Diversity in Norwegian Curriculum and Textbooks. 
Does the Curriculum for the 10-year Compulsory 
School Reflect Societal Change in Their 
Representations of Diversity?

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Abstract

The paper forms an introduction to the international anthology, Diversity in learning 
materiol. Interpretations of the thematization and representation of diversity in textbooks, 
learning material and educational practices. The book is planned to be published in the 
IARTEM series at Peter Lang in 2025. The paper discusses the core questions that the book 
dresses on diversity and its role in teaching and learning materials as well as practices. 
While the book contains contributions from ten different countries, the paper will present 
an example from a Norwegian context to contextualize the core questions addressed in the 
Introduction and in the book as a whole.

The example from Norway illustrates how conceptualizations of diversity change from cur-
riculum to textbooks and learning material and this interconnection changes over time. We 
compare different Norwegian curricula that have been introduced in the country over the last 
twenty years and analyse them in the context of societal change. Norwegian curricula have 
been modified and updated frequently in the last years. The current curriculum (LK20) 
was launched in 2020 (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) and is a revision of the LK06 from 
2006 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013), which in turn represented a quite radical revision of 
the previous one from 1994/97. In this paper we will give an overview of the evolution of 
Norwegian curricula over the years in regard to the thematization and representation of di-
versity interpreted in a broad sense and in light of the concept of intersectionality (Björklund 
& Lindqvist, 2016) and as a "vague concept" (Blikstad-Balas, 2014). We ask whether the 
curricula reflect the social transformation of the Norwegian society and in particular whether 
they include thematization and representation of diversity in different ways.

The specific aspect of diversity that we focus on here, is that of migrants, which means 
pupils with a migration experience either personally or through their parents. Their diver-
sity consists in belonging to a minority community (i.e. background, culture, habits, religion 
different than the majority), and for having Norwegian as their second language. Since the 
immigration to Norway has increased considerably during the very last few years, the popu-
lation has become much more diversified, plurilingual and pluricultural, we want to find out 
if and how the curriculum has implemented this transformation.

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We test out our findings in the different curricula with an analysis of one textbook in Norwegian language and literature for the secondary school. We analyse the textbook in its original version of 2006 created for the LK06-curriculum, and its revision adapted to the new curriculum of 2020 (LK20). Our method in analysing the example of the Norwegian curriculum is text analysis using critical discourse analysis and rhetoric.

References


Keywords: Diversity, societal change, national curriculum, intersectionality, text analysis