The reform included a

new national curriculum, The Knowledge Promotion (KP), and subject specific standards for several stages in grades 1–13 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.b). The first ten years in Norwegian schools are compulsory, and then students may choose to enroll for upper secondary school, years 11-13. All teachers in Norway are obliged to apply KP as a basis for instructional activities as well as assessments.

In its present form, KP includes content area standards (cf. Cizek and Bunch, 2007: 14), or *competence aims* in the governmental parlance, for each subject for the school years 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.a). In addition, the curriculum includes subject-specific definitions of the key competencies; for example, what it means to write in mathematics. Moreover, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (NDET) offers online material for teachers' professional learning about the key competencies (e.g., <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/grunnleggende-ferdigheter/skriving/>).

The KP standards are in the form of minimum requirements, meaning that a standard for a given year expresses what students are supposed to be able to do after adequate instruction. For example, one standard for the L1 subject Norwegian year 7 states that students should be able 'write narrative, descriptive, reflective and persuasive texts using patterns from sample texts and other sources, and adapt own texts to a given purpose and recipient.' For year 10 the equivalent standard reads: 'write creative, informative, reflective and persuasive texts [...] using rational arguments and adapted to a given recipient, purpose and medium' (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2013). As is the case with Danish and US writing curricula, the standard does not define levels of proficiency within school years and the progression between years is only implied. The standards offer no guidance as to what specific features of writing one should assess.

Several research projects have targeted writing as a key competency in Norway, including the SKRIV-project (Smidt, Solheim, and Aasen, 2011) and the Nadderud project (Flyum and Herzberg, 2011). Largest in scope were three intertwined projects: National Sample-Based Writing Test (NSBWT, 2010–2016), its predecessor the National Population-Based Writing Test (NPBWT, 2003–2005), and the NORMs project (2012–2016). The first two were funded by the Norwegian government, while the NORMs project was jointly sponsored by the Research Council of Norway and Sør-Trøndelag University College. The NPBWT was developed to monitor student writing proficiency in school years 4, 7, 10 and 11, and sets of criteria were developed within that project (Thygesen, Evensen, Berge, Fasting, Vagle, and Haanæs, 2007). Together with colleagues, researchers behind NPBWT later received funding for the NORMs project which developed 'norms of expectation' in collaboration with teachers across Norway (Evensen, Berge, Thygesen, Matre, and Solheim, 2016). These norms of expectation stated what was reasonable to expect of most students after receiving adequate writing instruction following 4 and 7 years of schooling respectively.

Researchers of the NPBWT and NORMs projects joined the Norwegian Centre for Writing Education and Research (the Writing Centre) in developing the NSBWT. The Writing Centre eventually developed new scales to be used in assessment in school years 5–10 (see Skar, 2017). All scales that have been developed in the NPBWT, NSBWT and the NORMs project share theoretical underpinnings and build on a functional understanding of writing (Berge, Evensen, and Thygesen, 2016). The government-funded test projects resulted in assessment scales that have been used as standards (Skar, 2017). The NORMs project developed standards

(Evensen et al., 2016) that were introduced in schools and served as a basis for the NSBWT scales and ‘may thus be viewed as yet unofficial ‘standards’ (Evensen et al., 2016: 229). Two projects documented that students benefited from teachers using these standards (Berge et al., 2016) and that teachers benefitted in terms of increased rating accuracy (Skar, Thygsen, and Evensen, 2017).

Writing Assessment in Norway. After the NSBWT was discontinued in 2017 – due to cuts in the state budget—writing is formally assessed in the L1 subject Norwegian. Teachers are responsible for assessing to what extent students meet the requirements of the national curriculum. In addition, there are standardized national exams, which are based on the KP standards and are designed to monitor schools and school districts. A sample of students at the end of lower secondary school (year 10) and all students at the end of upper secondary school Education Programme for Specialization in General Studies (year 13) sit for examinations in Norwegian. These examinations, including the rubrics used to score student writing, are developed by the NDET. Students complete two tasks prompting them to respond to a piece of text (e.g., literary analysis or other so-called ‘text types’). As in Denmark, secondary students sit for five hours. Classroom assessment and exam results form part of the school-leaving certificate. As such the national exam is a high stakes test: if a student fails on the exam (s)he is not eligible for upper secondary school or tertiary education.

Writing Education in the US

US Standards for Writing. Educational policy in the US differs substantively from European norms, as the US does not have a national curriculum. However, two research projects have attempted to provide a snapshot of the state of writing instruction in the US. The first, *Writing in the Secondary School* (Applebee, 1981) provided the foundation for the most recent nationwide study, *The National Study of Writing Instruction* (NSWI) (Applebee and Langer, 2013)—a collaboration between the Center on English Learning and Achievement at the University at Albany and the National Writing Project at the University of California-Berkeley that received support from the Spencer Foundation and the College Board. NSWI was designed to capture in reviews of curriculum and standards as well as in case studies the range of approaches to writing curricula by sampling from five states with varying standards and assessment systems. This approach was necessary because NSWI data were collected when each US state developed education standards and assessments individually (2006-2010) and states varied greatly in their approaches to writing assessment (Jeffery, 2009). That picture has changed since a consortium of state governors and nonprofits (most notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) organized the *Common Core State Standards Initiative* (CCSSI), which responded to what many saw as a problem of chaotic and uneven standards across states by promoting a set of standards known as the ‘Common Core’ for English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics for K (kindergarten, approximately age 5) through grade 12 education.

