

# Expanding Knowledge Gaps: The Function of Fictions in Teaching Materials after the 2011 Swedish High School Reform

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## Abstract

The aim in the study is to analyze how work with fiction is organized in six textbooks for senior high school in Sweden after the school reform 2011. Research into Swedish teaching materials has been neglected in recent years and there is a knowledge gap about how the work with fictions is affected by the reform in 2011. In the study quantitative and qualitative methods are used and Bernstein's theories relating to horizontal and vertical discourse are applied to the empirical material. The analysis shows that work with fiction in textbooks is marginalized, particularly work with fictions created by women. The study also shows that students attending vocational programs have access to a different knowledge than students attending university preparatory programs. This is remarkable, since the learning objectives in Svenska 1, curriculum for vocational and university preparatory programs, are the same. This means that central values of equal education are eliminated after the reform, and the knowledge gap between different groups of students likely is to increase.

**Keywords:** Bernstein's theory, curriculum, fiction, reading types, textbooks

## 1. Introduction

In autumn 2011, the first students entered a reformed senior high school system in Sweden. One major change in the new senior high school system is the fact that the differences between the preparatory programme for vocational and university courses have become clearer (SOU, 2012, p. 65). These differences also have consequences for Swedish as a subject, particularly in vocational preparatory programmes, where two courses in Swedish, Svenska A and B, worth 100 credits each, are now replaced by a single Swedish course worth 100 credits; Svenska 1. This is a new direction in Swedish educational policy and the effects of the reform have to be analysed (Nylund & Rosvall, 2011).

Paradoxically the reform is taking place at a time when new reports are constantly being presented which demonstrates that the reading ability of young people in Sweden is deteriorating (PISA, 2010; SOU, 2012, p. 65). It is therefore essential to investigate the effects more closely, and particularly the consequences for reading comprehension and the subject of Swedish.

When curricula change, it is clear that textbooks play an important function as they provide clear guidance about the conception of the subject, and knowledge about the design of teaching materials therefore becomes important (Englund, 2006; Ammert 2011). Since 1991 an official peer-review of textbooks is missing in Sweden and the educational publishers have a free market, which strengthen a study about teaching materials further (Johnsson-Harrie, 2009).

The aim in this article is to analyze how new Swedish textbooks, produced after and prior to the reform 2011, are designed and how these textbooks present reading and fiction comprehension for the vocational and university preparatory programmes. In the study functions performed by fictions such as fictional literature, film, theatre and other media in teaching materials are investigate and central research issues are: What proportion of textbooks consist of fictions? How are these fictions justified and how are the tasks related to them designed? What reading types are sought? Are there differences in textbooks for vocational and university preparatory programmes, and if so, what differences?

## 2. Curriculum for Swedish, *Gyll*

In the new senior high school there are nine subjects common to all programmes, including Swedish. The

vocational preparatory programmes should contain 100 credits of Swedish (Svenska 1) and the university preparatory programmes should contain 300 credits of Swedish (Svenska 1, 2 and 3).

In the new curriculum for Swedish for the senior high school, it is emphasised even in the introduction that: “The core of Swedish is language and literature”, that teaching should aim at ensuring that the students develop their ability to communicate both orally and in writing, and that they can read and work with both fictional and other types of texts. In addition, the students should be given the opportunity through the means of fiction to see the “distinguishing” and the “universally human in time and space”. The students should explore fictional literature, film, other texts and “media”, which should function as a “source” of self-insight and understanding of “other people’s experiences, living conditions, thoughts and conceptual frameworks”. The teaching should also challenge the students to explore new mindsets and make them open to new perspectives (*GyII*, p. 160). Svenska 1, which is mandatory for all programmes, should include:

- Fictional literature, written by both women and men, from different times and cultures.
- Central motifs, narrative techniques and common stylistic features in fictional narration, for example in fictional literature and theatre and in film and other media.
- Basic linguistic concepts that are required in order to methodically and in a structured manner talk about and analyse language and linguistic variation... (*GyII*, p. 162)

Svenska 2 also emphasises “Swedish and international authorship, both female and male, and works of fiction”, but here Danish and Norwegian fictional literature should also be involved, “including in the original language”, as should the “relationship between fictional literature and social development”. According to the subject plan for Svenska 2, “how fictional literature has been shaped by conditions and currents of ideas in society and how it has affected social development” should also be examined (*GyII*, p. 169).

