

VOCATIONAL STUDENTS TALK ABOUT TEXTS IN SMALL GROUPS

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Abstract. The study presents a comparison between how three teachers and their students talked about texts – narrative and expository – in small groups during a regular lesson and during two lessons where a new approach of comprehension instruction, Questioning the Author (QtA), was adopted.

The students were 17 years old. The majority of them were poor readers and they attended the Health Care Programme. The lessons were videotaped.

During the regular lessons, the teachers dominated the text talks and mostly asked retrieve information questions. The students – including the immigrant students – made few inferences and reflections.

After the regular lessons, the teachers were invited to participate in seminars led by the investigator where the QtA model was practised before videotaping the second time and the third time.

Results showed that during the QtA lessons the teachers' share of talking time diminished. The teachers' questions also underwent changes. The number of retrieve information questions decreased and construct message questions increased. The students – including the immigrant students – read more actively during the QtA lessons. They clearly made an effort to explore ideas in the text and made numerous inferences and reflections.

Key words: Poor readers; immigrant students, reading comprehension; reading strategies; structured text talks

Chinese

[Translation Shek Kam Tse]

職校學生在小組中討論課文

摘要：本研究呈現比較了三位老師如何與他們的學生在小組中（分別在一節常規課堂和兩節運用理解力教學和質疑作者的新方法的課堂上）討論敘述性的理解性的課文。

學生年齡為17歲。他們大多數人閱讀能力較差並加入了「健康關愛項目」。課堂被視頻錄像。

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在常規課堂中，老師主導文章講解，提問多數是讓學生再現課文中信息。學生們，包括移民學生，很少推論並反思。

常規課堂之後，老師們被邀請參加研究者舉辦的講座，讓老師們在第二次第三次錄像之前實踐了「提問作者模式」(the QtA model) 的教學。

結果顯示在「提問作者模式」的課堂中，老師們的講解時間減少了，再現信息的問題數量減少，建構信息的問題增多。學生(包括移民學生)在「提問作者模式」的課堂上更加主動地閱讀，他們明顯地致力於探索課文思想並做出很多推論和反思。

關鍵詞：能力弱的讀者，移民學生，閱讀理解能力，閱讀策略，結構性的課文講解

Dutch

[Translation Tanja Janssen]

TITEL: Leerlingen in het beroepsonderwijs praten in kleine groepen over gelezen teksten

SAMENVATTING: Dit onderzoek behelst een vergelijking tussen het praten over – verhalende en zakelijke - teksten in kleine groepen door drie docenten en hun leerlingen gedurende reguliere lessen en gedurende twee lessen waarin een nieuwe aanpak van tekstbegrip werd toegepast, Questioning the Author (QtA), Vraag het de Auteur. De leerlingen waren 17 jaar oud. De meesten van hen waren zwakke lezers die het zorg- en gezondheidsprogramma volgden. De lessen werden vastgelegd op videofilm.

Na de reguliere lessen werden de docenten uitgenodigd deel te nemen aan bijeenkomsten die door de onderzoeker werden georganiseerd. Op die bijeenkomsten werd geoefend met het QtA-model. Daarna werden nog twee lessen op video opgenomen.

Resultaten laten zien dat de spreektijd van de docenten verminderde tijdens de QtA-lessen. Ook de vragen van de docenten veranderden. Het aantal herinneringsvragen nam af en het aantal vragen naar betekenis of de boodschap van de tekst nam juist toe. De leerlingen lazen meer actief tijdens de QtA-lessen. Dit gold ook voor leerlingen van allochtone afkomst. Zij deden duidelijk hun best om ideeën in de tekst te exploreren, maakten talrijke afleidingen en reflecteerden op het gelezene.

TREFWOORDEN: zwakke lezers, allochtone leerlingen, tekstbegrip, leesstrategieën, gestructureerde gesprekken over teksten

Finnish

[Translation Katri Sarmavuori]

TITTELI: Ammatillisten oppilaiden puhe teksteistä pienryhmissä

ABSTRAKTI: Tutkimus tarjoaa vertailun siitä, kuinka kolme opettajaa ja heidän oppilaansa puhuivat teksteistä — narratiivinen ja ekspositorinen — pienryhmissä tavallisen oppituntin aikana ja kahden oppituntin aikana, kun uutta ymmärtämisen opetuksen lähestymistapaa, Kysy Tekijältä (QtA), käytettiin.

Oppilaat olivat 17 vuotta vanhoja. Suurin osa heistä oli huonoja lukijoita ja he osallistuivat terveydenhoito-ohjelmaan. Tunnit videokuvattiin.

Tavallisten tuntien aikana opettajat dominoivat tekstipuhetta ja enimmäkseen kysyivät muistiinpalauttamistietokysymyksiä. Oppilaat — sisällyttäen maahanmuuttajaoppilaat — päättelivät ja reflektoivat vähän. Tavallisten oppituntien jälkeen opettajat kutsuttiin osallistumaan seminaareihin, joissa harjoiteltiin QtA-mallia, ennen kuin videonauhoitus tehtiin toisen ja kolmannen kerran.

Tulokset näyttivät, että QtA-tuntien aikana opettajien puhe aika väheni. Opettajien kysymykset kokivat myös muutoksia. Muistinvaraisten tietokysymysten määrä väheni ja konstruointiviestikysymykset lisääntyivät. Oppilaat — maahanmuuttajaoppilaat mukaanlukien — lukivat aktiivisemmin QtA-tuntien aikana. He yrittivät selvästi tutkia tekstin ideoita ja tekivät lukuisia päätelmiä ja reflektioita.

AVAINSANAT: heikot lukijat; maahanmuuttajaoppilaat, lukemisen ymmärtäminen, lukemisstrategiat, strukturoitu tekstipuhe

French

[Translation Laurence Pasa]

TITRE : Les élèves en formation professionnelle parlent des textes en petits groupes

RÉSUMÉ : Cette étude compare la façon dont trois professeurs et leurs élèves discutent de textes - narratifs et descriptifs - en petits groupes pendant une leçon habituelle et pendant deux leçons où une nouvelle approche de l'enseignement de la compréhension, Questions à l'Auteur (QtA), est adoptée.

Les élèves ont 17 ans. La plupart d'entre eux sont de faibles lecteurs. Ils suivent le programme d'éducation à la santé. Les leçons ont été enregistrées en vidéo.

Pendant les leçons habituelles, les interventions des professeurs prédominent, ceux-ci demandent essentiellement d'extraire l'information contenue dans les textes. Les élèves – dont certains sont des élèves immigrés – font peu d'inférences et de remarques. Après ces leçons habituelles, les professeurs sont invités à participer aux séminaires proposés par l'instigateur du modèle QtA avant de procéder aux second et troisième enregistrements vidéo. Les résultats montrent que pendant les leçons de type QtA le temps de parole des enseignants a diminué. Les questions des enseignants ont également été modifiées : le nombre de questions visant à extraire l'information a diminué au profit d'une augmentation des questions visant à reconstruire le contenu du texte. Les élèves – y compris les élèves immigrés – ont lu plus activement pendant les leçons de type QtA. Ils ont fait un réel effort d'exploration des idées présentes dans le texte et ont formulé de nombreux commentaires et inférences.