Though the Common Core initiative never constituted a mandate, the standards were adopted by a majority of states after the Obama administration included them as a requirement for federal education grants (US Department of Education, 2009). CCSSI has sometimes been referred to as a national curriculum, but it is not a federal directive and the US government recently made this clear through the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), which releases states from obligations to implement common standards such as the CCSS. States can adopt the standards or not; and some states have adopted and then dropped the standards, while others never adopted them in the first place, and still others have adapted CCSS to existing frameworks.

Still, because they have been adopted in a majority of states, their implementation has now made it possible to identify a dominant set of US writing standards.

Research conducted after as well as before the Common Core confirms that teachers' writing instruction, and thus the writing opportunities to which students have access, are linked to writing standards and exams in the US (Troia, Olinghouse, Mo, Hawking, Kopke, Chen, and Stewart, 2015; Jeffery and Wilcox, 2016). For example, research regarding CCSS implementation has found that teachers work to align writing curricula with the standards and exams, particularly with respect to the genres they most frequently assign (Wilcox, Jeffery, and Gardner-Bixler, 2016). In this respect, the CCSS for writing (CCSS-W) focus on writing in the L1 subject English (English Language Arts Standards) as well as across disciplinary contexts in subject areas such as math, science, and social studies (Literacy Standards), and place a clear emphasis on 'informational' (e.g., non-narrative) texts. Research on implementation of the Common Core standards has found that while teachers generally view CCSS-W favorably, many worry that the focus on informational text is pushing younger and younger students to write source-based arguments and diminishing their opportunities to engage with imaginative and personal writing (Jaeger and Pearson, 2017).

Writing Assessment in the US. Perhaps eclipsing the content of the standards themselves is the issue of how their achievement is measured in high-stakes exams that have become the hallmark of US educational policy. Though there is currently no empirical basis for using large-scale standardized tests to raise achievement (Afflerbach, 2005), the high-stakes use of standardized literacy exams continues to be a prominent feature of federal accountability-based educational reforms, and in many states earning a passing score on exams is a requirement for secondary school graduation. As is the case globally, writing has become increasingly prominent in US standards and exams, though it continues to receive far less emphasis than does reading achievement (Wilcox, Jeffery, and Yu, in press). In the previous era, under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), achievement testing in reading or language arts and math was required of all states 'not less than once during—(aa) grades 3 through 5; (bb) grades 6 through 9; and (cc) grades 10 through 12.' In practice, most states administer mandatory exams in literacy and numeracy in grades, 3, 8, and 10 or 11. Though writing was not targeted by NCLB, it increasingly became a part of language arts exams, particularly in the later grades (Jeffery, 2009). In line with this trend, the CCSS place increased emphasis on writing, and high-stakes writing assessment is now the norm across the US.

Though no mandatory, nationwide literacy tests exist in the US, many states initially adopted CCSS-aligned exams developed by one of two conglomerates via contracts with large educational publishers: 1) the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (2015) contracted Pearson, and 2) the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2015) contracted CTB/McGraw-Hill. Each conglomerate received \$175 million in US Department of Education grants to develop common assessments under the Race to the Top initiative (US Department of Education, 2010). Not all states opted to use the common assessments, and some adopting states have since dropped them. For example, the state of New York developed CCSS-aligned secondary school exams independently, which resulted in substantial changes from the state's previous exams (Polleck and Jeffery, 2017). CCSS-aligned writing assessments, reflecting the standards' focus on informational text, increasingly require students to produce extended essays in which they write to informational sources. In contrast with Denmark and Norway, these tests typically allow students a relatively short period of time (e.g., 60--90 minutes) to complete

writing tasks. Writing processes (e.g., prewriting and revising) are often included in task materials though only final written products are ultimately evaluated with scoring rubrics that orient raters to particular aspects of writing.

Comparing Developmental Frameworks for Writing

As demonstrated in these snapshots, despite some key differences in approaching standards, Denmark, Norway, and the US reflect the global trend of outcomes-based policies in which standards and exams play an increasingly prominent role—with writing achievement receiving greater attention in recent decades. Next, we examine how the standards that were generated in these contexts articulate pathways for writing development, and how these pathways relate to writing theory and research.

Developmental Framing in Danish Standards for Writing

Grade Level Differentiation. It should be clear from the analysis of Danish writing education that Danish curricula establish a developmental framework—including standards, common objectives and examination goals—for writing in grades 1--12. Considering theoretical understandings of writing development implied in the framework, we find an outline of a theory of a *relatively linear progression* in the development of a student’s writing competence: productive, positive writing development is required by the curriculum standards and specified outcome-oriented objectives and is thus expected to take place among students. In compulsory school, the L1 subject Danish is expected to play a particularly important role in students’ writing development, while goals for disciplinary writing in all subjects and cross-disciplinary writing are inscribed in the curriculum for upper-secondary education.