In the Svenska 3 subject plan, there is a clear progression which explicitly mentions “the concepts and tools of literature”. According to the subject plan, the courses should deal with “literary science oriented analysis of stylistic approaches and narrative concepts” and in order to pass the course, the lowest grade (E) requires the student to be able to carry out an “in-depth text-based literary analysis of a theme, genre or body of work”. In the analysis, the student uses “with some confidence literary science concepts and tools” and can support their interpretation by means of evidence from the texts (*GyII*, p. 177).

The new curricula and subject plans are accordingly more differentiated than previously in as much as Swedish teaching is halved in the vocational preparatory programmes. The progression between the different Swedish courses is clear. If fictions have limited space in the first course, they obtain more in Svenska 2 and 3 (Lundström, Manderstedt & Palo, 2011). The new curriculum is also characterised by the fact that fictional literature tends to receive another more measurable value (Lundström, 2011).

As we can see, there are a number of different “types of reading” which are sought by the policy documents (cf. Mehrstam, 2009; Tengberg 2011). In Svenska 1 there is a historical type of reading in which the fiction should be related to a historical context, “fictional literature from different times and cultures”; a personal, subjective type of reading that links together fiction with the student’s own, everyday life, “a source of self-insight”; a meaning oriented type of reading that deals with central motifs, together with a technical/analytical type of reading in which literary concepts are sought, “narrative techniques and common stylistic features” (cf. *GyII* p. 162). But how well do the textbooks correspond to these reading types? What function do fictions play in the teaching materials?

### 3. Previous Research

In recent years, the value of fictional literature has been discussed and analysed by the research world, both nationally and internationally. Book titles such as *Varför läsa litteratur?* (Why read literature?) (Persson, 2007) *Litteraturens nytteverdi* (The value of literature) (Skaftun, 2009) and *Uses of Literature* (Felski, 2008) illustrate the need to legitimise fictional literature as a source of knowledge. Several researchers have attempted to show the values of fictional literature. Values which mean that fictions give access to new, fictive worlds, that they provide a perspective on existence and that they encourage the development of reading and writing and the construction of identity (e.g. Bruner, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1995; Langer, 1995; Nussbaum, 2010; Palm, 2009; Persson, 2012).

Swedish as a school subject has, in recent decades, been regarded as a “democratic subject” in which the reading literature has been perceived as a “lubricant to integration policy” (Persson, 2007, p. 11), which helps the students to grow as democratic citizens (Persson, 2007; Molloy, 2002; Hultin, 2003; Liberg, 2003). But fictions also develop reading comprehension and critical thinking (Persson, 2007; Mehrstam, 2009). Unfortunately report

results show that Swedish students have insufficient reading comprehension and new methods and teaching materials have to be developed (PISA, 2010; SOU, 2012, p. 65).

Research into teaching materials in Sweden has though been neglected and there is still a great deal to do within the area (Ammert, 2011; Carlsson & von Brömsen, 2011; Englund 2006). There are a number of thorough studies which in different ways present a historical view of literature teaching and textbooks for senior high schools (Thavenius, 1991; 1995; Martinsson, 1989; Danielsson, 1988; Brink, 1992; Englund, 1997; Bergman, 2007). However, the image of more recent teaching materials in Swedish is extremely limited. In recent years, it has primarily been the culture of tasks that characterise today's teaching materials which has been the subject of studies (Ullström, 2009; Norlund, 2009; Dahl, 2010; Lilja-Waltå, 2011), or alternatively the teachers' choice and use of teaching materials (Molloy, 2002; Englund, 2006; Lundström, 2007; Knutas, 2008).

In the last decade, studies have also demonstrate a lack of teaching materials regarding a gender perspective (Eilard, 2008; Graeske, 2008, 2010, 2013; SOU, 2010, p. 99), but still no study has investigate teaching materials for fictions, *Gyll*. This study however, point out how teaching materials for *Gyll* are organized and designed.

