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Challenges and possibilities in educating EFL reading teachers

Abstract
Experiencing literature is part of the English as a foreign language (EFL) subject in Norway. It is both challenging and possible to educate competent reading teachers who can foster this experience. The present article is a thematic exploration of some of these challenges and possibilities. The challenges are discussed under four headings: the profession of the teacher educator; the complaint that student teachers do not read enough; the role of national tests in forming how reading in English is taught in school; and the challenge of making sense of the concept of reading strategies. The second part of the article considers possibilities. These are grounded in the principle that teacher educators should not primarily lecture. Instead, they should alternate systematically between enactment and metacognition. The article describes scenarios in which students try out a sequence of pre-, during- and post-reading activities related to the short story "The Demon Lover" by Elizabeth Bowen. After engaging with each activity, the students take part in a reflection led by the teacher educator on their experience as readers, the learning potential of the activity, and questions related to its adaptation and organisation in a diverse school classroom. This operationalisation of a pedagogy of enactment (Grossman et al., 2009) allows student teachers to gain experience of and reflect on core practices. In the present case, the core practice is the planning and teaching of coherent and motivating learning sequences that promote increased reading motivation and proficiency in the English language classroom.

Keywords: teacher education, subject English, reading strategies, learning sequence, metacognition

Utfordringer og muligheter i utdanningen av leselærere i engelskfaget

Sammendrag
Litteraturopplevelser hører til i engelskfaget i norsk skole. Det er både utfordrende og mulig å utdanne kompetente leselærere som kan fremme slike opplevelser. Denne artikkelen er en tematisk utforskning av noen av disse

utfordringene og mulighetene. Utfordringene diskuteres under fire overskrifter: lærerutdanneren som profesjonsutøver; misnøyen med at studenter ikke leser nok; betydningen av nasjonale prøver for hvordan lesing i engelsk er undervist i skolen; og utfordringen med å forstå lesestrategier som konsept. Den andre delen av artikkelen tar for seg mulighetene som ligger i prinsippet om at lærer-utdannere ikke primært skal forelese. Isteden bør de veksle systematisk mellom utøvelse og metakognisjon. Artikkelen beskriver en sekvens hvor studenter prøver ut før-, under- og etter-lesningsaktiviteter tilknyttet Elizabeth Bowens novelle "The Demon Lover". Etter å ha engasjert seg i hver aktivitet, deltar studentene i en refleksjon ledet av lærerutdanneren, hvor de drøfter sine opplevelser som lesere, aktivitetens læringspotensial, og spørsmål om tilpasning og organisering av aktiviteten i et mangfoldig klasserom. Denne operasjonali-seringen av en enactment-*pedagogikk (Grossman et al., 2009) gir lærer-studenter anledning til å skaffe seg erfaring med og reflektere over kjerne-praksiser. I dette tilfellet er kjernepraksisen det å planlegge koherente og moti-verende læringssekvenser som fører til økt lesemotivasjon og kompetanse i det engelske klasserommet.*

Nøkkelord: lærerutdanning, engelskfaget, lesestrategier, læringsøkt, metakogni-sjon

Introduction

Barack Obama has advocated the power, the wisdom and the magic of a good story. In a speech made to the American Library Association in June 2005, he said:

> At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better. It's an enormous force for good. (Obama, 2005)

In a recently published book about the changing relationship between literature and nationhood, Jon Haarberg concludes that educationalists should bring world literature into the classroom because

> World literature actually includes both old and new literature that still speaks to us both as individuals and as a community. A reading experience is far better when it can be shared. (Haarberg, 2017, p. 238, my translation)

Obama's conviction that reading can be a force for good, and Haarberg's conviction that it is valuable to share the experience of literature with others, underpin this article. One very important place where the experience of literature can be shared is the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. (One frequently encounters the claim that in Norway, English is better described as a

second rather than as a foreign language. I cannot here comment on this claim, beyond saying that, since there is no neutral term, my use of the acronym EFL is deliberate.) To achieve this “force for good”, I debate and illustrate the education of proficient EFL reading teachers by first asking:

What challenges are encountered in educating EFL reading teachers?

This question is considered under four headings: challenges relating to the professional development of teacher educators; the complaint that students do not read as much as they should; the role of national tests in determining how subject English is understood and taught; and the challenge of making sense of the concept of reading strategies. This article then asks a second question:

How can student teachers become proficient EFL reading teachers?

