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Storyline: A Way to Understand Multimodality in a Learning Context and Teacher Education, in Theory and Practice



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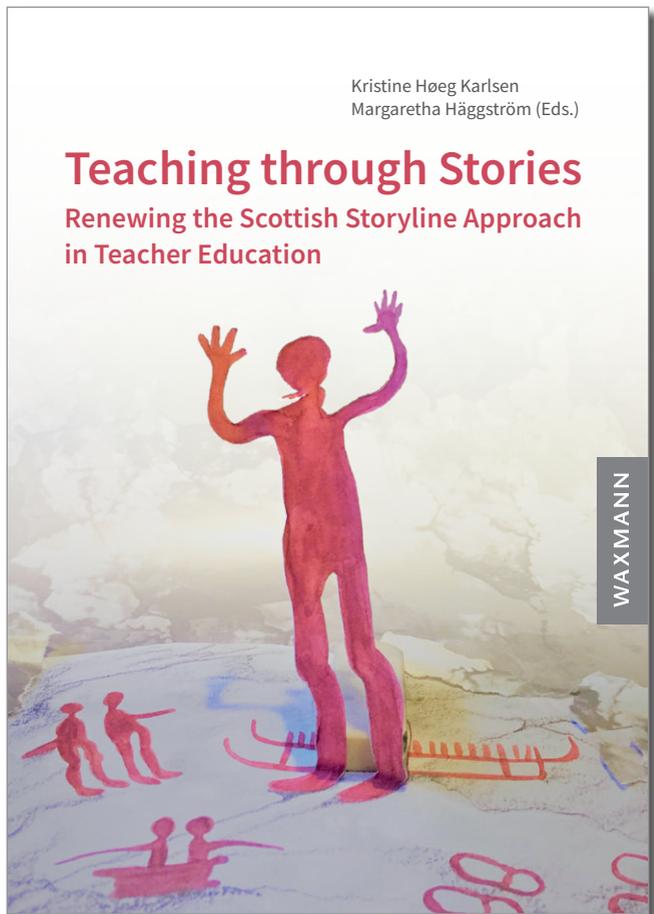
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Chapter 5

Storyline: A Way to Understand Multimodality in a Learning Context and Teacher Education, in Theory and Practice

Margaretha Häggström, Eva-Lena Happstadius and Anna Udén

Abstract. This chapter aims to shed light on how Storyline in teacher education can bridge the gap between pedagogical theories and pedagogical practice. We do this by using both research-based knowledge, and proven experience. Theoretically, this study is based on a model by Lindström (2012) which includes four dimensions of (aesthetic) learning: learning *about, in, with* and *through*. Empirically, the study is grounded in our own practice, and in particular a Storyline, which has involved approximately 500 student teachers. It has been developed and carried out over a period of five years. The implementation of a Storyline was a way to both bring methodology into teacher education and to contextualise the notion of multimodality. In this chapter we discuss three assignments incorporated in the Storyline, which have been identified as essential to the student teachers' comprehensions regarding both a Storyline's content and learning potential, and a multimodal teaching and learning approach. Our conclusion, in the view of Lindström's model, is that the learning process, actuated in the Storyline, interlinks theory and practice into a strong entity.

Keywords: Multimodality, theory and pedagogical practice, proven experience, learning process

Introduction

The understanding of theory and practice as two sides of the same coin is a major issue in Teacher Education Programmes in Sweden (Hegender, 2010; Karlsson Lohmander, 2015; Häggström & Udén, 2018) as well as in other countries (Hennisen, Beckers & Moerkerke, 2017; Peercy & Troyan, 2017). In order to remove barriers and create bridges between pedagogical theories and classroom practice, we have implemented a one-week Storyline, included in a course on Swedish for primary school, in teacher education. Storyline is one way to implement methodology into the classroom of becoming teachers. During the training-based courses, the student teachers are expected to connect literature and pedagogical theory with the actual task of teaching in classroom at school with pupils (Häggström & Udén, 2018). On the basis of the complex practice of teaching, the students are also expected to theorise what happens in the classroom. Additionally, they have to make their own lesson plans, anchored in pedagogical research. Didactical issues are to be raised, specified and given practical forms and to be discussed. Back at campus they have to report their experiences with regard to current pedagogical theories and methodology, and to draw conclusions that will help them forward. This is quite a challenge. We have noticed that students often discuss *what* they

