The Pedagogical Text – an important element in the textual world? Reflections on the concepts of 'text', 'context' and 'literacy culture'

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INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS

What do we actually mean when we talk about 'text'? By asking such a broad, yet challenging question, we become aware of what is problematic about this field of study. Nowadays it is necessary to have quite an open attitude when the concept or concepts of 'text' are discussed. This is because there are so many ways in which researchers approach 'text'. We must decide which perspectives we wish to operate with, and then distinguish 'text' from that which does not fall within this definition.¹

We must also have a clear strategy for defining the term 'pedagogical' when we wish to talk about 'pedagogical texts'. We must employ an operative, functional definition; this definition can be 'added to' or extended when we examine other cultural contexts. It is important that 'pedagogical' is not merely linked to learning situations, or, even more narrowly, to institutional educational situations.² The concept must be discussed in terms of its basic content, namely that it has something to do with the transmission of information. If it is the intention to inform or clarify that is the basis for a definition, then this category will include very many different texts and genres. Such a broad definition of 'pedagogical text' might, for example, include many newspaper texts and media texts.³ It might be claimed that such a definition is too comprehensive and general. If we link the intention of learning to it (i.e. the more traditional understanding of the concept of 'pedagogical'), our definition can state that texts which have the intention of learning to it (i.e. the more traditional understanding of the concept of 'pedagogical'), our definition can state that texts which have the intention that is essential.²

It is unrealistic to suppose that we will arrive at definitive answers to such questions. However, it is essential that they are raised when we are engaged in a discourse on 'text' and the development of the concept of 'text'. If we operate with an understanding of text as something visual and limited, our associations will immediately be linked to verbal texts or written/printed texts. Today, however, such a narrow perspective is regarded as somewhat restrictive. The culture’s oral texts, which of course are its original or oldest ones, can only be regarded as visual in an extremely limited sense. We can imagine analogous research into the non-fictional field of which 'pedagogical texts' are a part. We have the possibility of pursuing our inquiries in many directions, of exploring unconventional textual contexts and contributing to the shaping of new genres, norms and concepts. Today we already can discern such a development if we look at screen-based text cultures. These are perspectives we will return to later. However, now it is appropriate to start by considering the concept of 'text', since it provides a framework for all cognitive activity in educational and professional cultural contexts.

WHAT IS TEXT?

The original meaning of 'text' is derived from the Latin verb texere, 'to weave'. The concrete and visual aspect of the etymology is interesting. A weaved piece of cloth hangs together, but has clear boundaries or frames; therefore it is a completed whole. We can see the composition, the structure and the margins of the weave. We can also compare the weave to similar pieces of cloth. Seen in this way, the weave becomes both a visual entity and a mental construction. 'Text' is to be understood as something that is continuous and, as such, comprises a totality. However, we do not move far into the world of text before we encounter loose textual fragments that also urge us to label them as 'text'. The question then is how small a textual fragment can be in order to be considered as 'text'. It is also appropriate to ask questions about the degree of logical composition or coherence that must exist in order to define an item as 'text'.

It is unrealistic to suppose that we will arrive at definitive answers to such questions. However, it is essential that they are raised when we are engaged in a discourse on 'text' and the development of the concept of 'text'. If we operate with an understanding of text as something visual and limited, our associations will immediately be linked to verbal texts or written/printed texts. Today, however, such a narrow perspective is regarded as somewhat restrictive. The culture’s oral texts, which of course are its original or oldest ones, can only be regarded as visual in an extremely limited sense. We can imagine a synchronous situation with a speaker and listener. However, if the text that is
performed and interpreted is not taped or in any other way recorded for posterity, it has a merely momentary and ephemeral quality. It is not preserved and is, in Paul Ricoeur’s terms, broken and fragmentary (Ricoeur 1997). However, it is still a ‘text’, even though its non-durable nature makes it difficult to document or verify.

