Understanding English 5

A Study of the Central Content and Knowledge Requirements for the Course of English 5

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Abstract

This study regards the *central content* and *knowledge requirements* for the subject of *English 5* in the Swedish upper secondary school system. The study is based on an analytical reading of the documents and is complemented by a questionnaire that was answered by upper secondary school teachers. The aim of the study was to investigate what parts of the documents lack clarity, from a new teacher’s perspective. The study finds a few examples of terms that are likely to confuse new teachers when grading students. Furthermore, questions were raised regarding the course in general, such as how to give the students *confidence* to speak English, when to use Swedish in the classroom and which English speech communities and cultures teachers should focus on. The questionnaire provided answers that could be helpful to newly graduated English teachers who are preparing to work in the Swedish upper secondary school system.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Swedish upper secondary school, English 5, Knowledge Requirements, Central Content, English as a second language.
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to help those that are studying to become English teachers at the upper secondary level in Sweden. Even at the end of the five-year teacher education program, there can still be confusion and uncertainty regarding the documents that are created for teachers to follow. This essay will study the curriculum implemented by the Swedish Board of Education in 2011 with focus on the entry level English course in the upper secondary school system: English 5. The documents that will be studied are the central content and knowledge requirements. The Central Content regards what the course should include and how it should be conducted. The Knowledge Requirements do exactly what the title implies, determine levels of knowledge needed for a student to receive a certain grade. Many new teachers or teacher students will most likely have difficulties interpreting some parts of these documents. This essay aims to highlight and discuss these parts in order to try and provide answers or suggestions on how to interpret complicated parts of the central content and knowledge requirements.

The English language is perhaps more important today than ever before. The Internet and globalization in general have made the world a smaller place. Apart from relatively small parts of Finland, Swedish is generally spoken only by Sweden’s population of 10 million people (Höglin, 2002). Swedes then, are required to learn a more global language in order to compete in the global market place of today and the future. In fact, Sweden is constantly reoccurring as a top nation regarding English as a second language, along with its Scandinavian neighbors (Norrby, 2015). Historically, Swedes never dubbed foreign, mostly American, movies (apart from children’s movies). In the 1930’s, Germany, Spain, France and Italy all took political action to maintain and strengthen their native languages which resulted in them dubbing most foreign movies (Herman & Persson, 2012). According to Hermansson and Persson, the main reason why Sweden never dubbed movies was economic since it was simply cheaper to add subtitles. Regardless of the motive, the decision not to dub English speaking movies resulted in Swedes being exposed to the English language in a recreational manner.

In modern times, movies are not the only source of English that Swedes encounter. Many students play online video games where they are directly connected with people from all over the world, and their main language is English. Other students might watch

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1 There were 290,000 Swedish speaking Finns in 2002 (Höglin)
TV-series on the household streaming services available on their computers, phones, tablets, smart-TV’s and video game consoles. The result, along with several other factors, is that many students in the Swedish upper secondary schools speak fluent English and can fully understand spoken English. This development in language skills must be taken into account when interpreting the steering documents that the Board of Education has created for the teaching of English.

This study seeks to find issues within the Central content and knowledge requirements from a teacher student’s perspective. However, in some cases there might be answers or advice that experienced teachers can provide to these issues. Therefore, a questionnaire was created which includes questions that could possibly be answered by the participating three teachers.

1.1 Hypothesis

It is reasonable to think that the central content and knowledge requirements should provide the answers as to how a new teacher should conduct and assess their English 5 courses. However, the hypothesis of this study is that teacher students at the end of their education, as well as recently graduated teachers, are left with many questions after studying the central content and knowledge requirements for the course of English 5. These questions may be a result of a lack of clarity from The Department of Education.

New teachers might experience difficulties and contradictions at the very beginning of their careers with regards to the documents that direct their profession. There is arguably a lack of focus on the central content and knowledge requirements in the instruction and thus these documents might seem relatively foreign to a new teacher. Every instruction and guideline within the central content of the subject of English and the knowledge requirements for the course English 5 might seem reasonable on their own. However, when put together there might be questions or problems for new teachers when planning their English 5 course. Therefore, the education for teachers would benefit from a deeper study of these documents. Furthermore, this study expects that experienced teachers should be able to provide needed guidance regarding these documents that teacher students or newly graduated teachers did not receive at the university.
1.2 Aim and Purpose

The Aim of the essay is to detect problems regarding the course *English 5* that new teachers might experience. There might be contradictions or inconsistency within the documents provided by the Swedish Department of Education. Based upon the questions, problems, or contradictions that are detected, a survey is made for experienced teachers to answer. Furthermore, in the survey, participants are given the opportunity to freely discuss additional issues within the documents that they might emphasize. There are several studies made on the subject of curriculum theory. However, this study regards issues that might occur to new teachers in particular, and should therefore be able to add a new perspective.

It is often said that the first two years as a teacher are the toughest. The main reason for this is that new teachers need to plan everything from the beginning, whereas experienced teachers already have several lesson plans documented and even more importantly, they know what works and what does not work. Moreover, there is a period of adjustment regarding assessment. Meanwhile, there is arguably too little focus on the knowledge requirements for specific upper secondary courses when studying to become a teacher. Thereby, the purpose of this essay is to provide a service to future English teachers by investigating and addressing problems within the knowledge requirements and central content. The following are the research questions:

- What parts of the Central Content of English and Knowledge Requirements for the course English 5 are difficult to interpret?

- Can experienced teachers provide answers to the questions raised in this essay regarding the *central content* and *knowledge requirements* for English 5?

2. Method and Material

The method used is an analytical reading of the *central content* and *knowledge requirements* for the subject of *English 5*. The study aims to find contradictions within both documents as well as between them. Both the *central content* and *knowledge requirement* are available in English. However, every other document from the
Department of Education along with most literature used in this essay is written in Swedish and thereby translated by the author of this essay. The study is mainly limited to the central content and knowledge requirements. A larger study could include other aspects, such as the Swedish School Law, CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment and additional steering documents to investigate further contradictions or problems. The method could be used on other subjects or courses, as well as in other countries depending on their structure of education and steering documents.

