

Norwegian perspectives on aesthetic education and the contemporary conception of cultural literacy as *Bildung* ('danning')

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Abstract: This article aims at describing a Norwegian contemporary context as basis for developing a perspective on aesthetic education. The Norwegian concept for *Bildung* is 'dannelse' or 'danning'. The notion of cultural literacy will be considered as one contemporary conception of *Bildung* in a Norwegian context. The article consists of three parts. In the first part recent developments of the understanding of what 'danning' implies in Norwegian educational context are presented, with special focus on the dynamics between the general and the individual. As the second part of the article a study of arts and culture in Norway is presented briefly. In the third part Gunther Kress' (Literacy in the new media age, 2003; The conference reading images: multimodality, representation and new media, 2004; Contemporary issues in educational studies and research. An exploration in the frame of a social semiotic multimodal theory of meaning-making, 2012) theory of multimodality, and the concept 'literacy', including cultural literacy is introduced. Cultural literacy is suggested to be a concept describing 'danning' from the perspective of late modernity. The fourth part of the article comprises the presentation of a few research and development projects focusing on arts, culture and aesthetic education in Norway—with a side glance to Sweden and Finland. The examples illustrate more concretely what an aesthetic education might be. The competence of the teacher is underlined as a prerequisite for qualified teaching of arts subjects, as well as for teaching with an aesthetic perspective as a leading thread in all teaching. Through the focus on meaning making, the aesthetic approach may contribute to the qualification of a conception of 'danning' as cultural literacy.

Keywords: *Bildung* (Norw. 'Danning') · Cultural literacy · Norwegian education · Arts and culture

Norwegische Perspektiven auf ästhetische Bildung und die zeitgenössische Auffassung von „cultural literacy“ als *Bildung* („danning“)

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Artikel wird die ästhetische Bildung (in Norwegen beschrieben als „dannelse“ oder „danning“) im Kontext aktueller Debatten in Norwegen entfaltet. Zentral für die norwegische Debatte ist der Begriff „cultural literacy“ bzw. kulturelle Literalität. Der Arti-

kel besteht aus drei Teilen. Im ersten Teil werden die jüngsten Entwicklungen zum Verständnis dessen, was unter ‚danning‘ im norwegischen pädagogischen Kontext impliziert ist, dargestellt und dabei im Besonderen auf die Dynamik zwischen dem Allgemeinen und dem Individuellen eingegangen. Im zweiten Teil des Artikels werden Ergebnisse einer Studie über Kunst und Kultur in Norwegen vorgestellt. Im dritten Teil wird die Theorie der Multimodalität von Gunther Kress (*Literacy in the new media age*, 2003; *The Conference reading images: multimodality, representation and new media*, 2004; *Contemporary issues in educational studies and research. An exploration in the frame of a social semiotic multimodal theory of meaning-making*, 2012) und der Begriff der kulturellen Literalität eingeführt und vorgeschlagen, diese als ein Konzept ästhetischer Bildung in der späten Moderne zu beschreiben. Im vierten Abschnitt werden Forschungs- und Entwicklungsprojekte mit Schwerpunkt auf Kunst, Kultur und ästhetische Bildung in Norwegen – mit einem kurzen Blick auch auf die Entwicklung in Schweden und Finnland – dargestellt. Anschließende Beispiele zeigen konkret, wie ästhetische Erziehung aussehen könnte. Dabei kommt der Kompetenz der Lehrkraft als Voraussetzung für einen qualifizierten Unterricht in musischen Fächern besondere Bedeutung zu. Durch den Fokus auf die Konstruktion von Bedeutung trägt die ästhetische Erziehung in besonderer Weise zu einer Anreicherung des Bildungskonzepts als kulturelle Literalität bei.

Schlüsselwörter: Bildung · Norwegische Erziehung · Kunst und Kultur · Kulturelle Literalität

1 Norwegian conceptions of the German concept *Bildung* as ‘dannelse’ or ‘danning’

The German word *Bildung* is in Norwegian translated as ‘dannelse’, or ‘danning’. The difference between the two translations is that ‘danning’ stresses the ongoing process of character formation, while ‘dannelse’ is indicating the result. The concept is much used in educational texts in Norway, and it can be denoted in many different ways. In this text I will use ‘character formation’ in order to denote the Norwegian word ‘danning’. Educational philosopher Kjetil Steinsholt (2011) has extensively discussed the notion of ‘dannelse’ with reference to the German tradition. In a Norwegian context philosophers like Hans Skjervheim and Jon Hellesnes have influenced Norwegian education and educational policy from 1970 and onwards. Their concept of ‘dannelse’ has been used to support the thinking in reform pedagogy and dialogue pedagogy. Lars Torjussen (2011) writes about how these philosophers have been misunderstood. Skjervheim and Hellesnes have their inspiration for a dialectic view on ‘dannelse’ from, on one hand the Greek ‘paideia’ connected to German philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Humboldt, and Schleiermacher, and on the other hand a Norwegian tradition of education for the people (Torjussen 2011, p. 145). Torjussen argues that the core of their philosophy of ‘danning’ is dialectical encompassing a synthesis of pedagogy as normative (from outside) as well as free (from inside). Their philosophy is subject matter oriented and not person oriented (which is the way Torjussen describes Norwegian reform pedagogy of the 1970’s). Torjussen concludes his discussion of the philosophy of Skjervheim and Hellesnes suggesting that their philosophy describes a third way for education. A subject matter oriented dialogue pedagogy might form the frames around a character forming pedagogy without diminishing the importance of the subject matter (Torjussen 2011, p. 161).

