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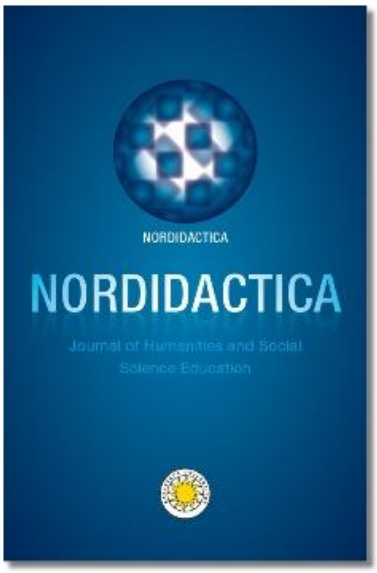

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A didactic model for teaching social studies: Contributing to rich tasks

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Abstract: This article proposes a didactic model for teaching social studies, presenting selected didactic categories that support teaching rich tasks. Rich tasks exhibit characteristics such as purposeful connections to the world beyond the classroom and offer diverse opportunities to cater to the different needs of students (Aubusson et al., 2014). The model is developed using a semantic theoretical approach (Kvernbekk, 2005). The didactic relation model for lesson planning (Hiim & Hippe, 1998; 2006) serves as a framework offering tools for planning and reflection on teaching to facilitate students' learning and studying. Drawing on Klafki's theory of categorical Bildung and didactics (Klafki, 1963; 2000) the new model aims to explore how rich tasks can be merged with categorical Bildung in teaching. It emphasizes how 'why' questions related to the educator's ability to analyse subject content can be related to the students' lifeworld. Additionally, the article outlines and discusses key didactic categories applicable to teaching rich tasks in social studies.

KEYWORDS: BILDUNG, SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION, DIDACTIC ANALYSIS, RICH TASKS, DIDACTIC TRIANGLE, DIDACTIC MODELS

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Introduction

The article proposes a new didactic model to assist teachers' lesson planning and reflection, focusing on selected didactic categories that support the practice of teaching rich tasks in social studies. Presently, there is no didactic support, such as models, for planning and implementing rich tasks in social studies teaching. For example, research conducted in Norway highlights a shortage of available didactic tools and models available in social studies (Børhaug et al., 2022; Solhaug et al., 2020).[1] This didactic model aims to address a gap in social studies teaching and research, particularly in Norway, but also more broadly. Although the article's discussion is limited to social studies teaching in primary and lower secondary school in Norway, the model's relevance and applicability extend beyond this context.

Rich tasks are defined by their multifaceted nature. They can be approached through diverse strategies and via multiple pathways, allowing students at different performing levels to engage with one task (Evensen, 2022). Rich tasks refer to activities characterized by their relevance to real-world applications and contexts, encouragement of reflective practices among students, accessibility for both teacher- and student-led exploration and the involvement of students in collaborative approaches to learning (Aubusson et al., 2014; Education Queensland, 2002).

The objective of the new model is to outline a path where relevant content knowledge and skills for students in social studies are revealed for the main societal challenges they encounter today. The social studies curriculum in Norway highlights an ambition of facilitating teaching and learning that equips students to be engaged, participatory and critically thinking citizens. It also aims to support and reinforce common values related to human rights, democracy and equality (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019b; Koritzinsky, 2020). Teaching meaningful content that achieves such goals is a didactic challenge.

The starting point is the didactic relation model for lesson planning (Hiim & Hippe, 1998; 2006). This tool has served as a resource for practicing teachers in Norway, aiming to enhance their planning, reflection and understanding of teaching and learning situations. My proposed model shares this aim, but with a more specific focus. In this article, I use Hiim & Hippe's model as a framework to propose a new model that provides greater support for the relations between the student, the teacher and the content, which are crucial to the instructional process of teaching (Kansanen, 2003).

Moreover, unlike Hiim & Hippe's creation, my model emphasizes Bildung, a concept which underscores the fostering and empowerment of the next generation to become responsible members of society (Sjöström & Eilks, 2020). The aspect of authority in Bildung, which involves critically assessing social conditions and one's own relationship to them, has traditionally been an important aspect of social studies in Norway (Børhaug, 2005, 174). In line with this perspective, educators should aim to

[1] In the Norwegian context, social studies is a school subject that integrates several scholarly disciplines such as history, geography, political science and sociology. It is taught continuously up to and including 10th grade.

foster students' development into thinking subjects who can also become political, active and liberating agents (Børhaug, 2005).

My proposed model maintains the goal of Bildung by drawing on Klafki's theory of categorical Bildung and didactic analysis. It combines Klafki's (1963; 2000) approach to Bildung with rich tasks in social studies teaching. It facilitates categorical Bildung, which here entails content selection that intents to provide essential insights and experiences of society, balancing knowledge acquisition with student engagement and active participation.

This model is founded on an analytical understanding of didactics. It offers didactic tools that teachers can use to reflect on and analyse their concrete teaching realities. Didactics is understood as theory in practice, involving a continuous dialogue between theory and practice. It broadly considers various aspects of teaching, their planning and execution. I will present selected didactic categories from multiple theoretical perspectives, using theories to illuminate, interpret and theorize about practice (Deng, 2021). In application, my model prompts social studies educators to combine content knowledge dissemination with a more student-centred, interactive teaching approach. The objective is to connect curriculum content with broader societal issues and the students' lifeworld.

This article proposes a didactic model that encapsulates key didactic categories, forming a basis of ideas for teachers to apply when planning and reflecting on rich tasks in teaching, by posing the question: *Which didactic categories should be included in a model for teaching social studies to support the planning and implementation of rich tasks?* Building on Hiim & Hippe's didactic relation model, I suggest the following didactic categories: *Teacher, student, content, settings, goals, assessment and categorical Bildung.*

Given the goals set for this model, a key challenge it sets for social studies educators is lesson planning that centres on the connection between content selection and the design of teaching activities aimed at engaging students. One approach to addressing this challenge is the use of rich tasks, which provide meaningful and adaptable teaching and learning experiences.