From a curricular point of view, such a framing reflects a school’s *programmatic* (Doyle, 1992) understanding of writing development. However, in a WLLW case study, Krogh (2018) took the alternative *enacted classroom* perspective on curriculum analysis and explored how one student, Sofia, developed as a writer in the transition from lower-secondary to upper-secondary education as she was offered opportunities for participation in L1 writing culture. While acknowledging common features on different levels, Krogh argues that a focal point in the shift in subject writing culture is the use of texts in assignments (Table 1).

Table 1

Writing Cultures in Danish on Lower and Upper Secondary Levels

| Writing culture in Danish (L1) | Differences on different levels | Common features on different levels |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Lower-secondary education | Emphasis on narrative, personal experience, personal stance and productive-creative analysis | Genre focus and genre command Imitation of authentic genres |
| Upper-secondary education | Emphasis on analytical text analysis with the use of knowledge sources and application of disciplinary concepts | Close text analysis |

In compulsory school's lower secondary levels Danish texts are meant to inspire and provide models for student writing, whereas in upper secondary Danish close analysis of texts is expected. Further, whereas lower secondary students are positioned as personally reflecting writers, in upper secondary they are positioned as objectively reasoning writers, as illustrated in the case of Sofia in Table 2.

Table 2

Sofia's Assignments for Secondary School Danish (Adapted from Krogh, 2018)

| | Lower Secondary school leaving exam Written exam in Danish (4 hours). | Upper secondary school leaving exam Written exam in Danish (5 hours) |
|---|---|--|
| Assignment genres | <p><i>Literary fiction</i> (fairy-tale, short story, crime, thriller, poem, diary...)</p> <p><i>Journalistic genres</i> (portrait, personal column, debate, fictive reporting...)</p> <p><i>Essay</i> (personal reflection on stated issue)</p> | <p><i>Literary analysis</i> (‘literary article’)</p> <p><i>Commentary</i> (‘feature’ [in Danish ‘kronik’])</p> <p><i>Essay</i> (reflective piece, addressing issue in text material)</p> |
| Requirements concerning text material | <p>Text material is always part of assignments, but in short formats, typically embedded in visuals.</p> <p>Texts are presented as <i>inspiration</i> for student writing, only rarely to be addressed explicitly.</p> | <p>Relatively comprehensive text material is part of assignments. Photos or paintings may constitute a text.</p> <p>Text <i>analysis</i> is required in all assignments (in the shape of analysis, exposition, representation of argument etc.).</p> |
| Requirements and expectations as to resources of knowledge | <p>Students are mainly expected to draw on everyday knowledge resources of personal experience and personal stances.</p> | <p>Specific knowledge resources are provided by the text corpora. Apart from this, students are expected to draw on specialised disciplinary knowledge and concepts.</p> |

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that there are obvious differences in writing culture between lower and upper secondary school in the L1 subject Danish. As Krogh argues with reference to Ivanič (1998), the prototypical possibility of selfhood offered to a student writer like Sofia in the lower secondary written exam in 2010 is that of the imaginative and personally reflective writer, a possibility that shifts as Sofia progresses toward the upper secondary levels, where ‘the prototypical possibility of selfhood offered to a student in the upper secondary exam is that of the rational and expert writer’ (Krogh, in press).

The study of Sofia was conducted before the 2014 curriculum for compulsory school was implemented. As pointed out earlier, the 2014-curriculum established binding *common objectives* for *production* in L1 writing after grades 2, 4, 6 and 9, and such objectives are, to some extent, discursively reframed in relation to ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’. The grade level distinctions for production (Table 3) illustrate one sample of the current Danish compulsory school’s framing of writing development in L1:

Table 3

Sample of Grade Level Differentiation for Production in Compulsory School's Simplified Common Standards for L1 Subject Danish (UVM, 2015; our translation)ⁱⁱ

| Grade | Competence goal | Phasesⁱⁱⁱ | Goals for skills and knowledge^{iv} |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| After grade 2 | The student can express him/herself in writing, speech, sound or picture in close and well-known situations | 1 | The student is able to produce simple texts with images and writing The student knows about language construction in words and sentences and the relationship between writing and image |
| | | 2 | The student is able to produce simple texts with a title and a beginning, middle and end The student knows about genre features in simple narrative and informative texts |
| After grade 4 | The student can express him/herself in writing, speech, sound or picture in well-known disciplinary situations | 1 | The student is able to express her/himself creatively and experimentally |
| | | 2 | The student knows about vocabulary and linguistic alternatives |
| After grade 6 | The student can express him/herself in writing, speech, sound or picture in well-known formal situations | 1 | The student is able to produce multimodal texts The student knows about expository and recounting writing acts The student is able to write reviews, instructions and disciplinary texts |
| | | 2 | The student knows about commenting and explanative writing acts The student is able to produce dramatic, documentary and interactive products The student knows about means for producing drama and documentary in movies, television and on the internet |
| | | | |
| After grade 9 | The student can express him/herself in understandable, clear and varied ways of writing, speech, sound or picture in a form that fits the genre and situation | 1 | The student is able to write argumentative and expressive texts The student knows about argumentative and reflexive writing acts |
| | | 2 | The student is able to produce larger multimodal productions The student knows about means of production, graphic design and post-production |
| | | 3 | The student is able to produce coherent texts in different genres and styles. The student knows about a variety of means for |

Conceptually, several features, including genre awareness and command, are still found in the 2014-curriculum. In this sense, the L1 writing culture that would enable students' disciplinary writing development has not changed. Rather, it is emphasized and foregrounded even more that students' writing development should evolve in a relatively linear progression, however in increasingly contextualized, formalized and disciplinary ways.