With the results of the analytical reading in hand a questionnaire was created and given to three English teachers, addressing problems or questions that new teachers might have in connection to the central content and knowledge requirements for English 5. The questionnaire did not include every problem or question found, but rather topics where the recipients’ opinions could offer additional value to the research. Furthermore, the survey was limited to one page due to concerns regarding the time required by the already busy teachers, and to the limits of this study. However, the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions which made it more time consuming for the recipients to answer. The reason for using open-ended questions is that the survey measures attitudes and behavior. Fink (2003) claims that measuring attitudes can be difficult and suggests performing a cognitive pre-test (Fink, 2003). Therefore, a pre-test was performed with one teacher before handing out the final survey to the three teachers participating in this study. All three teachers have several years of experience working with the subject of English. They are anonymous and will be referred to as teachers 1, 2 and 3.

2.1 Validity and Reliability

Since this essay analyzes documents from the author’s perspective, and contains opinions of only three additional teachers, general conclusions cannot be drawn from the essay. Furthermore, the essay lacks external validity as the result cannot be applied to people other than the three interviewed teachers. Since this essay is a qualitative research its provided results should be viewed as perspectives that can be added to the subject of curriculum studies, with the subject of English 5 in Swedish upper secondary school in particular.
The reliability of this essay is dependent on the questionnaire being a valid research instrument. The questionnaire was designed with the help of How to Ask Survey Questions, in order to obtain reliable answers (Fink, 2003). Since the questions gave the recipients the opportunity to freely speak their minds, and did not intend to unduly influence the recipients, their answers can be deemed as reliable. For the sake of reliability, it is also crucial that the translations from Swedish into English were correctly performed.

3. Background: English in the Swedish School system

In this chapter, the history of the English language in the Swedish school system will be briefly presented. We encounter the English language constantly in modern day Sweden. However, the language was not considered important in the early days of the Swedish public-school system. There were several languages with higher status than English, and this chapter begins with the history of the Subject of English’s journey to become the most important second language in Sweden.

3.1 The English Subject Before 1970

In 1842, a charter was issued by the Swedish state. It determined that every parish should have at least one school and one educated teacher. Moreover, every parish was required to offer education to all children residing there. This was the birth of the modern day Swedish school (Florin, 2010). During the 1850’s two different types of upper secondary schools were established in Sweden: the school of Latin and the school of Realia. These two school-orientations came to last for over 100-years (Malmberg, 2000, GY2000:18, Språk). Within the Realia school, there was more room for English studies due to the lesser influence of Latin. During the reform of the mid 1800’s, the school system was funded by the state and assigned to provide common education to the citizens and to promote scientific values. This reform came as a result of a demanding middleclass, and was generally opposed by priests and people of noble birth. However, the school system was still greatly influenced by the values of Christianity (Richardsson, 2004).
The English language was first taught in Swedish schools in the mid 1800’s. However, at that time, Latin and Greek were still the dominant second languages in school. The teaching of the English language was part of a modernization process that would continue well into the 20th century (Richardsson, 2004). According to Bratt, the status of the subject of English in Swedish universities grew at a relatively fast pace during 1850 – 1905. In 1902, at an assembly of Nordic universities, it was agreed upon that universities in Northern Europe needed to use a global language. Some argued that Latin should be reinstated, but were met with arguments that the language needed to be a living language. The political, economic and cultural expansion of Great Britain and The United States made the case for the English language (Bratt, 1984).

Swedish public schools in the mid 1800’s did not consider English as an important subject. In fact, Hebrew, German, French, Latin and Greek were all held in higher regard. Bratt writes that English increased in importance as the fight for civil education began to give results, where Latin and Greek were viewed as more elitist. Finally, the English language became mandatory in Upper Secondary Schools in 1905, although still second to the German language (Bratt, 1984).

In the early 1920’s, the Swedish school commission released a report in which some commissioners argued that English should be considered as the primary second language in Swedish schools. Due to pedagogical and cultural reasons, along with the notion that it was a global language, some commissioners concluded that English was the language that would benefit the students the most. However, there was resistance within the commission that would rather see German as the primary second language, due to its geographical and cultural ties with Sweden. The board of directors went with the minority of the report, and kept German as the primary second language (SOU 1938:50). In 1948, a new commission report concluded that English would be the primary second language, at the expense of German. At this time, English had gained popularity in Swedish schools, and the Swedish Public Radio had twice as many listeners of their English courses compared to the German courses. Furthermore, the commission stated that the education in English should be somewhat more practical than the previously heavily grammar based German and Latin courses (SOU 1948:27).

In 1956 there was yet another reform of the Swedish school system. The reform substantiated that English would be mandatory from the fifth grade (Axelsson, 2006). There was a debate during this period regarding mandatory English. Some argued that learning English at this age required a higher than average intelligence. Furthermore,
there was a shortage of teachers with the qualifications needed to teach English. Therefore, there was some substantial resistance to English becoming mandatory (Axelsson, 2006).

During the 1960’s the subject of English developed rapidly. Between the years 1961-1969 the state budget for supplementary training for teachers went from 250,000 to 38 million Swedish crowns. These additional funds would help the understaffed and undertrained English teachers (Axelsson, 2006). During an inquiry on the upper secondary school system in 1960, the Department of Education stated that Sweden was in dire need of contact across language boarders and that this mainly regarded English (SOU 1963:42). In 1962 the mandatory elementary school was established, and as a result from this there was a reform of the upper secondary school system in 1965. A three-year upper secondary school was established with five different programs along with a two-year commerce oriented school with two different programs. In order to be accepted to the three-year programs the student had to take a specific course in English (Malmberg, 2000). This rapid development of the English language in Sweden during the 1960’s marks the start of Swedes continuously ranking as some of the best second language speakers of English in the world (Norrby, 2015)

3.2 LGY 70

In the late 1960’s, the perception of school began to shift from a scientific one to a democratic one. According to Wahlström (2015), these new democratically oriented ideas aimed to create a school that fostered equality. The school system became perceived as a vital institution for the development of Swedish society, and began dealing with social issues such as inequality and power relations (Wahlström, 2015).