The two main types of text, oral and written, can both be validly considered as ‘texts’, even though they cannot be subjected to the same system of criteria. The normative system that examines textual coherence and communicational purpose must, however, be applicable to both oral and written texts (Berge, 1990 and 2001; Aamotsbakken, 2006). Nevertheless, norms of coherence, meaning and clarity are not sufficient to give an item the status of ‘text’. This is axiomatic, since printed texts have, up until our own period, had a higher status than the culture’s oral texts. This is clear, even though some theorists regard oral expression or oral discourse as the original type and therefore the most important. Jacques Derrida (1997) is amongst those who have polemized against the apparently obvious statement that oral textual expression always ‘goes before’ the written. It all rests on a fallacy, he claims, as he argues for the written expression to be considered as the original form. It is therefore necessary to reflect over the texts of the written culture and their special place in the textual hierarchy.

Our western culture’s preference for printed texts is not a self-evident value, one that has been asserted since the advent of writing. It was firstly at that stage in history when time became a validating factor in people’s lives that it is reasonable to date the rising importance of printed texts. Even in the Middle Ages, or the Western European Renaissance, it is not apparent that dating and chronology were important social and human values (Ong, 1982 [1990]: 97 f.). When writing and, gradually, the printed text became parts of ordinary people’s consciousness, the shift was not only from oral to written speech, but from sound to visibility. The visual space that a book page represented, for example, became important because of the invention of the printing press and the ensuing distribution of text. The connection between writing and printing of the written word became a focus of interest. At the same time, there arose a focus on the relationship between ‘the spoken’ and ‘the printed’.

Today, written texts are extremely important. However, print media texts are challenged by the texts of alternative media such as the Internet and mobile telephony (cf. Ringdal, 2002; Schwebs and Otnes, 2006 [2001]). These media are multimodal. They invite the subject to engage with images, animations, speech, music etc. at the same time as s/he is engaging with printed text (Otnes, 2000; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996 and 2001). Text signifies a number of different things in contemporary society, but common elements are combination and relationship. The relationship that previously marked the unit of text is today an expanded relationship in which many elements cooperate to constitute a totality. It is both the temporally limited aspects (e.g. the shifting status, birth and death of genres) as well as the constantly limitless or boundless aspects of the phenomenon of ‘text’ that are so fascinating. ‘Text’ changes conceptually and spatially, depending on the contexts it appears in and the relation it has with the elements that it cooperates with. On the one hand, it is a limited entity related to time; we can describe the historicity of the text. On the other hand, it is a hybrid and ever-changing, ‘amoeba-like’ element that extends beyond the known and points into the future. We recognize the fact that various forms of text will probably characterise coming epochs to an even stronger degree than they do today. The rapid development within the field of information technology opens for a number of interesting perspectives.

**THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY**

People today, regardless of their background, interests and age, have become used to using modern text media (Seip Tønnesen, 1992; Schwebs and Otnes, 2006 [2001]). This familiarity with modern technical media is, however, situated in a text culture, or a reading and writing culture. This situatedness is what is often termed ‘literacy’. Today there is an interesting and extensive body of research into ‘literacy’. The equivalent Norwegian term for this concept is the rather heavy expression ‘driftkultur’ (script culture). Etymologically, however, ‘literacy’ simply means the ability to read and write (Bussmann, 1996). In a discussion of what constitutes a text or a textual expression, ‘literacy’ is a concept that cannot be avoided.

‘Literacy’ can be considered as something of a codeword for more complex perspectives on reading and writing (Barton, 1994:5). Today, ‘literacy’ is often a synonym for the German concept of ‘Bildung’, or the traditional Norwegian concept of ‘dannelse’ (upbrinings’). ‘Literacy’ and the different activities connected to it are all linked to historical conditions and political power relations. Institutions linked to the literacy field, such as libraries, bookshops and publishing houses have gradually evolved. Rules and restrictions connected with the publishing process have been formulated in the state and municipal institutions that have also evolved. The educational system has also undergone major parallel developments and changes (Barton, 1994: 127f.). The various activities associated with texts have, of course, also changed a lot. The status of texts must always be related to their social position at the time of their conception or publication, and it is therefore wrong to project contemporary evaluative norms onto texts of earlier periods. (Jauss, 1997 [1991]: 657ff.). The temporal distance between the ‘now’ of the text and the ‘now’ of
the reader is an ongoing problem that has to be confronted by all who work in the educational system. It is from this perspective that the pedagogical adaptation or didactisation of texts becomes vitally important. It is illusory to believe that one can unproblematically apply older texts to the contemporary world. Certainly, anyone planning to use an older text for didactic purposes, as a 'pedagogical text', must address the problem of temporality if pupils are to fully benefit from engaging with the text.