Basis in Writing Theory and Research. Theoretically, this contextualized understanding of writing implies that the framing of writing development is deeply embedded in, and influenced by, a sociocultural theory of writing (Prior, 2006). Having said that, the change of writing culture that the 2014 curriculum may nurture in practice is a stronger emphasis on outcome-based visible learning that could and should be assessed by teachers. One could argue that such a curricular change reflects an emerging 'utilitarian paradigm' related to a psychometric turn in the learning sciences (Sawyer & van de Ven, 2006) and/or New Public Management accountability approaches to 21st century schooling, which are also found in Nordic L1 discourses and more broadly in contemporary Nordic educational thinking (Elf and Kaspersen, 2012; Krogh 2012).

From the point of view of writing research, and more specifically a sociocultural understanding of writing that we take as a point of departure, it could also be argued that the curricular framework for writing development does have backing, at least to some extent. In addition to the points already made, the state-sponsored supporting material for the compulsory school L1 curriculum indicate that writing development should be understood 'processually' (our translation) within specified teaching courses (www.emu.dk). This suggests a situated context-specific notion of writing development.

Also, it should be noted that the curriculum document's section on 'Fagformål' [purpose of the subject], which has a higher and more authoritative status than the common objectives, states that 'In Danish, students should develop their joy of expression and reading' (UVM, 2015; our translation). So, indeed, joyful *Bildung*-oriented writing is authorized. On the other hand, as a whole, on a larger time-scale from primary education via lower-secondary to upper-secondary education, clearly a more linear, generic and cumulative notion of writing development regardless of the student, which can be evaluated, is implied. Summing up, empirical findings of the WLLW and other Danish studies on writing point toward a revision of the framing of writing development and offer a critical corrective to national curricula's conceptualization of writing, as in the case of Denmark and elsewhere.

Developmental Framing in Norwegian Standards for Writing

Grade Level Differentiation. This section will focus on the Norwegian standards (or 'norms of expectation') developed within the NORMs project (Evensen et al., 2016), which, as explained above, differ from the subject area standards in the national curriculum. The NORMs project is not the state curriculum, but it is a large-scale research project with the potential to influence the official curriculum. The NORMs project filled an important gap as it resulted in the first standards to focus exclusively on writing (Berge, Skar, Matre, Solheim, Evensen, Otnes, and Thygesen, 2017). At the Writing Centre in Trondheim, which is funded by the NDET, NORMs researchers have – on the basis of the NORMs project findings– developed new standards for writing that are to be released in August 2017. Thus, project curriculum descriptions of what

students are supposed to be able to do with writing in certain school subjects at certain points in the education will be represented in these standards.

The norms of expectation are closely related to a theoretical model of writing, The Wheel of Writing, which was drafted when NSBWT was initiated and then finalized and used in the NORMs project and in the NSBWT (Figure 2). According to the model there are six basic acts of writing and six purposes. There is a default relationship between acts and purposes; for example, the act of convincing is often performed in order to persuade a reader or readers. However, a writer may very well try to persuade a reader by performing another act of writing, for example ‘to imagine,’ thus creating fiction (a common example is Aesop’s fables).

[FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE]

Figure 2. Wheel of Writing (from Skar, 2017:6).

The norms of expectation are divided into seven domains: Communication, Content, Text Organization, Language Use (lexicon, syntax, and style), Orthography, Punctuation, and Use of Written Medium (handwriting, multimodal resources). These domains or aspects of writing are commonly included in writing assessments. The novelty in the Norwegian case is the decision to create separate standards for each domain (Table 4).

