



## DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS AND MULTIMODAL PRACTICES OF YOUNG CHILDREN SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)

### Digital and print shared book reading in Early Childhood Education and Care settings

**COST Action:** IS1410

**Reference:** 38902

**STSM dates:** 4-2-2018 to 9-2-2018

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**Location:** Norwegian Reading Centre

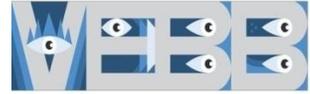
**Host:** Dr Trude Hoel  
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## Purpose of the STSM

The main purpose of this Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) was to get to know the program Språkløper and the VEBB project, led by professor Anne Mangen, associate professors Trude Hoel and Margrethe Jernes from the Norwegian Reading Centre at the University of Stavanger. This STSM also aimed at learning about the methodological aspects of an observational study with digital picture books. The final purpose was to exchange knowledge with researchers and practitioners about the BookStart program.

## Overview of Activities

| Date                                  | Activities   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> of February    | <p>Initial meeting with STSM host, Dr. Trude Hoel.</p> <p>Presentation at the Norwegian Reading Centre:<br/><i>'The long-term effects of Bookstart on the Home Literacy Environment'</i><br/>- Merel de Bondt</p> <p>Presentation at the Norwegian Reading Centre:<br/><i>'VEBB: Developing a tool for evaluation children's e-books'</i><br/>- Trude Hoel</p> <p>Attendees of the presentations:<br/>Trude Hoel, associate professor, UiS<br/>Anne Mangen, professor, UiS<br/>Margrethe Jernes, associate professor, UiS<br/>Elisabeth Brekke Stangeland, assistant professor, UiS<br/>Margaret Færevaaag, associate professor, UiS<br/>Monica Gundersen Mitchell, PhD-student, UiS<br/>Unni Espenakk, StatPed (National service for special needs in education)<br/>Marianne Undheim, PhD-student, UiS</p> |
| Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> of February   | Meeting with Dr. Trude Hoel. Discussing project Språkløper.  |
| Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> of February | <p>Visit to an Early Childcare and Education Centre participating in the VEBB-project and working with Språkløper: Emmaus Barnehage, Stavanger.</p> <p>Meeting with Liv Nese (Manager) and two kindergarten teachers. Attending two reading groups.</p>  |
| Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> of February  | <p>Visit to the public library of Stavanger, Sølvsberget.</p> <p>Meeting with Sylvi Moland Johansen and Gunhild Nordbø (coordinator Children and Reading) and the team</p> <p>Presentation at Sølvsberget:<br/><i>'The long-term effects of Bookstart on the Home Literacy Environment'</i><br/>- Merel de Bondt</p> <p>Presentation at Sølvsberget:<br/><i>'The Book of the Year'</i><br/>- Eli-Gunn Rønning Buvik</p>  |



## The VEBB project

VEBB is an innovation project funded by the Norwegian Research Council's program for research and innovation in education. The purpose of the project is to develop an app that kindergarten staff can use for selecting e-books.

There are multiple reasons to use e-books in Early Childhood Education and Care settings but caregivers do not know when and how to use children's e-books. Through experiments comparing group sessions with an e-book and a print book relevant information is collected. The same story was used in both conditions. The research was done in groups of 6 children because that is the standard situation in the Early Childhood Education and Care settings in Norway. The research group of the VEBB project is currently analyzing the observation videos coding: i) interactions between the teacher and the children, ii) interactions between the children, iii) time spent on pre-understanding of the story (building pre-expectations), iiiii) the amount of time children wander around during the reading session, iiiiii) how often the children point to the book, iiiiii) how often the children talk about the narrative, iiiiii) operating of the digital device.

The lack of research-based information on how to use e-books in Early Childhood Education and Care settings was a motive for the researchers at the University of Stavanger to start with this large project. The aim of VEBB is to develop a research-based, internet-based tool for the evaluation of children's e-books to be used in shared book reading activities in kindergarten settings. The goal is to provide knowledge to practitioners about the affordances of print books and e-books, and how these may interact with dialogue and engagement in dialogue-based reading. Books on tablets is relatively new in kindergarten settings, but the use of tablets is quite common. The VEBB project helps kindergarten staff to find relevant and high quality e-books. This practical tool will contribute to the beneficial usage of ICT in kindergartens as it is seen in Norway as a competence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## The Språkløyper program

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February I visited the Emmaus Barnehage. The Emmaus Barnehage works with the Språkløyper program and calls itself a "reading kindergarten". I was invited to visit two reading sessions in two different age groups to see how the teachers incorporate the information from the Språkløyper program.

