

Why study literature in English? A syllabus review of Swedish primary teacher education

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SAMMANFATTNING

Artikeln behandlar litteraturstudiers relevans i grundlärautbildningens engelskämne nationellt. Den bygger på en beskrivande och jämförande analys av akademiska kursplaner från samtliga grundlärautbildningar i Sverige för det akademiska året 2017–18. Utifrån kursbeskrivningar, lärandemålsformuleringar och litteraturlistor kartlägger artikeln litteraturstudiernas position och inriktning i engelskkurser i programinriktningarna mot grundskolans årskurs 1–3 och 4–6. Med kartläggningen som grund diskuteras värden som tillskrivs litteraturundervisning och som riktas mot såväl lärarstudenter som elever. Artikeln visar att de allra flesta kursplanerna positionerar litteraturstudierna som en oundgänglig del av grundlärautbildningen, även om studiernas orientering varierar. Inom engelskkurserna inriktade mot skolans årskurser 1–3 förhärskar språkdidaktiska perspektiv, medan kurser mot årskurser 4–6 tenderar att kombinera litteraturvetenskapliga och ämnesdidaktiska perspektiv. Skillnaden tycks åtminstone delvis vara kopplad till ämneskonceptioner och till frågan om litteraturstudiernas funktion, liksom deras tilltänkta mervärde utifrån vardera programspecialiserings villkor. Relevansen kopplas främst till grundskollärares språkförmågor, allmänbildning och professionella repertoarer.

Nyckelord: litteraturdidaktik, grundlärautbildning, engelska, akademiska kursplaner, litteraturstudiers relevans

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the core school subjects in Sweden and it is one that primary school teachers are trained to teach. The Swedish *Higher Education Ordinance* stipulates that teacher education (TEd) for primary school teachers must include English studies; however, the subject-specific content in TEd is not nationally prescribed. For a Degree of Bachelor or Master of Arts in Primary Education, the Qualifications Ordinance requires that students shall demonstrate “the subject knowledge, including awareness of current research and development work, required for professional practice” as well as knowledge of “subject didactics including methodology” (*Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100).¹ As is the case for all TEd subjects, it is up to the universities and the teacher educators themselves to decide the content of English studies. They are free to determine what areas of English are relevant so long as they follow the stipulations of the Swedish *Higher Education Act* and *Higher Education Ordinance*, and prepare student teachers for teaching in line with the school curriculum.²

In what follows, I address the study of literature – its position and orientation – in English courses within primary TEd in the two programme specialisations nationally, for years 1-3 and 4-6 of the compulsory school. I do so in relation to syllabi for primary TEd from all universities and university colleges nationally. Based on content descriptions, learning outcome formulations, and literature lists, I establish whether literature is studied in the English courses in each programme specialisation, and, if so, what knowledge areas are attached to the study of literature, as well as how its study is justified. I regard the syllabi as revealing of the subject knowledge deemed as necessary for this category of students, for their higher education and for their professional preparation. By extension, I take the findings to imply various ways of understanding the value and relevance of studying literature in English.

The present article is part of a larger curricular project on the study of English-language literature in Swedish higher education. That project reviews syllabi in the general higher education courses in English nationally (for the year 2016), through the English TEd courses, that is, courses specialising in secondary and upper secondary education (for the academic year 2017-18), to the primary TEd courses in English (for 2017-18). At issue, in the overarching project and in the present article, are the questions of why the study of literature in a non-native language matters and of what characterises its position, content, and rationale in higher education curricula. My endeavour is prompted by an interest in literature education, understood as both research and practice (*litteraturdidaktik*), and, specifically, by the questions of “what” and “why.” It is based on the assumption that higher education and TEd are arenas in which the relevance of engagement with literature is formulated and negotiated (Persson, 2012, p. 17). By virtue of linking disciplinary knowledge and values with school teaching, primary TEd practices can divulge underlying ideas about the relevance of engaging with literature in English, both inside and outside the classroom. A clearer picture of the position, nature and purposes of studying literature in the primary TEd subject of English can help understand how that relevance is defined.

Primary TEd is a particularly interesting case with respect to the study of English-language literature. For one thing, in Swedish primary TEd, English is allotted a relatively limited number of credits and this raises the question of the educational function and benefits of studying literature. A degree in primary school teaching requires a minimum of 15 ECTS credits (henceforth credits) of English subject studies for specialisation in the years 1-3 and at least 30 credits for specialisation in the years 4-6 (*Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100). The limited number of credits available means that var-

ious areas of knowledge within English studies, with relevance for primary school and primary TED, are vying for space in the English courses. Consequently, academic English departments, which are normally responsible for determining, and teaching, the subject-specific content in primary TED, must decide to what extent, and how, the study of literature can contribute to the knowledge and abilities that are necessary for primary school teachers. In addition, they must decide which aspects of literary-specific knowledge are relevant to impart and why. In question is the significance of the study of English-language literature for the professional training as well as for the general education of primary student teachers.

Further, primary TED is a uniquely illuminating example of how the relevance of engagement with literature in an academic setting is defined, when the educational goal is not disciplinary study as such. Primary TED has nationally stipulated vocational goals concerning teacher competence, as it is tasked with offering “subject courses and courses in subject didactics that are relevant for teaching school subjects” (*Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100). Unlike secondary and upper secondary TED in Sweden, which relies on a specialised teacher identity shaped via subject-specific studies, primary TED is generalist in its nature and it is characterised by strong teaching profession discourses (Alvunger & Walhström, 2018, p. 346). Accordingly, the content and orientation of the study of literature, and its rationale, in primary TED are shaped by other considerations than English TED and general academic courses of English. At stake, here, among other matters, are subject conceptions and how these determine what is taught and why – of the primary TED subject of English, as well as its relation to the traditions and values of the academic subjects of English and of literary studies, and to those of the school subject of English.

Finally, with respect to how the English school subject is delimited in the Swedish school curriculum and the professional preparation of primary school teachers, primary TED is a litmus test for the uses ascribed to literature in English language teaching (ELT). English, it should be noted, is the first foreign language subject that Swedish pupils meet and its position in the Swedish education system is closely tied to the status of English as a global language.³ The school syllabus current in the studied period stipulated that “[f]ilms and dramatised narratives for children” and youth as well as “[s]ongs, rhymes, poems and tales” should be part of the core content of English in years 1-3 and 4-6 (SNAE, 2018, p. 35-36).⁴ However, it did not specify the uses of literature in the ELT classroom. The Swedish National Agency for Education, SNAE (2017, p. 10), clarified that the core content was meant to help pupils reach the stipulated aims of the school subject. These were to develop pupils’ “all-round communicative skills” and to develop their “knowledge about and an understanding of different living conditions, as well as social and cultural phenomena in the areas and contexts where English is used” (SNAE, 2018, p. 34). These aims, moreover, were to be reached with school teaching amounting to approximately half an hour to two hours a week, depending on which year pupils were in.⁵ Given this definition of the English school subject and the positioning of literature therein, a key question for primary TED is how the role of literature in English should be conceptualised within TED courses in relation to primary school ELT. At issue, here, is the extent to which primary student teachers should understand literature as a foundation for ELT or as a supplement to it.

As this brief description suggests, the syllabus review accounted for in this article is embedded in particular areas of tension that directly and indirectly impact on the function ascribed to the study of literature by academic English staff. These concern the tension between freedom and regulation in relation to policy, between subject conceptions of English in different educational contexts, and

between various definitions of how and why English-language literature and its study matter in these contexts. These areas of tension raise the question of what the study of literature in English is for in primary TEd. The present article is motivated by a desire to identify some of the answers to this question, with special focus on what primary TEd syllabus formulations and reading lists can reveal about how the educational and social values of studying literature are defined.