Research into literacy has, necessarily, a close relationship to work carried out in other areas of text research – fields such as critical textual analysis, discourse analysis, literary studies etc. (Barton, 1994: 22ff.). In this article, we have only briefly touched upon fields such as reception aesthetics (cf. Jauss, 1974 and 1991) and institution theory (see for example Douglas, 1986). There is considerable overlap between the various fields that work with text. For this reason it might be appropriate to apply the term suggested by David Barton - 'Literacy Studies'. This concept reveals the complexity of the field. The individual moves through a world of text during her/his entire life span and for this reason textual competence and textual knowledge are desired goals in a literacy culture such as ours. For this reason the school’s teaching of reading and writing and relationships with texts, as broadly defined, are vitally important. The child learns from an early age to combine sounds and, later, combinations of sound sequences into words before whole units of meaning become comprehensible. The child’s verbal language later becomes the resource that s/he uses in order to be able to read and write. The relationship between speaking and writing and, ultimately, text, is a process that continues over many years; some stages proceed effectively and quickly whereas others go more slowly and are maybe problematic.

**TEXT AND CONTEXT – IS IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE AN 'ORIGINAL' TEXT?**

A text, whether a short, limited pupil text or a long article or thesis, is the result of a process and much valuable relevant and valuable literature has been written on the subject of process writing. However, it is also possible to think of ‘process’ in an alternative manner. Process writing is generally regarded as a practical method for creating more and better texts, for raising consciousness about one’s own and others’ writing and for providing constant inspiration for renewing texts. However, ‘process’ might also be perceived in another way, namely as a continuous, lifelong and never-completed development of one’s ‘own text’. ‘Text’ here implies the potential for development or the growth zone that is always present in the subject. The subject’s ‘text’ or, we may wish to say, his/her textual competence, interacts constantly with the texts that surround it and the process of text creation becomes an accompaniment to the various processual movements that the individual goes through. In order to continuously develop his/her own text it is necessary that the individual borrows, copies, rewrites and combines, drawing upon both older and newer patterns. In this way some of his/her own textual creation can contain elements that are original and innovative. However, what we have is a circling movement for the individual where the text space (Kristeva, 1979) offers possibilities for using what has already been written. This phenomenon is often spoken of ‘intertextuality’, a concept that has become somewhat imprecise. However, the term deserves our attention because it says something essential and inescapable about text creation and textual competence.

The intertextual perspective is maybe a statement of the obvious. However, it might seem discouraging and rather disillusioning if the corollary is that it is impossible to create anything completely new. On the other hand, this perspective offers endless possibilities for text creation if one accepts the borrowed, the copied and even the plagiarized as necessary resources (Aamotsbakken, 2007). In school, pupils are trained to produce texts by referring to given models, and textbooks and educational material present so-called exemplary or canonized texts (e.g. see Tønnesson, 2002; Aamotsbakken, 2003).

The intention behind incorporating such texts in the educational material is precisely to show ‘models’, examples that may safely be ‘copied’. The canonized texts provide inspiration for the insecure and tentative pupil/writer (Evensen, 2001).