#### 4. Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

Teaching materials are not an unambiguous concept, and can include many different types of material (cf. Englund 2006). The teaching materials included in this study consist of six textbooks for Swedish teaching at senior high school level: *Svenska för livet. Basbok för Svenska 1* (2011) by Ulla Björk and Kerstin Eriksson, *Respons. Svenska för gymnasiet* (2011) by Pär Larsson and Anna Åhlgren, *Insikter i svenska* (2011) by Fredrik Harstad and Iben Tanggaard (2011), *Svenska timmar. Litteraturen* (2012) by Svante Skoglund, *Svenska rum 1* (2012) by Leif Eriksson, Helena Heijdenberg and Christer Lundfall and *Fixa genren* (2011) by Pär Sahlin and Helga Stensson. The three first named are intended for vocational preparatory programmes and the three latter for university preparatory programmes. These teaching materials have been selected because they were the first to appear on the market after the reform and were newly produced for *Gyll* by three of Sweden's leading textbook publishers. One important criteria for the selection has also been that it should examine what I have chosen to call fictions, in other words "fictional texts" in different genres such as fictional literature, film, theatre and other media (cf. Olin-Scheller, 2008, p. 9). In the study, I have consistently chosen to use the expression "fictions", which here means "fictional texts" (cf. Olin-Scheller, 2008, p. 9) such as fictional literature, film, theatre and "other media" (cf. *Gyll*, p. 162).

The analysis is both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitatively, the number of fictions has been counted, as has the space devoted to fictions and the tasks related to them in terms of full and half pages. This enables us to see how large a proportion of textbooks is devoted to the comprehension of fiction and to determine whether there are differences between teaching materials for vocational and university preparatory programmes, and if so, how these differences are manifested.

Qualitatively, a content analysis has then been carried out of the work tasks related to the selected fictions. Here the focus is on what types of reading are sought and how the tasks are framed. The types of reading that I have employed are based on Michael Tengberg's different categories of reading types in literature discussions in schools (Tengberg, 2011) and Christian Mehrstam's categories of types of reading which are expressed in the school policy document for literature teaching 1971–2000 (Mehrstam, 2009). I have employed six categories in total: 1. plot oriented reading types which focus on the fiction's plot line, 2. meaning oriented reading types which focus on the fiction's motif and themes, 3. subject oriented reading types which address the students' "personal experiences"; things which have an effect on their own lives (Tengberg, 2010, p. 210), 4. technical/analytical reading types which focus on analysis of the narrative technique, style and form, 5. Historical reading types which take into account the historical context and relate fiction and interpretation of it to a historical perspective, and finally (cf. Mehrstam, 2009) 6. metacognitive reading types in which the reader becomes conscious of how he or she reads and analyses (cf. Tengberg, 2011, p. 227).

These different reading types can be linked to Basil Bernstein's theories about knowledge, power and control. Bernstein is appropriate in this study because his theories show how different knowledge discourses can be linked to a class and power perspective (Moss, 2002; Norlund, 2009). According to Bernstein, there are different types of knowledge, which he divided into vertical and horizontal discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). The vertical discourse is characterised by specialisation, generalisation, abstraction and distancing, "explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised as in the sciences" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 157). Reading critically, in which one evaluates, sorts and analyses the material read thus has characteristics of a vertical discourse according to Bernstein, while the horizontal discourse is more prosaic and informal as it emphasises the well-known and familiar, what Bernstein calls "'common sense' knowledge" (Bernstein 2000, p.

157). An important starting point is also that it is primarily the vertical discourse which is clearly expressed in the school's syllabuses, including in Swedish where students should be able to verify, analyse, evaluate and generalise (cf. Norlund, 2009, 2011) develop "new mindsets" and "new perspectives" (*Gyll*, p. 160).

Further concepts which are central in Bernstein's theoretical framework are control, framing and classification (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). Classification here refers to relationships between categories and the power that maintains them, for example between subjects and different forms of knowledge and learning (Bernstein, 2000). Classification can be both strong and weak and is linked to the concept of framing, which is related to how knowledge is organised by the teacher and to the freedom the students have to affect the content. In a weak framing the students have more freedom to affect the content, while in a strong framing the students have fewer opportunities to affect it. Framing is therefore a matter of who controls what in terms of the content and how it is organised (Bernstein, 2000, p.11ff).