MOTS-CLÉS: faibles lecteurs, élèves immigrés, compréhension en lecture, stratégies de lecture, échanges structurés autour des textes.

Greek

[Translation by Panatoya Papoulia Tzelepi]

Τίτλος: Μαθητές επαγγελματικού σχολείου συζητούν σε μικρές ομάδες για κείμενα

Περίληψη: Η μελέτη συγκρίνει πώς τρεις δάσκαλοι και οι μαθητές τους μιλούσαν για κείμενα – αφηγηματικά και δοκιμιακά – σε μικρές ομάδες, κατά τη διάρκεια συνηθισμένου μαθήματος και κατά τη διάρκεια δύο μαθημάτων όπου μια νέα προσέγγιση διδασκαλίας υιοθετήθηκε, αυτή της «ερώτησης στο Συγγραφέα». Οι μαθητές ήσαν 17 ετών. Τα μαθήματα μαγνητοσκοπήθηκαν. Κατά τη διάρκεια των συνηθισμένων μαθημάτων, οι δάσκαλοι κυριαρχούσαν στη συζήτηση και έκαναν ερωτήσεις αναζήτησης πληροφορίας. Οι μαθητές, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των μεταναστών μαθητών, προέβαιναν σε λίγα συμπεράσματα και αναστοχασμούς. Μετά τα συνηθισμένα μαθήματα, οι δάσκαλοι προσκλήθηκαν να λάβουν μέρος σε σεμινάρια της ερευνητριας, όπου η προσέγγιση της «Ερώτησης στο Συγγραφέα» παρουσιάστηκε και εφαρμόστηκε πριν από τη δεύτερη και τρίτη μαγνητοσκόπηση. Τα αποτελέσματα έδειξαν ότι κατά τη διάρκεια της διδασκαλίας με αυτή την προσέγγιση, ο χρόνος ομιλίας των δασκάλων συρρικνώθηκε. Οι ερωτήσεις των δασκάλων επίσης άλλαξαν. Ο αριθμός των ερωτήσεων ανάκλησης μειώθηκε και αυξήθηκαν οι ερωτήσεις δόμησης νοήματος. Οι μαθητές, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των μεταναστών, διάβαζαν πιο ενεργά κατά τη διάρκεια των μαθημάτων με αυτή την προσέγγιση. Έκαναν φανερή προσπάθεια να εξερευνήσουν τις ιδέες των κειμένων και εξέγαγαν πολυάριθμα συμπεράσματα και αναστοχασμούς.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Κακοί αναγνώστες, μαθητές μετανάστες, κατανόηση της ανάγνωσης, στρατηγική ανάγνωσης, δομημένη συζήτηση για τα κείμενα

Italian

[Translation Manuela Delfino & Francesco Caviglia]

TITOLO: Studenti della formazione professionale parlano di testi in piccoli gruppi

SINTESI: Questo studio presenta un confronto su come tre docenti e i relativi studenti hanno parlato di testi narrativi e descrittivi in piccoli gruppi, durante una lezione tradizionale e durante due lezioni in cui è stato adottato un nuovo approccio per migliorare la comprensione basato sull'idea di interrogare l'autore e denominato Questioning the Author (QtA).

Gli studenti hanno 17 anni, sono cattivi lettori e seguono i corsi di per Operatori della Sanità. Le lezioni sono state videoregistrate.

Durante la prima ora di lezione tradizionale i docenti hanno avuto un ruolo dominante nella conversazione sui testi e hanno formulato domande volte a individuare informazioni presenti nei testi. Gli studenti - inclusi alcuni studenti immigrati - hanno formulato poche inferenze e riflessioni.

Dopo la lezione tradizionale, i docenti sono stati invitati a partecipare a seminari condotti da ricercatori con l'obiettivo di adottare il modello QtA prima di videoregistrare la lezione durante il secondo e terzo incontro.

I risultati mostrano che durante le ore di lezione basate sul modello QtA, non solo i docenti hanno parlato di meno, ma anche le loro domande sono state diverse. Il numero di domande volte a individuare informazioni presenti nei testi è diminuita, mentre sono aumentate le domande volte a ricostruire i messaggi del testo. Gli studenti - inclusi gli immigrati - hanno letto in modo più attivo durante le lezioni QtA. Hanno fatto lo sforzo di esplorare le idee presenti nel testo e hanno formulato numerose inferenze e riflessioni.

PAROLE CHIAVE: cattivi lettori; studenti immigrati; comprensione della lettura; strategie di lettura; discussioni strutturate sui testi

Polish

[Translation Elżbieta Awramiuk]

TITUŁ: DYSKUSJA NAD TEKSTEM W MAŁYCH GRUPACH UCZNIÓW SZKÓŁ ZAWODOWYCH

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł prezentuje porównanie, w jaki sposób trzech nauczycieli rozmawiało z uczniami o tekstach – narracyjnych i wyjaśniających – w małych grupach podczas normalnej lekcji oraz podczas dwóch lekcji, na których zastosowano nową metodę nauczania, Zadawanie Pytań Autorowi (QtA). Uczniowie mieli 17 lat. Większość z nich była miernymi czytelnikami i brała udział w zajęciach wyrównawczych. Lekcje były nagrywane na wideo.

Podczas tradycyjnych lekcji w rozmowie o tekście dominował nauczyciel, głównie prosił o wyszukanie informacji. Uczniowie – włączając uczniów imigrantów – sformułowali kilka wniosków i refleksji. Po normalnej lekcji nauczyciele zostali zaproszeni do uczestnictwa w prowadzonym przez badaczy seminarium, na którym został przeciwstawiony – przed nagrywaniem lekcji po raz drugi i trzeci – model QtA.

Rezultaty pokazują, że podczas lekcji wykorzystujących QtA nauczyciele zmniejszają czas własnego mówienia. Pytania nauczycieli także ulegają zmianie. Zmniejsza się liczba poleceń o pozyskanie informacji, a zwiększa się liczba pytań wymagających skonstruowania informacji. Uczniowie – włączając imigrantów – czytają bardziej aktywnie podczas lekcji QtA. Wyraźnie czynią wysiłek, by wyjaśnić znaczenie tekstu i formułują więcej wniosków i refleksji.

SŁOWA-KLUCZE: słabi uczniowie, studenci imigranci, rozumienie czytania, strategie czytania, uporządkowana pogadanka o tekście

Spanish

[Translation Ingrid Marquez]

TÍTULO: ESTUDIANTES VOCACIONALES HABLAN SOBRE TEXTOS EN PEQUEÑOS GRUPOS
RESUMEN: El estudio presenta una comparación entre cómo tres maestros y sus estudiantes hablan acerca de textos –narrativos y expositivos—en pequeños grupos durante una lección tradicional y dos lecciones en las cuales se usó un nuevo enfoque para la comprensión de las instrucciones, llamado Preguntarle al Autor (QtA).

