Culture in Language Education; Secondary Teachers’ and Pupils’ Views of Culture

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Preface

This paper is not related to any ongoing research project and was written by Josefin Andersson and Emma Gregmar, who are equally responsible for this degree project. However, its sections were divided between us in the following way: Josefin Andersson wrote the introduction and the methodology part. Emma Gregmar wrote the background part consisting of previous research. Yet, theses sections: Abstract, the table of contents, research question, result & discussion, conclusion & analysis, the reference list and the appendix were written together. Moreover, the interviews were also conducted together but the transcriptions of the interviews were equally divided between us.
Abstract

Prior research in the field of culture and language education depicts the close relation between language and culture. Furthermore, such research emphasises that in order to understand and to be able to use a language properly, one needs to acknowledge that language is culture. Today English is a global language and a tool for communication in working life, in studies and when travelling. Hence, to be able to communicate in English one needs to know the cultural codes in these specific settings. Moreover, language teaching has many dimensions and according to the curriculum, teachers have an obligation to raise cultural awareness amongst pupils as well as teach fundamental values. The purpose of this paper is therefore to investigate how secondary teachers and pupils view and work with culture and how these views can be connected to the curriculum and to the syllabus of English Lgr.11. Through interviews with secondary pupils we found that their view of culture to an extent connects to the cultural content of the curriculum for Swedish compulsory school, Lgr.11. Through teacher interviews, we additionally found that even if the teachers had a broad view of culture that was connected to the curriculum, they did not always manage to convey their cultural teaching to their pupils.

Key words: Authentic materials, the syllabus for English, culture teaching, cultural awareness, English as a global language, ELT, language education, secondary school, Lgr 11
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English is a global language and is used for multiple purposes such as study and working life. It is crucial to realize that language is not merely a language but also a carrier of culture. In the same vein, McKay (2002) points out that English today is considered by many to be an international language and does not belong to any other than to the people who use it and, therefore, the English language cannot be reduced to single countries or cultures. MacKay also states that “[c]urrently, many ELT materials use cultural topics related to native English-speaking countries on the grounds that learning English should entail knowledge of native English speaking cultures” (p. 2). However, Kramsch (1993) discusses how pupils who have not grown up in a country where English is used as a first language, often have a harder time to identify meaning in the English language and know how to express themselves in an appropriate way in any given context. This means that they do not have the cultural codes in order to understand the target language fully. To be aware of this fact is of great importance in today’s classrooms when teachers no longer have a homogenous set of pupils. In the same vein, Tornberg (2000) discusses how teachers no longer can attempt to draw on any standardized, unified Swedish culture in comparisons to other cultures.

As mentioned above, English is used in many different contexts in global relations as well as in everyday life. In order to avoid culture shocks at work, in one’s studies or when traveling, there is a demand for cultural teaching. Kramsch (1993) discusses how conflicts can occur when people do not share the same culture, and how teachers can help their pupils to develop cultural awareness through their education.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate secondary teachers’ and pupils’ views of culture in language education. In order to do this we will highlight the importance of cultural awareness and cultural education with the help of previous research and studies in the field of culture and language. Furthermore, the importance of culture is also stated in the syllabus for English Lgr.11. According to the syllabus, teachers should “provide pupils 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” (p. 32). The above statement
is one of many concerning culture in the syllabus and with this strong focus on culture we want to investigate how teachers and pupils view the syllabus and how teachers intend to work with these aims regarding culture in the classroom.

Still, the syllabus leaves room for many different definitions of culture and which areas that could or should represent “areas and contexts where English is used” (ibid). Kachru & Smith (2008) illustrate a model of three different circles that depict areas where English is spoken. The inner circle countries consist of the UK, the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, while India, Nigeria, the Philippines and Singapore belong to the outer circle countries. China, Europe, Japan, Korea and the Middle East are areas that are included in the expanding circle. Our experience is that our partner schools use materials that often exclude cultures and countries from the outer and the expanding circle.

The concern about what cultures that should represent the English language has been widely discussed by researchers such as Tornberg (2000), and McKay (2002). Furthermore, Tornberg (2000), questioned the syllabus Lpo.94 concerning the above statement which is the same as in Lgr.11, and criticised the lack of definition of ‘areas’ and ‘contexts’ and argued that if no such definition is made, then what are the pupils supposed to show an understanding of or reflect upon? However, this is not the case in Lgr.11 since the comments to the syllabus for English do describe why areas and context are not explicitly defined in the syllabus. Furthermore, the syllabus states “Teaching should encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge” (p. 32), which means that the teachers should help the pupils to understand the connection between culture and language and its importance in language teaching and then give the pupils the opportunity to express their understanding. Many teachers use materials that have a strong focus on inner circle countries and teach culture in a traditional way, which means a stronger focus on facts rather than the concept that culture is dynamic. Researchers in this area such as Risager, Byram, Gagnestam and Lundgren support the view that many teachers teach culture in a traditional way. Nevertheless, culture and cultural education are complex matters and as such it can be defined and carried out in educational settings in many different ways.
Due to what is stated in the syllabus concerning culture, the purpose of this paper is to investigate how teachers and pupils view the syllabus of English (Lgr 11) in regard to culture in language education. In order to do so, we formulated two research questions to guide us in our investigation. They are as follows:

1. How do secondary teachers and pupils view culture and how can these views be connected to the curriculum and to the syllabus of English?

2. How do the same teachers and pupils describe how they work with culture in the classroom?

In order to get these questions answered we decided to conduct interviews at a compulsory school in Malmö, where we interviewed three English teachers and fourteen pupils in year nine. However, before we could begin our investigation we had to take a closer look at how culture is described in the syllabus for English as well as previous research and studies within the field of culture in language education, including the connection between culture and language.
Culture in Language Education

Culture in the syllabus for English

According to Spencer-Oatey (2008), “[c]ulture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other peoples’ behaviour” (p. 3). In the same vein, Nieto (2010), states that “[c]ulture is complex and intricate; it cannot be reduced to holidays, foods, or dances, although these are of course elements of culture” (p. 9). These descriptions of culture are our starting points when analysing the teachers’ and the pupils’ interviews.

According to the syllabus for English (Skolverket, 2011), cultural teaching is highly promoted as in the following statement: “Teaching should encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge” (p. 32). The comments to the syllabus for English discuss this statement and claim that an important task for the teaching of English is therefore to stimulate students' interest in language and culture. In other words, according to the syllabus, teachers should inspire and support pupils to develop an interest in culture and language. One way to inspire the pupils to learn English is to underline its status. According to the syllabus for English, “[k]nowledge of English … increases the individual’s opportunities to participate in … international studies and working life” (p. 32). This means that teachers should highlight the importance of the English language and how it will benefit the pupils in their future. There is a need for teachers to provide scenarios of how the English language is used in different contexts in professional and personal life. As a teacher, one needs to bear in mind that “areas and contexts where English is used” (ibid), also include the outer circle countries, and that a context where English is used might as well be a cricket game in Bombay, as a tea party in London. The comments to the syllabus of English discuss how and why, the term ‘areas and contexts’ is used instead of countries and this is because English constantly becomes more present in different contexts. However, language areas are not synonymous with a nation’s
borders and since language should be seen in a social perspective, the term ‘areas and contexts’ is a more suitable description.

According to the syllabus, teachers should encourage pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and in order to do so the teachers should use a variety of different teaching methods and material in order to get the pupils interested and educated. It is the teachers’ responsibility to create an environment where the pupils feel safe and to have “confidence in their ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes” (p. 32). Teachers should use materials that create cultural awareness among the pupils, such as using authentic texts that represent “different living conditions” (ibid). Using authentic materials may avoid the creation of stereotypes and minimise the risk of only representing a single view. The comments to the syllabus for English claim that knowledge of culture and tradition, along with language skills, contributes to new perspectives for the students and that is the reason why ‘cultural phenomena and traditions in various contexts’ is core content for communication in years 7–9. Nevertheless, the concept of culture has a very broad meaning in the syllabus and includes not only knowledge of culture in the traditional sense as in literature or art but it also refers to values and key concepts in different groups and social contexts where English is used. Cultural knowledge is also about being able to see patterns and avoid creating cultural stereotypes. Here again, it is important to include “social and cultural phenomena” (ibid), and the outer circle’s countries as well. The comments further discuss how knowledge about different living conditions in various parts of the world will give the students the opportunity to reflect upon both similarities and differences, but doing so without passing judgement them.

In the next section we clarify and discuss three studies conducted by Risager and Byram (1999), Gagnestam (2005) and Lundgren (2002). These studies are of great importance to us since they indicate how some teachers view culture and language education. They therefore have a direct bearing on our own investigation.
Previous research in cultural language teaching

We have chosen to take a closer look at three studies: Risager and Byram (1999), Gagnestam (2005) and Lundgren (2002). These studies have provided us with useful background information, which helped us when constructing the interview questions, as well as developing a better understanding of different approaches to cultural teaching and to the concept of culture. Being aware of these different points of view will be helpful to us, since we want to find out how the teachers perceive and aim to work with culture, and furthermore how the pupils perceive and work with culture. We also take Risager’s and Byram’s, Gagnestam’s and Lundgren’s findings, as well as Nieto’s and Spencer-Oatey’s definitions of culture into consideration when analysing how the teachers of one compulsory school perceive the syllabus concerning culture, and how the teachers work towards raising cultural awareness among their pupils.

During the years 1992–1994, Byram and Risager (1999) conducted a study on language teachers’ understanding of culture and descriptions of their own teaching. In the study, Language Teachers’ Identity and the Process of European Integration (1999), 653 Danish and 212 English teachers participated. Byram’s and Risager’s study showed that half of the teachers that were interviewed defined culture as a country, a group of people or a society. This definition is nationally oriented, which means that culture is what people do – the way of life of people. One of the participating teachers also stated: “To understand other people’s way of life you have to ask: What is it like to be a Dane, a German and so on” (p. 252). However, Nieto (2010), stated that “Culture is complex and intricate; it cannot be reduced to holidays, foods, or dances, although these are of course elements of culture” (p. 9). Risager (1998) came to the conclusion that teachers’ understanding of culture is often limited to the traditional belief of a national or a single culture and Risager stated: “at the same time, the nationally orientated conception exists in the form of numerous references to ‘the other peoples’, in an attempt to cope with national stereotypes” (p. 254). In the study Byram and Risager (1999) conducted, they identified four categories of teachers’ definitions of culture: Culture as people’s way of living or traditions (how people live, activities etc.); culture as the objective structures people live in (social, political and economic institutions); culture as norms or values (behaviour, mentality and people’s ideas about life); and culture as valued products or artefacts (music, literature, art etc.).

The most common definition amongst both Danish and English teachers was that culture was understood as ways of living, traditions etc. Within the Danish school system, language and
culture were often separated. Culture was looked upon as something that included everything but language, for example literature and social structures. In contrast, the English teachers often had a more anthropological concept of culture with more focus on people’s way of (life) living, but also paid attention to social structures, norms and values.

Lundgren (2002) investigated the possibility of developing intercultural awareness among pupils through English teaching in the Swedish comprehensive school. One of her points of departure concerns the fact that Sweden is a multicultural country. As a consequence, teachers are responsible for fostering essential basic morals and values. Lundgren’s discusses how language teaching should focus on the pupils’ individual development and not simply cultural facts. In her view, intercultural understanding becomes the content of language teaching. The language is then a tool in order to develop pupils’ ability to be aware of their own morals and values as well as to respect others and feel a responsibility for the world around them. However, Lundgren states “Teachers are powerful as they are in charge of contents and actual classroom pedagogy. If official guidelines are vague and contradictory, it is safe to stick to earlier practices” (p. 179). Lundgren (2002) defines intercultural understanding as an insight, gained through contact and communication with people, and how people’s perspectives of the world and ways of living might differ across cultures. According to her, it should be an increasing concern in language education to develop solidarity, cultural awareness and independence amongst pupils. Lundgren’s study reveals opportunities and obstacles for developing intercultural awareness in EFL education. According to Lundgren (2002), obstacles for developing intercultural understanding include the fact that teachers themselves often have no experience of cultural studies and therefore often have a traditional view of culture. Moreover, the goal of language acquisition dominates their teaching and there is little time for self-reflection and discussion. Many teachers thus feel uncertain about what methods and materials to use when the cultural content of the textbook is not enough. On the other hand, examples of opportunities that support intercultural understanding are that teachers do not have to use the textbook and can therefore find authentic materials. Furthermore, multicultural classes with diverse perspectives can be seen as an asset in intercultural teaching. Cultural language teaching may develop critical thinking through argumentation and pupils’ ability to reflect upon other pupils’ views.

Lundgren’s analysis (2002) showed that there were four qualities that the teachers considered important for pupils to possess, in order to develop intercultural understanding: empathy,
matureness, language competence, and views on knowledge. However, according to the teachers that she interviewed, pupils are often immature, self-centred and lack empathy for people around them and consequently show no interest in the outside world (2002). Lundgren further points out that the strongest focus in EFL education still is on British and American culture. Lundgren’s study is relevant to us since it concerns intercultural understanding in Swedish compulsory schools and how teachers view language education. Her study is similar to ours through the focus of what we are investigating.

In 2005, Gagnestam conducted a study that focused on definitions of culture and the relation between language and culture. The study had a total of 420 informants and included questionnaires and interviews with upper secondary teachers and their pupils, as well as English language students from Malmö högskola. According to Gagnestam (2005), the informants expressed four different views of culture. Gagnestam named the four categories as follows: ‘cultural culture’; ‘culture as a way of living’; ‘culture as a way of thinking’, and ‘culture is everything and everywhere’. Cultural culture is synonymous with ‘high culture’, such as art, opera, film, literature and theatre. Culture as a way of living was the most common view among both the teachers and the students and can be described as traditions, food, clothing and communication between people. Culture as a way of thinking includes morals, values and how societies are constructed in regard to politics, religion and social classes. The last category ‘culture is everything and everywhere’ consists of all the above definitions. Gagnestam’s study showed that the teachers and the pupils had a different view of culture. Some of the teachers showed a wider understanding of the concept, while pupils often limited culture to high culture. Gagnestam came to the conclusion that even if some of the teachers had a wide definition of culture, they did not seem to be able to convey their cultural teaching to the pupils (2005).

