



Qualities of reading: on Swedish and Norwegian lower secondary students' reading of literary texts

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In Sweden and Norway, concerns have been raised due to young people's declining reading comprehension. The fact that many teenagers in these countries do not read in leisure hours has inevitably led to increased pressure on teachers, who are expected to make students interested in reading, and to promote their reading comprehension. Nevertheless, recent research indicates that, over the past fifteen years, there has been a decrease of school related reading. This suggests that increasing the amount of reading in school is of paramount importance. However, since texts can be read in more or less efficient ways, this will not suffice; teachers also need to become aware of how they can help improve the quality of their students' reading. Therefore, it is relevant to investigate naturally occurring language arts instruction in order to find out how lower secondary students read literary texts in school. The present study aims to contribute such knowledge. It is based on video-data from

the Swedish and Norwegian LISA studies. A sub-sample of 19 Swedish and 23 Norwegian language arts classrooms where students (and their teachers) read literary texts has been analysed. Instances (N = 96) where students either listened to literary texts, or read silently on their own, were identified. Texts and time spent reading varied in length, with more short examples in the Norwegian sample than in the Swedish one. Students in eight Norwegian and two Swedish classrooms silently read texts of their own choices, but, more commonly, teachers read aloud while students listened, usually with the text in front of them. In both countries, but especially in Sweden, teachers frequently interacted with their students when literary texts were read aloud. Based on these findings, implications for teaching quality, and for students' development into competent readers, will be discussed.