At school, pupils constantly work intertextually in a variety of ways. The activities of reading, listening, writing or conversing are performed against the background of a knowledge of older and contemporary texts. Just as a conversation follows patterns from previous conversations, the writing process also follows textual patterns that have been received by the pupil from many different cultural contexts. From the beginnings of language acquisition until the child becomes fully aware of the relationship between phoneme and grapheme, s/he receives textual impressions every day. These impressions become, to a greater or lesser degree, fixed as templates or patterns. They ‘lie there’, ready to be used in subsequent text creation. For example, early children’s texts often contain reminiscences from the fairy tale genre. The fairy tale’s formulaic repetitions, such as the opening and closing lines, give the child tools for starting and ending a text. It is clear that what we have here is an example of intertextuality. The term ‘intertextuality’ is a relatively new one, first used in the 1970s. However, the phenomenon is as old as writing itself (Ong, 1991 [1982]).

‘Intertextuality’ was, initially, largely used to describe literary, fictional texts. Today it is applied to a broader variety of texts. This means that all activities connected to reading, writing, text acquisition and text creation are seen as being performed against a background of intertextual experience or compe-
This fuller definition was related to text-specific features, texts for pedagogy/education and texts used in teaching (my italics) (Selander, 2001 and 2002). In an effort to give more substance to the institutionally related definition of pedagogical text, a fuller definition, with sub-categories, was made. This establishes distinctions between texts about pedagogy/education, texts for pedagogy/education and texts used in teaching (my italics) (Selander, 2003: 223ff.). The last-mentioned feature refers to the texts’ presentation form; for example, irony is an inconceivable text strategy. More recently, an object-oriented definition has been formulated. In this definition, the older meaning of ‘pedagogical text’ is included in one of the sub-categories. This definition sees pedagogical text as a ‘cultural artefact’ (Selander, 2003: 224ff). Cultural artefacts are of three types or levels: 1. “objects of processed raw materials, 2. tools, models and space and 3. scientific, pedagogical and ideological texts” (ibid.). This final category defines text inclusively. Objects and models are considered as belonging to the category of text, while the connection to an institutional context is still a framework factor. Very few of the sub-categories, maybe with the exception of ‘ideological text’, can be freed from an institutional application. This is, however, a quite insignificant objection since it is problematic to use the concept of ‘institutional’ with a great degree of precision. Our overall conclusion must be that a text can be received as pedagogical, with regard to use arena, user intention, authorial intention and relation to the reader.

In addition, the view of the pupil has changed considerably, partly because of the introduction of information technology in the school. With the aid of this technology the pupil has to a greater extent become a creator or producer of text. In addition, the pupil often has an equal or perhaps higher technological competence than the teacher. This levelling of competence has affected the classroom hierarchy. This has, naturally enough, led to a modified view of the phenomenon of ‘pedagogical text’ (Selander, Åkerfeldt & Engström, 2007). This changed view of text is interesting, not least because the field of pedagogical text seems to be more open and inclusive than one had earlier defined it. A natural association, in this connection, is the extensive interdisciplinary work which has been a feature of the educational sector in recent years. The tendency to integrate school subjects in many of today’s educational institutions leads to a dissolving of rigid boundaries between school subjects. The subjects’ texts, or canons, also come under pressure and inroads are made into them. On the one hand, this might be viewed as a destructive process, but on the other it can be regarded as an acceptance of new forms of text, ways of thinking and discourse. At this point we might return to our preliminary definition of the concept of ‘pedagogical texts’, namely that they are texts which enlighten. With a growing command of technology and experimentation with text formation and alternation between media, we are able to include more texts in the category of ‘pedagogical text’.