Los estudiantes tenían 17 años. La mayoría leían con dificultad y asistían a un Programa de Cuidado de la Salud. Se grabaron las lecciones.

Durante las lecciones tradicionales, los maestros dominaban la plática sobre los textos y primordialmente hacían preguntas referentes a la información que incluían. Los estudiantes –incluyendo algunos migrantes—hacían pocas inferencias y reflexiones.

Después de las lecciones tradicionales, a los maestros se les invitó para participar en seminarios dirigidos por el investigador y durante los cuales el modelo QtA se practicó antes de grabar por segunda y tercera vez. Los resultados mostraron que durante las lecciones QtA, los maestros hablaban menos. Sus preguntas también sufrieron cambios. Bajó el número de preguntas sobre la información contenida en el texto y aumentó el número de preguntas diseñadas para construir un mensaje. Los estudiantes, incluyendo a los migrantes, leían más activamente durante las lecciones QtA. Era claro que se esforzaban para explorar ideas del texto, y hacían numerosas inferencias y reflexiones.

PALABRAS CLAVE: lectores deficientes, estudiantes migrantes, comprensión de lectura, estrategias de lectura, pláticas estructuradas sobre un texto

1. INTRODUCTION

A large part of Swedish students' work in school is focused on reading in order to learn. However, lots of students have problems with extracting meaning from many of the written texts with which they are confronted (Iversen Kulbrandstad, 1998, pp. 455). Why? One fundamental reason is that many expository texts focus on "necessary" information, which means that they are compact with regard to information content, and that much information is left implicit. Thus, the texts lack the coher-

ence needed to enable students to draw connections between ideas and events (Beck, McKeown, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1991; Reichenberg, 2005). Furthermore, expository texts have a variety of text structures (Lundberg, 2002). Consequently, expository texts require the application of complex cognitive operations to extract meaning during reading.

Research with Swedish students and their interactions with texts has shown that many of them tend to adopt a passive role when reading. Worrying results have emerged from international studies such as PISA 2006 and national studies (National Agency for Education, 2007, 2005). In particular, the Swedish students have difficulties in making inferences, that is, reading between and beyond the lines, and reflecting upon what they have read. The results have also shown that students who do not have Swedish as their first language performed, on average, less well than students with a completely Swedish background (National Agency for Education, 2007).

In upper secondary school many of these poor readers choose to study in vocational programmes, for instance the Health Care Programme. Despite the vocational character of this programme, literacy demands are, in reality, actually high. Texts in some subjects, such as civics and nursing science, appear to be more difficult than others.

2. READING FOR UNDERSTANDING IS A COMPLEX ACTIVITY

As stated above, many students are passive readers which means that they, unlike active readers, are less likely to note inconsistencies in text content, to fill in gaps in the text, to monitor what they understand from the text, to take notes, to go back when they do not understand the first time, and so on. Their metacognitive processes also operate differently from those of active readers and they display inefficient thinking and use a restricted range of reading skills (Stothard, 1995; Carlisle & Rice, 2002; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002; Pressley, 2002; Afflerbach, 2002).

Why, then, have they developed such a passive attitude? One fundamental reason is probably lack of practice. There is very little teaching of text comprehension at school. A classical pattern of classroom discourse is a cyclical pattern of three-part sequences: initiation-response-evaluation (IRE). (Dillon, 1990; Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Pressley, 1998; Alexander, 2006). In this pattern only the teachers ask the questions. Questions to which the teachers already know the answer (Mercer, 1995, p. 26). It is against the norm for students to ask questions. Students are schooled, as Dillon claims (1990, p. 7), to become masters at answering questions and to remain novices at asking them. Hence classroom questioning means teacher questioning (Nystrand, 1997; Beck et al, 1998; Alexander, 2006).

A second reason for the students' passive approach is that many of them have developed a low self-esteem from continuous failure to understand texts. To avoid further failure, many of them have developed various strategies, such as using a minimum of effort when reading: if you do not waste a lot of energy, then your failure will not be so big. Not to try is not to fail (Taube, 2000; Pressley, 1998). These

strategies may help students to fulfil the aim of avoiding failure but will not promote deeper comprehension (Guthrie et al., 1996).

A third reason is that many teachers appear to have a strong belief that if students just read, read and read, they will become good comprehenders. The problem is that it is not enough just to read more if poor readers are to develop skilled strategic reading (Pressley, 2002).

How then can we get these students actively involved when they are reading? Two lines of work can be found in research. The first line has focused on the revision of texts. In order to give expository texts a higher degree of readability researchers have revised texts and made them more coherent and also given them a personal voice (Beck et al. 1991, 1995; Reichenberg, 2000). However, even if all expository texts were revised and “student-friendly” it would not be sufficient. Beck et al. (1991, 1995) and Reichenberg (2000) found that, although the text revisions increased comprehension, many students still read in a cursory way and resisted exploring text ideas and difficult content.

Consequently, the second line of research has focused on techniques for encouraging students’ active engagement with texts. Although each of these techniques has a somewhat different emphasis, the common focus is to encourage students to consider issues that they encounter in the expository texts or develop solutions to problems that the characters in the narrative texts are faced with. There are also studies of practicing teachers who are effectively using discussions in their classrooms (Langer, 2005; Nystrand, 1997; Alexander, 2006). Through sharing ideas students can achieve more generalised kinds of understanding if they are actively helped and encouraged to do so (Mercer, 1995; Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Alexander, 2006).

Why, then, have these techniques and “good examples” not been practised in classrooms to a greater extent? According to Alvermann and Moore (1991) the reason is that the teachers experience difficulties in getting the strategies work whilst Pressley claims that “[...] many teachers do not understand comprehension as active reading – nor as active predicting, questioning, imaging, seeking clarifications, etc.” (Pressley, 1998, p. 220. See also Alexander, 2006).

2.1 Discussing during or after the reading?

Why, then do most teachers find it difficult to get the strategies work in the reading situation? One reason might be that discussions about texts are mostly initiated after the whole class have read the entire text silently on their own. Such an approach is very demanding for poor readers. It assumes that the students (a) have managed to read the entire text with good comprehension (b) are able to hold in their memory all the segments in the text so that they can make sense of it in the discussion (c) can articulate the difficulties they encountered when reading (Sandora, 1999). Consequently, only a few students are given the possibility to participate in the discussions.

Researchers have found that discussions in small groups, dialogic teaching, are necessary if all students are to have a chance to participate (Rogoff, 1991; Barnes & Todd, 1995; Mercer, 1995; Ogle & Blanchowicz, 2002; Alexander, 2006). Mercer

(2000) emphasizes that talk in learning is not one-way linear communication but a reciprocal process in which ideas are bounced back and forth and on that basis advance the students' thinking forward. Moreover, Mercer claims that teachers are vital as visible models for the students (Mercer, 2000). This is also in line with Vygotsky (1962) who has theorized that students require the scaffolding (questions, explanations and modelling) of adults and their more knowledgeable peers in order to progressively internalize and imitate those experts (see also Wertsch, 1991).

