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Media Education in the Swedish Compulsory School

-a comparison of the Swedish school curriculum documents with the leading countries
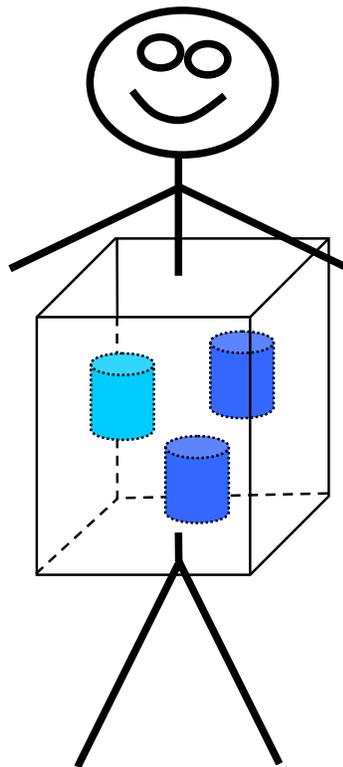
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Abstract

Title	Media Education in the Swedish Compulsory School – a comparison of the Swedish curriculum documents with the leading countries
Authors	Rosemarie Manalili, Johann Rehnberg
Course	Undergraduate Thesis in Media- and Communication Studies
Semester	Autumn Semester 2008
Supervisor	Karin Fogelberg
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Purpose	To describe how Media Education and Media Literacy is outlined in the curriculum documents in Sweden vis-à-vis Canada and UK.
Method	Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA)
Research Materials	Swedish curriculum documents (national curriculum + course syllabi), National curriculum documents from the UK, Curriculum documents from Ontario, Canada. Previous research and studies.
Main Results	Results of the study shows that the Swedish curriculum documents are goal-oriented while the UK and Ontario, Canada curriculum documents are more comprehensive and detailed in terms of covering media education and media literacy. All studied countries have integrated media education in other subjects, most explicitly in Ontario where media literacy is a separate strand in the Language Arts curriculum. In the Swedish and the UK curriculum documents, media education still appears as "small islands".

Executive Summary

This report documents the results of a study of how media education is reflected in the school curriculum documents in Sweden, in comparison to the leading countries Canada and the United Kingdom. We have looked into the treatment of media education in the curriculum documents—the extent of its explicitness; the coverage of the key concepts necessary in understanding the media, and the skills and competencies that learners should develop to acquire media literacy. The results of the study provide additional knowledge about the current status of media education in Sweden, as well as input to the current discussion on how media education and media literacy can be successfully implemented and sustained in the compulsory school.

In line with the aim of the study, the Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) method was employed to study the curriculum documents in Sweden, Ontario, Canada and the UK, with focus on subjects in the compulsory level and age range 5-11 years—that is, year 1-5 in Sweden, grade 1-6 in Ontario, Canada, and key stage 1-2 in the UK.

Although the structure of the school curriculum documents is different, it is possible to get a good picture and compare how media education & literacy is reflected in the school curriculum documents. Swedish documents are "goal-oriented", whereas the UK and Ontario documents are much more comprehensive and detailed in terms of covering what should be included as well as how it can be taught. In all three countries, media education is not a subject of its own right, but is integrated explicitly in the curriculum in several ways, mainly in the following subjects:

- The subjects of Arts and Music, Swedish, and Social Studies in the Swedish curriculum
- The subjects of Language Arts, and Arts in the Ontario, Canada curriculum
- The subjects of English, Arts &Design, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the UK curriculum

It seems that, in Sweden, the Arts subject is where we find most explicit references to media literacy and we consider the coverage of media literacy more explicit in this subject compared to, for example, Language Arts. This differentiates the Swedish approach from that of UK and Ontario, where Language Arts is the key carrier of media education aspects. Canada is laudable for its initiative in including media literacy as a separate strand in the Language Arts curriculum. The Swedish and the UK curriculum documents manifest inclusion of media education, however, these still appear as "small islands" lacking of clearer specifications.

Another important aspect that we have examined is the coverage of the key concepts in the curriculum. Results of the study show consistently, that Ontario curriculum covers all the four aspects (representation, language, audience, and production) substantially with examples and materials that may be utilised. The UK and the Swedish curriculum overall coverage of the four key concepts lacks inclusion of audience and production aspects.

Meanwhile, the expected skills and competencies that pupils should develop conform to the three essential skills: ability to access; ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media texts; and creative production. These skills are covered but with varying degrees in the three countries' curriculum. Canada's curriculum consistently covers all the required media literacy skills, whereas the Swedish and the UK curriculum, to some degree, are fairly weak in outlining the ability to analyse aspects of media like audience and production, as well as the ability of creating media texts.

The strengths of the curriculum documents in the respective countries provide us with the 'good practices' which may form basis for improvement initiatives:

- The way the Ontario curriculum treats media literacy as a strand of its own allows every teacher to recognise the importance of media for youth today and also allows the teacher to draw on the comprehensive experience that research has translated into teaching guidelines.
- The way the Swedish Arts syllabus, considering its overall goal orientation, provides a very good description of the 'representation' and 'language' key concepts.
- The way the UK curriculum treats ICT-knowledge as a domain of its own, thus allowing teachers to clearly, and explicitly, see where references to media relates to the technology aspect and where it relates to media literacy.
- The way the Ontario curriculum emphasises the learning progression of pupils by introducing the key concepts from grade 1-6 with varying complexities.

The UK approach seems to provide a good example of media literacy, as its curriculum documents require teachers to follow the overall goals and adhere to the specific instructions on what content should be taught, sometimes with examples of what materials that should or can be used. We would however propose the Ontario model, as it additionally explicitly outlines a programme of study that considers pupils' progression, hence, develops the pupils own skills.

All the above findings also illustrate the interdependence between the key concepts and the vital skills and competencies. These form a structure (e.g. the four key concepts forming a box with the vital skills contained within) that is necessary to acquire media literacy, and is geared towards the overall vision and goal of media education and literacy—critical and empowered youth who can become active participants of society (as illustrated and supported by e.g. in the UNESCO and EU declarations).

Additional reflections made during the course of this study, and which may be used as a springboard for further discussions, include: the role of the teacher (e.g. with respect to own media literacy); at what age should media education start; and assessment of media literacy skills. Finally, we would recommend that future studies include:

- A comprehensive study about the current status of media education in Sweden. This would entail the following aspects: teachers' and students' existing knowledge, skills and experience in relation to media education/literacy; an inventory of the existing resources (about media literacy) that may be utilised in the classroom; the existing co-operation between and among the educational sector and the media networks.
- As a result of the aforementioned study; conducting a case study of a school that is successful in implementing media education in Sweden is deemed necessary – to what extent, and how, are the key concepts, key skills and competencies implemented? That is, how does reality conform to the expectations of the school curriculum? What impact does media education have among young learners?

Contents

1   Introduction

This study, assigned to us by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Gothenburg, looks at the media education status in Sweden from the perspective of how media education is reflected in Swedish curriculum documents in comparison to the leading countries' documents. In a wider perspective it provides input to the current discussion on how media education and media literacy can be implemented into the Swedish compulsory school. The concluding report provides:

- Increased knowledge about the current status of media education in Sweden
- Input to discussions about the development of media education in Swedish schools
- Input to a discussion on a nationwide teacher training curriculum
- Outline "good practices", i.e. examples that are worthy of emulation or replication
- Recommendations for future work and studies

It is our intention, and sincere hope, that readers, irrespective of their area of interest, will find this report useful as input to their work.

This paper will initially present the importance of media education, previous research related to media education/media literacy, and relevant learning and communication theories and concepts. This would hopefully lead the readers to an interest in the actual study we have conducted: a content analysis of Swedish school curriculum documents in comparison to the UK and Ontario, Canada's equivalent documents. The report continues with a rather comprehensive presentation of the results, which have been compressed to the most relevant findings. The report concludes with our reflections and thoughts on the future of media education in Sweden.

2   Importance of Media Education

2.1   An existing problem – or a future societal problem?

Media play a vital role in the lives of young people. For the past two decades, the emergence of a new media landscape brought about by modern technologies continues to expand at an ever increasing rate. In the midst of this rapid change of media environment, issues like violence, sex, pornography, and the effects of advertising often crop up as young people tend to become "*heavy media users*"[1] According to Cecilia von Feilitzen and Ulla Carlsson[2], the new media landscape "*have a profound influence on the conditions and cultures of young people.*" It is often argued that young people tend to become more media competent than their parents. As David Buckingham, a media literacy expert puts it,

> "*…the media are now a force of liberation for children—that they are creating a new 'electronic generation that is more open, more democratic, more socially aware than their parents' generation'*"

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[1] Ekström & Tufte (2007: 9)

[2] Von Feilitzen and Carlsson (2002: 9); Cecilia von Feilitzen is a Scientific Co-ordinator of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom), Göteborg; Ulla Carlsson is the Director of Nordicom.

[3] Buckingham (2003a:19); Buckingham (2008b:13) Buckingham is a professor, researcher and directs the Study of Children, Youth, and Media, Institute of Education, University of London

This scenario has come to the fore for public debate among the different sectors of society—the concerned citizens, parents, educational institutions, policy making bodies, and other non-government organisations across different countries. The main concern raised by these groups is the influence of the media on children's moral values. Likewise, to protect these children through media education or media literacy is the utmost concern.

In recent years however, the need to establish media education has gone beyond the mere purpose of protecting children from the harmful effects of media. Proponents of media education have seen the need to empower young people to prepare them to become active citizens and participate in the democratic processes of our society.

The Grunwald Declaration on Media Education in 1982 provides the guiding principles or the justification of establishing media education worldwide[4]. This Declaration promotes the inclusion of media education from pre-school up to the university level. The need to empower children is further supported in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.[5] Article 13 states that "*the child shall have the right to freedom of expression*" while Article 17 stipulates that "*the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources…*" and "*the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being*".

To this end, several initiatives leaning towards empowerment have been launched such as the Multimediabyrån[6], Mediasmart[7], and SAFER INTERNET PLUS programme[8] (2004-2008) to provide parents, teachers and children with increased knowledge and understanding about the media.

2.2   Getting media education right allows improvement initiatives

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMG) is involved in several aspects of media education. Among others, their leading role in Media and Communication studies allows them to co-operate with the Department of Education in areas concerning media education for future teachers, and JMG's close cooperation with the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media at NORDICOM.

From the outlined research findings in Sweden, including international research (discussed in detail in section 3.4) and vast database from NORDICOM, JMG safely presumes that other countries have gone a long way and are ahead of Sweden in terms of media education implementation. JMG seeks then to investigate as to what characterises the success of the leading countries through a comparative/cross national study. It is then our assumption that the integration and the explicit formulation of media education in the curriculum is one contributory factor to the success of these countries.

In the most recent major study[9], several aspects of media education were compared among several European countries. Sweden was not included in this study; hence there is a need to see how Sweden is compared to other countries. With this in mind, JMG has provided us with the opportunity to study the current status of media education in Sweden.

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[4] Carlsson et. Al (2008:57) This declaration which was basically approved during the UNESCO International Symposium on Media Education in 1982 at Grunwald, Germany
[5] Von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001:7)
[6] http://www.multimedia.skolutveckling.se/
[7] http://www.mediasmart.se/Bazment/1.aspx
[8] http://ec.europa.ey/avpolicy/media_literacy/index_en.htm
[9] Unibersidad Autonoma de Barcelona (2007)

3 Media Education & Literacy – an Overview

3.1 Media Education & Media Literacy

Media education and media literacy are often defined in similar ways in different contexts. Buckingham defines media education as "*the process of teaching and learning about media.*"[10] Media education in this instance involves the process of imparting knowledge about the media to learners both in the formal and non-formal educational system. Similarly defined by von Feilitzen and Bucht, media education according to them is often equated with the function of the school to teach students[11] about the media.[12]

In relation to the above definition, Buckingham defines media literacy as the "*outcome—the knowledge and skills learners acquire through media education*"[13].This definition is further expounded in the European context. The Commission from the European communities has adopted the OFCOM[14] definition of media literacy as '*the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts.*'[15] Akin to this definition, the members of the Media Literacy Expert Group tasked by the European Parliament defines media literacy as the "*ability to access, analyse and evaluate the power of images, sounds, and messages which we are now being confronted with on a daily basis and which are an important part of our contemporary culture; as well as to communicate competently using available media, on a personal basis*". The members of the Media Literacy Expert Group composed of European experts with varied backgrounds and competencies[16] was set up to analyse and define media literacy objectives and trends, to highlight and promote practices at European level and propose actions in the field.

Although media education and media literacy have varied definitions, countries across national borders still share a common understanding of what encompasses media education or media literacy. For example, the recommendations (paraphrased below) to UNESCO during the International Conference in Vienna in 1999[17] supports this assertion.

- The use of print media, TV, radio, film, information technology.
- Understanding how media operates, e.g., the economic forces behind media production.
- Critical thinking and reflection in analysing media texts.
- Critical reflection when students create media texts.
- Learners should have 'the right to freedom of expression, to participation in society and to building and sustaining democracy.'
- Media education should have a place in the school curriculum as well as in informal education.
- Media education and media literacy 'should empower all citizens' and see to it that other less-privileged groups are given the chance to make use of media.

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[10] Buckingham (2003)

[11] Note that "student" is used equally as "pupil" throughout this document (since the studied curriculum documents use the terms respectively). We use these two terms including learners to mean the same thing.

[12] Von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001)

[13] Ibid. OFCOM (Office of Communication) is a communications sector regulator in the UK and is active in promoting media literacy in the UK

[14] http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/review0408/

[15] http://ec.europa.eu/acpolicy/media literacy/docs/report on ml 2007.pdf

[16] http://www.ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/consultation/index_en.htm

[17] Von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001:71)

In consonance to the scope of media education/media literacy, the European Commission named the four skills that should be developed to achieve media literacy: *access, analysis, evaluation, and creative production*[18].

From the definitions of media literacy, it is apparent that producing media texts is an important aspect of media literacy. Understanding and analysing media language or how certain groups are represented is not enough. To acquire critical skills, pupils should produce their own texts: "*the production process in itself leads to reflection and critique.*"[19] Student media production entails also interacting through emails, chat-rooms, and the like. In this instance, students could apply what they have learned—for example they would know what techniques they would use in producing, say, a short video film clip; or by conducting their own research about the target audience or receiver of their media texts, they could come up with a design that would suit what the audience wants.[20] Producing media texts should not be seen merely as "technical operations", according to Len Masterman, a well-known media literacy theorist in the UK [21] or "*mastering basic skills in using technology*"[22]—media education, as pointed out earlier, entails critical approach in analysing the media.