In 1970 a new national curriculum for upper secondary schools was created, which was activated the following year. The curriculum, LGY 70, determined that all forms of upper secondary schools would be united under one category: Gymnasiet. 16 mainly practical two-year programs, four three-year theoretical programs, and one four-year technical program were established (Malmberg 2001). There was a clear difference in the programs approach to second language learning as it was more prominent in the longer programs. However, students in the two-year programs were able to choose between an ordinary and an advanced English course. In general, Malmberg (2001)
writes that LGY 70 had a higher ambition regarding second language learning due to extended international relationships.

The Subject of English within LGY 70 was part of a category called *modern foreign languages*. Malmberg (2001) writes that this categorization was an indication of the inferiority of the English subject at the time, compared to more traditional subjects. However, LGY 70 also brought some progress for the English subject. This was the first time that communicative skills were acknowledged by the Swedish Department of Education, where English previously was perceived as a subject without any connection to actual practical use: “the practical purpose precedes the theoretical purpose” (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1973).

The aims of the subject differed between the two- and three-year programs. In two-year programs, the first aim was to “develop the ability to use the language in communication”. In the three-year programs, the first aim was to “develop the ability to understand the language in speech and writing” (LGY 70, 1970). Furthermore, there was a greater focus on texts in the longer programs, while producing and understanding spoken language was prioritized in the two-year programs. Another difference between the programs was pronunciation. Within the three-year programs, the students were supposed to use *received pronunciation*, which is a sort of standard proper British English. The students were also supposed to study forms of American English, but were not to practice these dialects. There seemed to be a concern from the Department of Education regarding the growth of American English through movies, television and radio, and the curriculum for the longer programs of upper secondary schools were instructed to uphold the British standard. In the two-year programs, however, American pronunciation seemed to be more accepted. According to the curriculum, the influence from American culture could lead to students sometimes pronouncing words in an American dialect instead of British. The teachers were not required to correct such linguistic behavior, especially if the mix of dialects occurred in otherwise somewhat fluent language (LGY 70: Planeringssupplement, 1970). While the three-year programs had a more traditional approach to the English language, the two-year programs started to indicate the acceptance of American English in the Swedish school system.

In LGY 70, the students were given grades from 1 to 5. In terms of assessment, it was quite different from what it looks like today. The grading system was designed to assess students in relation to their classmates. In other words, there were no standardized national requirements that teachers could use to grade their students. A
student was given a grade in relation to the performance of his or her classmates. There were, moreover, guidelines as to how many students could get a particular grade:

Table (LGY 70)

![Table](image)

Today, we see obvious problems with such a grading system. A student would benefit from attending classes with low-skilled classmates. Meanwhile, it would be hard to get an A in a class of highly skilled students. In reality, there are classes with many A-level students, as well as classes with many E-level students.

3.3 LPF 94

In 1985, a school law was implemented in Sweden. The law states, in accordance with LGY 70, that the school system rests on the foundation of democracy. Furthermore, it states that schools should be modelled in accordance with fundamental democratic values, and that every person within the school system should promote the respect of all people as well as the common environment (Skollagen 1985:1100).

There were several significant changes made in LPF 94 in relation to LGY 70. Implemented in 1994, the new curriculum made all upper secondary school programs three years long. The subject of English was divided into three levels: A, B and C, where A was included in every program. English A was the equivalence of the present English 5 course, which will be studied in this essay. Another significant change was the grading system. The new system removed the grading based on group relations. In
theory, everyone could now get the highest grade. The new grades were based on knowledge and aims of courses. The system consisted of the grades IG, G, VG and MVG. IG meant that the student had not met the requirements to pass the course, and MVG was the highest grade (LPF 94, 1994).

It is obvious that the subject of English had gained in importance at this point. One of the aims of LPF 94 was that every student was supposed to be able to use English in a functional way in their professional and private life as well as in possible higher education. Furthermore, LPF 94 recognizes English as a dominating language of global communication. It also states that English is of cultural importance and that Swedes consume English speaking culture in their everyday lives and that students should have a desire to develop their skills in English (LPF 94, 1994).

The 1994 curriculum for English had in-depth focus on globalization. Students were to be able to have the skillset to gain international contacts due to an increasingly globalized labor market. Moreover, the curriculum states that students were to be able to be part of the rapid development of information and communication technology.

English A was the compulsory first course in upper secondary school in LPF 94. The aims of the course stated that students should be able to comprehend and actively engage in spoken and written English in everyday life, work and further studies. Furthermore, the students should increase their knowledge of English speaking countries and increase understanding of other cultures. Some of the requirements to pass the course included: being able to express oneself in a formal manner, have knowledge of different dialects, engaging in different kinds of discussions, read simpler contemporary literature, formulate oneself simply but clearly in written language, and have knowledge of English speaking cultures and ways of living. Axelsson summarizes the development of English at this time. He writes that the usefulness of the language has been prioritized in comparison to previous years. Listening comprehension and speaking were now more important than reading, which was considered most important in previous lesson plans. Furthermore, there was now focus on giving the students confidence and willingness to use the English language.
3.4 GY 11

When the Swedish department of education created the current curriculum, GY11, they did so in part to stop “grade inflation”. The new curriculum was created to make teacher assessment equal across the nation, and thereby halt the inflation of high grades (Department of Education, 2008). A new grade system with grades F – A was implemented. This meant that the scale of grades grew with two new levels. The new scales, D and B, do not have specific knowledge requirements, but rather are implemented when students are in between E and C, or C and A. A projected result from this new system was that the portion of students receiving the highest grade would decrease.

GY 11 consists of more detailed information regarding the different courses. What was previously known as grade criteria was now replaced by knowledge requirements. The new curriculum is influenced by CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, a frame of references produced by the European Union. CEFR describes skills and knowledge required for successful communication and information of how to assess them. The purpose of CEFR is to improve international cooperation regarding language and to facilitate student movement within the European Union (GERS). CERS consists of three levels: basic user, intermediate user and proficient user. Furthermore, these consist of sub-levels where the course English 5 is equivalent to the level B 1.2 within the intermediate user category. Having an international equivalency to your course opens up new international sources of material and lesson plans for Swedish teachers.