**Culture in language teaching and the use of authentic material**

In our study, one of the purposes is to find out how the teachers and the pupils perceive the connection between language teaching and culture and moreover, if they think that culture is important. In order to do this we need to establish what cultural teaching is all about. There are numerous authors in the field of culture and language, but in this section we have focused on Kramsch (1993) and Byram & Risager (1999). However, before we give an account of their
views we use the syllabus as a starting point. The syllabus of English (Lgr.11) promotes the importance of cultural teaching, and it declares that “[t]eaching should encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge” (p. 32). However, in the syllabus, language and culture are separated, while Kramsch (1993) has the opposite point of view:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (p. 1)

Since our aim is to investigate the teachers’ reasoning around the connection between language and culture in the syllabus, this opposition is an interesting aspect to study further. There are many opinions on whether language and culture should be looked upon as separate elements or united under the concept of culture. Risager (2007) discusses how language and culture can be polarised in the following way: “on the one hand, it is possible to see a language as being closely linked to its culture; on the other hand, it can be seen as a communication tool that does not have anything to do with culture” (p. 166). In addition, Risager expresses how English as a foreign language is often taught with little connection to culture. In the same vein, Kramsch discusses how culture is not seen as a feature of language itself, but is often seen as information carried by the language. Kramsch expresses how ”cultural awareness becomes an educational objective in itself, separate from language. If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching” (p. 8). Furthermore, Kramsch states that “[c]ultural awareness must … be viewed both as enabling language proficiency and as being the outcome of reflection on language proficiency” (p. 8). In Risager’s view (2007), teachers can provide pupils with materials that help them to see diversity; the materials can consist of all kinds of literature.

In the same way, the syllabus for English highlights that the teachers’ role is to “provide pupils 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” (p. 32). We interpret ‘opportunities’ as providing the pupils with a wide range of materials of interest to them that will raise and broaden their cultural awareness. Risager exemplifies how
literature can be seen as a portal to what some refer to as ‘foreign experiences’, i.e. different ways of living, worldviews and various norms and values. Nevertheless, Risager also points to similarities between cultures, that is to say that people from different cultures share the same experiences, emotions and perspectives. Furthermore, she discusses the importance of making this visible to the pupils. According to Risager, there are three cultural dimensions of teaching language: the content, the context and the poetic dimension. The content dimension is the most common perspective in the classroom, which includes cultural and societal relations in different types of text and media. This dimension is described in Lgr 11 in how language teaching “should aim at helping the pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used, and also pupils’ confidence in their ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes” (p. 32). The context dimension can be explained as social relations where language is used. This is in line with Lgr.11 which states that pupils should be given the opportunity “to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in international studies and working life” (p. 32). The poetic dimension can be said to concern culture in the ‘poetics of language’, i.e. how culture is synonymous with the poetic use of language in both written and spoken word. In Lgr.11 under listening and reading – reception it is declared that the pupils should get the opportunity to face “Language phenomena such as pronunciation, intonation, grammatical structures, sentence structure, words with different registers, as well as fixed language expressions” (p. 35).

Kramsch (1993) discusses the term ‘authentic texts’, and how teachers can work with authentic materials in the classroom. According to her, authentic texts can be described as texts that lead to social interaction, for example a restaurant menu or a newspaper article in which the reader retrieves information. In a similar way, Little and Singleton (1988), explain that “an authentic text is a text that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced” (p. 21). The need for authentic texts is implicitly expressed in Lgr.11, which states that pupils should have the opportunity to “[u]nderstand and interpret the content of spoken English and in different types of texts” and that “[t]eaching should encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge” (p. 32).

The question is how can pupils learn cultural authenticity in non-authentic classroom settings? The pupils will study different types of texts but will they understand them? Kramsch (1993)
argues that authentic texts, when used in a communicative way in a classroom setting, should be socially appropriate and similar to real life experiences. However, Kramsch speaks of how a ‘generic native speaker’ must be questioned due to the fact that it is not possible to generalize people within cultures. For example, it is dangerous to assume that any Swedish speaker is representative of any given Swedish society. Furthermore, Kramsch suggests that the term ‘authentic’ describes how “language is used in non-pedagogic, natural communication” (p. 177). She also points out how authentic material can be seen as the opposite to the beforehand produced non-natural language that is used in textbooks and instructional dialogues. Kramsch concludes that the use of authentic materials in communicative approaches will hopefully result in the pupils being able to communicate with native speakers of the language in an appropriate way. Moreover, the aim for the pupils is to develop cultural awareness of their own as well as of the target cultures, and this understanding will hopefully develop their intercultural understanding. Nevertheless, there is a distinction to be made between authenticity in texts and authenticity in their use. Kramsch discuss how authenticity does not lie in the text itself but rather in the uses speakers and readers make of it, that is to say that an authentic text lose its authenticity when it is not used in the way it was intended. Kramsch gives an example of how a restaurant menu loses its authenticity when used in a classroom in order to practice grammar. The menu is then no longer used in the way it was intended by the restaurant. Moreover, there is always a risk when using authentic materials in an institutionalised setting if the material is used in the ‘wrong way’ but nevertheless, when used correctly, authentic material is a great resource for teaching.
Methodology

Why use a qualitative approach?

In this paper we use a qualitative approach in order to answer our research questions. Contrary to a quantitative approach, one uses the qualitative method when investigating a smaller amount of informants but in more depth, through interviews, observations or open-ended questionnaires. Freebody (2003) discusses how the researcher may retrieve more interesting data from a qualitative method. Moreover, qualitative methods often provide a larger amount of text to be analysed, which may result in a better understanding of the research area.

In our study, we interview some teachers and pupils with questions related to how they view the core content and the knowledge requirement of the syllabus for English Lgr.11. Furthermore, our purpose is to find out in what way they work towards these aims.

Heigham and Croker (2009) discuss how interviews can be seen as both a conversation with a purpose as well as a professional conversation. Moreover, they go as far as to claim that interviews can be said to be “the gold standard of qualitative research” (p. 183). We have chosen to use a semi-structured interview in our research because we want answers to specific questions, but we do not mind that the interview opens up new dimensions. We want the respondents to feel comfortable and secure in order to provide us with reliable data. According to Heigham and Croker (2009), semi-structured interviews often give the respondent the feeling of being part of something meaningful. We have chosen to interview three English teachers from one compulsory school in Skåne and twelve of their pupils. However, Freebody (2003) discusses how the answers from an interview can give crooked answers due to the informants’ conception of themselves and the reality around them. Consequently, an interview is not more authentic than any other social interaction. In the next section we will go into deeper detail about how we formulated our interview questions and how they are related to the syllabus and also, how we took previous researchers’ questions into consideration.
**Designing the interview questions**

To formulate interview questions is a complex matter. There are a number of aspects that one needs to take into consideration. According to Hatch (2002), interview questions should be open-ended, clear, generate answers related to the objectives of the research, be respectful towards the informants and presume they have valuable knowledge. Moreover, the questions should be formulated in a language that is familiar to the informants. When we designed our interview questions to the pupils we specifically focused on formulating the questions in order to make them clear and to use language that was comprehensible to the pupils. In order to get more precise answers and for the pupils to feel comfortable, we conducted the interviews in Swedish. On the other hand, the teacher interviews were conducted in English due to both pragmatic reasons as well as to the matter of authenticity. In order to keep the teacher interviews as authentic as possible, we did not want to translate their interviews, simply because we wanted their voices to be heard and also avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. When we designed the questions for the teacher interview we kept in mind that the reason informants are picked for interviews is because they have valuable knowledge relevant to our research. Furthermore, according to Hatch (2002), the questions should not be simplistic or condescending and should be asked in a way that invites the informant to teach the researcher.

We have divided our teacher interview questions into three categories:

- How do secondary teachers of English perceive the syllabus in regard to cultural content?
- How to work with culture in the classroom?
- How do pupils understand culture?

When we formulated the interview questions we looked at previous research in the area and how questions were formulated. All of them (Gagnestam, Risager & Byram and Lundgren) start with the definition of culture, and so did we. The underlying reason behind this starting point is that the way in which the teachers perceive culture (in itself and in regard to the syllabus of English) will probably mirror their cultural teaching. Byram and Risager (1999) support our point of view and discuss how there is no common framework for defining culture and how to work with it in the classroom. Therefore the teachers have to formulate their own personal concept and understanding of culture. Furthermore, Byram and Risager (1999) state that “the individual is
forced to reflect on what culture means for them, based own their own personal experience and their experience as a citizen in a Europe in the process of change” (p. 83). The second section is about how the teachers teach culture in the classroom, what materials they use and how they work to raise cultural awareness amongst the pupils. According to Gagnestam (2005), the teacher will teach culture depending on the teacher’s perception of culture. A narrow view of culture might result in traditional and national-oriented materials and methods. The third section concerns whether the teachers think that their cultural teaching is visible to the pupils or not. It is important that the teachers reflect upon how their own cultural teaching is perceived by the pupils.

The pupils’ interview questions are divided into two categories: ‘Betydelsen av kultur och förståelsen av kulturinnehållet i den engelska kursplanen’, and ‘Kultur i klassrummet: Elevernas tankar om kulturundervisningen’. In the first category we want to know the pupils’ perception of culture (in itself and in regard to the syllabus of English). This is an important question, because if the pupils respond that culture is static and can only be reduced to traditions, food, and art etc. consequently, the pupils will not be aware of the cultural teaching the teacher is trying to accomplish. In the second category concerning the cultural teaching, we get an insight into how the pupils think that they work with culture in the classroom and how they would like to work with culture. Gagnestam (2005) is the only one of the researchers who paid attention to the pupils’ perceptions of cultural teaching. Gagnestam designed questions that concerned the pupils’ understanding of the cultural teaching and the answers from the pupils differed from the teachers in some aspects. In some of the questions we can compare the teachers’ and the pupils’ answers, this is not the aim of the research but it can make the answers more reliable and trustworthy. There may, for instance, be scenarios where the teacher is certain that the cultural elements are obvious in their teaching but are not able to convey this to the pupils. There can also be situations where the teachers degrade the pupils’ ability to understand the concept of culture and how to work with it in a broader sense. In other words, the teachers might think that the pupils are only able to work with culture in a traditional way.

According to Lundgren (2002), there are teachers who consider pupils’ inability to empathise with others as an obstacle for cultural teaching. In the syllabus of English Lgr.11 one of the statements mentions “areas and contexts where English is used” (p. 32), we are interested in looking at how the teachers interpret this statement, which we think is somewhat of a dilemma.
However, we did not want to ask this explicitly, but hoped that we, through implicit questions, would get trustworthy answers. If the questions regarding the statement were asked in a straightforward, we were afraid that the teacher would feel that we were questioning their teaching and knowledge. Moreover, we felt that there was a risk that the teachers would give us the ‘right’ answers, simply to satisfy us. On the contrary, we were explicit when questioning the pupils about which cultures and countries are included in their English language education. We felt that there was no need for implicit questions since we knew we would get honest answers. The pupils have no reason to sugar-coat their education. Before the interviews could begin, we needed to conduct a pilot study and we discuss the reasons for doing a pilot study in the next section.

**Pilot study**

A pilot study was carried out before the actual interviews, to make sure that our questions were understandable and that they were not open for multiple readings. Furthermore, Heigham and Croker (2009) discuss how a pilot study is a helpful instrument when it comes to refining interview techniques. We carried out our pilot study (conducted the fourth of September) in one of our partner schools, which is a compulsory school in Skåne. We interviewed one teacher and four pupils from ninth grade. We handed out the interview questions to the teacher and the pupils one week in advance. The teacher picked out the selection of pupils from two different classes. The pupil interview took place in a group room without any disturbance from the corridor. The interviews were recorded with a mobile phone.

The interview with the pupils went well. They understood all the questions and answered with ease. When the interview was finished we asked the pupils if the questions were understandable. All the pupils thought that the questions were understandable and easy to answer. We got the impression that the pupils were relaxed and comfortable in the interview situation. The interview was successful and we did not make any changes to our questions.

Unlike the pupils, the teacher was less relaxed with the interview situation and expressed how it felt like a test of knowledge about culture. According to Hatch (2002), the feeling of being tested in an interview is not unusual and states “When informants think that correct answers exist to the questions they are asked, the interview becomes a game of finding the right answers” (p.
The interview with the teacher was fruitful, the teacher pointed out that question 2c and 2d were similar. However, these questions are different but it is our job to point out these differences and to explain questions when misunderstandings arise, which we did not. Overall, we found that the pilot study was helpful, because it showed that our questions were formulated in a way that gave us relevant answers. Neither the teacher nor the pupils had any trouble understanding the questions and were able to give us clear and concise answers.

**Sampling strategy and ethical issues**

Since we knew our respondents beforehand, we selected our informants through a convenience samples strategy. Furthermore, we chose these teachers because we consider all of them to be competent and engaged teachers that would supply us with useful information. The teachers that we interviewed work at the same school and they are the only English teachers working with pupils in year 7-9 and these teachers also represents a wide range of teaching experience and age. According to Hatch (2002), the convenience sampling strategy is the most common sampling strategy as well as the least desirable one (p. 99). Hatch claims “Their inclusion here should not be taken as permission to study individuals because they are familiar and easy to access” (ibid). Nevertheless, we do not see the negative aspect in knowing your informants. Convenience sampling strategy suits our study because we have access to the school, and already have a trusting relation with both teacher and pupils, which affects the reliability of the answers. That is, we feel certain that we will gain trustworthy answers from both teachers and pupils since we are familiar with the teaching- and learning environment. Because we chose to conduct the interviews in one of our partner schools, feasibility plays a part here too, that is being able to get things done during a short period of time. Furthermore, the informants are comfortable with us and there is no need to establish a new relationship.

