Across Textual Landscapes: The Role of Affect During Digital Reading Encounters

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Abstract
This article addresses questions related to how the change in the textual landscape, from paper-based books to electronic books, has an effect on the teaching of reading in early childhood classrooms as well as how the digital devices relate to different aspects of reading instruction. Drawing on the theoretical concept of affect, the purpose is to expand knowledge about processes of experiencing literary digital texts that are enacted and produced in a Swedish classroom when the teacher and the six-year-old students encounter digital narrative texts. The study draws on ethnographical methods to collect empirical material using video recording, field notes, and small interviews with children. The documentation includes both individual and collaborative reading of digital narratives. Discussed in the intersection between envisionment and affect, the results show that e-book activities create multiple and differing processes of reading. The metacognitive processes initiated by the teacher’s instruction of reading strategies create a distance between the student and the text, while processes of embodied sense-making create a closeness to the text that seems to be vital when the students encounter digital narratives and text worlds. These findings may contribute to educational as well as edu-political discussions about pedagogical rationales for e-book activities in which the dynamic and essential relation between body, space, and reading is made prominent.

Keywords Early childhood education · reading · digital narratives · affect

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Introduction

For younger school children in Sweden and other countries, narrative texts are a big part of the literacy activities in the language classroom (Kucirkova, 2021; Swedish Reading Delegation, 2018). Fiction is used both as a platform for sharing stories together, such as when reading aloud in classrooms or during reading instruction when focusing on how to read, and as a resource to practice decoding skills, achieve word knowledge, and develop reading fluency.

Today, narrative texts are also distributed on tablets. Among pre-and primary school children, a majority have access to tablets and can easily use electronic story books or e-books via libraries and other services (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015). At least to some extent, e-books have replaced printed books as instructional resources when teaching reading (cf. Sofkova Hashemi & Cederlund, 2017). E-book experiences, which include sounds, animations, and a read-aloud function, are likely to change early literacy instructional practice as well as the ways in which children encounter, perform, and perceive reading. Some research has been carried out in this area taking sensory aspects as a point of departure, such as Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen et al. (2021) who discuss young students’ act of reading a digital audiobook using the concept of multisensory reading. With a specific focus on the digital read-aloud voice, Carina Hermansson (2017) has studied the dynamic encounters between bodies, ideas, and materiality that characterize children’s engagement in e-reading.

However, further knowledge related to how children experience reading via digital tools in early childhood teaching practices is needed. In addition, we need to gain more knowledge about how the change in the textual landscape, from paper-based books to electronic books, affects the teaching of reading in classrooms (cf. Larson, 2015; Roskos et al., 2014) as well as how digital devices relate to different aspects of reading experiences in the classroom. Thus, the purpose of this article is to expand knowledge about processes of experiencing literary digital texts that are enacted and produced in a Swedish classroom by exploring not only social, cultural, and cognitive strategies but also how reading is experienced in embodied and affective ways, when the teacher and the six-year-old students encounter digital narrative texts.

Due to a concern about a general deterioration of children’s reading comprehension - not least in relation to the results of large international surveys such as PISA and PIRLS - in the last decade Sweden has placed greater focus on how reading instruction is conducted in preschool and school. The steering documents, for example, pay special attention to reading strategies as a way to improve children’s reading skills (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, p. 12). Teaching cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies has therefore become a routine practice in Swedish classrooms during the last ten years (Solem, 2011; Westlund, 2012; Widmark, 2014). In this context, reading strategies refers to something that readers apply when comprehension does not come automatically to them. They are used to help the reader take control of the reading process (Afflerbach, et al., 2008; Olin Scheller & Tengberg, 2016). Reading strategies show the type of cognitive activity a regular reader uses during reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995) and these strategies are modeled by the teacher–that is, the teacher thinks aloud–to show how a certain strategy is used when reading and understanding the text. The idea is that the students will learn to
pay attention to and practice using the strategies constructively in their continued reading process as well as practicing their metacognitive skills. In the Swedish context, studies focusing on reading strategies conducted by Annemarie Palincsar and Anne Brown (1984), Louise Rosenblatt (1978) and Michael Pressley (1998) have been important, and books by Susan Zimmerman and Ellin O Keene (2003) and Aidan Chambers (1993) are widely used by teachers and teacher educators.