have done during the training and to a certain extent *how* they did it. This is also in line with Lauvås & Handal (1992/2015) who argue that we need a more profound discussion about *why* student teachers have done something in the classroom (Lauvås & Handal, 1992/2015). This why-question needs to be addressed in teaching practice as well as in learning experiences. This is one core aspect of teaching (Curtis, 2013; Augustsson & Boström, 2016; Gidlund & Boström, 2017). Our Storyline is an attempt to help our student teachers to relate theory with their own experiences and knowledge. In particular, we want to implement the notion of multimodality and thereby to help our students to gain the ability to use multimodal methods in their upcoming profession. Walsh (2015) found in her study, that when students were involved in multimodal tasks, they were enabled to articulate their own learning, and that there was opportunity for both students and teachers to scaffold learning. In line with Walsh's results, we presuppose that students will be helped in their understanding of multimodality by taking part in this multimodal Storyline.

In this chapter we present a Storyline conducted in teacher education, and we do this with a threefold aim. Both in the Swedish curriculum for compulsory school (The National Agency for Education, 2011) and in the higher education ordinance (Ministry of Education and Research, 2014), two strands are emphasised as the foundation for children's education and teacher education. On the one hand is scientific ground or research-based knowledge, on the other hand is proven experience or best practice. The former is the dominating aspect at the university and teacher education, whilst the latter has been side-lined in the major discussion of teacher education; teacher education has become part of academisation, i.e. theoretical content is centred rather than reflecting on school practice (Carlgren, 2009). This chapter is an attempt to meet a call for counterbalancing the present bias in the direction of scientific basis; hence we base the text on our proven experience. However, we do this theoretically, using a theoretical model by Lindström (2012). The reason for this choice of theory is to respond to and to refute the prevailing appreciation of practical classroom methods as lacking scientific foundations (Morberg, 1999), and to respond to the critics contending that methodology in teacher education has been reproductive and prescriptive. The second purpose is to look at Storyline from a multimodal perspective and thus to make a contribution to the theoretical discussion on Storyline's learning processes. Thirdly, we want to bring in some of the student teacher's voices on Storyline, focusing on their meaning-making as becoming teachers.

The chapter is structured in five key parts. First, we describe Storyline as a multimodal pedagogical approach, building on a compound theoretical foundation. Second, we describe a theoretical model of learning (Lindström, 2008), which underpins the use of Storyline in teacher education, in particular the needs for student teachers to not only learn *about* pedagogical theories, but *through* them. Third, the general idea of the Storyline used in our teacher education is outlined, which is followed by reflections through the theoretical model by Lindström (2008). Fourth, we present some of our students' perceptions of the Storyline work. The chapter ends with concluding thoughts on the dichotomous attributed theory and practice in teacher education, and specifically on the learning process of a Storyline.

As previously mentioned, the Storyline in this study relies on a multimodal perspective (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2008; Danielsson & Selander, 2016; Jewitt et al., 2016). Multimodality characterises communication where images, gestures, sounds, writing and other modalities interact. This Storyline has been developed over a period of five years and this text includes parts from a pilot study in which students' perception of the Storyline was examined. In this text, we have selected student teachers' written statements from an evaluation form in order to exemplify students' anonymous opinions.

As previously stated, we wanted to integrate pedagogical methodology into the course, and we wanted a sustainable thoroughly worked out method which had been tried out for a long period of time. We regard Storyline as such a method. The major focus in this course is on communication, and multimodality has emerged as an appropriate perspective on communication. Specifically, we have included artistic expression and particularly visual art. To us, it is apparent that Storyline and multimodality goes hand in hand. The main theme for the Storyline has been didactics for language developing in grade 1–3 (year 6–9). The content and the framework are mainly the same each time with only small changes. Drama, music and visual art have been part of the course before the Storyline week starts, in preparation for the activities, which might make it easier for some of the students. We have between 75–100 students each semester, who are divided into three classes. One teacher educator leads and facilitates one class; thus, three educators are involved in the Storyline week.