The teachers picked out the selection of pupils from two different classes. Before we conducted the interviews we had to ask for parents permission in order to be able to interview the pupils. We handed out a permission slip to the pupils to take home and when these were signed and approved we could begin the pupils interviews. In the permission slip we made clear that all personal records would be treated strictly anonymous in order to protect the pupils identities. To do so is of great importance according to Heigham and Croker (2009) who discuss how
researchers must treat their participants’ identities in a careful way in order to protect the participants’ privacy and to hold the information you retrieve confidential.

**Conducting the Interviews**

The interview questions to the teachers and to the pupils were handed out one week in advance. In contrast to the pilot study there was a greater variety of pupils. In the pilot study the teacher had picked out the top grade pupils. However, the pupils that participated in our study had been randomly selected, which gave us more trustworthy data, since it represented the reality. The interviews were conducted on 18th and 19th of September. We have given the teachers fictional names and on the 18th we started our first teacher interview with Jessica. Jessica is a teacher of needlework and English and has been teaching English as her second subject for eight years. The interview was conducted in her needlework classroom where she knew nothing would interfere. The interview lasted for 30 minutes and we felt that the interview was successful and gave us relevant answers. The second teacher interviewee Karin is both an English and German teacher but has taught English as her first subject for eight years. This interview took place under similar conditions and setting, and lasted for 22 minutes. The third teacher interview with Sarah took place on the 19th of September and lasted for 27 minutes. Sarah has been teaching English as her only subject for 22 years, but has her roots in social science study.

We interviewed three groups of pupils; each group consisted of four pupils. The first group was interviewed on the 18th of September, while the other two took place on 19th of September 2014. Each group consisted of an equally mix of boys and girls, this was not our intension but we were glad to have both genders evenly represented. Furthermore, the groups represented a variety of grades from E to A and we believe that this would give us a more realistic representation of the pupils’ view of culture. In the result section we have named the groups A, B and C when presenting their answers and we did this due to convenience. We discussed whether we should give the pupils fictional names, like we did with the teachers, but we decided that this could be confusing when presenting the answers. Moreover, it was sometimes hard to separate the pupils’ voices from each other since they were interviewed in groups and not as individuals.
Result & Analysis

In this section we present the results of the interviews with the teachers and pupils. First, we show the answers concerning the pupils’ and the teachers’ view of culture. Secondly, we give an account of how the teachers work with culture in language education. Thirdly, we illustrate the pupils’ view of culture in the English language classroom. In other words, how the pupils actually work with culture in the classroom, but also how the pupils would like to work with culture. Fourthly, we present and analyse to what extent the teachers think that cultural teaching is visible to the pupils. Last but not least, we clarify to what degree the teachers think that the pupils can learn English only through cultural teaching. In order to analyse the results we connect the informants’ answers to the syllabus for English, to the comments to the syllabus for English, as well as to previous research and studies in the field of culture and language education.

The view of culture

The teachers

As mentioned earlier, defining culture is a complex matter and even though all informants in many aspects shared beliefs and perceptions of culture they expressed their thoughts in various ways. We began the teacher and pupil interviews with a discussion of what culture means to the informants. We consider the answer to this question as relevant and important to our investigation, solely because the view of culture will probably reflect the teachers’ way of teaching.

Karin expressed that “Culture means everything, everything in a country basically, communication between people, it means language, how we perceive things, how we make ourselves understood, which words that we use, the literature we read, it is very complex”. This way of defining culture directly connects with the Syllabus of English that states how English teaching should “encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge” (p. 32). Sarah offered a view of culture as well as
reasons for developing cultural consciousness amongst the pupils “I can think of culture as being cultured and I think that is part of your aim as a teacher to open the doors for children in areas where maybe they wouldn’t have come in contact with things that wouldn’t have been for school. A similar idea is expressed in the syllabus where it is put in the following way “Teaching should also provide pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge about and an understanding of different living conditions, as well as social and cultural phenomena” (p. 32). Jessica further discussed, how culture also “means reading good literature, but it also means about different societies in different parts of the world. And it also means within a society for example, in Sweden we have people that have different cultural experiences”. Karin further discussed how culture additionally is “how to behave together with just language and also that people are different in different countries. Not that everyone is the same but that there are fine rules which of some sort make up a culture. You have to behave differently and express yourself differently”. Sarah discussed how culture “means life, because when you live your own life you are always dependent on the people around you. Culture is really everything. Yeah, and I think culture is created between people, between groups of people and, you create your own culture. Maybe you are aware of that you belong to a culture or maybe you are not. It all comes down to the way you live and why you live that life”. Furthermore, she expressed how important English is in today’s society and how English can be said to be the language of information. Moreover, the informant declared the importance of making the pupils aware of the significance of being able to use the English language, due to the fact that it will play an important part of the pupils’ future study and working life. This is completely in accordance with what is stated in the syllabus about the importance of providing pupils with the knowledge and skills to use English both in everyday- and professional situations “Knowledge of English thus increases the individual’s opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in international studies and working life” (p. 32). Overall, the teachers explicitly explained the concept of culture and we could with ease relate most of what they said to the syllabus of English. The teachers’ answers indicated that they share Spencer-Oatey’s (2008) view of culture and they all discussed how culture is made up by assumptions and values as well as orientations to life, beliefs and behavioural conventions within groups of people.

With the teachers’ answers in mind, we were interested to know the pupils’ view of culture, we started the pupil interviews with a discussion about what culture meant to them.
The pupils

The majority of the pupils described culture as being paintings, art, history, clothes, religion, food, traditions, religious traditions, customs, and theatre. One pupil from group A further discussed how culture also includes language, pitch of voice and body language. In the beginning of the interview the pupils’ answers pointed to a more traditional view of culture, mentioning food, art, clothes etc. Gagnestam (2005), recognised four categories of how to view culture: ‘cultural culture’, ‘culture as a way of living’, ‘culture as a way of thinking’ and ‘culture is everything and everywhere’.

Gagnestam’s (2005) study depicted, in the same way as our study, that the pupils often had a view of culture that was limited to high culture and to traditions etc., which relates to the first and the second category. Nevertheless, towards the end of the interviews most pupils showed a greater understanding and described culture as societies that include different people and ethnicities, which would be the third and the fourth category of Gagnestam’s way of viewing culture.

The pupils from group B and C discussed how countries have different cultures and how a country like Sweden, especially Malmö and their school, is multicultural. Finally, at the end of group A’s interview the pupils came to the conclusion that relationships and living conditions also are part of culture and one informant expressed how “culture is almost everything, isn’t it?”

The comments to the syllabus for English discussed how culture teaching should involve a broader view of culture than just literature, food and art. In a similar way Nieto (2010) discussed how culture is complex and intricate and cannot be reduced to holidays, food, or dances, although she recognise that all of these are elements of culture. With the pupils answers in mind we can tell that the pupils, in the same vein as the comment to the syllabus for English and Nieto’s statement, think of culture as traditions, values and key concepts in different groups and social contexts in which language is used.
The teachers’ view of how they work with culture in language education

In this section we will present the teachers’ view on how they currently work with culture in the classroom. For multiple reasons the teachers use textbooks to a limited extent. Karin did not use textbooks at all and affirmed “I have not yet seen any textbooks, which raise cultural awareness because it only gives facts, it is only cultural facts in them so alone no textbooks raise cultural awareness you have to talk about it, things around, because culture is not just facts”. Kramsch (1993) also pointed out, how authentic material can be seen as the opposite to the language that is used in textbooks and in instructional dialogues. The same informant further expressed “I like to use fictional literature because I think it is a good language in many books, you get useful words in them and it is real texts”. This is in line with Risager (2007) who argues that literature is a good way of teaching language, because literature can be seen as a medium for presenting different ways of living and various norms and values to the pupils. Sarah described how textbooks can be used as part of the lessons but only when they are relevant to the project that they are working with. All the teachers expressed how they, instead of the textbook, use a variety of materials such as newspapers, magazines, film, youtube-clips, literature, music, role-plays etc. This is in line with the syllabus that highlights the use of “Spoken English and texts from various media” (p. 34). However, Jessica described how the textbook could be used “If it fits in with the theme that I got, it does not dictate the lesson, it never has”.

Karin explained that using other material, for example authentic texts, is fruitful and stated how “it is more fun, it makes more sense to read something that is real”. Using authentic materials with “Spoken English with some regional and social variants” (p. 34) is one of the suggested contents of communication in the syllabus. Kramsch (1993) also discusses authentic materials and illustrates how authentic texts can be described as texts that lead to social interaction, e.g. a restaurant menu or a newspaper article. Kramsch further argues that when an authentic text is used in a communicative way in a classroom setting, it should strive to be similar to a real life experience. It seemed to us that all of the teachers use a communicative teaching approach and that the lessons involve a lot of discussions in the classroom, and the teachers expresses how important it is to encourage the pupils to speak. Whether the teachers’ communicative approach is similar to the ‘real life experience’ that Kramsch discuss or not, we simply cannot see because this would require classroom observations.

However, the importance of encouraging pupils to speak and learn how to express themselves
are mentioned in the aims of the Syllabus of English, which states “Language strategies to contribute to and actively participate in conversations by taking the initiative in interaction, giving confirmation, putting follow-up questions, taking the initiative to raise new issues and also concluding conversations” (p. 35). All of the informants use topics for discussion that are of interest to the pupils and can be anything from political issues to teenage pregnancies. According to the syllabus an important task for the English teacher is to create an interest among the students in language and culture.

By using topics for discussion that are relevant to the students, this contributes to “knowledge about the world and culture in the broadest sense in areas where the language is used, to give students new perspectives” as stated in the syllabus. (p. 10). Jessica discussed the importance of making the pupils aware of racism, human rights and the environment and tried to find updated materials concerning these issues. Jessica stated “I have an obligation to make children social aware, and that is if you look at the bigger frame of about what we are suppose to be doing in school regardless if it is English class or math class”. Sarah expressed similar ideas and stated, “Many times I feel like I’m teaching civics and not English”. Lundgren (2002) discusses the same matter and speaks of how teachers nowadays are responsible for fostering essential basic morals and values as well as teaching English. Language then becomes a tool in order to develop cultural awareness and the intercultural understanding is the content. Likewise with the teachers’ answers and Lundgren’s discussion, the comments to the syllabus for English, argue that the teachers have the obligation to teach fundamental values in connection to the English teaching. In the syllabus, under the title Fundamental values and tasks of the school, the syllabus states “Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based. Each and every one working in the school should also encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person and the environment we all share” (p. 9).

No matter what materials the teachers use for creating discussion, they all agree that the purpose is to give the pupils the opportunity and the courage to speak. Karin claimed that in order to encourage the pupils to speak, the language is not that strict in the classroom, the focus is to get the message across “they can mix, they may speak ‘Swenglish’ if they want to as long as it is understandable”. “Oral and written information, as well as discussions and argumentation for different purposes, such as news, reports and newspaper articles” (p. 34) are highly promoted in the syllabus of English. However, all of the teachers use materials mostly from inner-circle
countries. Karin explains why the majority of literature she uses comes from inner circle countries in this way; “so far, because I do not know any other literature. It is not, it is always a time issue so I chose books that I have read, right now we are reading a book from England called ‘Junk’, which you may have read. It is about drugs, about teen pregnancies, it is about all the bad things that can happen to young people really”. This problem is recognised by Lundgren (2002) who points out that the majority of teachers still has a strong focus on British and American culture in their language education and Lundgren consider this to be an obstacle for developing intercultural understanding. On the other hand, most of their materials are authentic and have, according to us, a clear connection to the aims of the syllabus regarding culture.

Sarah gave an example of how to work with culture and how to combine the textbook with other materials and how the pupils then get to work with the text and how it is developed into discussion and role-play. The text in this case was from the textbook Time (1998) and is an extract from the novel The Woman Who Walked Into Doors by the Irish author Roddy Doyle (1996). The novel portrays the abusive relationship between Charlo and Paula in an Irish Catholic home, where domestic violence and alcohol is part of the everyday life. First, the pupils listen to the extract from Time that is presented with an Irish accent. Then the teacher adds more material from the novel that has been selected in order to start a discussion about relationships, sex and different living conditions due to religion and social class. Furthermore, the pupils compared this love story with Romeo and Juliette before they made a role-play where they dramatized a violent kitchen scene between Charlo and Paula. This way of working with a text relates to the following statement from the syllabus where the teacher should give the pupils the opportunity to “Understand and interpret the content of spoken English and in different types of texts, express themselves and communicate in speech and writing” (p. 32).

In the same vein, Jessica gave an example of how to work with My secret land from UR (Utbildningsradion). The pupils listen to different children around the world who give clues about where they are from. In My secret land, sixteen different countries are represented; most of them are not inner circle countries and gives the pupils the opportunity to listen to different kinds of English. This is highlighted in the core content of the syllabus that declares how the pupils should listen to “[s]poken English and texts from various media” and “with some regional and social variants” (p. 34). Furthermore, to listen to different accents and dialects from different countries was something that the pupils brought up in one interview group.
The pupils’ perception of culture in the English language classroom

In group A, two pupils discussed how they would like to learn more about different countries and one pupil expressed “I want to learn about more countries, not only the big ones like USA, Australia, England and Sweden and things like that but like South Africa”. The pupils’ comments are supported by Lundgren’s (2002) statement that schools nowadays still have a strong focus on inner circle countries, especially British and American cultures. The pupils’ interest about other countries outside of the ‘inner-circle’ is also in line with McKay’s (2002) viewpoint of how English as an international language is no longer reduced to the countries of the inner circle. The pupils gave more examples of materials they have worked with and the text about Charlo and Paula and Romeo and Juliet are mentioned several times in the pupils’ interviews as an example of how they work with culture. One pupil from group A exclaimed, “Is not Romeo and Juliet culture? When their parents decide whom their children should marry. Yeah, that must be culture, different conditions”. In group B, the pupils discussed how they have worked with cultural materials for example they have watched the film *Rabbit proof fence*, the TV series *Goal* and a text from the textbook about an aboriginal girl that faces discrimination. In the same vein as the teachers, all of the pupils confirmed that they do not work with the textbook a lot. Most of them agreed that the chapters in the book are ‘boring’ and not interesting. In group A though the pupils mentioned that they use the textbook sometimes if it fits into the theme, for example when they worked with Australia they read a chapter about the colonization of Australia.