Another central Norwegian educational philosopher Lars Løvlie has written about recent developments of the concept ‘danning’ in the combination techno cultural ‘danning’. He wants to describe ‘danning’ in a postmodern, technological society (Løvlie 2003, p.347). Løvlie points out that the traditional concept of ‘danning’ has as aim the transformation of the relationship between the self and culture. In a techno cultural character forming perspective the focus is not on the opposition between the self and culture but on the interface, the meeting point between them. The interface is not stable and technology makes the school building tremble, writes Løvlie (2003, p. 354). Geir Haugsbakk and Yngve Nordkvelle build upon the thoughts of Løvlie, but they say that Løvlie’s concept is not enough. Today a more developed concept is needed. The challenges to character formation must be connected more closely to society. Even if Løvlie thematizes media and new technology they want to go further. They find qualitatively new conditions for character formation. The elaboration of nature is substituted with elaboration of knowledge. This makes the character forming process a process of continuous renewal, and re-formation of the character “[...] in order to be operative for life” (Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle 2011, p. 341). Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle elaborate what character formation might be today, and they mention the closeness to a competence concept comprising cultural literacy. They are inspired by Danish philosopher Lars Qortrup and German sociologist Niklas Luhmann in their conception of character formation among young people, including probing different roles and identity, through media and technology. They consider self reflexivity as basic element for character formation today (Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle 2011, p. 353). Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle further discuss how the concepts competence and character formation are intertwined in the debate today:

Among other researchers there is a wish to anchor the concept ‘Bildung’ to a synthesis of different Bildungs-traditions, and a need to understand the relation between technology and humans in new ways. Central in this is the need to take a distance to restricted instrumental thinking and to promote a more holistic thinking around technology and media. (Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle 2012, p. 350; my translation)

Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle refer to a discussion by Svein Østerud regarding Wolfgang Klafki’s formal and material concept of Bildung—and they agree upon a synthesis of both in the formation of a third space, which Østerud and Ture Schwebs formulate in the following way: “7.../a holistic Bildung process which is brought into being through a dialectical process between the subject of insight and the object of insight” (Østerud and Schwebs 2009, p. 11). Through this process there is built a bridge between the knowledge from natural science to humanistic science.

Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle look back in time at Skjervheim and Hellesnes, who considered adjustment as an opposite to character formation. This is not the case in a media age, they claim. Adjustment is on the contrary a central concept in digital character formation. This is connected to the importance of digital media for young persons’ identity constructions and the rapidly changing technology connected to media culture. That’s why it is important to be adaptive to new scenarios. Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle (2011, pp. 354–355) conclude that the tension between the reflexive and the normative must be taken care of in policy documents and in research and development projects in education. This makes character formation an important political concept, which raises the central

question regarding the role of the individual in a dynamic and fast developing society. (Steinsholt and Dobson 2011, p. 8)

In this short overview of some of the central contributions to the ongoing discussion about what character formation might be today in Norwegian educational contexts it is apparent, that this is not only a Norwegian dialogue—the Norwegian thinkers are in dialogue with other Nordic, German, French and American thinkers. One issue of importance is the inclusion of a broad concept of competence which also has *Bildung* aspects in it, in order to embrace as well claims of skills and aspects of *Bildung*. In a Norwegian anthology “Dannelse Introduksjon til et ullent pedagogisk landskap” [*Bildung* Introduction to a fuzzy pedagogical landscape] 2011 the concept of *Bildung* (Norw. ‘dannelse’) is discussed as a not distinct, but still relevant, concept in education (Steinsholt and Dobson 2011). Christian Rittelmeyer has in 2012 published a book “*Bildung Ein pädagogischer Grundbegriff*”. Also in his text the difficulties in defining the concept are problematized. Like in the Norwegian anthology Rittelmeyer connects the concept *Bildung* to educational contexts. To learn about art, culture and artistic expression is central in a process of *Bildung*. I will continue to explore what place art and cultural education has in the Norwegian society today. I am referring to a study conducted by Australian researcher Anne Bamford (2012) “Arts and Cultural education in Norway 2010–2011”.

2 Arts and cultural education in Norway from an outside perspective

Anne Bamford (2012, p.9) was invited to carry out an investigation in Norway 2010–2011, commissioned by the Norwegian Centre for arts and culture in education. Her study addresses the following questions: What is being done in arts education and how is it being done? What is the quality of arts education in Norway? What are the possibilities and challenges currently and in the future? The study is based on rich information from over 2,400 informants, which is impressive considering that the country has only 5 million inhabitants. In Norway there exists about 400 Schools of music and performing arts, which is also impressive. Many of these ‘cultural schools’ are very small. Some in the cities offer a rich diversity of arts activities after school time. The cultural schools are voluntary. They have a fee for the children and young people taking classes there. These ‘cultural schools’ are supposed to cooperate with the compulsory schools and to function as resource centers for arts in school.

Ten years ago about 20% of the time in school was allocated for arts and culture subjects and practical subjects in basic education. In 2010 the time was reduced to 12.4%. Mathematics, English, Norwegian and physical education were the subjects getting more time. In fact the time for the arts, culture and practical subjects was not reduced, but the time spent in school was made longer. Through a questionnaire Bamford asked schools about how strong the focus schools in basic education have on arts and culture. About 71.5% considers their focus to be moderate. Only 23.4% considers their focus on arts and culture to be strong.

In Bamford’s report “The cultural rucksack” (DKS) is described as one of the world’s most extensive programs aiming at giving children possibilities to meet professional arts and culture events. The cultural rucksack provides funding in order to give pupils in

schools possibilities to meet professional artists and art. It has been successful in reaching out to the different regions of the country. One critical comment from Bamford's side concerns the relatively few workshops connected to the program. Bamford furthermore suggests that the local schools elaborate the experiences the children get through the performances offered by DKS.

Most of the kindergartens answering the questionnaire spend much time on arts and cultural activities, more than 80% of the kindergartens spent 3 h or more weekly on these types of activities. A central quality factor was, according to Bamford's study, the competence of the preschool teacher.

In basic education there is an extensive lack of competence in aesthetic subjects among the teachers. Many of the especially equipped spaces for arts have been reduced or totally taken away. Teachers with arts subjects in their education tend to work in secondary or upper secondary schools, or in 'cultural schools', as I have described them above.