It is worth noting that relatively little is currently known about how the study of literature is oriented, organised and justified in primary TEd, particularly when it comes to ELT. One reason for this is that research on literature in TEd, internationally, is less common than school-oriented research about the teaching of literature. Another is that much European and Nordic research concerned with literature in TEd, tends to focus on secondary and upper secondary TEd (rather than on primary TEd), and on mother-tongue subjects (rather than on ELT and foreign language subjects).⁶ Empirical studies in these areas – of curricula, of textbooks, of student teacher and teacher educator views, and of classroom practices – have explored such matters as text selections, subject conceptions, and effective instructional methods.⁷ Precursors to the present study include Magnus Persson's (2007) examination of how literary reading is legitimised in policy documents relevant for TEd in Swedish, and Marie Thavenius' (2017) dissertation on literary reading practices in secondary and upper secondary TEd in Swedish in relation, *inter alia*, to curricula. Precursors are also curricular studies on general (non-vocational) courses in literature in the academic language subjects of French and Spanish (Alvstad & Castro, 2009; Cedergren, 2015; Cedergren & Lindberg, 2015; Johansson, 2016).

The present study shares with some of the above-mentioned examinations a concern with the position, nature, and purposes of studying literature, and, like them, it proceeds from a review of academic syllabi. One of the study aims is to complement the review of the study of English-language literature in secondary and upper secondary TEd (Dodou, 2020b), which was similarly based on a syllabus review for the academic year 2017-18, and the review of general English syllabi from 2016 (Dodou, 2020a). Thereby, the present study can enable comparisons between the curricular reviews. The studied syllabi were in place some years after the 2011 TEd reform, which emphasised teacher competence in subject teaching and learning (*ämnesdidaktisk kompetens*) and differentiated between the teacher qualification demands for specialisation in years 1-3 and 4-6 (*Bäst i klassen*, 2009, p. 12-13, 18; *Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100).⁸ Thereby, the syllabus review can identify whether English departments defined the role of literature in each specialisation in different ways. The studied syllabi, similarly, followed the 2011 school curriculum reform, which differentiated between the core content to be covered in English in years 1-3 and 4-6, respectively (SNAE, 2008, p. 13-17; SNAE, 2018, p. 35-39), and the emphasis in the 2005 TEd evaluation (which prompted the 2011 reform) on the simultaneous academisation and professionalisation of TEd (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, SNAHE 2008). By virtue of succeeding a period of transformation for primary TEd, the syllabi enable a review of curricular priorities that followed. By making known the kinds of knowledge attached to the study of literature nationally, the review documents a part of the academic English subject's curricular history. It also presents a basis for considering the orientation and purposes of studying literature and an opportunity to discuss the relevance ascribed to the study of English-language literature.

MAPPING THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

In choosing to examine syllabi and the reading lists attached to them, I make a series of assumptions about how these documents operate and what they can disclose. I do so based on curriculum theory, especially theory that focuses on higher education (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Unlike nationally prescribed school curricula, the content of Swedish higher education curricula, and the syllabi that comprise them, more directly reflect the conditions at each higher education institution. To be sure, TEd syllabi are expected to comply with stipulations in national policy. However, they are largely products of the competencies and outlooks of those academic staff involved in designing primary TEd courses. Moreover, academic syllabi need to be integrated in the teacher qualification programme offered at the respective institution and to follow the logic of how that programme is organised. The steering of TEd in Sweden means that the content and organisation of English studies within various primary teacher qualification programmes may differ based on such local discrepancies at institutional and departmental level. Similarly, the position given to the study of literature and its justification in English courses may vary across institutions, for instance, depending on the ways in which national stipulations for TEd are interpreted and on whether an academic English outlook or an academic educational outlook dominated in the development of the primary TEd courses.

In the study, I assume that the syllabi delimit, by way of the content included and of the language used to describe it, what constitutes valid and relevant knowledge (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 27-37). Specifically, I take it that the modules in which the study of literature is incorporated and the course goals attached to the study of literature divulge its position and orientation. By extension, the syllabi reveal underlying attitudes, within at least parts of each academic English collegiate, about the curricular function of studying literature, that is, about the kinds of competencies that the study of literature is meant to develop. Moreover, I assume that the words used to describe its orientation and goals can disclose how academic English staff responsible for formulating the syllabi understand the nature and purposes of studying literature in the context of primary TEd. I make these assumptions without wishing to diminish the many ways in which curricula are shaped by various stakeholders in higher education and without trying to obfuscate that syllabi are products of compromise and of their social and institutional contexts (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 39-40). Moreover, I do so fully aware that syllabi can be vague and that they may reveal little of what happens in the classroom. Yet, their contractual nature in Swedish higher education means that syllabi can point to the knowledge and competencies deemed as relevant to impart and, by extension, to fundamental values ascribed to the study of literature and to dominant ways of justifying its presence in the TEd curriculum.

The review comprises the 33 English syllabi that included the study of literature in the academic year 2017-18. These were part of primary TEd programmes at the 18 universities and university colleges that offered specialisation in years 1-3 and/or 4-6. The study does not include syllabi for degree projects (*examensarbeten*) in English or school placement (*verksamhetsförlagd utbildning*) in either programme specialisation. Table 1 presents an overview of the syllabi included in the study.

Table 1. The studied syllabi per institution and programme specialisation

Institution	Primary TEd years 1-3	Primary TEd years 4-6
Dalarna University	1	1
Halmstad University	1	1
Jönköping University	1	1
Karlstad University	0	1
Kristianstad University	--	1
Linköping University	1	1
Linnaeus University	1	1
Luleå University of Technology	2	2
Mälardalen University	1	1
Malmö University	0	1
Södertörn University	0	2
Stockholm University	0	1
Umeå University	1	1
University of Borås	--	1
University of Gävle	1	2
University of Gothenburg	1	1
University West	0	2
Uppsala University	0	1
Total	11	22

To locate these syllabi, I asked the directors of study, or equivalent, at the English departments in all 21 institutions that offered TEd of any kind during the relevant academic year, to identify the primary teacher programme syllabi on offer. A criterion was that syllabi should include (the study of) English-language literature and/or the theory and practice of literature teaching and learning. In other words, the institutions themselves defined which, if any, syllabi were relevant. As an exception, when directors of English studies lacked insights into the programmes, I contacted programme coordinators for primary TEd to obtain this information. In a couple of instances, (parts of) the English courses were run by other departments, notably by the Department of Education and Special Education at Gothenburg and by the Department of Language Education at Stockholm.⁹ As a rule, however, the courses were offered by academic English subjects. In the table, “0” marks institutions that offered primary TEd, but where the syllabi did not include concrete information regarding literature. When primary TEd with a certain specialisation was not offered at the institution this is

indicated with a "--". The syllabi were downloaded via the university catalogues online. If literature lists were not included in the syllabi, these were obtained separately from the course coordinators, or equivalent. I was unable to locate the reading lists for years 4-6 at the universities of Halmstad, Kristianstad, and Umeå, and for years 1-3 at Halmstad and Umeå universities.

The syllabi have been examined individually, per university, and per programme specialisation, for years 1-3 and 4-6. Special attention has been paid to content descriptions and learning outcomes, as well as to literary works listed. The analysis has been descriptive and comparative. It includes qualitative elements (with regard to syllabus formulations), as well as quantitative ones (with regard to reading lists). Via content descriptions and learning outcomes, I have sought to identify the position granted to the study of literature in each programme specialisation. This includes determining the types of courses in which literature was studied, and their orientation. Via learning outcomes and literature lists, I have sought to establish the knowledge foregrounded in relation to the study of literature and the literature considered worth mediating. By paying attention to the above and to the words used to describe the content and aims attached to the study of literature, finally, I have sought to identify explicit and implicit justifications for its inclusion in primary TEd courses. I present the findings in three steps. First, I account for major findings and trends in lateral terms. Then I proceed to illustrate local variations via comparisons between syllabi from different institutions. Thereby, I complement a bird's eye view of the English courses with examples that highlight diverging approaches to the study of literature and conceptions of its function and value in primary TEd. Finally, I discuss the findings in terms of the relevance primary TEd syllabi outlined for the study of literature.