In this study, I use Bernstein's discourse concept, together with the concept of framing, to show how knowledge in textbooks is arranged and organised. The reading types which the students are supposed to use in the textbooks have been linked to Bernstein's horizontal and vertical discourses and the framing of the tasks have been analysed by his concept of strong and weak framing. Bernstein is useful in this context because his theories clearly show how school system, knowledge, class and power are linked. Bernstein's theories also clarify how knowledge is constructed and his theories have been used before in a Swedish context to illustrate how knowledge is created in senior high school (Norlund, 2009).

## 5. Brief Extracts

The proportions of fictions tender to differ in the teaching materials. In *Respons*, two separate chapters are devoted to fictional literature and film; 40 pages out of a total of 65, or 24%. In *Insikter i svenska*, the ratio is 66 pages of a total of 233, which is 28%. In *Svenska för livet*, however, fictions are not discussed in a specific chapter. Instead, fictions are interspersed as illustrations to the overall themes examined by the book, namely schooling, life knowledge, communication and working life (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011).

Fictions receive more space in the university preparatory programmes. In *Svenska rum 1*, fictions are discussed in 4 out of 8 chapters; 143 pages out of a total of 244, or 58%. In *Fixa genren*, 5 chapters out of 11 are devoted to fictions; 82 pages out of a total of 228, or 36%, and in *Svenska timmar. Litteraturen*, all chapters are devoted to fictions and literature with a historical context; a total of 343 pages. The fictions that are examined consist almost exclusively of fictional literature, but film and drama also appear. One of the textbooks examines the blog genre (Sahlin & Stensson 2011), but in general other media such as TV and computer games do not appear.

The various fictional literature texts which are presented are consistently in the form of short extracts and summaries, and the fictions are rarely examined as a whole (Harstad & Tanggard, 2011; Larsson & Åhlgren, 2011; Skoglund, 2012; Eriksson et al., 2012). For example, in *Insikter i svenska* 13 "famous stories" are examined. These stories all consist of short summaries of around half a page, and they are all taken from Western literature. Summaries are therefore provided of: *The Odyssey*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Frankenstein*, *Oliver Twist*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Crime and Punishment*, *A Doll's House*, *Gösta Berling's Saga* and *À la recherche du temps perdu*, all on a total of 10 pages (Harstad & Tanggard, 2011, pp. 148-158). In particular, short extracts and summaries of fictions dominate in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes, something which can be problematic as fragmentary remarks and assertions can impede comprehension and interpretation of fictional texts (Öhman, 2015).

It is also worth mentioning in this context that contemporary, Swedish and western fictions dominate the content of the teaching materials and that the division between male and female authors is unequal, as fiction by male authors is consistently better represented than that by women. For example, in *Svenska rum 1*, a total of 22 fictional texts are examined, 18 written by men and only 4 by women (Eriksson et al., 2012). Nor are fictional texts by any of our national minorities examined. This is thus a pattern that follows the mechanisms of the history of literary writing, but which does not fit well with the basic values of modern schools (cf. Graeske, 2010, 2013).

There are no detailed justifications for the choice of texts in the selected textbooks. In some of the forewords, it is stated that the fictions should be adapted to their audience, entertaining and interesting, and that the content should create insight at the same time as it should be based in reality. In addition, the tasks related to the texts should encourage a desire to read more (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011; Harstad & Tanggard, 2011; Larsson & Åhlgren, 2011; Skoglund, 2012; Eriksson et al., 2012). The choice of texts is not justified any further than this.

To summarize: The study shows that fictions in general are employed to a very small extent in selected teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes. The focus instead lies on argumentation, text production and writing processes. Work with fictions is more frequent in the textbooks for university preparatory programs, but still extracts and summaries of fiction are common. Another result is that the selection of fictions not is justified and didactic discussions are lacking in the teaching materials.

## 6. Various Knowledge Discourses

The teaching materials for vocational and university preparatory programs are also designed in different ways. Overall, the tasks and instructions are few and brief in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes, while there are more, more extensive tasks and instructions in the teaching materials for the university preparatory programmes. It is also clear that the fictions have other functions in the teaching materials for vocational preparatory programmes than in the teaching materials for university preparatory programmes, despite the fact that the goals in the subject plan for Svenska 1 do not differ.

The tasks in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes are usually based on reading types which are plot oriented and subject oriented in which the students are given several tasks via which to investigate the plot, what happens, and to compare the fiction with personal experiences in everyday situations.