To understand contemporary reading experiences and also how to reconfigure the literary teaching for new reading practices in early childhood education, an expansive view needs to be taken of what happens when students encounter digital textual worlds. This article focuses on the affective and embodied processes that arise when established teaching practices focused on reading strategies encounter reading practices initiated by the children themselves, exploring how affect might extend or stabilize the ways in which the processes of encountering e-reading “becomes.”

Reading and Reading Instruction of Narrative Texts

As mentioned above, reading strategies are one way of describing and understanding the processes that readers use when encountering narrative texts. Since 2013, the project En läsande klass [A reading class] (Widmark, 2014), which focuses on the teaching of reading strategies, has had a huge impact on Swedish teachers’ reading instruction practices in primary school, and the use of textbooks connected to Widmark’s project is widespread. The highlighted reading strategies here are summarizing, finding gaps and making predictions, visualizing and making inferences. Summarizing refers to when the reader -every now and then during the reading process- summarizes their reading experience. This strategy is linked to making predictions which, in contrast to summarizing, is directed forward in the text. Making predictions is important in relation to activating the reader’s prior knowledge and associative thinking. By using the strategy visualizing, the reader gets help from inner images in order to step into the text world in a more concrete way and create what Langer (2011) would call ‘envisionments’ of the text. To visualize is about creating an envisionment about or being able to ‘see’ the characters and events in the narrative text. Creating and recreating envisionments is a process that goes on continually during the reading process. The strategy of finding gaps and making inferences is based on the fact that no text can tell everything. There are gaps in all texts that the reader has to fill in by making inferences; that is using prior knowledge or by bringing together different parts of the text.

The use of reading strategies in teaching highlights the metacognitive aspect of reading by offering possibilities for students to become aware of the process of reading and their own thinking while reading., or what John Flavell (1976) calls metacognition. In relation to reading, metacognition is about controlling and adjusting the processes of interpreting and understanding the text. The reader’s awareness of these processes is crucial in order to be able to assess, for example, the credibility of different interpretations by gradually testing them against the available information, thus making meta-cognitive thinking during reading a central part in the development of the individual’s reading ability.
Focusing only on metacognitive awareness in reading instruction creates a distance to the text, which in one way is necessary as it helps the reader to become aware of his or her own reading process. However, processes of immersion, that is, the experience of engagement in narratives, text-related social interactions and embodied experience, are also important for reasons such as driving students’ will to derive meaning from text. Reading and interpreting fictional texts as activities means that readers relate their experiences and feelings to the text (cf. Felski, 2008; Langer, 2011) and studies show that teaching reading skills often involves finding a balance between closeness and distance to the text world as well as to other perceptions of the text in the classroom (cf. Olin-Scheller & Tengberg, 2016).

By turning to Judith Langer (2011) and her idea of envisionments, other parts of the reading experience can be discerned. Langer provides a framework that describes the processes of reading as a movement between closeness and distance to the text. The reader creates envisionments of the textual world as well as of the relation between the textual world and her own life while reading. Langer describes this process as a movement in five different stances, where one is crucial for the reading experience: “being out and stepping into an envisionment” (Langer, 2011, p. 17). In this stance, Langer describes readers’ “attempt to make contact with the world of the text by using prior knowledge, experiences, and surface features of the text to identify essential elements (e.g., genre, content, structure, language) in order to begin to construct an envisionment.” The envisionments are continually reshaped during the reading process, for example when encountering other interpretations in the classroom, but also when discussing or writing one’s own reflections of the narrative. This modification of envisionments eventually ends up in what Langer (2011, p. 16) calls a “final envisionment.” It should be noted however, that readers are different and that not everybody visualizes during reading. Some readers, Ryan and colleagues (2016, p. 63) state, “are ‘visualizers,’ and they will imagine settings, objects, and characters in great detail, while others are satisfied with schematic mental images.” Therefore, in this article, we regard the concept of “envisionment” as involving some form of sensory commitment such as rhythm and gestures.