Rich tasks

In education, rich tasks are understood as a generic term exhibiting a range of characteristics, including purposeful connections to the world beyond the classroom and diverse opportunities to cater to students' different needs (Aubusson et al., 2014, p. 219). A body of literature suggests that rich tasks can constitute an important component of the teacher's pedagogical repertoire (e.g., Newman et al., 1996; Aubusson et al., 2014; Education Queensland, 2002). In a Norwegian introductory book on social studies, rich tasks are similarly depicted. According to Evensen (2022), these tasks can be solved using different strategies and approaches, which allows students with various performance levels to work on them concurrently. Examples include problem-solving tasks that require thinking and reflection; tasks demanding in-depth learning; tasks involving real-world problems; tasks connecting classroom learning with the present

world; tasks requiring identification, analysis and multiple solution strategies and/or proposals – encouraging different approaches and tools; tasks introducing important ideas, concepts and/or theories; tasks that take time to solve and require effort and self-regulation (Evensen, 2022, p. 46).

To support the type of learning facilitated by rich tasks, teaching activities should focus on students' background, including prior knowledge, conceptions and metacognitive and self-regulatory abilities (Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2012). Rich tasks are also suitable for interdisciplinary activities and project work. A characteristic of rich tasks is their design intent to create a sense of relevance, linking what students learn in class to their lifeworld. In this context, relevance is viewed as influenced by the student's pre-understanding, interests, learning styles and attitudes towards oneself, the teachers, the subject matter and the school (Tomlinson, 2017). This aligns with an important element of social studies: A focus on contemporary societal development (Koritzinsky, 2020). Consequently, rich tasks should ideally revolve around societal challenges students face today and tomorrow (Klafki, 2000) and address such challenges and societal change.

It may not be the case that rich tasks have priority in social studies education within Norwegian schools. Research shows that teaching social studies in Norway is oriented predominantly towards teacher-centred instruction, wherein the teacher commonly talks or uses a class conversation, along with designated readings from textbooks (Brondbjerg et al., 2014; Solhaug et al., 2020; Christophersen, 2004). Hence, the type of learning facilitated by rich task completion is not necessarily prioritized, as the subject's main approach to didactics seems to favour the material perspectives of Bildung (Klafki, 1963). However, Norwegian research in social studies didactics also highlights a diversity of teaching strategies employed by teachers (e.g., Aashamar et al., 2023; Cyvin, 2013; Aashamar et al., 2024). Furthermore, in accordance with a broader reorientation in education across OECD countries, skill acquisition in learning social studies has been increasingly emphasized in recent decades. The shift is subject to debate, partly due to ambiguities surrounding what is meant by skills and their relative importance. Indeed, European and Norwegian research on social studies didactics and citizenship emphasizes skills as an educational concept, yet questions have arisen regarding the meaning of skills and competencies, as well as challenges with reformulating knowledge into skills (Halse, 2023; Löfström & Grammes, 2020; Dahlstedt & Olson, 2019; Hidle & Skarpenes, 2021).

While rich tasks emphasize engagement and adaptability, their usability relies on a broader educational philosophy. One framework that offers a valuable perspective on planning and conducting rich tasks in social studies is Klafki's (1963) theory of categorical Bildung, which emphasizes the interplay between knowledge, personal development and societal participation.

In this article, I intend to provide didactic support to aid in planning and implementing rich tasks that encompass, and seek to bridge, material and formal perspectives of Bildung. Furthermore, I will offer educators an ideational foundation for planning and conducting rich tasks based on selected didactic categories.

Bildung-centered didactics

Didactics is generally understood as a (sub)discipline focused on practice aimed at enhancing education. In this context, theories exhibit a somewhat serving and subordinate character. The primary motive for creating didactic models is not to equip educators with a repertoire of techniques and protocols, but to offer them a rich array of guiding principles to contemplate the interstices of the pedagogical encounter itself (Shirley, 2009). Bildung-centered didactics is a significant research tradition strongly rooted in Germany and Scandinavia (Willbergh, 2021). The tradition emphasizes learning and teaching as Bildung – the meaning the subject has in the interaction between the subject matter and the student. It also highlights the teacher's work as a professional interpreter, ensuring that interpretations of content are perceived as meaningful. As such, the practice reveals the humanistic and hermeneutic heritage on which the tradition is built (Künzli, 2002). Through tools like didactic analysis and modelling, Bildung-centered didactics provides guidelines for evaluating teaching practices, assessing whether they display the capacity to foster Bildung and empower young students to become responsible members of society (Sjöström & Eilks, 2020).

The foundation of Wolfgang Klafki's (1927–2016) work lies in the tradition of Bildung. Klafki's main contribution is the development of a dialectic interpretation of the structure of formation as 'categorical Bildung' (Klafki, 1963). It is divided into material and formal perspectives. Klafki constructs an opposition between material and formal perspectives on Bildung in order to synthesize them. His dialectical interpretation deals with central issues in the perspectives of Bildung: whether the student's education should primarily be based on academic content and its logic and characteristics (material Bildung) or instead on the prerequisites for the student to participate in, and process, the subject matter (formal Bildung). Both perspectives emphasize their own priority: The material perspective highlights the advantages of the subject and teaching content through what distinguishes a subject and its traditions from others, while the formal perspective prioritizes students' self-activity, learning activities and experiential learning (Pettersen, 2005, p. 40). Klafki's theory remains relevant for students in general education and upbringing today.

Klafki views education as the individual's empowerment within the framework of society. The development begins when the individual encounters cultural content that initially does not originate from inside her (Klafki, 2005). According to Klafki (1963), the essence of Bildung lies in the connection between knowledge (material Bildung) and learning (formal Bildung). The goal of achieving this is a central driving force in the theory of categorical Bildung. The educational process is a two-sided dialectical process between the student and the content. Bildung thus becomes an intertwined process, involving both the content/world opening up to the individual and the individual opening up to the content/world. The student is thus initiated into an existing society and culture, but the process allows her to become empowered by being critical and influencing the existing structures. This process must be both concrete and general, because otherwise the student cannot develop the ability to understand the world and act in it in situations that cannot be anticipated during school years (Klafki, 1963).

Klafki's theory of categorical Bildung can provide powerful knowledge to teachers, students and curriculum designers, as it conveys insights for selecting subject matter that has the capacity to expand perspectives and enhance comprehension.