Until now we have only suggested that attempts have been made to define ‘pedagogical text’ in text typological terms. Ottar Grepstad has in his book Det litterære skattkammer. Sakprosaens teori og retorikk. (The Literary Trea...
surv. The Theory and Rhetoric of Non-Fiction) (1997) included ‘pedagogical texts’ in a text typological perspective based on Egon Werlich’s model of five text types. However, by adding ‘pedagogical text’, Grepstad makes the mistake of confusing widely different principles of text categorization. While Selander’s term ‘pedagogic text’ is pragmatic in that it is activity and institution oriented, Werlich’s text-typology is text internal and temporally independent. In other words, it is neither genre orientated nor linked to changing genre development and status. By taking such an approach, Grepstad blends categories which do not harmonize, since Werlich’s five text types mutually exclude each other. On the other hand, Selander’s category of ‘pedagogical text’ can be viewed as including varying occurrences of different text types, according to Werlich’s definitions. Werlich’s categories ‘instruction’, ‘argumentation’, narration’, ‘exposition’ and ‘description’ are basic types that characterize large parts of a text (Werlich, 1976; 39), and they are to be found at all times in and in all text cultures. It is therefore incorrect to relate the concept of genre to the concept of text type, since genres are dominated by temporal and cultural text norms and are therefore in a state of continuous change and movement (Ledin, 1996; Cutting, 2002).

Genre, in a school context, is in fact often replaced by the term ‘text type’, and these terms can of course function as acceptable synonyms in a pedagogical situation. All the same, such a parallelization or synonymization is unhelpful if we are searching for more precise categorizations. Genres are, as mentioned, temporally dependent categories which can always be viewed in terms of social situations or socio-cultural developments. In addition, it is natural to connect the phenomenon of genre with text external categories, such as different discourse elements. (Swales, 1990; Fairclough, 1992). Discourse elements can, for example, be structural patterns in texts, and if such patterns are frequently found they can be said to form prototypes. In other words, the presence of repetitive conventional characteristics of different texts indicates prototypes.

‘Pedagogical text’ has, consequently, implications for genre norms as well as for more text internal categorizations like the ones we have mentioned above. Text-linguistic analyses often use both text internal and text external principles of categorization. In a school context such analyses can function as good didactic instruments. Yet it is the social context of the texts that determine if a broader analytical concept may be more purposeful. Modern discourse analysis, or what today is included in the field of ‘critical text analysis’, sees the text as being in interaction with its textual surroundings. For this reason an adapted analytical model, in line with, for example, Michael Halliday’s view of language, might function well in school. This model focuses on functions, and in a classroom situation it is often necessary to show texts’ intentions, functions, and cultural frameworks. Only then can we claim that texts function ‘pedagogically’, and are thus ‘pedagogical texts’ in a wider sense.

**AER ALL TEXTS USED IN A SCHOOL CONTEXT ‘PEDEGOOOGICAL TEXTS’?**

The classroom as an arena and everyday school life as an existential framework involve continual text usage and text formation. Without defining all school activities as texts, we can claim that most school subjects are ‘text subjects’, even though the nature and scope of teaching materials might differ greatly. Most textbooks and other teaching materials have text elements that work together with other media expressions such as pictures, sound, animation etc. Can we define all textual elements in textbooks and teaching material as pedagogical texts? We think the answer to this question is a qualified yes.

The first important matter that arises here is related to the issue of copyright. Both non-fictional and fictional prose texts are to a certain degree protected, especially the latter. If a fictional text is used in a school anthology the author and publisher must be contacted and recompensed. This stipulation does not apply to texts that are more than 50 years old.

Regardless of copyright, age, etc. it is an open question as to whether the text changes character when incorporated in a textbook. There is no doubt that the intention behind choosing specific literary texts for an anthology or a school edition is a different one than the original authorial intention. Very few authors actually write texts primarily for use in school. Most authors, however, will be happy to have their work used, since school texts are part of a common cultural meeting place. However, it is worth noting that a text which becomes part of a school anthology can change character in many ways. It is, for example, common to link assignments to the text. In many cases this directs interpretation along certain paths and it thus can be argued that other approaches may be ruled out or obscured. For this reason the reader of school texts, usually the pupil, will not enter the role of an imagined or intended reader to the same extent as an independent reader will (Eco, 1979; Iser, 1974; Bjorvand & Seip Tønnessen, 2002). The pupil is subjected to the teacher’s, co-pupils’ and, not least, to the publisher’s editorial influences when it comes to forming his/her literary perspective. This pedagogical adaptation of the text can on the one hand result in the pupil seeing textual patterns s/he would otherwise have been unaware of. On the other hand, important literary features of the text might remain unexplored (Smidt, 1989).