*Svenska för livet*, *Respons* and *Insikter i svenska* are all teaching materials that emphasise the everyday and recognition in the fictions and in which the tasks should lead the students to make connections between the text and their own situation. For example, in *Svenska för livet*, Johanna Lindbäck's *Tänk om det där är jag* is used as a starting point for discussions about what it is like to start senior high school, and Mikael Niemi's short story "Duell i sal 17" intended to encourage students to think about their own "responsibility" in school. The task is as follows:

Read or listen to Mikael Niemi's *Duell i sal 17*. Points for discussion:

- 1) Is the story credible?
- 2) Would you like to be in this class?
- 3) What responsibility do adults have in school?
- 4) What responsibility do students have? (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011, p. 20)

The questions about this task are open and they are not explicitly connected to the fiction. Instead, a subject oriented reading type is required in which the pupils' own experiences and values are in focus. The same applies to the tasks related to Jonas Gardell's short story "Brännboll och brandövningar", where the students are supposed to write three lines about how one can "make life easier in school" (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011, p. 10). These tasks are connected to the fiction in as much as they are based on it, but the fiction's only function is as an inspiration and the students are expected instead to work with issues that relate to their own reality in school, while analysis of style, form and structure are excluded.

In *Respons*, the tasks are also connected to the students' own lives, experiences and values. In several of the tasks, which relate to very short text extracts, the students must consider the "characteristics" of the homosexual character Kaja in Louise av Boije af Gennäs' novel *Stjärnor utan svindel* (Larsson & Åhlgren, 2011, p. 95). However, no aspect of the narrative's themes, form or structure is sought here; nor is any historical connection made. Instead the description of the character is in focus—a descriptive plot oriented reading type. When the students then are finally asked to describe one of their own friends who they "like", the reading type becomes subject oriented (Larsson & Åhlgren, 2011, p. 95).

A further example that shows that the content of the tasks is linked to subject oriented reading types is a task in *Insikter i svenska* where, in connection with the story of "*Robinson Crusoe*", the students must consider what they would do if they themselves ended up on a desert island: "What would you do if you ended up on a desert island? Explain why." (Harstad & Tanggard, 2011, p. 152)

The teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes thus contain "life knowledge" (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011, p. 34) and the fictions here function primarily as sources of "self-insight" (*Gyll*, p. 162). Here the fictions are also analysed, but these phases are few and primarily relate to characters and environments—rarely central motifs and narrative techniques – which means that a plot oriented reading type is being sought.

In general, the instructions for the tasks are also brief, with the focus on descriptive aspects such as actions and the characteristics of characters. The explanatory notes in *Svenska för livet* contain instructions about how to carry out an analysis of a short story. The aspects which are included are:

- 1) People
- 2) Time and place
- 3) Handling
- 4) Language and purpose
- 5) About the author (Björk & Eskilsson, 2011, p. 214)

As can be seen, the questions are weakly framed (cf. Bernstein, 2000). Here the instructions are open and quite vaguely formulated, and the students have great freedom to design the analysis themselves on the basis of the five points. Nor are there any concrete questions and no clear distinction is made between narrative techniques such as action and intrigue. Nor are concepts such as theme and motive examined. Instead the instructions emphasise a plot oriented reading type of a descriptive nature and the students receive no help from explicit questions which would guide them to analyse the short story on a deeper technical and analytical level.

The tasks that relate to the fictions in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes are thus organised in a horizontal knowledge discourse, which focuses on the well-known and familiar, on the students' own everyday lives (cf. Bernstein, 1990; 2000). The comprehension of fictions in these teaching materials thus tends to be elementary and to remain superficial. The students often have to make connections to their own personal experiences and the fictions are presented as "springboards" (Ullström, 2009, p. 133) into their own self-awareness, in which a "literary transfer" skill dominates (Thorell, 2002). This means that the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes often remain at the level of a "naive-realism" reading type (cf. Ullström, 2009, p. 128) which is characterised by recognition, the familiar and every day, every day life knowledge; what Bernstein called horizontal discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 2000).