The pupils discussed how they work with different English speaking countries such as USA, Great Britain, Australia and Ireland. The pupils from all groups explained how they watch films, read and listen to texts, which they then discuss or work with in groups. According to them, the majority of the lessons focus on discussion and how and if they have understood the text, this is inline with the syllabus that discuss how pupils should be able to “understand and interpret the content of spoken English and in different types of texts” (p. 32). Furthermore, according to the pupils they are often handed scaffolding questions in order to retrieve information.

The pupils in group B, further discussed an assignment where they interview their parents about love and what they think is important in a relationship, and what qualities and characteristics they wish for in their children’s future partners. This type of assignment relates to the syllabus, which identifies how teachers should use “Different types of conversations, dialogues, interviews and oral communications” (p. 34) in their teaching. In addition, the pupils
discussed the topic ‘love’ and the different assignments they had worked with and realized how all of it is culture. Similar ideas are expressed in the syllabus under the heading *Content of communication* “Current and subject areas familiar to the pupils /…/ relations and ethical questions; Views, experiences, feelings and future plans” (p. 34). On that account, two pupils from group B mentioned “For example the assignment where we should ask our parents about what is important in a relationship. We have read a love story, and answered questions, that is culture”, “because it is kind of different everywhere”.

Many pupils in group B suggested that they would like to compare their cultures with others and that they could even compare cultures in their classrooms. The comments to the syllabus for English promotes the idea of how awareness of one’s own cultural origins, as well as sharing them with others, provides a secure identity which is important in order to develop an understanding of the values and living conditions of other people. The comments further indicate how the school can be both a social and a cultural meeting place and how this can contribute to develop cultural awareness. Lundgren (2002) discusses how multicultural classes can be seen as an asset in language education because it gives the pupils the opportunity to compare different perspectives, which contributes to developing an intercultural understanding. One pupil from group C expressed the opinion that some cultures are more interesting than others. Another pupil from group C said “I think we should work with more interesting things like gender issues, inequality in the world, and cultural heritage”. However, other pupils from group C described that they do talk a lot about racism, poverty and respect in the classroom. Overall, the pupils had many interesting ideas of how to work with culture in the classroom and they showed an interest in working with culture in general. Moreover, their ideas were not only reduced to the traditional view of culture as food, clothes and facts about countries, but some of the pupils in group C expressed a desire to work with social phenomena’s in different societies, for example gender inequality and racism. The pupils ideas are in line with the core content of the syllabus that points out that “Each and everyone working in the school should also encourage respect the inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men” (p. 9). With the pupils’ ideas in mind, of how they wanted to work with culture in the classroom, we now move on to the teachers’ view on how they believe that the pupils’ perceive their cultural teaching.
The teachers’ opinion of the pupils’ understanding of the cultural education

In the following section we discuss if the teachers find that culture education is visible to the pupils. In order to find out answers we asked direct questions to the teachers and indirect questions to the pupils. Karin and Jessica thought that their cultural teaching was visible to the pupils, however Jessica discussed how the culture is visible to the pupils when working with Australian, American, and British culture. According to Jessica it is the teacher’s responsibility to make the pupils aware about how many areas in the world where English is spoken, the informant affirmed, “We studied South Africa and they don’t really have a clue about that at all. So that’s an eye-opener for them, to realize that that is English”. Additionally, Sarah reflected, “I don’t think they think of culture as being cultured, which I also think is part of the deal. I don’t think they see it like that”. However, Sarah added that it might be visible to the pupils at the end when the pupils are doing their evaluation of the theme that they have been working on. Jessica described that the pupils in the school “are rather aware of culture because they come from so many different backgrounds, so it’s easy to pick it up because they understand that we are not all alike”. Likewise, the syllabus exemplifies under the heading: *Fundamental values and tasks of the school* how “The internationalisation of Swedish society and increasing cross-border mobility place high demands on the ability of people to live with and appreciate the values inherent in cultural diversity” (p. 9). Jessica agreed with Sarah, that it is easier for the pupils to understand the cultural elements in the education when they “talk about the aborigines in Australia or the black peoples’ situation in the United States”. Furthermore, Karin is the only one that mentioned the word culture explicitly to the pupils in the classroom, and she was the same teacher that was the most convinced that the pupils were aware of the culture education. “But not just facts it is more important I think to understand living, how people are and what people do, not generalize, so it is hard to explain”. The importance of not to generalize is also mentioned in the comments to the syllabus for English when discussing how culture vary in different groups and social contexts. The comments further state that the aim of the teaching is that the pupils should be able to see and understand patterns, while avoiding cultural stereotypes, which can occur if ones generalize.

In the beginning of all the interviews with the pupils concerning culture in their education they answered that they worked with culture when talking about different countries, which would consist mostly of facts. Nevertheless, the result of Gagnestam’s (2005) study suggested that even
if most of the teachers had a broad perception of culture, they were not always able to make this visible to the pupils. We will now take a closer look at the teachers’ view of teaching English *only* through culture teaching.

**The teachers’ ideas of teaching English *only* through cultural teaching**

We were interested in knowing how the teachers would respond to the question regarding the pupils’ ability to learn English *only* through culture teaching. The reason behind this question was to find out how the informants viewed their own teaching but also to find out if any of the informants’ thinking was in line with Kramsch’s idea of how culture should not be regarded as a *fifth skill*. This relates to both of our research questions since we want to find out how the informants view the syllabus for English in regard to cultural content and how they work with culture in the classroom.

All of the informants considered that pupils could learn English *only* through cultural education. Karin even exclaimed “that is all I do so I really hope they do learn through it. I think that you need to vary your teaching methods and I think that you need to think about why you are doing things and what you want them to learn from doing it”. The answer from Karin indicated that she does not view culture as a fifth skill, instead she expressed similar ideas to Kramsch’s (1993) who discusses how culture is always in the background in language education “right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around of them” (p. 1). Sarah answered “I think that they can learn English through culture teaching, absolutely. Yeah, if that was your thing and that is what you want to go for I do not think that your pupils would end up worse in English than anybody else’s, if you had that as your theme or your type of teaching”. Jenny answered that, “In a way I think you could do only that, you could have that content to start from. And then of course when you find difficulties in understanding you have to work with vocabulary, grammar and things like that”. Jessica and Sarah both answered in a way that implied that they viewed culture as a *fifth skill*, however, both of them certainly showed a deeper understanding of the concept ‘culture’ in language education during other parts of the interview. Overall, the interviews offered a broad perspective of how
culture can be looked upon, how it is implemented in language education and furthermore, the importance of raising cultural awareness.
Conclusion & Discussion

In our investigation we were interested in investigating how culture and language is connected and more specifically, we wanted to find out how secondary teachers and pupils view culture as well as finding possible connections to the curriculum and the syllabus of English Lgr.11. The reason behind our interest in this matter is due to the rich and broad cultural content in the curriculum and in the syllabus of English. Therefore, it is an important task to teachers to be able to recognize and convey to pupils the phenomena of English as an international language, and how it is used both as a tool for communication as well as a carrier of culture in an increasing globalised society. Moreover, teachers need to be aware of how culture is everything and everywhere and that the world is made up and shaped by culture. We were interested to see if the teachers shared our thoughts about culture, which are in line with Nieto’s and Spencer Oatey’s definitions. To our help we formulated two research questions as our starting point to our investigation. We asked ourselves: How do secondary teachers and pupils view culture and how can these views be connected to the curriculum and the syllabus of English? How do the same teachers and pupils describe how they work with culture in the classroom?

All of the teachers revealed thoughts and ideas about what culture meant to them and expressed it in a way that, in our opinion, had a clear connection to what is stated in the curriculum and in the syllabus of English regarding culture. The teachers expressed an obligation to make their pupils aware of fundamental values and morals that infuses Malmö but also the rest of the world. Furthermore, the teachers discussed how literature is culture and how culture is communication between people, but also how culture is implicit in the way we perceive things and make ourselves understood. Our informants further discussed how English is important in today’s society and how English nowadays is the language of information. However, the pupils’ views of culture seemed to be somewhat limited to the traditional view of culture, although after discussing with each other, some pupils managed to show a deeper and wider understanding of the concept of culture. This result could suggest that the teachers do not always manage to make the cultural teaching visible to the pupils. All the teachers believed that the cultural teaching is visible to the pupils when they teach culture in the traditional way. But they were not as certain
about the visibility and the understanding of culture, when for example discussing abortion in Ireland, festivals in Singapore or different living conditions in South Africa. Karin was the only one of the informants who used the word culture explicitly in the classroom, and that was the same teacher who was most convinced that the cultural teaching was visible to the pupils at all times. However, we believe that the interviews broadened the pupils’ views through discussions among themselves and they seemed to realize that most of what they work with during their English lessons is culture. We came to the conclusion that the pupils understand the cultural teaching to an extent, and that the teachers sometimes have to point out what culture is in order for the pupils to understand. However, we have discussed what is of the utmost importance; is it whether the pupils understand that it is culture they are working with, or is it if they understand the reason behind reading about slavery or the holocaust?

The pupils themselves described how they work in the classroom with topics like racism, poverty and respect. They further discussed how they have worked with classic love stories like Romeo and Juliet and the pupils expressed an understanding of how all of this is culture. According to us, this showed that while working with the tasks mentioned above, the teachers had succeeded in raising cultural awareness amongst the pupils and moreover, contributed to developing a deeper understanding of culture. But they did express that they would like to work further with social phenomena in different societies like gender inequality and racism.

We believe that it is of great importance to work towards raising cultural awareness among the pupils. Malmö is a multicultural city and a lot has happened in Malmö recently and during the past years, everything from Malmö FF’s political opinions in the media about equality, to the increasing support of the Swedish democrats in the election this year. If we look at the bigger picture the world is in a rather chaotic state with events like the Ukraine crisis, the debate in Russia concerning homosexuality, the Palestine and Israeli conflict and the civil war of Syria, just to mention a few. These issues are of great significance to bring up to discussion since these events are, according to us, created due to cultural differences and the lack of cultural awareness. In more detail, conflicts in the world are often caused by cultural elements such as religion, traditions, values, morals and different point of views of human rights.

We also argue that teachers should find appropriate materials and give the pupils the opportunity to discuss such events in the classroom, for example the outcomes of the election in Sweden, human rights and all the problematic situations the world is facing today. Our
informants gave examples of materials that they use in their teaching such as film, music, YouTube clips, role-play and authentic texts such as newspaper, article, fictional literature, and magazines. Our informants use the textbooks to a very limited extent in their teaching due to the fact that, according to them, the cultural content of textbooks simply are not good enough. Our experience is that textbooks often have a strong focus on western cultures and countries. When an outer, or expanding circle country, for instance India is represented in the textbook the text often represent one side of the story and talking about traditional facts. Additionally, the voice in the text is often the one of a westerner that is visiting the country, representing the American and European white upper-class cultures. No matter how good our informants were at using authentic material, still, most of the texts originated from inner circle countries. On the other hand, the informants mentioned that discussions might occur in the classroom concerning the outer, and the expanding circle, for example when discussing topics like racism, human rights and the environment. Nevertheless, we consider it somewhat problematic that our informants showed such a strong focus on inner circle countries in their use of authentic literature when the comments to the syllabus for English clearly state that ‘areas and contexts’ can be anywhere where English is used.

It surprised us that our results were so similar to e.g. Lundgren’s study (which is more than twelve years old), when it came down to not limiting English as the property of the traditional inner circle countries. The pupils interviews further indicated that the representations of ‘areas and contexts where English is used’ often were reduced to countries like the UK, USA and Australia and they expressed a desire to work with other countries as well, not only “the big ones like USA, Australia, England” and so on. However, the third informant described one material called My Secret Land that this teacher’s pupils currently worked with. We listened to this material, which consists of sixteen episodes where children from different English speaking countries present themselves, as well as facts that are representative for the country they live in. Examples of countries that are represented in My Secret Land are Botswana, Singapore, Zambia and Pakistan and the children that speak have authentic accents. We came to the conclusion that this material is a good way of showing the pupils examples of outer circle countries (countries where English is an official language) and additionally, provide the pupils with the opportunity to listen to English with different regional and social variants and also, make the pupils aware of different areas and contexts where English is used. Yet, we believe that there might be a risk of
generalisation toward these countries and the cultures that are denoted in this material, since the children speak of traditional facts and typical cultural behaviour like food, dances etc. These generalisations might contribute to the creation of nationalistic stereotypes. Although, we consider that using a material like *My Secret Land* is at least, an effort to include outer circle countries and that the cultural diversity that is represented in this material beats most textbooks by far.

The outcomes of our study are of importance to us as future teachers, since its results has been an eye-opener for us in many different ways. The study has contributed to our understanding of the concept of culture and that it is crucial as an English teacher to have a broad definition of culture in order to teach. In other words, it is significant to be attentive of how culture infuses the curriculum and the syllabus of English and to be observant in regard to opportunities, as well as obstacles with cultural teaching. It has raised our awareness that teaching culture is not always a simple task, and if one is not aware of the obstacles the teacher might teach culture in a way that could create nationalistic stereotypes. This means that teachers always have to be critical and analyse the outcomes of one’s own teaching but especially to take a closer look at the material that is used in the classroom. We have learned that the material either if one uses the textbook, that the school is offering, or uses other texts, the material should be authentic and not only represent one single view of the story. One other thing that we have realised after the pupils’ interviews is to cherish the diversity that many schools in Malmö have today, especially when the pupils express a desire to work with culture in the classroom by comparing and sharing cultural experiences.

