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Digitala medier som en resurs för att lära sig engelska i 1-3

Digital media as a resource for English learners in 1-3

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Abstract
Digital media has a huge impact on today’s society. Technologies give opportunities for teachers to access different tasks, exercises, games and videos for teaching students a new language. This also means that teachers have opportunity to conduct more varied lessons to motivate students’ learning. However, digital media comes with advantages as well as disadvantages. This project will therefore discuss the use of digital media for learning English as a foreign language and discover what teachers thinks about using digital media for teaching. To examine the use of digital media in today’s school and teachers’ views of using digital media for learning. This project will carry out interviews and observations on teachers from a selected school. Participants from the selected school are teachers who use digital media regularly to teach Swedish students the English language. Moreover, the participants also discussed the advantages and disadvantages with using of digital media in teaching.
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1. Introduction

Different types of digital media are used for teaching English as a foreign language, such as games, films and computers for searching information, both for education and entertainment (Balkun, 2011). As Balkun explores in her article, teachers have always used latest technologies to support learning and engage students learning, whether this technology was filmstrips, sound recording, television, or video. Media is a part of children’s lives from an early stage. Most schools can access the internet through smart boards, iPads and computers. Through these, teachers have access to movies, pictures, music etc. which can be used for both teachers and children when teaching or learning a new language. Since digital media has a huge impact in today’s society, the use of digital media can therefore be used as a supplement to the traditional way of teaching English, in order to achieve the goals of the curriculum. But as Balkun (2011) mentioned in her study that there is no proof that technology actually improves the students’ learning.

As a teacher, your starting point will be based on the curriculum when planning a lesson to provide students opportunities to achieve the goals for grades 1-3. The Swedish syllabus for English emphasize that teaching should help students to develop skills in searching, evaluating, choosing and assimilating the content of spoken language and texts from different sources (Skolverket, 2011b).

The core content of the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011a), mentions that students are required to gain the ability to discuss daily life and ways of living in different contexts and areas where English is used. With digital media, this part of the curriculum can be covered since digital media gives the opportunity to access internet where students can research about daily life and ways of living in different context where English is used. Digital media can be used as an asset in many contexts to meet the curriculum’s requirements to achieve the goals for English in grades K-3. The use of digital media for this age group is growing (Lieberman, So & Bates, 2009).

During my placement I have seen the development of digital media. When I first started my internship at my partner school they were using whiteboards and other supplements, as resources for teaching English for younger learners. But as the technology developed, so did the school. My partner school, like many other schools, started to invest in smart boards (A smart board is an interactive whiteboard which is combined together by a computer and a whiteboard), iPads and laptops for each classroom. Digital media have brought new opportunities to teach language learning (Babak & Masoud, 2011). The
technology continued to develop and soon enough there was a huge variety of applications as a supplement when teaching different subjects in schools such as English, Math, Geography and more. However a problem occurred when smart boards were introduced because teachers did not get any further training of how to use the smart board.

Teachers at my partner school have often discussed how to use different technologies to develop students’ English skills in an efficient way. They argue that digital media is an advantage but their knowledge about digital medias are not sufficient enough to be able to conduct an effective lesson. Hence, my choice of this paper is to find out how teachers use digital media to support students learning and their view of using it. The selected school that participated uses digital media everyday for different subject when teaching.

2. Research questions
Alignment in keeping with the goals of the national curriculum and the concern regarding teacher’s use of digital media, the goal of this project is to investigate the use of digital media in reality. It will therefore investigate the following two research questions:

1. How is digital media used in English lessons for young learners in 1-3?

2. What do teachers think about the use of digital media in English teaching for students in 1-3?

3. Literature review
Vygotsky argued that through spoken and written language people have an opportunity to communicate with the world and establish a common understanding with people around the world. He also argued that there are other ways to express and communicate, for example through pictures (Lundgren, Säljö & Liberg, 2012). Digital media nowadays gives us the opportunity to use pictures to communicate. Lieberman, Bates and Jiyeon (2009) claims, in their article that many digital media products are designed to teach language and reading skills such as learning a language.

This section will refer to a few other studies that have been carried out by other scientists, with information, communications and technology (ICT) with digital media as a focus and how it is being integrated into classrooms for learning English as foreign language. The definition of ICT is “A set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information” (Babak & Masoud, 2011:1). Teachers and
Babak and Masoud are interested in using new technologies in second and foreign language teaching and ICT is often argued to increase students’ motivation to learn. This project also discusses the results of what the scientists concluded through their researches. Both positive and negative results about using digital media for teaching will be present in this section. Digital media is a broad concept which makes it hard to write and examine about all the existing digital media. Therefore I have chosen to limit this project to write about three different ways to use digital media in teaching English as a foreign language which are teaching through games, videos and tests. These three examples of using digital media gives a better understanding of what digital media is and how digital media can be used in teaching. These three previous researches are selected because the selected participating school use these three ways of teaching English as a foreign language.

3.1. Video as resource for teaching

Digital media is information that is accessible through technologies and video is an example of digital media that can be used in teaching. Wagener (2006, ref. in Sylvis, 2010) conducted a study on whether the use of videos as a resource in teaching could develop students’ language skills. The focus of these tasks was to encourage students to participate in language productions. Throughout Sylvis’ (2010) research, students were given opportunities to develop several skills such as listening, vocabulary and translation by using video clips. 

The students were to watch the short video clips over the internet and they were then asked to do different kind of tasks such as to translate the clips, produce spoken summaries of the content of the clips, and record and edit new voice tracks.

Throughout the tasks students were expected to focus on intonation and pronunciation. Wagener (2006, ref. in Sylvis, 2010) based his results on the analysis of two groups of students, which offered the students a way to provide their personal reflections and feelings about the activities. By giving students an opportunity to reflect and discuss their feelings about the activity, this will provide students an opportunity to gain skills to use English to discuss and argue.