The same potential for change applies to non-fictional texts and factual prose texts such as newspaper texts, advertising texts and pamphlets when they are used as teaching material. Abridgements and adjustments to language and content will often be made. Such texts will often be linked to related genres for purposes of comparison. In this way the texts risk being received and
The conclusion is that ‘the pedagogical text’ often constitutes a framing factor pedagogic context, and teachers have to be aware of these limitations that can result from didactisation.

The answer to the question we posed at the beginning of this section is still a positive one. Most texts can be used pedagogically and didactically, and thus broadly defined as ‘pedagogical’. However, there is an important difference between texts written or created for a pedagogical context and texts that are installed or integrated within a pedagogical textual framework. We have pointed out that a fictional text, such as a short story by Alexander Kielland, changes character if it is incorporated in a literary anthology for school use. The text is firstly put into a temporal frame with facts about literary history and comparisons with texts of the same category. The text can also be provided with explanatory notes, vocabulary notes, biographical details, pictures etc. Finally, it is also usual to create assignments that are linked to the text. With so many extra textual elements the text of the short story will necessarily emerge differently than if it were read as part of a collected edition of Kielland’s short stories.

A relevant question is whether pedagogical texts operate in different textual fields. Gérard Genette, in Palimpseste. La littérature au second degré (1982) and Paratexts (1997) has categorized elements of text and full texts into a hierarchic system that describes printed texts, such as those found in a book. Genette establishes these categories in order to look at the relations between the different elements. He is concerned with the lines of communication which are implicit and self-evident components of the reader’s understanding of the text. Genette speaks of paratextual relations and in our context the relations between a fictional text in a school anthology and the assignments that come with it are of a paratextual character. The lines of communication are explicit when the linked assignments mention details in the text, names, concepts, etc. They are at the same time implicit because they presuppose an interpretive reading of the same text. This double textual relation between ‘main text’ and ‘additional text’ is characteristic of texts which have been anthologized for use in school. Such a double relation is a characteristic of almost all original texts that are used in a school context. Such texts function as pedagogical texts, but have their origins in other media or cultural contexts. The conclusion is that ‘the pedagogical text’ often constitutes a framing factor vis-a-vis other texts and that it is the amalgamation of frames and original text that emerges in what we regard as the pedagogical text.

Is it then the ‘original text’ or the paratexts that constitute the pedagogical text? The answer to this is that it is both of them. The kind of pedagogical text which we have described here is one of many types. The more unadulterated pedagogical text is, of course, the one that is created for a pedagogical or didactic context; for example the body text in a textbook, an instruction book, etc.

The digital texts that are being increasingly used in the classroom or in the school’s data labs are, by their nature, more interactive than linear, printed paper texts. However, the digital texts are located in the same situational context as the traditional pedagogical texts, since they share the same underlying purpose. Their function is to inform and educate.

Their textual nature, however, is different. They are characterized by a greater simultaneity, with the possibility for greater variation and with a greater potential for pupil activity than the more traditional texts. From a paratextual perspective it can be claimed that the digital texts are more complex and at the same time more unpredictable or unstable than the linear and conventional ones. What constitutes the main text or main element on the screen is often difficult to interpret and definitively determine. It depends on what one is looking for and what one’s preferences are. The many links can, for example, lead out and go beyond the text, and in this way create a kind of ‘instability’, which makes it problematic to decide what the pedagogical text includes. However, this form of instability or unpredictability holds a lot of possibilities for the user, in our case the student or the pupil. Text creation on the screen implies rapid displacement, quick gathering of information and relevant source material, together with direct or online communication.

Today’s pupils encounter fascinating opportunities for text creation as well as text application, appropriation and adaptation. What were earlier considered slow processes can now occur quickly and therefore with less resistance and frustration, at least in pedagogical contexts. As the pedagogical text has become so finely divided into subcategories, there are a number of possibilities open to the teacher. At the same time, this demands technological competence. As we pointed out previously, the classroom hierarchy has been affected by the introduction of ICT in school, and there has been a parallel change to perceptions of learning.

