Title:
Improving Reading and Interpretation in 7th Grade. A Comparative Study of the Effects of Two Different Models for Reading Instruction

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Abstract
This presentation concerns the potentials for developing advanced skills for reading and interpretation in secondary school. The study presented is a comparative analysis of two models for reading instruction. International comparisons such as the PIRLS and PISA tests implicate that reading achievements of Swedish students is declining. Similar conclusions are drawn from national periodic surveys. In addition, international research has suggested that explicit classroom instruction on powerful reading strategies at a higher level is rare not only in Swedish schools but in schools in many countries. In order to work with students’ literary understanding, the previous research also proposes that teacher and students need to share an ongoing dialogue on joint reading experiences, and that students need challenging writing assignments which require them to think for themselves and to develop their own body of interpretive resources. But what difference does the choice of teaching model really make to students’ development as readers? During six weeks six separate study groups in seventh grade in a Swedish school participated in a design-based teaching project. The purpose was to gather more knowledge of how different teaching strategies may affect students’ development of advanced reading skills. Data was collected from students’ written assignments, interviews, and from classroom observations. The study attempts to provide an empirical corroboration of previously theoretically founded propositions. Findings indicate that the choice of teaching strategy does play an important role to students’ learning. However, in order to make normative judgments on one teaching model’s advantage over the other, further evidence will be necessary. In addition, to study the implementation and the effects of instructional change is a challenging field of research which requires an array of sophisticated methods that combine qualitative and quantitative analyses.