In answer, I illustrate how both initial and in-service teachers could and perhaps *should* be trained. This entails a relatively detailed presentation of a learning sequence – one of many possible – involving experience and metacognition. The sequence structures and supports the professional development of an EFL reading teacher in a more systematic way than I believe is customary in teacher education.

I use the term ‘teacher educator’ to refer to a person employed to teach English didactics at a college or university. In fact, as Smith (2015) points out, many players are teacher educators: practicum co-ordinators and mentors, pedagogy and subject teachers at university or college level, co-students, colleagues and school heads. To her list, I would add another key player: the teacher him- or herself. One need only join virtual communities of Norway-based EFL teachers, such as the Facebook forum “*engelsklærere*” with its more than 8,100 members (as of March 2018) to see how actively and collaboratively in-service English teachers supplement and update their initial professional training.

Parallel with such initiatives, traditional, ritualised classroom practices continue to flourish (Melby, 2009; Sandvik & Buland, 2013; Bakken & Lund, 2017). They are ritualised in the sense that teachers reproduce practices from their own schooling without due didactic reflection. In such an EFL classroom, reading typically involves listening to the teacher read the next text in the textbook and the pupils then taking turns to read it aloud and translate it into Norwegian. In a post-reading session, pupils typically give the shortest possible answer to questions that the teacher asks. As homework, learners are instructed to reread the text, as often as not with no explicit purpose for so doing, and to “learn” vocabulary.

The motivation for this article is a wish to contribute to the countering of this kind of traditional, tedious and ineffective practice, and the belief that student teachers need a pedagogy of enactment if they are to be safeguarded from such practices. Such a pedagogy organises the education of student teachers around

core practices, which teachers will continue to develop and refine in their professional lives (Grossman, Hammerness, & MacDonald, 2009). In the lesson sequence presented in the second part of this article, students enact the core practice of designing a coherent, motivating and effective reading lesson.

The present article belongs to a field of research "occupied primarily by researchers who are also teacher education practitioners. Their purpose is generating knowledge about how to enhance and/or critique the contexts in which candidates learn to teach" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015, p. 117). Let us therefore consider some of the challenges in educating EFL reading teachers, looking first at the situation of the professional teacher educator.

The challenge of being a teacher educator

A teacher educator is usually either somebody who has previously taught in school, or somebody recruited from a university background, often with a doctorate (Czerniawski, Guberman, & MacPhail, 2016). The field of in-service education in English has expanded in Norway in recent years, due primarily to the government's initiative to qualify teachers in key subjects, such as English. The need for increased capacity at the relatively large department of English where the author currently works, has led to the employment of staff with a third type of background – those who have only recently completed their Master's degree, and who have little experience as teachers. Teacher educators are, in fact, members of a profession without comprehensive professional requirements (Smith, 2011). Whatever their background, all teacher educators must fulfil very many roles, and the lack of induction into these roles is, according to Czerniawski et al., well documented.

Czerniawski et al. define a teacher educators' professional development as "the formal and informal processes that enable teacher educators to improve their professional practice throughout their careers, with a commitment to transform education for the better" (2016, p. 128). Most teacher educators acquire their expertise only *after* they have started working as teacher educators, an expertise that draws on collegial knowledge and on collaboration. In a study in which, amongst many others, 76 teacher educators at Norwegian colleges and universities took part, the respondents expressed most interest in professional development that targeted improving the *delivery* of the curriculum: how to teach their subject with "more generic teaching and learning strategies" (p. 136).

That there is little evidence-based knowledge dedicated to the professional development of teacher educators, is cause for concern (European Commission, 2012, p. 64). In 2005, Cochran-Smith and Zeichner carried out a large-scale review of the empirical evidence relating to policies and practices in the initial education of teachers. They found few longitudinal studies, and considerably more research about programmes and student attitudes than about what actually

goes on in the learning process, and what makes for effective learning. The report concluded that more research was needed on the impact of teacher education on teachers' learning and professional practice.

