

READING PRACTICES IN TRANSFORMATION

Re-designing print-based literacy mindsets in the Swedish digital classroom

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Abstract

Various reading projects aimed at stimulating students' reading are carried out on a regular basis in Swedish schools. Beyond L1, a common structure is also to include other subjects and teachers in these projects. By focusing on norms and values connected to the reading and teaching of literature, this article aims to deepen the knowledge about a reading practice project conducted in other subjects than L1, aiming to stimulate, develop and strengthen students' reading. The analysis is based on ethnographic video material, where the students' interactions and activities in the classroom are documented through video recording and screen mirroring of their computers and mobile phones. The analysis reveals challenges in relation to reading activities performed in classrooms where different digital devices are available. Results show that reading practice in the connected classroom is characterised by a print-based mindset that the students resist to varying degrees. This leads to situations where the printed book is given contradictory roles in relation to the reading activity in school, providing students with a cover behind which they can engage in alternative reading activities on their digital devices. Here, we highlight the access paradox as well as issues related to the issue of what texts, and what types of reading are sanctioned in reading activities at school, and not least what this means for male students in terms of their chances to join a reading community and identify as readers in the educational setting to which they belong.

Keywords: reading, literacy, mobile phones, literary instruction, digital classrooms

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following international surveys such as PISA and PIRLS (see for instance Mullis et al., 2012; OECD, 2013, 2016) which revealed declining results in reading comprehension and reading habits among children and young people, several major efforts intended to promote reading have been implemented in Swedish schools. The aim of these efforts, often designed as different reading projects, has been to stimulate young people's reading in the hope to make them read more and boost their reading ability (Nordberg, 2019). In particular, the problematic relationship between boys and reading has been observed, especially in relation to working-class boys, whose desires for engaging in reading are often constrained in the school context, a situation which has been the subject of debate for quite some time (see for instance Asplund & Prieto, 2013, 2018; Hammet & Sanford, 2008; Martino, 2011; Scholes, 2018). Efforts meant to promote reading usually emphasise the importance of reading for pleasure (Nell, 1988), and the reading that is taught in school is often seen as the opposite of such pleasurable reading (Andersson, 2014; Persson, 2007). "Reading for pleasure" as a concept is based on the idea that the motivation to read will be greater if students—not least in the subject L1—are allowed to choose what to read and engage in, so-called *free voluntary reading* (Krashen, 2011) and *sustained silent reading* (Pilgreen, 2000). Some studies of reading programs using free voluntary reading and sustained silent reading (SSR) with the goal to develop a taste for reading and to stimulate reluctant readers' reading habits, show positive correlation between SSR and attitudes towards reading (Gardiner, 2001). Moreover, these reading activities could benefit students' development in reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary, especially if the programs are conducted over a longer period (Krashen, 2006). Studies also show that students are actually reading during the reading time designated for the reading program, and not only pretending to read (i.e., only flipping pages and looking at pictures) (Cohen, 1999; Herda & Ramos, 2001). However, there are also studies concluding that there is no clear connection between the programs and reading achievement and that there is no difference between traditional instruction and SSR (Krashen, 2006). Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008) show that free choice is strongly linked to an interest in reading, and other studies (Gambrell, 2011) point out that motivation increases when students have access to a wide range of texts and genres. In this article, the context of our study involves the activity of *free voluntary reading*.

This article is based on a reading project which includes the idea of free voluntary reading. We studied a reading activity in a Swedish vocational classroom (Building and Construction programme) at upper secondary level (students aged 17-18), and the activity is part of a reading project organised as a module, involving several subjects. The purpose of the reading activity in question is to stimulate students' interest in and commitment to reading printed literature. The reading project is interdisciplinary since teachers of all subjects are responsible for conducting teaching in a reading activity. This means that a large part of the instruction provided

for the reading taking place in the project is led by teachers who have expertise in other subjects than L1. In other words, this article specifically aims to deepen knowledge about a reading practice, designed to stimulate, develop and strengthen students' reading, but set up in a different context than L1. Since L1 and L1 teachers have a special responsibility for students' reading development, teaching activities concerning reading conducted outside the L1 classroom are of interest for understanding and shedding light on the norms and values connected to the reading of literature that students encounter in literature teaching outside L1. In this context, we ask the following question: What characterizes a reading activity which is part of an interdisciplinary literature reading project in vocational upper secondary?

2. READING AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

Reading performed in an institution, such as a school, is a social practice (Gee, 2004). Whether defined as *free voluntary reading* (Krashen, 2011) or not, it is always determined by ideas regarding *what* texts can be read in this context, *how* they are to be read, and how reading and literature education should be designed. Intentionally or not, literary education reproduces the conventions and views of a long tradition which has established the value and function of literature, as well as academic norms related to texts and reading (Olin-Scheller & Wikström, 2010). These conventions are put into play along with the mainly implicit system of habits that teachers and students establish together in the classroom, creating what Brousseau (1997) calls *the didactic contract*. Here, teachers' and students' specific expectations of each other form the framework of the didactic transaction. From a subject-specific perspective (here, issues related to the teaching of literary reading), the milieu is important for framing what assignments are to be introduced and when and how students are to work with them during a lesson. One aspect of the didactic contract and the milieu of a classroom, which includes reading and literature, involves the experiences that students bring from previous classes and also from their spare time (Olin-Scheller, 2006). Since many young people today read, write, and communicate in digital texts (Ungar & Medier, 2015), it is likely that these experiences constitute a relevant aspect of their conception of reading and literature. The different types of texts that students encounter in their spare time make up part of the repertoire that they draw on in relation to texts used in school, a repertoire which may be more or less in sync with the texts and views promoted by schools and teachers (Asplund & Pérez Prieto, 2018; Olin-Scheller, 2006).