Reciprocity is also the central theme in Reciprocal Teaching (RT) (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Palinscar & Brown, 1989; Palinscar, Brown & Campione, 1993) and in *Questioning the Author (QtA)* (Beck et al. 1996). In RT the text is read segment by segment and four strategies are practised (a) summarizing (b) questioning- when students are taught to question themselves when they read, their understanding of text improves (c) predicting and (d) clarifying. There is a gradual change into guided group discussions and exchange of teacher roles. In numerous studies RT has been investigated (Reitsma, 1994; Lederer, 2000; Van den Bos, Brand-Gruwel & Aarnoutse, 1998; Van den Bos, Nakken, Nicholay & van Houten, 2007) and the general conclusion is that it does have an effect. In QtA (Beck et al. 1996) the text is also read segment by segment. The teacher has segmented the text in advance where she/he anticipates that the students may have difficulties. The students stop reading at this particular place and collaborative construction of meaning is performed. Stopping to discuss a text also allows readers to consider different alternatives.

A central idea in QtA is that the text is viewed as the product of a human author who is potentially fallible. Consequently, students with a low self-esteem can view texts as less impersonal, authoritative, and incomprehensible, and realize that texts are open-ended and incomplete and that as readers, they have to contribute something to complete it; for instance, by asking the author hypothetical questions, such as "What is the author trying to say?" and "What do you think the author means by that?" The purpose of these questions is to assist students in their efforts to further explore the ideas of the text. Questioning begins by eliciting what the author says and what that actually means and how it connects with other text ideas. Thus, QtA encourages collaborative discussions in which students are forced to deal with text ideas, to question, and consider alternative possibilities in order to construct meaning. Beck and McKeown (1997) have also developed several discussion moves in order to get the students to wrestle with the ideas in the text, e. g. *marking*, i. e. when the teacher wants to draw attention to an idea that a student has brought up in order to emphasize its importance, *turning back*, when the teacher wants to encourage the students to go back in the text as a source for clarifying their thinking, *modeling*, when the teacher thinks aloud to show the students how her/his mind is actually interacting with the ideas in the text (see Beck & McKeown, 1997, for a further discussion). Consequently, the teacher has a central role in this structured text talk as a facilitator, guide, initiator and responder. The whole class, including the teacher, is constructing meaning of the expository text during a QtA lesson. The teacher is attentive and responsive to students' comments in order to guide the discussion in productive ways (Beck et al., 1997, p. 21).

2.2 Aims

The overall aim of this study was to evaluate a new approach of comprehension instruction, QtA, and to investigate to what extent and in what way– if any – QtA changes the interaction between three teachers and their 12 students. The majority of them were poor readers. The following more specific research questions- three base line issues and the critical issue of the intervention effect- were focused upon:

- 1) What types of questions do teachers regularly ask when students are reading expository texts in the classroom under typical or regular classroom conditions?
- 2) How do the students respond to these questions?
- 3) What strategies do teachers typically and regularly use to get the students to interact actively with the text while reading?
- 4) What possible effects can structured text talks have regarding question types, students' answers and teachers'/students' strategies?

Focusing on poor readers' comprehension, the QtA approach of segmenting the text as well as the idea of questioning the author were adopted. However, there were also differences between the present study and Beck et al. (1996). The students in the present study were instructed to skim the text first, in order to get a general overview of the material before the text was segmented. The students were also older in this study. Moreover, the students read the texts in small groups to enable all the students to get an opportunity to participate in the text talks (cf Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Palinscar & Brown, 1989; Palinscar, Brown & Campione, 1993; Pressley, 1998). In Beck et al. (1996) QtA was practised in classes consisting of 23-25 students.

3. METHOD

3.1 Participants

In the present study, a total of 12 students, 17 year olds, attending the Health Care Programme participated.^{1 2} Out of them, 8 were identified by their teachers as poor readers and 4 as good readers. Good readers were included to facilitate discussion and give the poor readers cognitive courage (Lundberg, 2005). Four of the students had an immigrant background: Elham, Amina, Rana and Vera. In this study, students with immigrant backgrounds are defined as those who (a) study Swedish as a second language at school, or (b) speak a language other than Swedish at home/speak Swedish and a language other than Swedish at home. All four were identified by their teachers as poor readers.

Three teachers, two female, Rask and Frisk, and one male, Modig, also participated in the study. All names of teachers and students are fictitious.

¹ This particular study is a part of a larger project where 60 students participated (Reichenberg, 2005).

² Since the students were 17 years old parental permission was needed. None of the parents declined. All students also consented to being videotaped.

All three teachers had a long experience of teaching. They were selected because they were interested, not because they were nominated as exemplary. The female teachers taught nursing science to all students in the study while the male teacher taught Swedish language and literature to eight of them.

The students were selected on (a) the basis of tests of decoding and reading comprehension together with (b) teacher ratings of the students' attitude to reading, their ability to reflect and infer and propensity to superficial reading (see Reichenberg, 2008a). The tests and the teachers' estimations demonstrated that the eight poor readers had difficulties in understanding what they read and that they were not able to decode with automaticity (see Reichenberg, 2008a).

Characteristic of the eight poor readers, according to their teachers, was that they had developed avoidance strategies, like using a minimum of effort: when the teacher asked questions about a text read, they mostly had an answer ready but did not bother to check in the text if the answer had anything to do with the content of the text.

3.1.1 *Material*

The data consisted of 9 videotaped 40-minute lessons: 3 regular lessons and 6 Questioning the Author (QtA) lessons collected in the spring of 2004. There was also documentation in the form of notes from lessons, meetings and seminars with the teachers. In addition there was a test of word decoding and a reading comprehension test.

3.1.2 *Procedure*

The twelve students were divided into two groups with six persons in each – two good readers and four poor readers – two of them immigrants. Each of the three teachers performed one regular lesson and two Questioning the Author (QtA) lessons. Before videotaping, the investigator observed several lessons in order to become familiar with what questions the teachers asked, how the students responded to these questions, what strategies were used, how long the teachers' turns were, and so on. Teacher Rask and Teacher Modig performed text talks in the same group since she taught nursing science and he Swedish language and literature to all the six students in the group.

For the first videotaped lesson – here referred to as regular lesson – the teachers in nursing science were instructed to choose a text, unknown to the students, directly taken from a textbook in nursing science while the teacher in Swedish language and literature was instructed to choose a narrative text from a textbook and talk about the text with their students for 40 minutes. Teacher Modig chose a short story "Hills like white elephants" from *Snows on Kilimanjaro* (Hemingway, 1996). Since it was their first videotaped session, it seemed fair that the teachers had a text they felt comfortable with.

Afterwards the teachers were invited to participate in seminars led by the investigator. In these seminars, the teachers could watch their videotaped lessons and they

also received transcribed versions of them. Together, we analyzed the transcripts with regard to the teachers' length of turns, the teachers' questions, the students' answers, the teachers' and students' strategies. We also discussed what makes a text easy or difficult to understand for the students. Furthermore, the teachers were introduced to current reading research concerning reading comprehension, text reading strategies, different question types etc. The seminars were also directed toward acquainting the teachers with Questioning the Author. They were also introduced to author-oriented queries, designed to initiate and focus discussions and different discussion moves (see Beck & McKeown, 1997, for a further discussion). However, they were told that the queries and discussion moves were not a prescription for creating a discussion and make the students wrestle with text ideas; just resources they could draw on to keep students engaged in the constructive work of building understanding (Beck et al., 1996).

