



LESSONS IN LITERATURE

*A comparative study into the literature curricula in secondary
education in six European countries*

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Abstract

Students differ in their level of literary competence. Despite this fact, less capable students often have to read the same literary text as their more advanced classmates. To make sure students develop themselves and their literature reading skills, it is important that they read literature with a level of complexity that suits their literary competence. In the LiFT-2 project, the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland and Germany aim to create a literature framework for teachers in secondary education. This framework will be an instrument, helping teachers to match the reading ability of students to the complexity of literary works. This should improve the quality of literature education and it should help stimulate students to enjoy and appreciate literature. To develop such a European framework, it is important to examine the current literature curricula in secondary education in Europe. This study focuses on two questions:

1. *What are the main characteristics of literature curricula in secondary education across six European countries?*
2. *What paradigm is dominant across six European countries?*

The six participating countries filled out a questionnaire about their educational system and literature curricula. The answers were linked to four paradigms of mother tongue education that were present in the last 70 years in Europe. These paradigms, the academic paradigm, the developmental paradigm, the communicative paradigm and the utilitarian paradigm, differ when it comes to, for example, the function of literature education.

Results show that the Netherlands has a rather open curriculum, focusing mainly on the reader, marginally on the society and subject. This suits the developmental paradigm. Romania has a rather closed curriculum, focusing on both reader and subject, and marginally on the society. This suits the communicative and utilitarian paradigm. Portugal also has a rather closed curriculum, focusing mainly on the subject. The reader and society are also emphasised, causing links to the academic and utilitarian paradigm. However, the developmental and communicative paradigm seems to be apparent as well. The Czech curriculum is rather open, with a shared focus on both reader and subject. Not any paradigm is emphasised here. Finland has an open curriculum, focusing on both reader and subject. Here, the academic and communicative paradigm seems to be emphasised. Finally, Germany has a closed curriculum. The reader and subject are equally important, causing a link to respectively the developmental and academic paradigm.

Samenvatting

Leerlingen verschillen in literair competentieniveau. Toch moeten minder ontwikkelde leerlingen dezelfde literaire teksten lezen als competentere klasgenoten. Om de persoonlijke en literaire ontwikkeling van de adolescente leerling te waarborgen, is het belangrijk dat leerlingen literatuur lezen dat aansluit op hun literair competentieniveau. In het LiFT-2-project proberen Nederland, Roemenië, Portugal, Tsjechië, Finland en Duitsland een referentiekader voor literatuuronderwijs in het voortgezet onderwijs te creëren. Dit instrument moet leerkrachten helpen om het competentieniveau van leerlingen aan het juiste niveau literatuur te verbinden. Dit kan de kwaliteit van literatuuronderwijs verbeteren en kan leerlingen stimuleren om literatuur leuk te vinden en te waarderen. Voor de creatie van dit Europese referentiekader is het belangrijk om de literatuurcurricula in het voortgezet onderwijs te onderzoeken. Dit onderzoek richt zich op de volgende vragen:

1. *Wat zijn de belangrijkste kenmerken van de literatuurcurricula in het voortgezet onderwijs in zes Europese landen?*
2. *Welk paradigma is dominant in de zes Europese landen?*

De zes deelnemende landen hebben een vragenlijst ingevuld over hun educatieve systeem en het literatuurcurriculum. De antwoorden zijn gekoppeld aan vier paradigma's van moedertaalonderwijs zoals die de laatste 70 jaar in Europa zichtbaar waren. Deze paradigma's – het academische paradigma, het ontwikkelingsparadigma, het communicatieve paradigma en het utilitaire paradigma – verschillen bijvoorbeeld als het gaat om de functie van literatuuronderwijs.

Nederland heeft een tamelijk open curriculum met een nadruk op de lezer, maar ook op maatschappij en leerstof. Dit past bij het ontwikkelingsparadigma. Roemenië heeft een tamelijk gesloten curriculum, en focust op zowel lezer als leerstof. Ook de maatschappij wordt benadrukt. Het communicatieve en utilitaire paradigma lijken dominant. Portugal heeft eveneens een tamelijk gesloten curriculum en benadrukt met name de leerstof. Dit past bij het academische en utilitaire paradigma. De focus op lezer en maatschappij leidt tot een link naar het ontwikkelings- en communicatieve paradigma. Het Tsjechische curriculum is tamelijk open, en richt zich op lezer en leerstof. Geen paradigma is dominant. Finland heeft een tamelijk open curriculum, en kijkt naar lezer en leerstof. Het academische en communicatieve paradigma is dominant. Duitsland heeft een tamelijk gesloten curriculum en richt zich op lezer en leerstof. Het academische en het ontwikkelingsparadigma lijken dominant.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context of the study

“Few things leave a deeper mark on a reader than the first book that finds its way into his heart. Those first images, the echo of words we think we have left behind, accompany us throughout our lives and sculpt a place in our memory to which, sooner or later – no matter how many books we read, how many worlds we discover, or how much we learn or forget – we will return “ (Ruiz Zafón, 2001/2004, p. 6).

As Ruiz Zafón (2001/2004) illustrates in ‘Shadow of the wind’, books can leave a permanent memory in your mind. They can take you away to another world, where you might forget all your daily sorrows. It can be a magical experience, to think yourself in a different place with imaginary characters. For others, however, reading can be a negative experience. If one’s reading skills are not well developed, or if the meaning of a book is not clear to the adolescent reader, then reading a book will instead be a struggle with words. These two cases show a tip of the iceberg that is called ‘literary development’: not every reader is able to appreciate the same level of books, but readers can develop themselves to become more competent readers of literary texts.

Some adolescent readers are satisfied with types of books they have been reading for years now, whereas others might pick up a more complex book from their parents’ bookshelf. The way both of these readers think about reading books and the way they develop themselves in a literary way can partly be influenced by their home background. The first reader might have parents that never read books, whereas the second reader might be stimulated by his or her parents to read more difficult books. In the last case, the parents form a socialisation factor in the literary socialisation process of the reader. However, the literature classroom is the main influencing factor in life of the adolescent reader. In this context, students read literature and are guided – and influenced – by the teacher who provides the students with knowledge about the books that they are reading and, for example, gives them information about the context in which these books were written. This influence contributes to a great extent to the literary development of the reader.

The fact that reading literature – instead of reading books – is addressed in the classroom implies that literature takes in a special position in mother tongue curriculum. It also suggests that reading literature has educational functions. But, knowing that students are so diverse within and between grades, how can a teacher design the literature lesson in such a

way that every student is affected by these educational functions? How can the teacher reach the reader of children's books as well as the student that already reads and appreciates adult literature? How do you make sure that less developed readers appreciate literature as well?

The LiFT-2 project hopes to answer these questions, by trying to create a European literature framework for teachers in secondary education. In this project, the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland and Germany cooperate in order to stimulate students to read and appreciate literature. The European framework aims to be an instrument, helping teachers to match the reading ability of students to the complexity of literary works. In addition, it tries to stimulate the literary development of the reader. Furthermore, the framework will describe different levels of literary competence, so that teachers can adapt their teaching to the level of the individual student. If a teacher knows the level of literary competence of the student, then he can also easily recommend a book that suits the student. A list of books that are grouped according to level of complexity and features of readers at different levels can therefore help the teacher to do so. This should improve the quality of mother tongue literature education in Europe and it should help stimulate students to enjoy and appreciate literature.

1.2 Research questions

To be able to create a literature framework for teachers in secondary education, it is vital to consider differences between students when it comes to reading books. But not only do individual students differ from each other, cultural and national contexts of the students differ as well. Not every country may take differences between students into account when it comes to teaching literature, while this is an important aspect of the literature framework. Moreover, not every literature curriculum might be open to European influences when selecting books to read. In order to examine to what extent literature curricula of the six countries consider differences between readers when it comes to literary development, this study will compare the educational systems and literature curricula in secondary education of the participating countries. This comparison can pave the way for the creation of a European literature framework.

To discover if the six countries' literature curricula are similar to each other, they will also be connected to different paradigms of mother tongue and literature education. In the last decades there have been many developments in this field, which can be characterised by four paradigms of mother tongue education. These paradigms involve a view on mother tongue

and literature education; each paradigm sees, for example, literature in a different way and connects a different meaning to it. Moreover, the four paradigms have implications for the content of the curriculum and for teaching activities.

The tasks in this study – the comparison of literature curricula and the discovering of common grounds across these curricula – lead to the following research questions:

1. *What are the main characteristics of literature curricula in secondary education across six European countries?*
2. *What paradigm is dominant across six European countries?*

1.3 Structure

Chapter 2 forms a theoretical background for this study. In this chapter, the concept of literature is explored (2.1). Furthermore, the educational functions of reading literature (2.2) and literary development (2.3) are discussed. The last part of the chapter focuses on the paradigms of literature education (2.4) and the types of curricula (2.5), after which a synthesis (2.6) is given. The next chapter describes the method that is being used to conduct this study. After that, chapter four shows the results of this study. The last chapter forms the conclusion of this study and describes the characteristics of the six countries (5.2), links them to the paradigms of literature education (5.3) and discusses these conclusions (5.4). Recommendations for improvement of this study and for the creation of a literature framework for teachers in secondary education are also be given in this section.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter forms the theoretical foundation for this thesis. First, the ‘literature’ concept will be examined (2.1). Then, this concept will be put in an educational setting by describing the educational function of reading literature (2.2). Paragraph 2.3 addresses literary development in an educational context. After that, the link to the literature curricula is made by describing the paradigms in mother tongue and literature education (2.4) and types of curricula (2.5). This chapter ends with a synthesis (2.6).

2.1 The concept ‘literature’

The concept literature is used for several occasions, meaning different sorts of books. For example, scientific literature deals with research articles and differs therefore significantly from literature that is meant to enjoy to the reader. However, not all books that are meant to please the reader can be called literature. This is also acknowledged by Todorov Davis, Kline & Stoekl (1995). According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1997) the concept ‘literature’ means:

The body of writings produced in a particular country or period, or in the world in general. Now also in a more restricted sense, applied to writing which has claim to consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional effect.

The last part of this explanation refers to a restricted sense, indicating that the presence of certain rules concerning literature. One cannot speak of literature at any time; there has to be a ground of beauty of form or emotional effect, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1997).

In a literature review, DeKay (1996) states that there are three categories through which literature can be recognized. The first category is described by Lazar (1993) and sees literature as a certain genre, containing novels, poems, short stories, and plays. Besides that, the nature of the transaction between reader and text can distinguish literature from non-literary texts as well. Rosenblatt (1983) illustrates this second category, by describing that readers of literature will get to know the “infinite possibilities that life offers” (p. 6) through literature. Non-literary texts are not assumed to have the same power. The last category focuses on the linguistic and experiential dimensions of literature. DeKay (1996) quotes

Purves, who states that the use of language in literary texts identifies literature, and that this language has an effect on the mind of the reader.

Meyer (1997) seems to recognise these three categories as well, by listing characteristics that are often apparent in literature. He notes that literature consists of “written texts, marked by careful use of language in a literary genre” (p. 5). In addition, these texts are read in an aesthetical way, which is intended by the author. Finally, literary texts are open to several interpretations.

Most of the definitions above are subscribed by Sallamaa (2005), but added to the list are interpretations of literature through media, such as music and film. Also, non-literary texts can be seen as literature, as long as they have an aesthetic value.

2.2 The educational function of reading literature

Although there is no clear definition of the concept ‘literature’, it seems unarguable that it is important for students to read literature. As stated before, the fact that literature is being taught in the classroom, implies that it has an educational function. Van de Ven (1996) states that literature is self-evident; the use of reading literature is never questioned. There have been many researchers who have described the use of reading literature, and the list of studies is still growing (Hirsch, 1987; McNeill, 1996; Felski, 2008; Van Iseghem, 2009). A literature review shows three main categories regarding the educational functions of reading literature, which can be apparent in literature curricula.

2.2.1 Reading literacy

The first category emphasises reading literacy. It regards literature as an instrument to learn how to read texts and focuses on reading literacy. Pieper (2006) points out that the training of reading literacy is often a reason for countries to stimulate their students to read literature. However, she points out that the improvement of reading literacy can only take place when the student’s reading skills are actively trained. Otherwise, literature will remain a struggle with words for the disadvantaged student (Pieper, 2006). Rosenblatt (1983) also talks about reading literacy as an aim of literature education, but adds to this the aim of giving students insight into literary forms. Van Iseghem (2009) sums up a list of objectives for reading literature, and also puts forward that literature could be an introduction to linguistic skills.

However, this linguistic emphasis is mostly apparent in the reading of literature in a foreign language, so he states.

2.2.2 Reader

The second category is aimed at the reader, and sees literature as a contributing factor to the development of the individual. The shaping of one's personality is a commonly heard function of reading literature (Language Policy Division, 2009). Rosenblatt (1983) fits into this category as well, by stating that literature contributes to the shaping of moral attitudes and social values. This moralistic view on literature is supported by other researchers (Zbikowski & Collins, 1994; Van Iseghem, 2009) and is sometimes accompanied by a religious view on literature (Pike, 2006). The latter sees literature as a way of learning about religion and as a help for the reader to embrace certain religious values.

Besides shaping the personality of the reader, literature can be seen as a means of creating a personal identity as well (Pieper, Aase, Fleming & Samihaian, 2007; Soetaert, 2006). Soetaert (2006) states that reading literature deepens the knowledge about human experiences and that this knowledge helps shaping the identity of the reader. Lewis & Petrone (2010) agree by linking the creation of identity in adolescence of the literary character and the reader. They point out that adolescent readers are more willing to read literature that reflects the stage in life they are in themselves. Not only do readers create a personal identity by reading literature, they also experience a national identity. Byram (2006) argues that if students read in their national language, they will become better in understanding and interpreting that language. They will then easier identify themselves with the nation they belong to. This is true for reading texts in general (not necessarily literature), but reading the nation's classical literary works can encourage this process.

The development of one's personality does not take place in a vacuum; it can take place in a cultural context (Pieper, 2006). *Bildung* refers to personal development in a holistic way and illustrates this contextual view on development. This term was – when it first appeared in the 18th century – aimed at the elite population, but it is now used for all students (Pieper et al., 2007). *Bildung* can be an aim of literature education, despite the fact that it is hard to assess. Most curricula describe competences, but *Bildung* is “competences plus something more” (p.8). Pieper et al. (2007) state that very competent students might still not have reached *Bildung*; they need to adapt personal and cultural values as well. These values help the students to understand themselves, others and societies. In order to do this, it is

important that a wide range of literary texts is being read. For example, through the reading of literature as a form of art, students become familiar with unknown forms of language and they will thereby broaden their world (Pieper et al., 2007).

Where the previous three functions of reading literature concerned the personality of the reader, literature can help to develop a characteristic of the reader as well: critical thinking (DeKay, 1996). Ediger (2000) points out, that students need to be able to distinguish important from less important information, and that the teaching and reading of literature can contribute to developing such skills. DeKay (1996) found this in his literature review as well, and also mentions skills aimed at, for example, detecting generalisations and false information. Reading literature can help developing these skills, because it gives students the opportunity to look at a matter from several perspectives, through several texts.

The last reader-oriented function of reading literature is perhaps the most obvious one: reading pleasure. Soetaert (2006) and Van Iseghem (2009) both mention that literature education should stimulate reading pleasure. Felski (2008) describes a more detailed form of reading pleasure by seeing enchantment as a use of literature. When enchanted, nothing but the story matters to the reader. Reading pleasure is often taken to an even higher level, when people speak of aesthetic appreciation. Van Iseghem (2009) distinguishes this phrase from reading pleasure, by emphasising the artistic meaning of literary texts. Rosenblatt (1987) acknowledged this as well, by stating that aesthetical reading is characterised by an emotional relationship between reader and text.

2.2.3 *Culture and society*

Literature does not only play a vital role for the reading skills and personality of the reader, it is also important when it comes to culture. Hirsch (1987) played a key role in discussing the cultural function of literature, by introducing the term ‘cultural literacy’. The main idea was that people should have some knowledge in common about national matters. This resulted in a list where he summed up topics that people had to be familiar with. In terms of literature education, this meant that literature that represented the important aspects of history had to be read by every student.

This view proved itself important, which can be noted in the existence of the canon. The canon contains literary texts that students are required to read (Fleming, 2007). By doing this, it is thought that students become familiar with the national cultural heritage. The transfer of this cultural heritage is often named as a function of reading literature (Van

Iseghem, 2009) or as a goal of teaching literature (Janssen, 1998). By reading the most important – classical – works in a country, it is thought that the students' knowledge about their own culture and that of others will grow (Moumou, 2005).