A key concept for our analysis is *literacy events*. Like Barton (2001) and Street (2003), we understand literacy events as observable situations where texts, understood in a broad sense, are involved and influence the interaction between people. Literacy events that are repeated in different social contexts create patterns and routines which can be described as *literacy practices*. Literacy practice as a concept can in turn be used to understand the broad social functions of reading in a specific context (see for instance Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Heath and Street (2008)

contend that these types of sociocultural literacy practices also include values and attitudes related to what reading is, and is not, and that they are situated in broad social structures such as schools.

When reading is seen as a social practice, questions about languaging, meaning-making, and power are also raised. In the field of *Critical Literacy*, these issues have received special emphasis, and the field rests on the premise that there is a reciprocal relationship between languaging, meaning-making, and power, and that the reading practices produced by teachers and students in a classroom always represent a perspective with a more or less explicit ideological basis (see for instance Comber, 2015; Janks, 2010, 2013; Luke, 2012). Even though the students are also expected to act in accordance with that perspective, their position cannot be seen as completely powerless. On the one hand, the teaching may offer students access to several different discourses and encourage their agency, and on the other, students can perform acts also from a subordinate position of power and in that way transform their own reading practices (see for instance Janks, 2010, 2013). In our analysis of the reading practices performed during the reading activity in question, we use Janks's (2010) interdependent model. It comprises four mutually interdependent concepts: domination, access, diversity, and design.

Domination denotes the preservation of reading practices and recreation of dominant relations, and this concept is therefore directly related to issues of power. It involves the issue of whose interests are served by the reading practices that students encounter in the classroom, and whether or not the students have or are granted *access* to them. At the same time, Janks highlights a so-called access paradox in the sense that an emphasis on and teaching of dominant forms of language, discourse, and knowledge may entail that these are maintained at the same time as marginalised forms are excluded. The concrete literacy events that students are involved in can thus invite or foreclose *diversity*. According to Janks, diversity as a concept includes reading and text in the broadest sense and allows for analysis of the wide range of expression, knowledge, and experience-based differences that emerge in the students' literacy events. The concept of *design*, finally, comprises a view on agency and the students' own creative power in the sense that it is still possible for them to change the design of the reading practice that they encounter. They are afforded an opportunity, therefore, to question, challenge, and expand the dominant discourses that surround them through re-designing the reading practice—that is, independently (and socially) creating new and individual versions of it. We use these concepts as tools in our analysis in order to analyse the reading practices that were performed during the studied reading activity, and we agree with Janks (2010) that these concepts cannot be studied separately, since they are mutually interdependent.

The reading events that we studied can also be placed in a broader context. The reading project that was carried out at the school included in our study can be described as a policy, using Ball's (1993) concept. According to Ball, a policy can be both national and local, both formal and informal. A policy involves guidelines and/or

recommendations which influence practice without providing direct and concrete suggestions for what teachers are supposed to do. It is thus the individual teacher's task to interpret policy in relation to classroom practice, which means that different choices are possible when implementing—or doing—policy. The reading project served as a local policy, but the fact that the school arranges this type of activity can also be seen as a response to a general demand that schools promote the literacy development of students. The project, which includes the studied reading activity, is therefore also a response to a national, more informal policy.

When the teachers at the school in question carry out the reading project in their classrooms, then, they are doing policy at the local level. When the teacher in our study responded to the demands of his school that he carries out the project, his pedagogical choices constituted a policy action, which can be placed somewhere between adaptation and resistance (Ball, 2003). In this action, patterns emerge which can also be linked to the teacher's—and the students'—views on the value and status of different texts and on what reading is and what its purpose should be in different contexts. The reading events that we studied must therefore be understood in relation to the teachers and students' interpretation of policy on reading and reading education in a specific classroom context.

3. METHOD AND EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

The empirical material derives from a large video-ethnographic study on the role and use of mobile phones in different classrooms at the upper secondary level. In the study, we used ethnographic methods, which for instance allowed us to examine closely students' mobile phone use and activities in social media, such as YouTube and Snapchat, search engines, applications, and so on, which in turn also made it possible to analyse the ways in which these activities interact with practices that take place in the classroom. The project generated 70 hours of video material in total, involving 25 focus students (15 female and 10 male) in nine Swedish upper secondary classes at two different schools. As the project sought to include two traditionally gender-coded vocational programs in the data, we chose the male-coded building and construction education and the female-coded hairdressing education programmes. All focus students were interviewed, and we also took field notes from all lessons that were video recorded. The students who participated in the study were informed about the aims and implementation of the study. All students gave their consent to participate in classroom video-recordings, and the focus students also gave their permission for us to video-record their use of smartphones and laptops. We studied the class in question on several occasions over one year, which resulted in 17 hours of video-recorded practical teaching situations in the carpentry workshop of the school, as well as theoretical teaching situations in the vocational education classroom. On one of all these occasions, the regular vocational teaching was interrupted in order for the students to carry out a reading activity as part of the reading project, and it is precisely the implementation of this reading activity, which

took approximately 20 minutes, that provides the material for our analysis in the present article.

The sequence that we studied took place outside the regular vocational teaching of the programme. On the occasion in question, approximately 20 students (all boys) were present, and we followed one of the students (Simon; pseudonym) closely with several cameras. In total, there were four focus students, randomly chosen, in the class involved during our study. On this particular occasion when the reading project took place, Simon was the focus student whose actions were video recorded. Due to technical limitations, the activity of only one focus student could be recorded. One of the cameras was aimed at Simon to capture his interaction with his classmates and the teacher. Another camera was placed behind Simon in order to study more closely his activities at his desk; for instance, using the laptop, turning to various texts on paper, and so on. In addition to these video recordings of Simon's physical activities in the classroom, activities on his mobile phone were also mirrored and recorded on the researchers' computer through wi-fi technology. These sources were combined to make it possible to see both Simon using his mobile phone and at the same time what he was actually using it for. In this way, we were able to examine closely the literacy events that Simon engaged in on his mobile phone and in what way these interacted with the teacher's instructions. The method also gave us access to the activities of several of Simon's classmates, and these activities also form part of our data. In this article, we call these students Erik, Liam, Aron and David.