Expanding Storyline's Pedagogical Foundations

The origin theory to underpin the learning processes during a Storyline was based on social-constructive learning theories which consider learning as an active process that produces knowledge (Olusegun, 2015). This puts focus on the learners which makes education student-centred and implies that students have to be active and to use their own experience in the process of knowledge creation (ibid). Constructivism derives from the work of Dewey (2009), Bruner (2002), Vygotsky (1978), and Piaget (1972). Dewey believed that learning is an active process and that students need to be involved in authentic learning situations. He advocated experiential education. Bruner promoted a holistic view on education and developed a scaffolding theory, including structure in learning and its central role in teaching, and how to guide the learner to achieve the task in question. Vygotsky highlighted that social interaction plays a crucial role in learning and developing. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs first on a social level and then on the individual level. Piaget, like Dewey, Bruner and Vygotsky, also believed that learning is an active process. Piaget, whose main interest was children's learning, claims that when children interact with the surrounding world, they continually add new knowledge, building on previous knowledge. One premise of the ideas of these scholars is that learning is the outcome of mental construction, i.e. students learn through putting new experiences and information in conjunction with their previous experiences and knowledge. In addition, it is assumed that learning is affected and influenced by the context; hence learning is situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This view

on learning has had a huge impact on recent learning theories and teaching methods and has constituted a number of education reforms, curricula and syllabus (Olusegun, 2015). However, regarding Storyline, there have been various ways to support this pedagogical approach. For example, activity pedagogy, with historical roots from Comenius (2002) and Rousseau (1979) who both highlight the authentic experience as the most central way to learn. Close to this movement is the philosophy of experiential learning (Dewey, 2009). Dewey argues that problem solving is a creative and effective way to transfer knowledge from concrete experience into abstract thinking. He claims that real experiences involve the senses. The Storyline approach includes influences that correlate with all these ideas; for example, the emphasis on activity, social interaction and scaffolding, experiential education, building on existing knowledge, problem solving and the claim that learning is situated.

Multimodal Perspective on The Storyline Approach

All these substantiating theories are indeed essential, nevertheless, we suggest including a multimodal perspective on Storyline. Multimodality is a theory of communication and social semiotics (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Kress and van Leeuwen argue that all communication is multimodal, which implies different semiotic systems of meaning making. These systems are written and linguistic (vocabulary and grammar), visual (e.g. colours and shapes), aural (e.g. sound, music, silence, noise), spatial (e.g. position, direction, proximity) and gestural (use of facial expressions and body-language). Pedagogical classroom work too, can be understood as multimodal processes (Jewitt, 2008). Classroom work in general is undeniably multimodal; multidimensional and multimodal expressions are intertwined in the process of both teaching and learning. This is manifested in the interaction between the students and the teacher while communicating (Jewitt, 2008). The use of textbooks, picture-books, interactive digital boards, computers and more are already a multimodal communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). By including this perspective, we highlight the significance of the use of different modes of expressions, such as visual arts, drama, rhythm and dance, sounds and music, in addition to written and oral language and also body-language (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2008; Danielsson & Selander, 2016; Jewitt et al., 2016) which we all consider crucial in a Storyline. Accordingly, a Storyline is multimodal. Since Storyline encourages communication of all kind, we have chosen to implement a Storyline in one of our courses: *Language as a communicative resource* (University of Gothenburg, Course Syllabus, 2017).

