

## Editorial

# Yes, Please - Both Crafts and Digital Tools in Basic Education

The Ludvigsen Committee (Ludvigsen-utvalget), which aims to assess primary and secondary educational subjects in terms of the competence Norwegian society and its working life will need in the future, has published an interim report entitled *Pupils' Learning in the School of the Future – A Knowledge Foundation* (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2014). The committee wrote the following about Art and Crafts: “That the subject will contribute to personal development and simultaneously strengthen opportunities to participate in a democratic society, can be seen as a desire to attend both individual-oriented and community-oriented training. The breadth of the subject can restrict the ability to delve into certain topics” (NOU 2014: 7, 2014, p. 89, our translation from Norwegian). This will be an important challenge for the community of art and design education in the near future. The committee shall submit their principal report by June 2015.

Sten Ludvigsen, head of the Ludvigsen Committee, has repeatedly pointed out that one cannot continue to add new subject matter to school curricula without taking away some of what is already there. This touches on the fulfilment of the school's overall goals. The school shall provide children and youth with challenges so that they can acquire knowledge and skills that they do not automatically get through leisure or at home. An historical example may shed some light on this. When the subjects Sloyd, Crafts and Drawing entered the Norwegian curricula in 1889, Sloyd was mandatory for boys in urban schools but not in rural elementary schools (Lysne, 1969). One of the reasons for this was that the boys in the countryside learned to do carpentry at home or in their neighbourhoods, but this was not necessarily the case in the cities, meaning their schools had to take responsibility for educating boys on this ability.

Today, many students have a good knowledge of the use of social media, and the Ludvigsen Committee encourages schools to increase the use of digital tools. Some are afraid that this drives the “crafts” out of the subject Art and Crafts. However, we believe the opposite. Take, for example, training in knitting: it takes so much time that many teachers are reluctant to include knit training in a full class. But if students seek out instruction videos online (e.g., YouTube), they will be able to get that instruction with as many repeated viewings as they want. The teacher can then free up time for quality assurance of their works and to put knitting into a historical context, from home production to mass production, with a focus on quality and sustainability. Pupils receive motor training and they receive mutual recognition when they finish hats and scarves that are displayed within their social community. We hope more people will develop such instructional videos that can be used for training in design and art and crafts in all schools at every grade level.

Practical work with materials must not be removed from primary school. It should be required that qualified teachers are employed on the lower grades. Practical/hands-on work can give the trades a boost, encourage students to choose vocations and prevent dropouts in vocational education programmes. We need skilled craftsmen in the future, and good teaching in Art and Crafts in compulsory education could provide an important basis for both future craftsmen and customers of good craftsmen<sup>1</sup>.

## Articles in this issue

In Volume 7, Issue 5 of FORMakademisk, we published several articles.

**Else Margrethe Lefdal**, PhD candidate in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), and Research Fellow at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, in her article *Location tendencies for new secondary schools and arguments put forward for city centre location*, addresses the growing tendency in Norway to build new secondary schools in the city centre. Collected information about the location of the most recent school facilities, as well as school facilities that are going to be built, confirms this. In this article, she asks why the city centre is a preferred choice of location, and she has analysed the arguments put forward for city centre location. When it comes to students' choice of secondary schools, it shows that they prefer city schools.

**Birte Breketo**, PhD, Associate Professor at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, Department of Art, Design and Drama, in her article *Taswir – an introduction to a scholarly debate on figurative representation in Sunni-Islam*, discusses how in recent times Taswir has been associated with a debate amongst Islamic scholars regarding the use of figurative representation in visual communication. She asks why this scholarly debate should be a concern within modern communication. We are living in the age of modern media, and, consequently, visual messages are rapidly distributed to beholders from a variety of cultural backgrounds. An increasing number of us master the latest means of communication, but our knowledge of differences in visual traditions has not kept up with our technological skills. This article focuses on features of the Islamic visual tradition that most likely are unfamiliar to a secular-minded and western-oriented public. At the same time, these features, at regular intervals, are rising to the surface in our open and world-embracing communication setting.

**Laurence Habib**, PhD, Head of Department, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, Department of Computer Science, Oslo and Akershus University College, and **Elisabeth Juell**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, Department of Art, Design and Drama, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, in their article *Before and after Lightfoot/León: Using rich pictures to illustrate an educational journey throughout the world of opera and ballet*, they describe part of an action research project carried out in a classroom context within an art course at a higher education institution. The students were given themed collaborative drawing assignments in which the purpose was to create a rich picture of what they associated with the notion of "going to the opera". The assignments were carried out before and after attending a guided tour and a ballet performance at a famous opera house. The study points towards a significant transformation of the students' representation of the concept of opera over time, as illustrated by their drawings.

**Laila B. Fauske**, PhD, Associate Professor, Telemark University College, Department of Art and Design Education, in her article *Developing a research community of art and design education. Looking back at the early phase of the master's programme in art and design education*, looks at the master's programme in art and design education that was established at two teacher-training institutions in Norway in 1976. This one differed from other master's programmes because it acknowledged the students' creative work as part of their final thesis. Until 1973, only universities were able to offer master's programmes. However, a new law related to teacher-training changed this: it demanded the same quality in pedagogical master's programmes as in traditional programmes at universities. At this time, the community of art and design education had not yet developed an academic tradition of its own. This article explores the early phase of the master's programme in art and design education with an emphasis on the

challenges of including students' creative work. The concept of 'Knowledge Building' represents the point of departure for the discussion.

**Marte S. Gulliksen**, PhD, Associate Professor, Telemark University College, Department of Art and Design Education, in her article *Preparatory Knowledge – A Hub in Teacher Education in Arts and Crafts*, discusses that concurrent teacher education encounters a double challenge: the students learn one (or more) subjects while they learn to teach those subjects. In Art and Crafts, this debate often contains questions of how teacher-students, taking short courses on a subject, can acquire enough academic depth in the different areas of the subject. The first part of the article presents earlier research on Art and Crafts and the concept of 'pedagogical content knowledge', understood as a re-negotiation of subject content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The qualification width (the number of areas) and inner tension (between the areas) in the subject of Art and Crafts is discussed, ending with a conclusion that a reduction of qualification width will not lead to reduced tension or complexity in teacher education on the subject. Gulliksen proposes that preparatory knowledge can be understood as a hub in a principle of lifelong learning for teachers in Art and Crafts, and thus as an overarching goal of teacher education in general.

### **Book Reviews**

We have also published a book review.

**Peter Haakonsen**, Assistant Professor, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, Department of Art, Design and Drama, has reviewed Arne Krokan's book *Smart læring. Hvordan IKT og sosiale medier endrer læring* (Smart learning. How ICT and social media are changing learning). Haakonsen believes that it is a concise, informative and useful book that makes a case for how we can and why we should use ICT and digital media more in schools. Having given a general overview of various theories of learning and teaching paradigms that have relied upon in the past few decades (referred to as 'industrial society'), the author discusses how the learning potential of the internet and social media is not fully utilised in schools today. Krokan is concerned that ICT works on its own terms, rather than mimicking and replacing operations that have been undertaken in analogy earlier. A computer is more than a digital typewriter, and this is a point that is used in the discussion about how fruitful it can be to ensure that the internet and social media are used more often in teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> The Editorial is based on Nielsen, 2014.