The background of the slide is a light beige, aged paper texture. On the left side, there are several black ink splatters of varying sizes, some with fine lines radiating from them, creating a decorative, artistic effect.

Focus Literacy: An Overview of Initial and In-Service Teacher Training in Sweden

Ulla-Britt Persson
Linköping University
Sweden

New Teacher Training since 2011 (fulltime studies)

- Pre-school (ages 1-5) 3,5 years
- Leisure time pedagogue 3
- Pre-school class PSC (age 6)
and school years 1-3 4
- School years 4-6 4
- School years 7-9 (subject teachers) 4,5
- Upper secondary 5-5,5

Studies relating to literacy – pre-school level

- Pre-school – emphasis on early language development and emergent literacy, exam paper (7th term) on optional topics; about 20 % of the papers this year were about topics such as early language development, emergent literacy, reading aloud or using tablets to stimulate language development. Students write in pairs or individually.

Pre-school class (PSC and school years 1-3

- Courses in the Swedish language during the second year of study (3rd term), one full term (20 weeks), 75 % of the time is allocated to studies of literacy development
- Includes 3 weeks of teaching practice and a few extra days in school for observations for the examination task
- The examination task is to assess the literacy development of two children (pref. a boy and a girl) in PSC or grades 1-3 and write a report

PCS and school years 1-3

- During the 4th term – a 10 weeks course aiming at writing a literature-based exam paper focusing on Swedish or Swedish as a Second Language. Students write in pairs, go to lectures, and meet a tutor regularly in groups of 6-8 to discuss research methods and literature on the topic that the students have chosen. All literature has to be scientific with an emphasis on articles in peer reviewed international journals.

PCS and school years 1-3

- During the eighth term the students write a finishing exam paper individually or in pairs. They can choose any topic, but quite a few choose topics related to literacy issues, either as a follow-up of their previous review paper or a topic that emanated from the previous paper.

Political actions based on poor literacy results

- Based on Swedish pupils' relatively poor results on PISA 2009 and 2012, as well as the latest PIRLS results the government took measures to improve the situation.
- In the new curriculum 2011, national assessment tests were introduced in school year 3, and in 2012 grading was introduced in school year 6 (previously in grade 8).
- In 2013 a team of experts from OECD was invited to review the Swedish school system and presented some actions to be taken.

Professional development in literacy after initial teacher training

- A state committee recently presented “A reading, writing, mathematics guarantee” for all children in primary school – all children will get appropriate teaching and special assistance according to their needs, so as to achieve the goals set for school year 3 in the national curriculum of 2011.
- In-service training has been offered by universities, the National Agency for Education (NAE), and various private organisations (including SCIRA) for many years, but it is not obligatory.

“Läslyftet”

- NAE started a course (“Enhance reading”) that all teachers, at all school levels, are recommended to take; local schools can apply for government money for teachers to get time off to follow the course.
- All course materials are free of charge, available on the internet <https://lasochskrivportalen.skolverket.se>, and include texts, films, videotaped lectures
- The course is organised in moduls in various topics to choose from; all moduls are developed by researchers and literacy experts and are set up in the same way; they contain both theory and teaching exercises.
- The course is based on a ‘collegial learning’ model; teachers form groups at their local school with a specially trained tutor (one of the teachers). They discuss the contents and exercises, thus learning together.

LegiLexi

- Another literacy course is offered by LegiLexi, a non-profit foundation created by a Swedish billionaire, Bertil Hult, himself dyslectic, in collaboration with a brain researcher, Martin Ingvar. It was created with the vision to make it possible for all children to become good readers before they start school year 4 (at the age of 10).
- The course is systematically built on modules and focused on teaching reading in the early school years.
- Course materials are developed by researchers and experienced literacy teachers and well anchored in literacy research. They are available on the internet free of charge (www.legilexi.se)
- The modules can be studied individually but it's recommended to work together in teams

“En läsande klass” / ”läsfixarna”

- “A class with readers” is another example of private initiatives for competence development available free on the internet (www.enlasandeklass.se)
- Created in 2010 by a very popular Swedish writer of children’s books, Martin Widmark, who wanted to improve children’s reading comprehension. He discovered a variant of the Palincsar and Brown ‘Reciprocal Teaching’ model (1984) in a book written by a Swedish researcher (Westlund, 2010) and made it into a popular teaching device by calling it ‘the reading fixers’.

