



School of Education, Culture  
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# To Read or Not to Read, That Is the Question

An Analysis of Governmental Publications, the Curriculum of Upper Secondary  
School, and a Closer Look at Teachers' Work with Reading Promotion in the English Subject  
at Swedish Upper Secondary Schools

English for Teachers in Secondary and Upper Secondary School: Degree project ENA314

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### **Abstract**

Recent reports have confirmed that Swedish adolescents read less every year. Because of these reports, Swedish governments have implemented regulations to provide directions and emphasize the importance of reading promotion. However, how much these regulations have affected the curriculum for upper secondary schools in general, and the English syllabus specifically, is unclear. Therefore, this study aimed firstly to analyze the responsibilities of English teachers at upper secondary school regarding reading promotion, and secondly to take a closer look at the practice of reading promotion in the English classroom. This was conducted in a combined-methods study. Firstly, a close reading and analysis of what signals the governments and governmental agencies are sending out regarding reading promotion was done, and how visible these are in the curriculum/syllabus was done. Secondly, a survey was conducted asking EFL teachers in upper secondary school how they look upon their responsibilities in this regard and what they practice in class.

The results show that the curriculum of upper secondary school does not reflect the governments' emphasis on reading promotion. Some guidelines are provided, but they are vague, and it is unclear if they are part of the English teacher's responsibility. Despite the lack of emphasis on reading in the curriculum, the survey results show that the participating English teachers believe reading is important and work with reading promotion. However, the respondents stress that more resources for school libraries are needed to improve their work.

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*Keywords:* reading promotion, upper secondary school, Sweden, reading for pleasure, ESL teaching, textual analysis, governmental policy texts, questionnaire

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# 1. Introduction

Neil Gaiman, a famous author and lecturer, once said:

The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy, giving them access to those books, and letting them read them. (ReadingAgency 2013, timestamp: 4.00)

In other words, adults need to encourage and support children and adolescents with their reading, simply by giving them access to books that they enjoy and giving them time to read them. As a language teacher, it is not news that reading is beneficial for educational purposes. We can all agree that reading expands one's language skills, in terms of both vocabulary (Wagovich et al., 2015, p. 66) and general literacy skills (Krashen, 2004, p. 17). Some even say that reading could with its therapeutic properties help those with mental health issues (Healey et al., 2017, p. 163; Malibiran et al., 2018, p. 380)

Even though the benefits of reading are clear, recent reports state that Swedish students read less and less each year (Statens medieråd, 2021, p. 26), which has made the Swedish governments issue different regulations concerning reading promotion, mostly directed at libraries and compulsory schools (Prop. 2013/14:13). This implies that the governments think it is important that Swedish children and young adults read, and that we as adults should encourage them to read more.

With that said, the curriculum for upper secondary school does not mention anything specific about encouraging reading for pleasure. References to reading promotion in the curriculum are rare and mostly concerns the syllabus of the Swedish subject (more on this in section 4.1.3) The syllabus for the English subject, on the other hand, focuses on reading ability as a way of communicating, which is of course relevant, but it signals that reading promotion is not part of English teachers' responsibility.

As stated above, reading is important for several reasons, and all the regulations regarding reading promotion emphasize the importance of it as well, but the lack of comments on it in the curriculum and the English syllabus shows a conflict between a need for more reading according to governmental signals on the one hand and the regulatory documents for teaching on the other.

## 1.1 Aim and research questions

Because of the conflict sketched above, it is fair to question whether reading promotion is a part of an EFL teacher's responsibility. As mentioned above, researchers emphasize the importance of reading for language learning (Krashen, 2004; Wagovich et al., 2015), so maybe teachers should consider reading promotion when planning their language teaching. Therefore, this study aims to 1) analyze the responsibilities placed upon teachers at upper secondary schools from governmental policies and the general curriculum for upper secondary school, and 2) investigate the practice of reading promotion in the English classroom today. The study will do that by using a mixed method to answer the following research questions:

- Judging from recent decisions and policies published by the governments and the Swedish Arts Council, what are the responsibilities of upper secondary schools regarding reading promotion?
- How do the curriculum of upper secondary school and the English syllabus correspond to the signals given by the governmental policies, and to recent research?
- Do the participating teachers of English in Swedish upper secondary schools find reading promotion relevant, and if so, how do they implement it in their teaching?

## 2. Background

This section provides a summary of recent research on reading promotion. It is divided into two subsections: one that focuses on reading for pleasure, one that deals with reading in school.

### 2.1 Reading for pleasure

When reading promotion is mentioned in this study, it refers to reading as a pleasurable activity. Reading for pleasure, also known as recreational reading, pleasure reading, or free voluntary reading has been described as the time spent reading, both at home in one's free time and/or in school, without any restrictions or obligations. Krashen (2004) argues that free voluntary reading (henceforth called FVR) is as effective, and in long-term studies shown to be even more effective, than traditional instruction-based reading, resulting in better reading comprehension and writing style and more developed vocabulary, spelling, and grammar (Krashen, 2004, p. 17).

Reading for pleasure could be one important factor in bridging the socio-economic gap. In the document *Reading for Change*, an overview of the results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2002, the OECD claims that "15-year-old students who are highly engaged readers and whose parents have the lowest occupational status achieve significantly higher average reading scores [...] than students whose parents have the highest occupational status but who are poorly engaged in reading" (OECD, 2002, p. 121). In other words, reading habits could impact students' education more than their socio-economic background.

Furthermore, extensive reading has been confirmed to be a valuable way to learn and develop a good range of language skills. It has been shown that there is a positive correlation between higher grades and time spent on reading for pleasure during vacations (Gallik, 1999, p. 488). In other words, reading books or other fictional texts for pleasure can give big advantages in students' academic life (Kavi et al., 2015, p. 6; McQuillan, 2019, p. 134).

FVR is not only beneficial for learning a first language but also for second language learners. If students read for pleasure in their first language, it increases their reading comprehension in their second language as much as in their first language (Garrison-Fletcher et al., 2022, p. 297; Sparks et al., 2008, p. 171). Krashen (2004) explains this further by stating that students who read for pleasure in their second language "move from the beginning 'ordinary conversational' level to a level where they can use the second language for more demanding purposes" (p. 147).

To promote reading, one key factor is to give children access to books. Krashen (2004) states that:

The research supports the commonsense view that when books are readily available, when the print environment is enriched, more reading is done. A print-rich environment in the home is related to how much children read; children who read more have more books in the home. (p. 57)

In other words, the adults around children have an important job in providing that access to them. This has been noticed by healthcare systems that are trying to encourage parents and reinforce the importance of reading (Shaw, 2021, p. 186). This means that the most effective way for adults to encourage children's and adolescents' reading is first to help them find engaging books (Merga, 2017, p. 214). Merga interviewed children, asking them what would make them read more, and her findings, in line with Krashen's (2004), point to access as a key factor. When students find it hard to access engaging books, they tend to read less. To find them book series is also important, according to Merga (2017, p. 215). Students tend to read more if they find a series that they like and want to read more of. Another factor that she found important regarding reading promotion was to find books that give students a challenge while not being too difficult and to give them the time to read. (Merga, 2017, p. 216).

However, motivating students with learning disabilities can be extra difficult, which has been highlighted by Wei et al., (2021). They agree with Merga (2017) that choosing relevant and interesting texts is most important, especially for children with learning disabilities (Wei et al., 2021, p. 156). Furthermore, they state that finding texts that engage the students' knowledge-based interests could also be a crucial factor:

Educators can help build prior knowledge by engaging students in the learning process through a variety of hands-on activities to arouse situational interest and curiosity in reading. Doing so enables students to draw upon their own experiences to deepen their understanding of the concepts and related knowledge to support both their decoding and comprehension of the text. (Wei et al., 2021, pp. 157-158)

That is, if a student wants to learn more about a specific topic, their interest could motivate them to read books and other texts about that topic. Wei et al. (2021) argue that these interests could be a way for students to find reading interesting and therefore is something that teachers should encourage more.