From the perspective of research ethics, it is important to keep in mind that the students might have been affected by having their every movement registered by camera and their mobile phones and computers mirrored and recorded, even though they participated in the study voluntarily. However, the choice of technical solution, screen mirroring, only gave us access to what the students allowed us to see. The software that enabled mirroring the students' mobile phone screens is a program that the students themselves can control on their mobile phones, and the students were also informed that they could turn the mirroring off if and when they wanted to use their phones for something that they did not want to share with the researchers. We frequently reminded the students of this possibility while the project was ongoing.

The teaching sequence analysed took place in a traditionally set up classroom with desks in rows facing the teacher. In our analysis, we were inspired by the multimodal conversation analytic (MCA) approach that emphasises the fact that meaning and understanding are realised when people interact with each other and artefacts in a certain context, using different semiotic resources (Deppermann, 2013; Drew & Heritage, 2006; Goodwin, 2000; Schegloff, 2007). This is the multimodal perspective we applied to study how the students' activities and participation relate to their use of verbal and non-verbal resources to create meaningful interaction in this specific context. This means that, in the following, we lean on a multimodal analysis when describing and discerning the reading practices that emerged when the reading project was launched in the vocational classroom. Hence, we focus on

how interaction in the classroom, including students' smartphone and laptop use, speech, and bodily modes of position, posture, gaze, and movement, evolved in relation to the reading project that the students were supposed to participate in during the reading session. In line with the CA approach that rests on a "methodological and epistemological naivety" (Schegloff, 1997, p. 185) our analysis takes into account the viewpoints of the participants, that is how the conduct is understood by others. This means that the analysis of what is done in a transcribed passage is based on evidence located in the video-ethnographic data material itself and then presented in such a way that the reader can follow our analysis step by step (see for instance Sidnell, 2013). We provide a glossary of our transcript annotation conventions in Appendix 1. Our analysis focuses on how the students demonstrate understanding of the reading session there and then, and how they relate to the texts, each other, the teacher, and their mobile phones to create meaning and context.

4. RESULTS

The methodological approach of the study enabled us to follow the teaching session closely and in detail. In the presentation of results, we focus on how the teacher and the students act in relation to the dominant discourse on reading that they encounter during the reading activity. Selected examples show the attitudes, patterns, and movements that emerged in the classroom and that illustrate the range of literacy events that took place during the reading session. Through the examples, we can also follow the reading session from introduction to realisation and finally to completion. Although the selected literacy events only serve as some examples of the reading activity taking shape in the vocational classroom, they still constitute a valuable descriptive representation.

4.1 *Introducing the reading session*

The session begins with the teacher writing the content of today's lesson on the whiteboard. Most students are sitting at their desks in the classroom, but a few students also enter the classroom while the teacher is writing on the whiteboard. After chatting with a few of the students in the classroom for a couple of minutes, the teacher asks for the students' attention, turns to the whiteboard, and explains today's agenda. When he is done, he presents the first task of the lesson; that is, "the reading session":

Example 1: Fantastic books

1. Teacher: ok so there it is (.) so if you have (.) maybe no-
2. misunderstood that you're supposed to bring a book
3. so these two had been left down there



4. Liam: Shoo len is mine
 5. David: yes I had that bloody 'crisis in the water' (.) at
 6. Least it was mine
 7. Teacher: ((walks over to David who sits at the back of
 8. The room)) yep (.) is it any good?
 9. David: no it's about an (x) abet
 10. Teacher: it can still be good ((gives the book to David
 11. and walks back to the whiteboard)) and we have three
 12. other fantastic books (x) to take a look at ((takes
 13. up two books from the desk)) and then do you
 14. remember this one e:



15. read: so if you don't have a book other than these
 16. ((points to the table with books)) so (.) read this
 17. the paragraphs on passive buildings e: low energy
 18. buildings (.) plus-energy houses those headings (.)
 19. will probably be about the right amount of reading
 20. (.) everybody has read this before but e: >read it
 21. again< (.) since this will also be relevant
 22. tomorrow (.) that's the way it is
 23. (5.8)
 24. ((to the researchers)) we have a reading project
 25. (.) at (name) secondary school (.) so we read for
 26. approximately twenty minutes every day (4.5) well
 27. (.) please go ahead! ((waves both arms))

The teacher introduces the reading session by first making the students aware that they are supposed to bring books—and if they have accidentally “misunderstood” this, there are other “fantastic books” that they can get from the desk at the top of the room where the teacher is standing (line 2, 11-13). During this sequence, two students (Liam and David) also speak up to inform the teacher that the books that were left (line 3) in the classroom “down there” after an earlier reading session are theirs. David also remarks already at this early stage of the reading session that the “bloody” book that he is reading is no good (see lines 5-6 and answering the teacher’s question if the book is any good on line 9), but the teacher responds that “it can still be good”. The teacher then turns to a booklet (lines 14-18) which he picks up and shows to the students, and in the booklet the students can read “the paragraphs on passive buildings, low energy buildings, plus-energy buildings”. According to the teacher, these paragraphs may be “the right amount of reading” (line 19), and then he also explains why it might be a good idea to read these particular sections; it turns out that they will also be “relevant tomorrow” (lines 21-22).

As the teacher then gives a booklet to one of the students, he at the same time turns to one of the researchers sitting up front in the classroom (lines 24-26) and says that there is an ongoing reading project at the school which means that students are supposed to read for twenty minutes every day. The teacher concludes the introduction by turning to the students again to say, “please go ahead” (line 27) at the same time as he smiles and “waves” both arms as if to signal to the students to get started.

As soon as the teacher has finished introducing the “reading session”, some students start taking out their books, while others slowly walk up to the desk where there are some books and booklets meant for reading. While they are doing so, the teacher again turns to one of the researchers in the classroom (off transcript) and says that the “idea” of the reading project is “obviously” for the students to read “printed fiction”.