The *learning by doing* theory of John Dewey, an American philosopher and education reformer in the first half of the 20th century[23], is still relevant to our contemporary world, for instance, to media literacy. Dewey's theory emphasizes practical work in school which coincides with the above student production aspect. This is a pupil-centred type of learning emphasizing the necessity to consider pupils' experiences, preferences, and interests as the starting point of teaching—with the end goal of teaching the learners to become active participants of society.[24]

Moreover, the study of Martinez-de-Toda, a contemporary researcher, also aligns to Dewey's learning theory and the overall scope of media literacy with emphasis on the learner as an active individual. Central to his study is an active approach model of media education that takes into consideration the subject's (e.g. pupil) role as a receiver and as a communicator. This theory was labelled as a meta-theory because different theories have been integrated by acknowledged experts (e.g. the critical dimension of Masterman, creative dimension by Tufte, and active dimension by Ms Quail and Buckingham[25]). In this model, the subject has to be media literate to understand the different forces affecting how media texts are shaped; and to be aware of the economic factors affecting the construction and dissemination of media messages. In the midst of all these, it is expected that the subject is active, and critical to the media's explicit and implied meaning.

3.2 Conceptual Framework/Key Concepts of Media Education

In this section, we have adopted the four key concepts of media literacy outlined by Buckingham.[26]—language, representation, audience, and production. These concepts drawn from the research results of worldwide survey in 2001 were based from the concepts developed by the Association of Media Literacy (AML) in Canada, Masterman[27] and the British Film Institute (BFI) in the UK.

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[18] Pérez-Tornero (2008:105)
[19] Von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001:70)
[20] OFCOM (www.mediasmart.org.uk)
[21] Masterman (1985: 26)
[22] Buckingham (2008:17)
[23] Dewey, 1859-1952, Democracy and Education 1916, Experience and Nature 1925
[24] Forsell (2005)
[25] Lavender et. Al. (2003)
[26] Buckingham (2003)
[27] Masterman (1985)

3.2.1   Language

'Media language' is one key aspect that is often integrated in the policy documents. Just as there are rules in writing, there are in the production of media texts. Different media use a combination of several elements (codes and techniques)—for example persuasive words, sounds, special effects, colours, images, lighting, graphics, etc.—to create media texts and communicate this further.[28]

The use of these elements usually affects the way we see and interpret a certain media product. In analysing media language, one could also study how different media portray the same message (for example, the difference in handling the same news in print, radio, TV and even the internet).

3.2.2   Representation

This key concept of media education is one of the basic tenets of media education. This involves the question, "*How is the world represented; by whom; to whom; for what purposes; and to what effect?*"[29]

The media are not '*windows on the world*'[30] but they "*re-present*" reality[31]; they either tell the truth or they give a biased picture of certain ideologies or values. Objectivity is difficult to achieve. From the time the communicator selects the information that he would like to highlight up to the packaging of information, his/her judgement affects the way the message is presented, thus subjectivity come into play. In some instances, media tend to present stereotypes (e.g. class, gender, and ethnicity) and unrealistic portrayals but through reflection and analysis, one can identify the varying degrees of realism in these texts.[32] Other important questions in this aspect are as follows: Whose point of view is represented in the media text and are our own point of view affected by the representations made by the media?

3.2.3   Audience

With the aim of reaching the largest number of audience and different groups, media producers find ways and means in order to catch and sustain the interest of the audience. This is usually done by undertaking audience research and delves on audience media consumption. Results of this research are often used in designing or constructing messages to suit the tastes and preferences of the audience.

3.2.4   Production

This concept is equated with the media industries involved in the production of media products consumed by the audience. How media is produced and why they are produced are important questions in analysing the media. There is a tendency that the media content is marred by the producers or communicators to serve their own interests.

It is then important to study the economic[33] (e.g. the role of advertisements in media) and political forces behind media production. Are media products produced in the name of profit? Do they manifest the truth or are these messages manipulated to conform to the media owners' self interests?

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[28] Alvarado (2003); Buckingham (2003);
[29] Alvarado (2003)
[30] Masterman (1985:24-25) ; Buckingham (2003:57)
[31] Buckingham (2003:57)
[32] Ibid (55-56)
[33] Buckingham (2003)

3.3 Protecting young people from the media—or empowering them?

To protect the young people from the harmful effects of media—or to empower them is a phrase that is often laid down to justify the need of media education or media literacy.

In the 1960s, the protectionist approach[34] was predominant considering the all-powerful status of the media at that time, according to Frau Meigs, a member of the EU Media Literacy Expert group. During that period the audience was perceived as passive and are therefore manipulated and influenced by media texts (e.g. advertisements). In the United States for example, it is argued that the media have been considered as the root cause of the degrading moral values (e.g. sex and violence) of young children.[35] Even today, this is still considered as a contributory factor to the negative values of children as indicated in the debates and discussions. Aside from the proliferation of sex and violence issues, the problem on *consumerism* and *materialism* vis-à-vis the values of the youth has also been associated with the media.[36]

Thus, media literacy has been considered as a solution to this problem. Along this line, Elizabeth Thoman argued "*Media literacy must be a necessary component of any effective effort at violence prevention, for both individuals and society as a whole.*[37]

However, in the 1980s, the cultural approach prevailed in the media studies and this led to the shift of focus to participatory perspective in the mid 90s[38]. For one, Buckingham opposes the above protectionist view of media education. He supports instead the aim of media education/media literacy which is to prepare and empower the people to think critically. As it has been emphasized, it is important to teach the people to become *media literate* to prepare them to become active participants in a democratic society.[39]

Masterman further underlined the need to empower young people.

> "…media education is also an essential step in the long march towards a participatory democracy, and the democratisation of our institutions. Widespread media literacy is essential if all citizens are to wield power, make rational decisions, become effective change agents, and have an active involvement with the media. It is in this much wider sense of 'education for democracy' that media education can play the most significant role of all."[40]

3.4 Media education in a national and global perspective

This section will cover both previous research in this field as well as related theories that will be used additionally to support our analysis in the Results and Discussion section.

3.4.1 *Media Education in a National Research Perspective*

Media education in Sweden is a research field that has been neglected. We know little about the current status of media education in the country specifically, the place of media education in the curriculum and classroom practices. However, previous research done in recent years provides, at least, a snapshot of how media education is treated in the curriculum and how it is carried out in Swedish schools.

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[34] Frau-Meigs (2004)
[35] Buckingham (2000 & 2003)
[36] Buckingham (2003)
[37] Thoman in http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article93.html; Elizabeth Thoman, is a pioneering leader in the US media literacy community
[38] Frau Meigs (2004)
[39] Khan (2008); http://nordicom.aub.aau.dk/mld/medialiteracy.do
[40] Buckingham (2003:13)

The research report of Karin Fogelberg in 2005 entitled *Media Literacy En diskussion om medieundervisning* presents a discussion about the different aspects of media education in the formal school system.[41] Some of these include the following: the rationale of media education, the problems/obstacles that hinder its implementation nationwide and across national borders, the list of available resources that are useful in teaching about the media, and the presence of media education in the curriculum.

Fogelberg indicated the subject areas in the compulsory level whereby explicit formulations may be found—Arts, Music, Home Economics, Social Studies, and Swedish. In the upper secondary and compulsory school media education is present in Social Studies and Swedish subjects despite the explicit formulations in the curriculum. Fogelberg's result show, among others, the lack of clear specifications about how media education should be carried out in the classroom. Furthermore, Fogelberg's report was used as a springboard for two related studies which were conducted in the same year and generated similar results.

Erika Jonsson and Frida Wall[42] carried out a qualitative interview research and a content document analysis respectively. The former focused her study in the compulsory school while the latter opted to focus on the upper secondary school. Both studies, though formulated in different ways, had an overall purpose of investigating how media education is carried out in the classroom and how teachers adhere to the policy guidelines (e.g. curriculum and the syllabi).

Results of the two studies indicate that teaching about the media is far from the ideal concept propagated by the advocates of media education. Only certain aspects are covered in the classroom, for example—using newspapers and film showing; the production aspect entails, more often than not, writing articles; and the development of critical ability is often equated to critical stance in handling information sources[43]. It is their belief that this boils down to different obstacles, namely, teachers' lack of media education training, lack of resources, and the lack of clear guidelines/specifications in the national curriculum. The document analysis made by these two researchers conforms to the conclusion of Fogelberg. It was found out that the inclusion of media education is prescribed in the national curriculum; however, these are too general and vaguely formulated. Fogelberg added that these formulations, explicit as they maybe, are diffused[44] while Wall and Jonsson noted that these are open to interpretations.[45]

In line with these conclusions from recent studies, it is proper to look at one study done 19 years ago which is still relevant to the purpose of this study. Karin Stigbrand's doctoral dissertation in 1989 drew the same conclusion—that is, the national curriculum is broadly written, which makes it difficult to be 'translated' inside the classroom.[46]

3.4.2   The International Research Perspective

This section attempts to provide an insight about the development of media education—particularly, its place in the curriculum in different countries worldwide.

Commissioned by UNESCO in 2001, Buckingham and Domaille conducted a worldwide Youth Media Education Survey[47] along with a comprehensive study of related literature. Media education's lack of official status in the curriculum was cited as one of the obstacles of implementing media education.

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[41] Fogelberg (2005)
[42] Jonsson (2005); Wall (2005)
[43] Wall (2005)
[44] Fogelberg (2005)
[45] Jonsson (2005); Wall (2005)
[46] Stigbrand (1989)
[47] Buckingham & Domaille (2001)

Media education is a part of the English curriculum in the UK and the Language Arts in Canada. In the case of Sweden, the revisions of the National curriculum in 2000 indicate that media education should be integrated in the different subjects. However, the absence of clear guidelines towards the realisation of certain goals makes it difficult for media education to be 'filtered' in the classroom. This particular obstacle[48] in the Swedish context coincides with Fogelberg, Jonsson and Walls research results.

In line with the obstacle mentioned, the survey tackles the curriculum frameworks or key concepts that pupils are expected to learn in media education, and which may vary from one country to another. Buckingham and Domaille underlined the importance of curriculum frameworks in that, these provide a common understanding between the educators and the learners, for example—what is the expected learning outcome and how will skills and competencies be assessed?

It was noted that some countries either made use of some existing key concepts developed by the Association of Media Literacy (AML) in Canada and the British Film Institute in England; or others opted to use all of the key concepts. The different countries' frameworks, which appear to be similar but maybe coined with another term, have been categorized into four major groups, that is—*representation, language, audience, and production.* Sweden, for instance, has the following concepts of media education: *watching and analysing media; learning to understand media language; creating media products (films, videos, radio, programs); and participating in and enjoying media products.*[49] .

Five years after the aforementioned study, a European comparative study in eleven countries was initiated by the European Commission through the Unibersidad Autonoma de Barcelona in 2006. Dubbed, *The Current Trends and Approaches to Media Literacy in Europe*[50], the study seeks to examine the current practices and changes being undertaken in media education. Apparently, this study indicates a positive development of how media literacy —covering both traditional media and the ICT (e.g. digital media)—has started to find its place in the national curriculum in several European countries for the past 10 years. In Finland, Slovenia, France and Spain, for instance, competencies and skills related to media are formulated in these countries' curriculum.

In consonance to Buckingham and Domaille's study, media literacy is not still regarded as a subject of its own right in the United Kingdom; and teaching about the media is 'written in' the curriculum. Some schools, though, offer Media Studies as an elective subject to 14-18 year old pupils. It was concluded then in this study, that the "compulsory educational curriculum" is an important factor in the establishment/implementation of sustained media literacy.

3.5   Summary of Theoretical Framework

In sum, the above theoretical framework provides the interdependence of different concepts/theories and previous research that are related to our study.

The promotion of media education or media literacy has grown out of two paradigms: first is the protection of children from the potential harm from media; second the will to empower young children to become critical and active participants of society. International movements like the UN and UNESCO support the latter point of view. For instance, the Grunwald Declaration promotes the inclusion of media education in the curriculum.

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[48] Buckingham & Domaille (2001)
[49] Buckingham & Domaille (2001: 61)
[50] Unibersidad Autonoma de Barcelona Study: (2007)

Previous studies show that media education in the Swedish curriculum lacks specific guidelines, and this is regarded as one of the obstacles to the successful implementation of media education in schools. In light of this situation, there is an existing consensus on the general definition and scope of media literacy and media education, although, the terms are often used interchangeably.
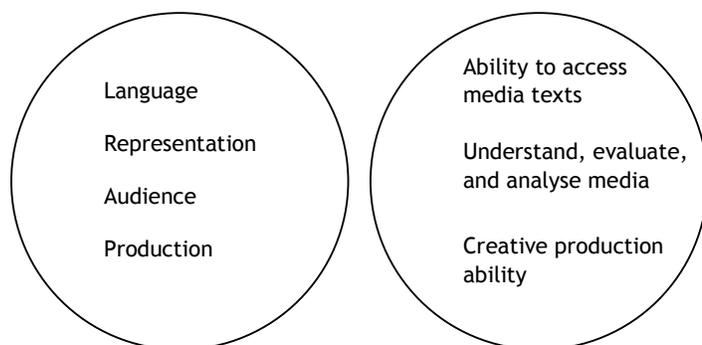
The figure above illustrates the four key concepts of media and the three main skills and competencies that we have identified and which the empirical study is based on, as summarised below.

Media education refers to the process of teaching about the media or the different concepts of media (representation, language, audience, and production): that is knowing how the media represent reality (representation); conventions and techniques to convey meaning in media texts (language); attracting and sustaining users of media (audience); how is media produced, what are the economic forces that affects the production of media content (production).

In studying these concepts, the students are expected to acquire skills in accessing the media texts that are needed for further analysis and learning. In turn, pupils, seen as active individuals, are expected to come up with their own media texts and communicate it to others. Media literacy experts as well as educational theorists share a common understanding that aside from understanding, evaluating, and analysing different aspects of media, creating media texts is also a way of empowering young people to become critical and active citizens of society—the overall vision and goal of media education.