Table 4

Grades 5 and 8 Differentiation for NORMs Expectations for Writing Domains

| Domain | Grade 5 (following 4 years of schooling) | Grade 8 (following seven years of schooling) |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| | The writer is expected to: | The writer is expected to: |
| Communication | Take a clear position as a writer Address one or more known readers in a suitable way Use a title that guides the reader in a relevant way | Take flexible positions as a writer, and be able to vary among various relevant positions Address known as well as unknown readers in a suitable way |
| Contents | Present his/her own impressions, experiences, thoughts and/or opinions Present relevant content elements derived from conceptions, dimensions of experience and/or knowledge familiar to the reader(s) | Present and elaborate his/her conceptions, experiences, thoughts and/or opinions, as well as those of others Present and elaborate on content elements that are topically relevant, e.g. to a subject field Adjust the amount of content relative to the topic |
| Text organization | Use some relevant principles of composition (temporal or thematic sequence, etc.) Use an introduction, a main part and an ending Create thematic cohesion within the various parts of the text Create textual cohesion by connectors (<i>or, but, because</i> etc.) | Use a variety of ways of structuring the text Structure the text in a purposeful way (e.g. genre) Use paragraphs as an organizing principle Create cohesion by a variety of connectors |
| Language Use | Use comprehensive declarative, interrogative- and imperative sentences Use elaborated nominal phrases Demonstrate some variation at the beginning of sentences | Build complex and varied sentences Use a relevant, varied and precise vocabulary, including discipline-specific terms Use an appropriate tone |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Use a relevant and varied vocabulary, including terms relevant to school-subjects Include some idiomatic expressions where appropriate Use direct and indirect speech where relevant | Use various idiomatic expressions, where appropriate |
| Orthography (with morphology) | Show control of phonographic spelling Integrate composite words Master uppercase letters in proper names, at the beginning of a sentence and after a full stop Demonstrate control of regular and irregular pronouns and interrogatives Master double consonants in high-frequency words Master the morphological system | Master orthographic spelling |
| Punctuation | Demonstrate appropriate use of full stops, exclamation marks and question marks Use commas between items in a list Use a comma before ‘but’ Mark direct speech by en-dash or colon and quotation marks | Master the use of colons, parentheses and hyphens Use a comma between independent clauses Use a comma after sentence-initial subordinate clauses |
| Use of the written medium | Create texts with a simple lay-out which are easy to follow Make use of various means of expression, like verbal language, drawings, pictures and symbols Mark spaces between words clearly Use and follow margins Delineate the heading graphically Mark paragraphs graphically after an introduction and before an ending Create aesthetically appealing texts Use cursive handwriting Use a consistent handwriting Use a legible handwriting | Use a clear and suitable lay-out Delineate paragraphs Combine multimodal means of expression in order to create cohesion and meaning Use digital resources for varied communicative and aesthetic purposes |

The assessment scales that were developed on the basis of these standards included five proficiency levels. Proficiency levels 1 and 2 represented: ‘very low level of mastery’ and ‘low level of mastery’ whereas proficiency levels 4 and 5 represented ‘high level of mastery’ and ‘very high level of mastery’. Proficiency level 3 represented ‘as to be expected after 4 [or 7] years of schooling’.

It follows from the presentation above that the implied idea of progression is rather complex. A student may progress within a domain (e.g., increasingly getting better at communication) and/or between acts of writing. A student who is judged to perform the act of writing to describe ‘as expected after 4 [or 7] years of schooling’ may not be able to perform the other acts of writing with the same proficiency. To arrive at the conclusion that a student has met the standards for a particular year then, one must have evidence from multiple sources, i.e. texts that represent different acts of writing and that are judged on all seven assessment scales. The reason behind this rather complex configuration is that the standards and assessment tools were to be used in formative classroom assessment. It was decided that teachers needed a tool that would yield precise and nuanced information about students’ writing proficiency. As such the

norms of expectation and the scales that are based on them do not offer a tool for measuring assumed progression from one school year to the other. Assessments made with scales for student texts from year 7 are not comparable with assessments made for year 4 texts. The newly devised NSBWT scales were developed with this kind of comparison in mind, but they are yet to be aligned to any standards.

Basis in Writing Theory and Research. The Wheel of Writing is founded on a functional understanding of writing and builds on work in sociocultural theory, semiotics, text anthropology, literacy research, and linguistics (Berge et al., 2016; Berge et al., 2017). According to the theoretical underpinnings of the model, writers perform acts of writing with the intention to serve a communicative purpose. An act of writing results in an utterance, which may or may not be accepted as a text depending on the degree to which the utterance has characteristics that align with the norms in a specific text culture.

The norms of expectation model was developed in two stages (Evensen et al., 2016). In the first stage, drafts of the standards were developed based on the curriculum and on research on writer development. In the second stage, teachers in school years 4 and 7, from 10 schools, presented texts from their own students and were presented with unknown texts and asked to ‘assess aloud’ and to place texts on scales with the five proficiency levels. Eventually, the research team condensed all teacher utterances to domain-specific standards for seven domains. An investigation into the effects of teachers using the Wheel of Writing, the standards and the scales as basis for assessment and assessment based instruction, showed large gains for students who participated in the project (Berge et al., 2017). The result indicated that it was indeed possible to introduce new ways to model writing, and new ways to assess writing with promising results.

Developmental Framing in US Standards for Writing

Grade Level Differentiation. In the US, as described above, the CCSS-W emphasize writing to ‘informational’ source texts and writing across content areas such as social studies, science, and math. With respect to developmental pathways represented in the standards, CCSS-W present differentiated genre expectations, explicitly shifting attention away from narrative genres and toward more discipline-specific and source-based genres as students move toward and into secondary school. In one CCSS supplementary document (Coleman and Pimentel, 2012), it is recommended that 35% of student writing at the elementary level (grades K-5) should be narrative, 35% should be informative, and 30% should be persuasive writing; whereas at the lower secondary level (grades 6-8), 30% of student writing should be narrative (a reduction), 35% should be informative writing, and 35% should be persuasive writing (an increase). By grade 12 the document stipulates that the purpose of 20% of student writing should be ‘to convey experience’ (a further reduction), while 40% should be devoted to arguing/persuading and 40% to explaining (a further increase).

Within these broad genre specifications, CCSS-W Anchor Standards are divided into four domains: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.b). The grade level distinctions for Text Types and Purposes (Table 5) provide a sample illustration of the CCSS-W framing of writing development.