What exactly happens when the reading session is introduced by the teacher, and how is it possible to understand what is taking place here? The teacher’s introductory comment to the students that they are expected to bring books and his remark to the researchers that the idea of the reading project is “obviously” for the students to read “printed fiction” show that there is an explicit agenda. The point is to read works of printed fiction, and, following Janks (2010), it is possible here to talk about the reading of printed fiction as the dominant reading practice. The texts that the school—thanks to the reading project—offers the students are precisely books of fiction. If students happen to misunderstand the “point” of the reading session and fail to bring books, however, the teacher opens up for alternative reading practices through offering texts that are directly related to the specific programme that the students are taking (that is, the Building and Construction Programme). In this case, the teacher decides to present the students with a booklet on climate-smart buildings, which is used for a thematic course component that the students

are working on at the time when we follow the class in question. In Janks's (2010) terms, the teacher's approach here could be described as an act through which he re-designs the reading session from a practice completely focused on the printed book of fiction to a practice which offers students the opportunity and space to work with other types of text which are probably also relevant for their education and therefore adapted to their interests.

4.2 *The reading session begins and is implemented*

The reading session then continues for 18 minutes. The sound level is rather high at times, and there is constant talking going on in the classroom. To an external observer, it seems like a difficult task to find peace to read in the classroom environment. During the reading session, the teacher is moving around the classroom monitoring the students' activities. Most of the time, however, he stays at the top of the room by his desk. The teacher does not himself pick up a book of fiction during the reading session, and thus does not participate actively as a reader in the classroom. In a more careful analysis of the students' activities during the following 18 minutes as the reading session proceeds, we also do not find that any of them use the time to read the works of fiction offered by the school and the reading project. Instead, the analysis shows that the boys engage in completely different texts, and the literacy activities that the students are involved in are moreover largely invisible to the teacher—or can be described as going under his radar (see Asplund et al., 2019). More specifically, this means that most of the activities that the students engage in take place under the cover of large bags on top of desks, behind laptop screens, or behind open books. However, before we move on to an analysis of these literacy events—and how they can be understood in relation to the ongoing reading project at the school in question—it is necessary to present a few student actions which may illustrate the ways in which the students tackle the following 18 minutes of the reading session.

4.2.1 *Rejecting book culture—using smartphones and laptops*

The most noticeable feature of the reading session is the phenomenon that Liam¹, one of the students in this class, provides an example of below. Liam is the student who, as soon as the teacher has initiated the reading session, claims Douglas Foley's young adult novel *Shoo len* in the example above (line 4). Liam starts the reading session by using one hand to browse through the novel that he has just retrieved (figure 1), while holding his mobile phone in the other hand. Liam's bodily actions give the impression that he is looking for a particular passage in the book; perhaps he is searching for the page that he was reading last time. After a few seconds of browsing through the pages of the book forwards and backwards, he suddenly opens

¹ All names in the text are fictitious.

the book somewhere around the middle (figure 2). As soon as he has done this, he moves his right hand in which he holds his mobile phone over the open book and places the mobile phone behind the book (figure 3). During the following 18 minutes—that is, the rest of the reading session—Liam is more or less active on his mobile phone in different ways. For example, he repeatedly moves his thumb up and down over the mobile phone screen and his gaze is fixed on it for most of the reading session, except at times when he is interrupted by a few classmates sitting next to him, and by the teacher who occasionally moves through the classroom close by. When his classmates interrupt him, he leaves the mobile phone in the same spot close to the book, but when the teacher, on a few occasions, turns up right next to him, he hides the mobile phone and then takes it out again when the situation permits.

Figure 1.*Figure 2.**Figure 3.*

Liam's actions are not at all unique, rather the opposite. Indeed, a majority of the students choose to turn to the digital resources (in all cases except two, these are mobile phones) that they have at hand in the connected classroom and pay targeted attention to them (see figures 4 and 5 below). In our material, we can see that the students, for instance watch moving images on their laptops, and several students place their mobile phones horizontally in order to expand the screen. These embodied actions, combined with the fact that these students have headphones in one or both ears, indicate that they are probably watching moving images with sound (which is also what Liam says that he is doing when he engages in a short discussion with Erik, sitting behind him, during the reading session).

Figure 4.

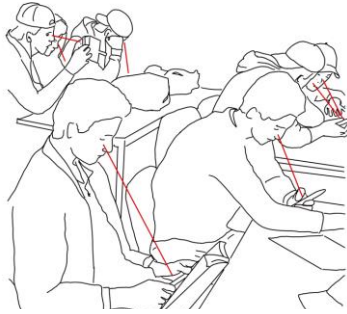


Figure 5.



The boys' use of their mobile phones is smoothly adjusted to the set-up of the lesson. The phones are taken out as soon as the reading session is introduced by the teacher and put away as soon as the teacher concludes it. However, the teacher's interaction with the students during the reading session also influences the orchestration and rhythm of their mobile phone use. A few minutes into the reading session, Erik, one of the students in this class, receives a Snapchat message. This surprises him to such a great degree that he, through talking about it loudly and showing it to others, involves Simon, sitting next to him, as well as Aron and Liam, sitting in front of him, in the message. The text message engages the boys and a discussion ensues regarding how it should be interpreted and answered. In the middle of this discussion, the teacher approaches the group and leans slightly over the boys, looking at them without saying a word. During this sequence, which lasts for a couple of seconds, the boys' conversation peters out, and Liam then turns around and puts his own mobile phone, which has been turned on all the time, in his right pocket (figure 6).

Figure 6.



When the boys have stopped talking, the teacher says "try reading now" waving his hand before moving on. Through bodily action and a verbal instruction to the boys

to use the time for reading, the teacher in this way makes the boys aware that he has noticed that they are doing something unrelated to the reading project. As soon as the teacher has left the group, however, Liam takes out his mobile phone again and places it behind the book that he has been instructed to read (figures 7-9).

Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.