4 The Research Aim, Questions, and Methods

In this part of the report we intend to outline the aim of the study we are undertaking, present key research questions, as well as explain the method for our study together with important aspects that have influenced our selection of research material, way of working, and presentation of results.

4.1 How Media Education is Reflected in School Curriculum

With the insights gained in the previous chapters' overview of media education & literacy, and our initial assumption that the integration and the explicit formulation of media education in the curriculum is one contributory factor to success, the purpose of the study is to describe how media education is reflected in school curriculum documents in Sweden vis-à-vis Canada and the UK.

4.2 The Research Questions

The three key questions to fulfil the purpose of the study, and that we intend to answer, are:

- *How is media education treated in the curriculum?* With this question, we intend to describe and compare the inclusion of media education & media literacy aspects in the respective countries curriculum documents.

- *How does the curriculum reflect the key concepts of language, representation, audience, and media production?* With this question, we intend to describe and compare the media literacy concepts outlined in the respective countries curriculum.

- *How does the curriculum reflect the skills and competencies required for media literacy?* With this question, we intend to describe and compare how the vital media literacy skills and competencies are reflected in the curriculum documents.

4.3 Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA)

The aim of the study is to describe how media education is reflected in the Swedish curriculum in comparison to Canada and the UK. As the purpose of our research implies, this study would entail a document analysis and for that reason, we have used the Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA)[51] as we are interested in looking at meanings and aspects in the curriculum.[52] This, in our point of view, could be attained through ECA, a method which is reflexive in nature.

In retrospective, we have realised that a qualitative text analysis allows us to read a lot of text, code aspects according to our protocol questions, and then analyse and present results and reflections of interest. In this process, we have seen that there is a substantial analysis effort and analytical thinking involved throughout the process. For example, analysis was employed in the following stages: definition of purpose and research questions; the iterative construction process of the protocol; the coding stage; the comparison of results; and the presentation/report. This comprehensive analytical approach is reflected in the report – although much of it is of descriptive character (e.g. the extensive number of examples), we appreciate that there has been a continuously high level of analytical effort in all steps of the process.

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[51] Altheide (1996:16)
[52] Ibid. (1996: 16 & 23)

4.3.1   Selection of Research Materials

We had selected the Swedish curriculum documents[53] as the objects of study or unit of analysis. For comparison, Canada and the UK were chosen because they are known internationally to be among the leading countries. Canada was chosen because media literacy was included as a separate strand in Language Arts, and that is considered as a key contributory factor to their success. Other contributory factors are the presence of grassroots movement (e.g. Association of Media Literacy); support from the policy makers; close collaboration with the media industry; provision of in-service training and workshops to educators; and the provision of resources on media literacy. As Canada does not have a national curriculum, we opted to study the curriculum from the region of Ontario.

The United Kingdom was chosen because they have a long history of media education. Media studies is an elective subject in the secondary level. Several organisations are active in promoting media literacy; the British Film Industry plays an important role in media education as it lobbied for the inclusion of moving image media in the curriculum's secondary curriculum.UK has also a strong foundation of research concerning media and children (e.g. the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media) undertaken by media literacy experts and media professionals.

Based on the fact that few previous studies have looked at the earlier stages of school, we initially decided to look at the Swedish curriculum documents at years 1-9 of compulsory school. However, considering the limited time frame, we decided to restrict our study to the initial years 1-5. After some discussion about the equivalent documents in the two countries of comparison, we decided to study key stage 1-2 documents in the UK, and grade 1-6 documents in Canada. This would allow us to look at media education in the age range of up to 11 year old pupils. Contrary to any other selection, this selection also supported the fact that we wanted to achieve a fair comparison, since Ontario, Canada starts with media education already from grade 1 at the age of five.

We acknowledge the fact that the school systems are not identical, however, we believe that the selected research materials will allow us to depict a fair and general picture of the Swedish curriculum documents in comparison to the UK and Ontario, Canada. This would also enable us to look at 'good practices' in these countries that are worthy of emulation, if not replication.

4.3.2   Protocol Development and Data Collection

Having all the materials needed, this allowed us to construct a protocol (a way of interviewing the document) consisting of five set of questions which are all essential in providing us with answers as to how media education is reflected in the curriculum documents.

To test the protocol, Ontario's Language Arts subject, grade 4-6, was used. Some similarities as well as differences in the way we categorised the answers cropped up and so further revisions were made omitting some vague questions, and we finally came up with seven specific questions. We had further defined the terms and concepts in these categories to achieve the same frame of reference of interpretation, and included, for example, instructions.

The following picture illustrates the protocol[54] that we eventually used for coding all subjects.

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[53] i.e. including overall curriculum document (Lpo94) and course syllabus for relevant subjects.
[54] Manalili/Rehnberg (2008)

1	What particular subjects contain media education and at what ages is it taught? *Instruction*: Include reference (heading & page); Specify the answer regarding the ages in accordance to the document you're analysing
2	In the subjects where media is mentioned, is it a strand or integrated across all strands? (i.e. also implicitly/explicitly mentioned). How? *Instruction*: Include other areas of curriculum/other strands ? (i.e. also implicitly/explicitly mentioned).
3	What key concepts or aspects of media education are reflected? What definitions are used? *Instruction*: Copy and paste important items and summarise the descriptions. Keep the 4 key concepts (Language, Audience, Production, and Representation) in mind.
4	What particular skills/competencies are expected of the students to learn? How is it reflected, e.g. in the students own production? *Instruction*: Copy and paste important items and summarise.
5	How is ICT knowledge related to the skills/competencies expected of the students to learn? *Instruction*: After having looked at question 4, look at how the curriculum relates to information and communications technology knowledge?
6	With the goal of equipping the students with certain skills, do these aim at protecting them from potential harm from the media or do they aim at empowering them? How is this reflected? *Instruction*: Look at it in relation to society (not in relation to media literacy)
7	How are students' skills/competence assessed? How do we track their progression? *Instruction*: Knowledge perspective

Sourcing the curriculum documents was done on the net specifically, from the Ministry of Education's website from each the respective countries. We had checked their validity and made sure that they still remain in force, thru e.g. e-mail inquiries. An answer from Ontario validated our Canadian source, and studying the planned revisions in the UK confirmed this source.

Another minor issue is that we had realised that it would have been good to source a written copy of the Swedish Syllabi documents. On the Ministry of Education's webpage, the English versions were available only as web-based text, and we downloaded these texts and compiled these into a document. But we had realised that this compilation, although complete and accurate as it is, only allows us to make references to our own compilation, a problem we had to manage while writing the report.

4.3.3   Data Coding

With the refined categories, both of us, using both soft and hard copies, coded all the Swedish documents and other subjects that contained explicit aspects of media literacy in the other countries, namely: Language Arts (Ontario, Canada) and English (UK) — to further assure the quality of the coded material. This would in turn ensure the reliability of our answers; with two persons looking at the same information, the accuracy of the data is ensured and big disparities in the answers are checked and verified. As we suspected, comparisons of the results led us to further check and refine the answers we had for each category, especially for those with somewhat overlapping dimensions.

The remaining research material we divided between us and coded accordingly. With the bulk of the documents that we have, it took us more than two weeks to code. To balance the feeling of a slipping time-plan, we were assured by the fact that we started to make interesting conclusions quite early in the data analysis phase – thus, proving the iterative and reflexive nature of the chosen method. For example, commentaries and initial analysis were written on the protocol to help us in the analysis stage.

4.3.4   Data Analysis and Presentation

Having coded the full Swedish curriculum and course syllabi, we discussed and reflected back on the purpose of the study, and decided to focus our comparison with the other countries on the subjects that contained the most explicit mentioning of media education & literacy aspects (Swedish, Arts & Music, and Social Studies). Based on the coded materials, we further refined our comparison of subjects to include only two subjects: Language Arts; and Arts. Other subjects, e.g. Social studies, ICT and others, would be included in the description and overall comparison, but will not be compared subject by subject.

Our initial fear that the questions in the protocols would be overlapping, forced us to be very keen as to what answers we really wanted to have for each category. For example, we had realised during the analysis stage that the protocols we had were not enough basis for the analysis of the second set of questions (aligning to the conceptual framework). We had to do the coding once again for each of these four key concepts across different subjects. This was time-consuming; however it gave us a deepened understanding and insight into the complexity of the subject. The above situation clearly shows the important aspect of ECA which involves a 'constant discovery' and 'constant comparison'[55]. Along the way, we did not just rely on the protocol; we had to go back to the original documents to check the accuracy of our data.

During the analysis stage, we decided that two of our protocol questions (No. 6 concerning "empowerment" and No. 7 concerning "assessment") would not constitute a separate section in our results & analysis part of the report. Answers to protocol question 6 would serve as a supporting detail in our analysis for research question 2 and 3; while protocol question 7 would only be discussed in our concluding remarks.

While writing the report, we acknowledged the strength of the chosen method in terms of not feeling tempted to present our results & analysis in a quantitative way. Although we have compared the respective countries, our aim is not to judge or give values to the comparison, and thus we have chosen to write a text-based report, despite the somewhat low level of user-friendliness this may result in.

4.3.5   Validity & Reliability

Validity refers to what extent you are measuring what you intend to measure.[56] Validity and reliability of the study was then ensured in several ways: first, by constructing the appropriate research questions to fulfil the purpose; second, by assuring that the protocol questions conform to the research questions; and third, by checking the consistency of our data and analysis.

We also acknowledge the fact that the study does not allow us to show the actual status of implementation of media education in schools in the studied countries. However, we can provide a view of the status based on how the curriculum documents reflect important aspects of media education and literacy.

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[55] Altheide (1996:16)
[56] Esaiasson et. al (2006: 61)

5 Media Education in the Curriculum Documents

This part of the report intends to describe how the curriculum of Sweden covers media education and media literacy, and in comparison to the curriculum of Ontario, Canada, and UK. The ambition is to provide clear answers to the questions put forward in section 4.2, while describing how media education is reflected in the respective documents. This part of the study thus consists of five chapters:

- Initially, a short explanation of the curriculum structure of the studied countries.
- A description and comparison of how media education is treated in the curriculum, with specific focus on the subjects most relevant to media education.
- A description and comparison of how the respective curriculum documents reflect the key concepts of language, representation, audience, and media production.
- A description and comparison of how the respective curriculum documents reflect the key skills and competencies; access, understand/analyse/evaluate, and produce.
- A concluding chapter, providing summarised answers to our research questions, together with examples of what we consider as "good practice".

5.1 Different school systems – different curriculum structure

Let us initially confirm that the school systems in the countries we are studying are different – hence the structure of the curriculum varies. For continued understanding, this chapter gives a short description of the structure of the curriculum in the different countries.

5.1.1 Sweden

The curriculum is Sweden consists of two levels of documents, covering years 1-9 for children and youth ~6-15 years of age: a curriculum, which is a relatively short and concise reference to the overall goal and tasks of the compulsory school; and a course syllabus for each subject.

The curriculum provides an overall view on education, starting with the fundamental values and tasks of the Swedish school. It continues with overall goals and guidelines with respect to norms and values, knowledge (e.g. "*have knowledge about the media and their role*"[57]), responsibility and influence of pupils, the school and home, the school and the surrounding world, assessment and grades, and finishes with an overall outline of the responsibilities of the school head. All in all, this document is approximately 20 pages.

The curriculum is complemented by course syllabi, which outline each respective subject in terms of: Aim of the subject and its role in education; Goals to aim for; Structure and nature of the subject; and Specific goals that pupils should have attained by the end of the fifth and ninth year in school. These documents are also relatively short, between 3-5 pages each, outlining goals but giving little or no details on specific expectations, or examples of how to plan programs.

As indicated earlier, the Swedish curriculum documents are not very specific on education contents but more on an overall level. This is partly due to the fact that Swedish curriculum documents are not intended to give detailed descriptions of contents in teaching, but instead, they provide an overall "goal-oriented" view on the subjects. Municipalities in Sweden may produce, in addition to the above curriculum, local school plans that outline more specific details on how the subject should be taught in the local schools.

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[57] Skolverket, Lpo94, pg 10

5.1.2 Ontario, Canada

The Ontario region outlines a curriculum that consists of fairly comprehensive documents for each specific subject. Every document outlines an introductory view of the subject, followed by overall and specific expectations for included strands and grade 1-8 (ages ~5 to ~11). The curriculum documents vary in length between 50-150 pages.

The introductory chapters explain aspects such as (example from subject Language Arts) the importance of literacy, language, and the language curriculum, principles underlying the language curriculum, and roles and responsibilities in language education. Furthermore, it outlines the program in language education, assessment and evaluation of pupil achievement. The introductory chapters are concluded with general considerations for program planning, including aspects such as cross-curricular and integrated learning, antidiscrimination, inquiry/research skills, the role of technology in language education etc.

The main part of the curriculum document gives comprehensive details on how the subject should be taught, by outlining overall expectations for each grade and strand (the Language Arts curriculum outlines four strands; Oral communication, Reading, Writing, and Media Literacy), and specific expectations for each grade and strand in detail, together with examples and teacher's prompts. Additionally, each strand has several sub-sections that cover various aspects of the strand.

5.1.3 United Kingdom

The UK has a national curriculum, and each subject is outlined in a document that sets out the legal requirements of the National Curriculum in England, as well as provides information to help teachers implement the subject in their schools. The curriculum is divided into four key stages, of which key stage 1-2 relate to pupils aged 5 to ~11 years of age.

Initially, the curriculum documents briefly outline how the subject in question relates to promoting pupil's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, as well as how key skills, such as IT, are promoted through the studies in the subject.

The main part of the curriculum contains the programme of study, and sets out two sorts of requirements: Knowledge, Skills and Understanding; and Breadth of Study. These are outlined for each key stage and area of the subject. The curriculum document, for instance, in the English subject outlines what pupils should be taught in the areas (~strands) of Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing. In addition, each key stage has non-statutory information, for example, information that relates to specific ICT opportunities.

The UK curriculum also includes a comprehensive part outlining general teaching requirements, discussing for example inclusion principles, use of the subject across the curriculum, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. The curriculum concludes with specific attainment targets for the subject.