Table 5

Grade Level Differentiation for CCSS-W Text Types and Purposes^v

| Anchor Standards | Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Kindergarten | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book. | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic. | Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened. |
| Grade 3 | Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. |
| Grade 6 | Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences. |
| Grade 9-10 | Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. |
| Grade 11-12 | Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. | Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. |

Basis in Writing Theory and Research. Though these grade-by-grade distinctions do seem to progress toward more complex writing production, it is otherwise difficult to ascertain their theoretical basis. For example, CCSS delay ‘valid reasoning’ for argumentation until the upper secondary grades (grade 9-10), although the use of ‘clear reasons’ in the early secondary grades

seems to necessitate an understanding of validity. As Applebee has noted, the standards’ ‘lack of a developmental model for writing’ and ‘lack of a substantive research base for the sequencing of language skills across the grades’ is revealed in grade-by-grade distinctions that somewhat arbitrarily ‘tend toward the formulaic and perfunctory, rather than supporting the development of a flexible array of strategies for addressing a wide variety of specific audiences and purposes’ (2013: 28--29). In contrast with the Danish and Norwegian standards, this CCSS-W domain does not address motivation to write or flexibility in approaches to writing.

Regarding the CCSS-W basis in research, the standards’ supplementary publication, ‘Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards’ (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.a) reveals that CCSS was designed with less focus on how children and adolescents develop writing competence in primary and secondary school contexts than on College and Career Readiness (CCR) outcomes. The 2½ pages devoted to writing in Appendix A, notably, do not include citation of scholarship regarding writing in K-12 settings. Rather, a section explaining ‘The special place of argument in the Standards’ (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.a: 24) includes references to work in college composition, and the only empirical works cited are curriculum surveys conducted in postsecondary contexts, the results of which highlight college instructors’ emphasis on argumentative writing competence. Further, studies of postsecondary practices cited in Appendix A include those conducted by organizations connected to large-scale college entrance test design (e.g., ACT, Inc., 2009; Milewski, Johnson, Glazer, and Kubota, 2005) or to the CCSS initiative itself (‘Unpublished data collected by Achieve, Inc.’ is cited in a footnote on page 25). This postsecondary emphasis is in keeping with the CCSS focus on CCR, but it does not include consideration of how writing might actually develop across K-12 levels.

CCSS supporting documents (Coleman, 2011; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017b) illustrate the underlying assumption—without reference to research on the topic—that teachers in K-12 settings have overemphasized narrative and personal genres at the expense of argumentative and informational genres. For example, the ‘Key Shifts in English Language Arts’ document (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017b) advances the claim that ‘frequently, forms of writing in K-12 have drawn heavily from student experience and opinion, which alone will not prepare students for the demands of college, career, and life.’ In response, some have raised concerns about the appropriateness of these shifts away from personal and narrative writing, particularly in the early grades, in light of the importance of students’ motivations to write and the use of prior experience as a resource in learning to write (Graham, Kiuahara, Harris, and Fishman, 2017; Troia and Olinghouse, 2013; Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Herbert, and Morphy, 2014).

How Writing Development Frameworks Compare across the School Systems

The descriptive analyses of these three framings of writing development demonstrate that educational policies with respect to standards are not static but are in a state of constant flux. While such a situation presents challenges for students and education professionals who must adapt to changing conceptualizations of writing competence, it also presents opportunities to frame and reframe how writing development is supported in school settings. The analyses also bring to light notable similarities and differences among the three national contexts, as summarized in Table 6, with respect to how development is framed as well as in the extent to which constructs of writing development are based in theory and research.

Table 6

Summary Comparison of Danish, Norwegian, and US Framings of Writing Development

| <i>Domain</i> | Denmark | Norway | United States |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Progressions for Writing Development | | | |
| <i>Source Material</i> | Increasing emphasis on source-based writing and text analysis as students move from lower to upper secondary education | Not an explicit focus in NORMs [but is incorporated in national subject-area standards] | Increasing emphasis on writing to informational sources as students progress from elementary through secondary school. |
| <i>Genre emphasis</i> | Relatively linear move from narrative toward analytic genres as students move from lower to upper secondary school Increasing genre awareness | Nonlinear progression for six acts and purposes of writing Increasing flexibility and variety Increasing genre awareness as students move from elementary to lower secondary school | Explicit linear move from narrative to ‘informational’ genres as students progress from elementary to lower secondary school. Increasing emphasis on argumentation as students move toward upper secondary school. |
| <i>Content Area Writing</i> | Writing becomes increasingly disciplinary in nature; writing within and across content areas is increasingly a focus in upper secondary education | Not an explicit focus in NORMs [but is incorporated in national subject-area standards] | Increasing focus on writing in science and social studies as students move into and through secondary school grades |
| <i>Motivation and self-expression</i> | Development of ‘joy of expression’ is in general a goal; use of writing as a medium for self-expression and exploration is a consistent goal. | Emphasis on ability to express thoughts, opinions and experiences in writing in more complex and elaborate ways as students move from elementary to lower secondary school | Not an explicit focus |
| Sociocultural Aspects of Development | | | |
| <i>Context</i> | Increasingly contextualized and formalized understandings of writing | Wheel of Writing model emphasizes social and situational contexts for writing consistently | Not an explicit focus |
| <i>Purposes</i> | Students write for increasingly disciplinary purposes in the upper secondary grades From more emphasis on writing for self expression to writing for analysis as students move into and through secondary grades | Consistent emphasis on purposes for writing in Wheel model Increasing flexibility of approaches for achieving a variety of purposes | Increasingly complex approaches to achieving narrative, informative, or argumentative purposes. Purposes for writing increasingly focused on producing valid source-based arguments as students move into and through the secondary grades |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| <i>Audience</i> | Curriculum outlines goals for audience- and scenario oriented writing in primary and lower secondary education in particular | Students develop from writing for known to both known and unknown audiences as they move from upper elementary to lower secondary grades | Not emphasized |
| Theoretical Basis | | | |
| | Functional and sociocultural theories of writing development are implied | Explicit functional and sociocultural theoretical basis | No explicit theory 'Backward mapping' from college level target outcomes |
| Basis in Research | | | |
| | Aligned with research basis underpinning sociocultural theories of writing development, however underestimating the role of student writer identity | Based in research on writing development Based in collaborative research regarding teachers' assessments of students' writing | Reference to research in postsecondary settings (but not to writing development research in K-12 settings). |

