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Toddlers' interaction in a story-time setting

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Project: Children's Early Learning

- a longitudinal study, started 2005 in Sweden
- the aim: to study the quality of preschool related to children's learning.
- 38 preschools are included, the children are born 2004 and 2005, altogether 230 children.
- one of the areas in which children's learning has been traced is early literacy.
- financed by The Swedish Research Council
- supervised by Professor Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson, Ass. Prof. Sonja Sheridan and Ass. Prof. Eva Johansson



Early childhood literacy

Our point of departure is that every child learns to read and write in his or her own way, depending on the child's opportunities, experiences, interests, the circumstances in which the child is involved and the people with whom he or she is integrated (Gustafsson & Mellgren, 2005).

Theoretical framework: variation, socio cultural



- In Sweden preschool embraces children aged one to five, and constitutes the first step of the educational system
- Introducing written language as a subject area has been one of the tasks of preschool and the preschool class since 1998.
- Despite a long preschool tradition and a nearly completely built out preschool system, we have limited knowledge of its effects on children's learning (Pramling Samuelsson, Sheridan & Johansson, 2003).



Method

- Video-observation of an arranged story-time setting at the pre-school.
- 1 – 3 year olds.
- 230 children/settings are observed.
- one preschool teacher read the picture book (Tidholm, 2004) to one child at a time.
- the teacher let the child play with three-dimensional figures and some other objects related to the story.



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Everybody can ride along

(Anna-Clara Tidholm, Alfabetas förlag 2004).





- The story is addressing 2–3 years old children.
- It is about friendship and the importance of the simple friendship of everyday life.
- A little girl drives a blue lorry. She picks up a number of passengers: a Father Christmas hanging around , a pondering pig, a boy that has tumbled in the street, a freezing dog and a sad teddy-bear. Together they go to the girl's house for a party.



- The children are not familiar with the book before this setting.
- The text tells about what the characters are doing or feeling.
- The text and the pictures in this book are complementary, the illustrations tell a little bit more details than the text.
- The book has plain pictures painted in water-colours.
- The girl and the boy look very alike. They have the same out-fit, trousers and t-shirt in green and blue. One of them has green trousers and blue t-shirt and the other has blue trousers and green t-shirt.
- The teachers are told to arrange the story-time setting as usual and interact with the child and invite to communication.



- When the teacher reads the book and the dialogue with the child has ended the teacher picks up the objects/figures which are made as specific research material for this setting. The aim of this objects connected to the story is to make it possible for the child to re-tell the story.
- The lorry is rather similar to the lorry in the pictures.
- The boy, the girl and the teddy-bear are soft and almost identical with the pictures.
- The pig looks rather alike the pig in the book.
- The dog is not so like, even if it has spots as the dog in the book, and some children name it “a cow”.
- Father Christmas is made in wool-yarn, it is grey with a red cap and his beard is made of cotton-wool.
- The house is made of an empty shoe cardboard box, with a door windows illustrated on the front.



Pilot-study

- language and communication aspects of story reading
- 8 preschools, 55 children
- individual video observations, 15-20 minutes for each child in a story-time setting



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Preliminary results

A variation in the child's interaction with the story/text in the setting.



In the analysing process we looked for six aspects:

- listening
- turn over the pages
- pointing at details in the pictures
- naming details in the pictures
- interacting with the story or the pictures
- retelling the story in the play



Categories

A – clearly retelling the story

B – partly retelling the story

C – interacting with the story

D – pointing and naming details

E – just listening to the reading



	1;4-1;5	1;6-1;11	2:0-2:5	2;6-2;11	Sa
A		1	4	1	6
B		6	1	2	9
C	1	8	4		13
D	2	12	3		17
E	2	6	1	1	10
	5	33	13	4	



Further analysing

- the teacher's acting
- genus
- questionnaire to the parents
- questionnaire to the teachers
- preschool quality - the quality is described in terms of the Early Childhood Education Rating Scale ECERS (Harms & Clifford), as an external evaluation as well as a self-evaluation.