Even though all the above methods of reading promotion could be relevant for all ages, they have typically been directed at students in their earlier school years. However, it has been shown that children tend to read less often as they grow up (Merga & Mat Roni, 2018, p. 215). Even though schools do have an important role in providing reading experiences for adolescents, Merga & Mat Roni emphasize the importance of all adults, including parents and guardians, acting as reading models beyond children's early school years (2018, p. 219). They state that when children start to read by themselves, parents tend to stop reading aloud to them and therefore stop sharing reading experiences. Merga & Mat Roni (2018) claim that this is the reason children read less often and that parents therefore should never stop being a reading model: "A continual demonstration of habitual reading by parents can form a long-lasting impression for the children to imitate as they progress in their lives" (Merga & Mat Roni, 2018, p. 219).

Additionally, Krashen's (2004) conclusions are quite clear. He argues that language education today has been turned backwards, in the sense that we tend to learn the "skills" first, then apply them to reading and writing. He claims that we need to turn that back around and read to improve our language skills and that a print-rich environment is a necessity to accomplish that (Krashen, 2004, pp. 150-151). Therefore, he pushes for teachers to promote FVR in schools as well.

## 2.2 Reading in school

Reading texts has been an obvious part of school since we started educating people, and it still has a natural place in today's schools. As stated above, access to books is crucial for reading to happen, which applies to schools as well. Krashen mentions the importance of print-rich environments at school, both in well-stocked school libraries as well as classroom libraries (2004, pp. 58-59). In particular, the school has an important part in providing a print-rich environment to children of low-income families. Parents with low income might struggle to provide that access to books at home, which is something that schools can counter (Krashen, 2004, p. 70, Locher & Pfof, 2020, p. 12).

Reading promotion in schools can have a big impact on students' reading habits. A study of this was done by Scott and Saaiman (2016), by examining students' attitudes on reading, before and after attending an intermediary program at a university in South Africa. The students were given a questionnaire before and after the courses where a reading promotion module was implemented (Scott & Saaiman, 2016, p. 4). The reading module "is designed to change the reading attitudes of students by motivating and encouraging them to

read” where the students read two required novels with an aim of getting an in-depth understanding of those books (Scott & Saaiman, 2016, p. 4). The results of the study showed that most students had perceived a change in their reading skills and that many of the participants wanted to make reading their hobby. Scott and Saaiman (2016) conclude that their results “are a clear indication of the substantial benefits from the programme, with students developing an enjoyment and enthusiasm about the reading. This leads to an improved attitude in students towards reading and a change in reading behaviour” (p. 10). Other reading modules like the one in Scott and Saaiman’s study have been confirmed to be successful by Collins et al. (2022, p. 94) and Mahasneh et al. (2021, p. 361).

These studies all focus on the development of students’ first language but practising FVR or similar activities in a school situation can be beneficial when they learn a second language as well. Patrick (2019), as a teacher of Latin, established a project in a second-language classroom, at the start of which she made sure there was access to books in Latin (2019, p. 79). Thereafter, she implemented reading sessions in her classes. Usually, the reading was done at the beginning of class since it gave the students a pause from reality and helped them concentrate on the lesson at hand. The reading activity was obligatory; however, the choice of book was up to the students. The teacher was reading alongside the students to be a reading model and did not give them any tests or assignments on what they were reading (p. 80). Patrick concludes her article by saying:

For far too long, reading has been an activity forced upon students. What was once a way to explore new worlds and experience new things has become the bane of many students’ daily lives. While many adults find reading enjoyable and important, an overabundance of testing, grades, and accountability has stripped this point of view from the students who come into our rooms every day. The fact remains, however, that reading is an excellent form of input for students of language. (Patrick, 2019, p. 82)

Even though Patrick’s version comes with some restrictions and might not be fully voluntary, she claims that a program that practices recreational reading, without testing and assessments, could assist students to find reading a pleasurable activity, which in the long run would help improve their academic results.

Nonetheless, it can be problematic to realize FVR in a school environment, where students are constantly evaluated and controlled. In a study made by Hempel-Jorgensen et al. (2018), it was concluded that even though schools implement FVR programs, they still risk

not supporting the children's motivation and engagement in reading if teachers keep a focus on proficiency only. When teachers use FVR programs but still have the main objective of increasing students' reading comprehension and vocabulary skills and not reading for pleasure in a non-restrictive way, it could rather do damage to the students' will to read more than it encourages them to do so. Hempel-Jorgensen et al.'s study (2018) "reveals the restrictive and restricting nature of pedagogy in relation to children's volition and social interaction as readers in the observed classroom" (p. 92). In other words, since the school environment is heavily focused on control and assessment, a pedagogy of reading for pleasure – namely to give students a place and time to sink into a book and read for their own enjoyment – is hard to implement.

### 2.2.1 School libraries and librarians

One part of schools that can have an obvious place in reading promotion, including FVR, is the school library. The library and its librarian play an important part in enhancing FVR at a school (Loh et al., 2022, p. 943; Ogbonna & Eze, 2015, p. 22). The ways school libraries and librarians can do that are similar to the methods mentioned above: arrange book talks, space and time to read, opportunities and possibilities to choose books for oneself, and reading and writing projects (Limberg, 2002, p. 62). Furthermore, an educated librarian, with good knowledge of current children's and young adults' books, recommends suitable books to each student (Limberg 2002, p. 62; Maynard et al., 2008, p. 239). In a research review made by Limberg (2002), she concludes that the school library is often disregarded in Swedish schools today, but research show that it could be an asset in students' language development, especially in examples where librarians and teachers cooperate (p. 89). Therefore, she argues, the librarian should more often be included in schools' didactic work.

However, even though a well-stocked library with an educated librarian can raise the quality of students' learning, Limberg (2002) concludes that it does not necessarily do so. The most important influence on students' learning is the teachers, their perspective on knowledge, and what methods they use. Limberg (2002) highlights examples where libraries contribute to different methods of teaching, but these examples all prove that librarians are still dependent on the teachers' perspectives (p. 46). This suggests that teachers have at least some responsibilities when it comes to reading promotion, regardless of their subject and school form, and preferably in cooperation with the school librarian.

### 3. Method

In this section the combined methods of the study are presented in three subsections: 1) reasons for the choice of method, 2) details regarding the textual analysis, and 3) details regarding the survey.

#### 3.1 Choice of method

In order to answer the first research question, a textual analysis of 5 different policy texts was made in search of guidance and specific directions for teachers in general, and English teachers more specifically regarding reading promotion. The aim was to examine how clear these texts are with regard to teachers' role in reading promotion. To answer the second research question, an analysis of the upper secondary school curriculum was carried out to see if it corresponds to the governmental reports and recent research.

Lastly, to answer the third research question, a survey was conducted, asking teachers at upper secondary schools how they work with reading promotion. The main reason for choosing a survey rather than interviews was the hope of getting a higher number of participating teachers from all over Sweden.

#### 3.2 Textual analysis

This subsection explains the details of the textual analysis. It is divided into two parts: one on how the documents were chosen, and a second one on how the analysis was carried out.

##### 3.2.1 Choice of documents

The official documents regarding governmental reports that have been used in this study were chosen firstly by searching for reading promotion (*läsfrämjande* in Swedish) on the website of the Swedish government: *regeringen.se*. The selection was made by looking at the latest directions that were presented after the implementation of the curriculum from 2011. The intention was to find documents that specifically aimed at the upper secondary school.