In order to facilitate the teachers seeing things from the students' perspective demonstration lessons were performed, where the investigator acted as teacher and the teachers as students.

Between the seminars, the teachers practised QtA – without being videotaped – with the whole class present in the classroom. The investigator was then present and provided the teachers with immediate feedback about their lessons. The teachers' experiences of these lessons were also discussed during the seminars before videotaping a second time, here referred to as QtA lesson 1. Then there were seminars again where the videotaped QtA lessons were analyzed with regard to the teachers' length of turns, the teachers' questions, the students' answers, the teachers' and students' strategies, segmentations etc. and we identified successful and less successful aspects before videotaping a third time, here referred to as QtA lesson 2.

Texts and transcriptions of the text talks.

In the first QtA lesson, Frisk's and Rask's groups read a text called "From extended families to core families" (458 words), dealing with how changes in society affect family structure while Modig's group read "Encounters" (501 words), dealing with what happens when we meet strangers for the first time (Kangas Fyhr & Wilhelmsson, 2000). In the second QtA lesson, Frisk's and Rask's groups read a text called "From poorhouse to the Swedish welfare state" (534 words), dealing with how society has changed over the past 150 years (Cronlund, 2003, pp.26, 46) and "Armed children" (271 words), dealing with child soldiers in Africa, Asia and Central America (Cronlund, 2003, p. 306).

Characteristics of the four texts were that they were relatively information dense with several gaps in them. There were also many infrequent words and concepts in the texts. Consequently, it was expected that poor readers would encounter difficulties in gaining a deeper understanding if they were to read the texts silently in the classroom.

Two of the texts, "From extended families to core families" and "From poorhouse to the Swedish welfare state" had a culture-specific Swedish bias, as opposed to the texts "Encounters" and "Armed children".

The texts were chosen by the investigator from a textbook which were not used at the selected schools and the students had not had the opportunity to read within the

subject area which the texts addressed. The teachers were introduced to the texts one week prior to videotaping.

In accord with Janssen (1996, p. 12), a moderately detailed method was used when transcribing the videotapes. However, there is a detailed transcription available of all utterances as well as some contextualization clues (hesitations, and so on). Transcribing all varieties of non-verbal, visual and prosodic clues, such as facial expressions, body language, intonation, etc., is of course very important, but it is also extremely complicated and time-consuming. Most importantly, the present analyses did not require such detailed transcriptions.

4. RESULTS

In this section, the results from 9 videotaped lessons will be presented. First the results concerning the teachers' length of turns during the 3 regular lessons and during the 6 QtA lessons will be presented. Then the teachers' questions and the students' answers will be shown. Representative excerpts from the text talks illustrating teachers' questions, students' answers and teachers' and students' strategies will also be given. (See Appendix A for the texts).

4.1 Length of turns and segmentations

As can be seen from Table 1 the teachers totally dominated during the regular lessons. Teacher Frisk, teaching in nursing science, had most talking time, followed by Teacher Modig – teacher in Swedish language and literature – . The teachers also had long turns.

Table 1: Distribution of talking time. Percentage. Average length of turns – distribution of words per turn.

Teachers	Regular lesson	QtA lesson 1	QtA lesson 2
Rask	47,6 (66,6%)	14,4 (42%)	17,4 (52,3%)
Frisk	41,7 (81,1%)	17,9 (45,3%)	20,6 (63,3%)
Modig	26,1 (70,4%)	14,5 (47,9%)	23,9 (51,2%)

Teacher Frisk and Teacher Rask used a version of the IRE (initiation, response and evaluation) format while Teacher Modig let the students discuss the text, although the discussion was very unstructured. As can be seen from Table 1, the teachers' talking time and turns diminished dramatically during the QtA lessons.

Table 2: Segmentations. Frequencies.

Teachers	Regular lesson	QtA lesson 1	QtA lesson 2
Rask	-	6	6
Frisk	-	8	8
Modig	8	10	8

Table 2 shows that only Teacher Modig made segmentations during the regular lesson. During the QtA lessons all teachers made segmentations.

The amount of text to be read in each segment varied and, according to the teachers, it depended on (a) the importance of a particular part of the text (b) the difficulty of the words and ideas in a particular section of the text and (c) the degree of information density in a particular part of the text. One of the teachers made a segmentation already after the subtitle and started by asking, "Do you know what is meant by extended families?" Each student read at least one segmentation aloud during each text. After each segmentation a collaborative discussion took place.

4.2 What types of questions did the teachers ask?

The teachers asked many questions during the text talks. 'Question' here refers to any utterance by the teacher related to the act of questioning the students. Procedural questions, rhetorical questions and discourse maintenance questions (e.g. giving turns, "Does anyone else have any suggestions?") were put aside. Repaired questions, that is questions repeated or paraphrased, were coded as one (see also Janssen, 1996, p.12). If there was more than one question in a turn the last question in the turn was coded, for example, "What technique does the author (i.e. Hemingway) use when writing? Technique? In what way does he write? Are there any difficult words?" Here the last question was coded.

The purposes behind the questions asked were the following:

To retrieve information. Questions that required students to retrieve information directly from the text for example, "He wants to encourage her and what does she answer?" (See also Beck et al., 1996, p. 395).

To retrieve information but in their own words.: "Describe in your own words what is happening in the text."

To check knowledge, where the teacher wanted to check if the students knew, for instance, the meaning of a word or if they had the necessary prior knowledge, for example, "Have you ever heard of Ernest Hemingway?" (See also Beck et al., 1996, p. 395).

To construct message. Questions that required students to construct meaning from the information in the text such as drawing *inferences*, i.e. reading between and beyond the lines to be able to answer the questions, for instance, “The ambition was to create good living conditions for everyone [...] what does that mean?” (See Cain & Oakhill, 1999, pp. 490 for a further discussion of inferences).

To reflect upon what is read. Questions where students were forced to continue developing meaning by building on ideas that had been brought up in the discussion.

Half-open questions are included here, for example, “Is this a good description of today’s family?”. The students had read about the core family and the teacher wanted them to connect the information in the text with their knowledge about today’s family.

Table 3: Question types during regular lessons. Frequencies.

Question types	Teachers		
	Rask	Frisk	Modig
Retrieve information questions	3	17	4
Retrieve information own words	-	-	1
Check knowledge questions	4	8	6
Construct message questions	-	-	4
Questions in order to reflect	2	-	-

As can be seen from Table 3, two question types predominated during the regular lessons: *retrieve information questions* and *check knowledge questions*. The teachers did not ask many *construct message questions* and *half-open questions* and seldom encouraged the students to express themselves in their own words.

One particular tendency during the regular lessons was that the teachers asked several questions during one turn.