3.5 Rapport 453

In 2017, The Department of Education released Rapport 453 regarding teachers’ opinions on the new curriculum for Swedish upper secondary schools. The report consists of 3,625 participating teachers, all of which had been working since at least 2010 when the older curriculum was still in place. Although this report concerns all subjects, and not English in particular, it contains several answers that are interesting to this study. Furthermore, the report regards more documents than central content and knowledge requirements (Rapport 453: Lärarnas Uppfattningar om Gymnasieskolan Efter 2011 års Gymnasiereform, 2017).
Throughout the report there are some positive conclusions made in the new curriculum. Nine out of ten teachers say that the new course plans add more clarity to what they are supposed to teach. A total of 88% of the teachers concurred with the statement “the central content makes what I am supposed to teach clear” (Rapport 453, 2017). However, a majority also state that the new course plans limit their ability to choose the content for their courses. Consequently, only 14% stated that the new curriculum gave them more freedom in choosing material for their courses. Furthermore, half of the teachers answered that the new curriculum has required them to use additional material in their courses. Meanwhile, a fourth of the teachers state that they have decided to exclude some of the content in the new course plans.

Perhaps the most interesting fact from this report, with regards to this study, is that a third of the teachers answered that they feel uncertainty towards how the steering documents are related to each other (Rapport 453, 2017). Once again, these are teachers with several years of experience, and with a few years of working under the new curriculum. Moreover, a third of the recipients answer that they need more knowledge regarding the school law and the regulations for upper secondary schools. Even though that number was twice as high in a report from 2012, it is still quite a remarkable number (Lärarnas uppfattning om 2011 års gymnasireform, 2014).

Regarding the central content, which is investigated in this study, 10% of the teachers answered that they were in great need of more knowledge about it. Moreover, 56% of the English teachers answered that the new course plan is clearer with regards to what content they could or should use (Rapport 453, 2017).

Regarding assessment there are some interesting results in the report. The usage of oral examinations and individual tasks have increased in comparison to the previous curriculum. Meanwhile, the usage of written tests has decreased in comparison to the previous curriculum.

4. Subject Aims Analysis

In this chapter, the aims of the English subject will be analyzed. The aims concern the subject of English in general, and thereby includes the advanced courses English 6 and English 7. Furthermore, the core content and knowledge requirements, both specific
to *English 5*, will be analyzed. Based on the findings from this analysis a questionnaire was created, which regarded the issues that a newly examined teacher might experience.

In the document, *Comments on the Curriculum of English*\(^2\) the Department of Education states that the new curriculum does not bring any major changes to the subject of English. However, the subject is now more aligned with the framework of *CERS (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)*. Furthermore, the new curriculum is increasingly focused on benefiting the students’ exposure to everyday English (*Kommentarmaterial till kursplanen i Engelska, 2011)*.

4.1 Core Content and Aims of the Subject

This chapter consists of an analysis of the course *English 5* from the current curriculum, GY 11. The subject of English is presented as follows,

The English language surrounds us in our daily lives and is used in such diverse areas as politics, education and economics. Knowledge of English increases the individual's opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in global studies and working life. Knowledge of English can also provide new perspectives on the surrounding world, enhanced opportunities to create contacts, and greater understanding of different ways of living (*Skolverket 2011*).

Most of the content in this introduction can be traced back to previous curriculums. *Culture, further studies* and *working life* have been recurring themes within the subject of English. What is truer in 2011 than in previous periods however, is how much the English language surrounds us in our everyday lives. For instance, a study from the University of Gothenburg shows that children’s video gaming improves their English abilities. The study was done on 76 ten-year old children and showed that boys played an average of 11.5 hours a week while girls played half of that time (*Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014*). Moreover, the rise of social media and smartphones adds to the exposure of English for children and young adults. The notion that English surrounds us is thereby more correct now than ever before.

\(^2\) This author’s translation
The category *Aims of the subject* includes requirements of giving the students abilities, desire and confidence for using English. The notion of giving the students confidence was introduced in LPF94, even though silent and embarrassed students probably have existed and created challenges for teachers since long before LPF94. Confidence is a factor mostly when it comes to spoken English. In fact, there are several studies supporting the claim that speaking a foreign language in the classroom can be a traumatic experience and leads to anxiety for some students (MacIntyre, 1995). Furthermore, it does not help these students, that many of their peers speak almost fluent English. Another aim is that “teaching should as far as possible be conducted in English” (Skolverket, English 2011). “As far as possible”, is obviously a statement open to interpretation. Perhaps it would be ideal to never use Swedish when teaching English. However, there could be several issues here; for instance lower skilled students could be silenced. The teacher would thereby contradict the aims of giving students desire and confidence to use English. Furthermore, there might be other occasions where using the students’ first language would improve the education, such as teaching difficult grammar rules or discussing grade criteria. Furthermore, Swedish should be used when encountering disciplinary matters such as verbal abuse amongst students. However, it would be reasonable to assume that the skill level of the students affects the teachers’ decision on English usage in the classroom. This is an issue that was addressed in the questionnaire that was given to the teachers in this study.

4.2 Content of Communication

The department of Education lists the *Core Content for English 5* in three categories: *content of communication, reception and production and interaction*. The following is the *content of communication*:

- Subject areas related to students' education, and societal and working life; current issues; events and processes; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; relationships and ethical issues.

- Content and form in different kinds of fiction.
- Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. The spread of English and its position in the world.

The first paragraph covers a wide variety of content that is supposed to be included in the course. The fact that the student’s education should be taken into consideration is interesting, as it means that the English education should differ regarding what program a student is attending. It would be interesting to know to which degree teachers alter their lesson planning due to the program of the students. However, some of the content, such as feelings and relationships are difficult to interpret, which is problematic as it is supposed to be included in the education.