Klafki's (2000) didactic analysis, which builds upon this theory, focuses on the educator's engagement in selecting subject content. It is structured around five fundamental questions that guide lesson planning and reflection, and which centers on the following aspects: Exemplary significance, current meaning for students, future significance, structural analysis and didactic accessibility (Klafki, 2000). By considering these questions in content selection, Klafki's didactic analysis seeks to ensure that teaching is purposeful, student-oriented and aligned with educational goals and broader societal needs.

A semantic theoretical approach to didactic modelling

A didactic model is defined as a representation of teaching and learning models that facilitates understanding and improves practice by selecting relevant key categories and discovering the interdependent relations between them (Rivilla & Mata, 2009, p. 61). Didactic models help educators ask and answer didactic questions when making didactic decisions (Jank & Meyer, 2006). A common approach for didactic modelling in various subject fields is the syntactic theory perspective (see, e.g., the proposal by Wickman, Hamza & Lundegård [2020]), which centres on three phases: Extraction, mangling and exemplifying. In this article, however, I have applied a semantic theoretical view (see, e.g., van Fraassen, 1989; Kvernbekk, 2005) as the foundation for a new didactic relation model.

The semantic theoretical perspective does not require, like the syntactic, a distinction between theoretical and observational terms in the analysis and didactic modelling of scientific theories. This is because theories, according to this view, do not deal directly with the phenomenon, but rather with the abstract system. Consequently, there is an indirect two-step relationship between a theory and the phenomena it strives to represent. This relationship provides an advantageous mechanism for analysis, theory application and the nebulous theory-practice connection in didactics (Kvernbekk, 2005, p. 70). Following this perspective, theory is fundamentally defined by structures of meaning, i.e., semantic structures, rather than by syntactic and logical ones (Kvernbekk, 2005, p. 62). A characteristic of the semantic theoretical view is that the model is not identical to the empirical phenomenon it is applied to. Instead, it takes on a theorized and abstract standpoint. Models constructed in accordance with this view are extralinguistic entities, meaning they persist as constant theories across linguistic culture and language (Kvernbekk, 2005, pp. 63–64). Thus, they appear as abstract constructions that may be far removed from the empirical phenomena they aim to describe.

The didactic model suggested in this article provides a conceptual foundation for teaching rich tasks. However, unlike a step-by-step recipe, the model leaves room for the educator's reasoning. Moving forward, I will present and explain selected didactic

categories in relation to this new model, showcasing, e.g., how these categories may complement each other. First, however, I will discuss existing didactic models that could potentially serve as frameworks for constructing the new model.

Key didactic frameworks

Currently, there are relatively few and disparate didactic models available for purposes of teaching social studies (see, e.g., Delgado-Algarra, 2020; García-Ruiz, 2006; Koritzinsky, 2020; Christensen, 2015), and most of them are unsuitable for teaching rich tasks. However, a theme-based model developed for analysing writing events in social studies classrooms in Denmark (Christensen, 2022; Christensen et al., 2014) could potentially serve as a basis. This model presents three defining dimensions of writing: Students, subject and school, all connected through the notion of culture. Each dimension possesses its own characteristics that influence the education event. First, social studies teaching occurs within a larger context, taking place in schools that are administratively and politically regulated and have distinct internal cultures. Next, teaching is directed towards young people who are not just students but also individuals influenced by their lifeworld and activities outside school. Finally, subject culture is not simply transferred to the classroom but is modified by other cultures. Teachers represent their version of the subject culture, which is their way of working with the subject in relation to their students. Teachers also represent the school culture, which is described as local because it encompasses both general and school-specific norms for organizing teaching. Additionally, there is the student culture, which expresses how students behave in the classroom. All these different cultures are present in the expressions of teaching (Christensen, 2022, p. 135).

This model focuses on school writing, which makes it unsuitable for a closer examination of teaching rich tasks. However, it sheds light on how various forms of culture impact a school's teaching and, although the model is presented as specific to social studies, it can be applied to different subjects.[2] Hence, it shares similarities with general didactic models, such as Mård & Hilli's (2020) didactic model for multidisciplinary teaching. Mård & Hilli developed their model through a comparative thematic analysis of two different cases of multidisciplinary teaching in primary schools in Finland. They identify various framing factors for teaching, similarto those pinpointed by Christensen (2022), such as school culture, collaboration and curriculum. Additionally, Mård & Hilli (2020) emphasize competence, values, student needs,

[2] Several studies from Norway show how certain aspects of student learning are interrelated with, and impact, classroom and subject culture. For example, Kosberg (2024) investigates how cooperative learning can be a tool in civic education to foster students' political efficacy. Ryen's (2019) study on news and critical thinking is based on analyses of an action research study centred on a teaching program where students work with news. By drawing on Klafki's theory of Bildung, Ryen demonstrates and outlines strategies that may help train students to think critically about media and social issues.

interests and educational goals as central and shaping factors for multidisciplinary teaching.

My suggested model differs from those of Christensen (2022) and Mård & Hilli (2020) by offering a more comprehensive framework for teaching rich tasks in social studies. While Christensen's model provides valuable insights into the unfolding of writing events in social studies classrooms, it does not fully address the broader teaching operations required for rich tasks. Similarly, Mård & Hilli's model highlights key framing factors for teaching but lacks an approach for connecting subject content with student engagement.

The focus of didactics is on how teachers can enact fruitful encounters between themselves, the student and the content (Wickman et al., 2020). Along these lines, didactics can be summarised by the didactic triangle (Fig. 1). Given the limitations of existing models in structuring social studies teaching for rich tasks, the didactic triangle remains a highly relevant foundational perspective, despite being several hundred years old. This model serves as a useful lens for understanding the core relations between teacher, content and student, with an emphasis on their interactions. Due to its similarities with the didactic relation model, I find it worthwhile to elaborate on the triangle model.