The results of this research showed that the use of video as a teaching material, for English language learners is a uniquely rich resource to develop students’ language learning (Sylvis, 2010) because the tasks gave students an opportunity to participate in their own language production. Sylvis also mentioned that the study of Wagener has adopted resources, which provides opportunities for students to modify and construct and also reinvent
and produce their own language. Digital media gives students an opportunity to develop their language skills step by step through their own ability.

In another similar study by Balkun (2011) claimed that the use of media can be advantageous but might come with an issue. He argued that using media can support a student’s learning but also be used as a gimmick, because is no proof that digital media develops students’ learning.

3.2. A web-based game

Many schools have, during many years, integrated games into learning a new language such as paper-, card- and classrooms games (Meyer, 2013). Meyer argued that games in general are associated with intrinsic motivation, meaningful exposure to the target language, as well as perceiving association between children’s language play and second/foreign language learning. This means that games are a resource which motivates students to learn. Many teachers nowadays use games for teaching students a new language.

Meyer (2013) has been analyzes a game called Mingoville, which is used for teaching new languages, both for younger and older learners. She argued that all ages can develop their language through this game. The advantages for Mingoville is that, through simple tasks, designs and access, it simultaneously attempts to connect with many different kinds of educational needs. Mingoville School is for the school environment where teachers can use the game as a tool for listening, speaking, writing and reading English in teaching students new language. This game also differentiates so that students can develop in their own pace. Futhermore, Meyer argued that the learning environment of this game is supporting a variety of ways of learning language. Hence, this game gives students an opportunity to develop in their own ability. This game can be accessed through iPads and it allows students to interact with each other by meeting, chatting and interacting through games.

The company of the Mingocille claimed that feedback is important for students as well; therefore a reward in this game as feedback is used as an implement. Reward is according to Meyer (2013) understood as something that will support both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Students need to achieve something in the game in order to be able to keep the motivation for playing the game. Meyer also argued that rewarding students for learning will give the students satisfaction within learning and achievements, and therefore it motivates students to play and learn for his or her own purpose.

This game allows students to plant a seed that grows into a tree which reflects the students' knowledge as an example of a reward. The tree becomes a visualization of the
growth of the student’s knowledge. As the students complete the tasks and learn more vocabulary, the tree will grow. The reward-tree addresses the issues of continuity, progress and performance. It also supplies an organic image of learning and achievement to children as well as to the educators or parents. This, to a large extent, counters the idea of testing and assessing performance as part of a circularized knowledge (Meyer, 2013).

Further on Meyer (2013) claims that this way of teaching young students to learn a new language will motivate them to learn English as a foreign language and will also develop their language skills, maybe without themselves knowing that they have learnt new English vocabulary. The game will also support the students to play and learn on his or her own. Using rewards as a means of feedback makes students respond positively to the feedback. It makes students work harder to learn and complete tasks to be able to achieve the goals of the game, and parallel with achieving the goals, the students will gain skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. However, as Bulkan (2011) argued in his article about using games for learning. Bulkan says that students who play games for learning must be guided by educators to translate those skill and knowledge into a meaningful learning.

3.3. A web-based test

Different kind of tests is a way for teachers to find out the students’ pre-knowledge and also a way to see if the students have gained knowledge. Tests can be done in different ways and one example is through digital media. Vold, Manger and Eikeland (2010) carried out a study using digital media, where he examined about a web-based test site made for reading English as a second/foreign language. The web-based test site is available for students where they can practice their reading skills in English. The research has been tested on different age groups, from the primary classes up to grade 10. The tasks on the website are varied to adapt to the difficulty levels of different grades, which also mean that the tasks are differentiated to adapt the different learners. The tasks measure students’ ability to find information and their understanding of the main content in the texts that they are reading.

There are two tasks, one is to find information and the other one is testing their ability to understand the main content of a book. These two tasks were tested by all grades. The grades above primary classes were given more challenging tasks such as, the ability to choose different reading strategies depending on the purpose. Students’ tasks were to read and answer questions, discuss the content of the text, both the negative and positive perspectives of the book. Students answered by choosing between multiple-choices for example by
clicking on check-off boxes, text boxes and pictures. Another task that students could choose was matching by dragging and dropping images in pictures. The last task that they were able to choose was highlighting by marking a word and last coloring by clicking on a paint color and clicking in pictures. Students were given the opportunity to pick which tasks to work with in order to answer the questions (Vold, 2010).

This way of testing students through web-based tests can according to Vold et. al (2010) motivate students to do a test about the book, because students are given opportunity to choose how they want to show their ability and knowledge about their reading skills. It is also differential and varied which means that students that need higher challenges can choose to test themselves by picking more challenging tasks.

Vold et. al. (2010) argued that the usage of ICT as a method for students’ language learning can show existing problems in students’ learning, especially for primary classes. They raise concerns that the students might achieve computer skills rather than language skills. Therefore there are also discussions about fairness, if students are being assessed fairly in using this kind of method to work with. Balkun (2011) argued that teachers that uses digital media must acknowledge that other skills needs to encompass even if it's not the main topic. Therefore it is important for teachers to carefully investigate the material through digital media before using it. “Each new form of digital media requires an investment of time and training” (Teaching with Digital Media: Widening the Framwork, 2011;15)

Bulkan’s (2011) studies discuss the positive and negative aspects of using digital media. The positive aspect about using digital media for teaching is that students gain skills to use English. Digital media is a unique resource which gives students opportunities to develop by their own skills. These studies also argued that digital media motivates students to learn and that most important of all is that all studies argued that digital media support students to gain skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

But as Lieberman et. Al. (2009) she argued in her article, digital media are made especially for students with explicit learning goals and effective learning strategies.