Teacher Modig: Did you find this text section difficult? Is there any word or anything that you could not visualize? Did you find out what the curtains look like? ... What feelings are generated when reading this?

A second tendency during the regular lessons was that the teachers asked many questions which the students had to answer with just one word as can be seen in the text excerpt below:

Teacher Frisk: [---] How many vertebrae do we humans have?
 Students: Many.
 Amina: Thirty.

David:	I think we have seven cervical vertebrae and fourteen more[---]
Teacher Frisk:	[---]. It may vary.
Student:	30-32 vertebrae.
Teacher Frisk:	There are 35 according to your book.
Saga:	There are 34.
Teacher Frisk:	Maybe we have different editions of the book.

And so the discussion went on in the same manner, which was typical of all regular lessons. The students' interaction with the text was only on the surface level. Their answers consisted of isolated pieces of information they have located in the text. Alexander (2006, p. 15) calls such questions *test questions*. By asking such questions the teacher retains absolute control over the answers and therefore the direction of the interaction. There are times when teachers need to ask such questions but if teachers only ask these kinds of questions the students will learn and understand far less than they could or should (Alexander, 2006, p. 31). Building understanding is not simply extracting information from the text. Building understanding involves making out what information actually means.

Although Teacher Modig asked questions in order to get the students to construct meaning, he mostly had to answer the questions himself like the example below:

Teacher Modig:	Notice the description of the settings. Do you find it in the text? Is there anything special about it? Read it through silently. It is just four lines. Think about what he (i.e. the author) means with the following section: "Across on the other side were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees."
Lisa:	He seems to be thinking about something.
Teacher Modig:	Yes, and he tries to describe the settings in his own words.

Table 4: Question types during Q_tA lessons 1 and (2). Frequencies.

Question types	Teachers		
	Rask	Frisk	Modig
Retrieve information questions	2 (5)	2 (8)	4 (3)
Retrieve information own words	5 (1)	2 (1)	1 -
Check knowledge questions	3 (3)	5 (12)	4 (3)
Construct message questions	13 (16)	11 (12)	5 (6)
Question in order to reflect	9 (4)	8 (5)	3-

As can be seen from Table 4, there was a shift in the teachers' questioning during the QtA lessons. The number of retrieve information questions decreased. Instead there was an increase in the number of construct message and half-open questions. By asking such questions the teachers signal an interest in what the students think and know and not just whether they can report what someone else thinks or has said (Nystrand, 1997; Alexander, 2006). Although Teacher Modig asked less construct meaning and half-open questions than his colleagues Rask and Frisk, his students extended their answers more often.

4.3 *What strategies did the teachers use?*

In the QtA lessons, the teachers also applied different strategies to encourage the immigrant students to deal with text ideas. To make the students initiate questions teacher Modig used the strategy of saying "Do you have any questions to the author?" and then the students asked a lot of questions such as:

- Lisa: In what way are depressed child soldiers helped?
 Lisa: Why do child soldiers use drugs?
 Elham: Are there any psychologists in these countries?
 Ellen: Why do they have to kill a member of their own family?

In the text excerpts below, the teacher wants the students to realize that there is a fallible author behind the text.

- Teacher Rask: The industry was prosperous. Is there something that the author has left out here in this paragraph? What do you think? Is there something that the author should have added?
 Lisa: Why was the industry so prosperous, for example. Why did it grow so much?
 Teacher Rask: Anyone else who has a suggestion?
 Elham: I would like to know about the wealthy women. In those days they never gave poor people a thought and now the author says that they gave the poor people clothes, food, and everything. How did this start? What made them realise that they should help?

As can be seen from the text excerpt Elham found a lot of implicit information in the text. However, she did not have the necessary prior knowledge to fill in the gaps herself. She did not blame herself though, instead she criticized the author for omitting useful information.

During the text talk teacher Frisk became aware how much trouble the misunderstanding of one single word can cause an immigrant student.

- Frisk: The houses were overcrowded ...and inside it was extremely dirty, lots of vermin and the stench was unbearable....What do you think about the author's writing?

- Rana: I think that because they were so poor... the rent was extremely high.
- Saga: Vermin means insects.
- Frisk: I can see, Rana, that you found it difficult to understand *vermin*. What is the difference between *rent* (*hyra*) and *vermin* (*ohyra*), Rana?
- Rana: Rent means what you have to pay...
- Frisk: Yes, what you have to pay for your flat. But do you have to pay for the vermin?
- Saga: No, lice could be found in people's hair. Isn't that so?

In the excerpt above the immigrant student, Rana, has totally misunderstood a word, *hyra*. This word is very central in the text. In the Swedish language *hyra* means *rent*, the money you have to pay for a flat each month, and *ohyra* means *vermin*. The poor reader Saga with a completely Swedish background actively contributed to Rana's comprehension and teacher Rask asked a check-knowledge question in order to ensure that Rana has understood the difference between the two Swedish words *hyra/ohyra*.

4.4 How did the students respond to the teachers' questions?

Five types of students' answers could be identified:

- 1) Retrieved information, directly from the text, word for word
- 2) Retrieved information, from the text but in the students' own words
- 3) Inferences, what is read between and beyond the lines.
- 4) Reflections, including comments on the text and student-initiated questions
- 5) Questions about the meaning of words

Repaired answers, that is answers repeated or paraphrased, were coded as one (see also Janssen, 1996, p. 12; Beck et al., 1996, p. 395). Several factual or possible inferential answers from the students to the same question were coded as one. The investigator categorized the teachers' questions and the students' answers. To determine reliability an interrater reliability test was performed in two steps. As a first step another researcher got the different question types and the students' answers described according to the investigator's definitions. Then the researcher was introduced to the investigator's categorizations. Discrepancies between the researcher and the investigator were discussed and settled by a mutual agreement. As a second step, two independent raters got the different questions and answers described according to the investigator's definitions. However, the two raters were not allowed to see the investigator's categorizations. In order to give the raters exactly the same information the definitions were written down. Then, independently of each other, the raters categorized the questions and answers. Lastly, their categorizations (see Larsson, 1986, pp. 36) were compared to those of the investigator. There was approximately 95 per cent agreement between the investigator's categorizations and the raters. The discrepancies were solved in discussions with a third rater (see Appendix A, Tables A1- A4).

Table 5. Students' answers during regular lessons. Frequencies

<i>Students' answers</i>	Rask	Teachers Frisk	Modig
Retrieved directly from the text	3	8	4
Retrieved directly- own words	-	-	1
Inferences	-	-	2
Reflections	1	5	1
Questions about the meaning of words	1	2	1

Table 5 shows that during the regular lesson most of the students' answers were retrieved directly from the text. Almost none of them tried to express themselves in their own words. They read the texts in a very passive way and many of them did not even bother to look in the text as can be seen from the text excerpt below.

Frisk: What word do you think I mean?

Amina: I don't know.

The students made few inferences and reflections (Table 5). No one questioned the author or commented on the text. The only questions initiated were questions about the meaning of certain words.

During the QtA lessons the students' answers had undergone a change. Table 6 shows that more than half of their answers were inferences and reflections.