5.2 Media Education Treatment in the Curriculum

So how is media literacy and education treated in the Swedish curriculum, and in comparison to Ontario, Canada and the UK? With this question our intention is to describe how media education is provided, for example with reference to aspects such as how explicitly it is integrated in the subjects. The following sections describe how media education is included in the different curriculum documents, first on a general level and then with regards to the specific subjects studied.

5.2.1 Media Education and Media Literacy on a General Level

As outlined earlier, media education has been discussed for long, and some countries have gone further in implementing it than others. Canada has chosen to add a separate strand to its Language Arts whereas Sweden and the UK have, so far, chosen to integrate media education across other subjects.

Sweden

In the Swedish curriculum documents, we find small islands of media education references. In the overall curriculum document, media education is explicitly mentioned under goals to attain, for example using the phrase "*have knowledge about media and their role*"[58] and also when stating that pupils "*are able to develop and use their knowledge and experience in as many different forms of expression as possible covering language, pictures, music, drama and dance*"[59].

In the respective course syllabi, we find many occurrences of explicit inclusions of media education in the following subjects: Swedish, Arts, Music, and Social Studies. Since the term "text" is used to include also media texts, the Swedish subject naturally includes many aspects of media education/media literacy. However, it seems that Arts is the subject where we find many and explicit references to media literacy.

In general, we see that the reader of the Swedish curriculum documents needs to know what media literacy is to be able to interpret the many inclusions across the curriculum. For example, in the subject Physical Education and Health there is a paragraph reading "*Together with knowledge of the great variety and trends, which are linked to the modern culture of physical training, the subject provides opportunities to question the models disseminated by different media*".[60] From what we understand, this refers to the pupils' ability to question representation of youth in media using stereotypes, based on knowledge acquired in the subject.

Ontario, Canada

In Ontario, media literacy is included as its own strand in Language Arts, very explicitly mentioned, and outlined in great detail. This does not mean that media education is excluded in other subjects. We find many explicit inclusions of media education in e.g. Arts & Design and Social Studies. In general, the Canadian curriculum documents are explicit, comprehensive, and provide a holistic approach in terms of media literacy aspects. Nevertheless, the different aspects of media literacy are substantially provided with the critical approach in focus. To further develop the pupils critical, analytical thinking, and creative thinking— producing media texts and communicating the produced texts are important aspects of media literacy as stated in Buckingham, AML's and Masterman's description of media literacy.

United Kingdom

Similar to Sweden, media education in Sweden is integrated across the different subjects. We however find more frequent and more explicit references to media literacy across the UK curriculum. Naturally, media literacy is contained in the English subject and we find many explicit references also in subjects such as Arts & Design, and Music.

Since the UK curriculum additionally has a specific curriculum for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which is referred to, and integrated, across all other subjects, there is a clear distinction between media literacy and the use of technology apparent in media.

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[58] Skolverket, Lpo94, p.10
[59] Ibid.
[60] Skolverket 1, Physical Education and Health

5.2.2   Media Education in Language Arts

The subject Language Arts constitutes teaching of the English language in the UK and Ontario, Canada and the Swedish language in Sweden.

Sweden

The Swedish document covers media literacy with explicit references to media literacy. The document includes a general statement specifying that the term "text" is used to denote not only literary texts but also media texts "*A broader concept of text covers pictures, in addition to written and spoken texts…*"[61] And together with the goal that pupils should have knowledge about media and their role, this implies that media education can be included at the discretion of the teacher. When depicting the structure and nature of the subject, there is a section included that outlines the importance of literature, films and the theatre. Here, these specific media are given equal weight as literature when it comes to e.g. development of identity.

In many cases, the media aspect of literacy is added to highlight to the reader to include media text in the teaching. For example, when outlining goals to aim for, the paragraph reads "*…develop the ability to use different opportunities to obtain information, acquire knowledge of the language and functions of the media, as well as develop their ability to interpret, critically examine, and evaluate different sources and their contents.*"[62]

Ontario, Canada

The Ontario curriculum is the most comprehensive document with respect to media literacy. As mentioned previously, the Language Arts curriculum contains four strands, of which Media Literacy is one. This strand covers media aspects like Understanding Media Texts; Understanding Media Forms, Conventions and Techniques, Creating Media Texts; and Reflecting on Media Literacy Skills and Strategies. In the other strands like Reading for example, media aspects are also tackled: purpose and audience, making inferences, interpreting messages, responding to and evaluating texts, audience response, etc.

The document includes a definition of media literacy that well corresponds to the one chosen for the study: "*Media literacy is the result of study of the art and messaging of various forms of media texts. Media texts can be understood to include any work, object, or event that communicates meaning to an audience. Most media texts use words, graphics, sounds, and/or images, in print, oral, visual, or electronic form, to communicate information and ideas to their audience. Whereas traditional literacy may be seen to focus primarily on the understanding of the word, media literacy focuses on the construction of meaning through the combination of several media languages – images, sounds, graphics, and words.*"[63]

The Ontario curriculum is also very specific when outlining what should be included. For each grade, the curriculum states the overall expectations, and for all of the aspects mentioned previously, specific expectations including teacher prompts. The following example states a specific expectation on grade 1 pupils when it comes to understanding media texts/responding to and evaluating text: "*…express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works (e.g., state whether they like or dislike a character in a cartoon, song, or movie; draw a picture of the character in a song)*"[64].

And following directly after the expectation is a teacher prompt: "*What do you like/not like about the story told in this movie? What was your favourite part? How did it make you feel?" "Did the characters in this cartoon use violence to solve problems? Was the violence funny? Is this a good way to solve problems?*"

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[61] Skolverket 1, Swedish
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 13
[64] Ministry of Education Language Arts, p. 45

There is also explicit references to the fact that the four strands are interdependent and complementary, which is clearly visible in the introduction of the other strands; e.g. the Reading strand explicitly states that the reading program should include a wide variety of texts, including "*plays and radio, film, or television scripts…magazine articles, comic books, newspaper articles and editorials*"[65]

United Kingdom

The UK curriculum for the English subject includes media, both explicitly and implicitly. The media aspect is integrated across the strands: Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing. When outlining the importance of English in the introduction, it is stated "*In studying English, pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It enables them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively and to communicate with others effectively. Pupils learn to become enthusiastic and critical readers for stories, poetry and dram as well as non-fiction and media texts.*"[66] The curriculum is specific when it comes to what pupils should be taught, listing, for each strand, several areas of importance and specific requirements, in some cases including examples of suitable objects of study.

5.2.3   Media Education in Arts

The subject of Arts constitutes teaching of Arts ("Bild" in Swedish) and Music in the Swedish curriculum documents, the teaching of Arts & Design in the UK curriculum, and the teaching of the Arts; Music, Visual Arts, Drama and Dance in the Ontario curriculum.

Sweden

The Swedish curriculum documents explicitly mentions media in goals to aim for as well as in the structure and nature of the subject. In the definition of the Arts strand, it is stated "*Arts has its own distinctive forms of expressions and covers….pictures used in the media…*"[67] indicating the importance of the picture as an information carrier in the media. Furthermore, the ability to observe and visualise has explicit references to media, and how pictures in media is used to create conventions "*…examine a picture's representation of reality and how this is expressed in pictures, films and on TV. … it may also involve moving away from the picture as such, and understanding the social and cultural patterns that create conventions.*"[68] In the music strand, we find statements such as "*…to reflect on the functions of music and the way this has been expressed in society in the past and today…*"[69]

With the pre-requisite that media today is very visual, we even conclude that Arts is the most important media literacy-subject in the Swedish curriculum, for example reflecting on the statement in the arts strand saying that "*Art bears the main responsibility for developing the pupils' visual language…*"[70] and the statement in the Music strand saying that "*…"music and text are integrated, often in combination with pictures, into new means of expression which reflect and influence…*"[71]

This type of statement, including other similar statements, clearly connects to the overall objective of the school to impart a cultural heritage, influence construction of identity, and knowledge. Nevertheless, media literacy has explicit connections to reach overall goals for the school. This is further indicated by stating the importance of pictures and visual communication as an important pre-requisite for active participation in society, and "the *way in which the media world represents class, ethnicity and gender.*"[72]

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[65] Ibid. p. 11
[66] Ibid. p. 13
[67] Skolverket 1, Arts
[68] Ibid.
[69] Skolverket 1, Music
[70] Skolverket 1. Arts
[71] Skolverket 1. Music
[72] Skolverket 1, Arts

We consider the coverage of media literacy being more explicit in the subject of Arts, compared to, for example, Language Arts. This differentiates the Swedish approach from that of UK and Ontario, where Language Arts is the key carrier of media education aspects.

Ontario, Canada

In Ontario, the subject of Arts also includes explicit references to media education and media literacy although not as thoroughly as in Language Arts. In Arts, the references to media literacy are implicitly included in the earlier grades, and more explicitly included from grade 3 (Music), grade 4 (Visual Arts) and grade 5 (Drama and Dance).

The definition of the Arts specifically includes the skill of critical thinking and creativity, e.g. "*Through the study of music, visual arts, and drama and dance… develop the ability to think creatively and critically….understand that the arts have long served as important media for recording and communicating ideas and feelings… the importance of the arts, both as sources of enjoyment and as means of communication.*"[73]

The creative work-aspect refers to media literacy skills, but the critical thinking-aspect is more explicit in referring to media literacy. There are many statements about "*communicate thought and feelings…express their response…can manipulate the elements of music to create a specific mood…use the elements of design to create a specific effect…*" and perhaps most explicit in "*…recognize and name characteristics of drama and dance performances that incorporate technology, visual art, music, and popular media to create artistic effects…*"[74]. Generally, the references to media literacy complement the extensive inclusion in the Language Arts.

United Kingdom

In the UK, the two subjects of Arts & Design and Music integrates media literacy aspects into the subject. Similar to the Ontario curriculum documents, media literacy is more covered in the English subject, although we find explicit references also in Arts & Design and Music. In the introduction to Arts & Design, is an explicit statement related to media literacy "*recognise how images and artefacts can have influence on the way people think and feel, and to understand the ideas, beliefs behind their making… relating art, craft and design to its cultural context… for example advertising…*"[75]

In the curriculum for Music, media literacy aspects are more implicitly included, for example "*…music provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of communication…*"[76]

5.2.4 Media Education in other Subjects

It would be fair to mention that the curriculum documents in all three countries include references to media literacy in other subjects, as the following paragraphs will describe briefly.

Sweden

Of the other subjects, perhaps, Social Studies is worth mentioning by its own credits. The subject has several explicit references to media literacy. In fact, the curriculum documents give the impression that it is Social Studies that bears the main responsibility for media education. General statements such as *"…The media and their message play a major role when people form their views. …develop insights into how different media can be used and how they influence Man and society. …examining, selecting, structuring, critically evaluating, integrating and presenting information in different ways – in speech, writing, pictures, art, drama, music and movement…*"[77] implies the value of media literacy in the subject.

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[73] Ministry of Education, Arts, p5
[74] Ministry of Education, Arts, p.58
[75] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Arts&Design, p.8
[76] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Music, p.8
[77] Skolverket 1, Social Studies

We see however not so explicit references throughout the Social Studies curriculum documents, instead they fall into the context of small "islands" of media literacy references, for example, in Social Studies/History strand: *"…ability to assess different texts, media, and other sources…", "…information and propaganda…as a means of exerting influence…"*[78]

Concluding our reference to media literacy in the Swedish curriculum, we have mentioned several times previously that we find small "islands" of media literacy references throughout the curriculum documents. Since the Swedish curriculum documents generally are on a more general level than the others, many of the references can, with the eye of a "media literacy expert", implicitly refer to media education, for example: *"learn to plan their finances on the basis of… examine and assess information and advertisements…","… understand differences between information and advertising…"*[79], and *"…they meet English in a variety of contexts: on TV, in films, in the world of music…"; "…ability to …critically examine sources of information…"*[80]

Ontario, Canada

The comprehensive coverage of media literacy in the Language Arts and Arts & Design respectively allows other subjects to include few explicit references to media literacy. Social studies do, but more from the perspective of how skills acquired in Social studies will strengthen the pupils' general abilities, applicable also in media education. For example, *"critical thinking and research skills taught in social studies… students' ability to recognize bias and stereotypes in…"*[81]

United Kingdom

Of the other subjects in the UK curriculum we find the one covering Information and Communication Technology (ICT) the most interesting. UK is the only country that presents ICT as a subject on its own, and perhaps even more interesting, all other subjects include a section that states how ICT knowledge should be integrated into the subject. The following statement, taken from the ICT curriculum, is included in all other subjects as a statutory requirement from key stage 2: *"use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects… find things out from a variety of sources, selecting and synthesising; the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias and plausibility; …using ICT tools to amend and refine their work … exchange and share information, … through electronic media; review, modify and evaluate their work, reflecting critically …."*[82]

From our perspective, this focus on ICT-knowledge strengthens, maybe contradicting, how media literacy is integrated into the subjects, by the fact that it explicitly delineates the use of technology as a means of teaching and the role of technology in the context of media literacy.

5.3 Key concepts – a holistic perspective on media education

This section provides the key concepts or aspects of media education that are manifested in the curriculum documents:

- Representation: that is, how reality is represented by the media
- Language: conventions and techniques used to convey meaning
- Audience: how the media attract and sustain interest
- Production: forces behind the function of the media (e.g. economic, ownership)

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[78] Skolverket 1, History
[79] Skolverket 1, Home and Consumer studies
[80] Skolverket 1, English
[81] Ministry of Education, Social Studies, pg 17
[82] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority ICT, p. 36

As it has been underlined in section 3.2 previously, understanding and analysing the key concepts of media is an essential component of media education/and media literacy that should be undertaken in the classroom. Findings of the study suggest that the key concepts are predominant in the Ontario curriculum while in the Swedish and the UK curriculum; some aspects like audience and production are left out.

5.3.1 Representation

The key concept 'representation' is manifested in the respective curriculum documents, but with varying degrees of explicitness in terms of scope. This is not surprising because in classroom situations, this aspect is often the focus of media studies. Ontario's media literacy strand in Language Arts meets all expectations. Its curriculum sets a good example by providing detailed guidelines that exhibit 'representation', giving the pupils the opportunity to analyse how media text represent the world, different groups, values including ideologies.