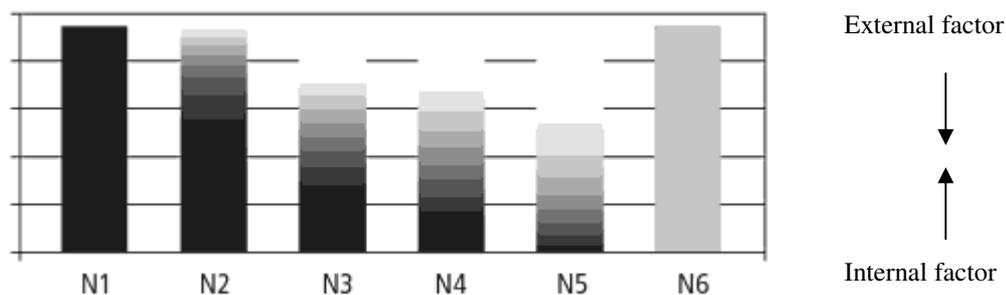
Besides influencing cultural understanding of the student, reading literature can also contribute to democratic citizenship. Encouraging this form of citizenship means encouraging participating in a democratic society (Starkey, 2002). In order to do so, citizens have to understand the society and its cultural values. This shows a clear link to the transfer of cultural heritage, which is also aimed at broadening knowledge about the culture (Moumou, 2005).

2.3 Literary development in an educational context

The educational functions of reading literature as mentioned above give an idea of the reasons why literature is being studied at school and of what aims a literature curriculum may exist. However, every student is different when it comes to the ability to read literature, causing that the educational effects – as listed above – might not be perceived with each student. Parallel to cognitive and social emotional developments that take place in the lives of adolescents, a literary development occurs as well (Witte, 2008).

Witte (2008) distinguishes in his theory six stages of literary development, varying from a very limited (level one) to an excellent level (level six) of literary competence. These stages together can be seen as a socialisation process in which personal and contextual factors influence each other. Personal or internal factors concern the social, cognitive and emotional development of the student, whereas the influence of the teacher or the literature curriculum can be seen as the contextual, external factors. Students with a low level of literary competence will mostly be affected by personal factors. For example, they might not be interested in reading literary texts, so that literature education does not have any meaning to the student yet. Student with higher levels of literary competence are more willing to read literature, causing literature education to find its meaningful way to the student. Figure 2.1 illustrates this, by showing the relation between internal and external factors and literary development for every level (N) of literary competence.

Figure 2.1 Relation between internal and external factors and literary development



Source: Witte (2008)

Black indicates the influence of the internal factors, white shows the influence of the external factors, such as literature education. It becomes visible that the external factors become more important as the students become more literary competent, resulting in the highest level of literary competence where literary competence is closely attached to the personality of the student (Witte, 2008).

It is important to acknowledge that students have to reach a certain level of literary competence, in order to go up one level (Witte, 2008). The term ‘literary development’ indicates it already: students are in a continuous state of development. Moreover, students with a high level of literary competence can also choose to read a book using a reading method that suits a lower level of literary competence. As Witte (2008) states, the flexibility of these students characterises their high level of literate reading.

Students that fit only in level one have an experiential reading method and have very little literary competence. Students in level two use an identifying reading method, thereby having limited literary competence. Level three contains students with a reflective reading method, which suits a modest literary competence. Students in level four have a fairly broad literary competence, and an interpretive reading method. Level five is characterised by students with a literate reading method and broad literary competence. The last – sixth – level contains students with an intellectual reading method and a sophisticated literary competence (Witte, 2008).

These six levels of literary competence describe the student’s level of reading literature. However, Witte (2008) also indicates what type of books students of each level are able to appreciate, and what tasks they can perform during literature lessons. Therefore, literary development should affect the choice of books and activities of the teacher as well.

2.4 Paradigms of literature education in Europe

Literature education has witnessed several changes in society, which lead to different paradigms of literature education. This paragraph describes these paradigms. Since literature education is part of mother tongue education, this section will start with four paradigms of mother tongue education (2.4.1). After that, the focus will be on different paradigms in literature lessons (2.4.2). These two sets of paradigms can help revealing differences and similarities between literature curricula and thereby assist in the comparison of literature curricula in Europe.

2.4.1 Four paradigms of mother tongue education

Van de Ven (1996) conducted historical comparative research in order to describe the development of Dutch mother tongue education. He indicated five paradigms, each paradigm being a “system of values, prescriptions, theories, competing coalitions” (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006, p.11). These five paradigms were accompanied by varying names and reduced to four after closer examination and after comparison with other countries (Van de Ven, 2005; Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006). Below, the remaining four paradigms and where applicable both their names are discussed.

First, Van de Ven (1996) distinguishes the literary-grammatical paradigm, which was apparent before 1900. This paradigm emphasises language as an instrument for writing. Literature education is used for acquiring knowledge; the history of literature is very important. In secondary education, mother tongue education is following academic ideas that also emphasise the importance of learning about the history of literature. Students practice different fields of language (such as grammar and writing) by a deductive approach that deals with those fields in separate exercises. In the classroom, the students imitate the teacher and memorise facts about language and literature. Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) state that literature education has to serve the transfer of the national cultural heritage and that a morally good socialisation has to be aimed for. This means that there is a closed curriculum. Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) now refer to this paradigm as the *academic paradigm*.

The second paradigm is aimed at individual expression (Van de Ven, 1996). This paradigm dominated in the first decennia of the 20th century and emphasised the development of children’s language skills through education. An inductive approach replaced the deductive one because it was thought to be too static. Students have to develop themselves through

language education, and reading literature should be an aesthetic experience for them. There are no longer set ways to deal with literature (such as imitation in the previous paradigm), but literature is seen as a way of individual expression. The cultural heritage is still important – as it was in the academic paradigm – but the emphasis on the individuality of the student leads the way to a meritocratic view on mother tongue education. Through learning language, students can develop themselves and climb on the social ladder. This implies a less closed curriculum, with a certain level of creativity in teaching. This paradigm is now known as the *developmental paradigm* (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006).

Van de Ven (1996) split the third paradigm in two by talking about a communicative-emancipatory paradigm and a communicative-utilitarian paradigm. An emphasis on communication became visible in the 1960s and 1970s. The communicative-emancipatory paradigm focuses on students learning a language in order to get insight into the society and emphasises the emancipation of students. This means that the students have to develop themselves, and this can be done by reading a broader selection of texts besides literature. Youth literature and other media are good examples of this broader view on appropriate reading material. The teacher stimulates autonomy, thereby leaving the authoritarian role behind. The communicative-utilitarian paradigm focuses less on emancipation in the society, but is more practical: language and thereby communication enables students to participate in the society. Literature has to give more room to pragmatic texts, although it is still useful for personal development and for comprehending the world. The curriculum is very open. For instance, teachers do not necessarily use a textbook. Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) merge these two society-based paradigms by calling it the *communicative paradigm*.

The last paradigm is called the *utilitarian paradigm*, by both Van de Ven (1996) and Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006). This paradigm has emerged from the communicative-utilitarian paradigm, stating that language education should help students to take part in the society. In doing so, the economy can grow more. This utilitarian view on language education means a more closed curriculum, where norms and standards become more important. Literature education is seen in the perspective of national heritage, the canon being an important part of it. This paradigm also allows discussion about the role of literature in mother tongue education (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006).

Although the paradigms seem to be relevant for a certain period of time, it is important to acknowledge that they are not of categorical order. All paradigms can be perceived through all times; there are however accents on one paradigm during a certain period in history.

Moreover, Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) point out that – due to fine distinctions in the curricula – not any individual curriculum will fit into one paradigm.

2.4.2 *Paradigms of literature education*

Where Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) conducted historical research on mother tongue education, Janssen (1998) interviewed teachers and observed literature lessons in the Netherlands, in order to describe the contents, approach and profits of literature education. This resulted in the creation of four paradigms – or approaches – of literature education. Similar to Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006), Janssen (1998) points out that most teachers are eclectic; therefore not any approach is visible in one classroom at one moment.

Janssen's (1998) first approach is 'cultural literacy', which states that students should be familiar with the literary history and the national cultural heritage (the 'classics'). The role of the student is to reproduce literary-historical knowledge. 'Aesthetic awareness' is the second approach of literature education and emphasises the studying of texts: if students have knowledge and skills in analysing and interpreting literary texts, then they can make well-founded judgements about the aesthetical value of a literary work. The role of the student is to analyse literary texts and to discover the meaning of them. The third approach is 'social awareness', which focuses not just on the literary text. Literature has to be understood in a social context, because it reflects and comments upon the contemporary or historical society. Therefore it is important that students understand social issues, such as feminism and that they approach texts in a critical way. The role of the student is to make connections between the text and the outside world. The final approach is 'personal development', and this stimulates students to experience pleasure when they are reading. Students who read and discuss literature will experience personal and emotional growth, and they will develop their own literary taste. The role of the student is to understand and explain reactions of readers and to produce the meaning of the text. Teachers who teach according to this last goal are successful with students with a low literary competence as well as those with a high literary competence (Janssen, 1998).

There seems to be an overlap between the four paradigms of Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) and the approaches of Janssen (1998). Cultural literacy can be recognised in two of the paradigms: the academic paradigm and the utilitarian paradigm. The academic paradigm regards literature as serving the national cultural heritage, which is also emphasised in cultural literacy. The utilitarian paradigm also states that literature serves the national heritage. The

canonical texts – also important in cultural literacy – are emphasised in this paradigm as well. Elements of aesthetic awareness are reflected in the academic paradigm. This paradigm emphasises the reading of ‘high’ literature. It thereby implies that students have to develop a certain aesthetic awareness, which is also a goal of literature education (Janssen, 1995). Social awareness places literature in a social context, so that students will make connections between the text and the outside world. The communicative paradigm sees literature as an instrument for students to understand society. This element of the academic paradigm can be linked to social awareness. Personal development focuses on the development of the individual student. This is roughly similar to the developmental paradigm, which is a child-centred paradigm.

Verboord (2003) reduced the four paradigms of Janssen (1998) to two approaches: the culture-oriented and the student-oriented approach. Verboord (2003) states that these two approaches are visible in the classroom. The culture-oriented approach contains Janssen’s (1998) cultural literacy and aesthetic awareness and focuses on ‘higher’ literature. The preference of the student is less important in the literature lesson compared to the student-oriented approach (Verboord, 2003). This student-oriented approach consists of social awareness and personal development (Janssen, 1998) and is characterised by a teacher that takes into account students’ previous knowledge and what interests students. Furthermore, a literary text should make students think about issues in the society (Verboord, 2003).

These two paradigms in literature education are both apparent in the literature classroom. However, Janssen & Rijlaarsdam (2006) describe a shifting focus from culture- or teacher-oriented education to more student-oriented literature education. They state that this development can also be detected on an international scale, which is illustrated by the emphasis on reader-response theories. Rosenblatt (1983) already pointed out that literature students differ from each other and that teachers should keep this in mind when teaching literature. For example, following a literary canon in literature lessons would not suit each individual reader. Connell (2008) observes that Rosenblatt’s (1983) theory has become more important again recently, thereby suggesting a student-centred approach as well.

2.5 Curricula

The literature lessons are guided by a literature curriculum, which forms one part of the overall curriculum for a certain grade. This curriculum can describe the contents and aims of a certain subject or even of an entire level of education. McNeill (1996) lists four types of

curricula; each of them contains ideas about, for example, the content of instruction and the teaching methods.

First, the humanistic curriculum emphasises personal development and personal freedom. Education should be aimed at, for example, personal growth and autonomy. In addition, self-actualisation is a strong force within the humanistic curriculum. Students should master cognitive, aesthetic and moral skills, and this can be perceived through such a curriculum. The teacher and student should not have a distant relationship to each other, but the teacher should create a warm atmosphere in the classroom. Besides that, students should still see the teacher as a source for information (McNeill, 1996).

Second, the social reconstructionist curriculum focuses on society rather than a student's personality. Students should learn about the problems in society, because it is thought that societies are in crisis. Therefore, all subjects within this type of curriculum have to contribute to facing societal problems. McNeill (1996) sees the teacher as a coach that encourages students to perceive their goals, and helps them to work together with groups in society. Also, the teacher connects local, national and international aspects of society to the student's goals.

The third – technological – type of curriculum sees the development of curricula mainly as a technological procedure. According to McNeill (1996), this process has to lead to the attainment of goals as set by policy makers. For example, 'technological' curriculum makers can develop a theory that should lead to certain outcomes. Mastery learning is an example of the result of the 'technological' curriculum. This type of learning is characterised by separate tasks that – if performed in the right sequence – should lead to mastering certain objectives. The teacher guides the student through the tasks, and decides if the student knows enough to proceed to higher level tasks.

Last, the academic curriculum provides the students fixed knowledge about various subjects. Although this implies the teaching of traditional subject matter – and thus little freedom for the student – McNeill (1996) points out that not every advocate of this type of curriculum agrees on this. For example, students could also be involved in discussions about traditional knowledge, thereby experiencing a more open curriculum.

2.6 Synthesis

This chapter described theories about definitions, goals, reading and teaching of literature. These theories act in the context of several types of curricula. Although no clear definition of

the concept of literature can be given, it is self-evident that reading literature influences several processes concerning the development of the reader (DeKay, 1996). However, every reader shows a different literary development, which means that diverse readers with diverse levels of literary competence are able to appreciate books of diverse complexity levels (Witte, 2008). This implies that there can be no set teaching method, if a teacher wants to do justice to every individual reader.

Over the last 70 years, there have been several developments in mother tongue- and literature curricula. The emphasis shifted from a teacher- or culture-centred curriculum to a more student curriculum (Janssen & Rijlaarsdam, 2006). Although paradigms of mother tongue education cannot be detected as entirely autonomous approaches, it becomes clear that mother tongue curricula can be aimed at academic, developmental, communicative and utilitarian aspects (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006). These aspects are also apparent in the paradigms of literature education (Janssen, 1998; Verboord, 2003); a culture-oriented approach seems to suit the academic and utilitarian paradigm, whereas aspects of a student-oriented approach could be detected in the developmental and communicative paradigms. In the latter paradigms, literary development is more likely to be dealt with than in the first two paradigms.

As mentioned before, these approaches have to be seen in the context of types of curricula. The humanistic curriculum has a student-oriented character, thereby showing similarities with the student-oriented paradigms just distinguished. The social reconstructionist curriculum is also rather student-oriented, although the emphasis is more on the society. This is shown in the communicative paradigm of Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) and social awareness of Janssen (1998). In the history of mother tongue and literature education, the technological curriculum cannot be traced. The academic paradigm of Sawyer & Van de Ven (2006) seems to fit into the academic curriculum. Janssen's (1998) cultural literacy and aesthetic awareness also seems to suit the academic curriculum.

The field of literature education proves to be versatile, with its different types of curricula, different approaches and different types of readers with different literary developments. It becomes clear that no single type of curriculum, paradigm or approach can ever suit any single country, classroom or reader. This implies that curricula have to be flexible and eclectic in order to consider the differences between individual students.

3 Methods

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methods of this study will be explained. First, the goals and questions as formulated in the first chapter will be repeated. Next, the research methods will be made clear. Third, there will be a description of the way the data was collected. The same will be done for the way the data is processed, which forms the fifth section of this chapter. Finally, the reliability and validity of this study will be discussed.

3.2 Research goal

This study is conducted as a part of the LiFT-2 project of the UOCCG. This project intends to create a European framework for the teaching of literature in secondary education. This study aims to compare the literature curricula of the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland and Germany, in order to get insight into the characteristics of these countries and differences between them. Also, the countries will be connected to four paradigms of mother tongue education (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006), in order to analyse the descriptions of the countries in a scientific way.

3.3 Research methods

This study can be categorised as comparative research, with an emphasis on contextual perspectives (Standaert, 2007). This research method is usually combined with an historical emphasis, so that the items that are being compared will be clear. The historical information is visible in the collected data, because the literature curricula stem from the history in a country. However, the character of this study is too narrow to involve extended historical research as well. Therefore, this study mainly describes and interprets contextual data.

3.4 Data collection

This study is part of the LiFT-2 project, which is led by the Netherlands. All members of the International Association for the Improvement of Mother Tongue Education [IAIMTE] were

invited to take part in this project. However, due to financial restrictions only six countries could participate. During the LiFT-2 conference that was held in November 2009 in Groningen, the members of the project agreed upon the main issues to be discussed in the framework. This led to the creation of a questionnaire that members of each country had to complete. This questionnaire requested information about the educational system in a country and dealt with more specific questions on the literature curriculum. To answer these questions, members of the project used documents about their country that are published on www.eurydice.org. In addition, they consulted official curricular information as was published by the Ministry of Education in their country.

By the end of January 2010, all the questionnaires were completed and returned. This resulted in six documents about the educational system and literature curricula of the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland, and the German states Lower Saxony, Bavaria and Thuringia. If there was any missing information in the document, then the members of the project were approached by e-mail with the request to provide more information on certain topics.