The teachers (from basic education) interviewed consider that the focus on PISA results has had an unnecessarily negative impact on practice in arts and culture subjects, even though there is a high correlation between high quality of arts and culture teaching and good results in PISA tests. (Bamford 2012, p. 59)

Some of the conclusions regarding possibilities and challenges in the Norwegian context concern cooperation between voluntary culture milieus, cultural schools and arts and culture in education. Bamford suggests that the arrangement with after school activities (called SFO) could have a stronger focus on arts and culture. Bamford's report has been placed as offering one perspective from outside on Norwegian strategic actions regarding arts and culture. There was in 2007 published a strategic plan for creative learning (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2007) and as a consequence the Centre for Arts and Culture in Education was established. In the strategy plan 27 efforts to strengthen creative learning are listed. Bamford's study contributes to making the results of the strategic plan, so far, visible. From the perspective of this article one interesting point in the strategic plan should be mentioned. In the national curriculum framework "Kunnskapsløftet" ["The Knowledge Promotion"] (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2006) for primary, secondary and upper secondary education the notion of "basic skills" is introduced as key competences for everyone in the knowledge society. Five basic skills are mentioned: to read, to write, to talk, to count and to have digital competence. In the competence aims for each subject taught the plan has descriptions of, what the basic skills are in the subject in question. In the strategy for creative learning two more competencies are added to the list of competences needed in the society today and tomorrow: social competence and cultural competence. In the ongoing discussions in for instance teacher education several suggestions for more basic skills or competences are discussed, for instance body and movement awareness. In fact has the theme to have physical activity as part of every school day been taken to the Norwegian forefront of discussions about school quality in young persons' lives. In Bamford's report the voices of pedagogues in basic education and in cultural education are heard. The Bamford report does not go deeply into discussions of character formation. Her preunderstanding is that cultural education is important, and she is an advocate for arts and cultural education. The contribution of her report is the moment in time she has pictured, and in this moment of time character formation through arts, to a high degree, is substituted by

concepts like developing competencies and skills. The aspect of self reflexivity is very scarcely present.

3 Aesthetic approach to learning in education

With background in the discussions about the place of character formation in education, and a presentation of some aspects of the study by Anne Bamford, I now discuss how an aesthetic approach might contribute to the qualification of learning in school, as well as contribute to a self reflexivity in cultural literacy. This question, and also the task of arts in education, is an ongoing discussion among Nordic arts educators, artists and researchers (cf. Anttila 2011; Austring and Sørensen 2008; Fink-Jensen and Nielsen 2010; Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle 2011; Høhr 2013; Steinsholt and Dobson 2011; Østern 2009; Østern 2010; Østern, Stavik-Karlsen and Angelo 2013), inspired by and in interaction with international communities of artistic research (cf. Barone and Eisner 2012).

What can be the contribution of the forms of knowledge in arts subjects? What importance do art forms have in young people's lives? I will in this article argue for the need for a better understanding of the value of work with arts subjects as well as more generally of aesthetic approaches to learning. What is behind the idea that cultural literacy is the *Bildung* project of our time? What does it mean for a young person to produce active aesthetic responses, or to transform ideas into an artistic expression? What is the importance of transformations in productive aesthetic work? What are the main characteristics of the cultural competence asked for in policy documents in Norway? This article is thus about the arts subjects in school, about embodied learning and the aesthetic approach—in short about the method of art.

The pre-understanding for this article is that the importance of aesthetic perspectives is under-valued in school and education. I take as my point of departure a research and development project which I have been engaged in, where aesthetic approaches to learning are tried out in different school contexts in Trondheim and at the Norwegian University for Technology and Science (NTNU) in its Programme for Teacher Education (PLU) and as research and development (R&D) in Trondheim. The R&D project has the aim to explore designs for learning, where innovative knowledge cultures are integrated with qualitatively strong meaning making learning processes through *Bildung* journeys. The pre-understanding is that the arts subjects and aesthetic approaches to learning carry with them a potential for experience and knowing which has hitherto not been explored enough. In this article I will give examples of what an aesthetic approach to learning might contain in the project "Arts Literacy as World Making in Education". I will describe two storyline projects where art and science were combined in inquiry based learning of science. My choice of entrance into the theme builds upon my background in arts subjects like literature and drama and theatre. As a horizon of understanding I connect to the concepts cultural literacy and eco-pedagogical thinking.

I consider *cultural literacy* as a key competence in school today and for the future. The "literacy" concept describes a possible way to *Bildung*, which is in concordance with the principles of education outlined in the Norwegian national curriculum framework "Kunnskapsløftet" (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2006).

Eco-pedagogical thinking implies work for sustainable development ecologically, socially, economically and culturally. Through eco-pedagogy a phenomenon is studied in context, as part of a larger entity. People's dependence on each other in ecological chains is in the focus of interests and decisions. This dependence can be described through the ecological footprints different cultures leave after them. Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss has in several of his texts written about the importance of an ecological attitude. Rune Slagstad (2006, p. 229) refers to a philosophical book "Livsfilosofi" (Life philosophy) written by Næss (Næss and Haukeland 1998) and underlines that Næss when he got older returned to his life philosophical thinking and discussed the difference between to have and to be, as well as the importance feelings have and ought to have in every human's life. With the perspective of a long life Næss asks if people really do what they consider important to do during the restricted time a life gives. In a discussion about character formation the questions posed by eco pedagogical thinking and by life philosophy, questions about the values in life, the ethics of a good life, and the survival of the earth are connected to the self reflexivity of Bildung.