“However, not all digital media for young students are made with so much expertise and care” (Lieberman et. Al. 2009; 272). The disadvantages are that sometimes according to Vold (2010) is that the students gain more knowledge about computer skills rather than language skills and we do not know if digital media is actually the reason to students’ improvement of language skills.
3.4. ICT in school through observation

Today’s schools are facing many challenges to create education that are relevant and motivating for the students. Students are expected to acquire knowledge and skills independently. They are also expected to be able to communicate in a variety of contexts and use a variety of means. To be able to achieve this it requires a transformation of education (Jedeskog, Plomp & Fredriksson, 2007). Jedeskog et. Al. (2007) also claims in their article that ICT can be as a supplement to realize such a transformation, but using ICT comes with weaknesses and strengths. Jedeskog and Nissen (2004) performed empirical study in their project with ICT as a focus in school. The empirical study was performed in nine different schools that worked with ICT. Observation was used as a method during this study as well as a descriptive framework was used to comprise the different ways of working with ICT. The observation occurred in both primary and secondary classes. Jedeskog and Nissen observed a third grade class which used ICT during their learning about an author. The students worked within groups and were expected to search for information. The teacher gave the students a task, and the students were given the opportunity to work with this task in any way they liked to. Some students chose to read pure literature, some collected facts about the author and others were writing on computers. The researcher made notes about what happened during the lessons.

The researchers Jedeskog and Nissen (2004) argue that computers are tools for working, but also tools for entertainment. They argues that the students had a lot of parallel activities going on at the same time, some students were listening to music while searching and others were chatting with each other while collecting facts about their author. Therefore this raised concerns about the role of the computer. The researcher claimed that computers might distract students and influence students’ ability to complete schoolwork in a disciplined way. Also during the process it was not possible to communicate with the students in a normal way because they wore headsets to listen to music. Hence, the teacher was only able to send students links and web-sites via e-mail. The researcher argued that a hidden communication between the teacher and the students may exist, but there was no evidence for the researcher to prove this.

Another dilemma that Jedeskog and Nissen (2004) discussed is the interactions between classmates and teachers is replaced by the computer and individual work, and that an oral conversation between them did not occur which meant that the students were not supported in developing their use of oral language discussion skills.
4. Method

During this project a collection of data in classroom environment were used in the analysis. Observations and interviews were used as methods during this project. Through this project, interviews were made on teachers and observations were made on teachers and students of the selected class. Tracy (1995, ref in Tracy 2010) means that a research should bring clarity to confusion and gain a deeper understanding of different areas, hence the choice of investigating digital media use in schools.

4.1. Research ethics

During this project the participants had to be informed of their rights. First of all, the participants were informed that they are participating in a project about the usage of digital media for teaching English as a foreign language, what the project is for and that the collected material will not be used for another purpose, these points are suggested by Vetenskapsrådet (2002). Second, the participants were also informed that they have the right to cancel their participation when they want and do not have to answer things that make them feel uncomfortable (Vetenskapsrådet 2002).

The participants were asked for permission to record them during the interview as Vetenskapsrådet (2002) argued the researcher must require the participants permissions if a recording will occur. The participants were also told that the materials only will be used for a project and the recording will only be used by the interviewer. During observation the observer asked for permission to only observe how digital media was integrated in teaching for younger learners, and how teachers and students were integrated with each other. The participants were informed that the observation will not be recorded because that would require permission from the students’ parents and that the focus was on digital media. This project had its focus on teachers and the usage of digital media and therefore it was not necessary to record the observation which involved the students.

Vetenskapsrådet (2002) argued that the researcher must be aware that individuals should be mentioned without their real names because it might, if the data are sufficiently detailed, be possible for some readers to identify the individual. This is one of the reasons to why the names of the participants in this project are labeled. To protect the teachers’ identities they are identified by numbers instead. Brief details about the teachers are mentioned to give the readers an understanding of the participants’ background.
The school is also anonymous, small details about this school are mentioned in this project to give the readers a better understanding of why this school was selected. The reason why the school is anonymous is because details about the school and the school’s teachers are written in this project which might make it possible to recognize and identify by the readers. All information about the participants must be recorded, stored and reported in a way that individuals cannot be identified by other (Vetenskapsrådet, 2001).

4.2. Selected school

I have chosen this school because the classes use digital media every day. The selected school is a private school in a small city, which uses digital media such as smart boards, iPads and computers regularly (everyday) for different subjects. The school has approximately 300 students, and in all classrooms there are smart boards instead of whiteboards. This is for teacher use, but it also gives students opportunities to do exercises on the smart board. In each classroom there are also laptops or iPads that are available for students to use when it is necessary, hence why this school is selected to be investigated. Another reason for the selection of this school is because English is taught at an early age at the school. Most schools do not teach English until third grade, but this school starts in 1st grade. By starting to teach English in 1st grade, it gives an advantage for me to cover all grades, because my major is focused on grades K-3. I have chosen to investigate grades 1-3, each grade have one class.

In each class there are two teachers, except in grade 3 that has one teacher, during English lessons. In the first grade there are 22 students which are merged by two classes and their two teachers. In second grade there are 12 students and with one class teacher (teacher 2) and one teacher as a resource. And in grade three there are 9 students with one English teacher (teacher 3). The teachers who are interviewed are the teachers who are responsible for the lesson.

Teacher 1 in the first grade is a male who has been working as a teacher for five years. His major is grades 1-7 and he is teaching subjects such as Swedish, English and Mathematic, but is now working as a teacher for grade K and 1. He also teaches digital media to other people.

Teacher 2 is a female teacher for 26 students in grade 2 and 3. Teacher 2 has worked in this private school for 3 years and is teaching Swedish, English and Mathematic. Since she started to work at this private school she had only taught grades 2 and 3.

Teacher 3 only teaches languages such as English and Spanish. She does not have any education which means that this teacher is not a certified teacher but have been
working as a language teacher for 10 years. She usually teaches grades 6-9, but since January she was given an opportunity to teach English in a grade 3 as well.

4.3. Observation

The purpose of using observations with both teachers and students is to have the opportunity to see how teachers use digital media in their teaching to provide students’ knowledge and develop students’ language skills. The focus of the observation will be on interaction between teachers and students, and also the students’ behavior during the lessons when digital media is being used to teach English.