Despite these efforts, there was still some non-response. The Finnish curriculum is not described in the way that the questionnaire requested, because in Finland it is thought that the curriculum differs too much from the other countries. According to the Finnish project members, this special curriculum makes it impossible to describe it in the same way as the other countries did. This caused that some questions were not or not entirely answered. There was also missing information in the Czech and German data. In both countries, this is caused by a too complex situation. In the Czech data, the differences between schools were too large to describe, for example, the difference between the formal and operational curriculum. In Germany, the situation is different in every *Land*, causing the same problem as the Czech data showed.

3.5 Data analysis

As mentioned before, the data was gathered using a questionnaire¹. This questionnaire consisted of five parts, of which the first three parts had to be answered using official information. The first part dealt with information about the educational system and political reforms in the country. The second part involved information about the organisation of the

¹ See appendix 1.

development of the curriculum. Third, the formal curriculum was focused upon. This part involved nine questions, dealing with aspects like aims of literature education. Two of these questions were not used in this study: the content elements and number of books were respectively too extended and not relevant. The last two parts can be seen as subjective counterparts of the first three parts of the questionnaire. The fourth part is about the operational curriculum, and tries to indicate what really happens in the classroom. The questionnaire distinguished six questions here, but only the question about ‘main activities’ was taken into account in the analysis. In the last part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to discuss the literature curriculum. Four questions tried to indicate the relationship between the formal and operational curriculum, the function of literature in the maturation process of the student, the unofficial criteria for text selection and finally the contents of the debates on literature education in a country.

This data collection resulted in six documents with information about the literature curriculum in each country, which could then be used for cross-case analysis. This form of analysis is used for explorative and descriptive research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data is processed in four different ways. First, some questions in the questionnaire resulted in meta-matrices, listing information per country per question. For example, questions about the decentralisation of a country were analysed this way. Second, other questions made a difference between lower and upper secondary education. These questions were presented in a time-ordered meta-matrix, so that the difference between those two school levels could be detected. The aims and competences were processed this way. In addition, the aims and competences were grouped into respectively five and six groups, where after meta-matrices were created. Third, there were questions focusing on debates in politics and education. The answers to these questions were presented in a summary table, where the themes in the debates were summarised. Fourth, questions about, for example, the number of languages of instruction, were presented in a column chart.

3.6 Reliability and validity

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability indicates if the scores through an instrument are consistent (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). If a study is reliable, then it can be assumed that coincidental factors do not affect the results (Baarda & De Goede, 2006). Although this study is qualitative, reliability is indeed

relevant. This study looks at six documents that are mostly based on official data as provided by the government of each country. In the tables, the information is literally copied from the document, which takes away a major threat for the reliability. Also, the interpretations of the six documents as have been made in this study, were returned for feedback to each country. This way, possible misinterpretations could be made clear.

There are however certain topics that are not based on official data. These topics (such as ‘main activities in literature lessons’) are based on information of the experts. This makes the information less objective and therefore less reliable. Another problem is, that the answers could sometimes be coloured by the person who gave them. For example, the question about the debates on literature education can be answered in many ways, and it is not possible to discover to what extent the personal interest of the project members lead to the provided answers. These issues could have been avoided by triangulation, where more sources are used to create answers to the questionnaire. Also, this issue could harm the reliability in a lesser degree when more respondents would have been used.

3.6.2 *Validity*

Validity indicates if you measure what you aimed to measure (Baarda & De Goede, 2006). In this study, there are some questions that can only be interpreted in one way, such as questions about decentralisation, or about the starting point of compulsory education. Construct validity indicates if the used construct is the right one to measure what you aimed to measure. In some cases, the construct validity might be affected. For example, all countries had to list the aims of literature education, based on formal information. Considering the idea that perhaps not all countries mention the exact phrase ‘aims’ in their official curricula, it is then understandable that the answers are based on a similar concept, such as ‘objectives’. This can affect the construct validity, because not all information is based on the same construct. However, during the international meeting in Groningen (November 2009), the concepts used in the questionnaire were discussed. This takes away a small risk for harming the construct validity.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the information that was gathered by a questionnaire. This questionnaire about general secondary education – filled out by the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland and the three German *Länder* Lower Saxony, Bavaria and Thuringia – comprises questions about the educational system and about secondary literature education.

Table 1.1 shows a list of country names and their abbreviations. Also, commonly used abbreviations for school type are given.

Table 1.1 Abbreviations

Country	Code	School type in nation's language	Code
The Netherlands	NL	<i>Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs</i>	VMBO
		<i>Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet onderwijs</i>	HAVO
		<i>Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs</i>	VWO
Romania	RO	<i>Gimnaziu</i>	
		<i>Liceu</i>	
Portugal	PT	<i>Ensino básico 3.º ciclo</i>	
		<i>Cursos científico-humanísticos</i>	
The Czech Republic	CZ	<i>Gymnázium</i>	
Finland	FI	<i>Perusopetus/Grundläggande Utbildning</i>	
		<i>Lukio-Gymnasium</i>	
Germany	DE		
Germany: Lower Saxony	DLS	<i>Hauptschule</i>	
		<i>Realschule</i>	
		<i>Gymnasium</i>	
Germany: Bavaria	DBV	<i>Hauptschule</i>	
		<i>Realschule</i>	
		<i>Gymnasium</i>	
Germany: Thuringia	DTH	<i>Regelschule</i>	
		<i>Gymnasium</i>	

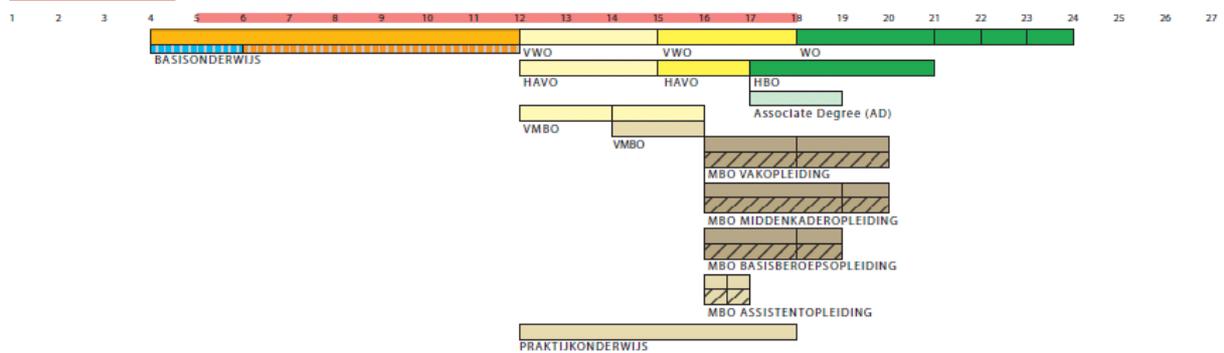
4.2 The educational system and administration

4.2.1 School types

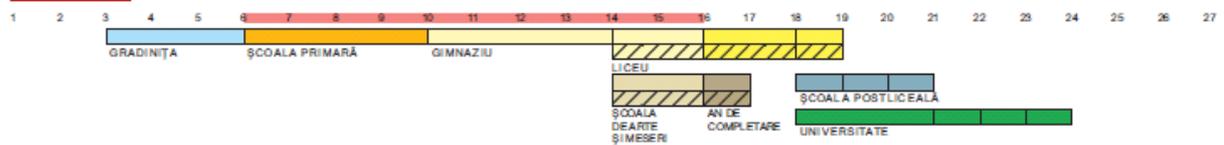
In table 1.1, a number of school types in each country were named. Figure 2.3 shows more information about these school types, by giving an overview of the levels of education and the corresponding grades.

Figure 2.3 School types

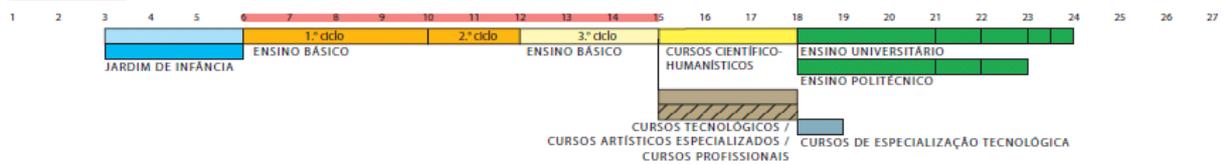
Netherlands



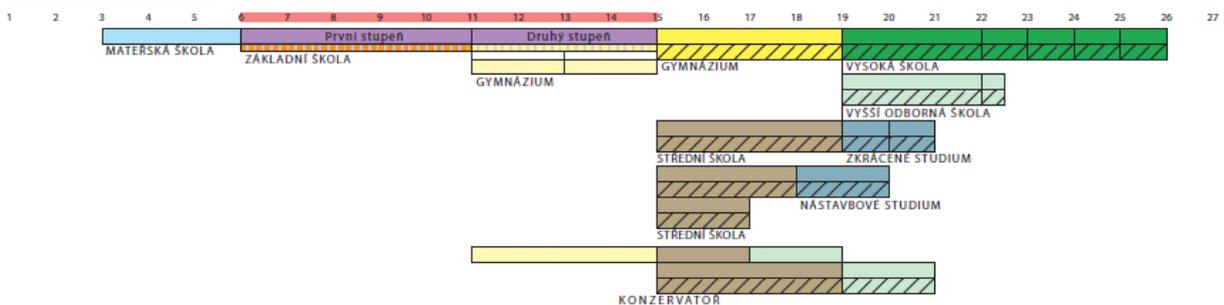
Romania



Portugal



Czech Republic



Compulsory education is the most extended in the Netherlands: it takes 13 years. It also starts the earliest there, at the age of five. However, students have to attend school until they are 16, but this is only extended to 18 when the student does not have a qualification yet. In most other countries (the Czech Republic, Germany, Portugal and Romania), compulsory education starts at the age of six in grade 1. In Finland, students are seven years old when they first attend primary school.

4.2.2 Organisation of education

The educational systems of all countries are rather similar when the responsible authorities are compared. Table 2.1 shows this.

Table 2.1 Responsibility for education

NL	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
RO	Ministry of Education.
PT	Ministry of Education.
CZ	Central government, regions (14) and communities.
FI	Ministry of Education.
DE	Federal government and 16 <i>Länder</i> (regions with autonomy in Germany)

In the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal and Romania the Ministry of Education is responsible for the educational system. In the Czech Republic and Germany, the responsibility is shared among the central or federal government and the regions in the country. When (de)centralisation is taken into account, it becomes clear that the differences in responsibility are not similar to the differences in (de)centralisation. Table 2.2 illustrates this.

Table 2.2 (De)Centralisation

NL	Mainly decentralised: The government decides on the main aspects of educational policy, but most of the legislation and execution is decentralised.
RO	Centralised education policy, but local authorities support a part of the schools' activities.
PT	Centralised: state provides public schools to all the pupils.
CZ	Decentralised. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports [MEYS]: formulating long-term policy objectives of education. Regions: responsible for education on their territory. Communities: responsible for compulsory schooling and nursery schools.
FI	Decentralised: local authorities determine how much autonomy is passed to schools.
DE	Decentralised: <i>Länder</i> are responsible instead of federal government. Centralised: Within the <i>Länder</i> more centralisation, but this varies between <i>Länder</i> .

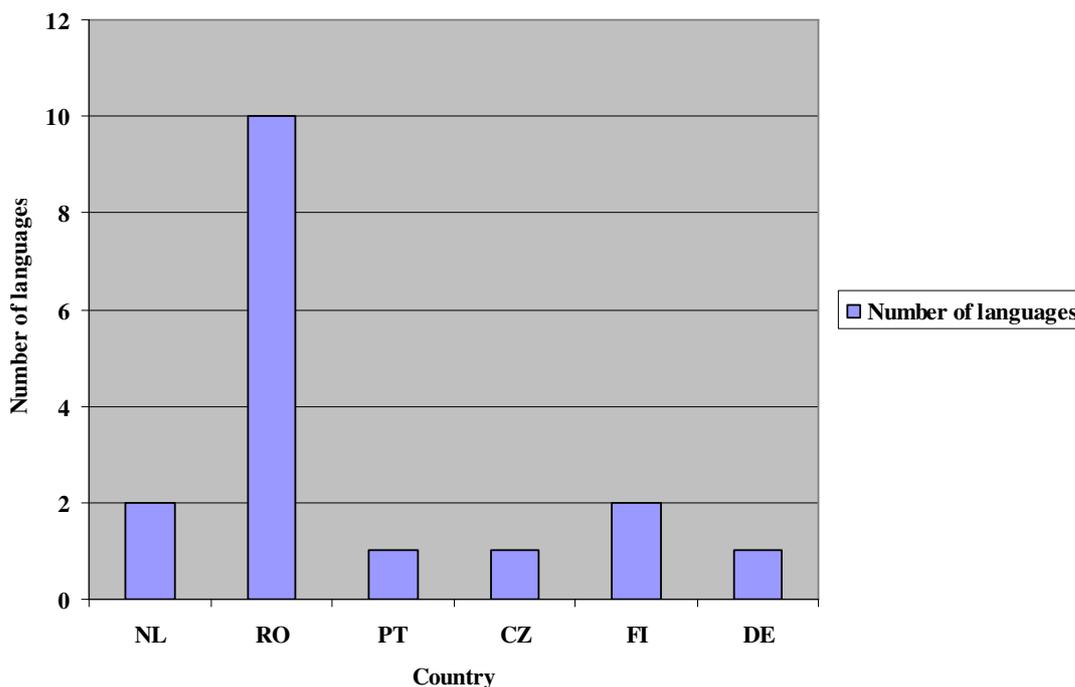
The Netherlands, the *Czech Republic* and *Finland* are mostly decentralised. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education decides upon the educational policy. It can however be characterised as decentralised, when the administration and management of schools are taken into account. In the Czech Republic, the MEYS determines the long-term educational policy, the Czech regions take care of education in their territory and the communities provide compulsory schools and nursery schools. In Finland, the local authorities determine how much autonomy is passed on to schools.

Education policy in *Portugal* is centralised, which means that the state or central government takes care of the schools and the administration. *Romania* is centralised when it comes to education policy, but decentralised when it comes to school activities. *Germany* is decentralised in the way that the federal government gives responsibility to the *Länder*. However, the *Länder* are fairly centralised, which makes the educational system rather centralised. This centralisation does vary between the *Länder*.

4.2.3 Language of instruction

Figure 2.1 shows the number of languages of instruction, followed by a short discussion about the languages of instruction in the Netherlands, Romania and Finland.

Figure 2.1 Number of languages of instruction



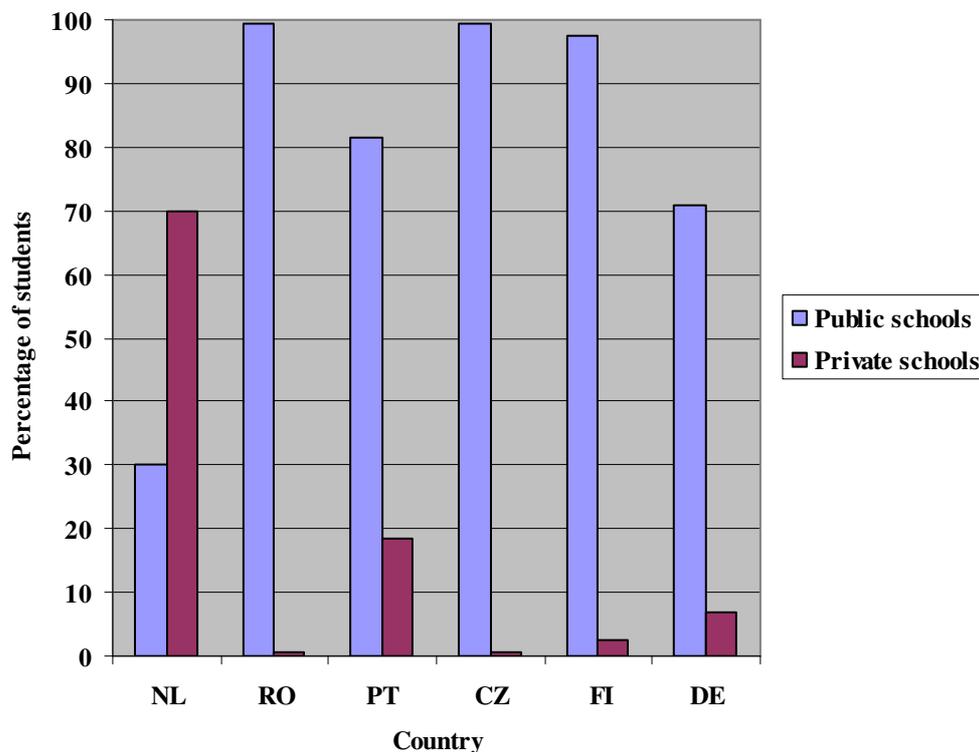
The *Czech Republic*, *Germany* and *Portugal* use one language of instruction in the entire country. *The Netherlands* uses mostly Dutch as instructional language, but in the province of Friesland both Frisian and Dutch are common in the classroom. This province is however a rather small part of the Netherlands. *Romania* uses mainly Romanian as language as instruction, but Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, and Ukrainian also have an official status. These languages can however only be spoken in private schools, which cover a minor part of the educational system.