Table 6. Students' answers during Q&A lessons 1 and (2). Frequencies

<i>Students' answers</i>	Rask	Teachers Frisk	Modig
Retrieved directly from the text	4 (8)	2 (11)	-
Retrieved information own words	1 (6)	2 (2)	2 (2)
Inferences	9 (8)	11 (8)	4 (5)
Reflections	13 (14)	7 (11)	3 (11)
Questions about the meaning of words	-	-	-

In the excerpt below the immigrant student Vera and her peers managed to make meaning from the text.

Teacher Rask:	Why did they move from the countryside into the cities?
Anna:	They thought it was easier to find a job there.
Lisa:	Maybe it was easier to support the family there.
Vera:	I think that more industries were founded and that made it possible to get a job at the factories.

Furthermore, the students made comments on the texts and questioned the author.

As can be seen from the example below, the immigrant student Elham was very active and the good reader Lisa challenged Elham to go further in the discussion:

Elham:	I have been thinking about this text. It says that the UN is aware that there are child soldiers. Why on earth does not the UN help them?
Teacher Modig:	Yes.
Elham:	They give countries to people and...
Lisa:	The UN has a lot to do.
Elham:	But I think that UN should prioritize child soldiers. If I had been a member of the UN I would have done it. The children are our future.
Lisa:	There are more children that need care.
Anna:	I agree.
Lisa:	There are children with aids and the UN has to help them...
Teacher Modig:	I think that is a very good question. What on earth does the UN?
[---]	
Elham:	If anything like this had happened here in Sweden, then they would have initiated supportive groups.

According to her teachers, Elham never used to wrestle with text ideas, but during the QtA lessons her answers indicated that she had realized that it is necessary to read between the lines.

Although two of the texts had a culture specific Swedish bias, the immigrant students were very involved when reading them. After the students have read a text segment about living conditions in Sweden the immigrant student Amina burst out:

- Amina: I don't think we are aware of how good the living conditions are in Sweden. The Swedes are never satisfied and demand better and better living conditions all the time. It is hard to find countries where the citizens have as good living conditions as they have in Sweden.
- Teacher Frisk: [---]What countries are you comparing Sweden with then?
- Amina: The developing countries.
- Teacher Frisk: The developing countries. Your home country?
- Amina: Yes.

When the text 'From extended families to core family' was read they were also involved.

- Amina: What is described in the text happened two hundred years ago. However it still exists in many countries. The parents decide whom their children are to marry and the woman's husband to be has to come from a wealthy family.
- Teacher Frisk: Has the author apostrophized that dilemma in the text? [---]
- Amina: Yes, since this opinion still exists in many countries.
- Teacher Frisk: There is a global perspective in the text, then.

According to her teachers, Amina was a very shy student with great comprehension difficulties. But during the QtA lessons she spontaneously talked and reflected upon the texts.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, text talks on line- (QtA) affected the way that three teachers and their students talked about texts.

The results demonstrated that during the regular lessons the teachers totally dominated the lessons and had long turns. During the QtA lessons the talking times were more evenly distributed. During the regular lessons the teachers mostly asked retrieve information questions and check knowledge questions, but during the QtA lessons the teachers' question types had changed. The number of purely retrieve information questions had decreased. Instead there was an increase in the number of construct message and half-open questions, that is questions that will induce poor readers to construct meaning from what they read. The changing nature of the teacher questions was probably a consequence of the teachers' reflecting on their

lessons by viewing the tapes, reading transcripts, discussing the effects of different question types and teacher strategies, and so on.

By asking questions that require students to construct meaning the teacher is likely to become a model for the students when they question the author on their own. During the regular lessons, both good and poor readers – including immigrant students – read the texts in a rather passive way. They often retrieved information directly from the text or did not even bother to look at it. Consequently, it must have been difficult for the three teachers to know whether the students had understood the text or not. These results are in line with those of Beck et al. (1996, 1998). This is also in line with what Alexander (2006) found when the teachers in his studies began to develop dialogic teaching.

The changing nature of the teacher questions produced a change in the students' answers. During the QtA lessons both good and poor readers – including immigrant students – interacted more actively with the text when reading, and they inferred from and reflected on the content on several occasions. They contributed actively to the teacher's and their peers' comments in order to explore the ideas in the texts. Their answers demonstrated that they were able to discuss very complicated issues.

The students spontaneously utilized their prior knowledge, connecting it with the information in the text, thus demonstrating that they had the potential to make inferences. Furthermore, all students showed signs of involvement. Two of the texts had a culture specific Swedish bias. However, the immigrant students were very involved and compared what they read with the conditions in their home countries. The teachers were also very attentive to what these students said, thus signalling that their text contributions were important and worth listening to and to be taken into consideration.

The students' active involvement was probably a consequence of the teachers segmenting of the text which facilitated comprehension and interpretation of complex sections. Dealing with a complex text in the course of reading may be particularly effective for poor readers. It can scaffold their comprehension processes by providing opportunities for them to reflect upon events and ideas, to scrutinize connections as they are encountered in the expository text being read. The present results are in accordance with those of Beck et al. (1996, 1998) and Sandora et al. (1999). During the QtA lessons, the teachers were also more attentive to where the students were in the construction process, their prior knowledge, and so on, which affected the way they directed the talk about the text.

It can be argued that structured text talk in small groups is very time-consuming. It is not that time-consuming to let the students read texts silently on their own. However, by participating in structured text talks in small groups, students will probably internalize the relevant strategies and use them on their own. That is, the processing carried out between the students and the teacher in the small group will also be carried out with individual students, in accordance with the Vygotskian view that individual cognitive development develops from participation in social groups (Vygotsky, 1962).

A limitation of the study is that I did not compare the patterns of change in the text talks to change in control or comparison groups. However, this has been done in a longitudinal study (Reichenberg, 2008b) where there were control groups.

The students in the present study were 17 years old. The majority of them had inadequate reading strategies at the beginning of the study. However, the study indicates that they have the potential to develop into good, active readers. But they need much more practice to be able to delve into a text on their own. This underlines the importance of putting the teaching of reading comprehension on the agenda already in grade 3, when Swedish students are nine years old and start reading expository texts. It is necessary to start asking construct message and half-open questions then. Construct message questions are necessary if the teacher wants the students to get a deeper understanding of the text. By asking such questions, the teacher is likely to become a model for the students when they have to question the author on their own.

However, to be able to teach students reading comprehension, teachers need practice. This underlines the need to focus on the teaching of reading comprehension in teacher education: reading strategies, metacognitive strategies and how to structure text talk – not only involving fiction but also with expository texts, and so on. Consequently, resources need to be allocated to teacher education to help teachers develop into effective literacy educators who can teach adequate reading strategies. Students who cannot meet the demands made on them in our schools run a risk of failing both in school and later on in working life and society.