During this project I observed each class one time to gather data on how digital media is being used. The observations were conducted in English and Swedish depending on the teacher’s use of language in their lesson. As Alvehus (2013) mention, because of the observers presence it might be difficult for the students to concentrate on the lesson. He claims that after a while the students will forget that someone is observing them. Therefore the researcher was not actively involved in the lessons and was sitting in the back of the classroom observing the teacher’s way of teaching through digital media.

The researcher has on multiple occasions before worked with the students and therefore the researcher might have been a distraction for the observation. An example is that there were students that came to the researcher to tell her stories about their day, while other students asked for help with assignments. The students who talked to the researcher were sent back to their seat either by the teachers or the researcher herself.

The observations about how digital media was being used and the interaction between teachers and students were written down by the researcher.

4.4. Qualitative Interviews

The purpose of qualitative interview with teachers is to emphasize teachers’ opinions about using digital media for learning a new language. According to Bryman (2008) a qualitative interview emphasis on the participants’ opinions therefore each interview can turn out differently (Bryman, 2008). Teachers’ opinions play a big role, because they are using digital media for teaching a new language. The choice of using both interviews and observation is a belief of that the reliability will be greater to confirm and refute when using both methods during this project.

Each interview lasted for about 10-20 minutes, and was conducted in the staffroom. Before each interview the teachers was asked for permission to record them. It was
also emphasized that the recording would only be used by the researcher. The recording method was selected during the interview to facilitate the interviewer’s work after when writing a summary of the interview. When the interview is recorded it gives the interviewer opportunity to go back and listen to the given answers and increase the reliability (Bryman, 2008).

4.5. Interview questions and motivations

Below this section are questions that were used in an oral interview with the teacher of the selected classes. A short justification to why these questions were asked is also discussed in the section below. The interviews were recorded with the teacher’s approval. Follow-up questions were also added during the interview, depending on the answers that were given. The interview was conducted in Swedish but below this section the questions are translated into English.

1. What education do you have?

2. What major as a teacher do you have?

3. How many years have you been working as a teacher?

4. Do you and the students have access to digital media during English lessons?

5. Do you have any further training for use of digital media when teaching English as focus?

6. How is digital media being used for English in your teaching classroom?

7. Do you always use digital media when teaching English?

8. What do you think about the use of digital media when learning English? What do you believe are some of the advantages and disadvantages when using digital media.

9. Have you noticed any differences between when digital media is used and when it is not?

10. What was your goal with this lesson when digital media were used?

Questions number one, two and three were asked to find out the teachers background, because it might be some small factor that affect the teachers’ answers during the
interview. For example if the teacher has only worked for a few years they might have a different point of view about new technology and ways of teaching. In comparison to if the teacher has been working for 20 years.

Digital media is the focus of this project, hence the fourth question was asked. If the classroom do not have access to digital media then it is hard to use as a resource when teaching. Question number five is about further training in digital media for teachers. This question is important because it might affect teachers’ decisions to use digital media in teaching for students or not. Further training for teachers can motivate them to use digital media in teaching for younger learners; hence the teachers gain ideas about how to use digital media when teaching younger learners English as a foreign language.

Number six and seven is about how digital media is being used in the classroom of the teacher that is being interviewed. The main reason for this is to find out how and why digital media in reality when teaching English as foreign language. Question number eight provides the answer to the second research question of this project. Question number nine give us a sense of why the teachers think digital media is a useful or an unusable resource when teaching English for younger learners.

The last question is asked to find out how the teacher uses digital media into teaching English as a foreign language and also how they meet the goals of the Swedish curriculum. Using digital media as a resource for teaching is fun, but it should motivate students’ willingness to gain language skills to be able to achieve the goals of the Swedish curriculum.

5. Results
This section is presenting the three observations and interviews that have been performed during this project. It starts by presenting one observation at a time and then followed it up with the interview that was done with the teachers from the class. All quotes in this section are written in Swedish with an English translation below. The observation section will give us an understanding of how teachers in the selected school work with digital media for teaching which is research question one in this project how is digital media used in English lesson for younger learner. In the interview section there are discussions with teacher about what they think of use of digital media and how digital media is used in their lesson to teach students English as a foreign language, which is research question two, what do teachers think about the use of digital media in English teaching for students in 1-3.
5.1. Grade one observation

The lesson started with a test for the first graders, where the test was about translating classroom vocabulary from English to Swedish, vocabulary such as paper, eraser, pencil, glue, scissor, ruler and computer. It was a written test based on if the students have gained their vocabulary for classroom-tools. While the teacher gave students instructions in Swedish the smart board was on. On the smart board there were pictures of USA’s, UK’s, Australia’s and Canada’s flag. Along with the pictures there were also phrases and words such as hello, good morning, good bye, how are you…? and I’m fine.

Teacher 1, who is a male teacher, was preparing the smart board while the students where finishing the test. The task was to recycle the classroom vocabulary by matching the picture with the English words on the smart board. The English words were on the left side and the Swedish words were covered next to the English words. The vocabularies were listed below each other in this order, computer, pencil, eraser, ruler, paper, glue and scissor. On the right side of the covered words there were pictures of the different words that were listed. The teacher then asked one student at a time to come forward to match the right picture with the right English word on the smart board. Students matched the pictures by dragging one picture with their finger on the smart board to the right English word. The dragging was difficult sometimes, because the picture did not follow the finger. When this problem occurred the teacher did the dragging on the computer instead. For each matching the teacher told the students to pronounce the English word before uncovering the Swedish word. Students uncovered the Swedish word by pulling down a line on the smart board with the help of their finger.