**An Affective and Embodied Perspective on Reading Experiences in Classrooms**

A key dimension of our analysis involves navigating the complex nature of teaching reading in today’s textual landscape—a landscape that includes online and offline reading and the panoply of ways of ‘reading’ multimodal texts. What is observed in the reading activities in the studied classroom are not only preplanned instructions of experiencing reading through metacognitive strategies, but moments of experiencing reading in an embodied, affective way. These embodied and affective processes are qualitatively different from conventional book reading and schooling models of learning to read. Hence, our interpretation and analysis have led to unpacking the nature and properties of reading that attend to both the representational, more formal, and accepted reading theories as described above (cf. Langer, 2011; Palincsar
& Brown, 1984), and—in using an affective and embodied lens on digital reading moments—the non-representational (cf. Leander & Boldt, 2013).

Affect, as described by Baruch de Spinoza and interpreted by Brian Massumi (2015), in combination with Langer’s conceptual work on envisionments, inform our analysis of data (Ehret & Rowsell, 2021). The concept of affect serves to draw attention to what moves us, that is to relations in which the children either expand or restrict their capacity to act which is registered as feelings (e.g. joy and intensity as students arrange the sofa cushions for further engagement in the digital reading). With attention to the productive force of affect, digital reading encounters are not limited to human bodies or living things, but include materialities, spaces, emotions and memories (cf. Masny & Cole, 2012). Material and other non-human elements are part of a performative production of power in interconnectedness with other elements. For example, the interactivity between students’ bodily movements, and the read-aloud voice, and earlier experiences of learning-to-read may, as in the upcoming example, create processes of repeated reading. As such, affect is created in situational moments of intensity, which indicates that how processes of reading are constituted in the children’s reading encounters becomes important. This article attends to the highly dynamic interplay between bodies, experiences, ideas and materiality that characterize the ways in which children engage in e-reading.

**Method and Material**

The study was undertaken in three preschool classes. In Sweden, most six-year-olds attend non-mandatory preschool classes (Statistics Sweden, 2014, p. 54) instituted by the Swedish government in 1998. The main feature of the preschool class is the idea of educare in which childcare and education are enacted in a balanced mix (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2001) and guided by the same curriculum as the school (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). In the Swedish reading classroom, there is often an expectation that teachers plan, teach, evaluate and assess through digital texts, often on tablets. For instance, most Swedish preschool teachers have a class set of tablets or laptops and they are expected to use these in their teaching (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016).

This article provides an outlook from a larger video-ethnographic classroom study examining six-year-olds’ reading activities in which three preschool classes at two different schools in the south of Sweden were involved. Two preschool classes at an inner-city primary school took part in the study from September 2013 till May 2014, whereas one preschool class from a primary school in a rural village participated from January till May 2015. 40 students and three teachers were involved in the study. The students were in groups of 13 to 14 students to one teacher. The three classes were diverse in terms of social and cultural background, and they were equally divided across gender. Each child and teacher had access to their own tablet computer and each classroom had an interactive whiteboard.

Different digital reading activities across the curriculum were documented one school day about every other week. From this large corpus of data, we selected electronic storybook activities on tablet computers because they turned out to be a
dominant aspect of digital reading practice in the documented classroom. More specifically, the effect of the introduction of e-reading narratives in one of the preschool classes is used to illustrate the potential of e-reading activities for the ways in which students and teachers create processes of digital reading, that is how e-reading processes emerge and what they produce. The work undertaken in the preschool classes has been reported elsewhere (Hermansson, 2017).

The study drew on ethnographic methods to collect empirical material using video recording, field notes, and small interviews with children. The documentation included both individual and collaborative reading of digital narratives. Most often the students co-read the digital narrative two by two; however, at times the whole class listened, read, and discussed the book collectively via the interactive whiteboard. These e-reading activities, regardless of form, were usually introduced by the teacher. They mostly took place in the classroom; but at times a separate room next to the classroom was used. Each child had access to a digital bookshelf in which the teacher continually presented new books corresponding to the child’s interest, literacy knowledge, and/or educational goal of the reading activity.

From this corpus of data, we selected and analyzed an example that represents common e-book activities as shown by the research data. This example has earlier been analyzed from the perspective of the role of the voice of the e-book (Hermansson, 2017). In order to explore how a frequently occurring e-reading activity is manifested in a preschool classroom, the example of *Erik at the Circus* is presented. The described example indicates a similar use of e-books, when students read narratives, in the analyzed data.

