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## You Can Find It in the Text!

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A Learning Study on what is necessary for students in 4th and 5th grade to discern in order to develop their abilities of inferential comprehension in works of fiction particularly of characters traits

Inferential comprehension is important because not everything in the text is explicit, which requires students to interact more with the text to gain a deeper understanding of the story and the characters. Therefore, the reader must generate inferences that fill in the gaps, in this case, about the characters. There is a need to study the ability to make inferences in closer detail because it is a complex ability which causes considerable challenges for the students.

The present study is based on the awareness of a common problem for teachers in primary school, namely the challenge of teaching inferential reading in a successful way. Accordingly, there is a need to identify and specify what the pupils need to discern in order to develop their abilities in inferential comprehension so that teachers will gain knowledge about which critical aspects to focus on in order to make the teaching of inferential reading more successful. More, specifically, the research team would like to generate knowledge about what 4th and 5th grade students (10-12 years old) need to discern in works of fiction focusing particularly on character traits and how teaching can make it possible for students to develop this skill.

The theoretical framework used in this research, Variation Theory, states that, to improve students' learning, attention must be paid to the object of learning, which ability that needs to be improved, and which critical aspects that are necessary for the learner to discern (Marton & Runesson, 2015; Marton, 2015; Lo, 2012). A basic assumption in Variation Theory is that people learn by seeing differences, not by seeing sameness (Marton, 2015). The method with which this study is conducted is Learning Study, an interventionist, iterative, classroom-based approach, characterized by the double aim of improving teaching while developing theory. In the research process, the aim is to find out which aspects are critical for the students to discern in order to develop the abilities of inferential reading, and how the critical aspects could be made visible in the teaching.

Two primary school teachers in Swedish (the official language of Sweden and a school subject) and the teacher-researcher collaborated to plan, teach, evaluate, refine, and analyse a series of six lessons in an iterative process with the Variation Theory as the pedagogical principle. Empirical data consists of interviews, pre- and post-lesson assessments, and video recordings of the lessons.

The result of the study contributes to previous research by identifying and specifying what the students need to discern in order to develop their inferential comprehension and how the critical aspects can be taught in a successful way. Primary and secondary teachers may find these results of great interest because they are related and important to their own teaching.

**References:**

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