When all words were translated on the smart board, Teacher 1 then told the students that they are going to watch a movie. The movie was in English and about 15 minutes long about a character named Muzzy. The teacher explained to the students in Swedish, that this movie was a beginning of a project that they will be working with for a few lessons ahead. The movie started with a song and as a result the majority of the students were singing along. The majority of the students listened and watched the movie. The movie followed the character during his daily life and contained a lot of phrases, for example “I am hungry” “What is this?” and “Who?” Sometimes during the movie the teachers paused and asked the students to repeat the phrases in English and translate the phrases for example, when Muzzy claimed he was hungry, Teacher 1 paused the movie and asked the students “Vad
betyder I am hungry?” (What does I am hungry mean?) and the students replied in Swedish that Muzzy is hungry.

At the end of the movie the alphabet order appeared and the teachers paused the movie again, only this time they asked if the students notice something different with this alphabet order compared to the Swedish alphabetical order. The teachers started to say the alphabet order, one by one, in Swedish while the students repeated along. At the end of the alphabet order one student shouted that the letters å, ä and ö were missing. The teacher then asked the students to repeat the alphabetical order once again along with the movie in English, while he pointed on the letters in the movie. When the movie ended the students packed their belongings and went home. No discussion about the movie occurred.

During this lesson the teachers were mixing both English and Swedish, but the majority of this lesson was held in Swedish.

5.2. Interview with teacher of grade one (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 is qualified teacher for grades 1-7. He has also studied the core subjects such as Swedish, English and Mathetic and has been working as a teacher for approximately five years. For now he is a class teacher for a class with students from K-1.

Teacher 1 has been on further practices and one of them is called PIM, which is based on three steps. The private school has also sent Teacher 1 for more training in Uppsala about the use of digital media in teaching. He also trains other teachers about digital media and during his training he provides teachers with material of how to work with digital media and different ways to use it in teaching.

Teacher 1’s class mostly starts with finding out students’ pre-knowledge about a theme. Students are then asked to do tasks on the smart board that are created by the teacher based on the theme. Through these tasks students are given opportunity to show their pre-knowledge and the teacher will know where to begin the lesson with. Tasks on the smart board will also provide students an opportunity to practice their language skills through different ways, for an example by singing a song. “Man lär ju sig i olika steg, både genom ljud, bild och text” (Students learn in different stages, through sounds, pictures and text). He also claimed that these are possible to access through media, because some students learn by pictures and are visual learners, and smart boards provides the opportunity for teachers to adapt a lesson to support all the different ways of learning as he said “Det finns övningar för alla ju” (there are tasks for everyone).
Teacher 1’s response to the question “Do you always use digital media in teaching?” was “Nej, men vi använder det som ett komplement till eleverna. De ska både få skriva det skriftlig och ha det själva, men också media för att stärka deras lärande. De lär sig snabbare då ju och vi ser det som ett bra hjälpmedel” (They do not use digital media in all their lessons but they use digital media as a complement for the students. He said that students should be given the opportunity to write in a traditional way and be able to save their writing on a paper and that media is used to strengthen the students’ learning). Furthermore he claimed that students learn faster with the use of digital media and they believe that digital media is a good resource for teaching but it should not replace the traditional way of teaching.

Teacher 1 argued that the disadvantage with usage of digital media is that you cannot always trust that the media will work and that you always need a reserve plan in case the internet is down and nothing works. He also thought that digital media is an advantage rather than a disadvantage. The advantages with digital media is that “Man kan få ljud eller filmer som stärker eleverna som har svårigheter, och det främjar elevernas lärande. De får en annan bild utav det och det lockar dem. Det blir roligare med media för dessa barnen” (It is possible to use sounds or movies to strengthen students who have difficulties in learning and it also encourages students to learn. He claimed that students get another picture of learning and that it attracts the students. He argued that a piece of paper and some text do not attract students and that digital media makes it more fun for the students). Another point he mentioned was that he can clearly see that digital media strengthen students’ learning because the students are given an opportunity to listen, see things and they can repeat it.

### 5.3. Grade 2 observation

In this lesson, Teacher 2 started the lesson by telling the students that they will work with body parts. After a discussion about body parts, the teacher had English vocabulary on the smart board, vocabulary such as ill, headache, ear, tummy and doctor. The students’ task was to drag the right picture to the right word. The teacher started this task by asking the students “what is this?” while pointing at one of the pictures on the smart board. The students raised their hands and the teacher picked one student to translate and asked him or her to come forward to drag the picture to the right English word. She then asked the whole class to repeat the word in English. It was difficult to see what was written on the smart board from the back of the classroom because of the sunlight and small writing.
After finishing the translation of the vocabulary, the students watched a movie about a boy who was sick. The main characters in this movie were a boy, his dad and a doctor. This movie contained a lot of body parts and aches which involved body parts. During the movie, the teacher paused the movie a few times to ask the students to translate what something meant, but there were also questions about the content of the movie for example “What did his father do?”

When the movie ended, the teacher once again had some new vocabulary on the smart board, but this time she only had words of body parts, such as hand, eye, mouth, and foot. The teacher read the words in English and asked the students to repeat after her. Once again, the students got a similar task as the one in the beginning of this lesson. The students’ task was to match the English words with the Swedish translation by dragging with their fingers on the smart board. While matching words with each other, the teacher asked the students to read the words loudly in English.

When they were done matching she paired the students up to share a laptop. The laptop was already prepared for the students and the game was already opened. The teacher started off by showing the students what to do in each game and which game to start with. During these games students were taking turns and helped each other to finish the games. The first game was completed when a clown was colored (appendix 1). The game contained voice tracks and sentence of how to solve the game. For an example, to color the eyes blue, and the students’ task were to pick the right color and then color the right body part. The second game contained a picture with eight different words of body parts and the goals were to put the words next to the right number (appendix 2). To complete this task student were asked to click and drag the words into the spaces below the picture.

If the students were finished with these two games, they could play another game which was similar to memory card (appendix 3). The goal was to find matching pictures and words. There were also voice tracks pronouncing the pictures and the words when students clicked on the cards. For those students who needed a bit more challenge in their language learning there was another game called “Part of The Body” (appendix 4). This game reminded of hangman as it gives the students a hint to read and the students have to figure out the right body part and spell it.