Triangulation was used to strengthen the validity of the results and analyses. In addition to a methodological triangulation between field notes, informal talks and video recordings, an investigator triangulation was realized as we were two researchers who first performed individual and then joint analyses of the data (cf. Smagorinsky, 2008). The use of video recordings enabled a detailed analysis of the e-reading activities while the field notes and informal talks provided contextual data about the overall cultural, pedagogical, and organizational settings. The body of the transcribed video recordings is considered the primary data source for the analysis.

Guided by our purpose—that is, to expand knowledge about processes of experiencing literary digital texts that are enacted and produced in a Swedish classroom when the teacher and the six-year-old students encounter digital narrative texts—our focus was not only on patterns or themes across the reading activities, but also on departures or unexpected choices during e-reading. First, the data set was transcribed using qualitative analytic software (Transana). Thereafter, three areas of indicators were applied: content of e-reading activity (e.g. exploring letters and sound correlation, repeating words accurately or connecting to own experiences), social process (e.g. individual or collaborative lis-reading), and context (e.g. student or teacher-initiated work, material, time and place). In this first step of the analysis, a stark contrast was identified between the embodied, active, and fluid movements of encountering reading in children-initiated activities compared to the teacher-initiated reading activities. Where the children-initiated activities that were more embodied, affective, and relational, involving a large degree of intra-action, the activities initiated by the
teacher were more generally institutional practices following predetermined strategies of modeling reading activities.

Thus, in the next step of the analysis we paid specific attention to the affective capacity, that is, how affect may extend or stabilize the ways that processes of encountering e-reading ‘become.’ This work allowed a way to address the situatedness of encountering reading, not only by observing how ways of being and doing shift across time and space, but also what constitutes the e-reading activity such as knowledge, materials, human bodies, feelings, and experiences.

While there were numerous examples of the dynamic encounters between bodies, ideas, and materiality that characterize children’s engagement in e-reading, we selected one project for analysis, *Erik at the Circus*, that shows how processes of encountering reading are manifested in the activity. This project is part of an instructional unit that the preschool teacher planned and involves teacher-pupils conversations/scaffolding as well as children’s engagement in reading. In the following excerpts from the project *Erik at the Circus*, we demonstrate how embodiment, feelings, and senses play vital roles in the ways that children become readers within varied schooling contexts.

**The E-reading Activity, *Erik at the Circus***

*Erik at the Circus* is a teacher-initiated and preplanned activity that takes place in the classroom and available rooms nearby. The interactive board in the classroom and a tablet computer to every other student create a potential for collaborative digital reading between not only teacher and students, but also between student and student. When read on a tablet, the narrative utilizes multi-touch capabilities, letting the reader access information with a swipe, tap, or a pinch of the finger. Further, the reader can select to have either the pictorial/alphabetic text displayed and listen to the read-aloud voice of the text, or they can choose to have access to both the text and the read-aloud voice at the same time. The narrative e-book *Erik at the Circus*, by Torsten Bengtsson (2011), has no customization tools, such as a notetaking feature, a built-in dictionary, or Internet links, but it does have features to adjust the font size, the speed of the read-aloud voice, the number of sentences displayed as well as the length of highlighted text. The following activity shows how digital reading activities develop and emerge in the classroom. It was produced by two young readers, Oskar and Caroline, in a group of 13 six-year-olds and their teacher, Marie.

**Teacher-initiated processes of E-reading Experiences**

The activity of reading *Erik at the Circus* involves a myriad of interconnected elements. As the group of 13 six-year-olds enter the classroom, they orient themselves towards the interactive board which displays a projected image of a clown. They are chatting and talking while finding their own chair among all the chairs organized in a half circle facing the board. The clown image is taken from the title page of the e-book *Erik at the Circus*, a book about Erik and his first-time experiences at the circus. The experiences of going to the circus are what the teacher, Marie, builds on
when initiating the activity. Before starting the sound recording of the book, Marie links memories of excitement as a child to the illustration of the clown. Vividly, she refers to memories of watching the clown doing funny, crazy things, while she invites the children to share their experiences by asking “What do you think happens at the circus [Vad tror ni kommer att hända på cirkusen]?” A student remarks that one may join the stage if a clown asks one to do that.