The following matters should be noted. First, the focus in this review is on the position, orientation, and relevance ascribed to the study of literature in primary TEd. It is not on the literary reading practices imparted in primary TEd, nor on the role of literature in primary education, even if those are closely related matters. Second, when discussing this, I include two ways of understanding what the study of literature entails, based on the examined syllabi. One is broad and refers to the inclusion of literary works in English courses as material to be read and discussed in relation to questions relevant to primary TEd. These often coalesce around appropriate teaching materials and instructional methods for the ELT classroom, but they may also include knowledge from the disciplinary field of literary studies, for instance in the form of knowledge about children's literature. The other definition is narrow and involves the explicit ambition to impart discipline-specific knowledge from the field of literary studies, for example literary concepts and literary ways of approaching texts. In both instances, literature is an object of study, even if the questions posed and the knowledge mediated in relation to literature may emerge out of different approaches and intellectual traditions. In this article, the *study of literature* is used to indicate that literature is included in the subject matter studied in the courses, regardless of approach. *Literary studies*, instead, refers to the sub-discipline of English. Whenever course goals refer to the latter, I indicate this in the text.

Third, the review does not regard the study of literature in English courses from a programme perspective, be that in relation to other subjects (such as Swedish) or courses that involve school placement. Similarly, the review does not take into account how the programme specialisations were constructed at each institution, even if those may have affected how English studies were organised. It is worth noting, for instance, that whilst most universities placed modules on English language teaching and learning organisationally under the jurisdiction of English, other universities, such as

the ones at Stockholm and Gothenburg, placed such modules under the departments of language education (*språkdidaktik*), or of education and special education. What the organisational location of the modules has meant for their orientation and staffing is beyond the scope of the present article.

Fourth, the absence of specific formulations on literature and its study in some syllabi for years 1-3 does not necessarily mean that literature was not included as subject matter studied in the courses. As the present curricular study relies on syllabi formulations, this is important to bear in mind in relation to the findings. Fifth, even though the English syllabi for the early years of primary education, that is years 1-3, also pertained to teaching in pre-school class (*förskoleklass*), the latter is not addressed here. Pre-school class, it can be noted, had no specific syllabus for English, but it is possible to interpret such core content as “Language and communication,” especially “Rhymes, jingles and other word games” as pertaining to English (SNAE, 2018, p. 21-22). Finally, in this article, TEd refers to teacher education, English TEd to teacher qualification programmes specialising in English for secondary and upper secondary school, and primary TEd to programmes specialising in years 1-3 and 4-6 of the compulsory school.

THE POSITION OF LITERATURE AND ITS STUDY

To begin with, the syllabus review suggests that the norm, nationally, was to offer the minimum number of credits in English, as stipulated in the *Higher Education Ordinance* (1993:100). This means 15 credits of English subject studies for specialisation in the years 1-3 and 30 credits for years 4-6. As an exception, at Halmstad the English course for 4-6 teachers comprised 34.5 credits (EN6005). Likewise, Luleå offered 30 credits in the programme specialisation for 1-3 (Luleå U0003S and E0002P). Decisions about the number of credits earmarked for each primary TEd subject, it is important to stress, were normally taken at a programme level at each university. Although it was not necessarily up to English departments to decide the credits allotted for English studies, an awareness of the number of credits available helps to understand the position of literature and its study within the relevant programme courses.

Literature tended to be included in two types of modules. These were, on the one hand, modules such as *English in the classroom* (5 syllabi) and *Language teaching and learning and literature* (4 syllabi) and, on the other, such modules as *English-language literature* and *English children's and young adult literature* (10 syllabi). As an exception, literature featured in modules on *Culture, Media, Society* (Karlstad LPGG15), *Texts, Communication and Language Knowledge* (Malmö EN431B) and *Writing, speaking and reading English* (Södertörn 1089EN). Some syllabi (8 out of 33) lacked information regarding modules taught. These included, instead, a brief overall course description and a list of learning outcomes, but they did not indicate how the content was organised. In programme specialisations for years 1-3, literature was normally studied in modules on English in the classroom, even if syllabi from three universities instead offered modules on children's literature. In programme specialisations for years 4-6, conversely, the norm was to offer literature modules, although on occasion literature was incorporated in modules on English in the classroom. As regards the number of credits dedicated to the study of literature, though far from always made known, these usually ranged from three to six credits in both programme specialisations. This amounts to between two and four weeks of full-time studies. It should be noted, however, that, potentially, engagement with literature was significantly briefer, especially when literature was part of modules on English in the classroom.

All English syllabi reviewed included literature as material to be read and discussed. However, in the syllabi for years 1-3 disciplinary knowledge from the field of literary studies – for instance, the development of literary modes of reading – featured only as an exception. In syllabi for years 4-6, on the other hand, the ambition to impart such disciplinary knowledge regularly recurred. Indeed, an initial observation is that modules on English in the classroom tended to focus on the uses of literature in ELT, whereas modules on English-language literature normally included learning outcomes about forms and features of literature and about literary analysis. This was true of modules in both programme specialisations. I return to this matter below, when accounting for the goals attached to the study of literature and when comparing different approaches and rationales for it.

Commentary

These findings from primary TEd differ from those for English TEd in the same period (Dodou, 2020b), in so far as the norm in secondary and upper secondary TEd was to offer modules on literature and to emphasise disciplinary knowledge from the field of literary studies.

WORKS TAUGHT

Most syllabi (23 out of 33) explicitly stated an ambition to address children's literature, thus suggesting a national accord about the significance of imparting knowledge from this area of literary studies. In addition, about a third of the syllabi (10 out of 33), stated that modules centred, for instance, on "contemporary English-language novels and short stories" (Gävle ENG509, my transl) or on "fiction from various parts of the English-speaking world" (Södertörn 1089EN). At the universities of Gävle, Luleå, and West, the years 4-6 syllabi included two modules on literature, one on children's literature and one on English-language literature. Literature lists indicated certain trends in text selections. When considering the results below, it is important to bear in mind that reading lists tended to function more as lists of the literary works students should acquire than as complete lists of the works taught. Some 14 syllabi (6 for years 1-3 and 8 for years 4-6) indicated that other works were included in the courses besides the ones listed. These, so syllabi stated, were usually picture books and poetry and, on occasion, film.

In the 27 located reading lists, 135 literary works were listed – 62 in the programme specialisation for years 1-3 and 88 for years 4-6. Of these, some 110 titles were found in a single syllabus. In years 1-3 syllabi, only five works recurred in more than one reading list. These were Anthony Browne's *Voices in the Park* (1998), Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), Babette Cole's *Princess Smartypants* (1986), Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* (1999), and Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (2003). Each of these featured in two syllabi, that is, they were taught at two institutions. For years 4-6, the most frequently listed works were L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), Roahl Dahl's *Matilda* (1988), Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002), Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), and Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963). With the exception of Haddon's book, which was found in four syllabi (at four institutions), the others were included in three syllabi each (three institutions).

