

Ann-Catherine Henriksson

Preface



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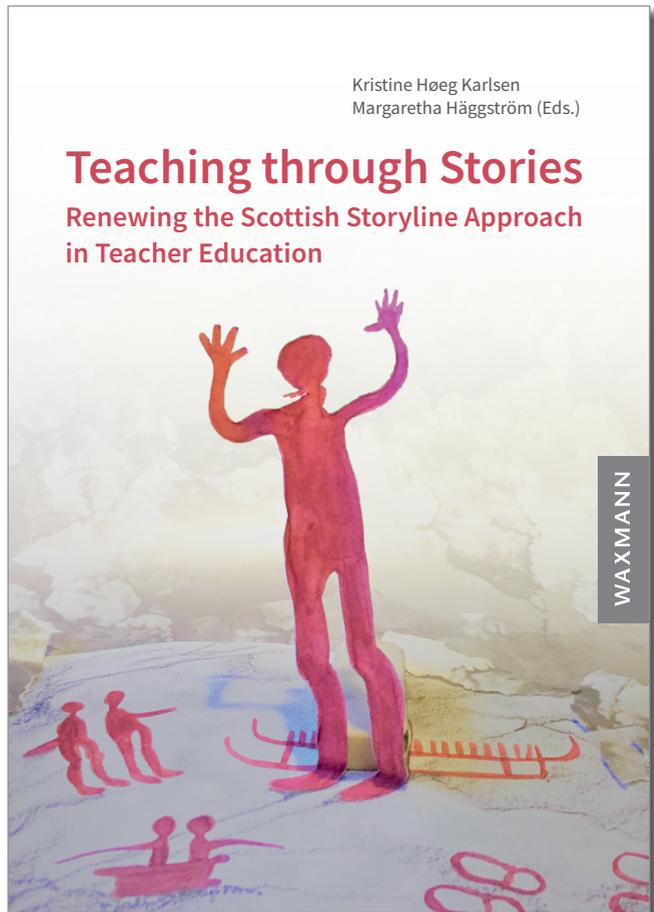
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Teaching through Stories

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Preface

Learning is often considered to be a direct result of teaching. But the experienced, conscious teacher knows this cause-and-effect mechanism operates in both directions. Teachers observe students' learning, gather important information, and adjust their teaching accordingly. Those who adopt The Scottish Storyline Approach often see and experience how students are involved and motivated by the theme at hand in a very special way. Storyline emphasises the students' active role in learning, and the importance of encountering open and engaging questions that lack fixed answers. Positive experiences have led teachers at different stages of education in a variety of countries to adopt The Storyline Approach. Over the decades, its international dissemination has been accompanied by increasing international research interest, although several issues are yet to be resolved. As researchers, we cannot be satisfied with the subjective opinions of teachers and students, and look to deeper investigation. This anthology is therefore to be welcomed, filling a research gap addressing the connection between theory and practice, school and university, as well as teacher studies and teaching practice. The authors have chosen to focus on the use of Storyline in teacher and higher education. Requirements and good experiences of good quality in teacher education spread like rings on the water to the field of education.

Educational steering documents in many countries emphasise the importance of students working in a more interdisciplinary fashion. Working methods are described by concepts such as phenomenon-based, cross-disciplinary, problem-based, and project-based, and there is often some uncertainty about the definitions of the different concepts. Various interdisciplinary methods come with rationales such as the reality around us is cross-cutting, and the way of working can put knowledge into context, which increases meaningfulness, perceived as motivational. At primary school level, there is a long tradition of working on different themes. Yet, from the subject teacher perspective, we encounter concerns that the students' subject knowledge suffers when interdisciplinary approaches are applied. Storyline was created in the 1960s in Scotland, in response to a need identified by teachers regarding a new directive on the subject integration of multiple curricula. The challenge for approaches like Storyline is to show that interdisciplinary methods do not compromise students' subject-specific knowledge. Good models for subject integration, realised as a combination of theory, reflection and practice, must be introduced into teacher education at all stages, if we expect practitioners to use them after their training. For this to be possible, we need collaboration between teacher educators, the courage to emerge from proven paths, and research-based models.

While many key pedagogical ideas have persisted since the advent of The Storyline Approach, there has also been a slew of developments within school systems, both nationally and internationally. Core competencies such as digital literacy and multiliteracy are, in accordance with the European Commission recommendation (European Union, 2019), strongly emphasised in many curricula. Sustainable development and

the work to meet global goals in accordance with Agenda 2030 permeate many steering documents. This anthology dedicates a chapter specifically to documenting research on Storyline as a tool in teaching about sustainable development. Alongside the assessment of the pupil's specific subject knowledge in different school subjects, there is an increasing need for more versatile and inclusive assessment of both content and form.

The many changes bring challenges. To what extent can Storyline be and needs to be updated in line with these changes? A classic expression within Storyline is that "structure gives freedom". For Storyline practitioners, this means striking a balance between adhering to the core structures and opening up to the 2020s. For the authors of this anthology, it is important to scrutinise the research on and new trends within Storyline with a critical eye. Updates must not be made at the expense of the core ideas of The Storyline Approach. Therefore, I welcome, for instance, the chapter on manipulation.

This anthology is intended not only for pedagogues active in teacher education. It will also be of great value to teachers within in-service education, and students and teachers in the field who will find support in drawing conclusions based on their experiences and teaching practice.

Ann-Catherine Henriksson

European Union (2019). *Key competences for lifelong learning*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
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