Ten years later, Cochran-Smith et al. described a burgeoning field where "many researchers around the world are now intensely interested in the systems and processes through which teachers are prepared and certified to teach" (2015, p. 117). It is still, however, a field they describe as sprawling and uneven (p. 109). And there is still a need, not least in a Norwegian context, for research that focuses on how we build knowledge in teacher education (Lund, 2015). Education policy makers at national level seem to see the professional development of teacher educators as the responsibility of the institutions at which they work. The strategy document for the continuation and expansion of the national *Kompetanse for Kvalitet* programme simply states that "The high quality of the offers is to be continued" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2012, p. 7, my translation), with no mention of the professional development of the teacher educators who are to deliver this high quality.

There are many other societal challenges, of course, beyond the poor visibility of the profession and the paucity of relevant research, not least issues relating to salary and tenure, that impinge on the practice of the teacher educator, but they are beyond the scope of the present paper. Instead, we now turn to a complaint that is rooted in both societal and individual factors, and that haunts the corridors of teacher educators, whatever their backgrounds. The complaint is that initial teacher education students often do not read the syllabus literature.

The challenge that "Basically they don't read any more"

It is the case that people have worried about other people, and especially children, not reading, for centuries. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) described reading, in the sense of enforced reading, as "the scourge of childhood" (s.a., cited in Pennac, 1992, p. 54). In 1992 Pennac himself imagined a similarly desultory dinner party conversation:

> "Basically they don't read any more."
> "No."
> "Too many distractions."
> "Yes."

The background for this conversation is the idea that, in 1992 at least, there was a cognitive gap between parents and their teenage children: "We read books; they have headphones" (p. 29). This impression is shared by many teacher educators, who say that students are more likely to check their Instagram account,

play Wordfeud or watch *Game of Thrones* than to read syllabus literature, or a short story, let alone a novel.

In the previous section, I bemoaned the shortage of research into the professional development of teacher educators. Another question that is surprisingly little researched, is how students read and make sense of syllabus literature. What we do know is that the proportion of the population in Norway who use the internet, has increased enormously over the last twenty-five years. Nine out of ten people use it on a daily basis (Norwegian Media Barometer, 2016). The proportion who "use books" on an average day – 25% – has remained unchanged over the same period. We also have annual Study Barometers, which provide information about the amount of time teacher education students self-report spending on their studies. It is likely that there is a complex interplay of factors that determine whether or not students read what we want them to read. The complaint that students do not do so, arises not from systematic empirical research but from classroom experience and corridor and conference small talk.

Are teachers of reading who barely read literature for pleasure themselves, less qualified to teach reading than those who read extensively? Korsvold has argued convincingly that it does matter whether teachers of reading in secondary school are themselves enthusiastic readers (2000). At primary level, where there *is* some evidence-based research, it is sparse and contradictory.

I have found two studies, both in primary schools, which address the relationship between a teacher's own reading and her success as a reading teacher. McKool and Gespass (2009) reported on a questionnaire that teachers had answered about their reading and teaching practices. The researchers found a positive correlation between how much the teachers read and how well they taught reading. Teachers who read for more than half an hour every day were both more effective and more enthusiastic in their teaching of reading than were those who did not read on a daily basis. Brooks (2007), by contrast, interviewed 4th Year teachers who were keen and competent readers. These teachers reported little or even no connection between their own experience as readers and the effectiveness of their teaching of reading. The difference in findings here may have to do with how instrumentally the skill of reading was defined in the two studies.

Let us return to Pennac (1992) and his imagined dinner party conversation. The situation need not be so desultory, he says. Instead of complaining that "basically they don't read anymore", perhaps we should be more curious about *what* and indeed *for what purposes* young people read? What is our students' earlier experience of reading required texts?

One such experience is the national tests in English in Years 5 and 8, where pupils are asked to read many texts for different but always particular purposes; somebody else's purpose. It is somewhat ironic that reading tests were introduced into schools in order to stimulate reading, but have a content and format

far removed from the purposes for which young people read by choice. This is one of several challenges related to the national tests, to which we now turn.

The challenge of national tests in English

In Norway, the current focus on reading strategies arose partly in response to the middling performance of 15-year old pupils when their reading comprehension was assessed in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 2003. Although PISA is concerned with reading comprehension in learners' first languages, the importance of reading strategies in all subjects quickly became a central ideological investment in Norwegian education. We find evidence of the high regard in which reading strategies are held at several levels in the Norwegian state education system. At the curriculum level, in the classroom, at research conferences and in journals, including the present, which especially invited articles that address metacognitive topics such as "How do we teach strategies for reading texts, and how effective are our methods?".