However, in the teaching materials for the university preparatory programmes, a vertical discourse more often applies as many of the tasks aim to achieve a deeper reading type and more analysis is required. Here, the fictions are also put into historical context and several of the questions deal with genres, themes, narrative techniques and stylistic features which must be verified. In *Svenska rum 1*, for example, what is time-specific and what is generally valid in a variety of myths is discussed, as are the differences and similarities between myth and saga:

#### EXAMINE THE TEXT:

One of the most well-known myths is the myth of Perseus. Think about the following while you read the summary of the myth of Perseus:

- 1) What are the similarities with the saga?
- 2) What are the differences?
- 3) What in the myth is generally valid? What is time-specific? (Eriksson et al., 2012, p. 20)

Here, the students must sort and verify important characteristics and they are expected to make connections to the historical context—a historical reading type—and discuss what is generally valid and what is time-specific. This textbook also discusses different genres and narrative techniques. It is also characterised by the fact that the fictions are to a large extent in focus, and that the students should take the fictions as the starting point during discussions, rather than their own lives. Below follow a few examples of questions for short story analysis in *Svenska rum 1*, intended for Svenska 1:

- 1) What conflict, problem or theme does the narrative handle?
- 2) When does the action take place?
- 3) Is the story told chronologically or does the perspective change?
- 4) Who is the main character in the narrative, and which are the secondary characters? How are their external and internal characteristics described? Give examples!
- 5) Can we follow the thoughts of these people directly, or is it made clear indirectly what they are like and how they feel and think by means of what they say and how they act in different situations?
- 6) Where is the turning point(s) of the narrative?
- 7) Does the narrative contain small and large threats that create tension and increase the desire to read further?
- 8) What narrative techniques does the text contain? In medias res? Composition? Planting? Dialogue?
- 9) Is there imagery, and if so, are the images new, original and bold or commonplace and tired? Give examples!

(Eriksson et al., 2011, p. 77)

In a comparison with the instructions for the short story analysis in *Svenska för livet*, the questions here are more comprehensive, concrete and strongly framed (Bernstein, 2000). There are more analysis questions and the students have to answer questions which relate to action, characters and themes as well as form and structure. In *Svenska rum 1*, in carrying out the tasks, the students are expected to sort, verify and analyse content and structure (Eriksson et al., 2011). Here, both a meaning oriented reading type that focuses on themes and motifs and a technical/analytical reading type that examines narrative techniques are sought. The knowledge is thus here organised in a vertical discourse in which specialised literary science concepts such as “theme”, “imagery”, “conflict”, “turning points” and “in medias res” are used.

In *Fixa genren* too, comprehensive questions occur, and in several chapters the students must work with specific characteristics of different genres (Sahlin & Stensson, 2011). In the chapter about short stories, the students are expected to carry out a short story analysis of Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s short story “Oändrat oändlig”; here specific patterns are sought, and the students must find “the conflict”, “turning points” and the “subtext” in the fiction (Sahlin & Stensson, 2011, p. 103). This textbook also includes a chapter discussing analyses and the pupils are thus also introduced to a metacognitive reading type in which they become conscious about how they act during an analysis. Even the foreword makes it clear that analysis and specific knowledge about structure, style and form are a precondition for the students succeeding in their own writing and learning (Sahlin & Stensson, 2011, pp. 112-127).

In *Svenska timmar. Litteraturen*, there is also focus on meaning oriented, historical and technical/analytical reading types (Skoglund, 2012). In the first chapter about Antiquity, we find questions that connect to these readings “What does it mean for a literary work to be epic?”, “What is the background to the Trojan war according to the ancient narratives?”, “What is meant when we say that the Iliad begins *in medias res*?”, “What is the Homeric question about?” and “What do you think of Horatius’ view of literature, which he presents in *Ars poetica*?” (Skoglund, 2012, p. 49f.)

To summarize: In teaching materials for vocational preparatory programs subject and plot oriented reading types are frequent and a horizontal discourse where students’ own lives and experiences are highlighted. In teaching materials for university preparatory programmes it is different. Here meaning and technical/analytical oriented types of reading are frequent and knowledge about fictions is organised in a vertical discourse in which specialisation, abstraction and distancing are characteristic. In these teaching materials, the fictions have a function that is clearly connected to historical context, analysis, specialised concepts and abstract, critical thinking; reading types which can be clearly connected to the policy document’s official educational knowledge (Bernstein, 1990, 2000).