Finland distinguishes itself from the other countries by having – next to Finnish-speaking schools – also Swedish-speaking schools. Besides that, there are also schools with instruction in other languages, like a modern foreign language or Sami language. These languages however do not count as an official language of instruction.

4.2.4 Public and private schools

Those languages of instruction are being spoken in either public or private schools. Figure 2.2 shows the percentages of students attending public and private schools in each country.

Figure 2.2 Public and private schools



It becomes visible that private schools are most common in the Netherlands. However, there are two types of private schools in the Netherlands: private schools that are depending on the government and private schools that are independent of the government. The first type of private schools is common in the Netherlands, and these are basically susceptible to the same legislation as public schools. The government-independent private schools are comparable to private schools in other countries when it comes to characteristics as well as percentages of students attending them.

Portugal has a rather high percentage of students attending private schools. In Romania, the Czech Republic, Finland and Germany, attending a private school is rare.

In all countries private schools are under supervision of the government. In the Netherlands, Finland and Germany, the funding is the same for public and private schools. In Portugal and the Czech Republic, private schools receive the same funding under certain circumstances. When Portuguese private schools are situated in an area without public schools, the government subsidises the private schools. In the Czech Republic the subsidy for private schools is lower than for public schools, but funding can be increased when schools

meet certain criteria. In Romania, private schools do not receive funding from the Ministry of Education.

4.2.5 Inspectorate

Evaluation takes place in all countries. Table 2.3 summarises the way inspectorates are organised in each country.

Table 2.3 Inspectorate

NL	Education Inspectorate, Minister of Education, Culture and Science is responsible. It supervises the quality of education, based on the principle that institutions themselves are responsible for the quality of teaching.
RO	Head teachers and general inspectors must make annual reports on the situation of education under their supervision. Each report is then submitted to local authorities and to the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation.
PT	Responsibility of General Inspectorate of Education, which has regional delegations supervising all aspects of non-higher education. There is internal and external evaluation. The inspectorate controls mainly administrative aspects; it is not aimed at pedagogical practices.
CZ	The Czech School Inspectorate is a central control body under direct supervision of MEYS. Responsible for educational conditions and results, quality of management, efficiency of using funds and complying with binding regulations.
FI	There is no real evaluation system in Finland, but education and training providers have a statutory duty to evaluate their own activities and participate in external evaluations. For external evaluation of education (higher education excluded) there is the Finnish Education Evaluation Council, which is an independent body under the Ministry of Education.
DE	School supervisory authorities in each <i>Land</i> are responsible for inspection and exercise academic, legal and staff supervision within the school system. Each school has a teachers' council responsible for educational matters and a school council for school regulations or disciplinary rules.

In all countries, schools are (in)directly supervised by the Ministry of Education. In the Netherlands, Portugal, the Czech Republic and in Germany, the Ministry of Education takes care of evaluation of education. In Romania and Finland, schools have to evaluate themselves and take part in national evaluations.

4.2.6 *Duration of school year*

The time students spend in the classroom per year differs across the countries. Table 2.6 gives an overview for lower secondary education.

Table 2.6 Hours of instruction in lower secondary education

Minimum number of hours of instruction per year	
NL	1027
RO	788
PT	880
CZ	915
FI	777
DE	883

It seems that in the Netherlands the students spend more time in schools than in the other five countries. In Romania and Finland, lower secondary students attend school the least number of hours per year. All students go to school five days per week. Table 2.7 shows the percentage of intended instruction time that is spent on teaching reading, writing and literature.

Table 2.7 Percentage of instruction time spent on reading, writing and literature

Percentage of instruction time spent on reading, writing and literature	
NL	32
RO	²
PT	15
CZ	26
FI	21
DE	20

4.2.7 *Debates in educational politics*

In order to see the information above in perspective, all countries were also asked to give a summary on the recent debates and questions in educational politics. Seven themes could be distinguished, as is shown in table 2.8.

² Information is missing

Table 2.8 Themes in educational politics

	Quality	Teaching staff	Active participation of students	Change of educational management	Curricular reform	Evaluation	Language and mathematics
NL	X	X	X		X		X
RO	X	X	X	X	X		
PT		X	X	X			X
CZ				X	X	X	
FI	X	X	X				
DE	X					X	

Table 2.9 shows the debates about every theme.

Table 2.9 Debates on every theme

Theme	Explanation
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Netherlands, a new quality agenda was launched, concerning six policy priorities and corresponding actions (e.g. good quality examinations, improvement of weak and good schools); - Romania is developing a framework for quality of education; - Finland presented a five-year development plan for education and research that also focuses on high quality education and research. Furthermore, Finland takes measures to develop quality and quality assurance; - In Germany, the <i>Länder</i> are encouraged to develop educational standards, to reach quality assurance;
Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Dutch quality agenda focuses on professional freedom for teachers; - Romania will also focus on the development of education staff training; - Portugal revises its educational management systems, thereby changing rules for the annual selection of teaching staff and emphasizing the scientific component of teacher training; - The Finnish five-year development plan focuses on competences of teaching staff. Also, between 2010 and 2016 the OSAAVA-program will be launched, that legally binds education providers to systematically and continually train their teaching staff.
Active participation of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Netherlands focuses in the quality agenda on citizenship education; - Romania also focuses on equal opportunities and increasing participation in education. Special attention is also paid to increasing the use of ICT, to decrease

Theme	Explanation
	<p>the gap between Romania and other European countries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portugal acknowledges the role of education in social cohesion, personal fulfilment and active citizenship. Portugal also focuses on participation in the knowledge based economy and information society, by designing the Technological Plan for Education; - Finland focuses in the five-year development plan on equal education opportunities.
Change of educational management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Romania has a new Law of Education and is decentralising the approach of education, giving more freedom to schools; - Portugal also revised the educational management systems; - In the Czech Republic, schools have to use the national Framework Educational Programmes [FEPs] to prepare their own educational programmes.
Curricular reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Netherlands, the ‘continuous learning pathway’ was designed, concerning language and mathematics; - Romania changed the national curriculum in 1998 and launched a new Law of Education in 2010, hoping to trigger a new curriculum framework and new curricula for each subject; - In the Czech Republic, curricular reform has been going on since 1989.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Czech Republic, schools are now obliged to self-evaluate, and final exams are being revised so that schools no longer have influence on their contents; - In Germany, every two years an indicator-based report will be published, that examines Germany’s education system. Germany also focuses on participation in international and national comparative studies of pupil achievement.
Language and mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Netherlands, a detailed and regulated curriculum for both subjects is designed, in which four standards of language skills and mathematics are defined. This curriculum should make the transfer to higher education easier; - Portugal wants to improve Portuguese language and mathematics by focussing on teacher training and designing new syllabi.

When looking at table 2.8, it becomes apparent that the focus is on several themes.

One debate is about the role of education for participation in the society. *The Netherlands* focuses on citizenship education, thereby hoping to increase the moral development of students. *Romania* mentions stimulating equal opportunities and increasing participation in education. *Portugal* sees education as an instrument for social cohesion, personal fulfilment and active citizenship. Finally, *Finland* also focuses on equal education opportunities.

Another common theme in the debates on education concerns the improvement of education. This is emphasised by debates on quality agenda's (The Netherlands, Romania, Finland, Germany), on teaching staff (The Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, Finland), on evaluation (the Czech Republic, Germany) and on change of educational management (Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic). This focus is less student-oriented than the focus on the society, and seems to be more focused on the management side of education.

4.3 Curricular control

4.3.1 Development of curriculum

In table 2.2 the (de)centralisation of the countries was examined. Now, the focus is on the development of the curriculum. This can also be analysed in terms of (de)centralisation. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the (de)centralisation of the curriculum developments.

Table 3.1 (De)Centralisation of curriculum development

NL	The curriculum is developed at two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education determines the overall curriculum and details of compulsory subjects; - Schools devise curricular plan and teaching methods, in order to reach attainment targets by end of primary school and lower secondary education.
RO	The Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation determines the curriculum. Experts on curriculum and practitioners are involved in the process of curriculum design.
PT	The Ministry of Education determines the curriculum and national external examinations.
CZ	Curricular documents are developed at two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State: National Education Programme [NEP] and Framework Education Programmes [FEPs]; - School: School Education Programme [SEP] is based on FEPs. <p>The FEP defines nine main educational areas and six cross-curricular topics. The SEPs divides the curriculum into parts (e.g. years), based on the FEPs.</p>
FI	The curriculum is developed at two levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finnish National Board of Education designs national core curriculum, including objectives and assessment criteria; - Schools/local authorities form their own curricular regulations sensitive to the local context.
DE	The <i>Länder</i> ministries determine the curriculum and follow the national educational standards adopted by the Standing Conference (in which the <i>Länder</i> cooperate).

The Dutch, Czech, Romanian and Finnish development of the curriculum is more decentralised than the Portuguese development. In the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and in Finland, schools have some autonomy in developing the curricular plan and teaching methods. In Romania, the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation decides on it, but gets assistance of practitioners and experts on the curriculum.

In Portugal, the Ministry of Education is in charge of determining the curriculum. In Germany, the *Länder* determine the curriculum. This indicates a rather centralised system.

4.3.2 Teaching methods and materials

The decision on teaching methods and materials can be made at four levels: the teacher, the school, the local government and the Ministry of Education. Table 3.2 shows where the decisions on teaching methods and materials are made in each country.

Table 3.2 Decisions on teaching methods and materials

	Ministry of Education	Local government	School	Teacher
NL	X		X	
RO	X			X
PT	X		X	
CZ	X		X	X
FI				X
DE		X		

It becomes visible that only in Finland and Germany, the decision on teaching methods and materials is made by one party in the educational system. In *Finland*, the teacher has absolute freedom to choose textbooks and teaching methods. In *Germany*, the *Länder* recommend teaching methods and approve textbooks.

In the other four countries, the Ministry of Education plays a role in the decision on textbooks and teaching materials. In *the Netherlands*, schools can decide on teaching methods and materials, but they have to follow attainment targets and competences as mentioned in the curriculum. In *Romania*, teachers can choose their teaching methods and materials, but they also have to follow the attainment targets that the Ministry of Education has determined. In *Portugal* the Ministry of Education defines the teaching method's guidelines and evaluates and certifies textbooks, of which schools can choose from. In the *Czech Republic*, teachers

choose their methods according to the policy of the school. The school chooses textbooks, but these have to be approved of by the Ministry of Education.

4.4 Formal curriculum of literature education

4.4.1 *Position of literature in the mother tongue curriculum*

The countries differ when it comes to the position of literature in the mother tongue curriculum. Table 4.1 shows if literature is a connected domain within mother tongue education, or if it is an autonomous domain. Also, the table shows if there is a separate textbook for literature.

Table 4.1 Position of literature in mother tongue curriculum

Connected domain	Autonomous domain	Textbook
NL	X	X
RO X		
PT	X	
CZ	X	X
FI X		
DE	X	X

In Romania and Finland, the domains of mother tongue education are connected. This means that literature is usually treated together with, for example, pragmatic texts. In the Netherlands, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Germany, literature is a separate part within mother tongue education.

Countries were also asked if there are separate textbooks for literature education. In the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and in Germany there are indeed separate textbooks. In Portugal there is only one textbook for mother tongue education. This is remarkable, considering the fact that it is a separate domain within mother tongue education.

4.4.2 *Structure of the subject 'literature'*

All countries were asked to describe the structure of the subject or domain 'literature'. The result is a list of elements of the literature curriculum, where four approaches can be detected.

The first approach is ‘cultural literacy’, which states that students should be familiar with the literary history and the national cultural heritage (the ‘classics’). ‘Aesthetic awareness’ is the second approach and emphasises the studying of texts: if students have knowledge and skills in analysing and interpreting literary texts, then they can make well-founded judgements about the aesthetical value of a literary work. The third approach is ‘social awareness’, which states that literature has to be understood in a social context. The last approach is ‘personal development’; this approach stimulates students to experience pleasure when they are reading. The structure of the curriculum in the light of these four approaches is shown in table 4.2.³

³ Finland did not discuss its curriculum in terms of these approaches; therefore Finland is not included in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Approaches of literature education

	Cultural literacy:	Aesthetic awareness:	Social awareness:	Personal development:
NL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literary history; - National cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysing and interpreting literary texts; - Well-founded judgements about value literary text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand context of contemporary or historical society in text; - Understand social issues; - Approach text in critical way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading pleasure; - Personal and emotional growth when reading and discussing literature; - Develop literary taste.
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chronological approach, following the evolution of the Romanian literary history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aesthetic approach, following the important European literary/cultural movements; - Structural approach of prose, poetry and dramaturgy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic approach of literary and non-literary texts. 	
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literary history (historical, social or cultural context of production); - References to literary periods and literary themes (upper secondary education only). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literary theory (genres, narrative categories); - Language knowledge (social and historical variation); - Reading skills (anticipate the meaning, express opinions); - Critical thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language knowledge (social and historical variation) - Literary history (historical, social or cultural context of production). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship between reading and personal experience, in order to understand better the world, different values and cultures, and to personal growth.
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basics of literary science (literary theory, literary history, literary criticism, poetics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading and interpretation of a literary work; - Experiencing literary works of art on his/her own. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methods of expressing experiences gained from literary works and opinions on them; - Sharing reading experiences; - Creative activities with a literary text.

	Cultural literacy:	Aesthetic awareness:	Social awareness:	Personal development:
DE	- Introductory knowledge about genres.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of regular reading habits; - Getting to know literature for personal enrichment and forming identity; - <i>‘Literarische Bildung’</i>, a holistic approach of personal development including knowledge about literary history, participation in cultural life and enrichment within society.

It becomes clear that only in the Netherlands and in Portugal all four approaches of literature education are present. It is striking that all countries see ‘cultural literacy’ as an approach of literature education. Most countries focus on three out of four approaches of literature education; only Germany focuses on two: ‘cultural literacy’ and ‘personal development’.

The Netherlands has a three-sided focus on literature education. First, the student is important; personal growth and reading pleasure are clearly mentioned in the structure of the subject literature. Besides the student, literature also focuses on the literary text. This text should make the student familiar with, for example, certain social issues. The literary text serves another goal: the student has to be able to interpret and judge the text. The last focus – besides shaping the personality of the student and its abilities to interpret literary texts – is the transfer of national cultural heritage.

Romania focuses on two aspects of literature education: literary history and types of texts. Romanian students are stimulated to learn about the history of Romanian literature, but are also encouraged to gain knowledge about European literary and cultural movements. Romania is the only country that mentions Europe in the literature curriculum. Besides a historical focus, students are also expected to deal with literary and non-literary texts and with different genres of literary texts, such as prose or poetry.

Portugal also has a two-sided focus on literature education. On the one hand, the focus is on rather abstract knowledge. Students are stimulated to learn about literary history, literary theory and the social and historical development of language. On the other hand, the focus is on personal aspects of literature education. In the structure of the subject, approaches focusing on expressing opinions about literature, learning to think in a critical way, understanding the world, experiencing personal growth are all mentioned.

The *Czech Republic* is similar to Portugal. Here, the focus is on, for example, literary theory as well. Besides that, the Czech literature education also focuses on more student-oriented aspects such as reading and interpreting literary works, and autonomously experiencing literary works of art.

Germany also has a two-sided focus on literature education, but the personal focus is more emphasised than the scientific side. The latter stimulates students to learn about literary knowledge. The student-oriented focus mentions developing regular reading habits, forming an

identity through literature, and *Literarische Bildung*. This German phrase involves personal development in a holistic way.

4.4.3 Aims

Each country listed the aims of their literature curricula. Due to the extensiveness of the aims, it was necessary to split them in five groups. This resulted in aims that focus on the text, the reader, the context or author, other media and a rest group of other aims. Table 4.3 shows the number of aims per country per group.

Table 4.3 Number of aims per country per group

			Text	Reader	Context/ author	Other media	Other aims
NL	<i>VMBO</i>	Lower sec.		2			
NL	<i>HAVO</i>	Lower sec.		2			
NL	<i>HAVO</i>	Upper sec.		1			
NL	<i>VWO</i>	Lower sec.		3			
NL	<i>VWO</i>	Upper sec.		1			
RO		Lower sec.		5			1
RO		Upper sec.		1	1		1
PT		Lower sec.	3	2	2		
PT		Upper sec.		3	1		1
CZ		Lower sec.		5			
CZ		Upper sec.		4			
FI		Lower sec.	1	7	3	1	
FI		Upper sec.	3	8	3		
DLS	<i>HS/RLS</i>	Lower sec.	1	5			
DLS	<i>GYM</i>	Lower sec.		5			
DLS	<i>GYM</i>	Upper sec.		5			
DBV	<i>HS</i>	Lower sec.	6	11	1		
DBV	<i>RLS</i>	Lower sec.	8	5	4		
DBV	<i>GYM</i>	Lower sec.	5	2	2		
DBV	<i>GYM</i>	Upper sec.	3	6	5		
DTH	<i>RGS</i>	Lower sec.	8		1	2	

			Text	Reader	Context/ author	Other media	Other aims
DTH	GYM	Lower sec.	4			1	
DTH	GYM	Upper sec.	1	1			

It becomes apparent that the *Czech Republic* purely focuses on the reader, by formulating aims such as ‘developing emotional and aesthetic perception’, or ‘shaping value orientations, taste preferences, and observing the surrounding world as well as oneself perceptively’.