The national tests in English are not tests of English, but of a limited number of competence aims related to reading. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training writes that "the results from the national tests give a limited picture of the skills and competences of the pupils" (2017, p. 2, my translation). The tests are made up of thirty or so short inauthentic texts, and forty or so multiple choice comprehension questions. Scanning, skimming and making intelligent guesses are the key reading strategies. All three are of course reading skills that we use on a daily basis in everyday out-of-school reading. In addition, test-takers must be able to sustain their concentration. To score highly, they also need comprehension monitoring strategies to ensure that they have found the information that will enable them to successfully complete each task and move quickly on to the next.

National tests in English have, at least in some municipalities, moved primary school teachers' focus towards reading for test performance rather than for mastery. Interestingly, the strategies required to do well in national tests are much the same as those required of successful gamers (Brevik, 2016). Gamers are highly motivated, instrumental readers of digital text. They read to find out what to do next, how to reach the next level, how to defeat the enemy. The dubious result of these two factors is that experienced competitive gamers are the de facto model readers of English in Norwegian state school education. What is more, national tests do not test the complex reading strategies needed to navigate hyperlinked digital texts (OECD, 2015), they fall short of the so-called twenty-first century skill of critical thinking, and they are largely irrelevant to the values of the core curriculum.

The challenge of reading strategies

This last, longer section will try to make sense of the many ways in which the concept of a reading strategy can be understood, in order to operationalise the term in the second part of this article. I will not address at length the debate about whether reading strategies deserve the prominence they have received in the development of reading proficiency. It is, however, disputed, not least by Krashen (2013), who reviewed studies into the effectiveness of reading strategy instruction in the USA, and found that there was no significant correlation between the time spent on the explicit teaching of reading strategies and measureable improvement in pupils' reading comprehension. There was, however, a significant correlation between reading comprehension and programmes that encouraged and supported *extensive* reading. Krashen (2013) concluded:

> The case for self-selected, free reading can only be described as astonishing, and new data emerges regularly, confirming previous discoveries and adding new ones. (p. 22)

The Norwegian national curriculum, *Knowledge Promotion*, takes as a premise that it *is* useful for learners of English to be able to use a wide range of reading strategies, and that if well learnt, they lead to improved comprehension. By the end of Year 4, learners of English are currently expected to use simple reading strategies. By the end of Year 11, learners should be so versed in their use that they are able to "evaluate and use suitable reading and writing strategies adapted for the purpose and type of text" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013).

In exploring what is meant by a reading strategy, one can take as a point of departure the more generic 'language learning strategy', which has been defined as "conscious thoughts or procedures the pupil uses to support his or her language learning process" (Haukås, 2012, p. 117, my translation). Reading strategies are closely related to language learning strategies, a cousin rather than a direct descendant. In this article, language learning *and* reading strategies are deliberate and conscious ways in which learners take responsibility for some aspect of their own learning. It might be as simple as taking off one's headphones in order to concentrate. It can also involve a more systematic strategy, such as underlining key sentences. The point about learning and reading strategies is always that the learner makes decisions about *how* they learn, even in situations where they have little influence over *what* they learn.

To come to grips with the term, it is helpful to be aware of a distinction that Baker and Brown (1984) introduced between strategies for the decoding of words and phrases on the one hand, and strategies for the monitoring of comprehension on the other. A typical decoding strategy would be to work out the approximate meaning of a word from its context. A typical comprehension monitoring strategy would be to know the purpose of reading a text, and to assess and adjust one's reading to achieve that purpose.

Oxford (2011) presents a six-part categorization of language learning strategies. The first category, which she calls metacognition, involves monitoring oneself and paying attention. This is what Baker and Brown would call a comprehension monitoring strategy. It is worth noting that Oxford reserves the term *metacognition* for only this one language learning strategy. Two of the other categories that also involve making decisions about how one learns she terms *affective strategies*, which relate to motivation and anxiety reduction; and *social strategies*, which involve making use of and contributing to the comprehension of other learners, for example by asking questions and taking turns.

