

## Literary discussions in Swedish and Norwegian Language Arts classrooms

The aim of this study is to investigate how fiction is discussed in Swedish and Norwegian Language Arts classrooms. In a time when young people seem to become less interested in reading, it is important that they meet interesting and challenging texts in school. Fiction can be a good option, since it can give those who read aesthetical experiences, and make them understand how other people live their lives (Nussbaum, 1990). Another reason why it is beneficial to focus on fiction is the fact that an interesting plot in a novel, or a short story, has the potential to capture the reader's interest.

Since literary texts can be difficult to understand, it is crucial that students learn how to interpret them. One way to learn this is to discuss literary texts with others. However, since all discussions do not lead to a deeper understanding of the text, it is important to find out what aspects in the discussions benefit respectively limit readers' possibilities to understand the text and its meaning.

In this study, theoretical approaches are drawn from Langer (2011) and her theory of literary envisionment and envisionment-building classrooms. She claims that a person's understanding of a text evolves during the reading process, especially when he or she discusses it with others and gets the opportunity to take part of other people's experiences.

In order to investigate what characterizes discussions about literary texts, I will analyse video-recorded Language Arts lessons from the LISA-studies in Norway and Sweden. The PLATO-manual (Grossman, 2015) has been used to code these lessons, and the coding will help me find adequate segments to analyse. My study will, however, mainly have a qualitative approach, and consequently I will explore *what* the participants of the literary discussions actually say and *how* they interact with each other.

In the Norwegian LISA-material Gabrielsen, Blikstad-Balas & Tengberg (2019) identified eight lessons where classroom discussions about literary texts took place. In these discussions the focus was on developing understanding rather than on what is "right" or "wrong". It remains to be seen if similar patterns can be found in the Swedish material. When comparing literary instruction in two different countries, it is possible to get a perspective that is not available when a study is performed in a domestic context. This is one reason why this study will contribute with new knowledge about literary discussions.

## References

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