In that search, two governmental directives called *Reading Promotion In and Outside of School* (Dir. 2016:78) and *The Position fo Literature* (Dir. 2011:24) were found, which became the base of my text search. Through the chain of legislation of those directives, the following texts were identified and used in the analysis: *The Culture of Reading* (SOU 2012:65), *Read for Life* (Prop. 2013/14:13), *Children's and Adolescents' Reading Habits – A Responsibility for All of Society* (SOU 2018:57), and *Children's and Adolescents' Reading Habits* (Skr. 2020/21:95). All titles have been translated by me. In the reference list, the

original titles are kept in Swedish to make it clear that the language of the texts is Swedish since no English translations of them were found.

For the analysis of the school curriculum, the most recent one published in 2022 was used, which can be found on the website of the Swedish National Agency of Education: *skolverket.se*. Since this version is such a recent one and is still being revised at the time writing, the Swedish National Agency of Education has not included the syllabi for each course there yet. Therefore, the specific website for each course syllabus was used.

Lastly, for the analysis of The Swedish Arts Council's role in reading promotion, one document was found when searching for an official definition of "reading promotion". The document was found at The Swedish Arts Council's website, *kulturradet.se*, and is called *Promote Reading: Plan of Action for Reading Promotion 2019* (Kulturrådet, 2019). This document gave further insight into official Swedish work regarding reading promotion, which is the reason for including it in the analysis. More details and links to all these documents can be found in the reference list.

### 3.2.2 Analysis procedure

During the analysis, I first searched the texts for keywords like *reading in school*, *reading promotion*, *upper secondary school*, and *love of reading* (*läslust* in Swedish), which then proceeded to a close reading of the corresponding passages. The main focus of the analysis was to find how the texts signal teachers' responsibilities regarding reading promotion, as opposed to the teaching of reading skills. Since all the documents that were found are in Swedish, the quotes provided in my analysis (see section 4 below) have been translated by me, with help from two dictionaries: *tyda.se* and *oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*. A list of all the Swedish original formulations can be found in Appendix 3.

## 3.3 Survey

In this subsection, details are presented regarding the respondents of the survey, the procedure of collecting data, and ethical considerations that were kept in mind for this study.

### 3.3.1 Informants

Since the focus of this study has been on upper secondary schools the informants had to be teachers at upper secondary schools. They were found in two ways: Firstly, the survey was sent out through a local network group of 55 English teachers. They all work at an upper secondary school in a middle-sized city in Sweden. Secondly, the survey was sent out through

two Facebook groups, one consisting of 2058 members and one consisting of 6112 members (in November 2022). In total, the survey was completed by 13 respondents.

### 3.3.2 Data collection procedure

The survey (see Appendix 2 for a copy) was created using Google Forms which provided a link that was sent out through the different media mentioned in section 3.3.1. According to Denscombe (2017), the “researcher needs to gauge how many questions can be included before the respondent is likely to run out of patience and consign the questionnaire to the waste bin” (p. 187). With Denscombe’s words in mind and since most questions were open-ended, in the hope of getting more qualitative data, the survey was kept quite short, containing only 12 questions. Some closed questions were included as well, to give the respondents a variety of questions to answer. These were not analyzed in a deeper sense since the aim of the survey was to achieve qualitative data rather than quantitative. Because the target group was only teachers of English at upper secondary schools, the survey started with two control questions to clarify this for the respondents and make sure the survey only reached the target group.

All questions, except the first two control questions, were based on extracts and quotes from different policymaker’s texts. The respondents were given an excerpt and then some questions in order for them to interpret and comment on the excerpt. The open questions offered opportunities for the respondents to motivate and explain their reasoning further. The open questions were not obligatory for the respondents to answer, to make the survey more accessible. This resulted in eight answers on question 4, six answers on question 6, eight answers on questions 8 and 9, seven answers on question 11, and lastly eight answers on question 12. On all the open-ended answers, a thematic analysis was carried out.

### 3.3.3 Ethical considerations

In order to follow the main principles of good research ethics (Swedish Research Council, 2017, p. 41): anonymity, confidentiality, and professional secrecy, the respondents were informed about the complete anonymity of their participation in the email and the Facebook post that were sent out with the link for the survey. Furthermore, they were informed of the study’s theme and purpose and its possible publication time in DiVA. No personal information about the informants was collected and they were free to finish the survey at any time (see Appendix 1 for more details).

## 4. Results and discussion

In the following section, the result of the study is presented. The first subsection presents the results of the textual analysis, and the second subsection presents the results of the survey that was sent out. Lastly, a method discussion is provided.

### 4.1 Analysis: policymakers on reading promotion

In this subsection, the analysis of policies is presented. The subsection is divided into three parts, each one treating different types of policy documents: 1) governmental reports, 2) the plan of action regarding reading promotion by the Swedish Arts Council, and 3) the curriculum for upper secondary school.

#### 4.1.1 Governmental reports

In the following section the analysis of the different governmental reports is presented. The Swedish original of the quotes and passages are marked with a footnote and can be found in total in Appendix 3.

##### *The Culture of Reading*

The first text that has been analyzed is the report that followed a decision made in 2011 (Dir. 2011:24). The report is called *The Culture of Reading* and concluded that the results from international school studies, like PIRL and PISA, were alarming, which made the Swedish government put together a committee whose main mission was to analyze the position of literature in Sweden in general and in all school forms more specifically (SOU 2012:65). In the text, it states that Swedes, in general, are good readers, except for the younger generations, who are reading less each year. Furthermore, the text states that:

[...] the new school law and the new curriculum could be a step in the right direction to turn this problem around. The curriculum's clearer expectations on students' reading ability, that fiction will be a part of science and social classes, and the demand that every school unit should have a school library, are all positive reforms. (SOU 2012:65, p. 384<sup>1</sup>)

In other words, the committee seemed hopeful about the new school reform that was implemented in 2011, and that it would fortify the position of reading in schools. However, they do also state that “these reforms have to be carefully followed up and additional contributions need to be added in order to strengthen the position of literature and reading in

schools” (SOU 2012:65, pp. 384-385<sup>2</sup>). This statement implies that reading has an important place in schools but needs to be further controlled in order for it to retain its position.

These formulations are quite clear about the place of reading, literature, and libraries in schools. However, they are not clear about which school form they are referring to and if the responsibility of reading promotion refers to upper secondary schools as well as compulsory schools. Generally, in Sweden, when we talk about “the school”, which is the term used in *The Culture of Reading*, we mean compulsory school. On the other hand, this report was made on all school forms and it could therefore be argued that these recommendations should be applied to upper secondary schools as well, even though it is not emphasized in the text.

Further down in the text, however, in the text’s more concrete suggestions, the upper secondary school is mentioned, mainly regarding the so-called “Literacy Boost” that was suggested to be implemented, a program that develops the teachers’ skills in literature didactics. The text suggests that “future investments in preschool, compulsory, and upper secondary teachers’ capacity building should be focused on giving them an increased knowledge in literature, especially children’s and young adult literature, and methods of literature didactics” (SOU 2012:65, p. 405<sup>3</sup>). This statement signals that it is important for all teachers to have updated knowledge of literature didactics, in order to promote reading in schools.

### *Read for Life*

The suggestions from *The Culture of Reading* were later the base for a governmental decision that was presented in 2013. In that proposition document, called *Read for Life*, the government at the time decided to introduce national reading objectives that specifically aim to promote reading and literature (Prop. 2013/14:13), in the hope of confirming reading ability as an important part of society. The objective came to look like this:

Everyone in Sweden should, regardless of their background, be given the opportunity to develop a good reading ability in relation to their individual qualifications and conditions and have access to high-quality literature. (Prop. 2013/14:13, p. 22<sup>4</sup>)

This quote signals that the government sees the importance of reading and schools might seem like an obvious place to develop a good reading ability, even though it is not clarified in the text if they have the main responsibility. However, the publication of this national objective led to further clarification in the school curriculum for compulsory school in 2016,



(Dir. 2016:78), though it did not make an impression on the curriculum for upper secondary school. On the other hand, a program for further teacher training was also implemented, called *The Literacy Boost (Läslyftet* in Swedish), which would reach teachers at both school forms.