As Figure 1 indicates, most works listed were examples of narrative prose. These usually comprised children's and young adult or crossover literature,¹⁰ although literature lists also featured novels and short stories. Together these amounted to approximately 43% of all works listed. Some 41% of the

titles listed were picture books and another 13% were illustrated children's books. Whilst these occasionally included picture book poetry, most were prose narratives. Some 2% were comics and graphic novels. Collections of poetry, including nursery rhymes, amounted to some 3% of the literary works listed. Drama was not visible in the literature lists.¹¹

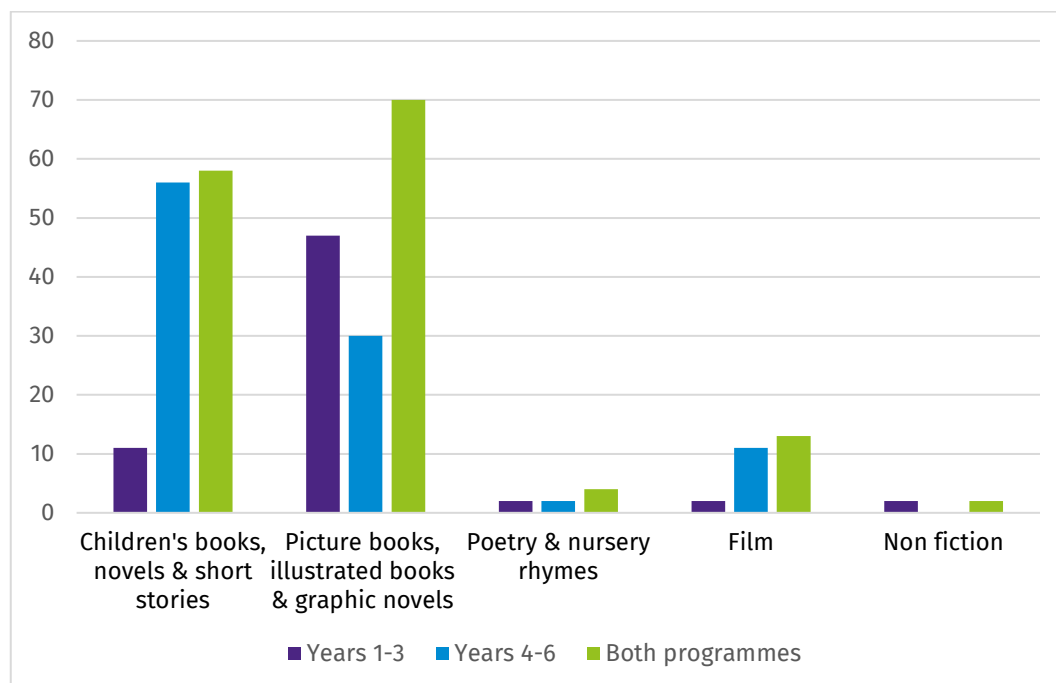


Figure 1. Overview of the works listed in relation to genre and format

Apart from the occasional memoir and biography and the occasional non-fictional text, the works listed were fictional and covered various modes of writing, including detective fiction, dystopias, folk tales and fairy tales, fantasy, historical fiction, and ghost stories. In addition to the 135 literary works mentioned above, the syllabi also included a total of 13 films. These were listed in syllabi from four universities, although syllabi from another three universities stated in their reading lists that films were taught. Listed films included adaptations of children's literature, adaptations of classic literature, and animated films. Most (11 out of 13) films were listed in syllabi for years 4-6.

The literary works mediated tended to be contemporary. Some 92% of all listed titles were published after 1950, with 70% first published after 1990. With the exception of A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* (1926), works published before 1950 (8%) all featured in syllabi specialising in years 4-6. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of titles per date of publication and programme specialisation.

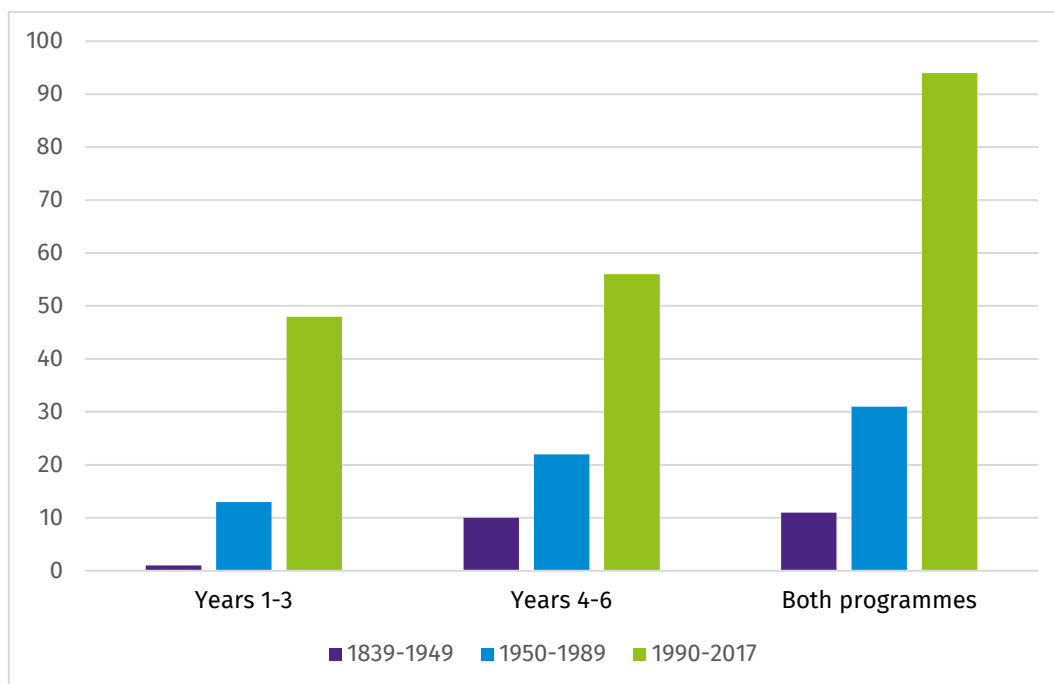


Figure 2. Overview of the literary works listed per date of publication and programme specialisation

Some 55% of the titles were written by men and 44% by women. For the remaining titles (Laydbird learners publications), I was unable to find information about the author. Some 10% of the picture books were co-produced by a male and a female writer and illustrator. Finally, some 63% of all titles listed, were written by UK and US writers. Of the remaining works, some 17% were written by Australian, Canadian, Nigerian, New Zealand, South African, and Zimbabwean writers. As an exception, syllabi featured translated works, such as Lars Klinting's *Harvey the Baker* (1996) and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (2000).

Commentary

These findings largely resemble those for English TEd for the same academic year (Dodou, 2020b). The review of literature lists from the latter, too, revealed a dominance of contemporary print-based prose literature. Likewise, Anglo-American writers were in majority also in English TEd, even as literature lists, there too, indicated the ambition to mediate literary works also by writers from other English-speaking countries. A major difference in the present literature review is the distinct presence of picture books and illustrated fiction. These were conspicuously absent in most reading lists within English TEd nationally. Similarly, the focus on works of children's and young adult literature was more prominent in primary TEd than in English TEd.

MAIN AIMS FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

The comparative analysis of learning outcomes and content descriptions in syllabi points to five main aims for the study of literature. None of these aims were ubiquitous across the syllabi.

Knowledge about English-language literature and culture

Students' knowledge about literature featured in 11 of the 33 syllabi, 4 out of 11 syllabi for years 1-3 and in 7 out of 22 syllabi for years 4-6. These foregrounded, for instance, "knowledge about English-language literature for children" (Linneaus 1GN036, my translation) and about "literary texts in different genres and media formats" (Jönköping LEGN16, my translation). Cultural knowledge gained via literature was referenced in 10 of the 33 syllabi, with 4 out of 11 syllabi for years 1-3 and 6 out of 22 syllabi for years 4-6. These occasionally indicated that the studied literary works "give students insights into parts of English-speaking culture" (Gävle ENG509, my translation) and "shed light on social themes such as ethnicity, class, gender and equality" (Linköping 973G06, my translation). Syllabi formulations normally did not divulge the conceptualisations and the intended approaches to literature and culture, for instance, whether literature was seen as an example of authentic language use, as a cultural transmitter, or as a means to cultural analysis.