At the end of this lesson, Teacher 2 started a song on YouTube, where they sang ‘Head, shoulder, knees and toes’. The song was repeated a few times and then she asked the students to stand up and sing along.
During these tasks, some pairs were using headphones while others did not, but all games contained voice tracks. The teacher encouraged the students to communicate in English by their own ability. Teacher 2 used English throughout the whole lesson and sometimes she said a few Swedish sentences. Some students were having troubles with starting their game while a couple were busy looking for an adapter to charge their laptop.

5.4. Interview with teacher of grade two (Teacher 2)

Teacher 2 is a graduated teacher for grades K-6 and teaches all core subjects such as Swedish, English and Mathematic and has been working as a teacher for three years. She is now a class teacher for grades 2-3 which are merged together. The only further training she has is about smart boards, where they taught how to use a smart board and different tasks on smart boards that they can access through internet.

Teacher 2 said that her lessons usually start by working together either by watching a movie, listening to a song or doing a task on the smart board. The lesson continues with that students get other tasks to solve. She also argued that use of digital media is good because it develops students’ language skills. She said that it gives students an opportunity to listen to English, trying to understand even though they do not understand everything that is said. Another argument is that the students can repeat after the movie and songs that are used. She also said that the students “får in den engelska klangen” (By this she means that students are given the opportunity to listen to the pronunciations of words).

As for the aspects of advantages and disadvantages for using digital media in teaching English for younger learners, she gave the same arguments as Teacher 1. The advantages are that it motivates students’ learning and using digital media creates a fun lesson for the students. Other advantages that Teacher 2 argued about is that “där är mycket bra övningar och saker som jag inte behöver uppfinna, som man kan hitta på andra sidor och använda” (There are very good exercises and things that she does not have to invent and that she can find these on other sites to use for her lessons when teaching). She also emphasized that some exercises need to be modified to adapt to the different students’ needs to be able to support students to develop their language skills. Teacher 2 claimed that students rarely think a lesson is boring when digital media is being used in the lesson.

The disadvantages with use of digital media are when internet, laptops and games do not always work as expected. Other disadvantages are that sometimes it requires too much time to turn on and off the laptops. She also argued that it requires lot of work before the lesson starts and after the lesson ends when using laptops to access different media.
Teacher 2 mentions that sometimes she thinks that the students do not really learn anything from gaming. She thinks that the students know how it works but do not understand the main content of the game and it is hard to know if the students developed their language skills through the games.

Teacher 2 claimed that she tries to use digital media as a resource as much as possible. She also said that “Det är egentligen det lättaste sättet att använda sig av i engelskundervisningen på ett sätt, eftersom det är mycket utantill kunskaper. ”Man ska lära sig ord och man får lyssna på ordet” (It is easier to use digital media when teaching English because you have to memorize the words and listen to them). This is one of the few reasons to the use movies and songs for teaching English in her classroom.

5.5. Grade 3 observation

Teacher 3 started the class by telling the students that they are going to repeat clothes-words and that the end of the lesson the students were going to do a crossword. To start with, the students were watching a movie about clothes and teacher 3 explained to the students that “Repetition is very good, because… remember? We have to work with these words later”. It took some time for the teacher to find the right movie and also to make the sound work. She got some help from one student to make the sound work. As it turned out that the teacher forgot to turn on the speaker on the smart board.

When everything at last worked the movie started by some children presenting themselves and clothes. The movie showed an item (clothing) and said the English word for it. For example a pair of trousers was shown and the word “trousers” was said, and so on. Some of the students repeated after the movie and said the name of the items that the movie showed. The movie then continued with repeating phrases such as “what is he wearing?” and “he is wearing a …”, which was repeated several times. Some of the students repeated these phrases along the movie as well. Not only did the movie say the phrases several times, but they sang it as well and the students did sing along. The movie then continued by two men who were hungry and during this part there were new phrases such as “I like hamburger” and “I do not like hamburger”. These two phrases was also repeated a few times but the food words were replaced each time (in this case hamburger was replaced).

This movie contained phrases such as “what are you wearing?”, “he is wearing…”, “what color is it?”, “it is…” and phrases that was mentioned earlier. The movie
did not only repeat the phrases but also the words of clothes items several times because the focus of this movie was about clothes.

When the movie ended the teacher asked two volunteers to stand at the front of the classroom and asked them to ask each other about their clothes. The task was to use the two phrases from the movie. One student asked “what are you wearing?” while the other one replied by saying “I am wearing …” and named the items that they were wearing. During this task students were not only expected to use these two phrases from the movie, but were also asked to use “what color is that” and “it is…”. At the end of the lesson students were doing crosswords on a paper that was handed out by the teacher.

During this observation teacher 3 began her lesson with speaking Swedish but not long after she changed into English which proceeded throughout the rest of the lesson. If the students did not understand her she tried to use her body to explain and if they still did not understand she would use Swedish to explain herself. The students replied to the teacher by using Swedish.

5.6. Interview with teacher of grade 3 (Teacher 3)

Teacher 3 is not a certified teacher but has been working at schools as a teacher for ten years. She mostly teaches languages such as English and Spanish for students between 13-15 years old. For now she is teaching English and Spanish in grades 6-7 and English in grade 3. She has only been working with grade 3 in this private school for two months, therefore it also makes it difficult for her to know what to expect from the students and which level of English she can teach the students.

This teacher said that she do not always use digital media when teaching, as a matter of fact she barely use digital media for teaching. She believes that students learn through the traditional way such as giving students tasks on paper to produce their own work on paper. She said that “Barn vet knappast hur man skriver längre, för de bara sitter och trycker på en skärm och det kan jag tycka är lite tråkigt. Jag kan tycka att sitta och skriva och känna på ett papper ger en annan känsla” (Children barely know how to write anymore because children only write on screens and she does not like that. She claimed that writing and touching the papers give students another feeling).