#### *Children's and Adolescents' Reading Habits*

How effective the Literacy Boost was, has been questioned because just a couple of years later a new directive, called *Reading Promotion inside and outside of school* (Dir. 2016:78), led to another report, which was published in 2018, called *Children's and Adolescents' Reading habits – a Responsibility for All of Society* (SOU 2018:57). In that report they do not give any explicit suggestions for changes but rather hope to keep the efforts already made and highlights important research on the matter.

The ability to experience a literary text as meaningful and interesting is connected to the development of enhanced reading comprehension. In this context, the delegation wants to emphasize the importance of teachers encouraging reading and systematically discussing what has been read. We also want to emphasize the importance of teachers being reading models for the students and gladly sharing what they themselves are reading. (SOU 2018:57, p. 87<sup>5</sup>)

In this passage, the text signals that it is important for teachers to encourage students to read for pleasure, and that teachers should act as reading models, which is something that has been highlighted as effective by research as well (Kavi et al., 2015; Krashen, 2004; Locher & Pfof, 2020; Merga & Mat Roni, 2018). However, as with the earlier statements quoted above, it is not specified what school form is referred to. In fact, the last quote does not mention “the school” at all, as has been done in earlier statements, but rather teachers in general, which suggests that these directives could be aimed at any teacher of any course and any school form. Furthermore, by addressing teachers, the excerpt emphasizes that teachers do have an important responsibility regarding reading promotion.

Additionally, the report *Children's and Adolescents' Reading Habits – A Responsibility for All of Society* also suggests that the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket* in Swedish and henceforth referred to as such) “should put additional focus on how the school can establish an interest in reading” and that “[i]t would be preferable if it were clearer how teachers and school librarians could cooperate. This could, for instance, be done by showing good examples from organisers and schools on Skolverket's website” (SOU 2018:57, p. 87<sup>6</sup>). This statement signals that Skolverket has the ultimate responsibility to

make schools work with reading promotion. Furthermore, the quotes suggest that cooperation between teachers and school librarians should be encouraged by assembling a page on Skolverket's website with advice and guidance on how that could be accomplished. However, since the suggestion only includes guidance via a webpage, it may not count as a mandatory obligation because it would not be included in the school law or the curriculum and syllabi. And again, it is not clear what school form has the main responsibility. On the other hand, the following quote shows that intention more clearly:

It is important to work with early reading interventions, but teaching and learning to read should also have a high priority in secondary and upper secondary school. [...] It would be desirable to increase the cooperation between school and library on methods to motivate reading, with special emphasis on students who do not have established reading habits and specifically students in the secondary and upper secondary school, who according to several studies read less than younger students. (SOU 2018:57, p. 89<sup>7</sup>)

This is the first appearance of a special emphasis on the importance of continued encouragement of reading in the later school years, after compulsory school. Again, this excerpt is also pushing for the importance of establishing cooperation between teachers and librarians, to enhance and increase students' interest in reading, a cooperation that is confirmed to be effective by research (Limberg, 2002; Loh et al., 2022; Ogbonna & Eze, 2015).

Despite all the above-mentioned texts being clear on the importance of reading promotion in schools, the report *Children's and Adolescents' Reading Habits* only led to one missive, which regards skill development for teachers:

The National Agency for Education received, in their regulation letter for 2021, a mission for continued support during 2021-2023 that would stand for skill development in reading and writing progress with a special focus on preschool classes and elementary school. (Skr. 2020/21:95, p. 23<sup>8</sup>)

In this excerpt, it is highlighted that the so-called "Literacy Boost" should continue. One could argue that it is important that teachers are well-educated in literature didactics and should therefore be prioritized. However, it is not mentioned that the government at the time should implement any demands or requirements regarding reading promotion in the

curriculum or school law. Furthermore, this excerpt only mentions the younger school years and neglects the above-stated importance of continued support and encouragement of reading in students' later school years.

### *Summary*

To sum up, one can conclude that the governments have, during the last couple of years, acknowledged the importance of further reading development and encouragement among older students, which corresponds with recent research (Krashen, 2004; Maynard et al., 2008; OCED, 2002). To make that happen, the governments suggest further professional development for teachers in all school forms to expand and update their knowledge of literature didactics. Furthermore, the governmental reports signal the importance of increased cooperation between school librarians and teachers in order to support and encourage students' pleasure reading, which coincides with recent research as well (Loh et al., 2022; Ogbonna & Eze, 2015). However, as far as the present study can determine, all the reports only led to one missive, which only concerns preschools and compulsory schools. Even though it is important to establish reading habits early on, it is fair to question why the governments acknowledge the importance of continued reading promotion in students' later school years, without letting this be reflected in the regulatory documents for upper secondary school.

#### 4.1.2 The Swedish Arts Council's plan of action on reading promotion

In 2014, the Swedish Arts Council (*Kulturrådet* in Swedish and henceforth referred to as such) received a mission from the government to put together an action plan regarding reading promotion called *Promote Reading: An Action Plan for Reading Promotion (Främja läsning* in Swedish). The reason for this was for the government to be able to work towards the national reading objective that was established from the proposition *Read for Life* (Prop. 2013/14:13; see details in section 4.1.1). Kulturrådet's action plan was created "in dialog with other authorities, adult education associations, libraries, and other key promoters of reading" (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 4<sup>9</sup>). In other words, this is not something Kulturrådet has put together by itself but rather in cooperation with different players in society. While schools are not mentioned here in the quote, they might be included among the "other key promoters of reading", though this does remain unclear.

Further on in the document, the action plan gives a definition of reading promotion by listing of what it entails in more detail, namely to:

- remove reading obstacles and open ways into literature
- contribute to people being able to develop all their languages
- strengthen readers' self-confidence and reader identity
- increase access to diverse literature in different languages and formats for readers of all ages
- give opportunities to artistic experiences through literature  
(Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 5<sup>10</sup>)

The text mentions both “removing obstacles” and “increasing access”, which signals a heavy focus on access, which is mentioned in the research as the key factor for reading promotion (Krashen 2004; Merga 2017). Furthermore, the text mentions that Kulturrådet “prioritizes continued reading promotion for children and young people” (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 5<sup>11</sup>). Both passages quoted above signal implicitly that schools should have a role to play when it comes to reading promotion. Children and young adults spend most of their time in schools and it could therefore be a natural place to promote reading for pleasure.

However, all examples of projects that are presented later in Kulturrådet's document are aimed at younger children only. Kulturrådet has, among other things, distributed “books to every preschool of the country in order to strengthen their reading promotion work and create an interest for reading among children and parents”, and they have implemented something called “Book Start”, where “parents are encouraged to talk, read, sing, and rhyme with the child. That way, the child's language and interest in reading develop” (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 11<sup>12</sup>). The activities mentioned in these quotes are only directed at smaller children, and no other activities directed at adolescents are mentioned in the document. The reason for that could be that Kulturrådet's work with reading promotion had not been going on for that many years, and the identification of activities for older students could therefore be something for the future.