Finally, it might be interesting to consider new perspectives on the role of the author and the role of the teacher and his traditional authority. Gunther Kress is among those who do just this, by claiming that, in today’s media world, it is the reader who is the author. This perspective can be traced back to similar reflections made by scholars such as Roland Barthes (1993 [1988]) and Stan-
The author of the text does not have the same authority as earlier; he is ‘dethroned’, in the words of Barthes. This has implications for the teacher’s role. Co-creation and use of text, reading and the ‘parallel authorship’ of pupils and students has changed social as well the pedagogical structures, inside and outside the classroom. What these changes might come to mean for future pedagogical texts and contexts is difficult to forecast. Here we shall not attempt to draw a conclusion, but predict that new pedagogical texts will bring about a series of challenges for pupils and students, teachers and institutions. There is an increasing production of text, on both paper and screen. For this reason the authorization of the text-creating reader or the reading text-creator is a fascinating prospect.

1 In the preface of an academic anthology from a research conference on pedagogic texts, held in April 2006 at Vestfold University College, the undesirability of defining the concept with too much precision is stated: ‘It is unlikely that we will, in the near future, arrive at a final definition of the concept of ‘pedagogical text’. Neither do we wish to. By allowing the concept to remain open-ended it is also flexible and inclusive. By operating with an open-ended concept, we avoid excluding potential future texts, in various genres and media. We live in a time of rapid change in a number of fields, and the digital media provide us with the possibilities of including new texts, new forms of expression and new genres rather than clinging to a final and fixed definition’ (Krudsden, Skjeldbø and Aamotsbakken, 2007).

2 Such a perspective will consequently differ from a more pragmatic and activity-oriented pedagogical text theory which regards a ‘pedagogical text’ as a text produced for a specific, institutionalized use (cf. Selander, 1988: 17). In addition it will also differ from a more text-internal, typological perspective (see for example Werlich, 1975 and 1976). Moreover, it must be added that the activity-oriented understanding of the concept has itself been modified and developed (see Selander, 2003).

3 A related and extensive area of study is that of non-fiction text research, which both internationally and nationally is relatively recently established. Text research has traditionally been focussed on fictional texts, but the projects Norsk Sakprosa and Prospektmål Norsk Sakprosa 2000 – 2003 (Norwegian Non-Fiction and the Project Field of Norwegian Non-Fiction 2000 – 2003) have raised an awareness for many alternative and important text cultures. See, for example, the principal studies from these projects; (Johnson and Berg Eriksen, 1998a and b) and Skriver fra prospektmål Norsk sakprosa 1-9 (Texts from the Project Field of Norwegian Non-Fiction) (Berge et al. 2001-2003).

4 The German and the Norwegian expressions are difficult to translate. The expression ‘upbringning’ is consequently insufficient to cover the meaning of the concept.

5 The concept of literacy has, over time, become so fragmented and ambiguous that employing it with a degree of precision and validity is problematic. Gunnther Kress discusses the development of the concept and wishes to avoid what he calls the ‘currently fashionable use of the term’ (Kress, 2003:23). Kress speaks of a number of common contexts and cultures that ‘literacy’ is connected to, such as ‘visual literacy, gestural literacy, musical literacy, media literacy, computer-, cultural-, emotional-, sexual-, internet- and so on and so on […]’ (ibid.). This emblems the concept of meaning. Instead, Kress wishes to restrict the concept to three areas: “1. words that name the resources for representing and their potential – speech, writing, image, gesture; 2. words that name the use of the resources in the production of the message: literacy, oracy, signing, numeracy, (aspects of) ‘computer literacy’ and of ‘media literacy’, internet-literacy; and 3. words that name the involvement of the resources for the dissemination of meanings as message – internet publishing, as one instance’ (ibid).