We have come to the conclusion that there are four different approaches to teaching English through a cultural content. According to us there could be four possible scenarios; the first one would be when the teacher has a narrow view of the concept of culture but still thinks that he/she is conducting the cultural teaching in a way that is in line with the curriculum. Yet, cultural education is reduced to dealing with culture in the traditional sense as in facts about culture such as food, clothes, art etc. The second scenario would be a teacher that has a broad view of culture but is not able to convey the message to the pupils, or tends to focus to hard on the word *culture* itself and consequently ends up with using the more traditional view on culture. The third scenario would be when the teacher is doing cultural teaching in a naturalistic way and includes all the elements of the curriculum but without being fully aware of it. This way of teaching still
promotes a cultural understanding, but the pupils might not be aware of that it is culture, because the teacher is not explicitly mentioning the word *culture*. The fourth scenario could be that the teacher is fully aware of what culture *is*, how to convey the ideas to the pupils, what materials to use and also are conscious of, and know how to avoid ‘cultural traps’ such as stereotyping. If our study had been conducted in a larger scale over a longer period of time and if it would have included observations of our informants teaching, then we could have been able to place the teachers into these four different categories. It would not be fair to our informants to make such judgements based on the small amount of data we have gathered in this study.

Overall, we think that we have managed to answer our research questions. However, in order to do so we had to adjust one of the research questions at the very end of our writing process. Consequently, we realised the hardship of formulating questions that were actually answerable and that would give us data to analyse. Furthermore, we came across difficulties with the interview questions to both the teachers and the pupils. The pupils’ answers to the questions about the statements from the syllabus of English concerning their understanding of those statements certainly left more to wish for. Basically, the statements were too hard for the pupils to analyse. Even if they got the statements in Swedish they were still not able to express any understanding of them. The reason behind this failure is because when we conducted the pilot study the teachers selected the participating pupils because they were talkative. They were A grade pupils who did not have any problems at all analysing the statements.

When conducting the real pupil interviews the pupils that participated were randomly selected and represented different proficiency levels. They were not selected in the same way as in the pilot study. These differences in selection of pupils became evident when analysing the answers. In the teacher interviews we experienced that our questions related to the statements from the syllabus did not function fully in the way we had intended. There was a misinterpretation of these questions which led to the modification of the first research question that from the beginning was: How do secondary teachers’ and pupils’ view the syllabus of English in regard to cultural content? But after analysing the result we altered the question to: How do secondary teachers and pupils view culture and how can these views be connected to the curriculum and to the syllabus of English?

Our intention was for the teachers to discuss their perception of the statements regarding culture but instead, the statements became more of scaffolding to the teachers when discussing
their view of culture and how to work with culture in the classroom. Nevertheless, we are satisfied with the results of the study, although we are somewhat surprised that our results are so similar to the results that Lundgren, Gagnestam and Risager accounted for long before Lgr. 11 came into use. Has it really not happened more in regard to cultural awareness and education? Or is there perhaps a very large focus on teachers to teach culture but the adequate training of the teachers is forgotten? It is one thing to believe and express that one does cultural teaching but it is another thing to actually do it and especially in a way that shows awareness.

Nevertheless, we believe that the pedagogical and the methodical aspect need to be included to a wider extent in future teachers’ education, and as teachers to be, one needs to ask the questions; what should be taught? Why should it be taught? And how should it be taught? Something to wish for in the future would be that compulsory schools includes and offers courses in cultural teaching and cultural studies to their employees. Additionally, compulsory schools should supply teachers with updated textbooks, materials and appropriate technical equipment that will facilitate teachers’ work. We believe that in the future, schools should give teachers more time to design lesson plans with appropriate cultural tasks and assignments and give them the opportunity to work across the curriculum and cooperate with other teachers. Lgr.11 promotes cultural teaching in its broadest sense and highlights the importance of including fundamental values and different ways of living in order to give pupils the possibility to develop an intercultural understanding.

Furthermore, Lgr.11 also promotes the use of authentic material, which is stated as different types of material “Spoken English and texts from various media” (p. 32) However, it is important to acknowledge that no matter how interesting and relevant authentic material you bring into the classroom (with the purpose of creating the real life experiences that Kramsch speaks of), recreating the real world within the classroom is not possible. Still, making connections between the outside world and preparing the pupils for that world is of course of the utmost importance for a teacher. Our informants both teachers and pupils gave examples of various ways to teach and learn different aspects of culture and also exemplified what materials to use in their education.

Moreover, the teachers showed how they made strong connections between their teaching and Lgr.11 and how they, most of the time, managed to convey these connections to their pupils. Even though there is always room for improvement and life is a never-ending lesson, our informants, especially considering the limited time and resources given, do teach culture in an
aware way and more important, they manage to convey this to their pupils.

Finally, our study showed us results that have made us realise the importance of embodying culture in language teaching as well as to view one owns teaching in a critical way and to consider all aspects of cultural teaching. In the interviews the pupils expressed a traditional view of culture but after discussions about what they actually do during their English lessons they showed a broader and deeper understanding of culture. The pupils moreover showed an interest in culture, which the teachers should have knowledge about and make use of. Being an English teacher gives you every opportunity to use the language as a medium for the message and our final words are not words of our own but are those of Corbett’s (2003) “No longer are the students simply ‘learning language’- they are learning ways of viewing others and viewing themselves” (p. 18).
References


Appendix

Permission slip to the parents

Hej!


Jag ger min tillåtelse att låta min dotter/son att medverka i denna undersökning:

________________________________________
Datum och underskrift

________________________________________
Namnförtydligande
The interview templates

To whom it may concern
We are two students from Malmö Högskola, Engelska och Lärande and we are writing our degree project about secondary English teachers’ and pupils’ view of culture in English language teaching. The information given from the teachers and the pupils are confidential and anonymous. Your answers are crucial for our investigation so thank you for participating.

Sincerely
Emma and Josefin

Teacher interview

1. How do secondary teachers of English perceive the syllabus in regard to cultural content?

   a. What does culture mean to you?
   b. How do you understand the following statements from the syllabus?

   1. Knowledge of English thus increases the individual’s opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in international studies and working life.

   2. Teaching of English should aim at helping the pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used, and also pupils’ confidence in their ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes.

   3. Teaching should also provide pupils 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.
4. *Teaching should encourage pupils to develop an interest in languages and culture, and convey the benefits of language skills and knowledge.*

2. **How to work with culture in the classroom?**
   a. To what extent do you use textbooks in your teaching?
   b. In what way do you think that textbooks may contribute to raising cultural awareness?
   c. How do you currently work to raise pupils’ awareness about cultural content?
   d. How do you work to meet the knowledge requirements regarding culture in your classroom?

3. **How do pupils understand culture?**
   a. To what extent do you think that your teaching about culture is visible to the pupils?
   b. To what extent do you think that pupils can learn English only through cultural teaching?
      Explain!
   c. How do you assess your pupils’ achievement in regard to cultural content?

**Elev intervju**

Vi är två lärarstudenter från Malmö Högskola som skriver examensarbete som handlar om lärare och elevers syn på kultur i undervisningen. Alla uppgifter behandlas konfidentiellt, det vill säga att varken namn, klass eller kön på deltagare i intervjun kommer att nämnas.

Era svar är en viktig del av vårt arbete och vi är tacksamma för ert deltagande.

Med Vänlig Hälsning

Emma Gregmar & Josefin Andersson

1. **Förståelse av läroplanen (Lgr.11)**
   a. Vad betyder kultur för er?
   b. Följande står i kursplanen om kultur, vad tror ni att dessa meningar betyder?

   1. *Kunskaper i engelska ökar därför individens möjligheter att ingå i olika social och kulturella sammanhang och att delta i internationellt studie- och arbetsliv.*
2. **Undervisningen ska stimulera elevernas intresse för språk och kulturer och förmedla nytan av språkkunskaper.**

3. **Genom undervisningen i ämnet engelska ska eleverna sammanfattningsvis ges förutsättningar att utveckla sin förmåga att reflektera över livsvillkor, samhällsfrågor och kulturella företeelser i olika sammanhang och delar av världen där engelska används.**

Eleven ska kunna förstå:

4. **Talad engelska och texter från olika medier.**

5. **Talad engelska med viss regional och social färgning.**

2. **Kultur i klassrummet; Elevernas tankar om kulturundervisningen**
   a. Hur arbetar ni med kultur i klassrummet? Ge exempel, uppgifter, projekt osv.
   b. Hur skulle du vilja arbeta med kultur i klassrummet?
   c. Vad tycker ni om textböckernas kultur innehåll?
   d. Vad gör er lärare för att avgöra om ni nått de kunskapskrav som gäller kultur?

**Transcription of the teachers’ interviews**

**Sarah:** 42 years as a teacher including secondary school 22 years

**Josefin:** Question 1a: What does culture mean to you?

“Culture to me has two separate meanings I can think of culture as being cultured and I think that is part of you aim as a teacher to open the doors for children in areas where maybe they wouldn’t have come in contact with things that wouldn’t have been for school. For example yesterday we were talking about Oscar Wilde and we were talking about and listening to the Canterbury ghost, so in that respect, that is what culture means to me. It means reading good literature, the children knowing about Shakespeare but it also means about different societies in different parts of the
world, as in culture. And it also means within a society for example in Sweden we have people have different cultural experiences”.

Josefin: First statement from the syllabus:

“Obviously, that if you know, it is a rather... If you never heard or know who William Shakespeare is, I think is limiting you socially and maybe you can’t participate in things that is going on around you. The same with different, if I think about authors, English writers people that are unaware who Alice Monroe is or who different cultural figures are within a written context I think it limits their ability to participate. And I think it is up to us to open the door”.

Josefin: Second statement from the syllabus:

“We go in for that in a big way in our school. In each year that is a major part of the syllabus. For example this year it will be England and America, where English is used about how children how they attend school, the school uniform about the context of America, different aspects of it. And year eight Australia, we have been talking about racism now and the consequences of the aboriginal act and how it affected the people, what it is like and what people think of living in Australia. And in year nine South Africa”.

Josefin: Which countries or cultures do you include?

“Well are you thinking like physical area like a country?”

Josefin: Yes

“South Africa, England, America, Ireland, Scotland, where English is the official language, well one of them is. And they need to know, in my opinion, how life is like there”.

Josefin: Third statement from the syllabus

“If you look at England and how people’s background affects their style and I can say that this is one area where I actual use the textbook. There is a very, very good chapter in the year sevens
where two children one is from Malvern he goes to Malvern college his family live in a very exclusive area, both his parents went to Cambridge and then the other child came from an housing estate in Birmingham. This is a text that I use over and over again because for me it depicts that life is not the same for everybody within Britain. And that life is extremely different depending on what kind of family you are born into”.

Josefin: Do you compare this story with your pupils?
“Yes, I think that most of the time you do some sort of comparison, with what they experience”.

Josefin: Last statement from the syllabus

“Yes, obviously I want children to think that the English lesson, I don’t want anyone coming here and think “o my god it is English again”, that for me would be a disaster. I have an obligation to make children social aware, and that is if you look at the bigger frame of about what we are suppose to be doing in school regardless if it is English class or math class, making children aware and making children aware of human rights, environment, which I really try to include in my lessons, how important it is to be, to look after what we got. And that is in a global context not specifically where English is used. But I do and I try to be and get actively involved in what we are doing and use method that create an interest. So modern children very much like computers but because we have very few, we don’t do it very often as I would. But I would never let them only using computer I like them to write as well and using other, my lessons would never be solely through a computer. Because I think that that would become as boring as everything else, you need to have a variation. And I think that I have to say that most of the lessons I have cover these areas, making children aware of what is happening in the world and specifically in English speaking countries. Maybe making them aware of their background and the relevance of that.

2 a. To what extent do you use textbooks in your teaching?

I do use textbooks but limited. If it fits in with the theme that I got, it does not dictate the lesson, it never has. Even when it was extremely common and popular to have textbook. I have never been able to work along those lines. It doesn’t fit in with me.
2 b. In what way do you think that textbooks may contribute to raising cultural awareness?

In *Times* one they describe two children’s very different worlds and there is a very nice article in the textbook time 2 about a girl who as an aboriginal background, and about her experiences, different to most of the others at the university, because that there are so few children with an aboriginal background studying. And that they are aware of this is relevant. If I think about year nine and how we have been talking about Romeo and Juliet contra Charlo and Paula, the woman who walked into doors. How different backgrounds and what are relevant. We are talking about what is important in a partner, religion, can you marry someone from a different religion, not speaking the same first language. We have a lot of discussions. I have been fortunate to fix half class, although it is not on my timetable, so on Thursdays I don’t have a lunch any longer, but that is my choice. Because I think it benefits both me and the children to have half class. Where they have an opportunity to speak, it is very difficult for children to speak foreign language when they are in whole class”.

Josefin: What other texts do you use when not using the textbook?

“It could be from the newspaper, film. So now the year eights just finish to watch rabbit proof fence, and about the laws. And then I got something taken from the Internet, the article was about when the prime minister apologised for the way the aboriginal had been treated. It could be a variety, different things. Literature, stories, bit of stories, anything that I think would be interesting, pause, for them. And of course it have to be interesting for me otherwise it is difficult for you to get them interested, if it is something that you don’t are particular interested in yourself. In year eight when been talking about Australia, I have tried to do some geography, where the country is and how big it is, and where the main cities are, and then we have talked about the wildlife so there are a little bit of background of that. And then we talked little bit about politics mainly how the Anglo sax and when they were there and rule and regulation, I actually just the textbook there about the first settlers there in Australia, the Anglo Saxon that were sent there by the British government and now what the children do is to write a letter, and they have to pretend that they were a boy that were seen there in year 1778 and they could work in small
groups to give suggestions to each other, how the text could be improved. ‘I read there draft and say that you should write more about this or look at you grammar so it is correct and then they have an opportunity to rewrite it and have graded it so that is part of their assessment. And the next week they are either presenting an oral presentation about something from Australia or a written, they got a choice. Because now it says quit categorically, their on production, but it does not state weather it is spoken or written. So this time they have the opportunity, those who wanted to write could write and those who want to speak can speak. And that will also be graded, so there will be two things graded there”.