Except for the above-mentioned excerpts, the only clear mention of schools' responsibilities can be found on the very last page of Kulturrådets' document:

The school's mission is to teach children basic reading skills, while the Swedish Arts Council works with reading promotion through cultural politics. We support children and adults in their reading outside of school. But also, in cooperation with school, (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 14<sup>13</sup>)

At a first glance, one can read this as the schools' only responsibility being to teach children how to read while Kulturrådet is supposed to promote reading for pleasure. On the other hand, the quote contains a reference to Kulturrådet working with cultural politics, which could mean that they can influence reading at school and even the school curricula. Furthermore, the quote mentions that Kulturrådet is willing to promote reading in cooperation with schools, but they are not giving any examples of what a collaboration like that could look like. Lastly, Kulturrådet describes their work "initiate, coordinate and follow up on reading promotion activities outside of school" (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 4<sup>14</sup>), which is even more inexplicit, and it is fair to ask at this point if Kulturrådet's document is relevant for schools at all.

Overall, the text *Promote Reading* gives us a few examples of how Kulturrådet can contribute to schools' reading promotion programs, even though the ones mentioned are only directed at younger children. However, that does not mean that a collaboration between upper secondary schools and Kulturrådet could not be a reality in the future. On the other hand, the lack of example in the text makes it currently hard to see how English teachers at upper secondary schools could benefit from Kulturrådet.

#### 4.1.3 The curriculum for upper secondary school

The general curriculum for upper secondary school does not explicitly mention reading for pleasure or the promotion of reading. The focus lies more heavily on preparing the students for their coming work life and allowing them to grow into independent members of society. On the other hand, one passage that is closely related to reading for pleasure is the following:

It is also the school's responsibility that every student [...]

- can find their way to non-fiction, fiction, and other cultural offerings as a source of knowledge, self-perception, and joy,
- can be stimulated by cultural experiences and develop a sense of aesthetic values (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 6<sup>15</sup>)

This excerpt could be interpreted as a directive that the school should encourage students to use literature for self-perception as much as to obtain knowledge. Furthermore, "joy" is mentioned, which more explicitly points to the promotion of reading for pleasure. On the other hand, it says that it is "the school's responsibility", which means that these objectives could be pursued by any member of the staff at school, for example a school librarian rather

than a teacher. On the other hand, there can of course be cooperation between the professions, though this is not specified in the quoted passage.

Another excerpt from the general curriculum, although a little less explicit, could be interpreted as a reason to work with reading promotion:

The students shall also be able to navigate and act in a complex reality with a large flow of information, increased digitalization, and a fast rate of change.

Their ability to find, acquire and use new knowledge thus becomes important.

The students should practice their critical thinking, to review information and circumstances, and to understand the consequences of different options.

(Skolverket, 2022b, p. 3<sup>16</sup>)

For students to be able to find relevant information on their own often requires a good reading ability. If teachers succeeded in promoting reading for pleasure, students would have an easier time reading in general (Krashen 2004; McQuillan, 2019; OCED, 2002), thus also being able to navigate large amounts of information more easily. However, this interpretation is quite far-fetched, since the above-quoted objectives could be achieved through instruction-based reading as well.

On the topic of school libraries and librarians, the curriculum mentions a couple of directives. What is stated is that it is the school's principal who is responsible for securing that:

- the education is designed so that every student receives guidance, access, and the possibility to use teaching aids of good quality, to be able to search for and develop skills, and other learning tools for contemporary education, including the school library and digital tools [...]
- the school library is used as a part of teaching and to strengthen students' language and digital skills (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 12<sup>17</sup>)

Both these points encourage cooperation between teachers and school librarians: apart from making sure that students can access and use a library, the school library should be a part of teaching. This goes hand in hand with what the governmental reports have concluded about the importance of libraries (see section 4.1.1) and what recent research confirms as beneficial (Limberg, 2002; Loh et al., 2022; Ogbonna & Eze, 2015). However, the quoted passage does not specify anything regarding reading promotion.

All the above-quoted passages are found in the general curriculum for upper secondary school and should therefore apply to all teachers. In the syllabus of the English subject more specifically, it is stated that “[s]tudents should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills” and that “[i]n teaching students should meet spoken and written English of different kinds as well as be allowed to put the content in relation to their own experiences and prior knowledge”(Skolverket, 2022c, p. 1<sup>18</sup>). In other words, the students are supposed to develop their English level to a degree that makes them comfortable using the language as well as being able to read and understand certain kinds of texts, both fictional and factual ones. Furthermore, they should be able to relate those texts to their own experiences. This requires a considerable reading ability, based on frequent reading, which of course could be acquired by reading for pleasure as several studies have found (Garrison-Fletcher et al., 2022; Sparks et al., 2008).

That said, the English syllabus does not say anything explicit about reading for pleasure. It does, however, mention the ability to “search, value, choose and acquire content from different sources of information, knowledge, and experiences” (Skolverket, 2022c, p. 1<sup>19</sup>), which is similar to the passage mentioned above on page 17. As stated there, to be able to search and value information requires a proficient reading ability and could be achieved by reading for pleasure. However, this objective could be reached by other means as well, such as instruction-based teaching.

All other points that are more clearly related to the promotion and encouragement of reading are exclusively to be found in the syllabus of the Swedish subject, which states that “[t]eaching should stimulate the desire of students to speak, write, read and listen, and in this way support their personal development” (Skolverket, 2022a, p. 1, their translation). Here we see that teachers of Swedish should encourage the students’ “desire” to read. Even though this points in the direction of reading for pleasure, the excerpt is still short and general and does not explicitly encourage the teacher to promote reading as a pleasurable activity, but rather to use every part of the language, not just reading, to support the students’ personal development.

To summarize, the general curriculum for upper secondary school does not emphasize the importance of reading for pleasure as much as both research and governmental reports do. As seen in the present analysis, some hints on the matter can be found in the general curriculum and the Swedish syllabus, but they are all unspecific on what the teachers’ responsibilities are. According to Skolverket’s texts, the main responsibility lies on teachers

of the Swedish subject: “[t]eaching should stimulate the desire of students to [...] read” (Skolverket, 2022a, p. 1, their translation). On the one hand, this goes hand in hand with research that says that reading more in one’s first language is beneficial for developing one’s second language (Garrison-Fletcher et al., 2022). On the other hand, it is fair to ask at this point whether reading promotion should only be the responsibility of teachers of Swedish. Previous research states quite clearly that well-established reading habits increase students’ general academic skills (Gallik, 1999; Mahasneh et al., 2021), and some studies have shown that reading modules of different sorts offered in schools could motivate students to read more (Maynard et al., 2008; Patrick, 2019; Scott & Saaiman, 2016). It would therefore seem that reading promotion should be the interest and duty of all teachers. Furthermore, the reports published by the governments stress the importance of reaching adolescents when it comes to reading for pleasure, which makes one question why this has not been better acknowledged in the general curriculum for upper secondary school, with a reference to all teachers and not just those who teach Swedish.

## 4.2. Survey results: Reading promotion in practice

In this subsection, the result of the survey is presented according to the themes that were found: 1) Attitudes to reading in English, 2) Teacher practice, and 3) Perceived needs. At the end of this subsection, a general discussion of the results from the survey is offered. The quotes from the respondents’ answers have been kept as they are, despite some misspellings. The extract used in the survey was kept in Swedish for the respondents to comment on but are translated in this section to make it more consistent to read.

### 4.2.1 Attitudes to reading in English

All respondents believe that students today need to read more in English. They comment on this by stating, for example, that “most students read online regularly, but not longer texts”, that “many students are not used to reading longer texts and struggle to keep focused” and that “students are not reading in their sparetime, so we should do more of it in school”. One respondent explains their thoughts a bit more in detail by stating that “it stands clear that most students do not read enough longer texts in more advanced, non-personal, or everyday domains. Their engagement in extramural English activities is immense, but it is rather narrow for the most part. Therefore they need to be encouraged to read books, magazines, news and similar”.



Most of the respondents report that the Literacy Boost is still being implemented to some extent at their school, as seen in Figure 1. One respondent commented on this by mentioning that “some of my colleagues have participated in Läslyftet and keep some ideas going”. However, no respondent confirms that they, themselves, participated in the Literacy Boost, or that they are doing it right now.