Oxford calls *cognitive strategies* only those that involve deliberate investigation and reasoning. They come into play when problems arise in the close reading of a text. Her remaining two categories are *memory strategies*, involving grouping and building semantic sets; and *compensatory strategies*, where one for example skips incomprehensible words and passages without losing the gist.

In the USA, the systematic teaching of reading strategies has been in focus for many years. Keene and Zimmerman (2014), themselves enthusiastic trainers of reading strategies in an L1 learning context, reviewed this development. They were, overall, pleased with what they found, namely that teachers are now less concerned with checking *whether* pupils have understood a text, and more concerned to practise with their pupils *how* to understand it. As long as reading skills are well taught, Keene and Zimmerman see this change of focus as a very positive development. They did observe, however, that some teachers encouraged rote learning of lists of reading strategies, an approach they see as misguided, because learners do not become better readers simply by being trained to recite a list of strategies. Oxford (2011) confirms their assumption, referring to research that indicates that learners will use strategies more efficiently if they are reminded about them just before they carry out an activity. This was found to be more effective than teaching pupils strategies in separate training sessions, and then expecting them to put this knowledge into action without further reminders or guidance.

Tovani (2000), the author of *I Read It, But I Don't Get It*, uses 'reading strategies' to refer to the monitoring of comprehension. To Tovani's initial surprise, many of the adolescent readers in her English class did not expect to grasp the meaning of a text, even though they understood the meaning of the individual words. Often, in fact, the pupils did not even know, or seem to care, whether or not they *had* understood or not. The strategies in which she then trained them were designed to improve their reading stamina, their curiosity and, not least, their comprehension of the text they read. They would learn, she told them, by imitating, over and over again, what she herself does as she reads. And then she would demonstrate her own strategies: thinking aloud, making connections, wondering, checking, and asking herself questions as she read.

My observation of primary school classrooms suggests that teachers of English as a foreign language sometimes assume that learners can and should

make use of the sort of comprehension monitoring strategies that are advocated for readers of a first language. Is this a valid assumption? What *do* we know about the relevance and transferability of reading strategies between a learner's L1 and L2? According to Brisbois (1995), the assumption that reading strategies are transferable between a learner's L1 and their other languages is confirmed by much of the research that arose in the wake of an article entitled "Reading in a foreign language: A reading problem or a language problem?" (Alderson, 1984). The research that ensued, says Brisbois, has tended to support a hypothesis that Cummins put forward in 1981, namely that skills in L1 and L2 are mutually transferable, provided that learners are motivated to read, and provided that they have reached a threshold level of proficiency in the vocabulary and grammar of the L2. The importance of this proviso is confirmed anecdotally by practising English teachers. It is also true of experimental studies. (See for example Yang, 2006, although the reading strategies that have been investigated in the testing of this hypothesis have tended to be of the cognitive and not the monitoring kind.)

Given the apparently valid assumption that reading strategies are transferable between languages, one might reasonably expect that the teaching and practising of these strategies would be co-ordinated across subject boundaries, especially between Norwegian, English and other foreign languages. Unfortunately, this is not something that the current *Knowledge Promotion* or the organisation of school timetables facilitate. One may hope that the ongoing reform of the *Knowledge Promotion* will address this issue. Its ambition, based on the recommendations in the white paper *Fag – fordypning – forståelse* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016), is that education should provide in-depth and less compartmentalised learning.

In 2012, Haukås reported that most teachers were unsure what language learning strategies actually were, and so didn't teach them at all. My own experience aligns with her finding. Student teachers, whether they are taking courses in *Kvalitet for Kompetanse* (KfK), Grunnskolelærerutdanning (GLU), Praktisk-Pedagogisk Utdanning (PPU), *lektor* or Master's courses, tend to know very little about reading strategies. The ones to which they most frequently refer, are BISON and VØL. BISON is a pre-reading activity based on the Norwegian acronym *Bilde* (picture), *Innledning* (introduction), *Siste avsnitt* (final paragraph), *Overskrift* (headlines) and *Nøkkelord* (keywords). VØL refers to a pre-reading activity that invites readers to say what they already know about a topic, what they want to learn, and what they have learnt after having read the text in question. Both strategies, or groups of strategies, as it is more accurate to call them, are geared towards improving text comprehension and motivation. Despite being the reading strategies with which student teachers are most likely to be familiar, they are not ideal for reading literary texts, and little suited to solving shortcomings of language knowledge, a challenge that a learner is likely to encounter in an EFL reading setting.