Teacher 3 said that if she uses digital media for teaching it would be through the smart board to watch videos or songs through sites as YouTube or other sites that are accessible. She also mentioned that if she uses digital media in her teaching she would begin or end the lesson with it because starting a lesson would support students to remember the
previous lessons. The reason to end the lesson with digital media is to summarize the lesson in a fun way for an example to use a song at the end. She also mentioned that digital media should work as a complement, not to replace the traditional way of teaching.

She argued that the disadvantages with digital media are that the technologies do not always work as it should. An example she gave was one time when she decided to use the technologies to teach but a problem occurred. She said that she could not write on the smart board so the focus were to find out how to make it work rather than the main reason of the lesson. Another disadvantage is that the internet does not always work. She said that “det händer en massa oväntande grejer som göra att hela lektionen bara stannar upp” (So many different unexpected things happens and you cannot continue the lesson that as you have planned).

Teacher 3 argued, as the other teachers, the advantages with digital media is that it motivates students to learn. She said that learning a new language is not boring, you just have to create a meaningful lesson for them. Another advantage by using digital media in teaching is that it facilitates those students who have difficulties to concentrate during lessons. This teacher also argued that games are a good resource for students to learn, especially when it comes to learning a new language. “De som spelar mycket spel så som minecraft, de är ju grymma på engelska” (Those who play games such as minecraft have good English skills). Her argument to this is because these students who play games online are using English in a fun and motivating way to learn.

6. Analysis and discussion

The three teachers that have been observed have mostly been working with tasks through different technologies such as laptops and smart boards. All of them also used videos as a resource in their teaching in learning English as a foreign language.

Both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 conducted tasks for the students which expected them to match different pictures with the right words. This is a way for students to refresh their memory and for the teachers to know the extent of the students’ knowledge. As Teacher 1 mentioned in the interview, digital media support different learners to develop in their own ability. Therefore the teachers think it is an advantage to use digital media to find different exercises with similar focus and are adapted to the students’ ability. Visual learners were supported by using pictures for matching. The teachers think that the main problem was that the technology sometimes was problematic during tasks because it did not work as expected. For example it was difficult to aim the right picture and drag it to the right words. This
problem might be a reason to why Teacher 3 is less positive about using digital media for teaching. As she mentioned in her interview, when problems about digital media occurred the main focus of the lesson will changes. As Vold et. al (2010) also argued in their study that tasks shows existing problems, especially in primary classes because there are concerns about what skills the students actually develop.

It is possible that this concern might decrease in the participated classes because the students were doing the tasks together with the teachers’ support. This means that during the task the teachers asked students questions before they matched the picture. For an example the teachers asked the students to translate the word before matching and asked them to say the word in English. This way the students will always be reminded of what they are doing. But the concern here could be that the students who were not asked to match, were easily distracted by other things. A reason for this might be because they felt bored. It is difficult to encourage all students to participate at the same time during tasks in whole class. But using digital media has its advantages. As Vold et. al (2010) argued, the usage of digital media increased students’ speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, which are gained by looking at the spelling of the words, pronouncing the words and listening to it while matching.

As for use of videos as a resource for teaching English as a foreign language, it seems to be the most popular complement among the selected classes because all of them used videos in their lesson. During my years in primary school, movies were only used in lessons when a special occasion occurred, but today many teachers use videos to teach. Teacher 2 argued that videos give students an opportunity to listen to English and repeat along with the video. Even though Teacher 3 barely used digital media for teaching, she also believed that using videos will motivate students to learn in a fun way. Which Sylvis (2010) also argued in her study that using videos for teaching is a unique resource to develop students’ language learning.

Two out of three teachers paused the video several of times to ask the students to translate the video. But it might also be important that the teacher should discuss the content of the video to get an idea of the students’ understanding. I believe that it is important to discuss the video and work with the content. If no discussion occurs about the video, issues may occur if the students did not understand the reason to why the video was relevant for their learning. Teacher 3 did not pause the video during her lesson, which made me consider if all the students did understand the video in order to learn.

Another concern that was noticed during the observations was that the videos contained some parts that were not relevant to the lessons. For an example in grade 2, the
lesson was supposed to focus on body parts but not only did it talk about body part but also different aches. This can be a problem for the students because they might not understand the main content of this lesson and the focus might have been on other things rather than body parts.

The last concern that I noticed was during the observation of grade 1, where a video was shown at the end of the lesson. The video contained a lot of phrases which can be hard for a first grader to remember. The video also had no connection to what the students were doing earlier in the lesson. The teacher did mention that the video was a start of a project, but it might be possible that the students will forget about the video until next lesson, especially when a week of break occurred the week after. The concern might be that the students did not learn anything from the video. The reasons might be because no discussion occurred about the video, there were many different phrases and the video was 20 minutes long.

Games also seemed very appreciated by both teachers and students when learning English as a foreign language. Teachers can access different kind of games through digital media to support students' development of language. Games are good in a way that in order to achieve something they have to finish tasks. As for an example the Mingoville game, that is mentioned earlier in this project. The more vocabulary the students learn the higher the tree will grow and according to Meyer (2013) this is how students get motivated to learn new words. All games have different tasks for students to achieve goals and “prizes”. On the other hand, if the game is not adapted to the students’ ability to achieve the goals of the games, it might not be motivating for the students to play.

Another example of a game was the one which reminded of hang man, that grade two played. In order to not get hanged the students had to spell the word right. Too many errors would get the man hanged. This is a game that makes students work harder to not get “hanged”. As Meyer (2013) argued, games make students work harder to learn and complete tasks and be able to achieve the goals of the game. Parallel with achieving the goals, the students will develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. There is a risk that students were only guessing letters in order to achieve the goal, which means that students might not be aware of the main content of this game.