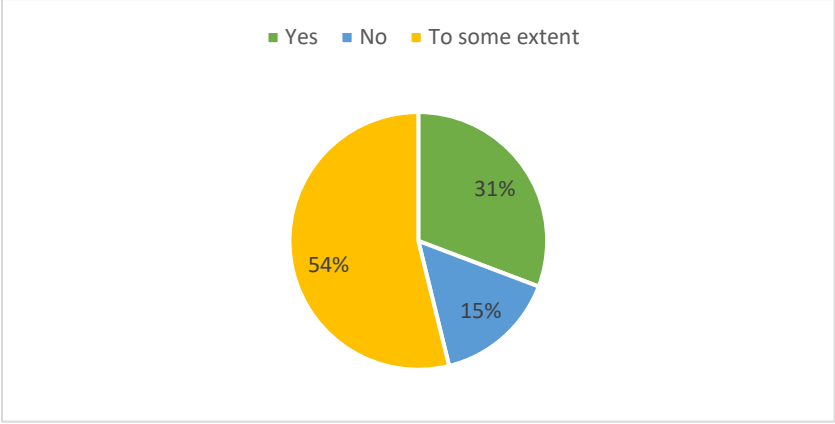


Figure 1 Answers, in percentages, to question 1: Is your school implementing Läslyftet? (n=13)

After this, the respondents were asked to react to the following excerpt:

The school’s mission is to teach the children basic reading skills, while the Swedish Arts Council works with reading promotion through cultural politics. We support children and adults in their reading outside of school. But also, in cooperation with the school (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 14)

As seen in Figure 2, 46% of the respondents think that Kulturrådet could be relevant to upper secondary school. Suggestions from the respondents as to how that could be done include “connections to real life” and “with inspiration and workshops”. One respondent commented that “Working together with society outside of school is paramount to establish routines and habits that are long-lasting”.

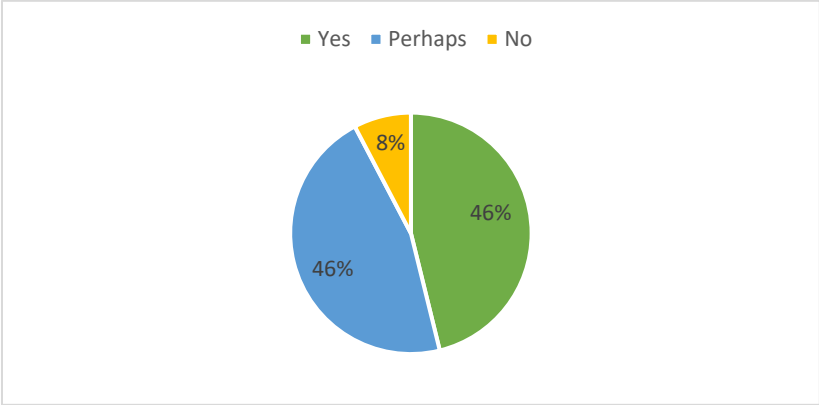


Figure 2 Answers, in percentages, to question 5: Do you feel Kulturrådet could be relevant for upper secondary school or your own teaching practice? (n=13)

#### 4.2.2 Teacher practice

Next, the respondents were shown the following excerpt from the curriculum:

It is also the school's responsibility that every student [...]

- can find their way to non-fiction, fiction, and other cultural offerings as a source of knowledge, self-perception, and joy,
- can be stimulated by cultural experiences and develop a sense of aesthetic values, (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 6)

A majority of the respondents agreed that they were able to incorporate these aims, as seen in Figure 3. Examples and comments that were offered include “reading together in class can make students curious to read more on their own”, “Obligatory reading of a novel of their choice, obligatory reading of a classic short story of my choice”, “I also include drama and theatre” and “Read texts that are authentic and relevant to teenagers and open their eyes to what is going on in the wor[l]d”.

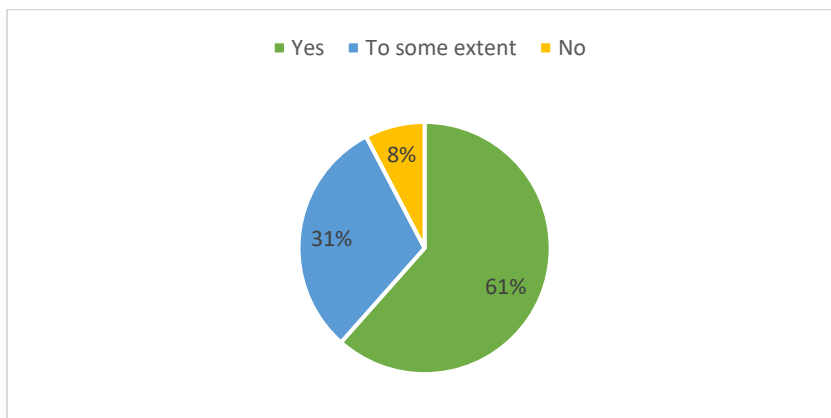


Figure 3 Answers, in percentages, to question 7: Do you feel you are able to incorporate these aspects in your own teaching practice? (n=13)

As seen in Figure 4, most of the respondents think that EFL teachers can be an important factor in the schools' reading promotion. Examples that were given of how to do this include “work with reading during class”, “keep reading with them”, “vary what they read - poetry, plays, articles diaries, etc.”, and “reading activities in and out of the classroom”.

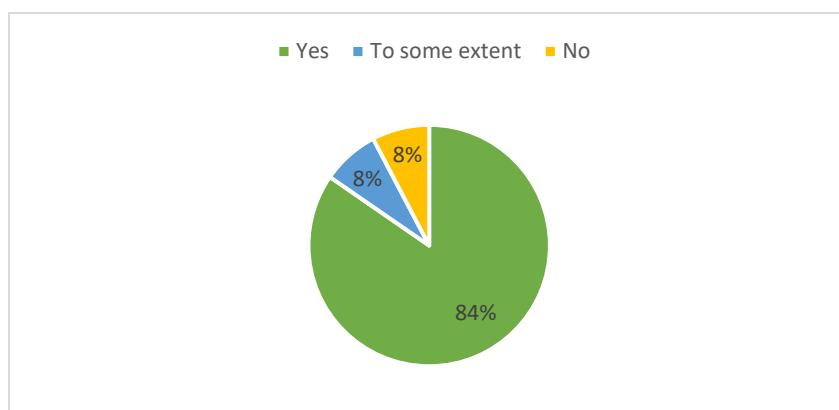


Figure 4 Answers, in percentages, to question 10: Do you think EFL teachers in upper secondary school can do anything to increase reading habits and/or improve reading comprehension among young adults? (n=13)

#### 4.2.3 Perceived needs

When the respondents were asked what would be required for them to work more with reading promotion almost all were unanimous on two things: 1) money and 2) a bigger school library. Money was required “to buy books” and for “buying suitable literature”. Those who pushed for a bigger school library commented that they want “a proper school library and a skilled librarian”, wishing for “a good library in every school, with a librarian who meets the students where they are, who promotes reading for fun and learning”, and that “for us a bigger library would be the dream”. One respondent wished for “a substantial English library in school”. Lastly, one respondent asked for “reading as a bigger part of the curriculum”.

#### 4.2.4 Discussion

The respondents claimed to work with reading promotion in different ways. They gave examples what had worked for them, and they expressed that reading promotion is an important thing to keep doing. No one mentioned a reading module or program, which is something that research shows could improve students’ motivation to read more (Scott & Saaiman, 2016; Maynard et al., 2008). However, they do mention that the school library plays an important part in the school’s work with reading promotion. This confirms previous claims that access to books and other texts through a school library is a key factor (Krashen 2004; Limberg 2002; Merga, 2017; Ogbonna & Eze, 2015).

