

SAMTALETS MÖJLIGHETER

Om litteratursamtal och
litteraturreception i skolan

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ABSTRACT

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(Potentials of Discussion. On Literature Discussions and Literary Reception in School)

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The objective of this dissertation is literature discussion as a learning activity in school. The aim is to examine the conditions under which literature discussions may help students to develop their reception of a commonly read text, and to examine whether, and how, the discussions may provide the students with opportunities to learn more about, or to develop specific attitudes or perspectives towards, literary reading in general.

A classroom study was conducted during the autumn of 2008 in two different schools, involving four teachers and ten classes in eighth and ninth grade. The data analyses are based upon video recordings of authentic classroom discussions, field notes, interviews with teachers and students, as well as written response statements from the students both before and after participating in the discussion. The students were divided into seventeen groups, and they all read and discussed the same text: "Över spåret" ("Across the track"), a short story written by Swedish author Majgull Axelsson.

The analyses combine theories of verbal interaction with theories of literary reception. Particular interest is devoted to 1) the organization and interactional patterns of the discussions, 2) the forms of reading towards which the students are being oriented, and 3) the dynamic exchange between individual and collective discernments and verbalizations of the text, as a response-inviting structure. Finally, I examine the students' and the teachers' own estimation of the educational value of discussing the text. The results suggest that the students are able to pinpoint a range of different perspectives through which their reception of the text has been enriched.

The conclusion, hence, is that literature discussions may accommodate some desirable educational potentials. These are summarized in the final chapter of the book. However, the study also discloses a number of conditions that need to be filled in order for these potentials to become both attainable and functional. These involve making room for students' own questions, monitoring and facilitating a flux of different forms of reading, and for students to recognize each others' comments and thoughts as relevant sources of new knowledge. These insights have theoretical and practical consequences both for the teaching of literature and for research on literature education.

Keywords: *literature discussions, literary reception, book talk, literature education, interaction, interaction analysis, classroom discourse, reader-response theory, reception study, didactics, forms of reading, literature instruction, teaching of literature, meta-cognition, reading research, dialogue, immersion, video analysis*

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