

A new understanding of reading and the possibilities of reading in Waldorf education

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Reading is one of the core subjects in school and in education. Reading is important to be able to take part in our contemporary societies. When we know how to read it comes automatically to us, we can´t not read. In schools children are expected to learn how to read. They are also expected to develop an understanding of what they read and an interest in and inner motivation for reading. To be able to go through school and education we have to read, but at the same time it is obvious that pupils and students don´t read like they used to. Something has changed. This is a question for schools, for education and for teachers but also for the society as a whole. What should we do with reading? What is the aim of reading and is it possible to reinforce reading in education? A few years ago I wrote a master thesis about 11 year old pupil´s reading experiences (Månsson D´Souza, 2020). I was interested in finding out more about the pupils experiences with reading, their feelings when they were reading and their thoughts about their reading experiences. The pupils told me about their reading and gave me new insights of what the individual experience with reading is and what it means to the reader, the readers prerequisites for reading, the possibility of inner objectives for reading, the intrinsic value of the reading experiences and a connection to ideas of a lifelong process, developing literacy and experiences of Bildung in school. Three things stood out in the interviews with the 11 year old children, and that was an unclear comprehension of the concept and content of reading, the implicit expectations of what reading experiences are and might be, and the possibility of something more than reading skills being important for reading experiences. In my lecture I will explore the different parts of reading, and ways of reading and present a pedagogical idea with practical implications about reading in school. How learning to read, practicing to read better, and understanding reading can be separated from the intrinsic value of reading, the inner experiences, the imagination and the inner pictures that reading can develop, so that time can be given for both these ways of reading in school. I will do this in connection to my Master Thesis *Läsoplevelser – Elevers upplevelser av läsning som inspiration för läsning i skolan* (Månsson D´Souza, 2020), *The reading environment* (Chambers, 2019), *Readicide – How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it* (Gallagher, 2009), *Envisioning Literature* (Langer, 2017) and *Literature as Exploration* (Rosenblatt, 2002). I will also connect my lecture to the work of Gert J. J. Biesta (2014) and Jesper Sjöström och Ruhi Tyson (2022).