3.1 Dialogue between pedagogy and arts subjects through the notion of Bildung

Aesthetic practice is an arena for a battle regarding thoughts and feelings, a battle concerning aesthetic symbols, a battle which is real and important. The character formation (Germ. 'Bildung') that is possible through work in art forms and through aesthetic approaches is not explored enough through the optics offered by late modernity. Norwegian professor of education Erling Lars Dale (2010) writes that Bildung consists of critical and creative thinking, independence, and responsibility including also a social dimension. My discussion in this article takes a distance from a restricted instrumentalist and normative pedagogy, but I at the same time wish to open up a dialogue between pedagogy and arts subjects about the concept of knowledge (See also Østern, Stavik-Karlsen and Angelo 2013). All education is in a way instrumentalistic, because it aims at something. The aim of school is to educate future citizens. At the same time however the time spent in school is an epoch in life with value for the individual student. If school is an instrument for a competitive attitude, that is blind to huge problems on a global level, I suggest that school is out of phase with its character forming function. In education the basic values are the foundation for all education: what is man, which knowledge is important, how do you learn about important issues in life and how are you connected to other living beings and nature? If school does not address these issues it might be seen as out of phase with its mission in a more overall perspective. In policy documents the importance of understanding democratic values and sustainable development is mentioned. These concepts are ethically loaded and represent basic values in the Norwegian society, as well as in the Nordic welfare states as a whole. This is why I support the idea of a third way for school (Gustavsson 2007), where the idea of high level competence within different fields of knowledge is combined with the idea of education as a Bildung journey, which will scaffold the students' skill to read the world. An aesthetic approach to learning can thus be formulated as a challenge, which concerns how the experience of an individual can be acknowledged and transformed in encounters with new knowledge. French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1988) has in "Time and Narrative" (Vol. 1-3) developed a

threefold mimesis, which he describes in the following way: Our lives are inscribed in time, not yet told, but they exist in time—this is the first mimesis. The second mimesis is the story told or written as an opus. The third mimesis concerns the reception and interpretation of the narrative told. Ricoeur's threefold mimesis could be a model for the Bildung journey also in school. In an inquiry based teaching and learning process the point of departure might be each student's experience (mimesis 1). In the learning process this experience is shared and explored further, and connected to other experiences and to new knowledge (mimesis 2). In the learning process the sharing of and response to these experiences might open up for new views of the other, oneself and the community (mimesis 3)—all this in a continuous transformative and ever changing process.

To paraphrase John Dewey one task of the school among other tasks is to present the students with images of a future they can see the value of living in. To tell about how this future will be, and what possibilities for a good life there will be, is not possible, but the idea of sustainable development is a central feature of the image of future. Ecological citizenship (Nicholson 2005) is part of a culturally sustainable development, containing also cultural heritage and production of new cultural expressions. In the Nordic countries youth researchers like Kirsten Drotner (2004) propose informal learning arenas as important instruments in the learning of young people. The fascination of the international youth culture challenges the school as an arena for learning, because the virtual world is a qualified producer of both knowledge and fascination. If young people learn 80–85 % of what they learn outside school, what should be the focus of the educational project of school? How can teachers and students work in school in order to supply the citizens of tomorrow with the necessary knowledge to enable them to be active in their own lives and in society in a constructive way? Bildung represents the deeper layers of knowledge learnt through the elaboration of fact knowledge connected to personal knowledge and experience. The arts and the creation of artistic expression work in this way, connecting facts to self reflexivity in a meaning making way.

3.2 Aesthetic approach as work with form expression to create meaning

In the aesthetic approach the focus is on meaning making through work with form expression (cf. Østern 2008, 2010; Østern and Kaihoviirta-Rosvik 2010), and in learning in arts subjects the aesthetic approach is the main way to develop knowledge. The aesthetic perspective opens up a discussion about quality, about what qualitatively makes a difference. This approach focuses on meaning making through elaboration of the relation between form and substance (content), something which implies dwelling on the art form and using symbol language and techniques in order to gain insight about and competence in the art form in question. In order to become skilled in music the student must play, compose, and analyze music, often guided by a teacher, but also alone and in ensembles. Art can be used as a method to promote other than artistic learning aims. The student is challenged both emotionally and cognitively in work with forms of art in multimodal expressions. The dialogue of the arts subjects about how reality is constructed culturally focuses on learning; in many ways work in art forms will teach the human being how life could be lived (cf. for instance Nielsen 2009, pp. 114–116). The arts thus might contrib-

ute to a cultural literacy, where fragments of understanding can be connected to a whole picture of what the important aspects of life are.

Sense-based approaches to learning are often called aesthetic because they have a potential for emotional experience. In encounters with both beauty and ugliness feelings and thoughts are challenged. Through elaboration in an art form the experience can be transformed into an insight. Then the experience has become an aesthetic experience. To form ‘still images’ with the bodies, in small groups of three students, of the core moments of an experience, is but one example of a poetic elaboration. When the students discuss the expression and interpret the other students still images, new insights might be formed. The aesthetic approach is thus about what you do, for instance work with a text—how a need for an expression is created—but also about challenges in the text and the elaboration of the text. Aesthetic competence embraces knowledge about aesthetic means through use of artistic expression. It also consists of the competence to evaluate and the competence to make choices, which makes the whole beautiful in some sense—it is tied to ethical considerations regarding the “beautiful” connected to “the good”. In a pedagogical context it is possible to say that the students, through learning to use aesthetic means in a learning project, also develop their competence to create meaningful expressions and to interpret the expressions of others. The elaboration that takes place by use of aesthetic means, and where personal reflection is connected to how a task is carried out, is often called poetic. The Scottish method “storyline” can provide such a learning space. In a research and development project about the water resources in Norway, the Alta controversy in 1970 in northern Norway was used as an example. (cf. Østern and Strømme 2012). The students were framed in roles as different interest groups, and acted out different aspects of the controversy. The students learnt about the historical event, they learnt about how water can be used for electricity. They learnt about how these intrusions into untouched nature affect for example the indigenous Sami people as well as the local inhabitants. They also learnt to argue from different positions. The potential for learning about facts as well as getting insight which develop new habits of mind, thus acting like character formation in an intensive learning process.