Regarding living conditions, values and traditions in parts of the world where English is used, one could wonder how much of the content is based on the USA, The United Kingdom and Australia. Recent events such as Brexit and general elections in the USA probably got a lot of attention in most English classrooms. It is a good idea to keep up with current events and by doing that, maybe it is easier to gain the interest of the students. Moreover, the United States should reasonably be the most studied English speaking nation. Dag Blanck, Professor of History and director for The Swedish institute of North American Studies at Uppsala University, believes that there is a strong Swedish need for America and explains that Swedes seek American, rather than British, approval. Blanck goes on to say that the Americanization of Sweden began in the early 1800’s. Back then, Swedish emigration to America began to accelerate, and it became known as the Nation of the future. Blanck claims that this notion is still alive in Sweden, and that Americanization will continue within Swedish society (Sundeby, 2016). If Blanck is correct, this notion of Americanization should be accepted in the Swedish school system as the majority of everyday English that Swedes consume comes from America.
4.3 Reception

The following are listed as topics of *reception*:

- Spoken language, also with different social and dialect features, and texts that instruct, relate, summarize, explain, discuss, report and argue, also via film and other media.

- Coherent spoken language and conversations of different kinds, such as interviews.

- Literature and other fiction.

- Texts of different kinds and for different purposes, such as manuals, popular science texts and reports.

- Strategies for listening and reading in different ways and for different purposes.

- Different ways of searching for, selecting and evaluating texts and spoken language.

- How words and phrases in oral and written communication create structure and context by clarifying introduction, causal connection, time aspects, and conclusions.

Most of these topics might be considered obvious. However, there are some interesting instructions here. Both movies and literature are mentioned, but also “other fiction”. Perhaps it is the word *fiction* that is interesting. Other possible material could be Podcasts or News broadcasts; however, none of these are necessarily *fiction*. Further material could include comic books or TV-series, but the necessity of including them in the English 5 coarse could be questioned. Furthermore, one could question if teachers use *manuals* and *popular science reports* in their *English 5* classes.
4.4 Production and Interaction

The following is listed under *Production and Interaction*:

- Oral and written production and interaction of various kinds, also in more formal settings, where students instruct, narrate, summarize, explain, comment, assess, give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue.

- Strategies for contributing to and actively participating in discussions related to societal and working life.

- Processing of their own and others’ oral and written communications in order to vary, clarify and specify, as well as to create structure and adapt these to their purpose and situation. This covers the use of words and phrases that clarify causal connections and time aspects.

Regarding the first paragraph there is only one thing that could become problematic to apply to an *English 5* class: *argue*, at least verbally. Students that struggle to reach the grade E in verbal interaction often lack self-esteem. These students might be able to agree, summarize and give reason for their opinions. However, arguments might be harder for them to perform due to feelings of inferiority. There are probably many students that meet all the requirements in paragraph one except for *argue*.

4.5 Knowledge Requirements for English 5

The knowledge requirements for *English 5* will be presented and analyzed in the following chapter. The requirements are originally written in Swedish. However, this translation was done by the Department of Education. Only three grade levels are accounted for. The grades D and B are given when students meet some, but not all requirements for grades C or A. The knowledge requirements are divided into eight tables in this study.
### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupils can understand the main content and basic details of English spoken at a varying speed and in clearly expressed written English in various genres.</td>
<td>Students can understand the main content and essential details of English spoken at a varying speed and in clearly expressed written English in various genres.</td>
<td>Students can understand both the whole and details of English spoken at a varying speed and in clearly expressed written English in various genres.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first table is about comprehension of spoken and written English. The grades are set with regards to the students’ understanding of “the main content and basic details” (E), “the main content and essential details” (C) or “both the whole and details” (A). This of course raises the question about the difference between basic and essential. Grade A, on the other hand, should be somewhat easier to recognize. Excellence and complete failure should, after all, be easier to assess than everything in between. Grade A requires the student to understand spoken and clearly written English. Thereby, it is essential that the teacher provides suitable texts. Clearly expressed written English can, after all, still be highly complicated and far above the expected skill level for students of English 5.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students show their understanding by in basic terms giving an account of, discussing and commenting on content and details, and with acceptable results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.</td>
<td>Students show their understanding by in a well grounded way giving an account of, discussing and commenting on content and details, and with satisfactory results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.</td>
<td>Students show their understanding by in a well grounded and balanced way giving an account of, discussing and commenting on content and details, and with good results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second table is closely related to the first one, but focused on how the students display their knowledge. The first part where the grades differ regards whether the student gives a basic, well-grounded or well-grounded and balanced account for content.
and details. Furthermore, the table includes criteria for acting according to message and instructions with an acceptable, satisfactory or good result. Satisfactory and good are highly elusive terms. One could ask why good is the requirement for the A-level, and not for instance great. To use well-grounded and balanced and good in the same paragraph of criteria, does not look coherent.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students can choose and <strong>with some certainty</strong> use strategies to assimilate and evaluate the content of spoken and written English.</td>
<td>Students can choose and <strong>with some certainty</strong> use strategies to assimilate and evaluate the content of spoken and written English.</td>
<td>Students can choose and <strong>with certainty</strong> use strategies to assimilate and evaluate the content of spoken and written English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third table is interesting due to the criteria of grade levels E and C being the same. They both require the student to use strategies with some certainty, whereas the A-level requires certainty. This is the first example on where two grade levels have the same criteria. This is quite interesting as it technically removes the E-level and thereby also the D-level. Consequently, some becomes the only word that differs between all grade levels.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students choose texts and spoken language from different media and in a relevant way use the material selected in their own production and interaction.</td>
<td>Students choose texts and spoken language from different media and in a relevant <strong>and effective</strong> way use the selected material in their own production and interaction.</td>
<td>Students choose texts and spoken language from different media and in a relevant, <strong>effective and critical</strong> way use the selected material in their own production and interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth table regards sources and material which students use for their language production. The grades differ in whether students use sources and material in a relevant, relevant and effective or relevant, effective and critical way. Thereby, this table does not necessarily regard the student’s abilities in the English language. The way in which
students should use sources and material is the same as in their native language. If a student reaches all criteria for A, but fails to reach this specific requirement, that would result in him or her getting a B, regardless of whether or not the student is fluent in written and spoken English, as well as excellent in comprehension.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in <strong>relatively</strong> varied ways, <strong>relatively</strong> clearly and <strong>relatively</strong> coherently. Students can express themselves with <strong>some</strong> fluency and <strong>to some extent adapted</strong> to purpose, recipient and situation.</td>
<td>In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in a way that is <strong>relatively</strong> varied, clear, coherent and <strong>relatively structured</strong>. Students can also express themselves with fluency and <strong>some adaptation</strong> to purpose, recipient and situation.</td>
<td>In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are <strong>relatively varied</strong>, clear, coherent and <strong>relatively structured</strong>. Students can also express themselves with fluency and <strong>some adaptation</strong> to purpose, recipient and situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth table consists of several abilities: *variety, clarity, coherency, structure, fluency* and *adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation*. The abilities do not differ in every grade level, the C-level shares descriptions with both A- and E-levels. Perhaps most remarkable is that the C-level requires students to express themselves with *fluency* (the same as for A-level). *Fluency* might be an elusive term, but *Merriam-Webster* defines it as being, “capable of using a language easily and accurately”. Failure in reaching this requirement results in the student not being able to get a higher grade than D in the course. Furthermore, there are only two requirements that differ between C and A, regarding variety and structure.