Learning about and Learning through a Storyline

Our Storyline is based on the idea that students learn *through* and not only *about* content relevant to teacher education. Inspired by Lars Lindström's theory of aesthetic learning we draw on his model of learning *about, in, with* and *through* (Lindström, 2008, 2012). In our case the focus is both on learning the concept of multimodality and learning the pedagogical approach of Storyline. This is done with the assumption that

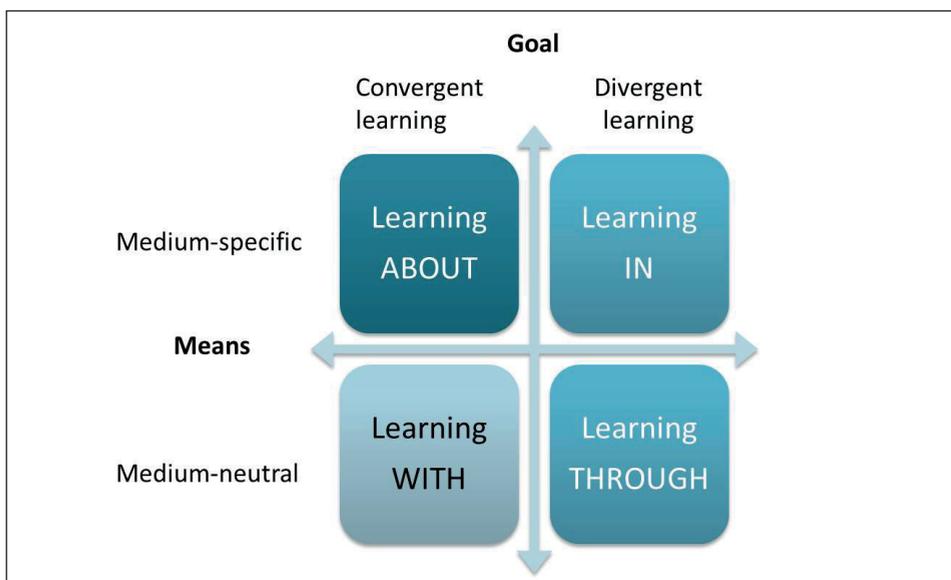


Fig. 1: Four ways of learning (Lindström, 2012).

students teachers need to experience the meaning of multimodality themselves in order to understand the concept. The same applies to the meaning of Storyline, i.e. student teachers need to experience the features of Storyline in order to deeply understand its potential. By extension, this will provide a discussion on how to teach pedagogical theories and methods in teacher education.

By using the model of Lindström (2012) we want to highlight a key aspect of importance for higher education pedagogy, particularly for teacher education. To start with, we need to ask ourselves: what kind of learning is envisioned by implementing a Storyline and multimodality? Storyline and multimodality stands for the *means* (see figure 1). The answer to this question is linked to the *goal* in the figure. The aspect we want to consider is the distinction between learning *about* and learning *in* and *through*. Learning only *about* the concept of multimodality or *about* Storyline as a pedagogical approach, will be limited to *convergent* learning, which is learning something as we learn facts. Thus, it is theoretical knowledge gained by listening to a lecture and/or reading a text and the goal is to achieve basic knowledge which is given in advance. By contrast, learning *in* and *through* multimodality and Storyline opens up for *divergent* learning, which is to involve an active, creative, experiential and often exploratory learning process. The goal here is rather to use previous knowledge in a new way, in new circumstances or contexts and with new intentions and aims (Lindström, 2012). In conclusion, we have to provide both convergent and divergent learning opportunities in order to ensure that our student teachers master basic knowledge about Storyline and multimodality, or whatever knowledge we want them to develop, and that they can use this knowledge in practice; master embodied practise.

Learning *about* multimodality will help students to understand that communication includes several modes that are combined in various ways. Learning *in* and

through multimodality is to try out these modes in different combinations and in new situations. Likewise, learning *about* Storyline will support the understanding of the different features included, i.e. learning *what*. This will also expose the theories behind and *how* to use the pedagogical method across the curricula. Learning *in* and *through* a Storyline makes the students take part in an actual Storyline themselves, and to try the different features. As we already mentioned, learning only *about* is not sufficient. On the other hand, only learning *through* may not give substantial knowledge, even though the knowledge is embodied. As mentioned in the introduction, student teachers also need to know *why* they should include Storyline and multimodality in the classroom. Lindström, too, is very clear that we need a variety of learning assessment tools, and that both convergent and divergent learning is better when combined and intertwined.