3.3 Cultural literacy as a key competence in school—and for the future

Literacy as a basic competence in school today does not only include traditional decoding and understanding of a written text; it embraces a broadened multimodal concept through new media. Gunther Kress in “Literacy in the New Media Age” shows how new media will change theories of meaning, language and learning (Kress 2003, p. 168. See also Kress 2004, 2010, 2012). Multimodality implies use of several types of semiotic signs. One starting point for the multimodal theory is that all different modes of expression have the same cognitive value, but they have somewhat differing affordances for meaning making (Jewitt 2009). Multimodality means use of several types of semiotic signs in a communication, for instance images, bodily signs, dance, drama, gestures, mime, auditive signs like music, sounds, and voice—and of course written music notes, numbers, figures and written signs. Kress writes about how this new literacy challenges traditional understanding of rationality, like that there should be only one kind of rationality, or that

rationality and affect are separated from each other. He writes that the notions will be much more open:

There will be much more open notions, which bring materiality, corporeality, sensuality and affect into the center of attention together with rationality and cognition – or challenge the distinctions between such categories. (Kress 2003, p. 169)

Kress underlines that when written text and image are integrated, theory will continuously be produced about how meaning is created, but the meaning is emerging and constantly changing. The modality in use for the expression has different affordances for meaning. The multimodal meaning theory gives tools for achieving cultural literacy in school, a literacy for the future. In multimodal theory the affordances by different modalities can be considered as possibilities to create meaning, which is not fixed but ever changing. According to Kress this meaning making leads to learning.

3.4 Teacher competence in a key role

For aesthetic learning processes to be a part of studies in different subjects requires teachers who know what it implies to teach with an aesthetic perspective. The art form the students work within gives the rules and the frames for the work. Art is connected with having knowledge about the art form and the craftsmanship connected to certain art forms. If the teacher uses art as a method in knowledge production he or she must have the competence to handle the dramaturgy of the classroom and to challenge the students to participate in aesthetic learning processes. The main characteristic of an aesthetic learning process is that the result is an insight into something, something is changed, a new perspective on reality is opened. I suggest two possible ways to provide the necessary competence for the aesthetic approach to learning.

(1) An ideal would be for every school to have supervisors/teachers who could provide the necessary competence in the art form used. The necessary teacher competence can be provided through cooperation across the curriculum with teacher teams including subject teachers with the necessary competence (depending on the nature of the project carried out) in literature, music, visual art, and craft, drama and theatre, dance or media subjects. If art is used as a method in learning, it is necessary that sufficient knowledge of the art form in use is supplied in order to qualify the learning. Mother tongue (in my case Norwegian or Swedish) usually facilitates the necessary competence in for instance genre, and can ensure that tasks are not given without the necessary genre criteria which function as the frame. When drama and dance is at stake it might be difficult to find the necessary competence inside school, because these are not subjects in the Norwegian basic education (only at upper secondary level, as an optional choice). Until this competence exists, the competence sought for can be achieved through cooperation with the Cultural rucksack program in Norway. Through the Cultural rucksack students might have encounters with arts inside their school reality. An encounter with art is always risky, and open. Depending on the competence in the art form in question among the students this encounter might lead to new insights about relations between facts and feelings—or it might not.

(2) Another option is to raise the aesthetic competence of every prospective teacher through teacher education as well as continuous education. If a module on multimodal

cultural literacy is included in every prospective teacher's education, the prospective teacher would gain an understanding of how the aesthetic approach in every subject could make learning at school more meaningful and give opportunities for deep learning about the aspects that are the basic values for education.

Young people today learn about aesthetics in their spare time. This leisure culture is to a high degree a hybrid, a performative culture where young people interchangeably mix drama, visual art, dance and music. This mixing of art forms is often done with sophistication and in developed manners, and young people have competence with an extensive development potential. If teachers appear to lack competence or have a weaker competence than the students have, there is a risk that the importance of school as a learning arena will shrink even more. Aesthetic means are used to awaken the interest of young people, and the kind of fascination of dramatized performances have a strong appeal to emotional experience; these kinds of media aesthetics are seldom in concordance with the value foundation of school.

In the next paragraph of this article the discussion is made more concrete by reporting from some research projects in Norway and Sweden, where the questions I posed in the beginning of this article are taken up for discussion and study. The main questions are what kind of knowledge can arts subjects contribute, and how can you work with an aesthetic approach to learning. The four projects are brought to an end.

4 Nordic research about aesthetic and artistic approaches to learning

4.1 "School and the radical aesthetics"

In a book called "Skolan och den radikala estetiken" [School and the radical aesthetics] (Aulin-Gråhamn et al. 2004) three Swedish researchers write about the conclusions of a three-year research and development project "Kultur i skolan" [Culture in school]. They state that the artistic visualization of reality has a specific form and which form the expression has means a decisive difference. Meaning is not solely created through what we say, but also by how we say it. The authors describe the method of art as open, questioning, and critical. The point made in the book is that the arts subjects today have a small, limited space in school's activity. The authors call this modest aesthetics. It is discipline-based, and the art form in question (music or visual art) is given a few hours weekly in a separate room. This is what the authors call modest aesthetics. Modest aesthetics are marginalized, because the subject fights for a space of its own instead of demanding to be a part everywhere, as a basic principle, a leading thread in all learning. Modest aesthetics are limited when it comes to being creative regarding new art forms and new aesthetics. The authors claim that in a modest aesthetics the development of the subject is in focus, but not so much aesthetics as part of meaning making.

Lena Aulin-Gråhamn, Magnus Persson and Jan Thavenius (2004) argue for radical aesthetics, which means that aesthetics should be a basic leading thread through the curriculum plan for all subjects and in all teaching. Radical aesthetics in a fundamental way use the potential of aesthetics to create meaning, to qualify learning and to develop the school. The authors have some strong arguments: They claim that school has prob-

lems today because it lacks meaning for students. Through the introduction of art as method, the meaning project can be focused. Art says “yes” to questions, it embraces the not yet ready, the not fulfilled, the emerging; it promotes an open and seeking attitude, and it gives value to divergent thinking and personal solutions. The authors mention the possibilities of holding together different aspects of knowledge and aesthetics, different aspects of feelings and experience with thinking, different aspects of expression and reception with analysis and reflection, and form together with content. Aulin-Gåhamn, Persson and Thavenius furthermore connect this suggestion to understanding of democracy. Through art as method young people can be challenged to participate in a dialogue about what is important and meaningful. As art is open to the unfulfilled, the emerging, the probing, and the things which do not have one right answer, a dialogue is opened up about values and meaning.