It is in fact my impression that most student teachers are not as well versed in choosing and using reading strategies as their own pupils are expected to be by the end of Year 10. This observation applies as much to qualified teachers attending an in-service KfK course as to initial teacher education students, who have completed their secondary schooling since the introduction of *Knowledge Promotion*. Should we blame teachers for this shortcoming? According to the white paper (*Stortingsmelding*) 11, 2008–2009 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2009), keeping abreast of new focus areas in education is the responsibility of the individual teacher:

> Good teachers […] see the possibilities in their own competence and limitations, are prepared to put effort into acquiring new knowledge, to assess it and to put it to work. (p. 14, my translation)

But surely teachers' uncertainty about learning strategies is more properly addressed as a reflection of the extremely challenging processes of curriculum implementation. It should be a cause for concern that reading strategies have been a curriculum requirement for learners of English at primary and secondary level since the introduction of *Knowledge Promotion* in 2006, and that so many EFL reading teachers still know so little about them.

We turn now to the second part of the article, where reading strategies are central. For the present purpose, the term is broadly understood to include both reading strategies and comprehension monitoring strategies, in Baker and Brown's (1984) sense. The learning sequence refers to reading *activities* – strategies that the teacher deliberately chooses on behalf of his or her pupils, to motivate and prepare them to engage with and make sense of a literary text.

The rationale and key features of the learning sequence

The purpose of the learning sequence is twofold: to present students with a range of pre-, during- and post-reading activities; and to guide their reflection on the different ways that these activities can promote reading comprehension, engagement and language learning in their own classrooms.

The learning sequence can be contrasted with more traditional practice in the following ways:

- The teacher educator teaches more than tells. This means that his or her primary roles are those of organiser, prompter and resource (Harmer, 2015, pp. 116–117).
- Generic learning activities are preferred to one-off activities that work best with particular texts.
- Full-class conversations related to professional development are led by the teacher educator, rather than organised in small group discussions.

- The teacher educator scaffolds didactic creativity rather than bemoaning its absence.
- The classroom session is not an independent event, but a stage in the students' structured development as reading teachers.

This last point refers to something that can only briefly be discussed here, namely that after the learning sequence, students are required to design a new reading lesson. This lesson will be closely modelled on the one they have experienced and reflected on. In this way students are given a framework for systematic and creative lesson design. In my experience, open assignments of the type "Plan a learning sequence based on a text of your choice" provide a framework that confident and creative students can welcome, but which does not offer sufficient scaffolding for less able students. A more prescriptive first assignment relating to becoming a reading teacher means that students' lesson plans are more likely to be collaborative, coherent and purposeful, rather than a haphazard compilation of texts and activities.

The learning sequence described below is constructed around the short story "The Demon Lover" by Elizabeth Bowen. Set during the Second World War and first published in 1945, it tells the story of Mrs Drover, an evacuee who returns to her London home to complete some mundane errands. Instead, she finds a letter that leads to a terrifying encounter with her barely remembered soldier fiancé, a man who made her a promise before he left for the war in France in 1916. The reading activities and metacognitive sequence introduced here are an ideal, rather than a report on any actual sessions, and much can be salvaged from traditional teaching forms. A succinct PowerPoint for example, at the start of a learning sequence, can with advantage introduce key terms and remind students of the need to study the syllabus literature.

It took me many years as a teacher educator before I fully recognised how important it is to present coherent model lessons, and not only a battery of interesting ideas and activities, which left inexperienced teachers to patch them together into more or less coherent lessons. The learning sequence is a recipe, and like most everyday recipes, it provides a clear idea of what the dish should taste and look like, but it can be adapted to what the teacher educator and the students have in their cupboards. Quantities also need to be adapted. There are probably more reflective questions here than most classes can digest at one sitting. What I believe *is* novel about this sequence is that students experience a structured and explicit exchange of perspectives between that of the reader and that of the reading teacher. They alternate between trialling activities *as readers* and then reflecting *as reading teachers* on the didactic potential of these activities. That is how the following section is presented.

The learning sequence itself

Preparation

Syllabus literature relevant to this session on the teaching of reading is listed in the seminar plan. Central concepts are reviewed in a twenty-minute interactive presentation immediately before the learning sequence itself begins.

