

# Abstract

Title: Early childhood literacy<sup>1</sup>: Becoming literate.  
Language: Swedish, with a summary in English  
Keywords: Children, teaching, learning, environment, interaction, writing, reading, literacy, multimodal, early childhood literacy, preschool, school, phenomenography, sociocultural perspective, action research  
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The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the knowledge of how early childhood literacy can be understood in pre-school and school, focusing on ages 1-8 years. We assume that children are competent and creative and generate meaning in the way they deal with text. Our research question in all the studies is: How should we as teachers in pre-school encourage, react to and contribute to developing early childhood literacy?

The theoretical framework of our studies is an example of research inspired by action research. Our didactic starting-point is that children's learning should be understood from the perspective of the learner. The data is analysed and discussed from the perspective of phenomenography and variation theory. We also apply a sociocultural perspective in order to see learning to express oneself in writing as a communicative process and in the light of social and cultural conditions for children's knowledge and learning.

In two of the empirical studies (I & II), the data were derived from interviews and writing tasks, in one of the studies (III) the data consisted of observations, while in the last study (IV), the data consisted of observations and interviews.

The results of the four studies comprising our thesis show that

- children establish an understanding and an approach to literacy learning at an early age, and that this tends to be stable;
- in pre-school and school there are traditions and things that are taken for granted with regard to children's literacy learning that should be rethought in order to realise the goals of the curricula;
- if pre-school and school fail to collaborate and if the teacher does not take the perspective of the learner/child in learning to express themselves in writing, the individual child will be affected negatively;
- it is a challenge for teachers in pre-school to create an environment that stimulates early childhood literacy, an environment with rich opportunities for functional literacy;
- it should be possible to utilise and develop the multimodal opportunities, such as pictures, colours, shapes, design etc. that have been a tradition in pre-school.

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<sup>1</sup> In our thesis we are using the conceptions "literacy" for children's early reading and writing.