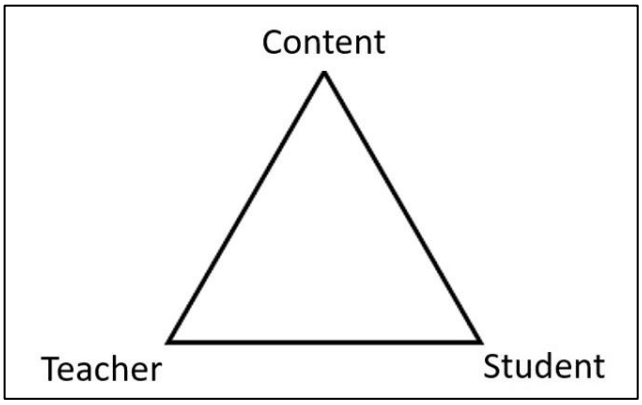

FIGURE 1

The didactic triangle

The content, located in the upper corner, presents the subject's teaching material to be learned and taught. The second component, the teacher, is responsible for conveying the content. The third component is the student, who is to acquire knowledge about the content. This scheme helps create a greater understanding of the relations between the three categories. It problematizes what might otherwise be taken for granted: The teachers' commitment is to help students to learn, not to exclusively teach (Meyer & Rakhkochkine, 2018). This model presents teaching as transmission of content directed towards a receiver, hearkening back to the inner form of the word 'didactics' that comes from the Greek word διδάσκειν (didáskein), which denotes teaching. This process involves awakening something inherent in the student to facilitate easier acquisition of the content being conveyed (Arnold, 2012). Accordingly, the teacher has no authority

over the subject matter or educational goals but is responsible for how they should be presented to the students. Due to the model's emphasis on teaching as transmission, it has been criticized for highlighting lecturing as the primary teaching method. Reform pedagogy, in particular, has argued for redirecting attention away from the triangle and the transmission paradigm (Pettersen, 2005). Instead, the focus should be on the student's learning activities and the teacher's role as a guide.

Similar to the didactic triangle, the didactic relation model, which I hereinafter will refer to as the relation model, emphasizes connections and interactions between didactic categories for lesson planning. Therefore, it should be viewed as an extension of the didactic triangle. The relation model includes different categories, intertwined in a diamond formation, which means that choices within one category have ripple effects on the others. Bjørndal & Lieberg (1978) introduced it as an alternative to the means-end thinking dominant in didactics during the 1970s. Hiim & Hippe (1998; 2006) further developed the relation model by adding one additional category and changing the titles and contents of half of the categories, though not the model itself. The revised relation model offers a broader understanding of didactics beyond the teaching level. Hiim & Hippe's version has been widely used for planning, analysing and researching teaching in the Norwegian context, in schools as well as higher education facilities (e.g., Timoschenko et al., 2021; Torras & Sætre, 2009; Skagen et al., 2009; Vestøl, 2008; Engelsen, 2015).

The strength of Hiim & Hippe's relation model is that it aims to create a balanced interaction between didactic categories when planning, implementing and reflecting on teaching. It allows to form a comprehensive picture of the teaching situation, as it presents interconnected didactic categories that constitute or impact teaching. Furthermore, it can increase educators' awareness and understanding of teaching practices that facilitate and enhance students' learning. Due to these advantages, I consider it fruitful to use this model as a framework for rich tasks in teaching.

Notably, the relation model has been criticized for lacking a theoretical foundation, which makes it difficult to subject this model to critical scrutiny (Strand & Kvernbekk, 2000). In contrast to it, my proposed model incorporates Klafki's theory on categorical Bildung. By emphasizing the student's role in society and her engagement with subject content beyond the immediate instructional process, this theory is particularly relevant in social studies education. Furthermore, my model makes use of Kansanen's (2003) notion of teacher-studying-learning process, which provides a theoretical basis for the teacher's role in the teaching operations. Additionally, it integrates a semantic theoretical perspective. All this allows for critical examination and discussion of my proposed model.

It is arguably a deficiency of Hiim & Hippe's model that it does not address Bildung, particularly in the social studies context, as the idea of Bildung provides a perspective on the student's process of maturation regarding her understanding of her role in society. Bildung as an educational ideal defines a process in which the individual's mind and heart become harmonized in a merger of self-cultivation and identity development within the broader society (Bruford, 1975).

Along with incorporating Bildung in my model, I have also made further modifications to Hiim & Hippe's model, focusing on replacing the following didactic categories: Learning conditions, defined as the educator's as well as the students' approach to contents to be taught and learned (Hiim & Hippe, 2006), and learning process, understood as previous knowledge, attitudes and experiences as the teaching and learning conditions for teachers as well as students (Hiim & Hippe, 1998). I find these categories, along with Hiim & Hippe's delineation of the content category, unsuitable for a model that emphasizes Bildung.

Hiim & Hippe's model deploys a sociocultural learning perspective, often extending its focal point beyond the teaching level. In comparison to their model, my proposed model is more focused. Moreover, Hiim & Hippe's categories do not address key aspects of the instructional process of teaching regarding the didactic and the pedagogic relation (Kansanen, 2003). Furthermore, Strand & Kvernbekk (2000) argue that the most apparent shortcoming of Hiim & Hippe's model is its conception of the teacher. Revising the earlier relation model, Hiim & Hippe have split the category of learning conditions into two new variables – students and frames – effectively removing the teacher from the framework. Paradoxically, their model is preoccupied with teaching; however, it seems that no one is actually doing the teaching.

In my proposed model, I have replaced learning conditions and learning process with teacher and student, going back to the less abstract, role-oriented categories featured in the didactic triangle. These categories underscore the significance of educational content, agency and the time variable regarding the initiation of young individuals into society. To integrate these categories into the new model, I draw on Kansanen's work on the teacher-studying-learning process (Kansanen, 2003; 1999; Kansanen & Meri, 1999). Furthermore, I have also revised the other categories, especially the content category.In the following sections I will present and explain the seven didactic categories of my model in conjunction with the suggested framework for rich tasks. I will disclose my revisions of four of the didactic categories outlined in Hiim & Hippe's model, but first, I will elucidate the teacher and student categories. These two, along with the overarching category of categorical Bildung, are new to the relation model. Generally, the relations between the didactic categories in the model exhibit numerous variations, but for practical reasons I will present and analyse the categories in pairs, based on what I perceive as intuitive connections. Nevertheless, in line with didactic relational thinking, I will also make endeavours to illuminate the categories more as a whole.

I will begin with an illustration of my proposed didactic model (see Fig. 2). Compared to Hiim & Hippe's relation model, the figure differs by placing categorical Bildung in the centre as an overarching didactic category. Thus, the interactions of the other categories are all interlinked with it.