Compared to the UK, the Swedish syllabus in the Arts subject provides more explicit formulations compared to the UK, however, there are no clear guidelines provided. The formulations are located diffusely as it is also indicated in Fogelberg's research paper[83] (specifically the Swedish syllabus). The UK has a relatively few explicit statement about 'representation'' and not all the aspects of this key concept are covered. More supporting details concerning this assertion are presented below.

Sweden

The key concept 'representation' in the subjects Swedish, Arts and Social Studies is well-formulated under the structure and nature of the subject; and conforms to the definition given by the media literacy experts[84]. This is manifested in phrases like *"understand themselves and the world, reviewing values and attitudes, exhibits degrees of realism; forming public opinion, construction of identity.* However, these descriptions are not specifically mentioned under goals to aim for and the goals that should be attained.

> *"…Literature, films and the theatre help people to understand themselves and the world, and contribute to the development of an identity. Literature, films and the theatre provide opportunities for developing empathy and understanding of others, and for what is different, as well as for reviewing values and attitudes."[85]*

> *"The picture we perceive is not an objective reproduction of what the naked eye sees… The subject covers examining the way in which the media world represents class, ethnicity and gender…It is a language which exhibits different degrees of realism and symbolic representational forms, as well as spatial and relations…Pictures occupy a prominent position in commercial contexts and play an important role in forming public opinion. Popular culture provides the most dominant category of pictures in the life of children and young people, and has an influential role in their construction of identity, knowledge and culture."[86]*

> *"The subject of art develops the ability to observe and also creative visualisation. This may involve examining a picture's representation of reality and how is this expressed in pictures, films, and on TV."[87]*

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[83] Fogelberg (2005)
[84] Buckingham (2003); Masterman (1985); http://www.aml.ca
[85] Skolverket 1, Swedish
[86] Skolverket 1, Arts
[87] Skolverket 1, Arts

In Social Studies, 'representation' is described both in general terms (e.g. in aim and role of the subject matter) and specific terms (e.g. goals to aim for). The example below about propaganda is a good example of how 'representation' is reflected.

> *"Knowledge is an area of social studies provides pupils with the opportunity of seeing their surroundings in relation to themselves, and understanding themselves in relation to their surroundings, i.e., how individuals form and are formed by their world."*[88]-

> *"-be able to reflect over how information and propaganda have been used before and are used today as a means of exerting influence"*[89]

Ontario, Canada

Canada, so far, in comparison to Sweden and UK exhibits a consistent and well-formulated key concept of representation which conforms to the media experts' definition of this concept[90]. Under the media literacy strand, a description of this concept is clearly stated:

> *"These texts abound in our electronic information age, and the messages they convey, both overt and implied, can have a significant influence on students' lives. …Students must be able to differentiate between fact and opinion; evaluate the credibility of sources; recognize bias; be attuned to discriminatory portrayals of individuals and groups; including women and minorities; and question depictions of violence and crime"*[91].

> *"They look beyond the literal meaning of texts and observe what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate an author's intent. Junior students learn to identify and explore multiple perspectives, question the messages in texts, and look at issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice"*[92]

The phrases used in the above description— *overt and implied, significant influence on students' lives, differentiate between fact and opinion, credibility, bias, portrayal; what is present or missing; explore multiple perspectives*—-cover the important aspects of 'representation' that pupils should learn. This description is further illuminated in all the year levels under overall expectations: *students will demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts.*[93] At first glance, this overall expectation seems to be a broad statement—but specific expectations[94] together with examples and teacher prompt provide clear guidelines.

> *"…express personal thoughts and feelings about simple media works and explain their responses (e.g. explain why a particular DVD/video or licensed character or toy game is more or less appealing to them than another, similar product)"- (Responding to and Evaluating Texts)*

> *"…identify, initially with support and direction, whose point of view (e.g. that of the hero, the villain, the narrator) is presented in a simple media text and suggest how the text might change if a different point of view were used. Teacher Prompt:" Who is telling the story? How would the story be different if another character were telling the story?" (Point of view)*

The above excerpt is an example of whose point of view is represented in the media. Other succeeding examples are given, with an increased complexity since these are intended for grade 6.

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[88] Skolverket 1, Social Studies
[89] Skolverket 1, History
[90] Buckingham (2003); Masterman (1985)
[91] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p.13
[92] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p.77-78
[93] Ibid. p.45
[94] Ibid, p.59-60

With the example below, including the preceding examples, the progression of knowledge and skills in understanding the concept 'representation' is indeed taken into account.

> *"…evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation and treatment of ideas, information, themes, opinions, issues, and/or experiences in media texts (e.g. evaluate the coverage of the same news item in a newspaper article, a segment of a news program, a website, and/or blog"[95] (Responding to and Evaluating Texts)*

> *"Identify whose point of view is presented in a media text, identify missing or alternative points of view, and where appropriate, determine whether the chosen view achieves a particular goal (e.g. identify biases in two different media texts that focus on the same topic or event; evaluate the portrayal of Aboriginal people in the media…"[96](Point of View)*

'Representation' is not only found under the Media Literacy strand; this is already introduced in the preceding strands, for example under the Reading strand, specific expectations:

> *"Express opinions about the ideas and information in texts and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions."[97] (Responding to and evaluating texts)*

> *"Identify the point of view presented in the text citing supporting evidence from the text, and suggest some possible alternative perspectives (e.g. identify words and phrases that reveal the point of view presented…"[98](Point of view)*

Furthermore, 'representation' with a focus on bias and stereotyping is contained in other subjects like Social Studies, and Geography.

> *"… The critical thinking and research skills taught in social studies, history, geography will strengthen students' ability to recognize bias and stereotypes in contemporary as well as historical portrayals, viewpoints, representations, and images."[99]*

> *"…use a variety of resources and tools to investigate different historical points of view about the positive and negative effects of early contact between First Nation people and European explorers;"[100]*

United Kingdom

In the case of the UK, the inclusion of 'representation' in the national curriculum is fairly small compared to Ontario. Its main focus is on accuracy, bias, or reliability of information while other aspects like stereotyping or point of view have been overlooked. Representation could be found in the statement on how ICT should be used across the different subjects studied,

> *"Pupils should be given opportunities to support their work by being taught to find things out from a variety of sources, selecting and synthesising the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias, and plausibility."[101]*

The above statement is more specified in the following formulation:

> *"…distinguish between fact and opinion (for example, by looking at the purpose of the text, the reliability of information). And consider an argument critically."[102] (Reading for information)*

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95 Ibid.p117-118
96 Ibid.p117-118
97 Ibid, p.84
98 Ibid, p.84
99 Ministry of Education, Social Studies, p. 17
100 Ibid. p.31
101 Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, English, p. 52

5.3.2   Language

Apparently, the 'Language' concept is manifested in the three countries curriculum and syllabi—with some variations of the way these have been formulated. By far, this concept is the most represented concept in the different documents. Just like the first concept discussed previously, Canada consistently outlines this concept having in mind the following: the aspects of media 'language' including the use of technology that may bring the desired effect and the learning progression of children—that is providing this concept with varying degrees of complexity in accordance to the year level of learners. Meanwhile, Sweden succeeds in providing the overall definition of what the 'language' concept means but fails to give guidelines that are more detailed. The UK compared to Sweden, to a greater extent, outlines more explicit specifications of this concept in the English and Music subject.

Sweden

In the Swedish subject, the key concept `language´, is found under goals to aim for and goals that pupils should have attained by the end of fifth year. In the two succeeding statements[103], understanding the function of media and the meaning of non-fiction texts are underlined but more specific aspects like the forms and techniques used in constructing messages are not included.

> *"…develop the ability to use different opportunities to obtain information, acquire knowledge of the language and functions of the media…"*

> *"…be able to read with fluency, both aloud and to themselves, and understand events and meaning in books and non-fiction written for children and young persons, and be able to discuss their experiences from reading, as well as reflect over texts…"*

In the subject Arts,[104] the real essence of media language is captured and well-formulated under the following nature and structure of the subject. Phrases like *"weaves of tapestry of meaning, has its own distinctive forms of expression, a wealth of techniques, pictorial codes, and decoding* clearly support this statement.

> *"…The media's integration of pictures, words and sounds weaves a tapestry of meaning which influences our perceptions.", "…Art has its own distinctive forms of expression and covers everything from children's pictures, works of art, pictures used in the media, in architecture and in design. The language of art is typified by a wealth of techniques and visual narrative forms which cover a wide area of pictorial codes….", "…The subject of Art focuses on providing knowledge of creating pictures and forms, visual communication, as well as decoding, interpreting and analysing pictures and forms…"*

Though the above the concept of media language is well-elucidated, it could be noted that the goals to aim for[105] is expressed in general terms.

> *"…develop the ability to analyse and discuss pictures and also an understanding that pictures carry and create meaning…", "Have basic skills in examining and interpreting pictures and forms"*

With this goal, it is expected that by the end of fifth year the pupils should have attained the "basic skills" to give meaning to the said pictures and other combined forms.

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[102] Ibid. p. 25
[103] Skolverket 1, Swedish
[104] Skolverket 1, Arts
[105] Ibid.

While the concept of media language is also covered in the Music syllabus, this is quite similar to the formulation of the Arts and Swedish syllabi, which is broad in nature. In the goal to aim for: "*the pupils should have the ability to understand/to learn the functions and language of music, its different forms combined with other forms of media and structure*". This is consequently expressed in the goals that pupils should have attained by fifth year: *"be aware and be able to reflect on the functions of music…"*[106] These goals are merely referring to the aim of knowing the functions of music—a more concrete guideline on what aspect of the 'language' concept should be studied is not outlined in the syllabi. The same thing applies to the Social Studies subject wherein media language is also broadly stated:

> "*…Searching, examining, selecting, structuring, critically evaluating, integrating and presenting information in different ways-in speech, writing, pictures, art, drama, music and movement-are all central to social studies…*"[107]

Ontario, Canada

The key concept of language is well-manifested in the Language Arts-media literacy strand; it is well-structured and adequately described in the introduction of this strand and this is cited in the overall expectation and its corresponding specific expectations. As described by Buckingham and Domaille in their survey[108], this concept is usually contained in Mother Tongue subject. The excerpt from the Program in Language Education[109] contains all the areas that should be studied in this key concept:

> "*…media literacy focuses on the construction of meaning through a combination of several media "language"-images, sounds, graphics, and words…", "…Understanding how media texts are constructed and why they are produced enables students to respond to them intelligently and responsibly...", "…This strand focuses on helping students develop the skills required to understand, create, and critically interpret media texts. It examines how images (both moving and still), sound, and words are used, independently, and in combination, to create meaning. It explores the use and significance of particular conventions and techniques in the media and considers the roles of the viewer and the producer in constructing meaning in media texts. Students apply the knowledge and skills gained though analysis of media texts as they create their own texts.*"

Moreover, the overall expectations are the same from grade 1-6: "*demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts; identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning…*"[110] These statements are further put in detail under specific expectations[111] (see examples below, grade 6). These cover both the media forms and the conventions—the elements that could be found in each media and how the combinations of these elements are used to convey a certain message. These examples make it even easier to understand how media forms and elements are used to create effects thereby affecting the audience interpretation of a certain media text:

> "*Form: describe in detail the main elements of some media forms (e.g., drama scripts: cast of characters, description of setting, acts, scenes, stage directions; television quiz shows: host/hostess, contestants...*"

> "*Conventions and Techniques: identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms and explain how they help convey meaning and influence or engage the audience (e.g., movie conventions: in*

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[106] Skolverket 1, Music
[107] Skolverket 1, Social Studies
[108] Buckingham (2001)
[109] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 13-14
[110] Ibid. p. 45
[111] Ibid. p.104

old-fashioned westerns, white and black cowboy hats were used to identify "good" and "bad" characters; movie techniques: freeze frame images, slow motion, theme music … "

Likewise, media literacy goes beyond analysing and reflecting on media language. It is also important that learners create/produce their own texts (as indicated by the media experts[112] and educational theorist) and apply all the things they have learned in analysing forms and techniques of media. For instance, by producing their own texts, pupils are able to reflect on what elements they can use or combine to suit their purpose:

"…produce some short media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques (e.g., • a tape-recorded soundtrack for a story; a sequence of pictures and/ or photographs that tells a story)[113]. (Producing Media Texts)

The concept of language does not only appear in the media literacy strand. Even in the other strands, acquiring knowledge in identifying media forms and how messages are constructed has also its own place. Showing the consistency of this aspect, the following specific areas of knowledge in studying media 'language' are outlined.

The Arts subject—with several strands Music, Visual arts, Drama and Dance— is loaded with specific expectations from the pupils to "critically analyze works of arts" *(including media works such as art, drama, theatre, film, etc)*. Similar to how the media literacy strand and other strands treated the "language concept", this subject outlines the knowledge in interpreting the elements of different genres e.g. music or visual arts and how they convey meaning.

"…describe, using appropriate vocabulary, how artists use the elements of design to create a specific effect…[114]-(Critical thinking)

"…explain how elements of drama and dance work together to create an intended effect on the audience[115] (Critical thinking)

"…interpret and communicate the meaning of stories, films, plays, songs, and other material drawn from different sources and cultures, using a range of drama and dance techniques"[116]

In this strand, the use of technology is integrated to know the particular effects this would bring if this is utilised.

"…recognize and name characteristics of drama and dance performances that incorporate technology, visual art, music, and popular media to create artistic effects"[117]

United Kingdom

Compared to the syllabi in Sweden, the UK English and Music subjects in the curriculum cover a more detailed formulation as to what knowledge are expected of the pupils to achieve in terms of the study of media language. For instance, in the English language under reading for information*; "Pupils should be taught to: understand that texts about the same topic may contain different information or present similar information in different ways".*[118] Other phrases that indicate clearer guidelines are: *"Pupils should be taught to draw on different features of texts, including print, sound and image, to obtain*

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[112] Buckingham(2003); Masterman (1985); http://www.aml.ca; von Feilitzen and Bucht (2001); Forsell (2001)
[113] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 46
[114] Ministry of Education, Arts, p. 33
[115] Ibid. p. 54
[116] Ibid. p. 48
[117] Ibid.p.57
[118] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, English, p. 18

meaning"and"*to look for meaning beyond the literal.*"[119] Other supporting guidelines to the above mandated aspects of media language could also be found under non statutory information:[120]

> *"…pupils learn to …read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how language works" (Reading for information)*

> *"Pupils could use moving image texts, for example, television, film, multimedia to support their study of literary texts and to study how words, images and sounds are combined to convey meaning and emotion…"*

In the second example above, the use of technology in analysing how different elements convey meaning is underlined. Other explicit specific guidelines are found under knowledge, skills, and understanding Non-fiction and non literary texts: [121]

> *"To develop understanding and appreciation of non fiction and non literary texts, pupils should be taught to; Identify words associated with reason, persuasion, argument, explanation, instruction and description.", "Evaluate different formats, layouts, presentational devices (for example, tables, bullet, points, and icons)"*

In Music, the inclusion of the use of ICT in studying how media elements are combined, are illustrated below:

> *"…pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through…using ICT to capture, change and combine sounds."[122]*

5.3.3 Audience

The key concept 'audience' is also an important aspect in that it helps the pupils understand how media industries make use of the knowledge about the audience consumption or media use in order to construct the appropriate message to suit the tastes, preferences of the public.