The comparison highlights instructive differences in the ways particular aspects of writing development, such as use of sources for writing and the importance of writing contexts, are foregrounded in the three countries' curriculum frameworks. In the following sections, we further discuss these comparisons in light of how they might inform the design of writing curricula in the future.

Discussion

With respect to developmental framing, a linear progression focusing on shifts away from personal and narrative genres and toward more analytic and disciplinary genres--source-based writing and argumentation in particular--characterizes the Danish and US standards for writing. In contrast, the Norwegian norms of expectation based in the Wheel of Writing model suggests a nonlinear approach in which writing develops unevenly across domains and in relation to various acts and purposes for writing. Further, the Norwegian model appears to focus more on a progression toward increasing flexibility and diversity in uses and strategies for writing as students progress through compulsory education. However, the Norwegian national curriculum subject area standards do not include standards exclusively focused on writing, and it is undecided how the norms of expectation will influence national writing curricula and exams in the future. Also, the norms do not include non-compulsory (upper secondary) grade levels, so this comparison is somewhat incomplete given the important distinction between lower and upper secondary writing cultures detailed in WLLW research in Denmark. Nonetheless, the Norwegian model points to an alternate possibility for the framing of writing development, one that could inform the work of policymakers and curriculum designers in the future.

Another important domain of variation among the educational systems' framing of writing development is the extent to which sociocultural aspects of writing (as opposed to decontextualized skills) are emphasized in the standards, particularly as regards student agency and motivation. Though both Danish and US curricula display a similar genre shift away from personal and reflective writing, the US standards are marked by their lack of attention to student

motivation and self-expression (Troia and Olinghouse, 2013). The CCSS-W omission of the role of motivation in learning to write seems to align with the standards' shift away from personal writing as well as a de-emphasis on prior knowledge in learning to write. Though professionally written arguments and informational texts often incorporate an author's experiences and background knowledge, the CCSS emphasis on 'text-dependent' writing requires that material for written work should be increasingly dependent on complex source texts with limited reference to students' prior knowledge and experience (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017b). Though the Danish standards also emphasize text analysis as students move into the upper secondary grades, the CCSS-W focus on text dependence and informational text potentially moves this shift into the early secondary and even later elementary grade levels, as classroom-based research on implementation has suggested (e.g., Wilcox et al., 2016). This crossnational comparison points to possibilities for including goals that are not necessarily skill-based such as the development of motivation to write and joy in expressing oneself through writing.

The three national contexts also differ in the extent to which frameworks for writing development are implicitly or explicitly based in composition theory and research. The CCSS appear to lack such a basis for writing development in primary and secondary school settings. In contrast, the Danish standards, in a contextualized framing of writing development, are aligned with (though not necessarily based in) sociocultural approaches to writing development. The NORMs project is unique in its explicit basis in sociocultural and functional theory and research on development. Further, the norms of expectation for writing in compulsory school are based in classroom research in which teacher knowledge plays a central role. This comparison points to possibilities for alternative standards-setting processes in terms of how researchers, teachers, and policymakers might work in collaboration to assure that students have access to writing opportunities that support their development through curriculum guidelines, standards, and formative assessments.

Based on research regarding writing in school settings, we favor a sociocultural framing of writing development that emphasizes the integrated roles of learner identity, agency and motivation in learning to write (Bruning and Horn, 2000; Cremin and Locke, 2017). This framework highlights the development of authorial agency, or the increasing understanding of why one might choose to write, as well as why one might write in particular ways for particular audiences. There is some scholarly basis for writing curricula that progress toward more analytic source-based forms of writing in the upper grades to support content learning and higher order thinking (Fitzgerald and Shanahan, 2000; Gilbert and Graham, 2010). However, we argue that this need not come at the expense of students' opportunities to develop a sense of their agency to use writing to serve a wider diversity of purposes.

To develop academic writing ability, students must come to see themselves as authors with meaningful ideas to communicate in disciplinary conversations. Applebee, in his review of scholarship regarding writing development (2000), described this framing in terms of 'writing as participation in social action' (p. 103). Drawing from ethnographic research on children's (e.g., Dyson, 1993) and adults' (e.g., McCarthy, 1987) writing development, Applebee focused on the concept of *effective participation*, in which students 'must learn how to take action within [a particular] domain: how to do science, for example, not simply to learn about it' (p. 105). To develop in this way, students need opportunities to participate in a wide array of disciplinary genres and to acquire 'a growing repertoire of strategies for orchestrating what they write' (p.