Method, Material and Analysis

This study is based on the approach of practice-based research (Rönnerman, 2018) and biographical research on action modes (Zinn, 2004). Practice-based research is commonly used in pedagogical research and educational sciences in order to concentrate research relevant for teacher, teacher education and school practices. One aim is to gain deeper understanding of an educational practice. In this study, we utilise this approach to scrutinise our own practice in order to understand the multimodal tasks used in our Storyline, and thereby to capture student teachers' meaning-making processes. In line with Stenhouse's (1975) reasoning, this might support us, as researching practitioners, to change our existing ways of working. As Stenhouse (1975, p. 143) states: "It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied: they need to study it themselves". However, these kinds of studies also need to be critical and scientifically grounded (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). One purpose of the method of biographical research on action modes is to conceptualise structural categories. In order to do so, we use the model of Lindström (2012) and the four categories of learning. This critical practice-based research has the potential to improve and to develop one's understanding of the practice (Rönnerman, 2018). In order to develop such understanding, we had to gather information and material that could be analysed, interpreted and compiled in the research group. The material included in the study is the course syllabus, the course's Storyline plan and three of its assignments, and students' written course evaluations¹. The Storyline assignments have been chosen since they have been regarded as critical by the students and because of their multimodal character.

The course syllabus, used in the study, is part of teacher education at the University of Gothenburg. As course teachers we already had access to the syllabus. This syllabus is the foundation for how the course is planned in detail, and the Storyline is a crucial component to guide students in reaching the course objectives. Specifically, the Storyline work, aimed at fulfilling four learning goals related to multimodal communication, working models and didactic tools. The Storyline plan has been developed since

1 This particular evaluation took place in the autumn 2015. The quotations are chosen because they are representative for those who answered the evaluation.

2014 by us and other teachers at the university. The course evaluations were collected during a period of three years, thus from six classes entailing approximately 500 students. The evaluations were gathered from the university's digital platform, filled out individually and anonymously by the students, after the course.

The material was analysed and coded through the model of Lindström, and the concepts of learning *about*, *in*, *with* and *through*. In the following, the outcome from the study is displayed by presenting the introduction of the storyline, and the three assignments of the Storyline.

Outcome

Here, we will give a brief description on the Storyline's introduction and how the Storyline proceeds from that introduction, before describing the three assignments studied, which are the basis for the following analysis. Students' written expressions are followed by our interpretations, guided by Lindström's model.

The Introduction and Beginning

We start the Storyline-week with a minor play in the form of a talk-show. It starts with welcoming music and one of the teacher educators is the host, dressed in glittery jacket, dancing through the audience of student teachers, showing a photo-story about Storyline and its benefits. Two guests are invited to the talk-show, (the other two other teacher educators, one in moustache as Steve Bell, one wearing a scarf, being Sallie Harkness), and they represent the founders of Storyline and they are interviewed and critically questioned by the host. Another song about how we should blame everything in society on the teachers, which of course is a humoristic, yet critical, view on the role of teachers, is played. The show ends with a music video by the Swedish group ABBA, called *When I kissed the teacher*. Then the show is followed by a traditional lecture about Storyline, explaining more deeply the features of a Storyline. The whole section ends with a lecture telling about a Storyline conducted in two school-classes, and then there is a break.

Student 2: "From the beginning, I was quite sceptical, but when the teachers showed how to have fun while introducing the Storyline, I was really inspired. I felt I could do something similar myself".

After the break the Storyline starts right away. The teacher educators are now a principal of *The Best School*, and the student teachers are addressed as the principal's employed and carefully selected teachers. Now the Storyline is put into action; key questions are asked, reflected upon, discussed, shared and exposed, characters are created and presented. The students are divided into groups of five, representing a team of teachers, thus, the characters are teachers. Everything that happens during the week affects these characters who will have to solve different problems and create situations, artefacts and constructive dialogues.

Student 4: “One thing that I will bear in mind and take back into the training course”.