This concept is well-manifested in the Language Arts subject curriculum and is mentioned broadly and in passing in the UK curriculum. The Swedish curriculum documents however, do not reflect explicit inclusions of this concept.

Ontario, Canada

In the Language Arts curriculum, this concept is outlined consistently all throughout the grade levels under the specific expectations which consist of knowledge and skills, in relation to 'audience', which pupils should learn—*understanding media texts, audience responses; and creating media texts.*

> *"Identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts (e.g. this movie tells a story to entertain children: this sign gives information to travellers)"[123] (Understanding Media Texts, Purpose and Audience), "Describe how different audiences might respond to specific media texts."[124] (Audience response)*

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[119] Ibid. p. 25
[120] Ibid. p. 22-26
[121] Ibid. p. 26
[122] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Music, p19
[123] Ministry of Education, Language Arts,p.45
[124] Ibid.

In these expectations, two specific aims are clearly stated, that is— identifying the target audience of media texts and describing how these media texts would appeal to the audience (are they positive or are they indifferent towards the media texts?). Analysing the audience of certain texts is an important aspect, however, as stated by Buckingham[125], creating their own text is deemed necessary. In creating media texts, pupils could reflect on what type of media text they will produce or what media language and techniques will be used, — having in mind the characteristics of the audience. This is exemplified in the following specific expectations[126]:

> "*Identify the topic, purpose, and audience for media texts they plan to create (e.g., a media text to explain the importance of hand-washing to a kindergarten class or to tell the story of a class trip to parents…*" *(Purpose and Audience)*

> "*Produce some short media texts for specific purpose and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques (e.g., a tape-recorded soundtrack for a story; a sequence of pictures…l; a selection of images downloaded from the Internet to accompany a science project…* "

The 'audience' concept is also integrated in the Writing Strand of the curriculum. Giving simpler examples in the writing strand would prepare the pupils in the Media literacy strand to do more difficult tasks. This also shows the continuity and progression of learning.

> "*Identify the topic, purpose, audience, and form of writing, initially with support and direction (e.g., a personal recount of a past experience, including pictures, to share with family or friends; after a math investigation "All About the Seasons" book for the class library; labels and captions for a pictograph to share findings with a group.*"[127] *(Purpose and Audience)*

United Kingdom

In the UK, the key concept 'audience' is only integrated in the ICT subject; however, this is not well exemplified and is broad in nature.

> "*to be sensitive to the needs of the audience and think carefully about the content and quality when communicating information.*"[128] *(Exchanging and sharing information)*

5.3.4 Production

The concept 'production' in this context is not the same with the usual definition which is the act of creating something. Production, refers to the knowledge of learning as to who produces the media products, how are these produced, how are these distributed, and is the aim of media industries in gaining profit affects the media texts they produce.

Looking through the curriculum and syllabi of the subjects studied, 'production' is mainly integrated in the Language Arts curriculum in Canada, specifically in the Media Literacy strand. The "production" concept is not explicitly covered in the Swedish or the UK curriculum documents.

5.3.5 Ontario, Canada

At first glance, one would suspect that this key concept/aspect seems quite difficult to grasp especially for young children. In the Curriculum Expectations in Media Literacy, for instance, it is stated: "*Understanding how media texts are constructed and why they are produced enables pupils to respond to*

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[125] Buckingham (2003)
[126] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p.46
[127] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 42
[128] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, ICT, 18

them intelligently and responsibly"[129] Looking at how this was formulated, with complementary examples, makes us understand that this is actually feasible or viable, even for small children. The specific expectation covering the production perspective under understanding of media texts is basically the same across the different grades 1-6, with some modifications in the wordings in grade 5 and 6—that is, an additional aspect is added.

> *"Identify, with support and direction, who makes some of the simple media texts with which they are familiar, and why those texts are produced"*[130] (grade 1) and *"Identify who produces various media texts, the reason for their production, how they are produced, and how they are funded"*[131] (grade 5-6)

If we look at the subsequent examples that will be outlined below, one could see that the content of this production perspective that is anchored to each year level starts from a very simple example in grade 1, to a more difficult example in grade 6. In grade 1 for example, pupils could study "*film companies hire manufacturers to produce toys and other products based on popular children's movies and television programs to sell to children.*"[132]

In grade 5 and 6, more difficult examples are provided: "*political parties create advertisements to win voters support, using funds raised by their members and supporter; producers develop television dramas to entertain and make money by selling their products to television conglomerates, which then broadcast the programs to make money by selling advertising spots in the program's time slots).*"[133]

From these given specific expectations together with the examples, we could further assert that this curriculum encompasses the key concept taking up all the important areas necessary to understand how media operates and how this affects the information conveyed.

5.4 Expectations on Skills and Competencies

This chapter aims at describing how the studied curriculum documents reflect expectations on different skills and competencies that pupils should attain, as well as to compare the respective countries. This will allow us to answer the third and final question of our study: how does the curriculum reflects the skills and competencies required for media literacy?

The chapter starts with a general description, before moving into the respective curriculum documents.

5.4.1 Skills and Competencies

In line with previous and concurrent work by researchers and expert groups, as outlined initially in this report, and with the four key concepts in mind, three "skill areas" stand out as key to acquire media literacy:

- Ability to access media texts
- Ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate media
- Ability to produce media creatively

The ability to access media and media texts involves using different types of media, both traditional and new media. The ability to use information technology (e.g. in searching for information, even up to the production of media texts) is included in this ability.

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[129] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 13-14
[130] Ibid. p. 46
[131] Ibid. 104 & 118
[132] Ibid.p.46
[133] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 118

The ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media involves understanding and critically reflecting on how the media works (e.g. the economic forces behind media production and what messages media products convey), analysing/deciphering and critically reflecting on media language used, e.g. to influence the audience, as well as how the media represents various aspects of modern and historical society and how this relates to the pupil's development of identity.

Lastly, creative production ability involves the pupils' ability to produce their own media texts, critically reflecting on the different media aspects they have learned – as well as being able to communicate their output to others, e.g. choosing the media well-suited to their aim and produce the media text that they want to disseminate.

A key word in all three aspects is "critical", and acquiring these skills will allow a state of "*critical autonomy*"[134] that is "*… develop in pupils enough self confidence and critical maturity to be able to apply critical judgements to media texts which they will encounter in the future. The acid test of any media programme is the extent to which pupils are critical in their own use and understanding of the media when the teacher is not there.*"[135]

This argument, which is aligned with the UN declarations and policy recommendations, points out that the critical ability empowers the learners to exercise "*the right to freedom of expression, to participation in society and to building and sustaining democracy.*" [136]

In conclusion we see that all three countries include many of the skills & competencies required, although with differences regarding the extent of coverage as well as how explicitly/implicitly they cover the different skills & competencies.

5.4.2 Sweden

The Swedish curriculum documents outline expectations on skills and competencies on a high level, which corresponds to the overall vision of educating active participants in a democratic society. Hence, many expectations on skills are not specific to media education and literacy but are expressed in general terms and are covered in all subjects. Examples of this include "*methods of acquiring and using new knowledge and skills are important… ability to critically examine facts and relationships…*"[137] which are relevant, but not specific to media education and literacy.

There are overall expectations that explicitly refer to media literacy skills. In the overall curriculum document, the expression "…*use their knowledge and experience in as many different forms of expression as possible covering language, pictures, music, drama and dance…*"[138] clearly points to overall expectations on media literacy skills. On this overall level, and leveraging the overall ambition of "*have knowledge about media and their role*", expressions such as "…*have developed their ability to express themselves creatively...*" would also, implicitly, refer to media literacy skills.

Additionally, many of the statements about expectations on pupils' abilities are expressed as "*Goals to aim for…*" that is non-statutory expressions rather than specific expectations. Typical expressions such as "*develop the ability…*", "…*provided with opportunities…*", "…*become intimate with…*" which, in our view, state a guiding direction, however without specific expectations on skills and competencies. For example, it is not obvious what particular skills and competencies are meant by statements such as "...*experience and learn from literature, films and the theatre…*"[139]?

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[134] Masterman (1985:25)
[135] Masterman (1985:24)
[136] von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001: 7); Carlsson et. al (2008:38)
[137] Skolverket 1
[138] Skolverket, Lpo94, p.10
[139] Skolverket 1, Swedish

With respect to the three skills areas we have outlined, the Swedish curriculum documents tends to cover all areas in generic statements such as "…*the ability to use different opportunities to obtain information*, a*cquire knowledge of the language and functions of the media, as well as their ability to interpret, critically examine, and evaluate different sources and their contents…*"[140] , which allows a teacher to plan their programme of study so that it encompasses all required elements. We believe however that this requires the teacher to have a high level of knowledge about media himself. Similarly, the Arts subject expresses a goal to aim for – *"…to analyse and discuss pictures and also an understanding that pictures carry and create meaning, and have a content, in addition to what they actually represent…"[141]* — that explicitly relates to media literacy and, in our view, requires substantial knowledge of the teacher. And from Social studies "*…Searching, examining, selecting, structuring, critically evaluating, integrating and presenting information in different ways – in speech, writing, pictures, art, drama, music and movement..*:"[142] adds to the type of expressions that imply all the skills outlined as vital, but with little information on **what** and **how**.

And so, our view of how the Swedish curriculum documents express expectations on skills and competencies, and which is reflected in the following sub-sections, nails down to the following main reflections:

- Awareness of what skills and competencies that are vital to acquire media literacy
- Mostly high level inclusions of the vital media literacy skills, and thus aligned with overall visions of media literacy.
- Requiring more than basic media skills of a teacher to be able to plan a good programme of study.

Ability to access media texts

> *"…methods of acquiring and using…", "…can use information technology as a tool in their search for knowledge…", "...ability to use IT as a tool…", "…to assess different text, media and other sources…"[143]*

The above examples, taken from various subjects, illustrate the explicit but overall expectations on skills and competencies in relation to pupils' ability to access media texts. Although we have included just few examples, there are many statements in the curriculum documents that indicate an overall expectation, and possibility, that the pupils can access media texts.

Ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate media

> *"…be stimulated into reflecting and evaluating these..", "…ability to read, understand, interpret, and experience texts…", "…adapt their reading and work on texts to its purpose and character…", "…understand, experience and interpret texts…", "…critically decode, evaluate, and interpret pictures and how reality is represented, "…decoding, interpreting and analysing pictures and forms…", "…basic skills in examining and interpreting pictures and forms…", "…films and the theatre help people to understand themselves and the world, and contribute to the development of an identity…", "…and how reality is represented…","…the media world represents class, ethnicity and gender…"[144],*

The above examples, taken from various subjects, illustrate that the Swedish curriculum documents cover many aspects of the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media, on the overall level that the documents are intended. With respect to specific expectations, some of

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[140] Ibid.
[141] Skolverket 1, Arts
[142] Skolverket 1, Social Studies
[143] Skolverket 1
[144] Skolverket 1

these refer explicitly to media literacy and are stated as goals that pupils should attain after the fifth year:

- In Swedish: "…*as well as reflect over texts*." However, as this expectation is added to an expectation that specifies reading and understanding meaning in books it may pass "unseen" by many teachers.
- In Music: "…be aware of and be able to reflect on the functions of music and the way this has been expressed in society in the past and today…"[145]
- In Arts: "basic skills in examining and interpreting pictures and forms…"[146]

With our "media literacy" glasses on, we can refer the expression "*functions of…*" in the above statement, to include a specific expectation on understanding of how media works, we are however not sure that this is the intention of the authors, nor the interpretation that a teacher does. Some of the key concepts that have not dealt on in the given examples above are the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate the audience of media and the production aspect.

Creative production ability

> "…*develop their ability to develop texts…*", "…*adapt their reading and work on texts to its purpose and character…*", "…*create pictures with the use of computers and video technology…*", "…*knowledge of creating,… and communicating visually…*"[147], "…*develop their ability to use IT as a tool both for learning, singing and playing music, as well as a tool for being creative in different ways…*", "…*its functions and importance in different environments, cultures..*", "…*means of exerting influence…*"

These examples, again, show that the Swedish curriculum documents cover, on an overall level, many aspects of the ability to produce and communicate creatively, and would provide an opportunity for learning by doing. The most specific expectation state goals that pupils should have attained by the end of the fifth year in school: "…*be able to produce texts for different purposes as a tool for learning and communication*"[148]. And without specific reference to media, we suspect that media texts will be given less priority in favour of traditional literature texts.

5.4.3   Ontario curriculum

Contrary to the Swedish curriculum, the Ontario curriculum documents outline the expectations on skills and competencies thoroughly and rigorously. The Ontario curriculum documents conform greatly to the four key concepts, and, perhaps based on this mere fact, they cover explicitly all the vital skills and competencies. In fact, there is no need to go beyond the curriculum for the Language Arts to illustrate this, already in the beginning of the Media Literacy strand, there are overall expectations stated that correspond with the vital skills:

- "*demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts; "*
- "*identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning; "*
- "*create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions and techniques; "*
- "*reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding and creating media texts.*"

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[145] Skolverket 1, Music
[146] Skolverket 1, Arts
[147] Ibid.
[148] Skolverket 1, Swedish

In the above statements, we find explicit references to understanding, analysis, and evaluation of media, as well as explicit references to creative production. Although the "access to media" aspect is not explicitly covered already in the overall expectations, we see that the way the curriculum outlines the programme of study allows pupils to access different media and acquire the required ability. The fourth overall expectation ("*reflect on…*") is unique in comparison to the others since it states specific expectations on meta-cognition skills, e.g. "*How did thinking about your audience help you create your poster?*"[149] and "*…explain how their skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing help them to make sense of and produce media texts…*"[150]

The level of detail in the Ontario curriculum does not mean that the visionary levels are excluded, the curriculum initially quotes the UNESCO, Statement for the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012 – "*Literacy is about more than reading or writing – it is about how we communicate in society…*"[151]

Our view of how the Ontario documents reflect expectations on skills and competencies, exemplified in the following sub-sections, is expressed in the following main reflections:

- 100% match to the key media literacy skills, and with overall visions of media literacy.
- Consistent, and detailed, specific expectations that allow pupils to progress in accordance with age.
- A complementing category that states meta-cognition and interconnected skills.
- Does not require deep and extensive media knowledge of a teacher to be able to implement the required programme of study.