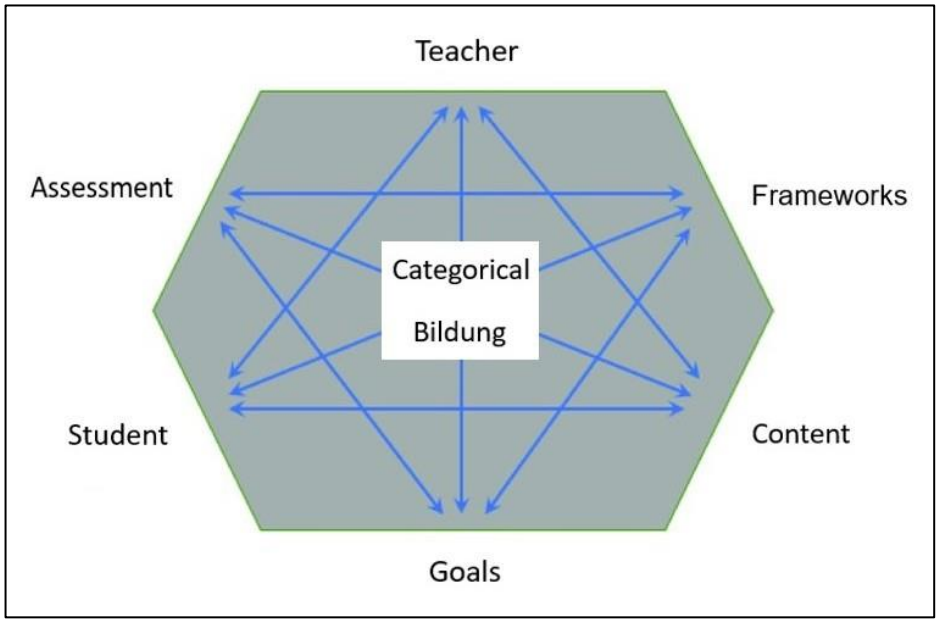

FIGURE 2

A new version of the didactic relation model (Hiim & Hippe, 1998; 2006)

Teacher and student

Didactic models often have as a starting point the relation between the teacher and the student. From the perspective of a young person, this relation is necessary and fundamental, and its objective is to draw out her best (Klafki, 1970). Interaction is the basic concept that describes the joint activity in the relation between student and teacher. In a school setting, this activity is centred on teaching, studying and learning. While all joint activity in teaching may be called interaction, not all interaction is pedagogical. Viewed as a pedagogical relation, it carries specific and unique meanings (Kansanen, 2003). The teacher's pedagogical relation to the student is asymmetrical and impermanent. Moreover, it must be rethought again and again as its context and content change.

Teachers have a certain authority that comes with the profession. It is related to their expertise, because they are responsible for doing what is appropriate to young people (van Manen, 1999, p. 25). As Kansanen (1999, p. 84) writes, the activity of the teacher, that is, teaching, is purposive and aimed at assisting the students' personal development.

Accordingly, students are anticipated to be motivated to study and strive to achieve the desired educational outcomes through studying. Consequently, the relation between the student and the content is viewed as studying, which involves doing something to complete the aims and goals of the curriculum (Kansanen & Meri, 1999). The activities of studying can be seen and observed in the instructional process.

The teacher-studying-learning process showcases how the relation between the teacher and the student is connected to other frameworks in the didactic relation model. It is crucial for describing teaching operations that centre on students' learning in school and generally on the development of a student's personality and Bildung. A key relation

in the teaching-studying-learning process is the student and her ability to achieve the aims and goals outlined in the curriculum (Kansanen & Meri, 1999). The teacher's role is to facilitate this relation.

Initially, there exists a connection between the student and the content, which is manifest as studying and latent as learning. Additionally, the teacher has a relation to the relation between the student and the content (Kansanen, 1999). Namely, the teacher has a connection to studying and, simultaneously, this connection also constitutes a relation to the student's learning and other complementary changes. The relation is termed the didactic relation (Kansanen & Meri, 1999) and is a relation to another relation (see Figure 3). The focal point on the relation between the student and the content lies at the core of a teacher's profession. Each teacher is expected to reflect and make individual decisions on how to approach this dynamic (Kansanen, 2003). Consequently, every educator should develop her own didactics – a framework that aligns with her pedagogical thinking.

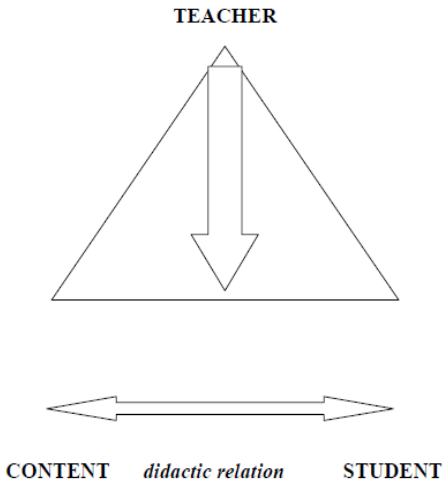

FIGURE 3

The didactic relation (Kansanen & Meri, 1999). Copyright 1999 by Kansanen & Meri

The pedagogical perspective I suggest for the new didactic model emphasizes a more student-centred approach to teaching compared to previous applications of the didactic triangle (see Künzli, 2002). The new model aims to combine teaching social studies content through lecturing with assignments that facilitate students' active learning practices based on the same content. This approach allows the teacher to employ varied teaching practices. Parts of the teaching should be carried out using a more traditional approach, where essential subject matter within the topic is conveyed. Here, oral activity and dialogue with the students is prioritized. However, rich assignments ought to be used during the lesson(s) to at least the same extent as traditional teaching. The new model suggests using instructional designs with rich tasks that are partly student-led, in the form of project work and/or group assignments. Here, students may also work in advance with educational content on the topic in the form of homework.

Content and frameworks

The didactic triangle with the teacher, student and content as its points has numerous variations and interpretations depending on how the points are perceived in a broader context (Künzli, 2002). The new model I propose has assimilated important aspects of the triangle and thus shares similarities with earlier models. For example, the teacher-content relation, which can imply a teacher's expert knowledge in a specific subject, and the teacher-student relation, which may involve understanding the student's personality that pertains to psychological interaction. However, there are also some differences. In the conventional interpretation, the didactic triangle refers to discipline-specific content that can be extended to address curriculum-related inquiries, although it does not address subject or general didactic questions as extensively. In the context of both the teacher-studying-learning process and the new model's additional didactic categories, the content category is considered more multifaceted. In addition, content in the new model is perceived to contain questions of general pedagogy, which brings it closer to the core of subject didactics (Kansanen & Meri, 1999). In line with this understanding, the teacher is driven by a desire to guide the students in mastering the content. Moreover, the teacher should allow other didactic categories' perspective, such as educational goals, frameworks and assessment, to influence the content.