4.2.2 *Challenging the existing dominant discourse—making meaning through digital devices*

The boys' actions indicate clearly that the reading project fails to attract them, and by doing something other than reading the works of fiction, they engage in active (but not always open) resistance against the reading project as such. In a certain sense, it is therefore possible to talk about their actions in terms of resistance to the dominant literacy practice (Janks, 2010), as conveyed by the teacher's introduction and organisation of the reading project. The boys' actions also correspond to the acts of resistance against schools and education performed by many boys in vocational programmes in many other studies (see for instance Åberg & Hedlin, 2015; Rosvall, 2015), and which have been described as expressions of an "anti-school culture". Choosing not to read books of fiction can be interpreted as an act of identity formation through which the boys construct a conventional masculine working-class identity (Ingram, 2018; Roberts, 2018), for which the reading of fiction (especially as part of literacy education in school)—and thus the reconstruction of the dominant literacy practice (Janks, 2010) conveyed in the reading project—is not among the more desirable actions (see for instance Connolly, 2004; Scholes & Asplund, 2021). During the reading session, however, the teacher intervenes at times to try to interrupt these types of processes. The example above illustrates one such occasion which, following Janks (2010), can be understood as a teacher action integrating simultaneous bodily and verbal communicative resources (Goodwin, 2000) in order to highlight and maintain the reading and literacy practice that the reading project requests the boys to join.

We would argue, however, that it is possible to interpret the boys' actions as something other than only acts of resistance to the literacy practice of the school,

and also that this type of interpretation risks limiting and consolidating the view of this particular group of students as non-readers (see for instance Asplund & Pérez Prieto, 2018). If we approach text and reading more broadly, the boys' actions can also be regarded as acts through which they in fact do engage in reading. This reading, however, is not sanctioned by the school and the reading project—and the boys are obviously well aware of this. So, in order to gain access to other texts (Janks, 2010), they turn to their mobile phones, and in order not to be “exposed” they use bags or open books, for instance, as cover. We see this as an action through which the boys act independently in the situation that they have been placed in by the school and the reading project, and through which they design, or re-design (Janks, 2010, 2013), the reading session in a way that makes it meaningful to them, while at the same time distancing themselves from the dominant discourse on reading that they encounter in the reading project.

4.2.3 *Between two discourses on reading*

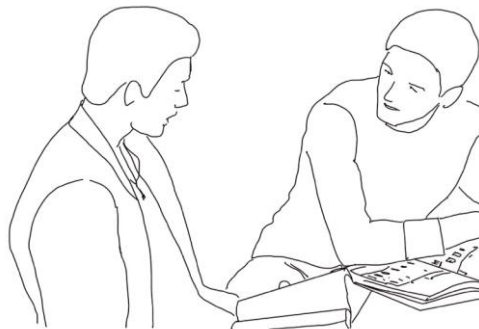
The analysis of the reading session shows that it is not only the students who act in the situation and design their own reading project in relation to the given framework. It is clear from the teacher's actions in the classroom during the reading session that he too faces the challenge of handling the reading project that the school has authorised and that he as the teacher is responsible for organising and implementing together with the students in the Building and Construction Programme. It is moreover obvious that the teacher operates between and within two different discourses on reading. On the one hand, he explicitly conveys the views and ideas of the reading project; that is, that the first twenty minutes of the building and construction class is supposed to be spent reading fiction. He introduces the reading session by showing the students works of fiction, for example, and also emphasises in a comment to the researchers present that the idea is for the students to read printed fiction (this comment could be heard by the students in the classroom as well). On the other hand, he also makes a simultaneous attempt to include the reading practices that the building and construction students probably expect by offering other texts linked to the core subjects of the vocational programme. As soon as the teacher has introduced the reading session, he presents texts that are clearly related to the students' education and also to the specific subject area that they are currently working on. For the students who, for some reason, “misunderstood that you're supposed to bring a book”, there is therefore the possibility to read other texts relevant to their vocational education instead. According to the teacher, these are also texts that the students are familiar with, texts that they have read before and that may therefore offer “about the right amount of reading”. Here, the teacher mainly highlights the booklet on passive, low energy, and plus-energy houses, and in this context, he tells the students that this particular teaching content will also be “relevant” the next day. Through this action, he provides motivation for the reading of these particular texts and at the same time

emphasises the usefulness of reading in relation to the boys' particular vocational education.

During the reading session, a few students occasionally pay attention to the booklets offered by the teacher. But we also see actions through which the students engage in other books that the teacher has provided and that are directly relevant to their vocational education. In one of these books, an artist has rendered a large number of buildings in the city where the boys are studying, and a couple of writers have contributed texts for each building that among other things describe their aesthetic expression. Aron is one of the students who picks up this book. Towards the end of the reading session, he directs his attention towards the book by browsing through it rather quickly—one page at a time. After browsing for a while, he suddenly turns to Liam, sitting next to him, and asks him to guess what buildings are in the pictures and where the buildings are located in the city, while hiding the text for each building with one hand. Aron has to make a bit of an effort, however, trying to interrupt Liam's activities on his mobile phone, but after a few repeated prompts (both verbal and bodily), he finally succeeds in capturing Liam's attention:

Example 2. Do you know what this is?

1. Aron: do you know what this is?



2. Liam: well it is the (x) building or whatever it is bloody
 3. called
 4. Aron: the court house (.) >do you know what this is?<
 5. Liam: ((leans forward over Aron's book)) (x)?



6. Aron: here?
7. Liam: the old (name) bank maybe?
8. Aron: h-how did you know that?
9. Liam: It says so you know on the (*signs*) there ((points with his book at Aron's book))

The example begins with Aron asking Liam if he knows “what this is” at the same time as he hides the text next to the building pictured on the book page. Liam offers a suggestion (lines 2-3), which turns out to be wrong (line 4). Aron then turns to the next page and asks again if Liam knows what house it is. At this point, Liam changes his bodily position and moves forward with his upper body so that he is closer to the picture that Aron shows him (line 5). Liam’s guess (inaudible) here is however not assessed by Aron, who instead quickly opens a new page and shows the next building and allows Liam to guess once more. This time, though, Liam’s answer is correct, which surprises Aron. “h-how did you know that?” he asks (line 8), and Liam smiles slightly at the same time as he moves his own book towards Aron’s book and says: “it says so you know on the (*signs*) there”.