Despite the lack of encouragement for reading promotion in the school curriculum (as shown in section 4.1.3), the result presented in section 4.2 offers a positive picture of reading promotion as done in schools today. However, the responses suggest a lack of access to books since this is the one thing that the participating teachers feel would improve their work with reading promotion. This fact is troublesome since research states that it is the key factor for

increased reading (Krashen, 2004; Merga, 2017; Shaw, 2021) and should therefore be a priority for school leaders to work with.

### 4.3 Method discussion

During the textual analysis, I had a hard time understanding in what order the documents were published and how to correctly cite them. However, after reading up on the website: *regeringen.se*, and asking a colleague of mine who teaches social science, the reading and analysis went on. No other bigger problems were encountered.

Some complications, however, were encountered when distributing the survey and may have altered and affected the results. Firstly, an acknowledgement must be made of the fact that fewer submissions than anticipated were received in the survey part of the study. Since the Facebook groups that were used to spread the survey were both quite large, the hope was to get more answers that could give a more general view of how English teachers work with reading promotion. However, this was not the case. This could have been avoided if I would have sent out reminders and a repost of the link, which was done once but could have been repeated once more.

Secondly, it is possible that the positive results that are presented from this survey could be explained by the fact that those who chose to answer may be more interested in reading and reading promotion than others since the topic of the study was presented in the mail and Facebook post. Despite this, the survey received some free-text answers that were sufficient to draw some conclusions.

## 5. Conclusion

One conclusion that could be drawn from this study is that the governmental reports and the text from Kulturrådet correspond with recent research in so far as all of them confirm the importance of reading for pleasure and indicate, if implicitly, that it should be done more often in both compulsory and upper secondary schools. However, these policies do not correspond with the curriculum of upper secondary schools. In the general curriculum and the syllabus for English, it is not clear what English teachers should do regarding reading promotion, as shown in section 4.1.3, since the regulatory documents for teaching do not offer any clear recommendations or guidelines. One of the governments' report, *Children's and Adolescents' Reading – A Responsibility for All of Society* (SOU 2018:57), highlights that students' later school years need increased consideration when it comes to reading promotion, but nothing explicit can be found in the curriculum for upper secondary school that corresponds to this, which makes it unclear what responsibility lies with the school. Furthermore, it casts some doubt about how serious these governmental recommendations really are. It is unrealistic to expect teachers to stay informed about and read other governmental policies than those expressed in the curriculum and syllabus. Since research confirms that well-developed reading habits increase students' academic results, a greater emphasis on the importance of and clearer directions on reading promotion should be included in the curriculum.

Despite this, the survey results show that the participating teachers do work with reading promotion at upper secondary schools. The respondents give relevant examples of how to promote reading in class and they try to be reading models. Furthermore, the respondents stress that reading promotion is indeed relevant for upper secondary school. However, they emphasize that more resources are needed to make reading promotion easier. The respondents' emphasis on the need for a well-developed school library goes hand in hand with research that states the importance of access in reading promotion (Krashen 2004; Merga, 2017 & Wei et al., 2021). However, as mentioned in the method discussion (section 4.3), the participating teachers were few and may have been positive because they are interested in the topic. It would therefore be interesting to investigate the practice of English teachers' reading promotion on a larger scale. Additionally, it is still unclear why the governments emphasize the importance of reading promotion for adolescents in its reports but has not let this be reflected in the curriculum.

A suggestion for further studies could, as already mentioned, be to investigate on a larger scale how teachers of English promote reading in their teaching practice. Furthermore, it could be interesting to compare the practice of teachers of English and teachers of Swedish, to see if there is a difference in their work on reading promotion since it is more explicitly included in the Swedish syllabus.

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## Appendix 1 Contact letter

Dear colleagues of English,

I have now taken it upon myself to finally finish my teacher degree; therefore, I am now writing my degree project in English. The idea for my project is to take a closer look at reading promotion and its relevance in the English subject at Upper secondary schools, and I would appreciate your opinions on the matter. I have constructed a survey with some questions that takes about 5-15 minutes to complete (depending on how much input you would like to add on the open-ended questions), and it would make me very happy if you could spare me that time to answer it. Of course, I understand that time is precious, so if you don't have the time yourself to answer the survey, I would be glad if you could spread it further to other groups of English teachers.

The survey will of course be completely anonymous and you can finish it at any time. Your answers will be taken care of with Vetenskapsrådets "Good Research Practice" in mind. The only ones that will see the results are me and possibly my supervisor and examiner. A summary of the results will be presented in my essay which will be published in DiVA in early 2023.

The survey targets specifically English teachers at Upper secondary schools. Therefore, you can disregard this if you don't "fit" into that category.

Link to survey: <https://forms.gle/95BpFtoK5kHJncoB6>

Thank you!

Best regards,

Isabelle Zetterberg

## **Appendix 2 Copy of the online survey**

During the last couple of years, there has been a loud discussion in language teaching about reading promotion for children and young adults. This discussion has mostly been concerning the Swedish school subject, and now I am curious about the relevance of reading promotion in the English subject in upper secondary school.

I hope you will help me gather knowledge on this topic by answering this short survey. It will take around 10 minutes.

### **Control questions:**

1. Do you teach the English subject?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you teach at an upper secondary school?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

If you answer no on both or any of these questions, I thank you, but you do not need to proceed.

This survey is part of a degree project in English at Mälardalen University. It investigates teachers' attitudes to reading promotion in the English subject and is aimed at teachers in upper secondary school. In the following questions, I ask you to comment on excerpts from official documents concerning reading and teaching.

### **Excerpt 1**

”Skolan bör fortsätta att stärka elevernas språk-, läs- och skrivutveckling. Läslyftet som helhet bör fortsätta inom ramen för de nationella skolutvecklingsprogrammen.”  
(Kulturdepartementet 2020).

1. Is your school implementing this in general?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. To some extent

- d. I don't know
2. In the English subject?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. To some extent
  3. Do you think your students need more reading in English?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  4. Please comment on your answers:

### **Excerpt 2**

”Skolans uppgift är att lära barnen grundläggande läsförmåga, medan Kulturrådet arbetar läsfrämjande inom det kulturpolitiska området. Vi stöttar barn och vuxna i deras läsande utanför skolan. Men också i samverkan med skolan, och i samverkan med civilsamhället, bildningsförbund, fackföreningar, intresseorganisationer och näringsliv.” (Kulturrådet 2019:14)

5. Do you feel Kulturrådet could be relevant for Upper secondary school or your own teaching practice?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Perhaps
  - c. No
6. Please give examples or comments

### **Excerpt 3**

”Det är även skolans ansvar att varje elev som har slutfört ett nationellt program [...]

\* kan söka sig till saklitteratur, skönlitteratur och övrigt kulturutbud som en källa till kunskap, självinsikt och glädje

\* kan hämta stimulans ur kulturella upplevelser och utveckla känsla för estetiska värden” (Curriculum for upper secondary school, Skolverket 2022).

7. Do you feel that you are able to incorporate these aspects in your own teaching practice?
  - a. Yes

- b. To some extent
  - c. No
8. If you answered yes or to some extent on the last question, please give examples on how you do this.
9. If you answered no, could you comment on what more you need in order to be able to do this?

#### **Excerpt 4**

”Det har under de senaste åren genomförts flera insatser för att främja ett ökat läsande och förbättrad läsförmåga. Det har också skett vissa förbättringar vad gäller barns och ungas läsförståelse jämfört med tidigare internationella mätningar som PISA och PIRLS. Det finns dock fortsatt stora utmaningar och fortsatt stora skillnader i läsförståelse när det gäller kön och socioekonomisk bakgrund. I gruppen ungdomar i åldrarna 16–25 år syns också en tydlig minskning bland de som läser på sin fritid varje vecka.” (Kulturdepartementet 2021).