Josefin: And how active they are in the classroom, in discussions and so forth?

“Absolutely, there will be a multitude of thing when I give their grade at Christmas. One of them is activity in the classroom. And they have papers, so it says quit clearly, so that there cant be any misunderstanding as to why, how I arrived to my decisions. So that they can see and there would be a comment on how I think that they can improve. In year sevens we had had short things to hand in but really I am still trying to get to know them and they are trying to get to know me and it is not going very well. So I spend a lot of my time in conflict with them, unfortunately. And I hope that that will change. And the year nines, we hade a lot of discussions, and the half class has really helped them!”

Josefin: How do the pupils understand culture?

“I think mostly when they talking about culture they think about Australian-, American-, English culture, I don’t thing they think of culture in being cultured, which I also think is part of the deal. I don’t think they see it like that. But I would like that when they leave year nine, that they do know, get a taste of, that they have heard of the name Shakespeare that they now who he was. They have some experience of the Shakespeare language, people like Charles Dickens for example, whom we usually work on in year seven. So there is some culture element literature. I think when we are talking Australia, South Africa, England, America, Ireland is clear. But I don’t think it is specifically clear if we talk about Shakespeare”.

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Josefin: Or love? Like you did during your previous lesson?

“Yeah I mean, I don’t think that they, that it is there clear, no. I don’t think necessarily it has been my aim if I’m, maybe I should think more about my aims. I can look at this what they should have done till today. They have to interview their parents about what is important, what they thought their parents. The parents have to say what they would like in a partner. In my class they have all done it and they came really prepared, but they didn’t in this class, which is a shame. I told them that it was really important because that was the lesson. Well of course I think, it is a good way of teaching. It might been visible to them in the end, when we go through what we have been doing evaluation”.

Josefin: Are you mentioning the word culture to them?

“No, I do not think that I do. Should I? And of course I think that they can learn English through culture teaching, absolutely. Yeah, if that was your thing and that is what you want to go for I do not think that your pupils would end up worse in English than anybody else’s, if you had that as your theme or your type of teaching and or do in year nine that they would do worse on the national tests if that is what you have been doing. But I think teaching is a very subjective thing and the teacher should have a say in what they are doing, you have the syllabus, and you have all of theses criteria to thick of and you have to absolutely work within that frame. So that I can fairly assess children, but in which manner I present it, I think is up to each individual. Well I don’t, and it is pretty obvious that some children are more, have better general knowledge than others and have a more interest in it. But I can’t say that I categorise, I decide what area we are going to do and I make sure that they know what are expected of them. But I don’t do it in a cultural context I don’t give them a worsted grade because they can’t, did not know what the capital of Australia was. Or but I think that there are certain things, they have to understand what we have been talking about in class and that is mostly, not from the cultural point of view but that they have understood what have been happening. For example yesterday they were listening to “I hate hogs”, and they worked in small groups and I checked and they all got the message. They all understood that Eric was not racist; he was making fun of racism in Australia. And that was very important for me that they got that, and I checked with everybody and they had they understood
that. This was a song that the writer had written it as through a person called Boish Smith. But the writer did not think… And when they make their presentations next week about Australian, I have given them the criteria, what we are looking for. It is purely if we can understand it, followed the rules.

What I want in my classroom is the children to be confident and dare to speak. Dare to even say that this is not of interest to me. Because I think that English is such an important, I mean you can do anything. The content the material that you use, it really does not matter as long as you practise in English. But than because I am social studies really, it is important that they are aware, they you look at the larger criteria in what you should be doing in school. That the children are aware of racism, the human rights, the environment, all of these issues that we all got responsible to make sure that the children are aware of. But, if I am been honest, it is this that has to steer, do they understand, how do they show their understanding, and I have to make them different ways of reading, watching films, they are using the computer, they got an opportunity to use all of it and than they have to show that they have understood it and than they have to produce something on their own. And than what material I use is secondary importance but it is not me per say I think it is important that they know how English is used in different part of the world.

I have really nice stories written bus out Africans, and if I have time I use they. But the films I use about South Africa are made by Americans. They are not South African films. And of course a lot of the time it is American or English, but I think that just rabbit proof fence”.

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Karin, 8 years as an English teacher

Josefin: Question 1a: What does culture mean to you?

“Culture means everything, everything in a country basically, communication between people, it means language how we perceive things how we makes ourselves understood, which words that we use, the literature we read, it is very complex”.

Josefin: First statement from the syllabus:

“I understand that as it, basically you need to know that there are differently language used in different social contexts and settings. That you use for example when you write a formal text you do not use abbreviations, and that you do not swear in America. Yeah how to behave together with just language and also that people are different in different countries not that everyone are the same but that there are fine rules which some sort of make up a culture. You have to behave differently and express yourself differently. It has to be different levels I suppose, I see it as I have to speak about this contexts, that you can study in other countries but also that even if you study in Sweden you need to know a lot of English because most course books are in English. And also how to apply for work in different countries, how to write a letter to an employer and so on”.

Josefin: Second statement from the syllabus:

“Well basically English is used all over the world, since it is the most common second language and it is used in different ways. I mean we talk about that, it is a way of communicating with people from other countries, if you do not speak the same language most people speak English and you can meet in that. And also we talk about which countries it is the native tongue and we do study facts about those countries and we talk about the people in those countries, we also talk about ourselves and our use of English and why we use English in a certain way”.

Josefin: Third statement from the syllabus:

“A good way to go about that is to read literature, to read fiction from other countries England, Ireland, America, South Africa and compare it to Sweden and talk about other countries and to learn about the people, I think that more than that the area Great Britain is bla bla bla so many people live there, but of course they should know the capitals and some basic facts but not just
facts it is more important I think to understand living, how people are and what people do, not generalize, so it is hard to explain. And also I do not know if it fits in, maybe to come to the next, yeah it is the next”.

Josefin: Fourth statement from the syllabus:

“That they do not feel like that they have to speak a certain English, they do not have to speak perceived pronunciation or American, they can mix, they may speak Swenglish if they want to as long it is understandable and because I think it is important to tell them that because if they feel that they have to speak like native speakers they will fail, before they even start. We talk about that there are a difference between where to use American English and British English that there is a different in meaning and we talk about things which are not good to say in which either of country, in social context.

To encourage the pupils means that we talk about the use of English for travelling, for watching films, TV-series, to meeting people that come here or when you go somewhere, if you want a job somewhere else or if you want to study as I mentioned before, all the course books are in English. It is never a problem to motivate the student to learn English”.

Josefin: No?

“Most of the time no, because they feel they want to learn English it is a fun subject”.

Josefin: Question 2a: To what extent do you use textbooks in your teaching?

“I do not, no I do not use textbooks at all. I have before but the textbooks at this school are very old and they are too easy and they are boring and if I think that they are boring the pupils will find them boring, so I am not using text books. I do not think that they raise cultural awareness. I have not yet seen any textbooks, which raise cultural awareness because it only gives facts, it is only cultural facts in them so alone no textbooks raise cultural awareness you have to talk about it, things around, because culture is not just facts. I use articles, fiction, I copy parts of books, we do not have class books for the whole, we had that in my other schools or we have not have that but I bought that, we will have that here too. I like to use fictional literature because I think it is a good language in many books, you get useful words in them and it is real texts, in a lot of textbooks it is written for Swedish pupils and it is what smart Swedish people think that Swedish
pupils should learn. I think it is better to read original literature, also because it is more fun, it makes more sense to read something that is real and then you can cross that of you list when you are a grownup, because you read that. I pick literature from different countries”.

Josefin: Only western countries?
“Yeah, so far, because I do not know any other literature. It is not, it is always a time issue so I chose books that I have read, right now we are reading a book from England called ‘Junk’, which you may have read. It is about drugs, about teen pregnancies, it is about all the bad things that can happen to young people really. It is the eighties, in England, working-class town, so we are talking about that”.

Josefin: Do you read out aloud?
“I sometime read load, they read aloud, they read silently with wordlist, they read to each other, they sit in focus groups and discuss and get everyone up to speed, helping each other to understand. They get questions to talk about, to try to read between the lines. This is because I know that everybody does not do their homework, in an ideal world they would, they do not in my world so they get to tell each other what it is what about, so that everyone can continue reading. And then they worked with short texts, they draw pictures of different people, we watch youtube clips, because there are some song lyrics in there, there are also references to squatters and that movement, so we watched youtube clips about how these people could look like, and listen to music which as mentioned. And we talk about the eighties in England were about, how school was like. Yeah, so I think we get a lot of culture into it”.

Josefin: Subcultures?
“Yes, because those are the peoples’ cultures, it is not just the queen”.

Josefin: Question 2d: How do you work to meet the knowledge requirements regarding culture in your classroom?
“I think I do by reading different kind of literature, learning different types of language, sets, talking about how people from different social classes live and we meet different situations in the literature, because we get to know the main characters, we talk a lot about the main characters.
And they visit different places, and then we also read by looking at the clips and so on and we read articles. We are going to read an article about teen pregnancy and one about domestic abuse. Yeah I think that I meet it”.

Josefin: Which other areas or cultures would you bring into your teaching later on?

“I’m doing with year seven a route 66 project, so we are travelling along route 66. And we make stops to New York as well, so we get that in. And we talk about some facts about the USA and we talk about different people, and schools, collages, differences between the USA and Sweden and they get to get presentations about different states and traveller brochures, and that group work and part of it, then they write a traveller diary and that is individual. So when they listen to the presentations they have to take notes and then they have to make up a travel dairy where they have visit three different states. So that I do, I normally do something on Ireland, probably in year eight but I do not have any year eights at the moment. We read ‘across the barricades’ and we talked about Northern Ireland mostly, but also about Ireland and wanting to be set free from England. We watched the film Michael Collins, because it is kind of great review of history and then we talk about that the IRA actual are terrorists and we related that with terrorists today. It is very few people who watch that film sympathize with the English or with anyone but the IRA. And how is that and then we talk about that you have seen things from different point of views. We do Shakespeare because it is fun and it is part of the English culture. We do have a project, partake on ‘Bridget Jones’ and ‘Pride and prejudice’, where they get to watch both films and compare. And try to get them to see that in her time Elisabeth was perceived as rude and vulgar as Bridget is today. And that time has changed and we talk about that, how people see them or view them”.

Josefin: Question 3a: To what extent do you think that your teaching about culture is visible to the pupils?

“Well, I tell them why we are doing it, they get matrixes so that they know why we do things and how and we talk about the curriculum. We compare it to their cultures and we compare it with Swedish cultures. Me – do you mentioning the word culture. Yes, I do and I think it is visible to the pupils, I hope it is”.

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Josefin: Question 3b: To what extent do you think that pupils can learn English only through cultural teaching?

“Well as I have explained, that is all I do so I really hope they do learn through it. I think that you need to vary your teaching method and I think that you need to think about why you are doing things and what you want them to learn from doing it. But I do think that they can learn through only cultural teaching”.

Josefin: Question 3c: How do you assess your pupils’ achievement in regard to cultural content?

“In different ways, in year seven right know they get to write an essay, where they chopped down everything they know about the USA on two pages. I assess their oral contributions in class, when we talk about it. I try to make them understand that people are different but they know that, it is kind of a lot easier at school like this where people represent different type of cultures when they come from different countries. Where I just to work all the pupils were Swedish and it was harder for them to understand that something could be different. They just thought that everyone is like us they just speak differently. Here they have a basic understanding to begin with so it is not that hard to stop talking about it. What pupils do have problems with understanding is that you are not aloud to say shit, they really want to say shit, and they say that on TV. We are actually talking quite a lot about swearing and how you swear differently in different social contexts and also in different countries. I have presentations as well, and discussions and I have essays, they get to write quite a lot. More than I would like them to because I do not want to do so much correcting, but I still think it is a good way of learn and it is a good way to show what they actual learned. I have quizzes some times, just short quizzes to see that they have got what we had just talked about but I do not have tests. I have unprepared listening and reading test and writing tests, the ones we do all over the school of course but apart of that I do not have tests. I’m not so interested in knowing how well they studied I’m more interested in what they learned. And they get words for homework, reading homework, most things. But I try to get them to use the language more than just write down ten words on a piece of paper”.

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Jessica: A total of 28 years a teacher, have been an English teacher for seven years, has needlework as a first subject.

Josefin: Question 1a: What does culture mean to you?

“I would say it means life… Because when you live your own life you are always dependent on the people around you. You grow up with a kind of culture around you from your family and friends and so on. And then you move on and then you meet other cultures and you adapt to that. Culture is really everything”.

Josefin: Can you be more specific when you say that culture is everything?

“Yeah, and I think it is created between people, between groups of people. You create your own culture. You do it deliberately sometimes, if you talk about politics and so on. But you also do it unconsciously, the way you live and the way you act, things like that. And the way you find things important and the way you find things unimportant and so on”.

Josefin: So values?

“Yeah, values. You could go down and pinpoint… thing after thing… What do you do and what do think when you do it like that? What do you do in the evening with your family? What do you appreciate to watch if you go the movies. They are all sign of some kind of culture that you belong to. Maybe you are aware of that you belong to or maybe you are not. It all comes down to the way you live and why you live that life”.

Josefin: The first statement, reads the first statement from the Syllabus

“Yeah that grows more and more important. Because, in the first place a lot of information is in English nowadays and you can’t rely on finding everything in Swedish. Because in certain contexts English is the working language. English is the information language. And those who are in it, who are deciding about it, they don’t bother to translate it because they are not interested in that target group anyway. So I think if you want to get a wider view of life or a wider range of work possibilities and so on you need at least be able to understand a lot of them. So that’s really important”.
Josefin: So then we have the second statement... Reads the statement.