The “quiz” that Aron starts together with Liam captures the interest of Erik and Simon (they are sitting behind Aron and Liam) and after a few futile attempts to borrow the book from Aron, Simon finally succeeds in “persuading” him, whereupon he in turn initiates a similar quiz with Erik. The initiation and realisation of this “quiz” show that the book, sanctioned by the teacher (but not primarily by the reading project), attracts the students’ interest. The example also illustrates how the students re-design (Janks, 2010, 2013) the reading activity endorsed by the teacher and turn it into a kind of quiz activity instead, where the illustrations are used as a starting point to figure out what buildings are included in the book, and where they are located in the city.

The teacher’s actions can be seen as an attempt to negotiate a workable situation for both students and teachers, which also enables the students to engage in reading practices that are not only related to the reading of novels. The booklet on sustainable buildings is an obvious expression of this negotiation. The illustrated book on buildings in the city with informative texts is yet another example of the

teacher trying to navigate among texts to support the reading practices of the students as far as possible.

4.2.4 *The access paradox*

There is, however, a limit to the kind of reading practices that the teacher supports and accepts, and the fact that the boys consider it necessary to hide their mobile phones behind books is evidence of this. There are also several situations apart from the one described in the example above (see figures 6-9) where students put their mobile phones away in their pockets when the teacher moves through the classroom during the reading session. But there are also examples of situations in the classroom when the teacher actually steps in and interrupts the students when they engage in texts other than the ones related to the reading project, even though these situations are infrequent in the data representing the class. On one occasion, the teacher approaches a group of students sitting in the middle at the back of the classroom. During the entire lesson, two (sometimes three) of the boys are watching a laptop and commenting on the moving images seen on the laptop screen. The student, whose laptop they are paying attention to, is constantly active with his fingers on the keyboard, and given his focused gaze and bodily movements, the reactions of his friends (both verbal exclamations and bodily movements) to what happens on the screen, and the moving images from the student's laptop that one of our video cameras registered, it seems likely that the boys are engaged in a computer game. When the teacher comes up to the group, he extends his right hand and slowly and expressively closes the laptop screen so that the boys are no longer able to watch it (figures 10 and 11). Then he tells them to read, and also taps the booklet on sustainable buildings that one of the students has in front of him on his desk (figure 12).

Figure 10.

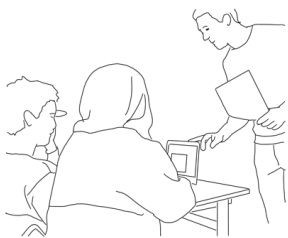


Figure 11.

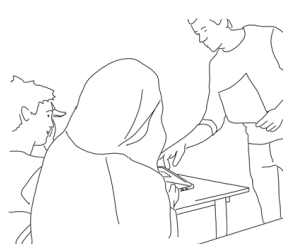


Figure 12.



By closing the laptop screen (without looking at what the boys are watching) and repeatedly tapping his fingers on the booklet, the teacher signals that the paper-based text is the point and that the teacher has the interpretative prerogative—that

is, the power to decide what texts are to be read during the reading session (see Janks, 2010). When the teacher has left the boys, however, the laptop screen is raised back up and within 60 seconds the boys have resumed the game.

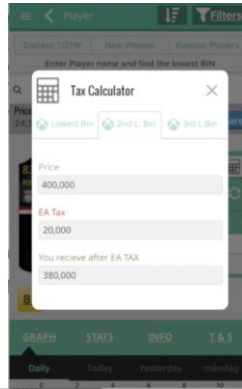
4.2.5 *Activity on a mobile phone—access to alternative texts*

During the reading session, we studied Simon, one of the focus students in the study, and his movements in the classroom in detail with several cameras. We also mirrored and recorded Simon's mobile phone screen on one of our computers, which provided us with knowledge of what he is actually doing on his mobile phone when occasionally using it. Unlike many of the other boys in his class, Simon is not active on his mobile phone for long stretches of time; instead, his mobile phone use follows a more fragmented pattern. Most of the time, he intermittently monitors social media feeds on, for instance, Snapchat and Twitter. During the reading session, Simon receives a few Snapchat messages, which he responds to by taking a few selfies and posting them back to the sender. He also engages in news feeds related to the world of sports. Halfway through the reading session, for instance, he receives a notification from *Sportbladet* and soon after that he opens the *Sportbladet* homepage (a Swedish sport website), scrolls down, and browses the news feed.

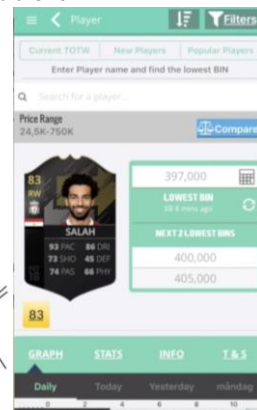
During the project, we followed Simon and his activities on his mobile phone in several teaching sessions over an academic year and noted that he was a frequent user of two smartphone applications called EA Sports FIFA 18 Companion and Futbin (see for example Asplund & Kontio, 2020). Both applications are associated with a popular soccer game which can be played on different game consoles, and through these two applications a gamer can among other things manage the team that he or she has created and buy and sell players. During the reading session, Simon opens these two apps several times, and on each occasion his friend Erik sitting next to him is also engaged in his activities (on a few occasions, Liam who is sitting obliquely in front of Simon in the classroom is also involved). In the sequence shown below, Simon has opened the application Futbin when Erik shows interest in the price tag of one of the soccer players (the Liverpool FC player Mohamed Salah) in Simon's team through reacting to the high cost of this player:

Example 3: Are you joking?