In European didactics, the significance of the subject matter is emphasized in the interaction between the content and the student. The discourse has revolved around whether the student's Bildung should primarily be based on the logic and distinctiveness of the subject content or on the student's ability to process and engage with the content. Focusing on the student relegates the content to a less prominent role, highlighting the formal side of Bildung, whereas emphasis the subject and the content of teaching highlights its material side (Pettersen, 2005).

My proposed model draws on both perspectives by considering the various intricate processes in which the categories of teacher, student, content, goals, frameworks and assessment are entangled. Similar to the didactic triangle, content occupies a key function in the model. It is embedded in the concept of studying, which forms the connection between the student and the content. Furthermore, the focal point of my model is categorical Bildung, which addresses the principal question of what is necessary to enable the content opening up to the student and the student opening up to the content (Klafki, 1963). In the model, all didactic categories are interrelated with this question. In the connection between the teacher and content, the teacher's competence in the selection, composition and generation of content is seminal. From the perspective of the model's affiliation with subject didactics, a challenge is managing the balance between social studies content and pedagogy when creating, planning and implementing lessons with rich assignments.

Frameworks in didactics are factors that promote or hinder teaching and learning. Frames can be imposed by society, an institution, a student group or an individual (Hiim & Hippe, 1998). They are commonly labelled as 'personal', 'organizational', 'time', 'physical' and 'economic' frames (Pettersen, 2005). We can distinguish between external and internal frames based on perspective and actor position (Gynnild, 2001).

These frames are partly conditioned by an external, structural nature, and partly by the actors' own thinking, priorities and choices, as illustrated by the following frame-theoretical thesis: 'if we are to understand, study, analyse or change the teaching process, it is necessary to see it as a process occurring within limits' (Gynnild, 2001, p. 63).

In the new model, frameworks are in a direct and reciprocal relationship with studying, the teacher's didactic relation and pedagogic relation, goals and assessment. This means that the frames are relative within a defined didactic context. The didactic relation model is an abstract construct that is always embedded within a specific setting when used. In this model's context of teaching, lesson planning and reflection, focus should be placed on concrete and specific frames, such as equipment, time available, room size etc. Some frames are provided by the curriculum itself, for example, in the form of guidelines for content selection for various school subjects (Hiim & Hippe, 1998). Correspondingly the instructional process for teaching that the model entails is always guided by such frames, and relations to larger societal conditions are defined through it.

In Norway, the national curriculum framework 'Kunnskapsløftet 2020' and 'Fagfornyelsen' (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019a) are examples of frames for the school subject social studies (a subject that incorporates various scholarly disciplines), as the curriculum with objectives, content and assessment provides clear boundaries and guidance for planning and implementing teaching. Rich tasks become integrated with such frames when the teacher e.g. anchors the task's content within the legislative education act (*opplæringsloven*), the curriculum, and learning objectives. What will be visible to the student is whether the teacher succeeds in utilizing and framing current societal topics and content by connecting them to the student's life world in the assignments. Hence, a path must be bridged towards essential social studies perspectives and content knowledge. In planning and carrying out rich tasks, the teacher is responsible for guiding the student's schoolwork by creating targeted frameworks in line with, among other things, the curriculum's goals in social studies. This can happen, for example, by formulating a problem statement that is contextualized so that it makes sense for the student to work with it.

Goals and assessment

Goals are linked to what teachers want students to be able to accomplish (Hiim & Hippe, 2006). The function of goals revolves around clarifying and raising awareness of the purpose of instruction. This clarification can be enacted on different levels, including the educational objectives of society, school, teachers, parents and the students themselves. In the framework of the new model, it is important to consider the overall didactic context when determining goals. Although the goals have a certain guiding function, they must always be considered in relation to the other didactic categories. A key aspect here is how goals become interwoven with the purpose of the teacher-studying-learning process, as the actions of the teacher and the students should

align with the goals, integrating teaching, studying and learning within the instructional process (Kansanen, 2003, p. 225).

Educational goals can exist at various levels, from overlying goals that reflect societal wishes, expectations and requirements for education to more elementary learning or competence goals for students. However, goals do not ensure that students will learn something specific (e.g., a particular skill or knowledge), especially given the inherent uncertainties in teaching and learning. Thus, every goal is always set with certain reservations. The more comprehensive the goal, the clearer the premises needed to achieve it. Consequently, the complexity of the educational system will increase (Werler, 2015, p. 291).

The proposed model distinguishes between two main types of goals: Basic and higher-level ones. This understanding aligns with Schneuwly & Vollmer (2017), who define basic learning goals within any specific subject as learning of a subject or within a subject (knowledge, skills, subject-specific competences). Higher-level goals of subject learning are understood as educational processes and outcomes that can be aspired to but are not guaranteed for every student. Such outcomes can be connected to the inherent potentials of Bildung, which are embedded in subject-specific knowledge, procedures and competences (Schneuwly & Vollmer, 2017, p. 46).

An example of a higher-level goal in social studies is student empowerment, which involves the student's ability to critically assess societal conditions and her own relationship to them. Student's empowerment can be connected to categorical Bildung. An important feature here is when the student in the process of initiation into society, can become empowered by being critical and influencing the existing structures (Klafki, 1963). Features of empowerment can be found in two goals of the social studies curriculum in Norway (SAF01-04), presented as core elements: 'Critical social thinking and connections' (samfunnskritisk tenking og samanhengar) and 'Understanding democracy and participation' (Demokratiforståing og deltaking) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019b).

Educational assessment involves a procedure for making inferences about student learning (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Traditionally, social studies assessment has been limited to what has been planned and communicated to the students, focusing on the reproduction of factual and conceptual knowledge (Brondbjerg et al., 2014). However, several generations of curricula have underscored the importance of considering additional facets of the subject during assessments. Currently, it is anticipated that students' self-assessments, attitudes and skills should carry greater significance (Børhaug & Langø, 2024, p. 73).