4.2 Design for learning in a graduate school about “Aesthetic learning processes”

The goal of the Swedish graduate school “Estetiska lärprocesser” (Aesthetic learning processes), which was active in the beginning of the twenty first century, was to explore aesthetic learning processes in different learning processes and contexts. This graduate school was to a high degree influenced by multimodal theory. Fredrik Lindstrand and Staffan Selander (2009) have edited a research anthology of work carried out in the graduate school, with contributions stemming from the borderland between aesthetics and learning—with weight on the didactics of aesthetic subjects, or to put it in their vocabulary, how teaching should be designed. Lindstrand and Selander (2009, p. 211) unfolds the idea that you through the expression come to insight and not the opposite, that it is the insight that is given an expression. Selander considers it characteristic of aesthetic learning processes that they are sign creating, mediated, interpreting and meaning making. He uses the notion of design for learning as an ideal for the situation in school today, with both teachers and students active in forming learning milieus and learning situations in school. The design theoretical perspective he unfolds leans towards multimodal theory in order to be able to say something about how an individual can increase his or her capacity to engage in the world and to give form to the experience in communicating communities.

4.3 Emanating from the concrete in the “Arts subject didactics” project

The research project “Kunstfagdidaktikk” (Arts subject didactics) (2004–2008), coordinated by Norwegian professor of arts didactics Aslaug Nyrnes (2008) in cooperation with Danish researcher Niels Lehmann, has developed a didactics of arts subjects built upon rhetorical thinking. The main idea in the project is that an artistic creation process starts with the concrete; that is what is formed and shaped. This is a point that is also made in the Swedish project by Selander, that it is the expression that forms the insight. Nyrnes and Lehmann thus stress the centrality of production aesthetics in the arts didactics they draw the contours of and articulate a topology for (Nyrnes and Lehmann 2008).

4.4 Arts literacy as world making in education

“Arts Literacy as World Making in Education” contains three sub-projects: “Storyline @quarelle” (2008–2011), “Reading and writing for children and young people in the 21st century” (2004–2012), and “SPACE ME—about man in universe” (2011–2012). They are all research and development projects. The researcher group at Norwegian University of Technology and Science NTNU in Trondheim consists of professor of arts education Anna-Lena Østern, professor of science education Alex Strømme and associate professor of arts education Tone Pernille Østern. In the second project Anna-Lena Østern is cooperating with Finnish colleagues from Åbo Akademi University professor Ria Heilä-Ylikallio, university lecturer in visual art Hannah Kaihovirta-Rosvik and primary school teacher Brita Rantala (cf. Kaihovirta-Rosvik, Østern and Heilä-Ylikallio 2011b). Through the projects aesthetic approaches to learning are tried out with an explicit aim to scaffold the development of students’ cultural literacy. The projects build upon a wide multimodal text concept with cultural literacy as the aim and eco pedagogical thinking as the principle. The first project “Storyline @quarelle” (carried out during intensive periods in grades 8, 9 and 10) has contained explorations of issues connected to water as threat and hope on local, national and global levels. The main working mode has been art and science combined with inquiry based learning through the Scottish storyline method (cf. Bell et al. 2007). In the project SPACE ME students learnt about Newton’s laws in a dance session about gravity on earth, as well as in a workshop with mime about zero gravity in the space connected to fictive spaceship trip. The sub-project “Reading and writing for children and young people in the 21st century” has a focus on interpretative reading in primary school. A reading material has been developed [Litteraturboken 1–5] for the Finland Swedish school system, based on literary genres, and teacher tutorials have been published as guides for the teacher on how to use aesthetic and artistic approaches to interpretative reading. Literary texts are used as openers, and the theme is elaborated through planned sessions where transformations and active aesthetic responses from the students become the working tools in holistic learning events. In this project especially techniques from visual arts are used in elaboration of aesthetic responses. One example might be an interpretation of the creation myth from the Finnish Kalevala epos. In the first elaboration groups of students create a small physical theatre moment based on one sentence. In the next phase the create a three dimensional scene by use of paper and small figures where they re-create a moment of the physical theatre scene. (Kaihovirta-Rosvik et al. 2010).

Kaihovirta-Rosvik (2009) underlines the importance of prolonged interpretation work, which is made possible through principles of relational aesthetics, where the artist/supervisor is in dialogue with the pupils about what is produced. The work is built upon the principle of cyclical learning in arts. You return to the art expression you have elaborated earlier, but now with increased challenge of complexity. Ten guiding concepts for the aesthetic approach to interpretative reading are mentioned and explained in the tutorial: rhythm, to listen, relational aesthetics, to articulate, embodied learning, ecological thinking, multimodal expressions, change and transformation, and to perform. In the concluding paragraph of this article I will elaborate on two of the concepts: rhythm and embodied learning. “The Water project”, which is now finished, has given life to a new project in Trondheim about the human body and the universe called “SPACE ME”, tried out in

teacher education as well as in grades eight and nine in local secondary schools. Project leader Tone Pernille Østern is a performing dance artist and choreographer as well as a teacher educator, and she has together with the team formed a project combining art and science, where the artistic part is given an even bigger space than in “The Water project” through a performance, playback theatre, movement sessions about gravity, storyline and artistic science loops through lectures about planets and space research. This research and development project was carried out in 2011–2012 as an artistic, a pedagogical and a science education project. Extensive data has been gathered and articles, one book and a PhD project are in process (Østern and Østern, T. 2013, Østern 2013, Østern, T. and Strømme, forthcoming) for gathering material from this project for analysis aiming at developing teaching models, which challenge students in active, explorative and engaged learning processes—where the aesthetic approach is the leading thread. This is because the combination of subject matter and personal engagement can be combined through the aesthetic approach.

I have now in short described some projects focusing on aesthetic and artistic approaches to learning in a Nordic context. The aim of the projects is to contribute to increased knowledge about the importance of aesthetics and learning. I have pointed to some central concepts, which are of importance for increased competence in the aesthetic approach to learning: rhythm, embodied learning, transformative aesthetics and active aesthetic response. I could add a few more, like pedagogy of the empty space, aesthetic doubling, code competence, meta cognitive competence and the artistic learning process. In the concluding part of this article I will use these concepts to outline the didactical possibilities to say something about the importance of arts subjects and teacher competence in order to be able to articulate some of the potential of the arts subjects and the teacher’s aesthetics competence to scaffold the development of students’ cultural literacy.