Taking the number of aims from table 4.3 into account, The Netherlands, Romania, Finland and Germany Lower Saxony seem to focus mainly on the reader. However, *the Netherlands* distinguishes levels of literary competence in its aims. These aims seem to be focused on the reader alone, but in fact the literary competences link the reader to the literary text. The focus on the reader might therefore be seen as a focus on both reader and text. The aim ‘developing experiential reading method’ is an example of this: it describes a development of the student, but it also focuses on the text.

Romania reveals a focus on the reader by the aim ‘understand the world’, but also focuses on the context/author (only in upper secondary education) and on ‘other aims’. The context/author aims contains the aim ‘develop cultural competences, so students can conceptualise the literary phenomena having in view the historical and cultural background’. The ‘other aims’ are communicative aims, such as ‘communicate and interact with other people’.

Germany Lower Saxony mentions – besides 15 aims that focus on the reader – one aim that is focused on the text: ‘understanding, utilizing and reflecting texts in a communicative process’.

Finland lists aims such as ‘develop own manner of expression and literary style’, which is focused on the reader. Finland, however, focuses on two other groups of aims as well. The same is true for Portugal, Germany Bavaria and Germany Thuringia. Finnish aims focus on the reader, the text, the context/author and incidentally on other media. The latter is shown in the aim ‘gain further experience with techniques of expression used in theatre and film’.

Portugal focuses – besides the reader – also on the text (only in lower secondary education), context/author and ‘other aims’ (only in upper secondary education). The Portuguese ‘other aims’ involve ‘the development of research, organization, treatment and information management, namely by using ICT’.

Germany Bavaria focuses on the text, reader and context/author. The latter is characterised by aims like ‘correlating culture areas and literature from different times’. *Germany Thuringia* mainly focuses on the text, and incidentally on the reader and on other media. German aims that focus on other media are, for example, ‘developing abilities to access texts by considering the content-form relationship in printed literary texts as well as auditive and audio-visual texts’.

It seems that literature education is mainly aimed at the individual student. Some of those ‘personal’ aims can be seen as ‘learning objectives’, indicating concrete activities or other practical things that students have to do. However, most of these personal aims are goals: more abstract demands of literature education. ‘Understand the world’ (Romania, lower secondary education) is a typical example of such a goal.

4.4.4 Competences

The countries were asked to list the competences in literature education that students have to master. Six groups of competences could be distinguished: ‘understanding’, ‘interpretation’, ‘evaluation’, ‘communication about the text and information processing skills’, ‘cultural and aesthetical values’ and finally ‘literary knowledge’. Tables 4.4 to 4.9 illustrate these six groups of competences by giving an example of the competence for every country and every group.

Table 4.4 Competences: understanding

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	Summarise key fragments.	Distinguish different layers of meaning.
RO	Identifying the specific structure of the texts.	Using reading strategies for understanding the studied texts.
PT	To characterise different genres.	-
CZ	Describe the structure and language of a literary work.	Exhibit extensive knowledge of the structure of literary texts.
FI	Analysis of fictional structures, using concepts appropriate to the form level.	Effects of different elements of style on text, such as choice of words.
DLS	Recognising and specifying well-known elements of design in texts.	Methodical professional examination of literary texts.

DBV	Knowing and applying methods of accessing - texts to non-fiction and literary texts.
DTH	Deepening the knowledge on linguistic - particularities of lyrical texts.

Table 4.5: Competences: interpretation

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	Give meaning to symbols.	Identify oneself emphatically with different characters.
RO	Comparing different ideas and attitudes in reflecting the same literary theme.	Interpreting the studied texts having in view their own values and their own experiences.
PT	To compare the way the theme is treated in other texts.	To interpret relations between verbal and non-verbal language.
CZ	Identify the basic features of a significant individual style.	Describe the individual means of poetic language and explicate their function in the text.
FI	Looking for and evaluating viewpoints, values and attitudes concealed in speech, writing and illustrations.	Analysis of short stories, poems and drama.
DLS	Reflecting ideas and attitudes while examining literary texts.	Independent understanding of texts by using various methods for understanding and interpretation of texts.
DBV	Understanding and comparing different - possibilities of interpretation of literary works.	
DTH	Autonomously interpreting lyrical texts considering the relation between content and form.	Interpreting and assessing views and attitudes of the author and his world outlook.

Table 4.6: Competences: evaluation

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	Give personal (subjective) response.	Evaluate the critics of peers and expert readers.
RO	Arguing their opinions.	Comparing and evaluating arguments for making up their own judgements.
PT	To express opinions and discuss meanings, as a personal reflection to a literary work.	To show preference when selecting the texts to read and to express ones own opinion and personal taste about texts.

CZ	Formulate, both orally and in writing, his/her impressions from reading and from having attended a theatre or film performance and his/her opinions on a work of art.	Distinguish between texts that fall into the areas of the so-called serious literature, mainstream, and pulp literature and justify their opinion with arguments.
FI	Building bridges between the text and the recipient.	A reflective text on a topic related to the contents of the subject and drawn up from a point of view chosen by the student.
DLS	Reflection on one's own reading experiences.	Reflecting on the different receptions of a text.
DBV	Formulating critical statements about texts.	-
DTH	Reflecting on author-text-reader relationship.	Reflecting on impact of literature as a product.

Table 4.7: Competences: Communication and information processing skills

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	-	-
RO	-	Selecting adequate techniques for researching a subject.
PT	To reflect upon cultural, aesthetical, ethical, political and religious values in texts.	To use different reading strategies.
CZ	-	-
FI	-	Written and oral contributions on topics related to the themes of the course.
DLS	-	-
DBV	Experience texts, developing media skills and presenting those.	-
DTH	Writing a survey of essential literary époques.	-

Table 4.8: Competences: cultural and aesthetic values

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	-	-
RO	Developing the aesthetic sensibility in the field of literature.	Developing cultural awareness.
PT	To reflect upon cultural, aesthetical, ethical, political and religious values in texts.	-
CZ	-	-
FI	-	Significance of language and literature in the

		construction of a national identity.
DLS	-	Dealing with ideas of man and the world in texts under consideration of the relation of the history of culture, society and philosophy.
DBV	Drawing the pupils'/students' attention to interesting books,	-
DTH	Fathom the impact of media programs on one's own personality.	-

Table 4.9: Competences: Literary knowledge

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL	-	-
RO	-	Developing a global perspective of the Romanian culture up to the beginning of the XX century.
PT	To relate the book with its production context.	To analyse literary devices, such as textual linguistic features, author's style and intention, <i>tropos</i> and other rhetorical figures.
CZ	-	Describe the vital features of the basic periods in the development of Czech as well as world literature.
FI	Classification of literature into main genres and certain subgenres.	Prose as a literary genre: devices of narrative techniques, such as narrator or point of view.
DLS	Determining historic and biographic relations of origin.	-
DBV	-	Conceiving the developments, conceptions, poetological bases, key works and the respective history of reception.
DTH	-	Identifying and describing the cultural context of chosen literary epoches and trends (enlightenment, classic, romanticism, literature of the 20 th century have to be considered).

The first three groups focus on the interaction between the student and the text. 'Understanding' can mean for example that a student has to identify basic structure elements in a story. This sort of competence can be seen as a text-oriented competence, since there is little

room for the student's own input: for example, the basic structure elements in a story do not differ per student. Competences that focus on 'interpretation' and 'evaluation' on the other hand, allow a greater role for the student. 'Interpretation' deals with competences such as 'identify with characters and events'; 'evaluation' can contain a competence such as 'to express opinions and discuss meanings, as a personal reaction to a literary work'. Both of these groups of competences are rather student-oriented, because they allow the student to give input to a text. Each student identifies differently with characters in a text (interpretation) and each student expresses his or her opinion in a different way (evaluation).

The three remaining groups of competences are less focused on the interaction between student and text; the competences in these groups are broader. 'Communication about the text and information processing skills' contains communicative competences such as 'presenting self chosen texts, reading passages out loud, giving details on the author', but also competences aimed at information processing skills. Examples of the latter are 'selecting adequate techniques for researching a subject' or 'practising reading skills'. The group 'cultural and aesthetic values' is aimed at the relation between the individual student and cultural and aesthetic values. 'Rising the interest for reading and the pleasure of reading, developing the aesthetic sensibility in the field of literature' illustrates the idea behind this group of competences. It deals with reading pleasure, creating an identity and is aimed at the development of the individual student. Therefore it differs from the communicative competences, which involve activity of the student. These two groups of competences are – similar to 'interpretation' and 'evaluation' – mostly student-oriented. The last group of competences is 'literary knowledge', focusing on recognising literary styles and knowledge about classical literary works. This group of competences is – similar to 'understanding' – also rather text-oriented, because it focuses on knowledge about fixed topics such as literary styles.

To get a clearer view of the competences across the countries, tables 4.10 and 4.11 are created. These tables show the relative distribution of the competences in respectively lower and upper secondary education. Although the table seems abstract, it is important to consider that it only shows accents on groups of competences.

Table 4.10 Relative distribution of competences in lower secondary education

	Number of competences	Under-standing	Inter-pretation	Evaluation	Communi-cation and infor-mation processing skills	Cultural/Aesthetic values	Literary knowledge
NL	77	34%	29%	38%	0%	0%	0%
RO	23	48%	13%	17%	4%	17%	0%
PT	28	29%	18%	18%	14%	7%	14%
CZ	9	11%	22%	33%	22%	0%	22%
FI	12	42%	8%	17%	8%	0%	33%
DLS	81	61%	21%	5%	9%	0%	5%
DBV	80	56%	10%	10%	30%	26%	9%
DTH	145	35%	16%	12%	34%	5%	4%
Total	459	43%	18%	16%	19%	5%	6%

Table 4.11 Relative distribution of competences in upper secondary education

	Number of competences	Understan ding	Interpretat ion	Evaluation	Communic ation and informatio n processing skills	Cultural/Aesthetic values	Literary knowledge
NL	24	33%	29%	38%	0%	0%	0%
RO	27	15%	37%	22%	7%	37%	4%
PT	12	0%	17%	8%	42%	0%	25%
CZ	14	36%	21%	21%	14%	0%	14%
FI	14	14%	29%	7%	14%	7%	36%
DLS	9	56%	11%	22%	0%	11%	0%
DBV	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
DTH	46	0%	80%	17%	0%	0%	2%
Total	147	16%	44%	20%	7%	11%	9%

It can be concluded that all countries focus on the first three groups of competences (understanding, interpretation and evaluation) in lower secondary education. In *the Netherlands* the focus is on those three groups of competences alone in both lower and upper secondary education. This indicates that the Dutch literature curriculum is focused on the interaction between text and student. There seems to be an emphasis on student-oriented competences, although the text-oriented competences focusing on understanding are also represented.

Romania deals with all sorts of competences. In lower secondary education there seems to be an emphasis on understanding, 48% of the competences focus on this text-oriented competence. In lower secondary education, no competences focus on 'literary knowledge', and only 4% of the competences focuses on 'communication and information processing skills'. Altogether, there seems to be a balance between text-oriented and student-oriented competences in lower secondary education in Romania. In upper secondary education the competences are spread over all six groups of competences. There seems to be a slight emphasis on interpretation (37%) and on cultural and aesthetic values (37%). The text-oriented competences 'understanding' and 'literary knowledge' is least focused upon. This could indicate that the curriculum in upper secondary education is more focused on the student than in lower secondary education.

In *Portugal* the competences in lower secondary education are spread over all groups of competences. Cultural and aesthetic values is the least focused upon here. In upper secondary, a slight emphasis can be detected on respectively communication and information processing skills (42%), literary knowledge (25%), interpretation (17%) and evaluation (8%). There seems to be a balance between competences that focus on the interaction between reader and text and broader competences. Both text-oriented and student-oriented competences seem to be important.

The *Czech Republic* is quite similar to Portugal. The competences in both lower and upper secondary education are spread over the groups, and no competences are aimed at cultural and aesthetic values. In *Finland*, the competences in lower secondary education do not focus on cultural and aesthetical values either. There seems to be a slight Finnish emphasis on understanding and literary knowledge in lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, the competences focus on all six groups without a specific emphasis.

Germany Lower Saxony has a clear focus on understanding, in both lower (61%) and upper secondary education (56%). There is little attention for interpretation and evaluation. This

could indicate that Germany Lower Saxony is focused on text-oriented competences, thereby leaving little room for the student to give input.

Germany Bavaria shows an emphasis for understanding in lower secondary education as well (56%), and also focuses on communication and information processing skills (30%) and cultural and aesthetic values (26%). In upper secondary education, there is only one competence: ‘Conceiving the developments, conceptions, poetological bases, key works and the respective history of reception’. This competence focuses on literary knowledge.

Germany Thuringia focuses mainly on understanding (35%) and communication and information processing skills (34%) in lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, the focus is mainly on interpretation (80%), indicating a student-oriented approach.

Figure 4.7 and figure 4.8 show the distribution of the student-oriented and text-oriented competences across the countries for respectively lower and upper secondary education.

Figure 4.7 Distribution of competences in lower secondary education

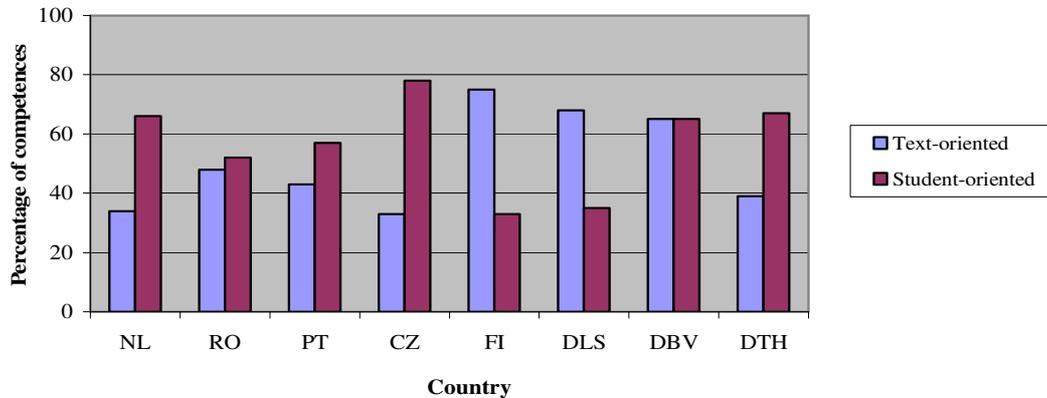
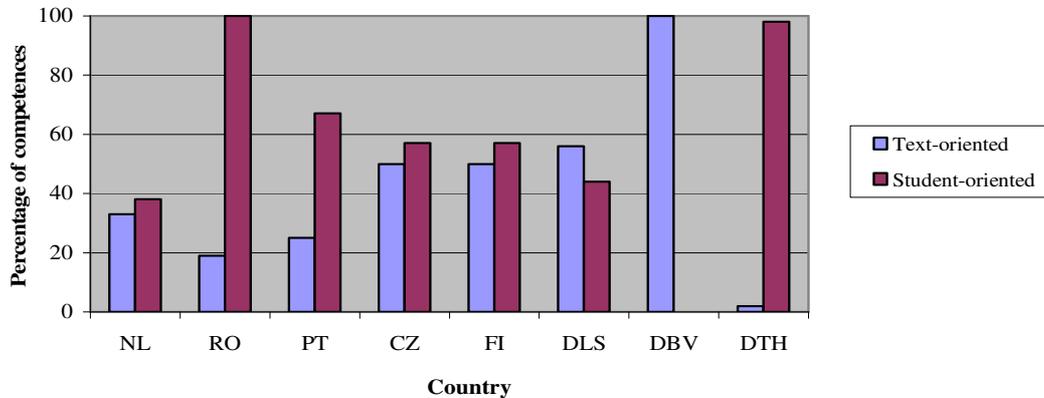


Figure 4.8 Distribution of competences in upper secondary education



It seems that *the Netherlands* focuses on rather student-oriented competences in lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, there seems to be a balance between text- and student-oriented competences. In *Romania*, it is the other way round: lower secondary education seems to have a balance; upper secondary competences appear to focus on student-oriented competences. The same is true for *Portugal*. The *Czech Republic* is similar to the Netherlands, in both lower and upper secondary education. *Finland* and *Germany Lower Saxony* are similar to each other as well, by appearing to focus on text-oriented competences in lower secondary education and by having a fairly equal focus on text- and student-oriented competences in upper secondary education. *Germany Bavaria* also seems to have a balance in lower secondary education. *Germany Thuringia* focuses mainly on student-oriented competences, in both lower and upper secondary education.