Different scientific approaches in education have varying views on the purpose of assessment; what should be assessed, how assessment should be conducted and why it is done (Hiim & Hippe, 1998). Therefore, it is important for educators to be as aware as possible of their subjective starting point and views on teaching. In the new model, the type of assessment chosen will affect other categories. Questions will arise about how the chosen assessment type will influence the selection of the content, goals and frameworks. In accordance with the model's focus exclusively on the teaching level, assessment should be done especially in relation to goals or the teacher-studying-

learning process. In this context, assessment will be understood either as an evaluation of teaching or learning outcomes in relation to goals, or a consideration of students' skills, behaviour and performance during lesson planning and teaching.

Along these lines, assessment is commonly divided into the subcategories of summative and formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Hiim & Hippe, 1998). Summative assessment occurs at the end of a defined teaching period, or after a teaching session, and is used by teachers to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition and achievement. It evaluates a student's competence in fulfilling the requirements set in the goals. Formative assessment, however, involves the teacher, and occasionally students, providing feedback on progress towards the goals during the teacher-studying-learning process. The feedback is employed to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements. Consequently, a key distinction between formative and summative assessments lies in the types of inferences drawn from the assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2018, p. 553).

International research on assessment in the social studies field of citizenship education indicates that summative assessment of knowledge is the typical approach, where a common way to assess students' citizenship knowledge is to evaluate memorized knowledge rather than the knowledge about the processes behind those facts (Inkeri et al., 2013; Paaske et al., 2023). Consequently, students should be expected to utilize their content knowledge in an assessment. A study on European teachers' assessment of democratic citizenship competences highlights possible reasons behind teachers' preference for summative assessment of knowledge. Paaske et al. (2023) find that the expectations of school systems and parents influence teachers' hesitation to implement formative assessment in citizenship education, leading to tensions in teaching practices. In addition, the teachers perceive that formative assessment explicitly focusing on attitudes and values related to democratic citizenship competencies is 'dangerous waters', and express concern about their own personal biases – that assessing attitudes and values in a reliable manner is challenging.

Norwegian research on assessment in social studies is limited (Skjæveland, 2020). However, a study on assessment practices of Norwegian social studies teachers in upper secondary school indicates that they are well-versed in both summative and formative assessment (Langø & Børhaug, 2022). Moreover, in relation to formative assessment, the teachers emphasize using formative feedback to students. In this context, the teacher's assessment in social studies should focus on how the task is performed, the grade, the student's learning process and/or the student's self-regulation (Grønlund, 2011).

In the proposed model, goals and assessment are subject-dependent categories. Moreover, they serve as variables for the choices made when planning and conducting teaching. However, within the framework of the model, they are not operationalizable and understandable for the student until they are integrated into a task-based context (Antun, 2022). This applies to both types of assessment, which, when combined, form an effective approach to evaluating students within the context of rich tasks.

In continuation, I will elucidate the last didactic category of the model. In the final part of my presentation of this category, I will also provide an example of a rich task in social studies to demonstrate the model's usage in content selection.

Categorical Bildung

Introducing the overarching didactic category, in accordance with the structure of the relation model where categories are interrelated and influence each other, will have implications for them. In Figure 2 categorical Bildung is placed in the centre in order to preserve the dialectical connection between material and formal Bildung. Bildung becomes categorical Bildung in the double sense when a content has opened up categorically to the student, and the student, because of the categorical insights, experiences, and perceptions she has gained, has been opened up to this content, referred to as the double-sided opening (Klafki, 1963). Content identified by the teacher as fulfilling the criteria of exemplary, elementary, or fundamental has the potential to create categorical Bildung. Hence, a connection between the two different types of Bildung (material and formal) is forged in the content when, through the concrete, something general, overarching, and abstract becomes illuminated for the student (Straum, 2018; Meyer & Rakhkochkine, 2018).

In teaching rich tasks, categorical Bildung may be attained through various interactions between the didactic categories. Similar to Hiim & Hippe's model, the new model has as a starting point that didactic categories should ideally be weighted more or less equally. However, as categorical Bildung constitutes a key part of the framework, the importance of content selection becomes particularly highlighted. Consequently, my model places additional emphasis on the connection between teacher, student and content to categorical Bildung through the teacher-studying-learning process.

Teaching must be connected to didactic relational thinking, which, in accordance with the model, revolves around the idea that didactic categories serve as analytical tools to highlight the tensions and connections between various fundamental aspects of teaching. In other words, we must bring the model's didactic categories in to play (Hiim & Hippe, 1998). Starting from categorical Bildung, the relation to each of the other categories constitutes guidelines and influences the overarching category. Thus, content selection for tasks should be structured on content wherein the teacher aiming to facilitate learning of a categorical nature, allowing through the concrete, something general and abstract to be experienced, understood, and applied in new contexts. The topic of social studies content should accordingly be related to students' lifeworld so that the task becomes more congruous and engaging. In selecting content, the teacher must reflect on herself and her understanding of the didactic relation to studying. She must also thoroughly consider goals, frameworks and assessment, and bear in mind the dynamics of the interrelatedness of the categories during the teaching process.

When categorial Bildung is connected to teaching, Klafki (2000) proceeds from a commitment to the current curricula in schools. The suggested model also underlines this with the goals and frameworks categories. Furthermore, educational content should reveal fundamental issues, conditions, possibilities, general principles, regularities,

values and methods (Klafki, 1963). According to Klafki, it is the teacher's task to examine the content of the curricula with the help of questions for didactic analysis. Thereby the teacher can uncover the potential of the prescribed educational content for categorical Bildung, considering the class and the teacher's own educational intentions (Jank & Meyer, 2006, p. 177). In Klafki's (2000) proposal for didactic analysis, teachers are invited to analyse the content they consider teaching by looking at its educational substance. The aim is to allow students to develop categorical Bildung (Meyer & Rakhkochkine, 2018). In this context, Klafki requires every teacher preparing for teaching to answer the simple question of whether what they have to offer the students is worth the effort. To this end, he has formulated five fundamental questions. These questions are useful when investigating possible content for rich assignments. The analysis involves a didactic interpretation of potential task content when planning instructional design. If the content satisfies the questions, it displays the potential to develop students' categorical Bildung (Klafki, 2000). These questions can thus be useful for content selection while adhereing to the propopsed model's framework.