1. Erik: are you **joking** (.) does he (co)st that much?



2. Simon: what?
 3. Erik: bloody hell:
 4. Simon: m-hm (.) but you know I'll **keep** him and then six



5. Erik: hundred I promise
 6. Erik: no you won't (.) **Liam**

7. Liam: m-hm ((turns around backwards))



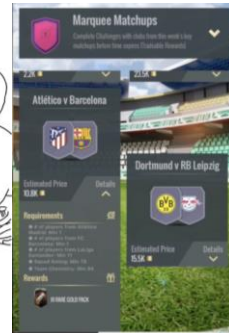
8. Erik: (x) Salah comes for six hundred?

This example shows that Simon's mobile phone activity does not go unnoticed by his friend Erik sitting next to him, and that it also involves content that Erik himself is familiar with. Early on in the example, Erik expresses surprise that "he" (Salah) costs so much and also augments this impression through uttering "bloody hell" on line 3. Simon confirms Erik's reaction, but then points out that he will not sell Salah with that price tag (400,000 coins); instead, he will keep him until his value has increased to "six hundred" (lines 4-5). Erik disputes this, however, and seeks support for his doubts through turning to Liam sitting in front of him (line 6) to ask him what he thinks of Simon's anticipation that Salah "comes for six hundred" (line 8). Our analysis of the short sequence above shows that several of Simon's classmates are involved in the textual world that Simon frequents, and the way in which the boys react to the content also proves that they too are familiar with this content.

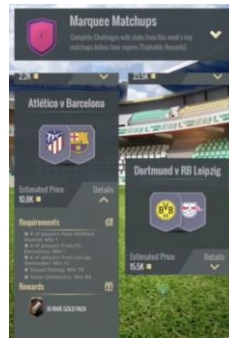
A little later during the reading session, Simon is back on his mobile phone and once more it is the application Futbin that has captured his attention. Once again, Erik shows interest in what Simon is doing on his mobile phone through aiming his gaze at it. After Simon opens a new window on his mobile phone screen, he points to the bottom of the screen where it says "Rare Goldpack" and remarks:

Example 4: Rare gold pack

1. Simon: rare gold pack that was the one I packed



2. Erik: m-hm that one is good as well ((points to Simon's smartphone screen))



3. Simon: it is a pack of fifty
 4. Erik: yes
 5. Simon: I want that [(.)] rare (.) and there I got him and
 6. Erik: [woho:]
 7. Simon: there I got lewan: (.) I got cle:ves there
 8. Erik: what?
 9. Simon: I got cleves
 10. Erik: m-hm I want that as well
 11. Simon: £you want it so bad£ ((smiles))

In contrast to the previous example, Simon and Erik are here in complete agreement in their positive views and assessments of the “pack” they are talking about, as Simon tells Erik which soccer players he received in the packs he is referring to (and who he “packed”), that is “lewan” and “cle:ves” (lines 5, 7, and 9). These players seem valuable, which Erik’s reaction in line 10 also confirms.

Once again, we have an example of a situation in which the textual world that Simon frequents is interesting to access for his friend Erik, sitting next to him, as well. Together and socially, they are creating meaning and a context for the multimodal text that they encounter on Simon’s mobile phone, and this is also a text that engages them. For the boys, the multimodal text provides the starting point of a conversation moving across time and space, when Simon tells Erik about the “pack”

that he obtained earlier and about the valuable players he got when he opened this particular pack, and when Erik says that he would also like to have one of the players that Simon received when he opened the “pack”, and who is now included in Simon’s FIFA team line-up. We can also see that the activities that we have examined closely in examples 3 and 4 take place behind the bag that Simon has placed on his desk; this supports the impression that these activities are non-authorised by the teacher (and the reading project). In order to get away with such activities, the boys have to carry them out in secret, behind a bag, and under the teacher’s radar. As Janks (2013, p. 236) notes, “smartphone technology takes diversity seriously and recognises that different communities use literacy for different purposes”, and our analysis of Simon’s activities on his mobile phone indeed shows that he uses the access to other texts that the mobile phone and its Internet connection make possible to read texts other than the ones offered by the school, thus creating meaning, context, and content.

4.3 The reading session is completed

The reading session is discontinued abruptly after 18 minutes. The teacher exclaims, “you can close the books now”, and several students close their books and put away their hidden mobile phones. Then everybody pays attention to the next item on the agenda: the mentoring sessions. The reading activity that filled the preceding 18 minutes is not commented on or discussed further.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis of what happened in the classroom when the reading session was initiated, implemented, and completed clearly shows that the reading project, as it was packaged and presented to the boys by this teacher, did not engage them. The texts sanctioned and legitimised by the reading project and the school (printed and paper-based works of fiction) did not appeal to the boys; at least not enough for them to spend time on reading them. In our material, we cannot see that any one of the boys spent a considerable stretch of time reading a work of printed fiction, and the peaceful atmosphere for reading that the project probably hoped would be in place for the reading sessions did not exist in the classroom that we studied. Instead, we witnessed the implementation of a reading session which included a great deal of talking in the classroom and students who engaged in activities other than the reading of printed fiction. The reading that did take place was mainly conducted via digital devices such as the students’ own mobile phones.

It must be emphasised, however, that the vocational teacher did not face a simple task. Even experienced teachers responsible for teaching literature reading find it challenging in many ways to engage young people in literacy education in school (see for instance Wilhelm & Smith, 2014; Wilhelm et al., 2014). The teacher’s strategy simply to position himself between the agenda of the reading project, on

the one hand, and that of the specific vocational programme, on the other, means that his pedagogical choices constitute a policy action which can be placed in a continuum between adaptation and resistance (Ball, 2003). His solution, to offer the building and construction students texts related to the programme, opened up a space not only for himself and his own teaching of the subject, but also for the students to engage in reading practices that are potentially more meaningful to them than the ones offered by the project. In this way a situation developed in the classroom where the teacher and the students negotiated how to cooperate in order to handle the reading session for which they were responsible, and where the point was to make progress in the lesson with as little friction as possible. This negotiation can also be described as part of the earlier established didactic contract (Brousseau, 1997) between the teacher and his students.