4.4.5 Approach

Besides describing the aims of literature education, all countries were also asked to provide information about the approach of literature education. This indicates what the architects of the literature curriculum have in mind when they design it. For example, the curriculum can have a reader-centred approach, indicating that most activities are aimed at the reader. The approach

⁴ In upper secondary education, only one competence is mentioned. Therefore, the result in figure 4.8 is not taken into account.

could, for example, also be aimed at literary genres. Here, the reader is less focused upon. Table 4.10 shows the approaches of literature education per country and – if applicable – per school type.

Table 4.10 Approach of literature education

	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education
NL <i>VMBO</i>	- Reader (pleasure).	- Reader (identifying) and textual.
NL <i>HAVO</i>	- Reader (pleasure and identifying).	- Reader, textual and contextual/society.
NL <i>VWO</i>	- Reader (pleasure, identifying), textual and contextual/society.	- Reader, textual, esthetical, contextual/society, biographical, historical, intertextual.
RO	- Personal development model (stimulating personal responses, based on both their understanding of the text and their own experiences); - Linguistic model (based on analysing and interpreting the texts they read); - Social model (based on discussions about the moral positions presented in the texts).	- Linguistic model (based on analysing and interpreting the texts they read); - Cultural model (students are supposed to gain an overview of the evolution of prose, poetry and dramaturgy); - Cultural model (the global perspective of the Romanian literary phenomenon); - Linguistic model (the close reading of important Romanian texts).
PT	- Text, context and reader; - Although it is a competence-based approach, content of instruction is present and specified. The knowledge about literature is integrated in the reading competence.	
CZ	- Reader	- Biographical and textual
FI	⁴	⁵
DLS	- Literature for personal enrichment and forming identity; - Development of regular reading habits; - ‘ <i>Literarische Bildung</i> ’, including knowledge about literary history and genres, participation in cultural life, personal development and enrichment within society.	

⁵ Information is missing.

Lower secondary education		Upper secondary education	
DBV	- Literature for personal enrichment and forming identity;		
HS/	- Development of regular reading habits;		
GYM	- ‘ <i>Literarische Bildung</i> ’, including knowledge about literary history and genres, participation in cultural life, personal development and enrichment within society.		
DBV	- Literary socialization;	- Literary socialization;	
RLS	- Developing personality and individuality, articulating opinions and feelings.	- Exploring the plurality of self-expressions and lifestyles (independently but self-reflecting).	
	- Establishing and improving relationships.		
	- Reflecting critically on texts and media;		
	- Communicating suitably for partners, topics and situations.		
DTH	- Literature for personal enrichment and forming identity;		
	- Development of regular reading habits;		
	- ‘ <i>Literarische Bildung</i> ’, including knowledge about literary history and genres, participation in cultural life, personal development and enrichment within society.		

The Netherlands focuses in its approach mainly on the reader, but also pays attention to the text. Besides emphasising text, context and society are also mentioned in the approach. *Romania* also focuses on the reader, by naming a ‘personal development model’. Besides this, Romania mentions a linguistic, social and cultural approach as well. The approach seems to focus on interpretation of texts (linguistic model), discussions about texts (social model) and literary knowledge (cultural model). *Portugal* focuses on the reader, text and context, but does not specify what aspects are focused upon exactly. The *Czech Republic* is – similar to the Dutch approach – mainly focused on the reader, but pays attention to the text as well in upper secondary education. The *German* approaches are quite similar to each other; all approaches seem to be aimed at the development of the reader. Only *Germany Bavaria* mentions – besides personal development – also a communicative approach. Literature education should in this approach also serve communication and reflection.

4.4.6 Criteria for text selection

The texts that students have to read for the subject ‘literature’ are sometimes selected according to certain criteria. Table 4.12 lists those criteria. If there is a canon in a country, then this is mentioned in table 4.12 as well.

Table 4.12 Criteria for text selection

	Criteria	Example
NL VMBO Lower sec.	Level of difficulty of the text.	- Relatively simple children’s literature; - Relatively simple young adult literature.
NL HAVO Lower sec.	Level of difficulty of the text.	- Relatively simple children’s literature; - Relatively young adult literature or simple adult literature.
NL HAVO Upper sec.	Level of difficulty of the text.	- Relatively complex young adult literature or simple adult literature.
NL VWO Lower sec.	Level of difficulty of the text.	- Relatively simple children’s literature; - Relatively simple young adult literature or simple adult literature; - Relatively complex young adult literature or relatively simple adult literature.
NL VWO Upper sec.	Level of difficulty of the text.	- Relatively complex adult literature.
RO Lower sec.	- Literary genre; - Thematic criteria; - Structural criteria; - Canon.	- Epic and dramatic texts; - Classic and contemporary literature; - Prose, poetry, etc; - Classical works
RO	- Chronological criteria;	- Romanian literary history;

	Criteria	Example
Upper sec.	- Aesthetic criteria; - Canon.	- European literary movements; - Classical works.
PT Lower sec.	- Representation and quality of text; - Works' integrity; - Textual diversity; - Progression; - Canon.	- Intrinsic value; - Reading complete works instead of excerpts; - Transactional texts; - Challenging complexity of texts; - Classical works.
PT Upper sec.	- Type of text; - Canon.	- Informative text; - Argumentative text; - Novel; - Classical works.
CZ Lower sec.	⁶	⁶
CZ Upper sec.	⁶	⁶
FI Lower sec.	Canon. ⁷	- Classical works. ⁷
FI Upper sec.	Canon. ⁷	- Classical works. ⁷
DLS HS/RLS/GYM Lower sec.	What the text should do.	- Offer student emotional and intellectual challenge concerning form and content; - Be traditional and contemporary and help students orient themselves in the world.
DLS GYM Upper sec.	Function of literature education.	- Literary-historical enculturation; - Literature in a cross-media relation; - Socio-political enculturation.
DBV	Function of literature education.	- Literary-historical enculturation;

⁶ Information is missing.

⁷ Further information is missing.

Criteria		Example
<i>HS/RLS/GYM</i>		- Literature in a cross-media relation;
Lower and upper sec.		- Socio-political enculturation.
DTH	Function of literature education.	- Literary-historical enculturation;
<i>RGS/GYM</i>		- Literature in a cross-media relation;
Lower and upper sec.		- Socio-political enculturation.

All countries except the Czech Republic and Finland distinguish criteria for text selection. As was shown above, *Finland* does have a canon. There are certain criteria for text selection visible in the Finnish curriculum. These criteria can be seen in the aims of Finnish literature education, indicating that – besides the classical works of the canon – the Finnish literature education also selects texts of different genres. The *Czech Republic* does not define official criteria for text selection either, but different genres have to be read by students. Teachers can select the texts for literature education.

The Netherlands focuses in its criterion for text selection on the level of difficulty of the text. This is in accordance with the previously described aims, which also link the students to their literary competence. This literary competence indicates what level of texts students are able to read.

Portugal and Romania both have a canon, which gives shape to their criteria of text selection. It is striking that *Romania* not only focuses on the Romanian literary history, but also pays attention to the European literary and cultural movements. No other country mentions a similar aspect. Besides focusing on the canon, *Portugal* also pays attention to the characteristics of the text and to the level of difficulty of the text. The countries that do have a canon (Romania, Portugal and Finland) could see literature mainly in terms of national or cultural heritage. But – as stated above – Portugal mentions other approaches as well.

It becomes clear that most countries have concrete criteria for text selection, except *Germany*. The German criterion for text selection – ‘the function of literature education’ – seems to be more abstract, illustrated by criteria such as ‘socio-political enculturation’.

4.4.7 Formal guidelines for evaluation

The evaluation of students takes various forms. This can happen in various ways. Table 4.13 shows if and what kind of evaluation of literature education is present in the six countries. Evaluation can be aimed at the subject 'literature' or can be part of an evaluation in mother tongue education. These subject evaluations can also be national. For instance, a national exam can test knowledge of students about literary works. In addition, these national exams could be part of national standardised evaluation. The final option is that a country does not have formal guidelines for evaluation of literature education.

Table 4.13 Formal guidelines of evaluation of literature education

	Subject 'literature' evaluation	Subject 'mother tongue' evaluation	National evaluation	National standardised evaluation	No guidelines for evaluation	formal for
NL					X	
RO	X		X			
PT		X	X			
CZ					X	
FI⁸						
DE		X		X		

It becomes clear that only *Romania* has official guidelines for evaluation in literature education. In table 2.3 it was stated that Romania also has to take part in national evaluations. This could explain why there is a national evaluation for literature education. Other countries mention general guidelines for mother tongue education (*Portugal* and *Germany*) or do not have or mention formal guidelines (*The Netherlands*, the *Czech Republic* and *Finland*). It seems that evaluation is not a common part of the literature curriculum in secondary education.

⁸ Information is missing.

4.5 Operational curriculum of literature education

This short section deals with the operational curriculum of literature education, and is therefore not based on official, governmental information. Paragraph 4.5.1 shows the main activities inside and outside the classroom.

4.5.1 Main activities

Literature education means more than just reading books. Table 5.1 shows the main activities that take place inside and outside the literature classroom.

Table 5.1 Main activities in the subject 'literature'

	Reading	Writing report or summary	Creative writing	Academic writing	Discussing	Presenting	Conducting research
NL	X	X			X		
RO	X	X			X		
PT	X	X			X	X	X
CZ ⁹	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FI ¹⁰	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DLS	X	X	X		X	X	
DBV	X	X	X		X	X	
DTH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The main activities of the subject 'literature' hardly differ between the six countries. All countries describe reading activities, discussions, and writing activities. In Germany, there is also a focus on creative writing and – in Thuringia – on academic writing. In Portugal and Germany, students have to give presentations about literature. This happens in no other country. Also, students are required to conduct research in these two countries.

⁹ Due to the immense differences between schools, it is not possible to describe the main activities.

¹⁰ Information is missing.

4.6 Discussion about literature curriculum

4.6.1 Relation between the formal and operational curriculum

The results in 4.4 are based on official information. This does not mean that the described practices actually take place in the classroom. Therefore, the six countries were asked to provide information about the relationship between the formal and operational curriculum. Table 6.1 shows this information. This table contains assumptions and can therefore not be seen as official information.

Table 6.1 Relationship between the formal and operational curriculum

Country	Discrepancy formal and operational curriculum	Explanation
NL	Yes	The requirements for students are broadly described, leaving a lot of freedom for teachers to set their own literature curriculum.
RO	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Romanian language and literature' is part of the national curriculum, so teachers are pressured to teach those things that are examined in the national examinations. Competences, values and attitudes towards literature are therefore sometimes ignored; - The curriculum changed after reforms, the teacher training is however still in its old shape. Therefore, teachers still use a mostly traditional methodology.
PT	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assumptions about outstanding things happening in the classroom, such as 'reading for pleasure is hardly present in the classroom; reading is always about responding and explaining'. - It is important to consider the effect of national exams, mainly structured in assessing literature comprehension and knowledge about literature.
CZ	Yes	The operational curriculum (SEP) is based on the formal curriculum (FEP). Schools design their own curriculum, in which they decide how to realise outcomes of the FEP. The problem is how the SEP, issued from FEP, is fulfilled in the practise. SEP is different school from school.
FI	No	The literature curriculum is part of an overall state curriculum, meaning that the formal

curriculum and operational curriculum are the same.

DE

¹¹

¹⁰

There are indications that the formal curricula differ from the operational curricula. This seems to be the case in all countries, except Finland.

In *the Netherlands*, broadly formulated requirements for students leave much freedom for teachers to create their own literature curriculum. This could cause a discrepancy between the formal curriculum and practices in the classroom. A similar thing happens in the *Czech Republic*, where schools can create their own SEP (school educational programme) based on the FEP (framework educational programme). This results in diverse practices in the Czech classrooms, thereby making it more difficult to compare schools with each other.

Romania and Portugal are rather similar to each other as well, because both countries experience the influence of the evaluation system. This evaluation system assesses certain items, causing an emphasis on those items in the classroom. In the case of *Romania*, less attention is paid to values and attitudes towards literature. Besides the influence of the evaluation system, Romania has another factor that causes a difference between the formal and operational curriculum: the teacher training. Although the national curriculum has changed after reforms, the teacher training remained the same. The teaching methods do therefore not suit the new curriculum, causing a difference between the formal and operational curriculum. In *Portugal*, the literature lessons seem to focus more on literature comprehension and knowledge about literature than on anything else. This does however seem to be in accordance to the results concerning the competences. Next to this influence, Portugal mentions a few assumptions about the daily practice in the classroom. One assumption is, for example, that reading for pleasure is hardly present in the classroom, because reading focuses more on responding and explaining. This assumption can be deduced from table 4.9, which shows that only 7% of the competences in upper secondary education focus on cultural and aesthetic values, including reading pleasure.

The *Finnish* discussion about the relationship between the formal and operational curriculum does not mention a discrepancy between the two at all. Since the literature curriculum is part of the state curriculum, it is thought that the formal curriculum and the operational curriculum are the same.

¹¹ Information is missing.

4.6.2 Presumed function of literature in the maturation process

Besides the official aims of literature education, the literature curricula also have an implicit function in the maturation process of the student. Analysis of these functions reveals four main functions that countries distinguish, and a rest group of other functions. Table 6.1 shows these implicit goals of literature education across the countries.

Table 6.1 Goals of literature education

	Cultural literacy	Aesthetical awareness	Personal development	Social awareness	Other
NL	X	X	X	X	
RO	X	X	X	X	
PT			X	X	
CZ	X	X	X		X
FI¹²					
DE			X		X

All countries see literature education as a way to develop the personality of the student. In the Netherlands, Romania and the Czech Republic, there is notion of ‘cultural literacy’ and ‘aesthetical awareness’ as well.

Besides focusing on cultural literacy, aesthetical awareness and personal development, *the Netherlands* also mentions social awareness. This indicates a rather broad function of literature education, where the focus is on the text, the student and the context (the society). The same is true for *Romania*, which distinguishes the exact same functions of literature education in the maturation process.

Portugal refers to personal development and social awareness, leaving aesthetics and culture aside. The *Czech Republic* sees literature education of a means of bringing cultural literacy, aesthetical awareness and personal development to the student, but also mentions another function: ‘the ability to read and think critically and to work with literary texts creatively’. *Germany* refers to – besides personal development – functions such as socio-political

¹² Information is missing.

enculturation, literary-historical enculturation and creating a positive attitude towards mass media. This could indicate that Germany perceives literature education from a wider perspective, instead of focusing on the literary text only.

4.6.3 Text selection

Earlier this chapter, the criteria for text selection were discussed. In this section, text selection itself is examined. Analysis of the data results in two groups: one group focusing on the student and his/her reading pleasure, and the other group focusing on the appropriate texts that students have to read. Table 6.3 gives an overview of the two groups and the way the six countries fit into these groups.

Table 6.3 Text selection

	Student and reading pleasure	Appropriate texts
NL	Students choose own reading list.	Teacher has to approve of reading list.
RO		Textbook authors and teacher may choose the texts for study, following curriculum recommendations.
PT		There are strict criteria for text selection.
CZ		Teacher chooses the texts.
FI	Popular fiction is read in lower secondary education.	Finnish literature and world literature is read in upper secondary education.
DLS		The focus is on influential authors, literary movements, etc. Literature should offer students an emotional and intellectual challenge concerning both form and content.
DBV	Reading for pleasure is promoted.	The importance of literature is emphasised.
DTH	A student-oriented choice is emphasised.	

The Netherlands, Finland and Germany Bavaria fit into both groups, indicating that there seems to be a balance between the freedom of the student and the emphasis on certain (types of) literary texts.

Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Germany Lower Saxony seem to emphasise appropriate texts rather than giving room to the student to select texts for studying. This indicates a rather closed curriculum. Germany Thuringia seems to focus on the student alone.

4.6.4 Recent debates and questions

The countries were asked to summarise the most important debates and questions about literature education in their country. Table 6.4 shows what themes are discussed in which country.

Table 6.4 Themes in debates on literature education

	Canon	Evaluation	Literary versus pragmatic skills	Teaching methods	Contents of literature education
NL	X		X	X	X
RO	X	X	X	X	
PT	X		X		
CZ				X	X
FI¹³	-	-	-	-	-
DE	X			X	X

Table 6.5 shows the debates about every theme.

Table 6.5 Explanation of themes in debates on literature education

Theme	Explanation
Canon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Netherlands there is a louder call for the canon, which could serve as a means to protect the national identity in times of multiculturalism and globalisation; - Romania has got a canon, but is debating about the content (living authors in the canon) and even about the necessity of having one; - Portugal also has a canon, but is also debating about the contents of it; - Germany does not have a canon, and is wondering if canonical guidelines are necessary in times of educational standards.