10. Do you think EFL teachers in upper secondary schools can do anything to increase reading habits and/or improve reading comprehension among young adults?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. To some extent
11. If yes, what do you suggest teachers could do?
12. If you personally would like to work more with promoting reading in the future, what would be required (from the management, the municipality, the government etc.) for you to do that?

If you want to read more on the topic, I have gathered all the sources that I have used in an easily accessible list below:

Kulturdepartementet, 2020. *Barn och ungas läsning*, Skr. 2020/21:95. Retrieved 2022-10-13 from <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/skrivelse/2021/03/skr.-20202195/>

Kulturdepartementet, 2021. *Regeringens skrivelse Barns och ungas läsning*. Press release.

Retrieved 2022-10-11 from

<https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2021/03/regeringens-skrivelse-barns-och-ungas-lasning/>

Kulturrådet, 2019. *Främja läsning*. Retrieved 2022-10-11 from

<https://www.kulturradet.se/publikationer/handlingsprogram-lasframjande/>

Skolverket, 2022. *Läroplan för gymnasieskolan*. Retrieved 2022-10-13 from

<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/laroplan-gy11-for-gymnasieskolan>

## Appendix 3 Swedish quotes used in the textual analysis

### Used in part 4.1.1 Governmental reports

<sup>1</sup> [...] den nya skollagen och den nya läroplanen kan vara steg i rätt riktning för att vända denna trend. Läroplanernas tydligare förväntningar på elevernas läsförmåga, att skönlitteratur ska ingå i de natur-vetenskapliga och samhällsvetenskapliga ämnena och kravet att alla skolenheter ska ha skolbibliotek är positiva reformer (SOU 2012:65, p. 384)

<sup>2</sup> [...] dessa reformer måste följas upp noga och att det krävs ytterligare insatser för att stärka litteraturen och läsningen i skolan. (SOU 2012:65 pp. 384-385)

<sup>3</sup> att framtida satsningar på förskole-, grund- och gymnasielärarnas kompetensutveckling bör inriktas på att ge lärarna ökad kunskap om litteratur, och särskilt barn- och ungdomslitteratur, samt litteraturdidaktiska metoder. (SOU 2012:65, p. 405)

<sup>4</sup> Alla i Sverige ska, oavsett bakgrund och med utgångspunkt i vars och ens särskilda förutsättningar, ges möjlighet att utveckla en god läsförmåga och ha tillgång till litteratur av hög kvalitet. (Prop. 2013/14:13 p. 22)

<sup>5</sup> Förmågan att uppleva en litterär text som en meningsfull och intresseväckande helhet hänger samman med utvecklingen av en fördjupad läsförståelse. Delegationen vill i det sammanhanget betona vikten av att lärare uppmuntrar och systematiskt genomför diskussioner om det lästa. Vi vill också betona betydelsen av att lärarna agerar läsande förebilder för eleverna och gärna då även berättar om vad de själva läser. (SOU 2018:57, p. 87)

<sup>6</sup> [...] Skolverket bör lägga ytterligare fokus på är hur man i skolan kan skapa läsintresse [...] Det vore därför önskvärt att det tydligare framgick på vilket sätt förskollärare, lärare och skolbibliotekarier kan samverka. Detta kunde exempelvis göras genom att Skolverket lyfter fram lärande exempel från olika huvudmän och verksamheter på sin hemsida. (SOU 2018:57, pp. 87-88)



<sup>7</sup> Det är viktigt att både arbeta med tidiga läsinsatser men även att läsundervisningen har fortsatt hög prioritet även i högstadiet och gymnasieskolan. [...] Det vore önskvärt med ett ökat samarbete mellan skola och bibliotek kring metoder som kan ge läsmotivation, med särskild betoning på elever som läser i liten omfattning och då särskilt på elever i högstadiet och i gymnasieskolan som enligt flera undersökningar läser i mindre omfattning än yngre elever. (SOU 2018:57, p. 89)

<sup>8</sup> Statens skolverk fick i regleringsbrevet för 2021 i uppdrag att under 2021–2023 fortsatt svara för fortbildning i läs- och skrivutveckling med inriktning mot förskoleklass och lågstadiet. (Skr. 2020/21:95, p. 23)

#### **Used in part 4.1.2 The plan of action for reading promotion from the Swedish Arts Council**

<sup>9</sup> Handlingsprogrammet togs fram i dialog med andra myndigheter, folkbildningsförbund, bibliotek och andra centrala läsfrämjande aktörer. (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 4)

<sup>10</sup> Läsfrämjande är att:

- \* ta bort hinder för läsning och öppna vägar till litteratur
- \* bidra till att människor kan utveckla alla sina språk stärka läsarens självförtroende och läsaridentitet öka tillgången till en mångfald av litteratur på olika språk och i olika format för läsare i alla åldrar
- \* ge fler möjlighet till en konstnärlig upplevelse genom litteratur (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 5)

<sup>11</sup> Vi prioriterar fortsatt läsfrämjande insatser som vänder sig till barn och unga. (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 5)

<sup>12</sup> Sprida böcker till samtliga landets förskolor för att stärka förskolornas läsfrämjande arbete och skapa intresse för läsning hos barn och föräldrar [...] Föräldrar uppmuntras att prata, läsa, sjunga, rimma och ramsa med barnet. På så sätt utvecklas barnets språk och läsintresse. (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 11)

<sup>13</sup> Skolans uppgift är att lära barnen grundläggande läsförmåga, medan Kulturrådet arbetar läsfrämjande inom det kulturpolitiska området. Vi stöttar barn och vuxna i deras läsande utanför skolan. Men också i samverkan med skolan (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 14)

### **Used in section 4.1.3 The curriculum for upper secondary school**

<sup>14</sup> att initiera, samordna och följa upp läsfrämjande verksamhet utanför skolan (Kulturrådet, 2019, p. 4)

<sup>15</sup> Det är även skolans ansvar att varje elev [...] kan söka sig till saklitteratur, skönlitteratur och övrigt kulturutbud som en källa till kunskap, självinsikt och glädje, kan hämta stimulans ur kulturella upplevelser och utveckla känsla för estetiska värden (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 6)

<sup>16</sup> Eleverna ska också kunna orientera sig och agera i en komplex verklighet med stort informationsflöde, ökad digitalisering och snabb förändringstakt. Deras förmåga att finna, tillägna sig och använda ny kunskap blir därför viktig. Eleverna ska träna sig att tänka kritiskt, att granska information och förhållanden och att inse konsekvenserna av olika alternativ (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 3)

<sup>17</sup> \* utbildningen utformas så att alla elever, för att själva kunna söka och utveckla kunskaper, ges handledning och får tillgång till och förutsättningar att använda läromedel av god kvalitet samt andra lärverktyg för en tidsenlig utbildning, bl.a. skolbibliotek och digitala verktyg, undervisningen, elevhälsan och studie- och yrkesvägledningen utformas så att eleverna [...] \* skolbibliotekets verksamhet används som en del i undervisningen och för att stärka elevernas språkliga och digitala kompetens, (Skolverket, 2022b, p. 12)

<sup>18</sup> Eleverna ska ges möjlighet att, genom språkanvändning i funktionella och meningsfulla sammanhang, utveckla en allsidig kommunikativ förmåga. [...] I undervisningen ska eleverna få möta talad och skriven engelska av olika slag samt få sätta innehållet i relation till egna erfarenheter och kunskaper. (Skolverket, 2022c, p. 1)

<sup>19</sup> söker, värderar, väljer och tillägnar sig innehåll från olika källor för information, kunskaper och upplevelser. (Skolverket, 2022c, p. 1)