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The sixth table might be the most problematic of them all. It is not grounded in any universally measurable terms, but rather in the student’s own communication abilities. The notion of requiring a student to make improvements to their own communication is dependent on there being room for improvement in the first place. Picture a student that writes an excellent essay, but is not capable of improving it, then what? One could argue that there is always room for improvement, but a student should not be required to improve an essay that is clearly on an A-level. Furthermore, in order to reach the requirements for the A-level, the student would benefit from not producing at a high level in the first place. Surely, it is easier to improve a text that is poorly written from the beginning. This paragraph is rather designed to measure development of the individual student, and is problematic to imply in a nationally comparable manner.

\[\textbf{Table 6}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students work on and make improvements to their own communications.</td>
<td>Students work on and make \textbf{well grounded} improvements to their own communications.</td>
<td>Students work on and make \textbf{well grounded and balanced} improvements to their own communications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal contexts, students can express themselves clearly and with some fluency and some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use essentially functional strategies which to some extent solve problems and improve their interaction.

\[\textbf{Table 7}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal contexts, students can express themselves clearly and with some fluency and some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use essentially functional strategies which to some extent solve problems and improve their interaction.</td>
<td>In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal contexts, students can express themselves clearly with fluency, and with some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use functional strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction.</td>
<td>In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal contexts, students express themselves clearly, relative freely and with fluency, and also with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use well functioning strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and take it forward in a constructive way.

The seventh table is similar to the fifth, but with focus on interaction. Once again, fluency is required at the C-level. The most interesting part of the table is regarding strategies to improve interaction. On the A-level students are required to, “improve their interaction, and take it forward in a constructive way”. This is interesting because it makes the students depend on each other. Group dynamics, personal chemistry and social abilities become terms that will determine whether this requirement is reachable or not. Regarding the difference in E- and C-level, the teacher needs to distinguish essentially functional strategies from functional strategies. This is quite difficult for teachers to assess, especially considering all the other requirements that should be assessed in an ongoing discussion between students.

Besides oral interaction, the seventh table also concerns written interaction. This could be done in several ways, such as letting the students communicate via the Internet or letters. However, the fact that written interaction is part of this requirement might lead to teachers feeling forced to create assignments that they otherwise would not do. If a student can write several different essays, they should be able to communicate in an online chatroom or via a written letter.

**Table 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students discuss <strong>in basic terms</strong> some features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used, and can also make <strong>simple</strong> comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge.</td>
<td>Students discuss <strong>in detail</strong> some features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used, and can also make <strong>well developed</strong> comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge.</td>
<td>Students discuss <strong>in detail and in a balanced way</strong> some features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used, and can also make <strong>well developed and balanced</strong> comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final table is more about social studies rather than the language itself. However, the fact that the requirement for all grades states that students should be able to discuss “some features”, the Department of Education sets a clear limitation to the knowledge regarding English speaking places and cultures that is required from the students.
Thereby the word *some* might prove important considering that the language should always be the main focus. If the requirement stated that students should discuss in-depth features of English speaking cultures to reach an A-level, it would shift the focus from language towards social studies.

### 4.6 Discussion of Knowledge Requirements

There are probably several instances where teachers might not apply some of the knowledge requirements. In the mentioned case of *fluency* for instance, all the students that are given the grade C are certainly not able to express themselves fluently. On the other hand, fluency is probably interpreted differently by different teachers. Can we really require any student to be fluent at the *English 5* level?

Is it fair that a student that speaks, writes and comprehends English with perfection, does not reach the highest grade? There are several scenarios where this would be the case. Some will probably argue that there should be other factors than the language itself when assessing the students. However, should the students’ inability to make well developed and balanced comparisons to life in South Africa or New Zealand lower their grade, if they are fluent in the English language?

### 5. Questionnaire and Responses

In this chapter, the questionnaire is presented one question at a time, followed by the answers of the teachers. The answers from the teachers should not be interpreted as definitive, but rather as advice and personal opinions. Moreover, the interview with teacher 2 was done orally, and the answers are thereby translated by the author of this essay.

1. “Teaching should as far as possible be conducted in English.” (Skolverket, *Central Content*). What does *as far as possible* mean in reality? When, if ever, do you use Swedish in the classroom?

Teacher 1: “Well, never. I sometimes give individual oral feedback in Swedish and if we look at course goals and criteria from Skolverket, the following discussion could be in Swedish. The all English class room is an important strategy for me!”
Teacher 2: “When it comes to grammar. That is perceived as a hard subject by the students, and it does involve complicated words and terms. Of course, it would be ideal to teach grammar in English, but the students’ abilities are generally not high enough for that to work. The use of English would rather become an obstacle when trying to teach grammar. Other than that, it is always rewarding to speak English in the classroom.”

Teacher 3: “I use English throughout my lessons and I always ask my students to use English as our working language. Therefor I use Swedish rarely. Occasionally, if I know the word is new to the students, or if it is advanced, I translate one or two words into Swedish to make sure that they have fully understood. I also use Swedish when presenting the course curriculum and criteria.”

