What does it mean to write a good or bad text and how can we tell the difference?

To write a text is to constantly make choices. Throughout the spelling of every word to the construing of entire texts, students make continuous choices of what to write about and how to do it. But are there wrong choices? And are there right ones? And how – and on what basis – can teachers tell the difference? In recent years, research have shown a great interest in differences in disciplinary literacies (Shanahan & Shanahan 2012) and also what specifically distinguishes subject specific writing in schools (Schleppegrell 2004). However, further research on how the emergence of disciplinary literacies may be detected in early school writing is called for in order to inform discussions of subject specific writing instruction and assessment practices. Research has shown that marking texts generally draws attention to spelling mistakes, syntactic or grammatical errors, while other aspects of meaning-making are often given less attention and in worse case overlooked. In this presentation a comparative study between how Australian and Swedish teachers’ value 38 literary texts written by primary school students in Sweden, will be presented. The results will be discussed in relation to results of previous studies (Björk forthcoming, Björk & Folkeryd forthcoming), using text analytical tools inspired by Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 2014), suggesting how signs of emergent literary literacy may be detected in these same texts. Preliminary results show that, despite the fact that signs of emergent disciplinary writing are detectable in a number of texts, these features seemingly don’t have a major impact on the assessor’s assessments of high quality. The main similarities between both assessor groups further concerns the low-quality texts, while the high-quality texts vary to a greater extent. Finally, the linguistic features of the low- respectively high-quality texts will be examined and discussed and problematized in relation to what can be consider good and bad writing in different school subjects and how we can tell the difference.

Björk, Oscar (forthcoming) *Tidigt naturvetenskapligt skolskrivande*

Björk, Oscar & Folkeryd, Jenny W. (forthcoming) *Emergent Literary Literacy*


Shanahan, Timothy & Cynthia Shanahan (2012). What is disciplinary literacy and why does it matter? *Topics in Language Disorders* nr 32, s. 7–18.