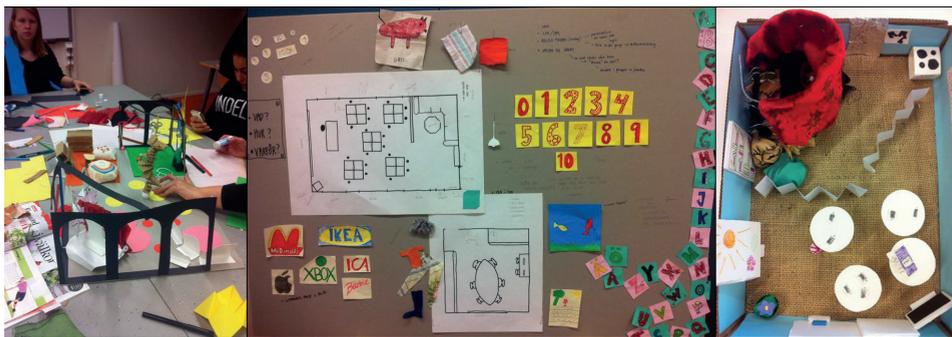
So, why did we choose to start the Storyline like this? First of all, we wanted to “live like we teach”, i.e. we wanted to present Storyline by being *in* a Storyline and *through* multimodal expressions. By doing so, we tried to be role models as teachers and we also demonstrated the *practice* part of a methodology. Additionally, we wanted to start in an active, positive way and “give ourselves” to the student teachers. We also anticipated that this would be an extraordinary experience quite different from the everyday experience of being a student teacher. Furthermore, instead of starting with the convergent teaching tools, we assumed that this lively start would be a way of promoting divergent thinking and facilitating the understanding of Storyline’s pedagogy. Still, we wanted to introduce The Storyline Approach as the thoughtful and developing approach it is. The introduction is therefore *about*, *in*, *with* and *through* Storyline. Though, this is from a teaching point of view, now we wanted to take it to the level of learning.

Three Multimodal Assignments in the Study’s Storyline

We would argue that everything you do in a Storyline is multimodal. Here, we want to highlight three assignments that will expand the common notion of literacy, as meaning reading and writing and maybe verbalising. These assignments include artistic modes in order to promote multimodal communication. Again, we wanted the student teachers to learn in an active and creative way, thus, to learn *in* and *through* different modes and to combine those modes in new and maybe surprising ways. Here, we will concentrate on the assignments of:

- Creating multimodal school environments in order to enhance language developing, indoor or outdoor.
- Planning for and conducting a multimodal language developing lesson.
- Multimodal presentation through *mise-en-scene* (staging), presenting the learning outcome from the Storyline week.

These assignments were essential features of the Storyline narrative and were conducted in character. Key questions preceded the first two assignments, the first in whole class, and the second in the small teacher-team groups. The last assignment was planned altogether in the small group of five students. These different levels of independence follow the idea of scaffolding (Bruner, 2002) and the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). That means that the learner increasingly develops a capability to conduct certain activities or solve some issues with less help and finally without help. In these assignments, course literature builds a foundation, thus we encourage discussions that will help students to connect theory and practice. We will briefly outline these assignments hereinafter and then reflect upon them through the model by Lindström (2012).



Img. 1: Creating multimodal environments. Photo: Margaretha Hægström.

Creating Multimodal Environments

The second day, *The Best School* receives a letter from the municipality executive board, saying that they want all schools to invest in and strengthen language development. They also want the school to adopt and embrace a multimodal perspective on communication. In particular, they call for a multimodal school environment, indoor as well as outdoor. Money is no problem, the motto is: just do whatever you like. The groups have to come up with a prudent plan and present it for the other groups. Each group then will be responsible for one area to develop further, or one classroom each. They start by sketching and then begin to create. The result will be displayed and presented to the class. When all groups have presented their work a joint discussion on learning processes and theories that support their ideas follows.

Student 1: “At last! I have longed for using creativity! Through this task, when we had to discuss what a multimodal classroom would need, I understood the importance of including different modes. It is not just for fun, this is democracy!”