Before starting lis-reading the narrative, Marie directs the students to the spelling of the word “circus.” She highlights that she can see the letter C in the word circus: “the letter C that one does not use tons of [bokstaven c som man inte använder så där jättemycket].” She also asks the students if they have thought about the fact that you can stop and pause and think aloud: “One doesn’t need to let them [the read-aloud voice] read all the time. One can actually stop so one can think some by yourself! [Man behöver inte låta dem läsa hela tiden. Man kan faktiskt pausa och så kan man tänka lite själv].”

When lis-reading the narrative, the students at times co-listen to a cluster of sentences and at other times only parts of a sentence before making a pause to think aloud. Marie invites the students to make associations with their own experiences and feelings. She also explains the meaning of what are likely to be unfamiliar words to the students. As the read-aloud voice reads, “A girl comes in. She can walk on a tight rope [Det kommer in en tjej. Hon kan gå på lina],” Marie pauses the recorder and demonstrates how she looks at the illustration of a dancer on a tight rope by scrolling down the text to figure out what a “tight rope [lina]” actually is. Suddenly, a student asks, “Can she be named Rope and walk on a rope [Kan man heta Lina och gå på lina]?” After a short discussion about names, the teacher explains that when the students talk so much she begins to think about various things and now she needs to concentrate on the narrative. Marie once again starts the read-aloud voice: “eafter that they see a clown [Efter det ser de en clown]” and when the read-aloud voice describes his looks, Marie pauses to share with the students that now she can see a picture in her head of the clown with a red nose and big shoes.

After a few pages, she asks the students to continue co-reading the narrative on their own, two by two on their tablet computers, saying:

Now it’s like this. I will not play more from this book. Instead you will continue listening to the end. And when you do, it is good if you do what I have done today. You stop. Pause and talk about “what have I heard?” “what do I think will happen?”. Tell each other when something comes into your mind or say what you feel, if you get happy or sad. [Nu är det så här. Jag tänker inte spela upp mer av den här boken. Utan ni får lyssna klart. Och då är det bra om ni gör som jag har gjort idag. Ni stannar. Pausar och pratar om, vad är det jag har hört, vad tror jag ska hänâ. Berätta för varandra när ni funderar på något eller berätta det ni känner, om ni blir glada eller ledsna.]

In foregrounding the affective capacity of the e-reading activity, this sequence, in which the book is introduced, captures the relationship between the teacher, the children, the read-aloud voice, the image, and the literary text on the screen. While Marie talks with the children, she explicitly refers to a number of metacognitive reading
strategies which open for a specific kind of reading experience. The question “what have I heard?” refers to the strategy summarize and by asking questions like: “What do you think will happen at the circus?” she encourages the students to use the strategy making predictions, where the reader reflects on what is going to happen in the story. She is also, by modelling the strategy to visualize, (“I see a picture of the clown in my head, with a red nose and big shoes”) helping the students to create envisionments of the clown. By pausing the reading and focusing on spelling, as in the sequence when the letter C is paid attention to, she explicitly shows how to make inferences while reading. Marie does this both in relation to how to spell the word Circus, but also in relation to the presence of the letter in the Swedish language (“the letter C that one does not use tons of”). Also, Marie is keen on keeping the students on track, that is, making sure that they concentrate on the text instead of talking about things that take them away from the narrative (“now we must concentrate on the narrative”). However, it is notable that when modeling and explicitly referring to reading strategies, she is not referring to any labels connected to the strategies.

Moreover, it is also notable that Marie, during her modelling, makes use of the digital device as a tool when guiding the students in their reading and interpreting processes. She pauses the recorder when making meta-cognitive remarks by using different reading strategies, but she also shows the students how the tablet can be used when reading: “You can stop and pause and think aloud. One doesn’t need to let them [the read-aloud voice] read all the time. One can actually stop so one can think some by yourself!” Using the e-book in this way, the tablet serves as an effective tool when modelling reading strategies in class. The digital device, as used by the teacher Marie, can also be described as an efficient tool for exemplifying the way that reading processes—not only on tablets—are constructed.