Ability to access media texts

> "*…should have access to oral, print, and media texts…*", "*…interacting with media texts…*", "*…select a magazine that appeals to them…*"

The ability to access media texts is outlined initially, and with examples of what media the pupils should acquire. Typical for the Ontario curriculum is the continuous inclusion of similar expression, however with variations in the examples. For instance, when stating what type of media texts that pupils should have access to, the statements starts off "*…should have access to…*" but then continues with different examples depending on grade:

Grade 1	"media texts with familiar topics…such as soundtrack for a story, posters or signs, photographs, or collages, cartoons, movies, and television shows…"
Grade 2	"…less familiar topics…such as digital images, recorded music, soundtracks, television commercials, and films…"
Grade 3	"…that require more background knowledge…and more complex and technical topics…such as magazines, video clips, comic strips, maps, storyboards, and photographs…"
Grade 4-6	"…more complex topics or issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice, more subtle or abstract themes… such as movie trailers, graphic design for various products, newspaper or magazine articles, video games, comic books, flyers, posters, websites, and e-mails…" [152]

This example, together with specific expectations on the other skills, specifies the specific expectations on pupils' ability to access different media.

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[149] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 57
[150] Ibid. p. 88
[151] Ibid. p. 3
[152] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, p. 33-34, 77-78

Ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate media

> *"…identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts…", "…describe how different audiences might respond to specific media texts…", "…identify, initially with support and direction, the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms..:", "…identify whose point of view is presented or reflected in a media text…", "…express personal opinions about ideas presented in media texts…"*

The above examples are taken from the comprehensive list of specific expectations. Perhaps, more interesting is to list the categories that they belong to, which shows alignment to the vital skills and competencies (and also links to the four key concepts discussed in the previous chapters): "*purpose and audience, making inferences/interpreting texts, responding to and evaluating texts, audience response, point of view, production perspective, form, conventions and techniques,*".

Similar to the first skill area, the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media production, is outlined with almost identical phrasing throughout the grades, and examples are used to give a specific expectation on the pupils skill at each grade. For example, the skill that is expressed as "*…identify who produces selected media texts, and why those texts are produced*" is outlined differently depending on grade:

Grade 1	"…identify, with support and direction…who makes some of the simple media texts with which they are familiar… (e.g. traffic signs made to protect the safety of…)…"
Grade 2	"… (e.g. film production companies produce movies to…)…"
Grade 3	"…identify who produces selected media texts… (e.g. companies design eye-catching logos so…)…"
Grade 4	"…identify who produces various media texts and the reason for their production (e.g. the government produces public service announcements…)…"
Grade 5	"…, how they are produced, and how they are funded (e.g. publishers produce magazines for specific audiences…)…"
Grade 6	"… (e.g. political parties create advertisements to win voter support…)…"[153]

Creative production ability

> *"...identify the topic, purpose, and audience for media texts they plan to create...", "…produce some short media texts for specific purposes and audience…", "...describe in specific detail the topic, purpose, and audience…", "…and identify challenges they may face in achieving their purpose…"*

Similarly, the creative production abilities are listed under a few categories, which align to the vital skills and key concepts: "purpose and audience, form, conventions and techniques, producing media texts" – under the heading of creating media texts.

5.4.4 UK

The UK curriculum falls, in comparison, somewhere between the Swedish and Ontario curriculum documents. Similar to Sweden, media literacy education is integrated into the different subjects; the UK curriculum however allows the expectations on skills and competencies to be rather specific, although not as comprehensive as the Ontario curriculum. So our view of how the UK curriculum documents express expectations on skills and competencies is expressed in the following main reflections:

- Good coverage of the vital media literacy skills.
- Detailed specific expectations that allow pupils to progress in accordance with age.

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[153] Ministry of Education, Language Arts,

- Requires more than common knowledge of a teacher to be able to implement a good programme of study.

Ability to access media texts

"…*pupils should be able to…from a variety of sources, selecting and synthesising the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias and plausibility…", "…opportunities to work on screen and with a variety of media and to communicate using e-mail and the internet…", "…*

Many of the examples on how pupils should attain skills in accessing media texts are from the ICT curriculum. The UK curriculum documents are, as stated previously, very explicit and comprehensive with respect to ICT-knowledge and skills. Since all subjects include excerpts from the ICT curriculum, aspects of access to is widely covered, including access to media.

Similarly to the Ontario curriculum, the UK curriculum includes initial statements about the range of texts that should be studied, "The range should include…", and then there is an increasing level of complexity depending on what stage the pupils are at:

Key Stage 1	"opportunities for pupils to listen to recordings (for example radio, television)" "print and ICT-based information texts"
Key stage 2	"opportunities for pupils to listen to recordings (for example radio, television, film)" "print and ICT-based reference and information materials (for example… CD-ROMs, internet), newspapers, magazines, articles, leaflets, brochures, advertisements"

Ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate media

"…comment constructively…", "…take account of different listeners…", "…understand that text about the topic may contain different information…", "…develop their understanding…", "…how language varies…between standard and dialect forms, for example in drama…", "…look for meaning beyond the literal", "…distinguish between fact and opinion…consider an argument critically…", represent important features of an argument, talk, reading, radio or television programme, film…",

The above examples are from the English and Arts & Design subjects, and illustrate how the UK curriculum encompasses many aspects of the ability to understand, analyse and evaluate texts. The curriculum is however not explicit in terms of skills in how media works, how audiences use and interpret media or in terms of how media represents reality.

Again, the ICT curriculum complements by its additions to the other subjects. For example, in the English curriculum there are references to ICT-opportunities, including references to media literacy, e.g. "*Pupils could use moving image texts (for example television, film, multimedia) … to study how words, images and sounds are combined to convey meaning and emotion.*"[154]

Creative production ability

"…gain and maintain the interest and response of different audiences…", "…identify features of language used for specific purpose, for example to persuade, instruct or entertain…", "use language and style that is appropriate to the reader…", "…features of layout, presentation and organisation effectively…",

The UK curriculum is fairly weak in its expectations on skills and competencies when it comes to creative production of media texts and content. In most cases, the expectations are aligned to the use of the language and text, and since text in the English context encompasses also non-literary texts, these are somewhat implicit.

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[154] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, English, p. 26

5.5   How Media Education and Media Literacy is Reflected in School Curriculum!

In summary, we see that although the structure of the school curriculum documents are different, it is possible to get a good picture and compare how media education is reflected in school curriculum documents in Sweden, Ontario, Canada, and UK. The following sections provide short answers to our research questions, fulfilling the purpose of the study, as well as outline a number of examples of "good practices", that is examples worth replicating.

5.5.1   *How is media education treated in the curriculum?*

The structure of the curriculum documents varies, based on the fact that the school systems in the compared countries are different. Swedish documents are "goal-oriented", whereas the UK and Ontario documents are much more comprehensive and detailed in terms of covering what should be included as well as how it can be taught. In all three countries however, media education is not a subject of its own right, but is integrated in the curriculum in several ways, mainly in the following subjects:

- The subjects of Arts and Music, Swedish, and Social Studies in the Swedish curriculum
- The subjects of Language Arts, and Arts in the Ontario, Canada curriculum
- The subjects of English, Arts &Design, and ICT in the UK curriculum.

In the Swedish curriculum, the term "text" is used also to include media texts, which basically allows any aspects of the language subject to involve media education. However, it seems that Arts is the subject where we find many explicit references to media literacy and we consider the coverage of media literacy being more explicit in this subject compared to, for example, Language Arts. This differentiates the Swedish approach from that of UK and Ontario, where Language Arts is the key carrier of media education aspects.

By and large, Canada is laudable for its initiative in including media literacy as a separate strand in the Language Arts curriculum; thus, complying with the UN declarations as well as the Grunwald Policy recommendations—that media education is a basic right[155] and should therefore be included in the curriculum. The Swedish and the UK curriculum documents manifest inclusion of media education, however, these still appear as "small islands" lacking of clearer specifications.

5.5.2   *What is the conceptual framework applied/used in media education?*

Regarding the media key concepts in the curriculum, the findings suggest that Ontario's curriculum in the Language Arts contains all the key concepts—representation, language, audience, and production—which are thoroughly formulated giving the teachers explicit guidelines concerning the content (by way of the examples given) and how to do it (through the Teacher prompts). Students' production of media texts, another important concept of media literacy— that enables students to reflect and to be critical— is also highlighted in the different key concepts.[156]

Sweden and the UK documents also contain some of these aspects like representation and language but not as comprehensive and coherent as the Ontario document. There is an apparent lack of explicit inclusion of the "audience" and "production" concepts in the Swedish and UK curriculum documents.

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[155] Von Feilitzen & Bucht (2001;71); Carlsson et. Al (2008: 38)
[156] Buckingham (2003)

5.5.3 What particular skills/competencies are expected of the pupils to develop?

Lastly, the expected skills and competencies—that pupils should develop conform to the three essential skills: ability to access; ability to understand, analyse and evaluate media texts; and creative production— are covered but with varying degrees in the three countries' curriculum.

Canada's curriculum, having covered all the important aspects, consistently outlined all the basic skills, and does not require extensive media knowledge to be able to teach about the media. The Swedish and the UK curriculum, to some degree, are fairly weak in outlining the ability to analyse other aspects/key concepts of media like audience and production, as well as the ability of creating media texts.

5.5.4 Good practices

Looking at how media education & media literacy is treated in the different curriculum documents, we would like to put forward the following examples of what we consider as good practices, first with respect to how media education is treated in the curriculum:

- The way the Ontario curriculum treats media literacy as a strand of its own allows every teacher to recognise the importance of media for youth today and also allows the teacher to draw on the comprehensive experience that research has translated into teaching guidelines.
- The way the Ontario curriculum includes teacher prompts. These questions, in many cases, assist the teacher in deciding what the media literacy perspective proposes.
- The way the UK curriculum treats ICT-knowledge as a domain of its own, thus allowing teachers to clearly, and explicitly, see where references to media relates to the technology aspect and where it relates to media literacy.

With respect to how the four key concepts are reflected in the curriculum:

- The way the Ontario curriculum provides a coherent and all-embracing formulation of the four key concepts with examples and teacher prompts that can serve as a guideline in "translating" media aspects in the classroom.
- The way the Ontario curriculum emphasises the learning progression of pupils by introducing the key concepts from grade 1-6 with varying complexities.
- The way the UK curriculum underlines the potential of ICT, for example, in creating media texts.
- The way the Swedish Arts syllabus provides a very good description of the 'representation' and 'language' key concepts.

With respect to how the curriculum reflects skills and competencies aspects:

- The way all three countries' curriculum documents strive to cover the three vital skill areas.
- The way the Ontario curriculum consistently covered the skills and competencies in line with the different media dimensions (key concepts), thus complying with the definitions and scope of media literacy, the declarations and policy recommendations.
- The way the detailed and explicit formulation of expectations on skills and competencies allow progression to be tracked in the Ontario curriculum.

6   Towards a viable and sustainable media education

This part of the report will discuss some of our main reflections during the course of the study. In some areas, we have a very clear view on what we would consider an opportunity for improvement, while in other areas we have noticed something that we consider has an impact on the future of media education in Sweden. In those cases, we have allowed ourselves to explain our reflections and leave an open question – for future studies or as input to continued discussions among those involved in the development of media education in Sweden.

6.1   The Relation between Key concepts, Skills and Competencies

Ideally, the explicitness of a curriculum guides the teachers in teaching about the media. Given a curriculum that is goal-oriented and lacking specifications about media education, several outcomes are expected; teachers choosing not to carry it out in the classroom—or it may also happen that teachers who are media enthusiasts may integrate media education[157].

Some teachers may claim that they actually integrate media education in the classroom to adhere to the curriculum or syllabi by using newspapers for critical analysis, or showing film videos by impulse towards the end of the term. But the question is—do they really adhere to the definition and scope of media literacy? If we take a look once again at the definition of media literacy, it is defined as *the process of teaching and learning about the media."* [158]

The phrase "about the media" is not a matter of using the newspapers or the internet just for the sake of motivating students to participate or for the sake of having a tool or teaching aid to teach the subject matter. In this respect, the media which is mainly used as a tool is considered instrumental.[159]

"About the media" in this context refers instead to the media concepts (e.g. the four key concepts: representation, language, audience, and production) that should be taught in the classroom—these aspects would form a structure for media education programmes.

The conceptual framework ("the structure") of media education contains the skills and competencies that pupils should develop to become media literate. It includes the ability to access media texts; ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate media; and ability to create media texts.

When the four concepts are taken up in the classroom, this would require first and foremost, the ability to access certain media texts and employ the ability to understand, analyse, and evaluate them. However, media education/media literacy goes beyond the act of accessing and analysing media texts. All media literacy experts emphasize the need for the students to create their own media texts, i.e. *learning by doing* [160] to achieve "*critical autonomy*"[161]. Pupils carry with them an enormous amount of information brought about by their media use outside the school system, and teachers can start with the children's interests and preferences by teaching about the media and involving them in critical production and communication of media texts.