Knowledge from the field of literary studies

Just under half of the syllabi (14 out of 33) made known the ambition to impart to student teachers knowledge about disciplinary ways of approaching and analysing literature. Key here were abilities of interpretation and argumentation, with the use of literary concepts. Syllabi stressed, for instance, students' abilities to "do close readings and to show their understanding of English-language literary text" (Stockholm ENGL46, my translation). Such formulations were normally found in syllabi for years 4-6. For years 1-3, 2 of the 11 syllabi stated that literature was analysed.

Student teachers' language proficiency

The development of student teachers' communicative abilities was explicitly linked to the study of literature in 9 of the 33 syllabi, two of which were for years 1-3. While these sometimes stated the aim to "improve students' writing" as well as reading and interpretation (Södertörn 1089EN), the syllabi also emphasised the significance of reading texts "for one's own and others' language development" (Gothenburg L6EN10, my translation) and, further, the expectation that students would display good language use when engaging with various texts.

Literature in the school classroom

A recurring aim in about half of the syllabi (16 out of 33) regarded student teachers' abilities to account for or to reflect on the uses of literature in ELT. About half of the syllabi for years 1-3 (6 out of 11) and 4-6 (9 out of 22) emphasised the potential uses of literature as a means of furthering pupils' language development. This included the use of literature to develop pupils' vocabulary and to "motivate pupils' writing and speaking in English" (Halmstad EN2045, my translation), as well as the "use of fanfiction with the aim to develop pupils' reading and writing" (Borås C46E60, my translation). The potential of literature to impart to school pupils knowledge about English-speaking cultures featured in 5 of the 33 syllabi, one of which concerned years 1-3.

Knowledge from the fields of language and literature education

Goals on student abilities to "plan and carry out teaching" that uses literature (Halmstad EN2045, my translation) were foregrounded in 6 of the 33 syllabi, half of which were for years 1-3. A handful

of syllabi explicitly linked the study of literature to theories about language teaching and learning and, in one instance, specifically about literature teaching and learning (Jönköping LE3K17).

Commentary

These aims principally corresponded to the ones found in syllabi for English TEd for the same period (Dodou, 2020b). Across the latter, too, the study of literature was regularly linked to knowledge about English-speaking cultures. In the syllabi for secondary and upper secondary TEd, however, student teachers' abilities of literary reading and analysis constituted core learning outcomes, which was not always the case in primary TEd. The latter, instead, emphasised the uses of literature in school ELT to a greater extent. Another difference between the primary and the English TEd syllabi was the emphasis in primary TEd on literature as a means for developing student teachers' language proficiency. Notably, in primary TEd, this goal was mainly attached to courses for years 4-6, which were the ones that also normally included literature modules. Moreover, in primary TEd syllabi, the study of literature was more often associated with pupils' language development and with language teaching and learning, than was the case in English TEd syllabi.

DIVERGING APPROACHES AND RATIONALES FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

The account above points to some of the variations regarding the position of literature and the rationale for its study in English courses within primary TEd. These local variations were evident across the programme specialisations, and also within programme specialisations across different institutions. In the following, I illustrate key divergences made visible in relation to the three aspects addressed above: the type of module in which literature was included, the aims attached to the study of literature, and the literary works taught. Together, these point to the position and orientation of the study of literature, and, by extension, to ways in which its relevance was understood.

Disciplinary outlooks for the study of literature: the case of years 1-3

One major difference concerned to what extent English courses should encompass disciplinary knowledge from the field of literary studies, or if the study of literature should – primarily or exclusively – attend to knowledge from the fields of English language and literature education. This divide was present mainly between the programme specialisations in years 1-3 and 4-6, respectively, as inclusion of disciplinary knowledge from literary studies was the norm in courses for years 4-6, but not 1-3. The relative significance of literary analysis and interpretation was a divide visible also across institutions within the programme specialisation for years 1-3. The English syllabi at Dalarna University and Mälardalen University here illustrate the opposite ends of the spectrum for the years 1-3 courses, nationally.

In the Dalarna syllabus, “a selection of English-language children’s books” featured as part of a 5-credit module on *English in the classroom*. The functions of literary works according to this syllabus were twofold: “partly to develop the students’ own language, partly to discuss how these can be used as working material in teaching” (EN1097, my translation). In the Mälardalen syllabus, the English course included a 4.5-credit module on *Children’s literature*. This module description likewise foregrounded children’s literature “from a teaching and learning perspective” and “as a teaching tool,”

but it also emphasised primary student teachers' knowledge of "classic and modern English-language prose, rhymes, songs, poetry and other cultural expressions meant for children" (ENA501, my translations). A learning outcome of the literature module was to develop primary student teachers' abilities to "analyse and discuss children's literature: characters, themes, genre and stylistic figures" (ENA501, my translation). In the Dalarna syllabus, conversely, the only learning outcome that explicitly addressed literature foregrounded student teachers' "knowledge about and [ability to exemplify] how different forms of children's literature in English can enrich pupils' learning" (EN1097, my translation).

Whilst some similarities were evident in the two courses, there was little in the Dalarna syllabus to suggest that the study of literature was regarded as other than an instrument for – student teachers' and school pupils' – language learning. In the Mälardalen syllabus, on the other hand, the ambition to address literary elements and literary analysis implied that the study of literature also served to develop student teachers' abilities of discipline-specific modes of literary reading. Besides the Mälardalen syllabus, only the syllabus at Luleå University of Technology (U0003S) included literary analytical competencies in its learning outcomes. The remaining syllabi for years 1-3 nationally, rather, focused on school-oriented teaching practice, usually with an explicit focus on language development.

As this suggests, the studied syllabi for years 1-3 acknowledged the potential of literature in the ELT classroom and they subscribed to the importance of studying literature for primary teacher students. The chosen approaches, as indicated by the goals and the areas of knowledge foregrounded in the relevant modules, suggested a relative consensus that literary principles and practices of reading and analysis were not necessary in this context. Instead, here the relevance of studying literature was mainly linked to such questions as appropriate teaching materials and instructional methods.

The purposes of studying literature: the case of years 4-6

A related issue concerned the purposes of studying literature, specifically the extent to which it was relevant for student teachers outside the realm of their professional training. In question here was mainly whether the value of studying literature within primary TEd extended beyond the craft of teaching and, if so, whether literary perspectives and perspectives on language and literature education should be reconciled. This was a divide between the two programme specialisations, as indicated above, but it was mainly visible in courses within the specialisation for years 4-6, where disciplinary knowledge from the field of literary studies came into play.

One end of the spectrum can be illustrated via the syllabus for years 4-6 at Malmö University. Here the principal focus was on the uses of literature written for and about children for ELT. The syllabus, notably, emphasised teaching "from a 4-6 perspective in accordance with the school steering documents" (EN431B, my translation). This syllabus included no goals on literary analysis. At the other end of the spectrum was the English syllabus at Uppsala University, which did not include any goals regarding classroom practice. Instead, all three learning outcomes for the literature module concerned literary analysis and interpretation. The module description, further, foregrounded, besides student teachers' language development, how the studied works "depict people and their circumstances" as well as "development in contemporary society" (Uppsala 5EN209, my translation). Thereby, the Uppsala syllabus implied that the study of literature chiefly contributed to student teachers' literary reading abilities and their knowledge about cultural conditions in English-speaking

countries. Compared to the Malmö syllabus, which ostensibly sought to model the uses of literature in ELT, the focus on literary interpretation in the Uppsala syllabus implied vague connections between, on the one hand, the study of literature in the TEd English course and, on the other, primary school teaching practices.

