

Engagement when reading fiction in various formats: A study of teachers' and students' understanding of reading engagement in Grade 7-9 Swedish language classes

Being engaged in reading fiction is a crucial starting point for developing literacies (Guthrie et al., 2012) and achieving aesthetic experiences of fiction (Rosenblatt, 2002). Fiction could though be read in various formats, and previous research shows that adolescents certainly do have an interest in multimodal texts (Nordberg, 2015). Even if recent studies have shown student interest in reading is not in decline (Tattersall Wallin et al., 2022), many adolescents report that they only read if they are compelled to do so (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2019).

However, teachers and students could prove to have different viewpoints regarding engagement in reading fiction. From hermeneutic phenomenology, where 'lifeworld phenomenology' is central (Bengtsson, 2005; Ricœur, et al., 1993), this PhD project aims to investigate how teachers and students in Grade 7-9 Swedish language classes understand which prerequisites there are for students to be engaged in reading fiction. Both teachers and students have, and will, participate in semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

The findings from the first sub-study reveal that adopting a multimodal fiction format, including various digital resources, may hold didactic relevance, especially regarding the enhancement of the students' aesthetic experiences. However, this is not the crucial prerequisite for engagement, according to the teachers. The teachers find that the most significant prerequisite for reading engagement is satisfied when teachers and students interact with each other through fiction in safe collaborating learning environments. How students understand engagement and the prerequisites they identify as relevant to reading engagement are questions that are in process to be answered by upcoming classroom observations and interviews with students.

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