The following is an example of a didactic analysis of social studies content for a rich task on historical periodization related to the Middle Ages. The teaching session is partly student-led. Before the session, students should prepare by engaging with educational content on the topic as homework. Half of the time is dedicated to conveying essential subject matter, while the other half is spent on solving a task related to the topic. The problem statement is formulated as follows:

1) Create a timeline based on the traditional understanding of the Middle Ages (500–1500). Include events/dates and processes highlighted as central in this period.

2) Create an alternative timeline based on a slightly different understanding of the Middle Ages. Include events/dates and processes considered central in this period.

In line with Figure 2, it can be fruitful to apply Klafki's five fundamental questions to the content of the rich assignment to determine whether it is suitable for use in teaching. In other words, subject content should display overt potential for developing categorical Bildung among students. Hence, the assignment on periodization taken as an example will be investigated for the following criteria.

1) **The exemplary significance of the task content**: While the task treats the concept of periodization in the context of the Middle Ages, it is also exemplary for other historical periods in Norwegian and world history.

2) **The relevance here and now for the students**: Most students have experience using digital software to create multimodal content, such as timelines. By allowing students to use a skill many of them already possess, they may gain a deeper understanding of the concept of periodization as they visually construct a timeline.

3) **The significance for the students' future**: Periodization involves organizing history into different parts to highlight specific developments during the period. By working on the task, students gain insight into ways of extracting key features and events in history. In the future, students may encounter situations, both in their own lives and in their contemporary world, where the ability to sort out and highlight specific parts of history or narrative, such as development trends or change processes, will be relevant.

4) **The structure of the content**: The topic of periodization includes information about what characterizes a historical period, what periodization revolves around, why it is useful and what typically characterizes periodization, e.g. the historian's perspective, contemporary values, etc. These viewpoints and their connections form an initial outline of the content for periodization. Such an outline can also specify the minimum knowledge about the content and topic that students should acquire (Jank & Meyer, 2006, p. 167).

5) **The accessibility and presentation of the content**: Periodization can be introduced using a situation related to how the news and thus the view of the world is largely shaped for today's students. One can start with a historical case related to a central current event. For example, the war in Ukraine can be applied as a starting point. This can be connected with events preceding the war that were important in other historical periods and may be pointed to as determinants for the current situation. An example is the demolition of the Berlin Wall, which marked the end of the historical era of the Cold War. Such examples can help apply the insights about periodization, add nuance and improve understanding.

Considering the key characteristics of various school subjects, Klafki's didactic analysis is particularly well-suited for analysing social studies content. This is especially true for the third question, which stresses the importance of content knowledge that students will need to be ready for future societal challenges – in other words, social content that facilitates learning for an undefined future. Meyer & Rakhkochkine (2018, p. 22) support this claim by stating, 'if he [Klafki] had analysed how far or how close the school subjects are to his categorical Bildung analysis, he would have found that they are good for the social subjects [. . .], but only to some extent for mathematics [. . .] and for the arts'.

Concluding remarks

The point of departure for the article is the following research question: *Which didactic categories should be included in a model for teaching social studies to support the planning and implementation of rich tasks?* In addressing this question, I propose a didactic tool for social studies educators. The model serves as both a framework for research on practice and a resource for the development of social studies curricula. Employing it as an analytical tool during lesson or course evaluations can help ensure and document that key aspects of the teaching and learning process are considered. However, selecting only a few categories for examination would undermine the model's insistence on relational thinking within didactics. The analytical approach must strike a balance, as not all elements can be equally addressed. A semantic theoretical lens should be applied for studies utilizing the model, as well as for its evaluation. This involves qualitative, interpretive methods to explore how teachers and students construct and derive meaning within the teaching and learning process.

With the model, I aim to shed light on what I consider one of the fundamental aspects of teaching: The educator's dual role as a transmitter of knowledge and a facilitator of students' learning. For me, this role requires a pronounced connection to key concepts

and elements of school subjects, grounded in content knowledge. The model is intended to assist educators in creating and carrying out rich tasks in social studies, supporting lesson planning and content selection that is both meaningful to students and responsive to contemporary societal developments. In social studies, this is a key concern given the subject's mandate to cultivate active, critically thinking citizens.

The model highlights how educators, through rich tasks, can address and integrate current societal issues and challenges into their teaching. Students can engage with content knowledge alongside more practical, task-oriented activities. In this context, the educator must consider students' existing knowledge, attitudes and prior experiences when designing tasks. Furthermore, I would also underline teacher's role as a guide, requiring the deployment of specific skills to provide ongoing feedback and support. This type of feedback should help students better understand their progress and areas for improvement.

The framework of the model emphasizes a hermeneutic, interpretative and heuristic approach to connecting subject content to practical application in teaching (Deng, 2021; Shirley, 2009). It points to how knowledge is situated and produced through an interactive process predicated on social action, highlighting the crucial role of language in the process (Burr & Dick, 2017). The model integrates key didactic categories and their relations, providing a foundation for planning and carrying out rich tasks in social studies.

However, no singular didactic model can address the complexity of teaching and learning situations educators encounter. Students exhibit various ways of reasoning and may respond to teaching differently than expected. Unlike the didactic relation model (cf. Bjørndal & Lieberg, 1978), which has been denounced for passing itself off as capturing the whole – implying that the variables it includes are both necessary and sufficient (Strand & Kvernbekk, 2000) – my proposed model adopts a more modest approach by identifying selected categories as key for supporting teaching rich tasks. Furthermore, the didactic relation model has been criticized for lacking a theoretical foundation, which hinders critical scrutiny. In contrast, the new model incorporates a foundation and theoretical lens that interconnects with the didactic categories, thereby providing a basis for critical evaluation.

In this article, I have intended to illuminate the underlying dynamics of the didactic categories within the new model and their interconnections with the teacher-studying-learning process and categorical Bildung. With the dialectical interpretation of the structure of Bildung as categorical Bildung, Klafki's (1963) objective was to foster students' self-determination and participation in socio-political matters. By merging Klafki's theory with a revised version of Hiim & Hippe's relation model and adding the concept of the teaching-studying-learning process, my goal with the new model is to advance the teaching of rich tasks that may improve students' knowledge acquisition and understanding of social studies content – by implementing a theory that interconnect students with subject knowledge and skills.

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