“So in the first place make them aware of how much English is used all over the world. They know a bit because they are on the net and so on. And they get information from everywhere. But they don’t really have the knowledge about how many countries where you use English as... maybe as a first language, maybe a second language and so on. And they know a lot of English but they are really not, well you say. To look forward, to look five years ahead, when you are supposed to manage your own life. What are you going to use English for then? Not only for entertainment and movies. So that is also important to show them that you use English in so many parts of the world. And that is really is the working language, and the study language. If you want to study abroad and so on, you need to use English”.

Josefin: What do you say about areas and contexts where English is used? Where would you say that is?

“Let’s say, I think as you say…If you want to go studying at the university. If you want to be able to, perhaps apply for a job or apply for a scholarship and so on. They should be able to make a good presentation of themselves. And also, just to know different kinds of English. Because, they know a lot of English, but it’s mostly from the net world, the entertainment world and so on. So they need to meet other kinds of English. I experience when I make them work with newspaper articles that, that’s not the English they are used to. So they need to meet different kinds of English texts and presentations and so to be able to understand that there is more English in the world that they already know”.

Josefin: So that’s context, but what about areas?

“That depends of what you put in to that areas… Is it geographically or professionally?”

Josefin: Let’s say geographic!

“Well then, as I said before, to make them realize how many areas in the world where you speak English that you don’t really connect. We studied South Africa and they don’t really have a clue about that at all. So that’s an eye-opener for them, to realize that is English. It can come from South Africa or Australia and so on. Some of them have clues, because they might have a
football player or a sports athlete or a celebrity that they know come from another part of the world. But then again they show up in Europe, although they come from another part of the world. And so I guess they make the connection between Europe and America anyway”.

*Josefin: Third statement from the syllabus:*

“Oh yes! And that’s so nice with teaching English, because the aim is to make them better at talking and writing English and so on but you can do it with any kind of material. So we choose every year to make them a task on United States, Australia, and South Africa and so on. And the thing is that you have a nice material where you can bring in vocabulary for geography, for history, for food and things like that. And then you also get to talk about how people live. And the history of Australia and South Africa is really, really interesting and there you really get the opportunity to discuss different living conditions. Why is it like this? Why is the culture like this? Why is the politics like this? And so on... And you really get the opportunity to talk about it a lot. You got that in the United States too, of course, you just need to pick up Martin Luther King and then you set the thoughts rolling in their head. And those who are interested, then you can really get the discussion going. And when you bring up South Africa they are really astonished. “God! I didn’t know it was like this. I didn’t know it at all”. And that is really good. Almost every time we do it there are news to them. There is news about something that happens in South Africa or something that happens in Australia, and you can put the pieces together. And that is really, really interesting… For me, and for some of the students, not everybody but you can show them. Life is like this, that’s what happens on the side of the world and that concerns us too. And that is fairly easy, because you can find texts on different levels and so on, and I think we really bring it up”.

*Josefin: The last statement from the syllabus:*

“Yeah, I think it does. But it has to compete with everything else they like to do. So you can get an interest by pointing at this too is happening in the world, this too could have something to do with your life and so on. So I guess we try it, but to compete with the English they meet in the computer games, on the net, in their chat rooms and so on, that’s the tough part… To make, what we show them, more interesting than what they do otherwise. But I think we can show them aspects of life, for ordinary people. And to make them think a little about, maybe, that politics are
Josefin: Question 2a: To what extent do you use textbooks in your teaching?

“Less and less. We have a textbook; Times, but I only use the parts that is useful for the different areas we work with. For instance there are texts about Australia in year eight and a good chapter on South Africa in year nine and so on. So there are good texts, but then we do other projects that takes more time and so on. But we have the textbook there so it’s still useful. But if we should decide on something new, and invest a lot of money in something new I don’t think we would buy new textbooks for our children. We would rather buy different I think and use them in another way!

Josefin: Question 2b: In what way do you think that textbooks may contribute to raising cultural awareness?

“Not the book itself but its content… If there are good texts about people who meet each other, who have difficulties in understanding each other but who discovers different sides and can agree on something, or agree on disagreeing. Texts that gives them pictures of how people live together and… But it doesn’t have to be in a textbook, it could be in a newspaper article. The good thing about the textbook is that it is always there and all the students have access to it and that’s the main reason for keeping the textbook I think”.

Josefin. So you don’t use the textbook that much?

“Not that much. No.

Josefin: You have an old version as well?

“Yes we have so you also have to be aware of that. And we always put in other stuff with the texts.
Josefin. How do you currently work to raise awareness about cultural content?

“Do you mean outside the English teaching or inside?”

Josefin: Inside.

“Inside, hmm…I use a lot of… Since I am as old as I am I use some old songs for listening comprehension and I have a couple of songs that I use frequently. I use them because the text is telling a story such as Elton John’s song about Marilyn Monroe and then we go back to her story and the film industry and things like that. And I have another song with the Beatles about a young girl who is running away from home and then we discuss that. It is so interesting because this girl is running away because she is fed up with her parents that protect her and gives her a lot of money but doesn’t give her freedom. And you could apply that picture on today, on a young Muslim girl who isn’t allowed to go outside and so on. So I try to find texts and other things that you can discuss and you can ask: ”Does this apply to today?” So a bit of showing them that some themes are eternal. In young life they show up everywhere you are, whether you grew up in the thirties or now and so on. And I also try to find newspaper articles about what’s happening in the world, for example if there is this earthquake in California, to remind them about that you could live in that area and have that risk around you all the time and so on. So different parts of the world and also it’s good if there are, so to say, real persons saying something in that newspaper article. Persons that have witnessed something and so on. In the best of cases I don’t defy a little bit with that person and so on, but then again what you see and hear and find in the newspaper articles is mostly British, Australian or American. So you don’t really get stories from other parts of the world, which would be nice to have. But I try to find such material and sometimes I find small news items in the Swedish newspapers and then I ask them to try and translate them and make a short summary in English. And this could come from other parts of the world. So they just get a glimpse of “Oh, Ok, so that has happened…hmm...interesting” Or not!” (Laughs)

Josefin: Question 2d: How do you work to meet the knowledge requirements regarding culture in your classroom?

“Well it’s… If you say…It mostly shows when we do this projects around other countries for example South Africa. So when we studied that one we studied all parts of it; geography, history and so on. And we put in as much as possible and if there is time and the students are interested
they make a small presentation about for example the Aids situation in South Africa. So they get more knowledge of a little part of it, and in the meantime I do small bits like finding a text, a song or a listening comprehension. I also use UR a lot because they do very nice little programs. So there is this series called “My secret land” where a young person is telling about him or herself and his or her country. And my students are given clues and are supposed to guess which country the persons are from. I just started with this task and so far we have done Australia and Namibia, but there are ten more episodes to listen to. My idea is to let them do their own presentation of Sweden or the country where their parents were born. So we’ll see if it works… I don’t know, but the series from UR is really super because in a few minutes the students get information that would have taken me hours to find and put together.”

Josefin: Question 3a: To what extent do you think that your teaching about culture is visible to the pupils?

“Oh well, that’s hard to say. But I would say with the group of students we have at this school, they already are rather aware of culture because they come from so many different backgrounds, so it’s easy to pick it up because they understand that we are not all alike. It would be different if the students had the same background, because then it would be more natural to say:” I am what I am but what about that?“ But know they have different languages and different stories, stories about their lives. So they are aware of it. And then it is interesting with teenagers because they don’t really want to be different, they want to be the same and they also want to be seen for who they are and there is always this desire to tell their own story. So we try and give them the opportunity to do this in their own writing project and from there on I get to know more about them. Most of them are very open and tell about their family story and so on. And then I can pick this up when we go on, because I know them a little bit better. I also think that when we talk about the aborigines in Australia or the black peoples’ situation in the United States that most of students can relate, because they often see it from the “underdog” perspective because they find themselves being there. They are not the “well-off” children. They are the children that need to take care of the opportunities and sometimes they don’t, but they know this situation and recognize this when we talk about groups of people who are fighting for their rights and so on.
Sometimes it gets really, really interesting, when you have four or five students that are really interested in this well, then the discussion can go far!

Josefin: But how often would you say that this is culture?
“Well I would say it is every time you talk about peoples relationships. I think its culture because it tells you something about how that person is living and what his thoughts are and so on.”

Josefin: Do you say it to the students?
“No, No I wouldn’t say that. I have learned that I need to be very clear about the assessment and what they are assessed on. And when we study another country they are supposed to make comparisons between Sweden, or their home country, and the country that we are studying. And that could imply geography, social conditions and so on. So culture… No, I don’t use that word.

Josefin: So you wouldn’t put the word ‘culture’ on the board then?
“No I wouldn’t, because when we start with a country I put the name of the country in the middle and then I ask them: “What do you think about…? And so on, and then I try to fill in the things I’m missing. But no, the word culture isn’t there.

Josefin: Question 3b: To what extent do you think that pupils can learn English only through cultural teaching?
“In a way I think you could do only that, you could have that content to start from. And then of course when you find difficulties in understanding you have to work with vocabulary, grammar and things like that. But the contents in the texts that we listen to, that we read and the discussions they are supposed to participate in… That could be about those things. Since I do imply everything into the word ‘culture’, it wouldn’t be a problem. Because football is also culture. So we could start with football and so on. So that wouldn’t be a problem at all.

Josefin: Question 3c: How do you assess your pupils’ achievement in regard to cultural content?
“So what I am supposed to look at if you think about the criteria is this ability to learn something about Sweden because everyone don’t know enough about Sweden to be able to compare things,
and then you need to know about the country you compare with. But from their own thinking. And they could have achieved this thinking in the classroom when we discuss things. They could have it from home, from students that reflect upon politics and things like that. They could read more texts about things they are interested in, and they are supposed to talk or write texts about how they have understood, what they have learned and how they understand Sweden in comparison to this country. So it’s really their discussion, written or oral, that are assessed. Of course this demands a good vocabulary in English and for those who hasn’t this might be problematic. These students might have good ideas and thoughts but to put them down on a paper is a challenge. So it really comes down to the fluency of English even though I try my best to tell them that “I can see your thoughts even if you have trouble expressing them” and that the important part is that the students can show me that they have understood. That’s where the grading happens.

Josefin: So you will assess them orally in discussions and presentations?
“Yes, and also written. The problem with the oral thing is that it takes so much time, so we are not able to do that under perfect conditions. We need quite a lot written. And it is also about organizing situations where they feel comfortable to talk about these things. It’s not really easy and then there is also this; should you prepare it very carefully or should the students have the liberty to choose? Which mostly makes the motivation better, but then they are more on their own so it is always a balance depending on groups and so on. In the criteria it says: “You should be able to compare” so we have to work to reach that aim. And otherwise, when we read texts for example, their understanding and their ability to retell and make presentations and so on is important. And when it comes to understanding I often ask questions and encourage them to ask questions. For instance, if we read a newspaper article about the Syrian conflict questions to be asked could be: Why is there a conflict? Why are they angry? What could be the solution? Many times I feel like I’m teaching civics and not English, but I do it in English which is a problem for those students who aren’t that talkative in English, so that’s a challenge. To get everybody involved in some way!”

Josefin. Ok! I think we are done!
“Good”
Josefin: Thank you very much!
“Thank you for the interesting questions!”

Transcription of the pupils’ interviews
Informant Group A.

Josefin: Vad betyder kultur för er?
- Målningar, konst, historia
- jag tänker på människor, jag vet inte varför
- Ja, det gör jag med, kläder, språk å sånt
- Människor från olika delar av världen
- Ja, olika länder och hur dom t.ex. firar julafton och religiösa saker
- Ja, religion och mat, och språk, tal

Josefin: Vad är skillnaden på språk och tal?
- Att man har helt olika röster,
- Ja, att i vissa kulturer så pratar man mycket högre
- Ja, och man har olika formningar i rösten, olika ton, och använder kroppsspråk

Josefin: Vad har det med kultur att göra?
- Italienare använder t.ex. mycket kroppsspråk

Josefin: Visar kursplanen och läser första punkten.
- Ingen aning
- Jag tänker typ att lära sig engelska skulle hjälpa en att förstå andra personer som inte pratar ens egna språk men jag kan vara helt ute och cyklar. Och att man kan åka lite överallt och prata engelska och så förstå folk en.

Josefin: Visar och läser andra punkten från kursplanen
- Alltså att lektionerna ska vara intressanta och roliga och den ska liksom och förklara varför det är bra att kunna olika språk.
Josefin. Tredje punkten från kursplanen, visar och läser

- Jag vill läsa ju om olika länder som Australien, USA

Josefin: Har ni inte läst om andra länder som t.ex. Sydafrika, Skottland, Irland?

- vi ska läsa om Sydafrika, vi har inte läst om andra länder
- Jag, är faktiskt förvånad att vi liksom inte har läst om Storbritannien, för vår lärare gillar sånt.

Josefin: Men ni har väl ändå fått texter som har handlat om andra kulturer/länder?

- Nä
  Kursplanen
- livsvillkor är hur folk lever, och vilka förutsättningar de har i livet.
- Samhällsfrågor kan vara typ rasism och sånt

Josefin: Visar och läser fjärde punkten från kursplanen

- Läsa texter från tidningar och filmer och sånt där,
- Böcker, internet
- Man ska typ förstå folk som har dialekter, t.ex. Skottland. De ska inte behöva prata helt ren engelska för att man ska förstå

Josefin: Har ni gjort det?

- Nä det tror jag inte men vi förstår vår lärare och en skotsk man har varit här, vi förstod honom

Josefin: Hur arbetar ni med kultur?