¹³ Information is missing.

Theme	Explanation
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Romania, the debate focuses on the gap between the evaluation in the curriculum and in the national exams.
Literary versus pragmatic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Netherlands, there is fear that pragmatic language skills are taking over the curriculum at the expense of literary skills; - Romania is debating about adding non-literary texts to the curriculum so students will become capable of reading different sorts of texts. This would mean that less attention would be paid to the in-depth study of literature. In addition to this, Romania also questions whether the focus on developing reading strategies will mean the decline of literary knowledge; - Portugal has got a new syllabus for grades 10 to 12, and debates about the presence of informative texts in the syllabus. Some argue that this ignores the role of reading Portuguese writers.
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Netherlands debates whether reading pleasure should be taught at school or whether it should be practised at home. In the first case, the emphasis is on personal development and literary taste, in the last case the focus in the classroom is on theoretical knowledge about literature; - In Romania the curriculum has changed and now focuses more on reader response and interactive methodology. Therefore the role of the teacher became different as well, and teacher felt their traditional position was threatened by the changes; - In the Czech Republic there is an ongoing debate about different models and concepts of teaching literature: traditional versus modern literature education, transmissive versus experiencing model of literary education, the focus on facts versus the focus on the reader, the focus on knowledge versus the focus on skills and enjoyment, and talking about literature versus working with the literature; - Germany debates about the definition and measurement of literary competences. Also, the role of gender awareness and gender differentiation is questioned: will this create stereotypes? Germany also debates about the relation between learning assignments and performance related assignments. In addition to this, there are questions about how formulated tasks can preserve the ambiguity of literary texts without creating an arbitrary system in literature education.
Contents of literature education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Netherlands prescribes a certain number of books that students have to read per year, and question whether the current numbers are the right ones. Some say students should read more books per year; - Germany discusses the proportion of adult literature and of youth literature in class. Also, Germany looks at other media (like internet) and the influence of electronic learning and wonders how the subject of literature will develop in this

Theme	Explanation
	field. Finally, Germany is debating about the relation between the formal and the operational curriculum.

It seems that the recent debates on literature education revolve mainly around two questions. First, discussions about the canon, literary versus pragmatic texts and about the contents of literature education deal with the contents and function of education: what do students need to learn and why? Second, questions about evaluation and teaching methods focus more on the organisational side of literature education: how is literature being taught and assessed?

The Netherlands debates mainly the function of literature. The louder call for a canon could indicate the wish for a more text-oriented curriculum. The fear for the increasing influence of pragmatic texts can also be seen as pointing in the same direction.

Romania focuses on both questions. The necessity of having a canon is questioned, indicating a possible movement to a more student-oriented curriculum. The importance of literary knowledge is however acknowledged, and the discussion about pragmatic texts is therefore heading in the opposite (text-oriented) direction. Also, the role of the teacher is being discussed. The teacher's role has become more interactive in the new curriculum, and this student-oriented method causes that teachers feel threatened in their traditional position.

Portugal debates mainly about the function of literature education. The canon is not questioned, but its content is indeed. Also, Portugal is struggling with the balance between pragmatic and literary texts. More pragmatic texts are included in the new curriculum, and this change towards a text-oriented approach is not self-evident.

The *Czech Republic* mentions debates on both questions. The method of teaching is being questioned: should it be traditional or modern? In addition, the Czech Republic debates on the balance between a text-oriented or a student-oriented approach.

Germany also debates on both questions. The canon is not taken into consideration, but instead Germany wonders if a canon fits into a system of educational standards. These standards are a source for more debate: how can the versatile field of literature be caught in standards? The function of literature education is further discussed in questions about the proportion of

adult- en youth literature. Also, other media are examined, and Germany tries to see how literature education fits into this multimedia development.

5 Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Introduction

Literature education is a diverse field of education, and the literature curricula differ greatly across Europe. There are many differences inside the classroom and between grades as well; students differ in their level of literary competence. Despite this fact, less capable students often have to read the same literary text as their more gifted classmates. This does not stimulate their literary development; students should read books that they will be able to appreciate. To make sure that the literary development of students is guaranteed, it is important that they read literature with a level of complexity that suits and trains their literary competence. In the LiFT-2 project, the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Finland and Germany aim to create a literature framework for teachers in secondary education. This framework aims to be an instrument, helping teachers to match the reading ability of students to the complexity of literary works. If a teacher knows the level of literary competence of the student, then he can easily recommend a book or adapt his teaching method in order to stimulate the student's literary development. A list of books that are grouped according to level of complexity and features of readers at different levels can therefore help the teacher to reach this goal. This should improve the quality of literature education in Europe and it should stimulate students to enjoy and appreciate literature.

To develop such a European framework, it is important to examine current literature curricula in secondary education in Europe. This examination can reveal similarities between countries that make the development of a framework easier. However, it can also detect differences to be taken into account before creating such a framework. To detect these similarities and differences, the six participating countries completed a questionnaire. The gathered data was linked to four paradigms of mother tongue education that were present in the last 70 years in Europe (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2006). These paradigms, the academic paradigm, the developmental paradigm, the communicative paradigm and the utilitarian paradigm, reflect different views on mother tongue and literature education; each paradigm sees, for example, literature in a different way and connects a different meaning to it. Moreover, the four paradigms

have implications for the content of the curriculum and for teaching activities and can therefore help to compare the six literature curricula.

This research focuses on two questions:

1. *What are the main characteristics of literature curricula in secondary education across six European countries?*
2. *What paradigm is dominant across six European countries?*

This chapter will discuss the two research questions above, by first describing the characteristics of each country individually (paragraph 5.2). These characteristics will look at the distinction between student-oriented and subject-oriented aspects of literature education. In paragraph 5.3, the four paradigms will be linked to the characteristics of the countries. Hereafter, conclusions about each country will be made, thereby answering the second research question. Paragraph 5.4 will discuss these conclusions and give recommendations for improvement of this study and for the creation of a European literature framework.

5.2 Characteristics of literature curricula of six European countries

This section describes the characteristics of the six European countries, thereby answering the first research question. Every paragraph discusses the literature curricula in terms of openness and focus on, for example, reader or subject.

5.2.1 The Netherlands

The literature curriculum in the Netherlands forms an autonomous domain within mother tongue education with a separate textbook for the teaching of literature. The organisation of literature education can be regarded as decentralised. Although schools have to follow attainment targets as prescribed by the Ministry of Education, they can decide on the teaching methods and materials. Furthermore, teachers have a certain freedom in the classroom as well, because the requirements for students are only broadly described. The student may be granted autonomy as well, by being able to choose (with approval of the teacher) the literary books and texts to study. This implies a rather open curriculum.

The curriculum of literature education shows an emphasis on the reader or student. This emphasis reveals itself in many ways. For instance, the structure of the subject literature mentions personal development as an approach of literature education. Analysis of the data showed that the aims of literature education are also mainly focused on the reader. The same is true for the competences that students have to master. This emphasis on the reader is especially visible in lower secondary education. Another indication of a reader-oriented literature curriculum can be found in the description of main activities in the classroom, where writing and discussing are two activities that take place. These activities involve action of the student and can therefore also be seen as reader-oriented.

Although the emphasis seems to be on the reader, other aspects of literature education become apparent as well. First, there are indications that literature education focuses on the society. This focus can be detected in the – more general – debates on the stimulation of citizenship education, but more concrete in the structure of the subject: becoming familiar with social issues through examination of a literary text seems to be aimed at the position of the student in the society. The structure of the subject is also focused on transferring the national cultural heritage, thereby teaching students about the history of the society. The louder call for a canon emphasises this as well. The emphasis on the society can also be seen in the approach of the subject literature, which reflects a focus on the context and society. This is similar to the function of literature in the maturation process, which – amongst other functions – lists social awareness as a function of literature.

Second, a focus on the subject seems apparent. The literary competences, as described in the aims, concentrate on the level of the student and the appropriate literary texts that students could read. Reading skills are important, but the content of the text being read is important as well. The level of complexity of texts also forms a criterion of text selection for literature education. Furthermore, there are debates on the balance between literary pragmatic texts. There is fear that the latter will ‘take over’ the literature curriculum.

5.2.2 *Romania*

The Romanian literature curriculum is connected to the other domains of mother tongue education, instead of being part of a separate subject. Consequently, no separate textbook for the

teaching of literature is available. The development of the curriculum takes place at the Ministry of Education, but they get assistance of experts of the subject. The teacher can decide on the textbooks and teaching materials, but everything has to be approved of by the Ministry of Education. The student has not much freedom to choose the books or texts to be read. This implies a rather closed curriculum, which is emphasised even more by the existence of a canon.

The curriculum of literature does not have a strong, one-sided focus. Instead, it seems to focus on the reader and the subject. The focus on the reader can be found in the plan to increase equal education opportunities for students, but shows itself more in the aims of literature education. Mainly in lower secondary education, the aims focus on the reader. In upper secondary education, the context or author and communication are also emphasised. The reader is also important in the competences that students of literature have to master. There is however a balance between competences that focus on the reader and those that focus on the subject. This balance is especially apparent in lower secondary education; upper secondary education seems to focus mostly on the reader. Another – more recent – emphasis on the reader reveals itself in the discussion about the teaching methods. The teacher is used to a more traditional role in the classroom, while the new curriculum implies more interaction between teacher and student. This could indicate a growing focus on the student or reader.

The focus on the subject becomes clear through many aspects of the literature curriculum as well. The structure of the subject refers to cultural literacy and aesthetic awareness; both approaches focus more on the contents of the subject than on the individual student. In addition, the structure of the subjects mentions literary history of Romania and Europe as important starting points of literature education. As stated above, the competences show a balance in focus on reader and subject in lower secondary education. Such a balance cannot be detected when looking at the approach of literature education; the interpretation, discussion and knowledge of texts is strongly emphasised here. Also, the criteria for text selection focus on the type of text. The canon is a good example of this, by prescribing what classical works students have to read. However, the necessity of the canon is being discussed, indicating a possible decline of the focus on the contents of the subject. Moreover, there is discussion about adding more pragmatic texts to the literature curriculum. This requires a more open curriculum, which emphasises the contents of the subject to a lesser degree.

Although the main focus is on the reader as well as the subject, there is – similar to the Dutch curriculum – also a small emphasis on the society. The structure of the subject mentions social awareness as an approach of literature education, demonstrating that literature also serves to teach the reader about positions in the society.

5.2.3 *Portugal*

In Portugal, the literature domain forms an autonomous part within mother tongue education. There is however no separate textbook. The curriculum is rather closed; the Ministry of Education determines the curriculum, prescribes a list of teaching methods and materials and strict criteria for text selection. Also, as a consequence of the national evaluation system much attention is paid to those aspects of literature education that are being evaluated. Therefore, more attention is paid to knowledge of literature than to more student-oriented aspects of literature.

In the literature curriculum, there seems to be a slight focus on the subject. This is shown in the structure of the subject, where cultural literacy and aesthetic awareness are mentioned. Literary knowledge is also an important part of the structure of the subject. The aims in lower secondary education seem to be balanced between reader and subject. The same is true for the competences in lower secondary education. The focus on subject is furthermore revealed in the criteria for text selection, where the canon, characteristics of texts and the level of complexity of texts form an important part. As mentioned above, there are strict criteria that leave little room for the student's own input. Also, the evaluation system influences the operational curriculum, causing a focus on literary comprehension and literature knowledge. Reading pleasure is therefore less important than attainment targets. However, the canon is under discussion, but this debate only focuses on the contents of the canon. The discussion about literature focuses also on the increasing share of pragmatic texts in the curriculum, indicating a focus on the subject as well.

Besides the focus on the subject, the reader is also important in Portugal. The structure of the subject mentions personal development, thereby emphasising the personal experience while reading literature. This personal developmental approach is also mentioned in the function of literature in the maturation process. The aims are – besides being focused on the subject – also focused on the reader. The competences show a reader-centred focus in upper secondary

education. Finally, the reader is emphasised in the main activities, where writing, discussing and presenting are common.

Similar to Romania, social awareness is also referred to in the structure of the subject. This is however a small part of the literature curriculum.

5.2.4 *The Czech Republic*

The Czech literature domain forms an autonomous part within mother tongue education and works with a separate textbook. The curriculum is rather open: schools have autonomy when it comes to the development of the curriculum, and decide together with the Ministry of Education and teachers on the teaching methods and materials. Furthermore, there can be considerable differences between the formal and operational curriculum, because of the autonomous position of schools. This means that there is no set curriculum, but that the curriculum is rather open.

The literature curriculum has a shared focus on reader and subject, similar to the Romanian curriculum. The reader-centred focus is apparent in the structure of the subject, which refers to personal development. The aims and competences also seem to reveal a focus on the reader, although the competences in lower secondary education are rather spread over both subject and reader. The function of literature in the maturation process also mentions personal development as a goal of literature. And finally, the discussion about literature revolves around questions concerning the focus on facts (as was the case traditionally) or on the reader, indicating at least a slight movement of focus towards the reader.

The subject-oriented focus can be noticed in the structure of the subject as well: students are required to know the basics of literary science and they are stimulated to read and interpret a literary work. As mentioned before, the competences are rather spread over subject and reader in lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, the approach focuses on texts and authors. This line continues in the criteria for text selection, which seem to follow types of texts as a guideline. The student has little influence on this, as the teacher chooses the texts that have to be read.

5.2.5 *Finland*

The literature domain in Finland is connected to other domains of mother tongue education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of the national curriculum, but schools or local authorities adjust this curriculum to their local context. This does imply a rather open curriculum. The fact that the teacher can decide on teaching methods and materials also indicates an open curriculum. The openness of the curriculum is relative, because there is a canon in Finland. It is remarkable that there does not seem to be a difference between the Finnish formal and operational curriculum. This would mean that – although the curriculum has an open character – the operational curriculum is following the exact prescriptions set by the Ministry of Education.

The curriculum of literature shows a clear two-sided focus on both reader and subject, although the subject might be emphasised more. The aims in lower secondary education seem to direct mainly towards the reader, and only marginally to the text and author. In upper secondary education, there is a balance between a focus on reader and subject. The competences show a clear emphasis on the subject in lower secondary education, and a balance between reader and subject in upper secondary education. This balance is also reflected in the criteria for text selection: lower secondary education allows popular texts, indicating a more student-oriented approach; whereas upper secondary education refers to the classical works (of the canon) that have to be read. The existence of a canon indicates a more subject-oriented approach, thereby suggesting that the Finnish literature curriculum could be more subject-oriented than student-oriented.

5.2.6 *Germany*

The German literature domain forms – similar to the Netherlands and the Czech Republic – an autonomous part within mother tongue education, and uses a separate textbook. The curriculum is rather closed: the *Länder* determine the curriculum and recommend teaching methods and materials. German mother tongue education is also evaluated in a national standardised evaluation.

The literature curriculum has a two-sided focus on both reader and subject. The reader seems to be more important, because of the German phrase *Bildung*: personal development in a holistic approach. This holistic approach involves literary texts as well, thereby leading to a shared focus on reader and subject. *Bildung* is mentioned in the structure of the subject and in the approach of literature education. The reader is further emphasised in the aims in Germany Lower Saxony and Germany Bavaria. The competences also reveal a focus on the reader in Germany Bavaria and Germany Thuringia, besides focusing on the subject. The criteria for text selection mention texts that should ‘do’ something to the student. This is another indication for the two-sided focus in the literature curriculum: the text is emphasised, but the student is important as well. The main activities in the literature lessons also involve action of the student: writing, creative writing, discussing and giving presentations are all focused on the student rather than on the subject. Furthermore, the student has to be considered when deciding on what texts have to be read in Germany Thuringia.

The subject-oriented focus can, first, be found in the structure, where knowledge about genres is mentioned. Also, the aims in Germany Bavaria and Germany Thuringia show a focus on the subject: in Germany Bavaria there is a balance between subject and reader, but Germany Thuringia focuses mainly on the subject. Third, the competences in all *Länder* reveal a focus on the subject. In Germany Lower Saxony, competences that focus on understanding form the major part of all distinguished competences. The other two *Länder* show a more balanced set of competences. As mentioned before, the discussion about the selection of texts also treats the text as an important starting point. Fourth, the text selection in Germany Lower Saxony states that literature is the basis of selection, instead of the student’s own choice. Finally, the debate in Germany deals with the balance between adult literature and youth literature. This can also be seen as a balance between respectively subject and reader, since youth literature is easier for students to comprehend than adult literature.

Besides focusing on the reader and the text, there are indications that Germany looks at literature from a broader perspective. This can be seen in the function of literature in the maturation process, where the creation of a positive attitude towards mass media is mentioned. Also, the debate on literature education revolves partly around the influence of other media on the subject of literature.