This assignment was first focused on learning *with* multimodality since the students were designing environments, artefacts, and furnishing, with the purpose of supporting literacy developing *with* the help of multimodal approaches. After deciding what to design they also had to actually create the designed objects, which promoted learning *in* multimodality. This meant that they had to explore and experiment in a way that was not foreseeable from the beginning, thus, this could be a surprising learning and outcome to both the students themselves but definitely to the teacher educators.

Multimodal Language Developing Lesson

One morning the principal (the teacher) gets a phone call from the minister of education. The minister had heard about the fantastic work done in *The Best School*, and now wants to pay a visit. This is done quite realistically – the teacher’s smart phone is actually ringing, and the teacher acts embarrassed, apologising for taking the call during class and then miming: “it is the minister of education”, looking surprised and thrilled. She hangs up and tells the student teachers (now teachers) that the minister will come the



Img. 2: Holding multimodal lessons. Photo: Margaretha Häggström.

next day to observe how they work with language development in a multimodal way. Each group then plans for a literacy lesson, emphasising the multimodal perspective. The day after, they will conduct a mini-lesson with their peers acting as pupils. Each group has twenty minutes for this assignment. The minister is present, represented by a man's suit and tie and a paper copy of his face at the top. Afterward we put talk bubbles next to the minister to show how pleased and excited he was about the teacher's innovative ideas and implementation of creative language work. We use talk- and thinking bubbles so that the characters become more alive. This is also a way to understand the difference of being professional as a teacher and being private as an individual.

Student 6: "When we had to plan and conduct the lessons, my role as a future teacher became real and I understood what this was about. It was both scary and fun".

Student 3: "It was hard to be pretend to be a pupil, I mean, how far should I push it?"

Student 1: "Even if this lesson was kind of fake, I learned a lot about planning lessons, how to think and to relate it to the School curricula. I think it was educational."

The second assignment had a standpoint of learning *about* multimodality and learning *with*. This involves having being part of lectures, literature reading and associated seminars. Knowing *about* multimodality then implies knowing what multimodality means and entails. Knowledge built on learning *with* multimodality is to understand what multimodality may bring, how it can be used in order to scaffold language development and to understand how a teacher can utilise different modes when teaching. In this sense, multimodality is both used to support learning processes, and a teaching approach; both students and teachers can express themselves in multimodal ways. When the students planned their lessons to be held, they dealt with learning *in*, that is they had to discuss and decide what, how and why to do in a certain way. Finally, when they conducted the lesson it was learning *through*. In this case, it meant learning through the

Student Teachers' Perception of this Storyline

According to the course evaluation, most of the students are very optimistic regarding Storyline as a pedagogical approach:

Student 1: "It was really good to try out and to identify with the Storyline, instead of simply read about it".

Student 2: "It was valuable to experience different methods within the Storyline and to discuss what these methods are good for".

These two excerpts highlight the practical part of the Storyline work, which a substantial number of the respondents did. We interpret this as a call for bridging theory and practice, which in turn is interpreted as a need for learning both *about*, *in* and *through* Storyline.

Student 3: "Storyline engage the children and makes the process of learning fun".

Student 4: "To use multimodal didactic tools in an educational situation mean that I now have a deeper understanding of how I should think, and it has also given me a lot of ideas before my future job".

Student 5: "What has been the most valuable was to learn to work multimodal, because that is such important to be aware of and particular in today's school".

These three students are thinking of their upcoming profession as teachers and the usefulness of the required knowledge they now have. This seems to be twofold: firstly, for them as teachers, who will educate the next generation, secondly, for the children of the next generation. Hence, in our interpretation, this reveals an estimation of knowing *what*, i.e. to know *about* Storyline and multimodality, and also to know *how*, that is to know *how* to perform as a teacher and *how* this performance may affect children. Following Lindström, this knowledge might be gained by learning *about*. But this will only be knowledge based on theory. Adding learning *in* and *through*, which is always practice-based, will deepen the knowledge *about* and make it embodied. Embodied knowledge guides you in action (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2014).

Student 6: "The Storyline was incredibly fun although I was not so positive from the beginning. But I was really surprised! I didn't think I should learn so much, but I have learnt very much and I will definitely work with Storyline with my future pupils!! So fun and instructive!"