Frequently, however, syllabi for years 4-6 revealed an ambition to combine, if not to balance, perspectives from literary studies and perspectives from language and literature education, as the English courses at the universities of Jönköping and Luleå illustrate. In the Jönköping syllabus, the six learning outcomes for the study of literature were divided between, on the one hand, student teachers' knowledge about literature and their ability to analyse literature and, on the other, their knowledge "about basic theories and methods in literature teaching and learning" and their "ability to develop their language teaching" (LE3K17, my translations). A similar ambition to develop student teachers' literary as well as literature teaching and learning competences was visible in the Luleå syllabi. Whilst the Jönköping syllabus combined the two perspectives in a single module, the Luleå syllabi implied a desire to impart the two perspectives separately. The study of literature at Luleå featured in two modules that combined language teaching and learning with literature. In the first, a stated goal was to develop student teachers' ability to "discuss and analyse English-language literature" with the intention to "further [student teachers'] language development and critical ability" (E0003P, my translation). In the second module, the goal was to develop student teachers' ability to "analyse English-language children's literature and show familiarity with how literature can be used in teaching as a tool to further all pupils' language development in English" (U0004S, my translation). Syllabi from another five universities subscribed to this ambition to combine different approaches to the study of literature in their courses for years 4-6.

Notably, at Luleå University of Technology the teaching and learning perspective was attached to the study of children's literature, whereas reasoning ability was attached to the teaching of novels and short stories. At the University of Gävle, too, the study of literature featured in two modules, one on children's literature and the other on the novel form. The description for the latter module foregrounded student teachers' knowledge about English-speaking cultures (Gävle ENG509). As with the Uppsala syllabus, in these examples the study of literature was implicitly justified by virtue of developing student teachers' cognitive abilities of reasoning and of helping them to gain knowledge about the (English-speaking) world. The literary text selections on the courses, further, were suggestive of assumptions about the kinds of works that were appropriate for student teachers to encounter and engage with. From the syllabi, it is not possible to determine if the novel form was regarded as uniquely equipped to develop student teachers' general knowledge and skills. However, the inclusion of adult literature in a handful of literature lists implies that English staff deemed it as significant that TEd not simply impart children's and young adult literature that could readily be used in the ELT classroom for pupils aged 10-13.

The examples addressed here illustrate a tension between different ways of conceptualising the function and benefits of studying literature depending on an academic English outlook or an academic educational outlook. An upshot was variation in the extent to which the study of literature served the general knowledge and individual growth of students or their professional training. Moreover, the examples suggest a desire, at least in some TEd programmes, to acknowledge multiple rationales for the study of literature in English primary TEd courses.

THE RELEVANCE OF STUDYING LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

As the review indicates, literature was incorporated in almost all primary TEd courses in English. The type of module in which literature occurred, the works taught, and the aims formulated for the study of literature, however, suggest that different definitions of its value underpinned syllabi across, and within, the two programme specialisations. By way of concluding, I trace the relevance of the study of literature formulated, and implied, in syllabi in relation to the three areas identified in the opening of this article. These are conceptions of the English subject and of the study of literature therein, the function and benefits of studying literature in primary TEd courses, as well as the role of literature in primary school ELT. Each of these matters sheds light on how specific educational content is envisioned as valuable, for the individual or as a common good.

The study of literature in relation to primary school ELT

To begin with the latter, the studied syllabi pointed to an ambition to establish literature as a relevant basis for primary school ELT in Sweden. With the exception of a handful of syllabi from as many universities, which did not indicate that literature was studied in courses for years 1-3, children's literature was consistently foregrounded as appropriate teaching material for ELT in both programme specialisations, for years 1-3 and 4-6. This suggests a great degree of consensus nationally regarding how to interpret the stipulations in the school curriculum on the inclusion in the core content for ELT of “[s]ongs, rhymes, poems and tales” as well as “[f]ilms and dramatised narratives for children” and youth (SNAE, 2018, p. 35-36). At most English departments the stipulations seemed understood as requiring that goals concerning the study of literature be articulated in the TEd syllabi. The review of literature lists, further, although it is not comprehensive, suggests a predisposition, nationally, for text selections that centred on literary prose narratives in printed form, over, for instance, songs and films. The latter is the case despite the emphasis in the school steering documents on the use of “digital and other” media to develop competences of language reception (SNAE, 2017, p. 12). Whether syllabi formulations and text selections are indicative of academic English teachers' assumptions regarding student teachers' reading skills and reading habits and the worth of reading literature, or of other priorities is unclear from the syllabi.

Most courses, further, required that student teachers' account for how literature could be used in primary school ELT, or show the ability to plan teaching that uses literature. Literature in ELT was defined as foremost relevant for pupils' language development (in 13/33 syllabi). However, its value was occasionally also formulated in terms of pupils' “socialisation” (Linnaeus 1GN036, my translation), “creativity and intercultural ability” (Mälardalen ENA602, my translation) and “understanding of language, literature and culture” (Borås C46E60, my translation). This ambition to highlight the relevance of literature in ELT was in keeping with current research in both language and literature education, which has emphasised the benefits of teaching literature to young language learners. These include benefits for motivation in language learning, for pupils' language and literacy development, for their cognitive, affective, and evaluative development, for pupils' increased intercultural awareness, as well as for the fostering of democratic values (Bland, 2013; Bland & Lütge, 2014; Brunsmeier & Kolb, 2017; Dolan, 2014; Drew, 2018; Ghosn, 2013). In cases when the study of literature extended over the course of an entire module and included learning outcomes on literary analysis, this ambition was also in keeping with Janice Bland's (2019) argument in relation to ELT

that TEd should provide primary school teachers with necessary expertise in the area of children's literature to enable the realisation of the above.

Much of this scholarship, it can be noted, has been a response to European policy and to felt concerns that the emphasis on instrumental dimensions of language teaching have led to reductive conceptions of language subjects. Specifically, many scholars have reacted against the implications for language teaching of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001).¹² The latter has become a basis for national school curricula in Europe, and in Sweden the National Agency for Education explicitly stated in its syllabus supplement that the English school syllabus was so formulated as to align with CEFR (SNAE, 2017, p. 5, 10). According to Carola Surkamp (2012, p. 490, qtd in Volkman, 2017, p. 218), literature education research has tended to respond to functional approaches to language teaching in two ways. In part, it has opposed them and submitted, instead, how engagement with literature in the classroom "can contribute to the learners' general education and personality development." In part, it has aimed to show that "the use of literary texts can be reconciled with the currently postulated competences and the principle of output orientation." At issue in these arguments are both the value of studying literature and the conception of language subjects.

To return to the primary TEd syllabi, school-oriented goals attached to the study of literature, in several cases and especially in syllabi for years 4-6, suggested a desire to transcend narrowly functional approaches to school ELT, by also emphasising other values for studying literature than facilitating language reception and production. I hasten to add, however, that it was far from always possible from syllabi formulations to determine the school subject conceptions that underpinned the studied courses, as TEd syllabi tended to be vague, for instance about the envisioned uses of literature.

The function and benefits of studying literature in primary TEd

As regards the function and benefits of studying literature for the student teachers, a recurring goal was increased familiarity with English-language literature for children. As the reading lists indicate, attention was often paid to literary works readily used in ELT classrooms for years 1-3 and 4-6. Course descriptions and learning outcomes, especially for English syllabi specialising in years 4-6, also repeatedly linked the study of literature to the development of student teachers' general knowledge about English-speaking countries, of their reading abilities as well as of their analytical and critical abilities. In so doing, these syllabi aligned with research on language and literature education mentioned above, which highlights the benefits for general education and personal growth of engagement with literature.