5.3 Four paradigms of literature education

This section describes the six European literature curricula in the light of four paradigms of literature education. The first paragraph (5.3.1) uses the four paradigms of literature education as a starting point, by describing the characteristics of these paradigms and their visibility across the six literature curricula. Following, the second paragraph (5.3.2) discusses each country separately, and attempts to link the six European countries to one or more paradigms.

5.3.1 *Characteristics of the four paradigms of literature education*

Analysis of the results reveals the existence of the academic, developmental, communicative and the utilitarian paradigm in each country. This does not mean that all the characteristics of these four paradigms can be found in the respective countries; only parts of the paradigms are mentioned in the descriptions of the literature curricula.

The *academic paradigm* sees literature as a means of transferring the national cultural heritage and is characterised by a closed curriculum. These two characteristics can be seen across the countries in different ways. The Netherlands literally mentions the transfer of national cultural heritage. In Romania, Portugal and Finland, a canon is included in the literature curriculum, thereby also implying the function of transferring national cultural heritage. The Czech Republic shows a closed curriculum in the way that students are required to gain literary knowledge, which leaves little room for the student's own input. The German literature curriculum emphasises *Bildung*, which can also be seen as fitting into the academic paradigm. It implies a classical development of the student, besides a personal one. This classical part of *Bildung* suits the academic paradigm.

The *developmental paradigm* shows a less closed curriculum and is child-centred. Literature education serves – as part of mother tongue education – the social progress of students. Furthermore, mother tongue education should stimulate the use of language of children. This focus on the child can be easily detected in every country, as they all mention personal development of the student as a goal of literature education. Also, as was seen above, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Finland are characterised by a rather open curriculum. The

Netherlands also distinguishes levels of literary competence, thereby stimulating students to improve their literary skills.

Similar to the developmental paradigm, the *communicative paradigm* emphasises a rather open curriculum. The focus on the personal development of the student is important here, causing two important similarities the developmental and communicative paradigm. As was shown above, all countries fit into these two characteristics. However, the communicative paradigm sees language as communication, and is society centred. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on reading skills in combination with the contents of texts. These typical aspects of the communicative paradigm can be seen in all countries. The Netherlands mentions a societal approach, and the aims in the literature curriculum deal with reading skills and content of texts. Romania emphasises social awareness as well, and the notion of pragmatic texts shows the idea of language as communication. The latter is also true for Portugal. The structure of the Czech literature curriculum reveals the importance of the sharing of reading experiences, indicating a communicative approach. This communicative focus can also be seen in Finland, where students, for example, have to give oral presentations about the books they have read. Finally, the reading skills can also be seen in Germany, thereby revealing a link to the communicative paradigm as well.

The *utilitarian paradigm* implies a more closed curriculum, and sees literature as a means of transferring national cultural heritage. Fiction is less important here, and so the use of canonical text is (although regarded as important) questioned. In addition, the utilitarian paradigm stimulates the contribution of students to the development of the society. Because of the notion of national cultural heritage, all countries fit into this paradigm as well. A few specific indications for this paradigm can be seen across countries. The Romanian curriculum wants students to use language to create capacities for solving daily problems. This implies a rather practical approach that follows the utilitarian paradigm in training students to contribute to society. Also, the debates about adding pragmatic texts to the literature curriculum can be connected to this utilitarian paradigm. As was shown before, these debates are apparent in the Netherlands, Romania, Portugal and Germany.

5.3.2 *Six countries and the four paradigms of literature education*

It is difficult to describe linear relationships between the characteristics of the countries and the four paradigms. However, indications do reveal a certain emphasis on one or more paradigms in each country. In *the Netherlands*, the developmental paradigm seems to be dominant, as this is the only country that mainly focuses on the reader. The individual student is important in the Netherlands, as can be seen in the existence of the levels of literary competence. These levels can also be linked to the aim of stimulating the use of language of children, as these levels of literary competences form an instrument to do so.

Romania seems to emphasise both the communicative and utilitarian paradigm. The communicative paradigm shows itself in the connected position of literature and other domains of mother tongue education. This paradigm focuses on the student, as does the Romanian curriculum. Communication is an important aim of Romanian literature education; the aims ‘communicate and interact with other people’ and ‘to strengthen the students’ communicative competences (...)’ illustrate this for respectively lower and upper secondary education. The presence of a canon – and the discussion about it – indicates a small link to the utilitarian paradigm. The fact is, the Romanian literature curriculum has many elements (such as literary knowledge) that would fit into both paradigms, but the discussion about the necessity of the canon is characteristic for the utilitarian paradigm. Another indication for the utilitarian paradigm is the Romanian focus on European literary movements. This focus on Europe could be connected to the utilitarian aim that stimulates students to contribute to the development of the society.

Portugal does not seem to show an emphasis on one paradigm. There is a canon, indicating links to both the academic and utilitarian paradigm. The general focus in the Portuguese literature curriculum seems to be on the text, which suits these paradigms. The focus on appropriate texts rather than on the choice of the student when selecting texts is an example of this link to the academic and utilitarian paradigm. Portugal also emphasises literary knowledge, which also suits these two paradigms. However, the reader is also repeatedly emphasised, meaning that the developmental and communicative paradigms are also represented. Nevertheless, these links cannot be made as often as the links to the academic and utilitarian paradigm.

The Czech Republic is similar to Portugal in that no clear emphasis becomes visible either; the focus seems to be on both text and reader. Concerning the four paradigms, there seems to be a balance between the developmental or communicative paradigm and the academic or utilitarian paradigm. The curriculum is rather open, so the curriculum might fit more into the developmental or communicative paradigm. However, the operational and formal curricula differ greatly from each other, making it more difficult to draw definite conclusions about the paradigms.

The *Finnish* literature curriculum seems to fit into both the academic and communicative paradigm. The academic paradigm shows itself mainly in the presence of a canon in the Finnish literature curriculum. Also, the competences in lower secondary education are mainly focused on an understanding of texts and on literary knowledge. This suits the academic paradigm as well. The communicative paradigm becomes visible in the position of the literature domain within mother tongue education: it is connected to the other domains. Furthermore, the aims include the notion of the ‘power of the media’, thereby revealing a broader perspective on literature and thus a more open curriculum. This can be related to the communicative paradigm as well.

Germany fits into the academic and developmental paradigm. These links are rooted in the notion of *Bildung*, which is focused on the development of the student and on – amongst other subjects – learning about literary history and genres. Germany Thuringia seems to have a larger focus on the student than Germany Lower Saxony and Germany Bavaria, which was mainly revealed in the competences.

As was shown above, there is not one paradigm that seems dominant across the countries; all paradigms seem to be equally apparent. The utilitarian paradigm seems least focused upon, which could indicate that the literature curricula are more student-oriented rather than subject-oriented. This is however an assumption; proof for this idea is weak. It does become clear that countries that have a canon in the literature curriculum do not only focus on the literary text. Instead, they also emphasise the student as well.

5.4 Discussion

Although conclusions have been drawn, there are still several points for discussion to deal with. The most important point concerns the reliability of the study. The study used questionnaires to

gather data among the six participating countries. The main part of the questionnaire focused on official data, thereby taking care of most of the reliability of the answers. However, the practice in the classroom can be significantly different, as is the case in the Czech Republic. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the conclusions above are based on official data and not on, for example, observations in the classrooms. If there would have been data collection in the classrooms, then the results might have been different.

Consequently, the reliability of this study must be analysed. As mentioned above, only parts of the questionnaire required consultation of objective sources. Other parts, such as questions about the main activities in the classroom, the relation between the formal and operational curriculum and the presumed function of literature in the maturation process might have been answered differently if another respondent had provided the answers. Therefore, the conclusions on these questions are not as definite as they might seem. The answers were given by only one person. However, the respondents are all experts on the subject, and the major part of the questionnaire dealt with official data.

Besides discussing the analysis of the subjective information, the information based on official data can also be scrutinised. All countries listed the aims and competences of literature education, as formulated in their official literature curricula. Some countries describe this in great detail, where others however mention only a few words. This means that the results could perhaps change if the competences and aims are described with the same level of accuracy in every country. Therefore, these conclusions have to be seen as strong assumptions rather than definite conclusions as well.

In contrast with the discussion above, this study did also gather data that can lead to more exact conclusions. Information about the decision on teaching methods and materials, the position of literature in the mother tongue curriculum and the presence of a canon are all items that do provide clear information. It can be assumed that the reliability of this information is rather high, which leads to more definite conclusions. The links to the four paradigms – as was shown above – can also be seen as stronger proof due to the reliability of this information.

So far, the discussion concerned the reliability of the data and the results in this study. However, the four paradigms can also be discussed. These paradigms describe characteristics of mother tongue education throughout the last 70 years. This study focused on the literature curriculum, which forms only one part of mother tongue education. Nevertheless, the

information on the literature curricula alone has been linked to the four paradigms of mother tongue education in its entirety. Because of this difference, the conclusions cannot be read as definite answers to the research questions. Instead, they have to be regarded as indications for links to certain paradigms.

These links would have been clearer if the descriptions of the four paradigms had been more extended on the topic of literature education. Janssen's (1998) four paradigms of literature education might help to establish clearer links, but more information from inside the classroom would be needed then; these four paradigms focus more on the operational curriculum rather than on the formal curriculum. Another possibility to strengthen the links between the curricula and the four paradigms of mother tongue education could be a more extended collection of data; if more information was gathered in each country, then the links might have been stronger as well. For example, an extended set of observations in the classroom during literature lessons could provide information about the approach of the teacher. Since this is indeed described in the four paradigms, the link could have been easier to make than with the currently gathered data.

The conclusions showed no clear distribution of the paradigms across the countries; characteristics could often fit into two or more paradigms. This could be the case because of literature being such a small part of the descriptions of paradigms. More information about the entire mother tongue curriculum could perhaps indeed show a clear link to a single paradigm. However, it could also mean that the four paradigms are not discriminating enough in the current educational period. The results in this study show a distinction between only two emphasised subjects of literature education: the student and the subject. The translation to the four paradigms could only partly be made in the sense that, for example, the student-oriented education seemed to fit into the developmental and communicative paradigm. Perhaps the four paradigms should be reduced to two, when talking about literature education.

Besides discussing the conclusions, recommendations can also be given. As pointed out before, an extended set of observations in the literature classroom in each country could improve this study. These observations would give valuable information with which the differences between the formal and operational curriculum could be detected. This could help the realisation of a literature framework, because it gives a better view on the main differences between the countries. The observations could be accompanied by interviews with teachers and students, in order to check if the official curriculum is perceived the same way in the classroom. Such an

interview could ask students if and how they notice the educational functions of reading literature, and how they perceive their role in the literature lesson: do they experience a student-oriented approach or is the subject matter more important? These answers could then be scaled into key themes that would also be apparent in the formal curricula, in order to compare the practice in the classroom to the official curriculum.

Concerning the creation of a European literature framework for teachers in education, the recommendations above are very important. The name says it all: a framework for teachers, not for policy makers. It is therefore of great importance that the information is based on what happens in the classroom, as much as is possible. This study does not use information from inside the classroom. Therefore, when the literature framework will be created, it can only function as a rough guide when examining the countries' literature curricula. The differences between countries that are student- or subject-oriented can now be taken into account, so that the literature curricula of both types of countries can fit into a European literature framework.

This study revealed no extremes, in the sense that no country focused entirely on one aspect of literature education. As was stated in chapter 2, the scientific literature does not mention one type of curriculum, paradigm or approach to be the 'right one' either. The fact that each country emphasises aspects of all four paradigms helps the creation of a European literature framework. It makes the literature curricula more open to changes in perspective on literature education. All countries seem to address the individual student. Although this might not be the most important focus, it still helps to guarantee the literary development of the students.

However, the presence of a literary canon – in Romania, Portugal and Finland – forms a risk for the creation of a European literature framework; it leaves less room for the teacher to connect the complexity of literature to the student's literary competence. Moreover, the literature curricula will less likely be open to the reading of European literature if mainly the nation's national cultural heritage is being emphasised.

The aim of the framework is to improve the literary skills of students in secondary education and to stimulate an intercultural dialogue between countries. This study did not find insuperable difficulties that would block the creation of a European literature framework. However, the framework can only be perceived if it is addressed to the teacher and the students. As Commissie Dijsselbloem (2008) advises educational policy makers: focus on the content of the subject and leave the teaching methods to the teachers. The same is true for the European

literature framework. Only when there is dialogue within the framework between the policy makers, the teacher and the students, will a European literature framework be useful and successful. Only then will students develop the competences to understand the lessons in literature.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire LiFT-2 project

LiFT-2 | Work Package 1 | Comparison Literature Curriculums

Explanation of the Format

General function of this document. In this stage of the project the descriptions have the status of 'work documents' for ourselves to give us an insight in the literature curriculums of our countries. We discuss the curriculums again at Joensuu. Beside this, these documents are the main source for the comparative article (June 2010). For more details of WP 1 see appendix of Witte & Kok (2009). LiFT-2 Work Programme | 2009 -2012 (p.14)

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief description of the educational system

Please use for this item the Eurydice document of your country

1.2. Current reforms and priorities in politics

This differs from country to country. e.g. In the Netherlands there is a strong governmental need to set and control the longitudinal development of reading and writing abilities. In 2008 a commission of experts developed a framework in which four levels are defined.

2. Curricular control (grade 7-12)

Please use for this item the Eurydice document of your country. What of the literature curriculum is controlled by whom? Can you tell something about the procedure by which the curriculum is realized?

3. Formal curriculum of literature (grade 7-12)

This paragraph deals precisely with the formal ('written') curriculum of your country. In par. 3.4 you can make some additional remarks to these 'facts'.

3.1. Position of literature in mother tongue curriculum

Is literature integrated in the mother tongue curriculum or is it a sub-domain of the mother tongue curriculum? Maybe literature is an autonomous subject in the curriculum (as in Finland). What is the relation between reading literature and reading other texts?

3.2. Structure of the subject

What elements are included in the literature curriculum, e.g. literary history, literary theory, literary development.

3.3. Table 1: Formal curriculum

Make for each school type of your country a table of the literature curriculum form grade 7 (11/12 yrs) to grade 12 (17/18 yrs), see appendix A.

<u>Aims</u>	<i>general finalities for a certain grade, e.g. develop pleasure in reading at grade 7 and develop autonomy in reading at grade 11</i>
<u>Competences</u>	<i>goals in the light of performance of the subject, the expected outcomes and the values and attitudes that are taken into account for each grade.</i>
<u>Approach</u>	<i>e.g. textual, biographical, reader</i>
Criteria for text selection	<i>e.g. genre, 'quality' (lecture/literature), language</i>
Content elements	<i>e.g. literary theory, cultural periods</i>
<u>Number of books</u>	<i>how many books per year are prescribed</i>
Formal guidelines for evaluation	<i>only for the literature part</i>

3.4. Additional remarks

In this paragraph you can make some additional remarks to clarify aspects of the formal curriculum. For discussion see 5.1.

4. Operational curriculum of literature (grade 7-12)

In most countries there is a lot of variation in everyday practice of literature education. This table describes **in very general terms** what is common in your country in certain school types / grades. If the variation in school practices is very big you can skip the question.

4.1. Table 2: operational curriculum

Make for each school type of your country a table of the operational literature curriculum form grade 7 (11/12 yrs) to grade 12 (17/18 yrs), see appendix B.

<u>Main activities</u>	e.g. reading, teaching the canon (take notes), writing reading logs, classroom discussion, etc.
<u>Time literature lessons</u>	average minutes per weak
<u>Home reading</u>	do the students read there books at school or at home? How much of the reading tasks for school do the students at home?
<u>Representative book/text</u>	which text or book is very common in this grade (if possible, find a book that is translated in English)
<u>Process evaluation</u>	methods and objects of formative evaluation
<u>Product evaluation</u>	methods and objects of summative evaluation

4.2. Additional remarks

In this paragraph you can make some additional remarks to clarify aspects of the operational curriculum. For discussion see 5.1.

5. Discussion about curriculum of literature

In this paragraph you can bring in some points for discussion and report about the main discussions about literary education in your country.

5.1. Relation between formal and operational curriculum

We all know that teaching traditions can be very persistent, so it is probable that there are some differences between the formal and operational curriculum (Andrej!). What are the most pregnant differences and can you explain them?

5.2. Presumed function(s) of literature in the maturation process

e.g. political and cultural socialization, esthetical awareness, moral development

5.3. Text selection

In many countries there is a discussion about which texts must or may be read and studied at school, e.g:

- *position of the canon in different school types*
- *balance between adult literature and young adult literature*
- *openness towards popular genres e.g. thrillers, chicklit, popsongs*
- *relation between printed media, audiovisual media (e.g. film, listening books) and interactive media*

5.4. Recent debates and questions

What are the most frequent or maybe I should say most emotional questions in the debate of literature education? Are there special issues in the debate of a special school type or grade (e.g. lower / upper secondary)?