We find this student of interest for several reasons. In every class we have a few students who are sceptical at the beginning. This is understandably one of them. We do not think that doubting and being sceptical is a negative attitude, quite the opposite, it is natural to be uncertain when being confronted with something that is new and maybe different. It is also vital that teachers and student teachers critically examine pedagogical methods. However, this student seems to change her or his mind rather fast, to her/his own surprise, which is also interesting. Lindström (2012) stresses that divergence learning, i.e.

learning *in* and *through* promote *surprising knowledge*. In other words: knowledge you did not expect or anticipate occurring. This could also be said as significant for learning as such, thus when the understanding of a phenomenon or a situation changes such that we view the phenomenon or situation in a new way (Illeris, 2003). Furthermore, this is also significant for creative thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). This student, although sceptical, probably had an open mind and was responsive and flexible. We think it is crucial for student teachers to distinguish between their own learning preferences and what they need to perform as becoming teachers in order to reach all students, and this is what we see in this student's statement. That is also why it is essential that student teachers are given the opportunities practically to try out pedagogical methods and theoretically deliberate on the benefits and constraints of different methods.

Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

In the previous sections we have interpreted the three Storyline assignments through the model of Lindström (2012), in order to examine the Storyline work in relation to the aspects of learning *about*, *in*, *with* and *through*. This has been a way of scrutinising our own work and to study if we are doing what we think we do. The implementation of a Storyline was a way to both bring methodology into teacher education and to contextualise the notion of multimodality. It was also an attempt to connect theory and practice. Building on pedagogical theories that emphasise students' activity and interaction (Dewey, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978) we are assured that teaching and learning methods, i.e. didactics, ought to be experienced by the individual herself. In other words, student teachers should practice the method themselves in order to deeply understand the core of the method, to experience how the method influences learning processes and to embrace a method as a becoming teacher. The outcome of the study shows this to be evident. Student teachers' meaning-making is very much about learning *in* and *through* the method. The three assignments studied here, are designed to support and push the students to "live the method" and to physically test a multimodal way to express themselves. Teacher students seem to need the practice work when understanding pedagogical theories.

Together, these assignments were intended to combine convergent and divergent learning. In order to accomplish this combination, we included elements that we could predict the outcome of, such as knowledge *about* multimodality and *about* Storyline. This *knowing about*, builds a foundation for the other assignments which included elements that are more experience-based, explorative and unpredictable. The combination of learning *about* and then learning *in*, *with* and *through*, as we understand and use the learning concepts of Lindström, is a perfect match, because it strengthens the students. It makes them feel comfortable to experiment and to try approaches they might not have met before and to use modes such as music, dance and visual art. Multimodality has thus been both the means and the goal.

As declared in our introduction, this chapter is not based on research per se, but on proven experience. The Swedish Education Act stipulates that Education in compulsory school should be built on scientific ground and proven experience. Proven experience is defined as professional experience gained through co-operating work between

teachers, a work that is conducted by a systematic documented way which also will be spread (The Swedish Agency for Education). We regard Storyline as being very much a proven experienced approach. However, it has currently achieved more attention in educational research (Ahlquist & Lugossy, 2015; Nutall, 2016), notable also in this anthology. Even though it has its foundation in practical classroom work, it also has had a rigorous basis of educational theory from the beginning (Bell, Harkness & White 2007). Storyline has then continuously been viewed through various theories and through the work of different philosophers, educators and researchers (Falkenberg, 2007; Schwänke & Gronostay, 2007). This chapter has been an attempt to contribute with yet another perspective by bringing in multimodality and the learning model by Lindström.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have illustrated how Storyline in teacher education can be a fruitful way to connect theory and practice. By supervising The Storyline Approach in parallel with teaching the concept of multimodality, this Storyline aimed to instruct and facilitate theoretical and practical knowledge simultaneously. Indeed, it is our firm belief that the dichotomy between theory and practice is only unproductive and undesirable thought patterns that show an archaic view on epistemology. As shown here, in the view of Lindström's model, the learning process actuated in the Storyline, interweave theory and practice into a strong entity.

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