Språkløyper is part of The Norwegian National Strategy for Language, Reading and Writing (2016-2019) which consists of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) that aims at increasing the skills and expertise of teachers and staff in the areas of language development, reading and writing.

The Norwegian kindergarten is called Barnehage and children attend the Barnehage from age 1 to 6. In Stavanger 90% of all the children attend kindergarten. The kindergarten teachers have a bachelor degree (3 years). Mostly there is one kindergarten teacher and two assistants for 9 children under the age of 3. For children older than 3 the groups consist on average of 18 children.

The Språkløyper program consists of modules with 6 to 10 steps that the trainee will follow during the course of a year. The trainee will follow the course individually but will also have group discussions about the information or assignments. These group discussions are with colleagues of the same Barnehage. There are 4 modules: 1) Language and reading activities, 2) Everyday language, 3) Transition from kindergarten to school, 4) Language difficulties, and the Språkløyper research team from the University of Stavanger continues to develop new modules. The Språkløyper program is freely accessible at no cost to all the kindergarten staff in Norway. The research team from the University of Stavanger organizes meetings throughout Norway on a regular basis to inform all kindergarten staff about the program.

During my visit at Emmaus Barnehage the first shared book reading session I attended was in a group of two-year-olds. The teacher incorporated the use of concrete materials to introduce the main characters and items of the story (*'Lars sier hei'*) in order to build pre-expectations from the children. This is one of the aspects of reading introduced in the Språkløyper program in the first module (Language and reading activities). The toy suitcase with concrete materials from the story elicited enthusiastic reactions from the children. Their attention was drawn to the story in a playful way. During the story the teacher elicited reactions from the children without losing the storyline.

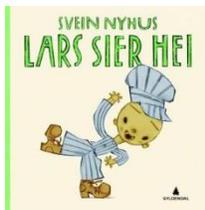


Figure 1: Book of the first reading session



Figure 2: Book of the second reading session

The second shared book reading session I attended was in an older group (age 3 to 4). The teacher started with a discussion about the cover of the book (*'Fuglefesten'*) and showed an invitation for a birthday party (concrete material matching the theme of the book). The teacher paid a lot of attention to the cover and the first page of the book, with only illustrations, and talked with the children about what they saw. The teacher incorporated multiple aspects of reading from the first module of the Språkløyper program during the introduction of the book. After the reading session the teacher told me that she found the information from the Språkløyper program a useful addition to her knowledge. Despite her high level of education it gave her new insights and she believed it improved her skills as a kindergarten teacher.

## Book gifting projects

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February I visited the public library of Stavanger, Sølvberget. I met with the team responsible for *'Children and Reading'*. In Norway there are a few regional initiatives but there is no national program for stimulating shared book reading. The staff of the public libraries are looking for a program on a national level. I discussed BookStart, a book gifting program in the Netherlands and multiple other countries. The BookStart program stimulates an early start with shared book reading. The aim is introduced to the parents through a BookStart book package and free membership of the library

that offers a baby corner with a large collection of baby- and toddler books. The BookStart libraries organize activities for parents and babies like shared book reading sessions or music sessions.



Figure 3: BookStart in the Netherlands

In Norway, all the parents receive a free book from the library when their child turns two. The library doesn't have a collection of books for children younger than two years of age. The BookStart program would be a perfect match in order to involve this younger group.

The public library of Stavanger managed to create an attractive space for children where they can search for books and read. The library collaborates with the kindergartens and schools in Stavanger. On a regular basis classes visit the library.



Figure 4: Public library of Stavanger



Figure 5: Public library of Stavanger

## Conclusions

During this STSM I had the opportunity to meet researchers working in the field of (shared book) reading in early childhood education. I had a chance to get acquainted with VEBB and Språkløyper and how they are used in the practical field. I am grateful that the Cost Action IS1410 (DigiLitEY) enabled me to travel to Stavanger and share ideas and knowledge with researchers and practitioners. I had multiple learning opportunities to improve my PhD-research. I want to thank Dr. Trude Hoel, my host from the Reading Centre at the University of Stavanger, for the warm welcome and the hospitality. I hope that there will be an opportunity for future collaborations.