

Conference on Literacy

København, 2019

Symposium (263)

The initial teaching across Europe (FELA)

Chair: Renate Valtin and Greg Brooks

Norway: Jørgen Frost

University of Oslo

Norway 1

- Most schools have chosen a traditional bottom-up strategy
- Letters as step-stones – however not for all!
- Letter learning can open for comprehension and strategic insights
- Most children are able to learn to read after introduction to letters
- Some schools use language games to develop linguistic awareness (Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen, 1988; Frost & Lønnegaard, 1995)

Norway 2

- Some schools have chosen a top-down strategy:
- Language production, experimental writing with invented spelling
- Positive results

(Hofslundsengen, Hagtvét, & Gustafsson, 2016; Oullette, Sénéchal, & Haley, 2013)

Reading as a focused language proces

- Language games focus the spoken language to develop ability to *phonological processing* (Frost, 2001), *one of the two most important step-stones for early literacy development* (Snow, 2008).
- The child focuses the sound structure in words and is taught to differentiate sounds and to separate and handle them
- Through invented spelling the child in addition learns to attach the sounds to letters (Hofslundsengen m.fl., 2016).
- In this way letters become functional units of language processing in spelling and reading (Frost, 2001).

Linguistic transparency (hypothesis)

- Invented spelling offers a variation of meetings with sound structures in words
- These meetings – alone or through mediation by others – might create tolerance for variation in pronunciation of sounds in words.
- Largest benefit in languages with low level of transparency.
- In this way the problem about degree of transparency might be minimized, compared to children who don't get these kind of linguistic experiences
- Both Norwegian and Canadian beginning readers seemed to profit from these experiences (Hofslundsengen m.fl. 2016: Ouélléte m.fl. 2013)

Basic thoughts for didactics in literacy learning

- Mediation is about facilitating learning by support in the child's proximal learning zone.
- Different didactic elements offer different opportunities for mediation.
- Activities for letter learning have less potential compared to activities with phonological processing. Letter learning profits from being part of a phonological processing task – like invented spelling.
- Accordingly, dynamic assessment seems to be ideal as tool for evaluation and planning regarding early literacy development.

Bottom up and top down!

- Simple view of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1995)
- Reading = comprehension **X** decoding
- **Top-down** means comprehension before decoding
- **Bottom up** means decoding before comprehension
- **Balanced view** means interaction - *in a language proces*