2. The Department of Education states that teachers should aim to help the students to gain confidence to use English. This task might take on different forms depending on the student, but are there ways in which you generally try to give confidence to students that suffer from low self-esteem?

Teacher 1: “Encourage communication in smaller contexts and also making note of progress points, and mentioning them to show that language skills are developing.”

Teacher 2: “That is a core issue in the English subject. You must always work on self-esteem. It is important to create an open environment in the English classroom, where it is okay to use the wrong word or pronunciation. If this is not achieved the students will speak Swedish instead.”

Teacher 3: “I try to motivate them and give them pep talks whenever they make an effort to talk. I also, as far as possible, give them opportunities to speak in smaller groups and also one-on-one with me.”

3. “Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (Skolverket: Knowledge Requirements). What parts of the
Teacher 1: “Reflect, as in aiming for variation, yes. Apart from material from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand presented in most text books I also use a post-colonial perspective which takes us to Africa, India and many other places. This is later required in English 7.”

Teacher 2: “Yes. I try to create projects where students can compare English speaking cultures to their own. I like using travel shows where they visit New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland etc. However, I think that it is wrong to teach realia as an independent chapter within the English education. Instead, you should try and involve it in other assignments. If you create a reading task, for instance, choose a text involving English speaking cultures.”

Teacher 3: “My sources are generally American or British but I, at times, try to choose sources from other English speaking countries too. To be honest I rarely reflect upon these choices but on national tests (English 6) for example I am often reminded that we should have included other parts of the world.”

4. The English education should be designed with regards to the student’s program. To what degree do you implement this? Do your lesson plans differ between the different programs that you have taught in?

Teacher 1: “Yes, at TE (technology education, author’s note) we have developed the connection between English and the other courses in different ways. Apart from regularly including TED-talks, articles etc. on biology, history, sustainability… and English 6 and Programming come together in The Game of the Book-project where students create a computer game based on the characters and plot of a novel.”

Teacher 2: “I believe so. When I taught in the construction program, it was easy to include the program in the English subject. They would prepare construction projects in English, learn the names of all the tools and terms related to the profession. Furthermore, the students could prepare for working abroad in the future, which was a
common phenomenon. In the program where I work today, it is a bit harder, but maybe my own interests play a part. However, I do believe that this is important and good for the students.”

Teacher 3: “My lesson plans certainly differ between different programs. I always involve the students in the planning of the course and try to come up with ideas that would motivate them.”

5. Regarding the knowledge requirement “Students work on and make (C= well grounded, A= well grounded and balanced) improvements to their own communication. Students could, technically, reach the A-level of this requirement by improving an F-graded essay into an E-graded one. Furthermore, should a student that already writes at an A-level be required to make well-grounded and balanced improvements to their writing?

Teacher 1: “Tricky business! For me those criteria always go together with the general writing skills criteria and linguistic strategies. I never measure solely for the improvements”

Teacher 2: “Yes! There is always room for improvement and we should always strive to stimulate the students. It is part of our job to raise good citizens. I think that development is part of that. The students should not stop working just because they reached the A-level. The grade is not the teacher’s final aim, the aim should be that every student learns as much as possible.”

Teacher 3: “This is a requirement that must be assessed in relation to other course requirements and cannot be tested separately.”

6. Is there any way that you want to conduct your courses, that is prohibited or reduced by the curriculum?

Teacher 1: “NO!”
Teacher 2: “Yes, quite a lot. *The National Test* forces us to be square with regards to the knowledge requirements. There are things that I want to do, that would educate the students, that I do not have time for. Instead, I must plan the education with the knowledge requirements in mind, because that will give results in the National Test. The result becomes a bit monotonous, because the knowledge requirements are sometimes too detailed.”

Teacher 3: “Not that I can think of.”

6. Discussion

First of all, it is safe to say that there are some uncertainties regarding the steering documents for many English teachers on the upper secondary level, regardless of experience. Even though *Rapport 453* included more than the central content and knowledge requirements, the fact that one out of three teachers in the report felt confused regarding how the documents relate to each other, is a strong indicator that there is room for more clarity from the Department of Education. When a third of experienced teachers felt confusion regarding the documents, it is probable that the numbers are even higher for inexperienced teachers.

It might come as a surprise to first time readers of the knowledge requirements that several requirements are the same for two grade levels. For instance, fluency is the same for grades A and C. The requirement for variation, on the other hand, differs between C & A. Even though it is a good thing that variation differs between the grades, it might be harder to assess than fluency. Furthermore, it is a tall order for us to expect English 5 students to use the language fluently, especially on a grade C level.

Most new teachers will likely struggle with some of the key terms within the Knowledge Requirements. When rounding them all up it becomes quite overwhelming. In an assignment that has both writing and speaking parts, basically all of these terms might apply: basic, essential, well-grounded, balanced, acceptable, satisfactory, good result, certainty, some certainty, relevant, effective, critical, variety, clarity, coherency, structure, fluency, adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation, essentially functional strategies and functional strategies. These are all the terms that essentially determine

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4 See tables 6 & 8
the grade of a student. During a student discussion, the teacher will have limited time to assess several students. It might be extremely difficult for inexperienced teachers to balance several of these terms in their mind while listening to the students speak. Therefore, it is wise to record discussion to make sure the grade will be as fair as possible. This will also give teachers the opportunity to co-assess spoken English with their colleagues, which is otherwise difficult from a scheduling perspective. Furthermore, it also gives the teachers the opportunity to assess each other’s students, which can be healthy from a perceptive of favoritism and bias towards one’s own students.

Some of these terms are easier to apply than others. Table 3, for instance, consists of two parts that represent both easier and harder terms. Basic terms contra a well-grounded way seems to be somewhat easy. On the other hand, satisfactory result contra good result seems harder to determine. These terms should be the subject of deeper studies during a teacher’s education at university, as they often are problematic to deal with.

The notion within the Central Content that the education should as far as possible be conducted in English, does not provide much clarity for the inexperienced teacher. Surely every class is different, both in terms of skill and group dynamics. However, examples from the real world would probably be helpful for a lot of teacher students on this matter. All three interviewed teachers agreed that English should be used as the classroom language. However, they all agreed that Swedish was appropriate when discussing the curriculum. Furthermore, Teacher 2 claimed that using Swedish when working with grammar is preferable at an English 5 level.