Moreover, many of the syllabi foregrounded the benefits of studying literature for primary student teachers' language development. Indeed, many of the syllabi established a parallel between primary student teachers' and primary school pupils' needs for language development. The emphasis on student teachers' language proficiency was specific to primary TEd, as such goals were normally not attached to the study of literature in English TEd syllabi and in general English syllabi (Dodou, 2020a; Dodou, 2020b). It is unclear from the present study whether this was in acknowledgement of the fact that primary student teachers did not specifically choose to study English, since that was an obligatory subject in their study programme (as stipulated by the 2011 TEd reform), or if it reflected

assumptions – or experiences – by academic English staff regarding this student body’s language proficiency. Regardless, this syllabus feature suggests that a dominant means of legitimising the study of literature was by emphasising the value of literature in English for student teachers’ language development. As noted above, within language education research the latter is a key argument for engaging with literature.

Subject conceptions and the study of literature in English

Course descriptions and goals in the English syllabi indicated two main ways of conceptualising – and justifying – the study of literature in primary TEd. Roughly, these corresponded to the types of module that featured the study of literature, on English in the classroom and on literature, respectively. The former conceptualisation emphasised school pupils and the English school subject and it relied on language education research on how to develop young learner’s language reception and production. Here, the study of literature was mainly justified by way of school curricular stipulations regarding pupils’ language acquisition and their confidence in using the English language (SNAE, 2018, p. 34). Testimony to this are repeated references to the uses of literature as a means to further pupils’ language development and to stimulate their motivation for language learning. Teacher competence, from this perspective, involved familiarity with a varied repertoire of instructional methods. This is evident in syllabi formulations that described the relevance of studying literature in terms of providing examples for appropriate teaching materials and methods. Whether these emphasised student teachers’ awareness of how to use literature in light of “theories on vocabulary and phrase acquisition” (Halmstad EN2045, my translation) or their training in “reading aloud and in free narration” (Linneaus 1GN036, my translation), the syllabi implied that the focus in TEd courses was on student teachers’ methodological toolkits for language teaching.

The second way of conceptualising the study of literature foregrounded student teachers’, rather than school pupils’, education and it was based on values primarily from the field of literary studies and secondarily from the field of language and literature education. Learning outcomes indicate that key functions for the study of literature, here, were to develop student teachers’ analytical and reasoning abilities and to impart to them general knowledge about the English-speaking world. They suggest that teacher competence was not merely to be understood in terms of familiarity with “basic theories and methods in literature teaching and learning” (Jönköping LE3K17, my translation) and an ability to plan teaching based on “steering documents and theories about language teaching and learning and second language learning” (West EFG400, my translation). It also depended upon the ability to use “basic literary terms to discuss and analyse different forms of narrative” (West EFG400, my translation) and to reflect on “social and cultural expressions in the English-speaking world” (Dalarna EN1116). Teacher knowledge, in other words, included discipline-specific perspectives from literary studies, with relevance for school curricular stipulations. The latter required that teaching should develop pupils’ reading abilities, stimulate their curiosity and their reading habits (SNAE, 2018, p. 7-8), and provide them “with opportunities to develop knowledge about and an understanding of different living conditions, as well as social and cultural phenomena in the areas and contexts where English is used” (SNAE, 2018, p. 34). The justifications for studying literature in this conceptualisation, in other words, latch onto such key goals for primary education as literacy and intercultural awareness. The orientation of the study of literature toward reading based on literary competence and toward the analysis of “social themes” (Linköping 973G06), notably, harmonised with English TEd syllabi and general English syllabi. Those, too, privileged the discipli-

nary questions and practices of literary reading and interpretation, and focused on the cognitive functions of literature and on its potential for providing knowledge about the world (Dodou, 2020b; Dodou, 2020a). The consistency across the academic curricula suggests the influences from the sub-discipline of English literary studies on this primary TEd approach.

A main difference between the two approaches to the study of literature in primary TEd, then, concerns how they defined what is central to ELT and to primary TEd, and what is peripheral.¹³ The result was partly diverging conceptions of the TEd subject and of its proximity, respectively, to the school and the academic subjects of English. Partly, the result was differing ways of positioning and valuating the study of literature therein. As the review shows, the former conceptualisations were more common in courses specialising in years 1-3 and the latter in years 4-6.

On the discrepancies between the programme specialisations

This difference between English courses in the two programme specialisations is likely the result of multiple factors. One concerns the content and aims outlined for years 1-3 and 4-6 in school curricular materials and how those were interpreted by academic staff responsible for English courses in the TEd programme specialisations. As indicated earlier, the 2011 curricular reform meant that distinct requirements for the early and middle years of the compulsory school were formulated in the school syllabus. In its supplement to the English syllabus, SNAE (2017) clarified that, as regards language reception,

In the early years, pupils shall mainly encounter English in spoken form. This standpoint is based on research which points out that the methodological principles of “hear-do” and “listen-understand-imitate-speak” are the most effective for fostering younger pupils’ confidence in their ability to use the language. [...] Therefore oral *and* written language is only emphasised from year 4 (p. 13, my translation, emphasis in the original).

The discrepancy between the content and orientation of English for years 1-3 and 4-6, respectively, was reiterated in the supplement in conjunction with language production and interaction. Here the inclusion in ELT of both speech and writing was described as “an articulated requirement” starting with years 4-6 (SNAE, 2017, p. 16, my translation).

These curricular specifications offer partial answers to what has affected the study of literature in the TEd syllabi, in terms of its position and orientation. The syllabus supplement, namely, implies a school curricular model in which disciplinary knowledge from the field of literary studies is not directly applicable in ELT for years 1-3, however beneficial it may be for primary student teachers in other ways. It is hardly surprising, then, that most TEd syllabi for years 1-3 focused on other competencies than, say, literary analysis, especially given that English studies were normally allotted 15 credits in this programme specialisation. Conversely, for years 4-6 the syllabus supplement emphasised textual understanding. For primary TEd, this emphasis implies that the fostering of student teachers’ developed reading abilities was more important for the years 4-6 programme specialisation. That literary analysis was considered particularly apt for training reading abilities testifies to the status that literary studies as a sub-discipline holds in academic English departments in Sweden, and also to influences on the TEd syllabi for years 4-6 from this part of the academic English subject.

Another likely factor for the differences between syllabi for years 1-3 and 4-6 is the academic staff involved in teaching courses that included the study of literature. A questionnaire sent to all aca-

dem English staff that taught literature within TEd in the period in question (2017-18) indicates that most of the respondents who taught literature in primary TEd were literary scholars, that is, they had PhD degrees in English-language literature and were also active researchers within the field of literary studies (Dodou & Gray, forthcoming).¹⁴ The questionnaire, which was sent to some 104 staff and had a 41% response rate, although it only divulges information about some of the staff who taught, rather than designed, TEd courses in the studied year, provides an indication of the outlooks that shaped the study of literature. Notably, most respondents who were literary scholars and active in primary TEd (13 out of 39 respondents) taught courses for years 4-6 (a handful taught both 4-6 and 1-3) and one taught literature in the years 1-3 specialisation only. It is unsurprising that courses for years 4-6 taught by literary scholars would include justifications for the study of literature from the field of literary studies, especially as most respondents specified that they did not have a background as primary school teachers or an active research interest in literature (or language) education. Staff competences were most likely consequential for the orientation of the study of literature also in years 1-3 courses and for the type of disciplinary knowledge and perspectives incorporated therein.