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion—Expanding Knowledge Gaps

The study thus shows a clear stratification in the subject of Swedish and that the teaching materials work with the goals in different ways in books for the vocational and university preparatory programmes. This development is remarkable and can be a risk where scholastic values differ between vocational and university preparatory programmes. It is obvious that students on vocational preparatory programmes have less time for fiction comprehension with *Gyll*—only 100 credits—but also, via the teaching materials, receive other knowledge and other reading types, which in the worst case make it more difficult to achieve the knowledge goals for Svenska 1. This can actually be compared with certain students only learning certain ways of counting, adding and subtracting, while other students learn more ways of counting, including multiplication and division, despite the fact that the knowledge goals are the same.

The marginalised position of fictions, and the short extracts and summaries in textbooks also risk impeding fiction comprehension, and when certain groups are better represented than others, the scholastic value perspective is also threatened in this sense (Graeske, 2010; Öhman, 2015).

With Bernstein’s theory, it would be possible to assert that the framing of the subject has generally become stronger after the reform (Manderstedt & Palo, 2010), but that the increasingly segregated subject plans within the subject of Swedish lead to different knowledge discourses developing within Svenska 1 for students on the vocational and university preparatory programmes (Bernstein, 2000).

Naturally this study says nothing about what then happens in the classroom and the actual learning situation, but the textbooks still have a strong position in the classroom (Ammert, 2011; Englund, 2006) and the developers of teaching materials therefore have a major responsibility to affect the publishing work. Together with the authors of teaching materials, they can improve the conditions for a more equal “outcome” (cf. Bergström & Boréus,

1992) by being careful to ensure that all knowledge goals are included and that knowledge is also organised in a vertical discourse which helps the students to develop a critical, analytical way of thinking that challenges them to consider new mindsets and perspectives (Bernstein, 2000; Nylund & Rosvall, 2011; *Gyll*).

In summary, this study shows that the fictions are marginally represented, particularly in teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes. In one textbook for the vocational preparatory programmes, only 24% of the content is devoted to fictions, something which can be seen as an effect of the fact that the space devoted to fiction reading in the policy document was reduced after the reform (Lundström, 2011; Palo & Manderstedt, 2010). It is primarily fictional literature and film that is represented in the textbooks; TV and computer games are not included at all. It is also striking that the selection is not justified and that didactic discussions are lacking. Short extracts and summaries of fictional texts occur frequently, something which can impede comprehension and the opportunity to benefit from particular content (Öhman, 2015).

The study also shows that the fictions have different functions, as the tasks in the textbooks for university and vocational preparatory programmes vary markedly. The textbooks seek different reading types and knowledge despite the same syllabus. In the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes, the knowledge is organised on the basis of a horizontal discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) in which life knowledge and the students' personal experiences and judgement are in focus. In the teaching materials for the university preparatory programmes, however, the knowledge is specialised and organised on the basis of a vertical discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) in which the students are trained in analytical and critical thinking by using literary science analysis tools and concepts. The tasks here are comprehensive and tightly controlled, while they are more open in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes. The tasks are consequently more strongly framed in the teaching materials for the university preparatory programmes and the teaching methods are visible, while the relationship is the reverse in the teaching materials for the vocational preparatory programmes (Bernstein, 1990; 2000). It can seem to be contradictory that the students on the vocational preparatory programmes thus receive less guidance in completing the tasks. Weak framing can also impede the work, as the students themselves are expected to break the code; in other words to determine themselves which knowledge will be rewarded under less visible teaching methods (cf. Norlund, 2009).

The study also indicates that there is a risk of knowledge gaps increasing between different student groups, because the teaching materials for vocational and university preparatory programmes give access to different knowledge discourses, despite the fact that the goals are the same for Svenska 1. That the knowledge about fictions is organised in such differentiated discourses is noteworthy given the fact that, according to Swedish scholastic values, all students have the right to the same education regardless of their background (Orlenius, 2001; Hedlin, 2006). One question which can be posed in this context is thus whether Swedish is a subject can continue to be considered as a "democratic subject"? In the future perhaps two different subject plans with different goals are necessary?

Following the reform, it is clear that students on the vocational preparatory programmes, who to a large extent are recruited from environments not accustomed to studying (Nylund & Rosvall, 2011), receive less time and knowledge, but also different knowledge, which can mean that the stated knowledge goals become more difficult to achieve and that the knowledge gaps in society increase.

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