Learning objectives

The sequence starts, as should most learning sessions at tertiary level, with the presentation of learning objectives:

a) To be familiar with a range of reading activities suitable for EFL short stories
b) To reflect on the learning potential of these reading activities

Pictures

The story is set in the second of the two world wars and draws on memories of the first. In this pre-reading activity students work in small groups with *one* of two pictures. One illustrates the Blitz and evacuation, the other the remembering of unnamed soldiers. The students' task *as readers* is to use the pictures to speculate on the setting of the story.

Figure 1: "Evacuation of children" by Dudley S. Cowes (artist), 1939–1946. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:INF3-87_Evacuation_of_children_Artist_Dudley_S_Cowes.jpg

Figure 2: "The cemetery at Abbeville" by David McLellan (photographer), 1918. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WWI_British_cemetery_at_Abbeville.jpg

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- How did you arrange the seats as you did this task? Could there be other and perhaps better seating arrangements?
- How can groups share what they have learnt from their pictures?
- The whole class could have worked with both pictures. In what ways would the learning and motivational outcomes then have been different?
- In what ways is this an activity that allows both strong and weak learners to develop their language skills?
- How else could pictures be used as a pre-reading activity?

Alias

The task *as readers* is to get one's partner to guess ten words and phrases on a list that the teacher educator has made in advance. A has one list, B a different list, and the twenty vocabulary items are taken from the short story and listed in the order in which they occur.

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- Comment on the instructions you were given at the start of this activity.
- What speaking and listening strategies did you use to solve this task?
- Would you let learners choose their own partners? Why? Why not?
- What would you need to think about in selecting vocabulary items for the lists?
- How would you adapt this activity so that also learners with a very limited vocabulary could take part?
- How else, apart from as a pre-reading activity, could one use Alias?
- Would it not be more effective if the teacher presented the new words?

Guessing the plot

The task *as readers* is to work with a partner and with the help of the two pictures and the two Alias lists predict the storyline.

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What would you do if a pupil said that they would rather work alone?
- Should the various predictions be shared? Why? How?
- Consider the learning benefits of asking pupils to write their predictions, rather than speak them.

Guessing the title

The task *as readers* is to suggest the missing word when the title is written on the board like this: "The D… Lover"

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What language learning benefits are there to this activity?
- Why is guessing such fun?
- In what ways could learners use the title as a *post*-reading activity?
- How could other parts of the story be used as pre-reading activities?

Individual reading

So much then for pre-reading. The time has come to read the story. The task *as readers* is to read individually, taking one's time. A calm timeframe means that quick readers will need something meaningful to do afterwards. Before everybody starts reading, those who finish early are asked to illustrate a scene of their choice from the story.

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What would change if one were to set a time limit for this activity?
- Would it be smart to advise learners to make use of particular reading strategies, and if so, which strategies would you advise?
- What other meaningful and text-related activities could be offered to those who read faster than others?
- What would you as the teacher do while the learners are reading the text?
- Would it be a good idea to ask learners to read the story again as homework? Why? Why not?

Illustration

Those readers who had time to illustrate a scene can volunteer to show their illustrations, and explain why they chose that particular scene. The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What is the benefit for both quick and slow readers of this post-reading activity?

Readers theatre

As readers, students are introduced to a technique of verbal dramatization that is often new to them – Readers theatre. Here is a succinct presentation:

> Readers Theatre, in its simplest form, is a verbal presentation with no props, costuming, staging, or choreography – just acting with the voice. This makes it an attractive choice for the classroom. (Campbell & Cleland, 2003, p. 4)

There are very many ways in which to organise Readers theatre. One is that students form groups of four. Each group picks twelve or so continuous lines from the short story. They divide the lines between them, in a way that makes the story come alive. Perhaps they take the voice of different characters. Perhaps they read one sentence each. Perhaps they take over the reading in mid-sentence. They practise their lines. In the performance phase, the group splits up and takes

up a position in each of the four corners of the room. As they read aloud, all the other students turn to look at whoever is reading.

The task *as reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What learning benefits are there to practising reading aloud?
- What is the role of the teacher in the preparation and in the performance phase?
- How can this activity be carried out so that both strong and struggling readers benefit?
- How else could the performance stage of Readers theatre be organised? Students are referred to Ion Drew's short online article "Using Readers Theatre in Language Teaching" (2010), an opportune reminder of the many resources available at the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education *(Fremmedspråksenteret*).