5 Aspects of a didactics for cultural literacy

5.1 Rhythm as a dramaturgical tool

Rhythm can be described as the zero point of culture, because rhythmical patterns can be identified in the rhythm of the day and night, different shifts in nature, the rhythm of the life cycle, the heart beat and the breathing in all living creatures. Simultaneously all artistic expressions might be described as different ways of rhythmizing in the modality the expression is a part of. Bo Renberg (2006) describes, with the support of cognition researcher Merlin Donald (1991), three phases in the cognitive development of humankind: the mimetic phase, the mythical phase and the theoretical phase. During the mimetic phase humans communicated through bodily gestures and sounds. During the mythical phase, language as a symbolic means was developed, making humans storytellers. The theoretical phase is marked with the development of written signs. Donald claims that rhythm has from the very beginning played an important role in the cognitive development of humankind. He considers the sense of rhythm as the core of the mimetic skill. Rhythm is there every time a person is bodily present. Donald writes that the human brain cannot realize its potential if it cannot be involved in a complex network of communica-

tion and symbolic representation—and in aesthetic work complexity is a main characteristic. The learning through rhythm is part of a larger multimodal ensemble in use for composition of meaning.

In the aesthetic approach the teacher can focus on rhythm in different ways. One central way is to structure teaching sequences with a rhythm in which the students can function well. The shifts between activity and rest, between demands and challenges, between working forms and between individual work and reflection, collective work and communication—all these are dramaturgical tools the teacher can use connected to the idea of rhythm.

5.2 Embodied learning

In work with art forms many things are learnt through repetition, through making something again and again. This is also true for artistic expression, handicraft and athletic performance. The sense of timing, which is a rhythmical component, builds upon the skill to perform something at an exact moment. Gunn Engelsrud (2006) writes that movement makes you begin to think. She leans on body phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who describes the body as “lived”. He claims that the body is pre-reflective, and that a person “just knows” many things before he or she is able to articulate this as a conscious thought. Conscious thought is slow compared with bodily funded knowledge, the knowledge of the lived body, which is experiential knowing. The human being is a psychophysical entity, and thus sense-based aesthetic approaches to learning open up different modalities in learning. To think in probing, tentative action is characteristic of learning in art forms. Increasing the awareness of how central bodily experiences are for learning could contribute to qualifying learning at school.

5.3 Transformative aesthetic theory

Transformation is a concept borrowed from John Dewey’s description of transformative aesthetics in *Art as Experience* (1934/1980). The transformative theory underlines the impulse, the experience that initiates a process. The outcome, the aesthetic product, is an ongoing interactive transformation process, where the interaction between I and me, I and others, I and the material and the technique, I and the supervisor, and I and the task and my own thinking is in dialogue about which form makes the most meaning. This dialogical elaboration is transformative: it is an experience or an everyday experience (a memory), a sense-based impulse that is transformed through the poetic elaboration in an art form into an aesthetic experience. In the research and development projects mentioned above this transformative theory has been the overarching horizon for elaboration of learning in connection with character formation aiming at cultural literacy.

Form transformations can be distortion, enlargement, diminishing, stylizing and simplifying. To stylize is always part of a transformative process for the person or the group that has chosen some elements to build upon, because it has to be limited in the end product. Film techniques are good examples of form transformations: slow tempo, quick tempo, change of lens close up, tilt, bird perspective, panorama, still image, grotesque use of the lens, pictures out of focus and staccato moments. Events receive a commentary through

form transformations: the fiction comments on itself. This is called a meta fictive comment. Form transformations bring in change of status and change of perspective, contributing to different meaning making processes. Stylized moments are loaded with symbolic meaning potential. The aesthetic elaboration creates a distance, which might destabilize things that the learning individual takes as given, allowing them to be studied from a new perspective.

5.4 Pedagogy of empty spaces, active aesthetic response and aesthetic doubling

Wolfgang Iser (1978) describes the reader's meeting with a fictive text as a development of the skill to make an aesthetic doubling. Aesthetic doubling is about creating a fictive time, a fictive space, fictive characters and a plot. Iser's theory about aesthetic response describes the encounter between the reader and the text as an active creation from the reader's side, a reader response to the author's text. In the author's text there are gaps, blanks and in-between spaces—empty spaces that the reader fills in with her or his interpretation. Fictive or aesthetic reading is characterized by a special competence: not only to decode letter by letter, but also to interpret behind the text, read between the lines and outside the lines, catch threads which have been planted earlier in the text, and make new interpretations when new information about the characters is given. This is called being a competent reader of fiction (Steffensen 2001). In the aesthetic approach to learning the notion of pedagogy of empty spaces is used when students are challenged to fill in empty spaces, continue creating a story where it ends from the author's side, or to build alternative stories through aesthetic doubling or through transformations into other modalities. Through elaborating with an aesthetic approach students are challenged to develop advanced code competence and also to get hold of a meta language to talk about what cultural literacy implies.

5.5 Code competence and meta cognitive competence

Art is connected with 'to know'. In every art form there are challenges in mastering different techniques, conventions and materials. Code competence within a cultural field also demands that the individual recognizes the code, and can use the codes and decode the coded symbol language in the field in question. The codes of the art form must be mastered both receptively and productively in order to open up a broader spectrum of meaning making possibilities. Choice of language code, accent, style—all these are examples of communicative signals which are part of the interpretative process, or which remain unnoticed signals, not interpreted or interpreted only vaguely or restrictedly. In child and youth culture there is an ongoing meaning producing process through the establishment of new hybrid genres, created with codes which are familiar only to insiders of a certain group. When it comes to art, code competence gives a more developed and complex horizon of understanding, which might qualify the interpretation. Part of this qualification process is to acquire a meta language, the concepts which are in use when you talk about the art field in question. This meta cognitive competence scaffolds the learning processes among students. It gives them tools for formative peer response and for self-evaluation. In reflective processes the students learn to define genres, to think dramaturgically, to use focus, tension, rhythm, to give an exposition, to find the conflict, to use contrast, to use

space—these are just a few examples of meta language that might scaffold the learning process of the students with the explicit focus on how important form is for meaning making.