**Student-initiated Processes of Lis-reading**

The teacher’s introduction unfolds into a moment where the students create a space for lis-reading the narrative. They spread out into various spaces around the classroom. Some lie on the floor while others sit at their desks in the classroom. Still others lean against the wall, sit at tables or on the sofa in the hallway, as do Oskar and Caroline who occupy the sofa right outside the classroom. They partly lie and partly sit in the corner of the grey sofa, trying to log in to their digital bookshelf, but with no luck. As Marie helps them with their password, Caroline explains, “We are lying (on the sofa) because it seems so cozy [Vi ligger (på soffan) för det verkar så mysigt].” Marie nods and returns the tablet to them, now with access to their e-library, while Oskar arranges the yellow sofa cushion to come even closer to the digital tablet. Caroline and Oskar sit so close that they can both touch and see what is on the screen when the read-aloud voice starts to read: “Erik at the circus [Erik på circus].” Immediately, Caroline touches the pause button of the sound recording and remarks that there is a clown on the title page while Oskar declares, “It says Erik [Det står Erik].” Leaning across Caroline’s chest, Oskar follows the letters on the screen with his finger, reading “Erik” letter-by-letter, “E-R-I-K.”

Caroline scrolls down to the animation next in line, a black and white picture of the main character Erik and his father, while listening to the read-aloud voice.
This sequence illustrates how the e-reading activity created by Oskar and Caroline includes processes of both socially-based experiences and cognition growing out of these experiences. In parallel with notions highlighted by Langer, the students “learn to manipulate the tools of language to serve the functions and reach the ends they see modeled around them” (2000, p. 1).

It is worth noting how Caroline and Oskar expand their capacity to act in the social setting related to the sofa but not in relation to other entities such as the table with chairs right beside the sofa. By choosing the sofa for their reading activity, arranging the sofa cushions and enfolding their bodies around the e-book, they display an awareness of what the act of reading ‘looks like’: reading is done in a comfortable position and is an act often associated with out-of-school reading activities. As such, they bring out-of-school experiences into the school environment indicating how processes of e-reading inevitably mean dealing with power relations. The cozy reading space in the sofa challenges the conventional school standards of how reading is enacted.

At the same time as Oskar and Caroline’s reading activity or movements collapse the boundaries between in-school and out-of-school spaces for reading, the sequence shows how they model the metacognitive strategies they have seen their teacher use. They draw inferences from the content when comparing their own experiences of what color a circus tent has with the lis-read description. Described via Langer’s stances in the process of understanding, the students apply “local envisionments and personal knowledge to build and elaborate understandings” (2000, p. 10). Moreover, Caroline and Oskar create an opportunity for practicing the visualizing strategy. They create a mental image of Erik and his father going to the circus when listening to the read-aloud voice, reading the alphabetic text and looking at the image.

The e-book enables Caroline and Oskar to lis-read the text and read the illustration concurrently, thus creating potential for specific ways of making envisionments. It is notable that the students employ these features in concurrency without the pre-planned modeling of the teacher. Instead of utilizing a visualizing strategy in which textual and pictorial resources are applied distinct from each other, as modeled by the teacher when first reading the text and then the picture (as in paper-based text), the students use the option to listen to the content, ‘[t]oday Erik will go to circus. Daddy will come too’ in simultaneity with watching the attached illustration of Erik and his father. They lis-read. Hence, the e-reading activity allows the reader to make an immediate connection with, for example, earlier experiences of going to the circus, knowledge of the act of reading and exploration of what the technology may produce. It invites one to see e-reading not only as a skill-based practice but also as a dynamic part of the social, cultural and material life embodied in the classroom.

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**Sound Recording (SR):**

Today Erik will go to the circus. Daddy will come too. They see a large tent. It is red and yellow. [Idag ska Erik gå på cirkus. Pappa ska följa med. De ser ett stort tält. Det är rött och gult.] (Caroline and Oskar pause the read-aloud voice)

**Oskar (O):**

Red and yellow. [Röd och gult.]

**Caroline (C):**

That’s not how it usually is. It’s usually red and white. [Det brukar det inte vara. Det brukar vara vitt.]

**O:**

When I was at the circus it was blue and red. No, blue and yellow. [När jag var på cirkus var det blått och rött. Nej, blått och gult.] (Caroline presses the button to start the read-aloud voice)
Eve Bearne (2003) notes that when children create their own meanings, they “assume integration of image and word, supplying sound, elements of gesture and movement” (p. 98). Accordingly, the e-reading activity *Erik at the Circus* shows not only how the alphabetic text and the pictures become resources when Oskar and Caroline create and communicate their sense of the lis-read, but also how the interplay between the read-aloud voice and corporal movement becomes crucial in this process, extending the ways that Oskar and Caroline encounter reading *Erik at the Circus*.