105). Teachers provide instruction that illuminates how competent writers write as well as why writing takes different forms for different audiences in order to optimally support students' development. Such instruction requires teachers to consider learner background knowledge of the purposes and characteristics of different genres and how ideas are expressed variably in different disciplinary contexts and why (Bazerman, Krut, Lunsford, McLeod, Null, Rogers, and Stansell, 2010; MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2006). The three educational systems analyzed here vary in the extent to which their curricula align with this developmental model.

Any discussion of standards for writing must address the use of high-stakes exams to measure achievement. A number of scholars have noted that even with standards that emphasize the importance of particular skills and competencies, high stakes assessment content typically has a greater impact on the enacted curriculum than do the standards themselves (Hillocks, 2002; Shanahan, 2015; Shohamy, 2014). One concern is that standards are designed with an excessive focus on measurability of achievement benchmarks as opposed to a focus on developing writers equipped for success with writing in the 21st century. Comparing these sociocultural and functional theories of writing development with insights from writing research and the main findings of the research projects with which we have been involved, we argue that there is a risk of conceptualizing writing development in such simplistic ways that underestimate the complexity and dynamics of student development. In the WLLW project in Denmark we find that students risk losing the writing competence once developed in one context, and that such losses of writing competence may influence, in dramatic ways, the way they identify with writing and writing development in particular subjects (Krogh, 2018). In the NSWI and CCSSW implementation projects in the US, we find that teachers align genre expectations with high-stakes assessment content even when standards explicitly call for genre diversity (Langer and Applebee, 2009) and even when doing so is inconsistent with their professional knowledge regarding students' development (Wilcox et al., 2016). This suggests that while many students may be developing certain types of writing that are measured on high-stakes exams, they do not have access to the range of writing opportunities that would prepare them for the dynamic writing purposes they will encounter beyond secondary school curricula.

Other research on writing development in the transition to academic writing (Sommers & Saltz, 2004) backs these findings, as it suggests that a backlash may very likely take place in the transition from one education system to another, as students try to understand and navigate within the new norms and practices of disciplinary writing found in the subsequent school context. Writing development could go back and forward, up and down, dependent on the school context and subject; and writing development is not necessarily a positive term (Freedman, Hull, Higgs, & Booten, 2016; Krogh & Jakobsen, 2016; Ongstad, 2013). In fact, it seems quite normal for students to move from experts to novices, and it is crucial for their further development as writers that they acknowledge and, in a sense, identify with such a frustrating non-linear transition in their writing development.

One way of compensating for this frustrating challenge is to offer scaffolding feedback (Dysthe et al., 2016; Smedegaard, 2016). A way forward would be to apply the conceptual distinction WLLW makes between *writing* and *writer* development, and which theorizes that writing development is linked to *writer* development. This means that a student's expansion of his or her semiotic – textual and discursive – resources in school genres (writing development) is influenced, or 'coordinated' (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010), by writer identifications on different time-scales and in different contexts, including school subjects (writer development). In this

sense, curricula's implied conceptualization and progressive-linear understanding of writing competence should be balanced with an alternative understanding of the much more dynamic and flexible student perspective on writing and writer development. Students construe and reconstrue, in a complex ongoing process, their own perceptions of and identifications with the programmatic writing curriculum, and student writer development co-shapes and influences their writing development. WLLW research suggests that schools and teachers tend not to be aware of or adaptive to the student perspective on writing/writer development. This in itself becomes a barrier for students' development.

Conclusion

This descriptive comparison of three educational systems' framing of writing in curricular standards is limited in scope in that it has only accounted for a small sample, in Europe in the US, of the much wider range of curricular possibilities. However, we view this as a step toward a broader consideration of how different educational systems approach the challenges inherent in articulating frameworks for writing competence and its development. What we have found, as with the IEA Study of Written Composition, is that such crosscurricular comparisons are messy due to the many structural, conceptual, political and cultural differences that characterize educational systems. The variation in goals for writing development might be large, while the curricular and educational policy issues vary substantively across the globe. The variation in theory and methodology may also be large, while theory and methodologies are bound to regional research customs and interests that reflect – positively or critically – local policy interests. Yet we have also found that such comparisons, by illuminating alternative possibilities, providing bases for curricular critique, and facilitating conversations among stakeholders—have the potential to inform future work in the standards-setting processes that strongly influence students' pathways to writing development.

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ⁱ Educational systems, following Purves (1992), are defined by a country or subsection of a country. In the present study, the educational systems we examine are joined by national or common education standards.

ⁱⁱ For a full version in Danish, see <http://www.emu.dk/sites/default/files/Dansk%20-%20januar%202016.pdf>, p. 9.

ⁱⁱⁱ Specified in phases 1, 2 and, after grade 9, 3.

^{iv} Specified goals for planning, preparing, producing, responding to, revising, presenting and assessing production/writing; few samples presented below focusing on production.

^v The complete grade-by-grade standards can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/>