- Vi har gjort arbeten om olika engelsktalande länder, USA och Australien. Grupparbeten där vi har fått lära oss om aboriginer, indianer osv. Det som är kultur är historian och sådär
- Är inte Romeo och Julia nån sorts typ att föräldrarna ska bestämma över vem barnen ska gifta sig med? Jo det är väl kultur, olika förhållanden…
- Ja, allt är ju nästan kultur... det mesta är ju kultur då eller hur?

Josefin: Om ni säger att allt är kultur, kan ni tänka på andra saker som ni har gjort?
- Vi har ju läst olika böcker, jag fick kultur från Nya Zeeland och det är säkert folk som har fått från andra länder.

Josefin: Hur vill ni arbeta med kultur?
- Läsa och lär sig mer om olika länder,
- Jag vill lära mig om fler länder inte bara om de stora som USA, Australien, England och Sverige och sånt utan typ Syd Afrika

Josefin – Har ni inte arbetat med Mandela?
- Nä, men jag tror att vi ska gör det
- Ja, det ska vi, det sa hon

Josefin: Frågar om användning av textböckerna
- Vi använder inte textböckerna så mycket
- Nä vi har bara använt den en gång denna termin, när vi lästa om Charlo och Paula.
- Ja just det, men det var typ den ända gången
- Förra terminen så använde vi den knappt alls
- Ja, vi använde den en gång om spindlar och om hur Australien har varit en koloni
- Vi använder textboken när den passar in
- Ja, och när vi läste en intervju om den tjejer
- Men innehållet är väl ändå ok, men jag tycker att det borde innehålla lite mer intressant information för det som står är oftast vildigt tråkigt
- Alltså den är helt ok men det kunde stått liksom lite mer också

Josefin: Berättelsen om Charlo och Paula är det kultur?
- Ja, den handlar om hur det var i katolska Irland på den tiden
- Vi ser på film och sånt istället
Josefin: Hur bedömer er lärare er?

- Jag vet inte riktigt det
- Hon ställer frågor till en
- Och hon kollar hur aktiva vi er
- Och vi brukar redovisa
- Hon känner oss så hon vet om vi har skrivit det själva eller om det är wikipedia, copy pasteat
- Diskussion i klassrummet, redovisningar där man kan lämna in skriftligt ifall man vill
- Istället för prov brukar hon ge oss många små uppgifter

Josefin: Vill ni tillägga något?

- Att vi kanske borde prata lite mer om vad som händer i världen, och i andra länder.
  Diskutera i klassen
- Nyhetsinslag, så man kan se det.
- Ja, vi jobbade med Malala, kom jag på nu

Informant Group B.

Josefin: Vad betyder kultur för er?

- Jag tänker på språk och konst
- Ja, mkt konst tänker jag på som i kulturhuset
- Teater,
- Olika länder
- Olika personer har olika kulturer,
- Ja, olika människor
- Jag tänker på den Pride flaggan
- Länder kan vara mångkulturellt, som Sverige men det är inte bara så i Sverige
- 75% av världens länder är mångkulturella

Josefin: Hur är språk kultur?

Ingen svarar.
Josefin: Läser och visar första punkten från kursplanen.

- Ingen aning, typ. Det finns så många ord som jag inte förstår
- Arbetsliv är väl typ det att man ska kunna använda engelska i arbetslivet
- Men vi lär oss inte så mycket rättsskap och sånt

Josefin: Andra punkten från kursplanen, läser och visar

- Att man typ vill åka till det landet där man pratar det språket
- Ahha att man ska bli intresserad

Josefin: Läser och visar tredje punkten från kursplanen

- Alltså livs villkor, jag vet vad det är men jag kan inte förklara det. Hur man ska leva ungefär. Vad man behöver för att leva, mina livs villkor typ
- Hur man ska använda engelskan i livet?
- Livs villkor är inte det vad man ska kunna i livet? Eller för att överleva?
- Samhällsfrågor är frågor som angår samhället, som tex valet
- Det finns många länder där man talar engelska för det har funnits engelska kolonier
- Mest i Afrika och i delar av Europa
- Eller hela världen, engelska är ett så stort språk, alla länder i världen kan prata engelska
- Nä, inte alla, inte Tjeckien och Slovakien, de kan inte så bra engelska

Josefin: Fjärde punkten från kursplanen, läser och visar

- Olika, va, jag fattar inte
- Ju men TV, tidningar. Att man ska förstå tv som inte är textad
- Radio, film, artiklar, musik, teater, engelska lektion, internet
- Vad är färgning? Variation?
- Regional vet jag inte vad det betyder
Man ska kunna tala, det finns ju olika dialekter av engelska i hela världen, så man ska kanske anpassa sig efter det. Eller?

Josefin: Hur arbetar ni med kultur i klassrummet?

- I so har vi mest
- I engelskan kanske man läser en text och så innehåller den kanske lite kultur. Som tex uppgiften när vi ska fråga våra föräldrar vad som är viktigt i ett förhållande. Vi har läst en kärlekshistoria, och svarar på frågor. Det är kultur
- Men de är ju frågor om hur ens föräldrar vill att ens barn ska ha ett förhållande
- Ja, om man kan vara tillsammans med någon med en annan hudfärg
- Va!
- Ja, och så brukar hon fråga oss och skriva upp på tavlan, Hur tycker ni att er tjej/kille ska vara i framtiden? Och så får vi säga olika saker. Sånt gör hon ofta

Josefin: Hur är det kultur?

- För att det är typ annorlunda överallt

Josefin: Jämför ni er kultur med andra kulturer?

- Nä, det har vi inte gjort
- Sen kollade vi på den Romeo och Julia, vi brukar kolla på filmer och sen få frågor på filmerna.
- Vi har sett den australienska filmen “Rabbit proof fence”, TV-serien “Goal” har vi sett.
- En svart tjej som blir diskriminerad, hon är
- I sjuan kollade vi på han som är så taskig, sen vaknar han upp en dag å så är han i en dröm å så ser han hur framtiden, den är tecknad. Minns ni inte den?
- Nä
- Den går ju på julafton, det är med en sån kille som är rik, som vaknar upp
- Ahhh ok

Josefin: Hur vill ni arbeta med kultur?

- Kanske jämföra mer, vår kultur med andras
- Jag vill hellre snacka amerikanska än engelska, det vill jag hellre lära mig faktiskt. Uttalet alltså, engelska känns lite gammalt. Vi fick nått prov i sjuan där lastbilar på amerikanska är ”truck” men ”lorry” på engelska
- Studie besök i USA!

Josefin: Frågar om textböckernas kulturinnehåll
- Vi läser knappt textböckerna, vi kanske läser 20 av 100 sidor
- Men de kapitlen som vi har läst har ändå varit kultur saker
- Speciella texter brukar det vara
- Det var väl någon tjej någon gång,
- Ja, en kärlekshistoria
- Nej, den tjej som hade flytt från någonstans. Hon var aborigin och blev mobbad i skolan.
- Sen har vi också läst om såna som bor i slumområden, som snor och sånt, och kärlekshistoria från 1900-talet.
- Ja, Romeo och Julia England. Den vara gammeldags de fick inte ha förhållande och sånt
- Ja, och Charlo och Paola. I Irland får man inte ha sex med preventivmedel, så de fick tre ungar
- Fick de inte fler?
- 4,5,6,7 kanske
- Det är annorlunda från hur det är här, i Sverige så skulle man aldrig kunna ha det så, tror jag. Jag gillar inte det att man inte får använda kondom å sånt för då kan man ju inte ha samlag innan man giftar sig.
- Hahah ha kan du klippa bort det

Josefin: Bedömning av kultur
- Jag har aldrig läst några betygskriterier
- Det är bara vår lärare som säger vad vi ska göra
- Vi redovisar, inlämningar
- Vi har ju fått välja ett land någon gång och skriva om det på engelska t.ex. Australien
- Ja, det har vi gjort, å så gör vi Power Point
- Vi skriver även om djur från Australien
- Man ska skriva om sånt som har med staden att göra
- Om USA hade vi en text om 9/11 och att det var mest bilar i San Fransisco
- Nej, Los Angeles
- Med Australien, snackade vi jätte mycket om de där aboriginerna. Vi har också arbetat med Storbritannien och Kanada
- Vi arbetar med kändisar, deras bakgrund
- Vi brukar få frågor efter att vi har läst en text
- Ja, hon brukar ställa frågor
- Sen så har vi skrivit dagböcker

Informant Group C

Josefin: Vad betyder kultur för er?
- Samhälle, olika länder,
- Ja, samhälle olika sorts människor, olika kulturer och religioner, historier, och historia, ursprung och allt det där.
- Olika traditioner, folk, vanor, olika typer av människor.
- Det finns många kulturer i Sverige, det är ett kulturrikt land.
- Mat och historia.
- Kultur är liksom olika delar av världen. I USA finns det många kulturer t.ex. Chinatown, jag USA är mångkulturellt.
- Vår skola är en mångkulturell skola och det menas att alla är olika, svarta, vita, gula.
- Ja, det finns elever från många olika länder.
- Men det är ju inte kultur
- Jo, det är det och religioner

Josefin: Kan inte svarta och vita ha samma kultur?
- Jo, men de som bor i Afrika har en annan kultur än vi i Sverige, vanor och sånt
- Kaviar är kultur här i Sverige, det säger Jimmy Åkesson
- Nej, o då är Coca cola också kultur då för det kommer från USA
- Nej, det finns ju i hela Världen, kaviar finns ju bara här, det är ju svenskt!
- Ja, har ni inte sett Kaviar reklamen

Josefin: Läser och visar första punkten från kursplanen.
- Ja, som typer kyrkor, moskéer, att träffa människor i olika sammanhang. Att i arbetslivet prata med folk från andra länder, vara sociala med andra människor
- Ja, typ som båt handel
- Ja, och taxichaufförer
- Ja, det är många utlänningar som kör taxi, det är mångkulturellt

Josefin: Andra punkten från kursplanen, läser och visar
- Jag det ska få oss att bli mer intresserade, lära oss om olika kulturer
- Det gör vår lärare, vi har mycket diskussioner och sånt så man lär sig
- Ja, vi diskuterar mycket i klassen och lyssnar på varandras åsikter

Josefin: Läser och visar tredje punkten från kursplanen
- Jag får läsa det själv jag fattar inte
- Ja, den där kursplanen måste de förenkla
- Livsvillkor är livets regler, livets villkor
- Förutsättningar vad är det nu igen.
- engelska är ju viktigt eftersom man snackar engelska i hela världen, och det är viktigt i arbete om man flyttar utomlands
- Livsvillkor är saker man ska kunna för att kunna leva, man måste kunna laga mat själv
- Samhällsfrågor, frågor som angår samhället
- Engelska snackas överallt
- Nej, inte överallt, alla kan ju inte engelska

Josefin: Fjärde punkten från kursplanen, läser och visar
- Tidningar, Tv, Internet, Youtube, facebook, instagram, böcker, filmer, radio
- Ja, allt som vi ser på tv idag är på engelska
- Regional? Bor vi inte i en region?
- Ett område typ med social
- Ja, brittisk, och Amerikansk, skotsks, irländsk, kanadensisk dialekt
- Ja, i varje land så finns ju dialekter, accenter
- Men här i skolan så försöker vi lära oss brittisk engelska
- Nej, det gör vi inte!
- Finns det inte olika engelska dialekter i hela USA typ?
- Jo, det finns Texas
- Vi har hört amerikans, brittisk, irländsk, skotsks, australiensk å rysk engelska

Josefin: Hur arbetar ni med kultur i klassrummet?
- Mycket diskussioner och film
- Ja, och vi pratar mycket om rasism
- Ja, speciellt i Australien ville de rensa rasen
- Ja, så mycket kultur i klassrummet
- Ja, och vår lärare pratar mycket om att respektera varandra
- Vi pratar också om religioner
- Jag allt har typ med kultur att göra nästan
- Vi är intresserade av kultur
- Vi har jobbat med Australien, USA om John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, England, Skottland, Irland
- Mandela, Gandhi är det samma sak, han ville hjälp kasen i alla fall
- Nä, det är inte samma sak!
- Vi brukar oftast få välja vad vi vill jobba med

Josefin: Hur vill ni arbeta med kultur?
- Jag vill ha det som det är det är bra
- Jag skulle vilja jobba om Kroatien, skriva arbeten om skillnaderna mellan länder. Det är inte kul att sitta och snacka om det
- Även här i klassrummet, vi som en klas, kommer från olika kulturer. Titta Sara kommer från Marocko, Johan kommer från Sverige,
- Vad har det med det att göra?
- Ja, hur man kan arbeta i klassrummet med alla olika kulturer som vi har här, jämföra kulturer.
- Jag kommer ju från Jugoslavien
- Jag tycker vi borde arbeta om mer intressanta saker som könsskillnader, ojämlikheter i världen, kulturarv
- Viss kultur är mer intressant än annan

Josefin: Frågar om textböckernas kulturinnehåll
- De är tråkiga och dåliga
- Vi har ju bara läst två kapitel!
- Men de är bra att ha ifall inte vår lärare har något annat för sig
- Vår lärare använder den typ inte
- Men vi diskuterar om vissa kapitel och gör pjäser av det
- Men det är lite kultur i den, som först kapitlet handlar om olika människor och vad de gillar,
- Är kultur om olika människor och hur man är? Vi snackade om en farlig kille och en tjej
- Du menar Charlo och Paula?
- Det var irländsk kultur, där kristendomen var väldigt strikt, katoliker
- Vi kollar mycket på film, vi jämförde ju Charlo och Paulas relation/kultur med Romeo och Julia.
- Den var bra den filmen, två familjer bräkar mot varandra
- Nej, man fattade inte ett ord av vad de sa, de var ord från bibeln
- Shakespeare skrev den

Josefin: Hur blir ni bedömda?
- Ställer frågor, vad vi tycker, vad vi vill, vad är bra, vad är mindre bra
- Hur aktiva vi är och om vi pratar engelska eller svenska
- Redovisningar ibland, men oftast diskussioner
- Då är det bra att vara i små grupper, för då är det lättare att prata
- Power Point