Discussing the text

The task *as readers* is to share in the creation of possible meanings. This can be a lively enriching experience, but classroom discussions of literary texts can also be a ritualised and embarrassing affair, where the teacher stands at the front of the class without succeeding in engaging the pupils. In this session, the students try out the fishbowl technique (see e.g. Munden & Sandhaug, 2017, p. 247). The question they discuss *as readers* is "Who do you think wrote the letter, and how did it get into the house?"

Still using the fishbowl technique, students can discuss the following questions *as reading teachers*:

- What characterises a good classroom discussion?
- How can the teacher facilitate a good discussion?
- Is it important that everybody says something?

Close reading

As readers, the students explore foreshadowing, something to which this story lends itself very well.

As reading teachers, students discuss, with reference to *Knowledge Promotion*, what sort of conversations learners are expected to have about literary texts in the EFL classroom.

Summing up

It is important to model a tidy ending, especially as students will not have had the chance to make more than cursory notes during the learning sequence. List all its components. If time runs out, as it so often does, this is not a part of the learning sequence that should be axed.

Overview tasks
The concluding task as *reading teachers* is to discuss:

- What would be achieved by contextualising the short story with more information about the First and Second World Wars? How could this be done?
- Sometimes, as here, the teacher builds many learning activities around a text. Sometimes one can read and listen to a story for the simple pleasure of a shared experience, and do nothing more than that. Thinking back over this learning sequence, were there too many reading activities?
- In a classroom setting, how could the reading teacher and the learners assess what they had learnt after a similar session working with a short story?
- What writing tasks, inspired by this story, can you suggest?
- What would you say to a colleague who said that when you spend this much time on one story, you will not get through the textbook?

Assessment
All self-respecting learning sequences include assessment. Lengthy sequences require some form of final assessment. One alternative is to ask students to write an individual exit note about what they have learnt about being an EFL reading teacher. Here, reproduced with permission, are a few examples of authentic exit notes:

- "Huge learning potential of these activities"
- "I felt we tried out a good amount of various activities, and allowing time for a discussion is crucial in order to share experiences and feelings as colleagues."
- "After each activity we discussed the learning potential of these activities, and things I had not thought about were mentioned. Great input and good reasons for implementing these activities into the classroom."

Concluding remarks

The model learning sequence presented here exemplifies a pedagogy of enactment. Its purpose is to provide students with experience of the core practice of planning and teaching reading in EFL. The teacher educator needs both to *model* such practices and to guide students in a structured, didactic and metacognitive discussion about what they have experienced, and the choices and possibilities available to them as reading teachers. The professional development of teacher educators would benefit from the creation, trialling, sharing and assessment of more such models.

I have several times taught versions of this learning sequence. I have just as often intended to do so, and then decided against it, because it would take too long. This article is an attempt to end a long-standing disagreement I have had with myself, by presenting the case for the importance of spending time teaching students how to become EFL reading teachers. It simply cannot be done in a hurry, for as Rousseau has said, "We obtain most surely and quickly what we are in no hurry to obtain" (cited in Pennac, 1992, p. 54).

Time spent in face-to-face interaction with student teachers is often a minimal factor in teacher education. The resulting temptation is to devise sessions in which student teachers are told how to do things. Telling students what to do and why to do it can seem more effective than guiding them to find out for themselves. After all, the teacher educator is required to cover a curriculum packed with ambitious proficiencies – knowledge, skills and general competencies that student teachers are to attain. Yet the word 'cover' is itself a warning that packing everything into PowerPoint presentations may do just that: cover the curriculum. 'Covering' can actually suggest that the teacher educator has covered but not taught, hurried his or her way through a series of topics, and left the student to turn somebody else's knowledge into their own knowledge, competence and skills.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are human. It is a characteristic of being human that one learns and remembers more when one actually does something oneself, especially if one then thinks about what one has done; especially if one then has to do it again, differently but similarly, in an autonomous but guided way. What is proposed here is a model for EFL teacher education, one that can support the student in making the transition from reader to reading teacher. It is a pedagogy of enactment, where the trialling of core practices paves the way for a systematic sharing of both metacognition and didactic creativity.

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