5.6 Sava's model over an artistic learning process

Inkeri Sava (1995) has formulated a model for how an artistic learning process can be scaffolded and what it consists of. Sava is a researcher within didactics of visual art, and her point of departure is that work in arts subjects has learning as its goal. She mentions three possible changes which will possibly emanate from an artistic learning process. The first one is a quantitative increase in the amount of knowledge, and the second is a qualitative change through a more elaborated aesthetic-artistic interpretation or insight. The third possible change is a structural change in a person's artistic, creative thinking and in how a person's imagination functions. Sava also mentions results that are connected to a person's relationship to the surrounding world and the inner world of the individual, like visual and spatial patterns of thoughts, body image and scheme for movement, aesthetic-artistic systems for conceptual thinking, and thinking in images. Sava (1995) describes the learning individual as capable of noticing, reflecting and contributing to his or her own learning. She questions to what degree the teacher supports the student in this work. The importance of the teacher as a supervisor of artistic learning processes is stressed. This conclusion is in accordance with the conclusions from the four research projects I have described earlier in this article.

Sava's model is formed like a repeating cycle, with different starting points for aesthetic elaboration of sense impulses from everyday experiences, nature, culture and memories. Sava's model has five phases of work with the forming of an art expression. In all phases transformation is present as a core element. In the initial phase it is important to master material and technique. In all phases there is a shift between individual work and sharing with others. In the fifth phase Sava thinks that students master the concrete tools of the art form and the material they work with, but also the mental understanding that is necessary in a holistic learning process. Sava mentions the importance of an openness to sense, to engage yourself in your own feelings as well as in art as a phenomenon; to be able to reflect on and articulate personal experiences, feelings and knowledge, to listen and be open to the experiences of others and artistic expressions, and to understand the symbolic and visionary language art uses. Sava underlines how important it is to be able to listen to others in the sharing of artistic experiences, and she states that this is a meaning producing process, a process where something is given meaning and value. She ends her discussion on artistic learning processes by focusing on the closeness and the relation between aesthetics and ethics. Sava writes that the developed awareness and the expanding insight encompass an ability to carry responsibility for oneself, for others and for culture and nature. Through artistic learning processes students developmental models at least in two ways: metaphorically through the language of art, and verbally through the articulation of concepts.

Through the transformations implicit in an artistic learning process, the learning individual can change his or her relationship to some aspects of human life, to society and to nature. Through the descriptive analysis of Sava's model the discussion has returned to the starting point of this article about what *Bildung* is in late modernity. I have asked

above if cultural literacy could be the concept of *Bildung* in our time, a multimodal literacy, where different semiotic signs cooperate in meaning making. Cultural literacy includes an intercultural perspective, where literacy is tested in encounters with the other and phenomena, which are different. The notion of *Bildung* is abandoned in form of the classical interpretation with a very Western focus; it is substituted with a more dynamic concept of *Bildung*, embracing a much more diverse and larger part of our world today. In a concept of *Bildung* for today and tomorrow the ability to read the world is included in the concept of cultural literacy. In this concept the core of *Bildung* as character formation remains, but it is extended to a critical self reflexivity including a diverse cultural picture, and many hybrid cultural formations.

5.7 The arts subjects, creativity and learning

Creativity is a central aspect in all fields of knowledge, and aesthetic approaches as a fundamental dimension in all learning can contribute to creative learning processes. Ken Robinson (1997, 2001) has pointed out four fields with huge challenges for school in the near future: economy, technology, the social and the personal. He argues that school has to meet these challenges together with other agents in society. In his book “All our futures: Creativity, Culture & Education” (2001) he introduces a strategy for aesthetic approaches to learning. He mentions creativity as a core concept for learning, not only within arts subjects, but also for science, mathematics, technology, politics, economical life and all aspects of everyday life. Robinson (1997, p. 30) writes that the arts subjects contribute extensively, distinctively and in some ways uniquely to learning processes and to cognitive development. Science and art are not opposites but complementary. To produce artistic expression and to learn about arts in school thus plays a central role in cultural *Bildung*. Through the symbol language of arts students learn about cultural diversity, to accept cultural relativity, and to understand how cultures are formed and changing.

Finnish professor of education and researcher of creativity Kari Uusikylä has over several decades reminded politicians about basic values in education. Uusikylä (2003) says that the most important challenge to education is to scaffold young people’s wish to learn and their creative mind. If these are supported, effectivity will flourish, as will creativity.

I have in this article outlined how aesthetic approaches to learning can contribute to a qualification of the learning processes in school. I have elaborated the concept of *Bildung* (Norw. ‘dannelse’ or ‘danning’) from a Norwegian perspective. I have taken in some examples of how ‘danning’ as cultural literacy is promoted in educational contexts. The forms of knowledge in arts subjects, embracing substance knowledge and understanding as knowledge contribute to meaning making methods and principles. I have argued for the values in art-based work, and I have especially underlined the need for enough substance knowledge amongst teachers about arts in order to be able to scaffold students in their acquisition of cultural literacy. The scaffolding consists of building structures, which the teacher must be aware of that they exist. Unless the teacher does not have the necessary meta language himself he cannot support the learning processes of the students enough. This literacy is multimodal, and it uses different modalities in meaning production. I have

built the discussion in this article with Kress' (2003) multimodal theory of meaning as a potential contribution to a contemporary theory of Bildung regarding literacy connected to a broad concept of text. Work with meaning making can be focused through letting art processes interact with subject processes in an intercultural pedagogy. Through the articulation of aesthetic approaches to learning the didactics of arts subjects can contribute to the discussion about how education can be developed with the reflexiveness mentioned by Haugsbakk and Nordkvelle (2011), with both a solid knowledge base and skills to reflect on values in education in a meaningful way.

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