When continuing the e-reading activity, the read-aloud voice reads, “There are many people there [Där är fullt med folk].” Caroline stops the recording and swings both her arms out from her body, opening them in front of her. Then the list-reading goes on. When the read-aloud voice says that the clown has a red nose and big shoes, Caroline repeats “red nose and big shoes” with a funny bass voice while pointing to her own nose and showing the big shoes with her hands. Now Caroline and Oskar find out that the clown does not know how to play the violin but likes to play, something that engages Erik.

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**SR:** Erik laughs so much his stomach hurts [Erik skrattar så han får ont i magen]  
**C:** Imagine, imagine if we were going to laugh so much our stomach will hurt [Tänk. Tänk om vi börjar skratta så vi får ont i magen]

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Oskar pulls up his leg to his stomach, laughs, makes mimic gestures, twists and turns on the sofa until Caroline starts the sound recording again.

The read-aloud voice continues by saying that Erik and his father leave the tent to ride a little pony during the break. Pausing the voice of the sound recording, Caroline says: “They must wait because there is a long queue [De måste vänta för det är en lång kö]”. At the same time as she illustrates with her hands from left to right the length of the queue, she says, “It’s a loong, loooong, long queue [Det är en lååång, låååång, lång kö]”. As the e-reading continues, they reread what the sound recording just read

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**SR:** Erik can at last borrow a helmet. [Till slut kan Erik låna en hjälm.]  
**C:** An Erik [en Erik]  
**O:** Erik  
**C:** Erik can at last borrow a helmet (showing the rhythm of the voice with her hand moving rhythmically in the air, starting from the middle of her body directing slightly diagonal out from the body)  

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**SR:** Now he sits in the saddle. [Nu sitter han i sadeln.]  
**C:** Now he sits in the saddle (with a rhythmical movement in the air, as described above)  

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**SR:** But the break is over. [Men pausen är slut.]  
**C:** But the break is over (with a rhythmical movement in the air, as described above)

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So over and again Caroline and Oskar repeat what the read-aloud voice says.

All of a sudden, Caroline looks at Oskar who twists and turns on the sofa. She tells him to lie still so that he won’t fall down, or she will get the teacher. But instead of getting the teacher, she suddenly stands up exhorting, “Let’s make it more cozy [Vi gör det lite mysigare].” Immediately, they start co-arranging the pillows in the sofa,
continually negotiating the emergence of their reading den. They add two blankets on top of the pillows before they crawl in under the blankets with their digital tablet. “It’s cozy [Va mysigt]!” Caroline confirms as she starts the sound recording. Oskar and Caroline lie still, tightly encased in blankets. They turn the volume down. Once again, they imitate the read-aloud voice until the text ends, but now with a whispering voice of theirs. As the narrative comes to an end, Caroline asks, “Should we listen to it once again,” but they decide not to as Oskar wants to do something else. They both leave their reading den for the classroom.

Many of the actions made by the students, as described above, capture intense moments and movements in which the read-aloud voice and corporal actions interconnect. For example, the sequence described shows how these intense moments offer a potential for embodied repeated reading. In co-concurrence, Caroline rereads out loud for instance, “Erik can at last borrow a helmet” and moves her hand rhythmically in the air. This moment, just as similar moments, provide opportunities to increase the reading rate, practice rhythm and reading words correctly, not as a pre-planned routinized exercise but as a self-initiated exploration which may develop a better understanding of the digital narrative.

Furthermore, this sequence illustrates how the read-aloud voice of the e-book mixes with and expands the children’s capacity to act as they construct a cozy place for reading. In moments of engagement, pleasure, and lis-reading, they create a space in which they end the lis-reading of the narrative. However, in this act of constructing a comfortable place for reading, it is difficult, if not impossible, to say what effects what. Rather, the read-aloud voice, the students, their engagement, pleasure, and reading practice can be viewed as interdependent of each other. The act of lis-reading creates engagement and pleasure just as engagement and pleasure form the act of reading. Here, as a specific feature of the e-reading-book, the read-aloud voice becomes not just a tool that Caroline and Oskar use and access; instead, Caroline and Oskar and the read-aloud voice work in synch as one body; or, rather, as different parts of one body that are physically distinct but still intrinsically entangled in mutual engagements. (For a detailed discussion of the affective capacity of the read-aloud voice of the e-book, see reference withheld).