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Table A1. Main categorizations of teacher questions during regular lessons. Discrepancies according to raters 1 and 2. Frequencies

<i>Categorizations of teacher questions</i>	Number of deviations		
	N	Rater 1	Rater 2
Retrieve information questions	-	-	-
Retrieve information own words	1	-	-
Check knowledge questions	18	-	-
Construct message questions	4	1	-
Questions in order to reflect	2	-	-

Table A2. Main categorizations of teacher questions during QtA lessons 1 and 2. Discrepancies according to raters 1 and 2. Frequencies

<i>Categorizations of teacher questions</i>	Number of deviations		
	N	Rater 1	Rater 2
Retrieve information questions	24	1	3
Retrieve information own words	10	-	-
Check knowledge questions	30	-	-
Construct message questions	63	1	1
Questions in order to reflect	29	1	-

Table A3. Main categorizations of student answers during regular lessons. Discrepancies according to raters 1 and 2. Frequencies

<i>Categorizations of student answers</i>	Number of deviations		
	N	Rater 1	Rater 2
Retrieved directly from the text	15	-	-
Retrieve directly- own words	1	1	-
Inferences	2	1	-
Reflections	7	-	-
Questions about the meaning of words	4	-	-

Table A. Main categorizations of student answers during Q&A lessons 1 and 2. Discrepancies according to raters 1 and 2. Frequencies.

<i>Categorizations of student answers</i>	N	Number of deviations	
		Rater 1	Rater 2
Retrieved directly from the text	25	1	-
Retrieved directly –own words	15	1	1
Inferences	45	1	1
Reflections	59	-	-
Questions about the meaning of words	-	-	-

APPENDIX A

From extended family to core family

Two hundred years ago, 80-90 per cent of the population in Sweden lived in the countryside and earned their livelihood on farming. The landowner wanted his family to keep the land within the family. Consequently, it was very important whom his children married. Thus, marriage became some sort of economic arrangement and the parents influenced the choice of husband or wife.

On the farms different generations lived together with their farmhands and country-maids. They cultivated and produced what they needed; the members of the family were dependent on each other. All had their tasks and they complemented each other. That meant that everyone had their special task, not as an individual, but as a member of the family. This is still how the family is viewed in many countries where families depend on farming for their livelihood.

The men and the women carried out different kinds of work on the farm. Women worked indoors and in the barn, while men worked in the fields and in the woods. However, the man was the head of the farm. Only if the woman had become a widow was she permitted to run the farm herself. But if she remarried, her new husband took over the farm. The children too had to work. If families did not have enough children they could hire other people's children.

The children started working when they were about four years of age. Thus, they were not permitted to be just children. The family was responsible for the children's training in order to prepare them for running the farm when the parents grow old. However, only the eldest son inherited the farm. If there were no sons in the family, the daughter inherited it. Younger brothers and sisters often stayed on working on the farms.

By the end of the nineteenth century daily life in Sweden was changing. There were a lot of industries and many people left the countryside and started working in the factories, and there was no room for the extended family in the overcrowded cities. The families dwindled.

At first, women and children also used to work in the new industries. However, the members of a family no longer worked side by side. Each of them had their own job and was paid for their work. Family life and labour were thus separated.

As a consequence of the changed social values children's and women's industrial work was limited. The head of the family, that is the father, was supposed to support his family alone. Consequently, the mother became a housewife and the children were allowed to go to school. Thus the mother became more dependent on her husband.

In the industrialized society, marriage no longer meant working together in order to make a living. Moreover parental influence had decreased. The most important thing was to be in love with each other. However, one restriction remained: the children were supposed to marry someone within their own social group. The extended family had become the core family. (Cronlund, 2003)

From poorhouse to the Swedish welfare state

About 150 years ago, most of the Swedish population lived in the countryside. If you got ill or old, the family took care of you. If you had no children, you had to go to the poorhouse. You also had to go there if you could not support yourself. Most of the poor were women.

The poorhouses accommodated elderly people, single mothers, the severely ill, disabled people, drunkards, and orphans. The poorhouses were crowded, dirty, nasty-smelling and crawling with vermin.

Sometimes poor people were left in the care of farmers, who received some money from the parish for this service. Farmers who demanded less money to take care of a child got them, mostly orphans. By taking care of the poor, farmers got cheap labour.

When Sweden was industrialized, many people left the countryside for the cities. In the cities there was not enough housing and hygienic conditions were bad. Further industrial work was dangerous. There were often accidents. Children also had to work in the factories.

In order to get clothes, food, etc., poor children and working-class families had to turn to charity, mostly run by wealthy women. In the late nineteenth century many critical voices were heard. They wanted society at large to take responsibility for the poor. To relieve current needs was not enough. Instead conditions had to be improved. Consequently, there was legislation regarding work in dangerous factories. Furthermore, children's and women's industrial work was limited. Social benefits were introduced, for example a state pension for all citizens when they turned 67 years old (1914).

Following the huge unemployment of the 1930s, the government decided to initiate an active social welfare policy in order to decrease unemployment and get the wheels turning again. But it was not enough to provide for the unemployed. The ultimate aim was to create good conditions for all, young and old, ill and healthy. Politicians wanted Sweden to become a welfare state and Per Albin Hansson, Prime Minister and Social Democrat, was the prime mover of this new policy.

Lots of houses were built and in the countryside running water, sinks and electricity were installed. Old-age pension was increased and all workers were allowed to have a holiday. Since the economy prospered, industry expanded and it became possible to build the welfare state.

If you fell ill, you did not lose your pay because you got compensation from society. Society also paid for medical treatment and medicines. The unemployed received benefits until they had got a new job. Parents got benefits to be able to provide for their children. Consequently, public spending increased, like taxes.

Education received a lot of money. If there was a shortage of labour in some part and unemployment in another part of Sweden, society paid for the retraining and transport of these people. Also, preschools were built in order to get women to work outside the home. Fathers received benefits if they stayed at home and took care of the children. By the 1970s, Sweden had become a social welfare state (Cronlund, 2003).

Armed children

Around the world, child soldiers are becoming more and more common. Today there are more than 300 000 child soldiers all over the world. They are found in governments' troops as well as in guerrilla troops.

Above all there are child soldiers in African countries, like Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Mozambique and Congo. This is due to the fact that there are more ongoing armed conflicts in these countries than in other countries and that they have been going on for a long time. The longer there is a conflict, the fewer adults there are to recruit to the armies - consequently children are recruited instead. Child soldiers are also common in Asian countries like Burma and Sri Lanka and in Latin American countries like El Salvador.

In many cases these children are abducted from their homes, often from poor circumstances or from refugee camps and forced to join the army.

The reason for recruiting children is that they are easily manipulated and they do not need a lot of food.

It is more common for boys to be recruited, but there are girls being recruited as well. They are even more vulnerable than the boys since they are sexually abused by the male soldiers.

In many places children are systematically brutalized by forcing them to kill family members. Once they have killed a family member they have broken most barriers. In addition to this the children suffer from terrible experiences and lose their possibilities of normal childhood development.

The children have difficulties recovering from these terrible experiences; they get depressed and cannot get over what they have been through. Besides this they are physically injured. They are shot, mutilated by mines, their eyes and ears are injured and they get infections.

(Cronlund, 2003)

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