The Central Content states that teachers should aim to help students to gain confidence to use English. Teacher students might have their own ideas and theories on how to implement this. However, many would probably benefit from reading about examples from experienced teachers on this matter. All of the interviewed teachers had some interesting statements. Teacher 1 took notes of progress points and made sure to show them to each student so that they would see clear improvement. Teacher 2 talked about an open environment where it is okay to be wrong. This might be easier said than done, but it should be at the back of every teacher’s mind when entering their first English classroom. Teacher 3 mentioned pep-talks as well as giving opportunities for students to talk in smaller groups. Adding the answers from these teachers makes for a short, but valuable list of tips for the newly graduated English teacher.
The third question answered by the teachers regarded parts of the world where English is used. Historically, British was the preferred type of English to use. In the 1970’s, American English began to get recognition. In 1994, the Department of Education would focus more on the usefulness of English. With this progression in mind, it is natural to think that American English would have a dominant position in the classrooms today. Perhaps the English-speaking cultures that are studied should also reflect the Americanization that has taken place over the globe in recent history. This does not mean that the English education should focus exclusively on America, but perhaps it should be in the majority. Teacher 1 states that the UK, USA, Canada and New Zealand are presented in most textbooks. Therefore, Teacher 1 uses a post-colonial perspective and thereby includes Africa, India and other places. Teacher 2 mentioned using travel shows that visit the usual English speaking countries. Furthermore, Teacher 2 said that realia should be integrated into the course, and not be executed as an independent project. Teacher 3 admits to often forgetting to include other parts of the world besides Britain and America. However, the teacher continues to say that the National Test can remind us that we should include other countries and cultures.

It is a good thing that the knowledge requirement mentioned above is not more specific as it gives the teachers some freedom to plan their courses. However, students could still end up with an English teacher of a more traditional mindset, that focus their education on Great Britain. However, there is also the chance that teachers only focus on America. In the end, the point of this requirement is that teachers must reflect upon their choices, and at least include some alternative cultures in their lesson planning. Already in LGY 70 we saw that American English was the dialect of the future, while the more conservative minds at the Department of Education tried to fight the establishing of American as the standard dialect. In an article in Svenska Dagbladet it is revealed that 44 percent of the content on Swedish TV-channels is American, while only 38 percent is Swedish (Hammarbäck, 2008). It should be noted that this is a relatively old article, which might even make a stronger case for American influence in modern Swedish culture. Since Gy11 states that students should have desire to use English, and that the content should reflect the students’ social lives, should not America have a large place when regarding the cultures that we study in English 5? Of course, not all realia should be about America, but perhaps a majority of it.

That English teachers are supposed to design their course plans with the particular students’ program in mind requires them to have or acquire knowledge in various fields.
There is a wide variety of programs in the Swedish Upper Secondary School system. As an English teacher, chances are that you will have classes from different programs, and sometimes one class consisting of students from several programs. The programs differ from economy, natural science and societal studies, to carpentry, car mechanics, children and recreation, hair stylist and industrial technology. In the interviews done in this study, all three teachers answered that they modify their lesson plans with a specific program in mind. Some advice was to use TED-talks and articles linked to the subject of the program. Another good point was to involve the students in the lesson planning, which is in agreement with a democratic school. However, one of the teachers answered that some programs are easier to include than others. Of course, this is individual as we all have different interests and hobbies. This might come down to a managerial issue. If you have an English teacher who is a musician, it would probably be wise to assign students from the music program to said teacher.

This study took issue with the knowledge requirement stating that students should make improvements in their own communication. Two of the teachers simply answered that the requirements should not be interpreted independently from other requirements, while the other teacher answered that the development of students is part of the school’s mission to raise good citizens. Although these are all reasonable answers, the fact remains that the knowledge requirement can at times be found “on its own” in assignments given to the students. Whatever your opinions in this matter, this requirement might be troubling for teachers, whether they are experienced or not.

In the last question, the teachers were asked whether they ever feel held back by something in the curriculum. Two teachers answered: no. However, teacher 2 felt quite restrained by the curriculum, and by the knowledge requirements in particular. The education can get quite repetitive when you need to focus on the knowledge requirements as practice for the National Test. There were things that teacher 2 wanted to do, that would benefit the students, but the time was better spent repeating certain requirements when regarding the chances of getting higher grades for the students.

The more detailed the central content and knowledge requirements are, the easier it is for a new teacher to plan their courses. However, after that teacher has gained a few years of experience, he or she might start feeling shackled by them. After all, in Rapport 453 a majority of the teachers said that the coarse plans in Gy11 limited their opportunities of choosing their own material.
7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether there are issues and questions raised when reading the central content and knowledge requirements for the course English 5. The study was based on an in-depth reading of said documents as well as a questionnaire answered by three experienced teachers. The questionnaire included the following questions:

- When Swedish could or should be used in the English classroom
- How the teacher can help the students with confidence
- Which English speaking cultures teachers focuses on, how or if teachers specialize the courses with the upper secondary program in mind
- How teachers implement the requirement regarding the students’ improvement of their own production

Further potential issues from the documents found in this essay regarded:

- Including the students’ “feelings and relationships” as content of communication
- What different types of fiction a teacher can use besides articles, literature and movies
- Including “manuals and popular science reports” in the reception-part of the course
- Having the students arguing might be a tall order for many students
- Differences between terms like basic, essential, well-grounded, balanced, acceptable, satisfactory, good result, certainty, some certainty etc. regarding assessment and grading
- That fluency is required at the C-grade level
- That parts of the knowledge requirements are not related to the English language itself, such as knowledge about English speaking cultures and the use of sources and material.

The questionnaire often provided different views and opinions on questions that might be hard for new teachers or teacher students to answer. In the end, there are many instances where the documents from the Department of Education are open to personal
interpretation. However, teacher students could benefit if the documents were studied thoroughly during their education, thereby possibly eliminating some questions and issues that were raised in this essay.

References