In this intense relationship between engagement, pleasure and lis-reading, the students step into embodied envisionments related to the act of reading in the form of building a reading den – a mo(ve)ment offering opportunities to experience the pleasure of reading. This elaborative performance also involves processes in which Caroline and Oskar build perceptions of themselves as readers. As such, they are being in and moving through an envisionment connected to various aspects of “reading the world, the word and reading self” (Masny, 2006, p. 150).

**Discussion**

This article has described and discussed processes of experiencing narrative digital texts that were enacted and produced in a Swedish primary school classroom. The results show that e-book activities create multiple and diverse processes of reading. The processes that are initiated by the teacher lead towards metacognitive reading
strategies, thus creating a distance to the text, while processes of embodied sense-making create a closeness to the text that seem fundamental to the encounter between the children and the digital narratives and text worlds. Thus, in applying the notion of affect, our study extends the understanding of envisionments, as conceived by Langer (2011), from a conceptualization of envisionments as “text-worlds in the mind[…] when we make sense of ourselves, of others and of the world” (p. 9) - visualized and implemented in the classroom through social, cultural and cognitive strategies (ibid.) - to an understanding of the phenomenon as involving not only social, cultural and cognitive strategies but also strategies of experiencing reading in an embodied, affective way. These affective and embodied strategies are thus essential to understanding the processes of envisioning literature.

We have shown that the e-book serves as a constructive tool for the teacher when guiding the students’ reading in relation to how the story develops. Moreover, the e-book functions as a suitable tool for the teacher when highlighting reading strategies and modeling the text together with the children and by doing so directing the students to the process of reading and emphasizes metacognitive aspects of reading. These activities can be said to foster a reading process where a distance to the text is supported rather than a reading process where the reader’s emotions and intimacy with the narrative are favored. Our results also show that the children, when asked to continue reading on their own in pairs, and thus gaining more control over the reading context, gradually move towards a close and emotional reading experience where body and space are essential to creating the reading den, which is the children’s room for reading. In contrast to the room for reading where the teacher is orchestrating the reading context and where metacognitive strategies dominate, the space that the children create themselves is characterized by a pursuit of and desire for experiencing reading in an embodied and affective way.

These embodied reading strategies can be said to have similarities with out-of-school reading practices, where the children reproduce a reading context characterized by “cosyness”, or being intimate with the world of the narrative text as well as being close to other bodies. The children simply seek for a context where reading is something other than explicitly focusing on reading strategies and highlighting metacognitive processes. One way of understanding the children’s actions when creating a reading den is that they are reproducing a situation that is similar to a reading context outside school, where “reading for pleasure” dominates. Reading stories at home at bedtime or in a sofa with parents and other grown-ups can be described as an important aspects of socialization in becoming a reader (cf. Appleyard, 1991), and the children can be said to act in a way they are familiar with when endeavouring to enter the text world.

It is interesting how these moments of intimate and emotional reading experiences evolve in an intense interplay with the e-book, in particular with the read-aloud voice. The children’s e-reading indicates a “mix with” the e-book. It seemed the students were getting used to “being with” the e-book and what it could do. For example, when Caroline and Oskar and the read-aloud voice come into contact with each other, a spontaneous movement of repeated reading starts. Caroline begins to reread sequences of what she hears from the read-aloud voice while showing the rhythm of the voice with her hand, a movement where being with the read-aloud voice functions
as embodied materialization of various aspects of e-reading processes. As the children keep on repeating what is read out loud, the mutual engagement with the e-book does not only create potential for improving the reading rate and rhythm and help them associate printed language with spoken language, it also provides opportunities to experience the pleasure of reading on its own terms.

In sum, the results of this study may contribute to educational as well as edu-political discussions on pedagogical rationale for e-book activities in which the dynamic and essential relation between body, space and reading strategies is made prominent. Observing the children’s involvement with the e-book draws attention to what it may mean to learn “with” and “from” the electronic storybook activity, inviting the question of what kind of reading experiences the activity set in motion. The act of lis-reading, in this context, may be perceived to unfold convergence relations of metacognitive reading strategies, body and space in which, we argue, acknowledging reading for pleasure as an aspect of reading development is important in relation to reading instruction at all levels.

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