Teacher 3 also argued that games are a good supplement to develop students’ language skills. “…games are essential components of active learning. In the early years of schooling, play in particular is of great importance in helping pupils to acquire knowledge” (Skolverket, 2011a:11). The reason for this is because students are motivated in a fun way.
But as Teacher 2 argued, games do not always support students to learn. Even games have its issues when it comes to teaching. Games do not always work and sometimes it is difficult to know if the students learnt anything from playing the game and what they have learnt. She also argued that students sometimes know how to play the game to achieve the goals without actually understanding the game.

Something that can be in consideration is that games need to be evaluated before using it for teaching, not all games actually develop students’ language skills and the games has to match the topic of the lesson. For example, if the lesson is about body parts then the games should as well be about body parts. As Teacher 3 argued you have to create a meaningful lesson for the students to be able to develop their language learning. Games also have to challenge the students to be able to give them an opportunity to develop. An advantage with games is that there are different kinds of levels which mean that all students can be challenged.

Teacher 3 is less positive about using digital media for teaching, but at the same time she believed that online games develop students’ English skills. As she mentioned in her interview, children who play Minecraft have good English skills. Question is then why do teacher 3 not use games for teaching? The reason might be because it is hard to find a game, it might require a lot of time to start the game or simply she does not trust that the technology will work.

The findings of this project do match the findings in the studies that are mentioned in this project. The participants and previous studies agree that there are both advantages and disadvantages about using digital media for teaching younger learners a new language. Some teachers seem committed to use digital media, while others do not. But all teachers seemed to agree that digital media motivate students to learn because it is fun and there are varieties of ways to teach with the help of digital media, Jedeskog and Nissen (2004) mentioned in their study that ICT is a way to create a good learning environment.

I believe that using digital media for teaching will meet the goal of the Swedish curriculum. For example, the Swedish curriculum states that students should be given opportunity to listen to songs, films, conversations etc. (Skolverket, 2011a), and these are able to access through digital media. Many of the Swedish curriculum’s goals can be achieved by digital media, because digital media is use as a supplement to motivate in a fun way and develop students’ English skills. But as earlier mentioned there are no proofs that digital media develop students’ English skills (Balkun, 2011) and you are able to achieve the Swedish curriculum’s goal without digital media.
7. Conclusion

Digital media has become a big part of today’s schools. Teachers use digital media as a resource when teaching English as a foreign language. The main reason to why they use digital media when teaching is because teacher thinks that it motivates students to learn. Teachers think that students are also developing reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. Another reason why digital media is used for teaching is because it benefits different learners and tasks can be adapted to different abilities and skills which match the students’ skills.

Research question one asked how digital media is being used in teaching for students in grade 1-3. The findings revealed that teachers chose to use laptop and smartboards for games, videos and different exercises in their lessons. This is to provide students a motivated and varied lesson. Games allowed students to use their knowledge to achieve “rewards” which motivate the students to work harder to learn more. Videos support students that learn better through visual, but also give students an opportunity to hear the pronunciations. Exercises can be found online which can facilitate teachers because they can find fun task for the students.

Research question two asked what do teachers think about use of digital media in teaching grade 1-3. As some of the teachers and studies mentions, there are both advantages and disadvantages in using digital media as a supplement for teaching young students a foreign language. As some studies and teachers argued, goals can be achieved without digital media as well, but it do not motivate students in the same way to learn. Another argument that the teachers have is that digital media is good but it should not take over the traditional way to learn. Digital media should be used as a supplement. Teachers in the investigated school either start or end the lesson with digital media. They use digital media to introduce a new theme or to test if the students extend their knowledge and skills about a particular theme. It can also to strengthen the students who might have difficulties with learning a new language.

As for the future as a teacher, this project was found that it requires time when using digital media for teaching. Digital media gives teachers a broad opportunity to find different of exercises, songs, videos and many other sources such as blogs to work with when teaching English. During my years at Malmö University we have not discussed much about the use of digital media in school. Which is important, because the technologies and the teaching material that digital media gives are developing and are used more in schools for
teaching. This project made me realize how many different resources there are to help
students but also many disadvantages that should be kept in mind. Therefore it is also
important to carefully evaluate the media that are decided to use while teaching students in
grade 1-3. As earlier mentioned in Bulkan’s (2011) study each new form of digital media
requires an evaluation.

Since this project focuses on teaching English as a foreign language by the use
of digital media and therefore it is beneficial to have the opportunity to do an empirical study
to exam this project. This project is to be completed in 10 weeks and written with a 25 page
limit.

A recently opened private school was selected to participate in this project. The
main reason for the choice of school was because of the awareness of the school using digital
media regularly in all subjects. The school uses smart boards instead of whiteboards. White
boards did not exist in this school and therefore this school was a perfect resource to
investigate in this project.

Considering the difficulty scheduling a meeting with the teachers for an
observation and interview, only three interviews and three observations were possible. The
three classes have their English lessons on the same days and almost at same time, which
made it difficult to observe all classes in a few weeks. The teachers also did not have time for
an interview after the observation, because they had other classes afterwards. Therefore it was
necessary to schedule meetings for interviews on other days when the teacher had time.
During this project the school had a one week break, which was another week reduced from
the schedule to able to observe the usage of digital media for teaching and interviewing the
teachers.

It would be possible to follow a class for a project with digital media as focus
for teaching English as a foreign language, if the project’s limitation allowed more time and
page limit for the report. It would also be interesting to participate when classes use digital
media to teach young learners a new language and to be able to see the development of
students’ language skills when using digital media as resources in teaching. However, due to
the limit of time and pages, this was not possible.

Another option that was considered was to interview the students when they
used digital media as a resource for learning, because it would provide interesting analysis of
the students’ point of view when digital media is used for their learning. However, to be able
to interview students, parents’ permissions would be required, which would require more
preparation time before starting the investigation for this project. Also it would require more
time to choose between all the students in the three classes and summarize the results of it.
8. References


9. Appendix

9.1. Appendix 1

9.2. Appendix 2
9.3. Appendix 3

9.4. Appendix 4