

Challenges of linking theory and practice in distance teaching

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It is a challenge for student teachers to link theory and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2014), and therefore we have developed a model for Reflective Observation of School writing, the ROS-model, including lectures, seminars and classroom observations in school practice for student teachers for school years F–3 and 4–6 in Sweden (Sturk, Hipkiss, Randahl & Edlund, forthcoming). Due to the pandemic, the lectures and seminars turned digital, which worked well. Though, due to further restrictions, observations of writing in school practice were impossible.

In this presentation I will describe how the ROS-model was transformed to meet the challenges of distance teaching and yet fulfil the aim of enhancing students ability to link theory and practice. Based on our ROS-model, the student teachers used a theoretical framework for school writing (Ivanič, 2004, 2017) to analyse and reflect on writing education in school books. The new distance teaching and learning model included: reading Ivanič's (2004); scaffolding of Ivanič's article; practising the theoretical framework and modelling of a school book analysis; analysis of on-line school books; a seminar with follow up of the analyses.

After the seminar a questionnaire about the understanding of the theoretical framework for writing education and the distance teaching model was distributed. 55 students participated. Preliminary findings indicate that the students have achieved a strategy for connecting theory and practice; gained an awareness of writing education in school books; learnt most from performing an analysis and from the reflective discussions during the seminars.

These results indicate that the students, despite the adaptations, could appropriate the analytical tool presented in the ROS-model. The most challenging limitations were that the students were directed to on-line school books since the restrictions also included the library. This conclusion opens up for new ways of using Ivanič's framework in teacher education also in post-pandemic time.

References

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