This didactic contract also includes approaches which mark boundaries for what types of texts are sanctioned by the reading project and the teacher, that is, what texts are to be read, and what texts are not. Such a demarcation, made visible through our multimodal analytic approach, concerns the texts that the students brought into the classroom from their private spheres, and which the teacher tried to stop them from reading. These were texts mediated through digital devices which the students can get access to through the connected classroom. These were texts hidden behind open books, their jackets or bags and engaged in secretly. This reading practice was difficult for the teacher to discover, but at the same time fully visible to classmates, thus making it a collective response to the reading project.

In a certain sense, the boys' actions therefore correspond to the well-known and well-established image of the non-reading boy that we have seen in countless research reports and in the media (Connolly, 2004; Hammond & Sanford, 2008; Scholes, 2018), and from this perspective the boys' actions can be described as acts of resistance in relation to the reading project. We argue, however, that this is a simplified view of what happened here and of what happens in this and other classrooms, running the risk of entrenching the conception of this particular group of students as non-readers. It would be more fair to talk about adapted resistance. As Olin-Scheller et al. (2020) have shown, upper secondary students' use of mobile phones often occurs in the "in-between spaces" (p. 6) during lessons and it is smoothly integrated into the social order of the classroom. According to Olin-Scheller et al., when students turn to their phones, they bring social business into the classroom as a distraction from the teaching and learning activities. When it comes to the male building and construction students, one interpretation could be that they considered the reading project as an in-between space. Another interpretation could be that they openly resisted the project. Since there were no confrontations and their own reading activity was negotiated in the moment without it being recognized as a problem, we regard it as an adapted resistance. In fact, the boys did not reject the central idea of the reading project. They were actually doing what the reading project—through the agency of the school and the teacher—encouraged them to do, that is, to engage in textual work albeit not with fiction.

Instead of busying themselves with the printed books of fiction, they turned their attention to digital texts such as sports articles and news feeds, YouTube films, computer games, gaming applications on mobile phones with information and statistics about soccer players, and various text messages. In Janks's (2010) view, these situations can be described as processes through which the boys re-designed the reading session and thus designed their own reading practice through which they can access diverse texts. In other words, the situation created the opportunity for the boys to engage in reading practices that are usually marginalised in this studied educational context.

In a way, the boys' re-designing of the reading project can be related to a history of boys rejecting the reading instruction encountered in school, and it could be argued that some 40 years ago the boys would have been reading comics behind their books or desks, and that their behaviors would likely have been the same. However, in this study we show how this practice can emerge in a connected classroom in which students have totally different opportunities to access, choose and use different types of texts, more rapidly and more fluidly than ever before. What our analysis also shows is that the reading practices that take shape in the classroom have not changed, but the students' reading practices have. What is constant in this situation is that the students' choices of texts are marginalised in school. Reading in school has traditionally been associated with what is visible to the teacher (Olin-Scheller & Wikström, 2010). When students read a comic or a book, teachers can see what their students are doing and reading. Digitalisation affords different opportunities for students to get access to texts outside the classroom, right there and then, and this creates uncertainty, since these texts are not visible in the same way as before.

Consequently, the book of fiction is given several partly contradictory roles and meanings in relation to the students' reading practice. On the one hand, it is a symbol of what Erixon (2010) calls *the sacred* in a subject (i.e., content on which teachers are unwilling to compromise) and the *dominant* view on reading that the reading activities represent and convey to the boys. On the other hand, it functions as protection, a cover behind which the boys can engage in their own marginalised reading practice (Janks, 2010). Thus, our analysis discerns norms and values connected to fiction and reading activities within a school context other than the subject L1 (language and literature). From a student perspective, meeting different attitudes to and expectations of reading fiction in school becomes a part of the students' literature repertoires and how they perceive themselves as readers of fiction. From a literacy perspective in which knowledge of these repertoires, perceptions, norms and values are important (cf. Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 2003), this is valuable insight for L1 teachers when planning, enacting and evaluating literary reading in L1.

In the light of our results, it is possible to talk about a reading activity which in fact counteracts itself and its own purpose. One purpose of the activity is of course to stimulate reading. The printed fiction offered in our example may at first seem to

represent free voluntary reading and serve as an argument for the idea of reading engagement. But since the dominant view on reading, conveyed through the teacher's actions in the classroom, appears contradictory to the students' way of reading in the context of the reading project, the boys are faced with the limited option of making a free choice among texts on paper and printed fiction. Our analyses show what happens when a reading project is implemented in a connected classroom where a print-based mindset (Olin-Scheller & Tanner, 2019) dominates its framing, and when the norm of traditional, printed fiction is maintained and reproduced. This mind-set also characterizes and can be described as sacred in the L1 subject (Erixon, 2010). The incentive to read printed literature that the reading activities are meant to provide therefore seems likely to be lost.

The digital reading practices of the building and construction students during the reading session highlight the access paradox discussed by Janks (2010) and issues related to what texts, and therefore what types of reading, are sanctioned in different reading activities in school. These practices also tells us what this means for male students in vocational programmes in terms of their chances to join a reading community, and how they view themselves as readers in the school context.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPT NOTATIONS

[Overlapping utterances
(x)	An uncertain hearing of what the speaker said
(.)	A short untimed pause (less than one half a second)
(1.0)	Length in seconds of a pause
(())	Double parentheses contain contextual description and accounts
word-	A halting, abrupt cut-off
<u>word</u>	Stressed syllable or word
:	A prolonged stretch
>word<	Right/left carats indicates speeded up delivery relative to the surrounding talk
word	Indicates the exact moment at which the screen shot has been recorded
(word)	Indicates the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
£word£	Pound sign indicates smiley voice, or suppressed laughter