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[157] Jonsson (2005); Wall (2005)
[158] Buckingham (2003)
[159] Ibid.; Barcelona de Autonoma (2007)
[160] Forsell (2005)
[161] Masterman (1985)
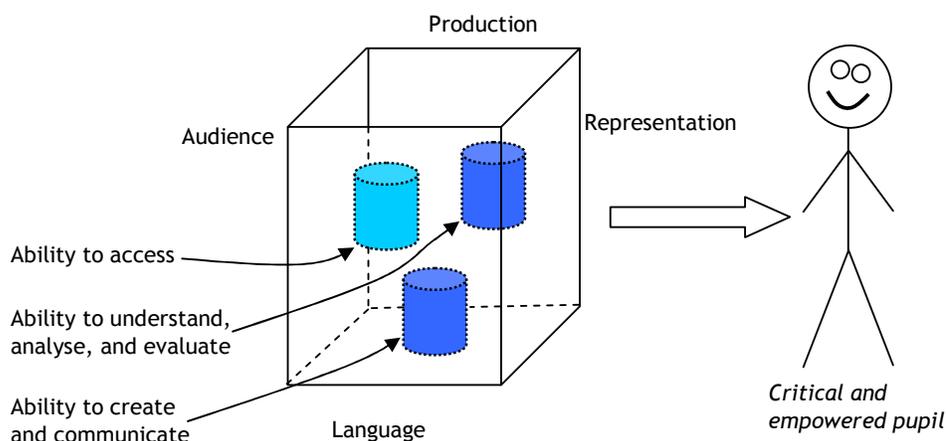
The figure above illustrates how we perceive, based on above reflections, the four key concepts as a box with four sides ("the structure") for the containment of all the required skills and competencies needed to acquire media literacy, and the desired outcome – critical and empowered pupils who actively participate in a democratic society.

6.2   Go for the Canadian model, or..?

As the results of this study clearly shows Ontario, Canada is well ahead of Sweden when it comes to coverage of media education & literacy in the curriculum. In Ontario, the curriculum does not only outline the goals and targets, it also describes in detail the different areas that should be covered together with examples and teacher's prompts. This allows us to put forward the question - *would all this make it easier for a teacher to teach media education*?

The quick answer to this question is that we suspect that it does, but perhaps, what is more interesting is the fact that it allows us to reflect on the role of a teacher.

In Sweden, being provided with the overall goals related to media education, a teacher must rely on his/her own competence when it comes to outlining **what** areas should be covered as well as **how** the subject should be taught. Irrespective of whether the teacher does this individually, or in team-work at the local level, this gives the teacher the role of outlining a programme of study together with the responsibility to assure that it covers all required concepts and skills & competencies, as well as outlining assessment methods to assure that the pupils reach the goals in the curriculum documents. And, with the commonly expressed view among Swedish teachers that they feel they don't have the resources available to manage all requirements[162], we can understand that media education becomes a neglected item on a teacher's agenda.

In the Ontario context, a teacher can focus on designing the learning environment, with each pupil's individual needs and learning style in focus. The Ontario teacher has all **what's** and also good examples of **how's**, and their role and responsibility would require them to select the appropriate examples that would jibe with the learning needs of pupils. In so doing, this would even allow teachers to focus most of their energy in applying their pedagogical skills to deliver the goods.

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[162] Wall, Jonsson (2006)

Additionally, the role and responsibilities that comes with the Swedish "goal-oriented" approach require a Swedish teacher to have extensive knowledge about media literacy. We believe that many teachers fear that they do not know enough about the media and media literacy to apply any experience and skills they may have about the media. Add to this is the fact that the media industry develops, with new media and a convergence of media taking place, and the task may seem understandably overwhelming.

Additionally, supposing the teachers do decide to undertake media education in the classroom, do they have enough learning resources or textbooks that reflect the four key concepts? For teachers who lack formal media education or training in this aspect, to integrate media education would just be an additional burden, considering the many directives in the school systems. It is then necessary to provide teachers with the needed resources.

We believe that the Ontario approach, outlining specific details both about what to include as well as how to include it, would encourage and empower also a Swedish teacher to include more media literacy in their teaching, irrespective of subject. In this context, the UK approach may seem to be one possible development scenario for Sweden, as the UK curriculum documents require teachers to follow the overall goals and adhere to the specific instructions on what content should be taught, sometimes with examples of what materials that should or can be used. We would however propose the Ontario model, as it additionally explicitly outlines a programme of study that considers pupils progression, and hence develops the pupils own skills.

6.3   Media Education — at What Age?

In line with the initial comments on protecting children and youth from the media or empowering them, and our findings in the respective curriculum documents, it feels natural for us to reflect on this, as well as reflect on at what ages the studied countries implement media education.

We clearly see that it is no longer an issue of protecting the youth from the impact of the media, but instead it is an issue of empowering them—which we believe is the key to success. The fact that we have found only one instance where it explicitly states that the children should be protected in all documents (i.e. nearly 700 pages), and this in a commentary section, supports this conclusion.

It is evident that pupils are not barred from making use of different media—be it traditional media or the new forms of communication technologies. This only shows on the one hand, that the educational systems in these countries empower the children by exposing them to different types of media texts for further analysis. On the other hand, through the critical approach applied in analysing these texts, learners are also empowered to exercise their analytical skills and produce their own texts. After all, this is the overall goal of media education—to empower citizens to become informed citizens and become active participants of society.

We however see that the studied countries have different views on when media education should be stressed. Whereas Ontario starts with focused media education already in the first grade, Sweden and the UK integrate it into other areas of the various subjects. It is first at later ages that UK and Sweden are very explicitly focused on media education:

- In UK, in key stage 3-4 at the age of 11-16 years, the media literacy aspect is explicitly covered when specific sub-sections for "*Media and moving image texts*"[163] is included as part of the Reading strand in the English language subject.
- In Sweden, the media literacy aspect is explicitly covered in attainment targets at the ninth year in school, i.e. at ~15 years of age, where it is stated "*be able to…non-fiction and newspaper articles on general subjects, as well as be able to reproduce the contents coherently and also reflect over this*" and "*…be able to appreciate and reflect over and evaluate the contents and means of expression used in pictures, films and the theatre*" and "*…analyse and critically examine works of art, advertising material and propaganda, news and information…*"[164]

We believe that pupils can start with focused media education in the early years. The key factor to a successful media education in the early years may be a consistent view on progression of skills and knowledge, in line with that of the Ontario curriculum (see next section).

6.4 Learning Progression in Media Literacy

In this sub-section, we intend to share our reflections considering the fact that the Swedish curriculum documents have little specifications on pupil progression, no more than the fact that there are goals to be attained at the end of the fifth and ninth year respectively.

Does the Ontario curriculum require too much of the pupils? Is it "unrealistic"? The first encounter with the Ontario curriculum leaves an impression that the curriculum is highly demanding that asks too much of the teachers and the pupils. The comprehensive coverage of media education makes us also think whether this curriculum is achievable or not—the fact that media literacy is already given to grade 1 pupils. A close interaction with this document however, makes us conclude that this is indeed viable and feasible as illustrated by the simple examples given in grade 1 and with increasing complexity in the upper age range. This is likewise an indication of the learning progression of children which is highly visible in the following examples:

- The overall expectations are constant irrespective of grade level.
- The areas of specific expectations are the same throughout the grades, and it is only the complexity of the content/tasks that increases as the pupils grow older.

The table below explains how the different skills & competencies follow the pupil throughout the different grades:

Grade	Specific expectation	Example	Teacher prompt
1	Identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts.	Overt message of a toy advertisement showing two boys playing with a car: This toy is fun; implied message This toy is for boys. Overt message of a cartoon: the violence here is funny and doesn't hurt anyone; implied message: violence is acceptable	"Let's try to think of an advertisement made for a specific audience, for girls or boys, for mothers, or for teenagers. How do we know that the advertisement is for that audience?"
2	Identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts	Overt message of an advertisement for shoes: great athletes wear these shoes; implied message: if you want to be like these athletes, buy these shoes Overt message on a billboard advertising brand-name clothing: these attractive people wear this brand of clothing; implied messages: wearing this	"What is this advertisement telling us? Do you believe its messages?" "What do the heroes and villains look like in the cartoons you watch? What does this suggest?"

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[163] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority English, pg 34
[164] Skolverket 1, Arts

		brand of clothing will make you attractive too; clothing makes the person	
		Overt message in a superhero cartoon: the hero is a tall, strong man; implied message: tall, strong men are like heroes	
3	Identify the purpose and intended audience of some media texts	This magazine is aimed at children/teens/adults; these boxes for DVDs/videos are aimed at the parents of very young children	"Who is this intended for? Who else would like it? Who would not like it? Why, or why not?"
4	Identify the purpose and audience for a variety of media texts	This print advertisement is designed to interest children in taking karate lessons; this website is designed to provide information to fans about a favourite singer; this CD cover is designed to attract classical music fans/pop fans/rap fans.	"Why do you think this text was created? What age, gender, and cultural group is it aimed at? How do you know?"
5	Identify the purpose and audience for a variety of media texts	This sitcom is designed to appeal to teenagers; this comic book is designed to appeal to younger girls; this CD-ROM contains information for people interested in sharks	"Who is this work intended/not intended for? What evidence in the work tells you that?"
6	Explain how a variety of media texts address their intended purpose and audience	T-shirts intended for supporters of particular institutions, groups, or causes are decorated with related images, logos, colours, and slogans; CD and DVD covers designed to appeal to young children have colourful images of their favourite characters; advertisements geared to parents of infants are broadcast during the daytime whereas those geared to single adults run during late-night programming	

As you can see from the above example, both the expectation itself as well as the example allow the teacher to work on different aspects of skills and competencies (identify + simple, identify alone, explain + address their intended) and use teaching material that may be attractive and suitable for youth at a certain age. The teacher prompts also indicate the level of complexity suitable for the grade. Note however that the absence of teacher prompt for grade 6 is a coincidence; most grade 6 expectations have teacher prompts as well.

6.5   Assessment

Assessment is an important aspect in any field of endeavour or any programme for that matter. The inclusion of media education in the school curriculum requires a form of assessment and evaluation to examine whether the expected knowledge, skills and competencies are attained. Nonetheless, assessing and evaluating learners' media literacy would readily help teachers to detect the specific areas of learning that should be undertaken in line with the learners' diverse needs. Initially, we have looked at the assessment aspect in the curriculum documents; however, this is not spelled out clearly in relation to media literacy. One reason is that media literacy is a new subject, and the process has just started in many countries, hence, the assessment aspect is not always outlined. We have therefore, decided not to include it in the results and discussion but instead, we will just present our overall impression as far as assessment is concerned, as this needs special attention when implementing media education.

The Canadian and UK curriculum do include assessment/attainment targets, although not specific to media education. Some references are included, and in those cases in general terms implicitly relating to media literacy, for example in the Language Arts in the Canadian curriculum where it is stated "*including media forms*"[165] when discussing achievements in the category of communication. In the Swedish curriculum the assessment aspect (which is not included in the revised English version of the syllabi) is similar to Canada and UK, with a few explicit and implicit formulations about media literacy.

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[165] Ministry of Education, Language Arts, pg 21

6.6   Miscellaneous reflections

In addition, we have made a few smaller, although interesting, reflections that may serve as valuable input to further discussions. These include:

- *Responsibility of teachers, pupils, and parents*: The UK and Ontario curriculum documents are much more specific in terms of outlining the responsibilities of the community involved in a pupil's education (parents, pupil, and teacher). What does this imply in terms of how media literacy can be enforced by parents? Considering the fact that much of the media consumption is made in the home, parents could play an important role for media education. Educating young people is not the sole responsibility of teachers. Too often, the media world of children seems to be incomprehensible on the part of parents but they should find a way to remove this barrier—to help children develop a critical stance towards the media texts around them.

- *Media education in Social Studies in Sweden*: Something that contributes to somewhat contradicting message that the Social Studies curriculum in Sweden express is that we find general paragraphs about the nature and structure of the subject that we would like to include as an introductory text into a future media literacy-specific strand:

"*Knowledge in the area of social studies provides pupils with the opportunity of seeing their surroundings in relation to themselves, and understanding themselves in relation to their surroundings, i.e. how individuals form and are formed by their world. This knowledge provides a foundation for participating, taking responsibility and acting as citizens in a democratic society and also contributes to the sustainable development of society. The main task of social studies is to develop pupils' knowledge about Man and his activities, as well as about changes in the landscape and society in different places and during different periods. The aim is to stimulate reflection over human thinking and actions, and over phenomena in society, to strengthen preparedness to review the life situation of one's own and others, to increase security in one's own identity, as well as provide knowledge of how our society is based on ethnic and cultural diversity*"[166]

And a couple of pages later in the same document:

"*In a complex society with a vast flow of information and a rapid rate of change, the ability to acquire new knowledge is essential. The subject provides an opportunity to make observations and to use different sources of information. The aim is to develop the ability to search for, examine structure and evaluate facts, as well as integrate, present and give expression to new knowledge. Analysing, drawing conclusions and determining personal views on the basis of information provide a foundation for critically examining society.*"[167]

Imagine inserting "media studies" instead of "social studies" in the first paragraph, and perhaps using some definitions that are more common when discussing media literacy into both paragraphs – that would give the Swedish curriculum an explicit media literacy strand irrespective of what subject that is chosen to bear that responsibility (or maybe as a subject of its own).

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[166] Skolverket 1, Social Studies
[167] Ibid.

6.7 Future work and studies

In conclusion, we would like to put forward a number of areas where we see a possibility to make additional work and studies, and make vital additions to the knowledge, skills and experiences relating to media education and media literacy. The following suggestions are based on reflections we have made during the course of our study and writing this report:

- A comprehensive study about the current status of media education in Sweden. This would entail the following aspects: teachers' and students' existing knowledge, skills and experience in relation to media education/literacy; an inventory of the existing resources (about media literacy) that may be utilised in the classroom; the existing co-operation between and among the educational sector and the media networks.

- As a result of the above study; conducting a case study of a school that is successful in implementing media education in Sweden is deemed necessary– to what extent, and how are the key concepts, key skills and competencies implemented? That is, how does reality conform to the expectations of the school curriculum? What impact does media education have among young learners?

- A study of how existing learning materials, e.g. textbooks, explicitly reflect the four concepts and allow skills and competencies to be developed.

- It would be interesting to understand if and how, teachers' attitudes towards their role and responsibilities can contribute to the development and implementation of media education, and thus, continuing the discussion we have started in section 6.2 of this report. Such a study would possibly allow viable input to what kind of guidelines teachers actually would benefit from, considering the cross-functional characteristics of media literacy.

- A project work outlining a suggestion for in-service training for teachers in relation to media literacy.

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