“Läsfixarna”

- The internet site presents material for different age and ability levels: a manual, texts written by well known authors, examples of lessons and exercises, etc., as well as a discussion forum.
- Five figures (‘the reading fixers’) represent one comprehension strategy each:

The fortune teller, the reporter, the artist



SPÅGUMMAN

Illustration: Kristina Grundström för En läsande klass



REPORTERN

Illustration: Kristina Grundström för En läsande klass



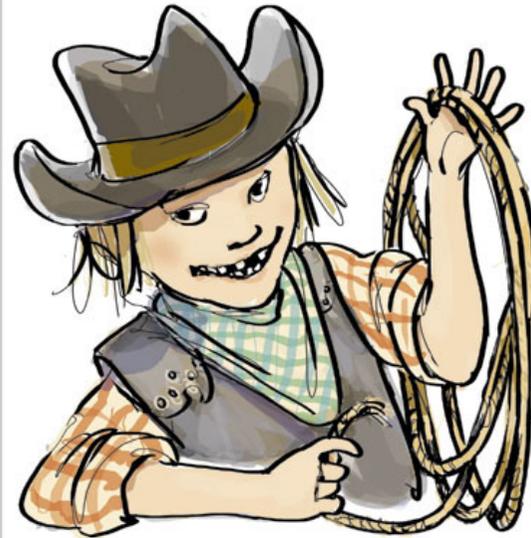
KONSTNÄREN

Illustration: Kristina Grundström för En läsande klass



DETEKTIVEN

Illustration: Kristina Grundström för En Isände Klass



COWBOYEN

Illustration: Kristina Grundström för En Isände Klass

The detective and the cowboy

The strategies

- the **fortune-teller** predicts the content of the text by e.g., determining genre, looking at pictures and various clues
- the **reporter** poses questions on three levels, i.e., what is on the line, between the lines and beyond the lines?
- the **artist** creates pictures in her head of the content of the text, she can see, feel and hear what it's about
- the **detective** clarifies anomalies, finds out the meaning of new words, reads over again, uses prior knowledge, etc.
- the **cowboy** draws conclusions and sums it all up

In conclusion

- Several measures have been taken to improve Swedish pupils' reading ability, most of which we have not yet seen the results of.
- Some of the ideas presented by OECD are not yet implemented.
- However, the 15-year olds improved their performance on PISA 2015, so it's at least a step forward.

References

- OECD (2015). *Improving Schools in Sweden: An OECD Perspective*.
(Downloaded from www.oecd.org/edu/policyadvice.htm)
- Palincsar, A.S. & Brown, A.L. (1984). Reciprocal Teaching of Comprehension-Fostering and Comprehension-Monitoring Activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1984, 1 (2), 117-175.
- Skolverket (2010). *Rustad att möta framtiden? PISA 2009 om 15-åringars läsförståelse och kunskaper i matematik och naturvetenskap*. Rapport 352. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Skolverket (2013). *PISA 2012. 15-åringars kunskaper i matematik, läsförståelse och naturvetenskap*. Rapport 398. Stockholm: Skolverket.
- Skolverket (2016). *PISA 2015. 15-åringars kunskaper i naturvetenskap, läsförståelse och matematik*. Rapport 450. Stockholm: Skolverket
- Swedish National Agency for Education (2011). *Curriculum for the Compulsory School, Preschool Class and the Recreation Centre 2011*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
(Downloaded from www.skolverket.se/publikationer)
- Swedish National Agency for Education (2015). *An Assessment of the Situation in the Swedish School System 2015*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
(Downloaded from www.skolverket.se/publikationer)
- Westlund, B. (2010). *Att undervisa i läsförståelse. Lässtrategier och studieteknik*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
<https://lasochskrivportalen.skolverket.se>
www.enlasandeklass.se
www.legilexi.se