

Analyzing teaching qualities in relation to use of PowerPoint in L1 teaching

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## Abstract

Access to digital technology facilitates and opens up for multimodality in teaching, which gives teachers and students access to a variety of semiotic resources, but at the same time, both new and old challenges appear in somewhat changed teaching contexts and media landscapes (see Blikstad-Balas & Klette 2020; Erixon 2012). In this presentation I want to discuss the development of an analytic framework for my first study, where the aim is to explore an assignment involving PowerPoint with a focus on how students' engagement in multimodal text design can be described and understood. I draw on Fenstermacher and Richardsson (2005) who discusses teaching qualities in terms of both *successful* and *good* teaching practices. The theoretical foundations are social understandings of literacy from the field New Literacy Studies (NLS) and social semiotic theory (Kress 2010). With a social semiotic perspective, communication, interaction as well as identity are put at the center (Bezemer 2014; Jewitt 2008; Kress 2010).

The study has a qualitative, video ethnographical approach, where data consists of video recorded lessons and field notes from a Swedish lower secondary classroom. As a next step in the analytic process, I am working on the development of a framework for continued analysis of aspects of teaching qualities in relation to teaching and instruction on multimodal text design. Using a social semiotic approach, interaction could be analyzed in relation to use of communicative meta-functions from ideational, interpersonal, and textual perspectives (Jewitt 2008).

Preliminary findings shows that the PowerPoint as a resource for the student's meaning making is different in the text production phase compared to the presentation phase when the students give an oral talk supported by the Power Point. In the production phase creative and playful use of technology is a part of the student's engagement. In the presentation phase, terms of assessment and aspects of identity displays come to play.

## Extended summary

### Introduction

In the contemporary media landscape the norms for text, writing and communication are changing in the lower secondary classroom, in ways that still need to be explored (Erixon 2012; Godhe et al, 2022; Jewitt 2008; Kress 2010). PowerPoints are common and accessible resources for text production in today's lower secondary classrooms and can be seen as an example of how digital technology has increased the access to and brought new multimodal resources for digital text production, which also changes how oral presentations are made (Insulander et al 2022). My PhD project aims to investigate teaching qualities and how the phenomenon of multimodal text design are expressed in digitally rich classrooms, with a focus on teachers' instruction and students' conditions for participation and engagement in learning processes involving digital and multimodal writing. In this presentation I want to discuss the development of an analytic framework for my first study, where the aim is to explore an assignment involving PowerPoint with a focus on how students' engagement in multimodal text design can be described and understood. The research questions are:

1. How, from a multimodal perspective, is the students' participation in the task constituted (in interaction with the screen and others)?
2. What conditions for participation are shaped in different phases of the work process?

### Theoretical and educational significance

As I try to understand teaching qualities in a changing and multimodal media landscape, I draw on Fenstermacher and Richardsson (2005) who discusses teaching qualities in terms of both *successful* and *good* teaching practices. Good teaching practices, they say, has to be distinguished in relation to basic values of education such as student willingness and effort, engagement, supportive social surround, opportunity to teach and learn as well as representations of content. In this study, I am interested in teaching practices that involves digital and multimodal writing in classroom interaction and how the students' conditions for participation and engagement in the learning process are constituted.

The theoretical foundations are social understandings of literacy from the field New Literacy Studies (NLS) and social semiotic theory (Kress 2010). In the field of research (NLS), the concepts of literacy event and literacy practice are central concepts, and in this study I am interested in literacy events embedded in teaching contexts where a high degree of multimodal text design occurs. With a social semiotic perspective, communication, interaction as well as identity are put at the center (Bezemer 2014; Jewitt 2008; Kress 2010). It is a complex web of meaning-making that goes beyond a transfer of information. It is rather about interpretations and re-interpretations of information to create understanding with the support of form and content in the representations (Jewitt 2008; Kress 2010).

### Methodology and material

The study has a qualitative, video ethnographical approach, where data consists of video recorded lessons and field notes from a Swedish lower secondary classroom during years seven to nine. In each lesson, one focus student was followed where two cameras captured both spoken interactions and screen-mediated text use. Students, as well as teachers, have 1:1 access to a personal laptop provided by the school and the classrooms are connected to the internet and equipped with projectors. When recording, we used three cameras, one that recorded the actions of the teacher, one that recorded the focus student's screen, and finally, one camera that recorded the actions of the focus student. The three different data sources were compiled into one video that showed the focus student's activities from three angles. All video recordings were coded in Nvivo, a software for qualitative research analysis, with focus on different forms of organization of teaching, use of digital technology and student participation.

I follow two lessons in the subject Swedish when the students are working on an assignment, which is to present a piece of music that they like. As support for the oral presentation, they are supposed to produce a PowerPoint. In lesson one, the focus student is in the production phase which highly involves multimodal text design. The second lesson is the presentation phase. For the present analysis, relevant clips showing one focus student's digital writing process with use of PowerPoint have been selected for multimodal transcription with a social semiotic approach (Jewitt 2008). As a next step in the analytic process, I am working on the development of a framework for continued analysis of aspects of teaching qualities in

relation to teaching and instruction on multimodal text design. Using a social semiotic approach, interaction could be analyzed in relation to use of communicative meta-functions from ideational, interpersonal, and textual perspectives.

### Preliminary findings

Early observations in the ongoing analyses show that text design and the role of the PowerPoint are not explicitly instructed by the teacher. Also, the PowerPoint as a resource for the student's meaning making is different in the text production phase compared to the presentation phase when the students give an oral talk supported by the Power Point. In the production phase, I find creative and playful use of technology is a part of the student's engagement. In the presentation phase, terms of assessment and aspects of identity displays come to play. In the progressing analysis, I am working on how to understand qualities of how teaching affords and constrains the students writing process in these two phases.

### Relevance to the QUINT ambition

Access to digital technology facilitates and opens up for multimodality in teaching, which gives teachers and students access to a variety of semiotic resources, but at the same time, both new and old challenges appear in somewhat changed teaching contexts and media landscapes (see Blikstad-Balas & Klette 2020; Erixon 2012). Against the background of changes in the new text landscape, there is a need to investigate the area of teaching quality and digital text design.

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