Influences on the TEd syllabi are numerous, as those syllabi testify which included in the learning outcomes for the study of literature both literary perspectives on literature (including literary terminology and practices of literary analysis) and strategies for language teaching (including theory and methodology on teaching and learning). Beyond competing academic outlooks, the syllabi suggest the influences of other stakeholders, such as the government, with its vested interest in ensuring a successful education system, for instance via stipulations on teacher competence in “subject didactics” in steering documents (*Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100). The outlooks of student teachers are also likely influences, given the requirements in Section 4a of the Swedish *Higher Education Act* (1992:1434) on the active participation of students in the development of higher education programmes, although their influence cannot be ascertained from the syllabus review. Here it is worth recalling the definition within curriculum theory of syllabi as products of compromise (Barnett & Coate, 2005, p. 39-40). In this regard, the multiple purposes and orientations of the study of literature can be understood in terms of a felt need to accommodate differing perspectives.

The findings from the present review, it can be noted, are consistent with those from other studies. For example, in a comparative study of TEd in the Swedish subject, Maria Ulfgard (2015, p. 130) found that the justifications for studying literature and the approaches to it varied across programme specialisations in primary TEd and in Swedish TEd. Moreover, her findings suggest that the approach to the study of literature largely mirrored the backgrounds of the academic teaching staff and their views on the value of engaging with literature.

Concluding remarks

Ultimately, the present review shows that the significance of the study of literature, though in many ways foregrounded, was formulated in different ways depending on the outlook and traditions mainly drawn upon and depending on underlying assumptions about *whom* the study of literature was for (student teachers or their pupils) and about *what* it was for. Despite variations within and across programme specialisations and universities, the review shows that the study of literature was recognised as a foundation for TEd courses – even when engagement with literature was simultaneously established as a supplement for school ELT. The study of literature, so the syllabi implied, was there to aid the general education, language competence and professional skills of student teachers.

In many TEd syllabi, especially in programmes specialising in years 4-6, the study of literature was incorporated also to develop student teachers' literary reading abilities, to sharpen their cognitive skills, and to introduce them to knowledge and practices from the field of literary studies. The relevance of studying literature, thus conceived, was formulated principally in terms of benefits for the individual. Yet, that many of these benefits – including developed language abilities and increased inter-cultural awareness – were also envisioned as relevant for primary school pupils, suggests that, in the examined syllabi, the study of literature in English was also established as a common good.

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¹ Specialisation in years 1-3 of the compulsory school leads to a Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Primary Education (180 ECTS credits) and specialisation in years 4-6 leads to a Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education (240 credits) (*Higher Education Ordinance* 1993:100).

² This limited autonomy reflects the Swedish education system, which is steered by goals and results at central level and involves control via periodic evaluations. The most recent government proposition regarding TEd, *Bäst i klassen – en ny lärarutbildning* (prop. 2009/10:89), and the Official Report of the Swedish Government, *En hållbar lärarutbildning* (SOU, 2008:105), on which the proposition was based, similarly, have little to say about subject-specific content and aims, though they specify that Swedish universities and university colleges should offer equivalent (*likvärdig*) TEd.

³ For a discussion of English as a global language and the consequences this has for English language education, see for instance Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016, p. 19-41). On the status of English in Sweden, Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016:24) write that: “If we take the case of Sweden, the prevalence of English has led some scholars to argue that English can be regarded as a second rather than as a foreign language [...], even though others stress that such a claim only holds at an individual level” For a discussion of the linguistic globalisation of English, Swedish language policies and the status of ELT, see for instance Francis Hult (2012) and Béatrice Cabau (2009).

⁴ The 2018 translation of the *Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare* included revisions regarding equality in parts 1 and 2 of the curriculum, which were implemented on July 1, 2018. The revisions did not affect the English school syllabus, which followed the stipulations in the 2011 curriculum version.

⁵ Primary school pupils are guaranteed 60 hours of English teaching in years 1-3 and another 220 hours in years 4-6 (SNAE, 2020). It is up to the schools to decide how these hours should be distributed between each school year. These 220 hours can be compared to the 200 hours in English that pupils should receive in years 7-9 of the compulsory school (SNAE, 2020).

⁶ In these discussions, scholarship attends to various aspects of reading and teaching literature in ELT classrooms, as exemplified in extant issues of the *Children’s Literature in English Language Education CLELEjournal* and in *Acta Didactica Norge*, as well as in such publications as Werner Delanoy and Laurenz Volkmann’s *Future Perspectives for English Language Teaching* (2008a), and Janice Bland and Christiane Lütge’s *Children’s Literature in Second Language Education* (2014). Swedish-based school-oriented research on literature and ELT includes the examination of classroom activities and materials in primary school (Schröter & Molander Danielsson, 2016), of the “ideological and emotional dimensions of reading” in the upper secondary ELT classroom (Thyberg, 2012) and of the potential of literature for intercultural learning in upper secondary ELT (Greek, 2008).

⁷ In relation to English TEd, recurring concerns in Swedish-based research include text selections and various types of creative writing activities (Sundmark & Olsson, 2020; Svensson, 2021), democratic citizenship education via literature (Cananau & Sims, 2017) and approaches to disciplinary knowledge (Dodou, 2018).

⁸ A key goal with the TEd reform of 2011 was to strengthen teacher competence in subject teaching and learning (*ämnesdidaktisk kompetens*), not least for primary school teachers (*Bäst i klassen* 2009, p. 17-18).

⁹ At Malmö, TEd courses in English were offered by the faculty of Education and Society, whereas general English courses were offered by the Faculty of Culture and Society.

¹⁰ For a discussion of crossover literature, see for instance Sandra Beckett (2009).

¹¹ A possible exception is J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan* (1904), as it was unclear from the reading list whether the prose edition or the play was taught.

¹² As Werner Delanoy and Laurenz Volkmann (2008b, p. 12) observe, the CEFR combines functional approaches to language teaching with a humanistic and intercultural language learning agenda. However, they maintain, “the absence of humanistic and intercultural aspects on the document’s more concrete levels makes them an appendix to, rather than an integral component of what is defined as communicative competence.”

¹³ For a discussion of different traditions of TEd and of how changes in TEd policy for the past several years have sought to reconcile, or to integrate, disparate traditions, see Lars-Göran Malmgren’s discussion of the Swedish subject (1996, p. 107).

¹⁴ None of the respondents who taught literature in primary TEd English courses in the academic year 2017-18 was a PhD-holder or an active researcher in the field of language or literature education, one had a primary school teacher degree and three had some experience as primary school teachers of English (Dodou & Gray, forthcoming).

Vol 15, nr 2 2021

Tema: Litteraturdidaktik

Tema: Litteraturdidaktik – Litteraturstudiers relevans för skola och samhälle
Mattias Aronsson, Katherina Dodou & Anette Svensson

Integrating competence and *Bildung* through dystopian literature: Teaching Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* and democracy and citizenship in the English subject
Marit Elise Lyngstad

Klimatkrisen i klassrummet: Reflektioner kring användning av litteratur i undervisning om hållbar utveckling
Ulrika Andersson Hval & Celia Aijmer Rydsjö

Ett drömspel: En lärarstudent utmanar gymnasieelever att tolka Strindberg
Katarina Rejman & Elisabeth Zetterholm

Alla läser! Empiriska perspektiv på frågan om litteraturens samhällsliga relevans
Olle Nordberg

Why study literature in English? A syllabus review of Swedish primary teacher education
Katherina Dodou

Musiklyrik i läroböcker i franska för den svenska skolan
Mattias Aronsson

Spel som berättelser
Stefan Lundström

Från finrummet till vardagsrummet: Transmedialt berättande som litteraturdidaktisk underhållning
Anette Svensson & Jenny Malmqvist

Promoting EFL literacy through shared and individual classroom reading experiences of literature
Ion Drew

Litteraturläsning som upplevelse och livskunskap
Pär-Yngve Andersson