6 In his introductory book David Barton limits himself to “print literacy” (Barton, 1994: 23), and he justifies this term by stating that he is neither concerned with orality nor with the significance of other media. This limitation is necessary, he claims, in order to demarcate a subject that is reasonably manageable (ibid.).

7 Even though he is writing about the field of fiction, Harold Bloom’s much-discussed work The Anxiety of Influence (1973) is of interest, Bloom describes the aversion of fictional authors towards the influence of great literary models. It is impossible to avoid such influence, Bloom claims. This postulate corresponds to our more general observations about the ‘necessity’ of intertextuality.

8 Competence here has the same application as in Noam Chomsky’s generative grammar. Literary and textual competence can, however, be a broader concept (see for example Culler 1975 and 1981).

9 It must be added that the concept of ‘production’, when used in a pedagogical and didactic context, can have a wider meaning that that given above. Re-production can also mean innovation, in that the pupil or student actively utilises what has already been created in his/her own text process. What is reproduced will probably deviate somewhat from the original. The changes that are made can be of low or high quality; however, what is important is that what is reproduced differs from the original.

10 The last category: scientific, pedagogical and ideological texts, is defined as ‘institutionally limited texts’. The sub-category of pedagogical text is further again divided into two (see Selander, 2003: 227f).

11 This applies to both the 1988 and 2003 definitions, even though the latter is far more nuanced

12 Werlich’s characteristic is ‘dominant textual foot’ (ibid.).

13 See for example Berge et al. (1998) on Halliday’s functional grammar.

14 Ricoeur distinguishes between discourses with centripetal and centrifugal directions. For example, a poetic discourse has a centripetal direction when it only points towards inwardly on itself and not to anything external. It therefore has no real reference. A didactic discourse, on the other hand, points away from itself towards something else and is therefore labelled centrifugal.

15 It must be noted that the term ‘centrifugal’ is used more flexibly than in Ricoeur’s interpretation. We interpret ‘centrifugal’ to mean that the pupil will be able to fully benefit from a text’s centrifugal direction if he can see the text’s pedagogical function parallel to its common text function. For example, a newspaper feature article, has a general cultural intention when it is in its usual place in the paper. When the same article is used in the classroom it undergoes a changed relationship with the reader. Teachers commonly experience that students only are aware of one of the functions; it is the pedagogical situation that prevents realisation of the full potential of the text.

16 For example, it is claimed by Arne Olav Nygard that information technology (IT) has taken an important step in several theoretical contributions (see for example Selander, 2002: 222; Grepestad, 1997: 517). However, the concept of textbook in this context is often too narrow because the term ‘textbook’ generally means a text created for a specific pedagogical purpose. Anthologies will, in such a perspective, fall outside the definition as they lie in the borderland between the traditional textbook and the original text, here defined as a text produced for a different purpose than the pedagogical or didactic. Selander establishes this distinction between textbook and teaching material: “A textbook remains a textbook even outside of school, while the above definitions of teaching material can give the possibility of one and the same text being or not being teaching material simultaneously, depending on whether it is used in or outside of school” (Selander, 2003: 222).

17 In our context it is sometimes appropriate to draw a line between textbook and teaching material, as is done in several theoretical contributions (see for example Selander, 2002: 222; Grepestad, 1997: 517). However, the concept of textbook in this context is often too narrow because the term ‘textbook’ generally means a text created for a specific pedagogical purpose. Anthologies will, in such a perspective, fall outside the definition as they lie in the borderland between the traditional textbook and the original text, here defined as a text produced for a different purpose than the pedagogical or didactic. Selander establishes this distinction between textbook and teaching material: “A textbook remains a textbook even outside of school, while the above definitions of teaching material can give the possibility of one and the same text being or not being teaching material simultaneously, depending on whether it is used in or outside of school” (Selander, 2003: 222).

18 In his introduction to The Anxiety of Influence, Bloom expresses the aversion of fictional authors towards the influence of great literary models. It is impossible to avoid such influence, Bloom claims. This postulate corresponds to our more general observations about the ‘necessity’ of intertextuality.


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