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# Teachers' choices of teaching material

Authentic material  
and adaptations to  
the new curriculum in  
Sweden



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## Abstract

In this study seven secondary/ upper secondary EFL teachers have been interviewed about their use of and views of different teaching material, authentic material, and their adaptations to the new curriculum (LGY11). Answers have been compared to those of similar studies conducted prior to LGY11. Most teachers in the study used textbooks but preferred other material. TV/film clips, articles, and literature were most frequently used, and the most common justifications were that the material fit the current theme, was relevant to the students, prepared students for the national test or provided variation. The teachers in the study, while using authentic material, rarely mentioned authenticity. It was also found that most teachers neither reported to have changed following LGY11, nor seemed to have changed compared to previous studies. Possible reasons and implications for these findings are discussed as well as directions for future research.

# Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction..... 3**
  - 1.1 Background .....3
    - 1.1.1 Textbooks in the communicative approach ..... 3
    - 1.1.2 Defining authentic material ..... 4
    - 1.1.3 Curricula and syllabi in Sweden..... 7
  - 1.2 Aims and research questions ..... 8
- 2 Literature review ..... 9**
  - 2.1 Teaching efficiency of authentic material vs graded material. .... 9
  - 2.2 The use of textbooks and authentic material in Sweden ..... 9
- 3 Method ..... 13**
  - 3.1 Participants ..... 13
  - 3.2 Material ..... 14
  - 3.3 Procedure..... 15
  - 3.4 Analysis ..... 15
  - 3.5 Ethical considerations ..... 16
  - 3.6 Limitations ..... 17
- 4 Results ..... 18**
  - 4.1 Teachers’ choices of teaching material ..... 18
    - 4.1.1 Textbooks..... 18
    - 4.1.2 Other material..... 20
  - 4.2 Definitions for and attitudes to authentic material ..... 22
  - 4.3 Teachers views of the new curriculum..... 23
  - 4.4 Teachers have not changed as an effect of the new curriculum ..... 25
- 5 Discussion ..... 27**

**6 Conclusion ..... 30**

**References ..... 31**

**Appendix 1: interview guide .....  
1**

**Appendix 2: non-translated citations .....  
2**

# 1 Introduction

The communicative approach brought about a focus on communication and authenticity in EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching. As a result, traditional teaching methods with textbooks and focus on form have decreased as communication activities and use of authentic material, which could be explained as material created by and for native speakers, have become increasingly popular. As authentic material often contains more advanced language structures it has been argued to be too difficult for some students but as students' aptitudes increase with years of teaching this argument becomes less relevant. Thus, while there have been arguments against the use of authentic material in EFL as well as arguments for the use of textbooks, most post compulsory school teachers seem to hold positive attitudes to authentic material and prefer its use over textbooks. This trend has been seen in Sweden as well as many other countries.

In 2011 compulsory and upper secondary school in Sweden received a new curriculum. A new curriculum may change teachers' relationships to different types of teaching material, authentic material included. As no studies investigating teachers' attitudes to different teaching material have been conducted in Sweden since the onset of the new curriculum this paper will begin the process of filling this gap. This paper will examine upper secondary Swedish EFL-teachers' choices of teaching material and whether and if so how these choices have been affected by the new curriculum.

## 1.1 Background

The background will briefly cover the role of textbooks in the communicative approach, different views on authentic material and an overview of the changes in the new curriculum, with an extra focus on authentic material.

### 1.1.1 Textbooks in the communicative approach

Vassilakis (1997) proposes that there is a conflict between communicative language teaching (CLT) and textbooks: teachers often accept textbooks with accompanying complementary material as a "package deal" (p. 3) often informing not only the material used in the classroom but also how it is used. Vassilakis suggests that when materials start to inform the behaviour of the teacher, they function as "prescriptions for classroom practice" (p. 4) preventing the teacher from acting on his or her judgement of situations. Breen, Candlin & Walters (1979)

suggest three basic principles for materials design in communicative language teaching, one of which is: “Materials design will be more concerned with the teaching-learning process than with the content for teaching and learning” (p. 1). To Vassilakis, this means to take the learners’ needs into account, but “these learner needs, however, cannot be taken into account [by a coursebook/ textbook] if the target population is as diverse as the potential users of the coursebook packages intended for international use.” (Vassilakis, 1997, p. 4). Hence, according to Vassilakis, CLT cannot let its practice be prescribed by a coursebook/textbook package.

In a literature review focusing on textbook usage in teaching, Englund (1999) too suggested that the textbook often had the exceptional position of being the teaching material that regulated the teaching process. But contrary to Vassilakis (1997), she suggested that textbooks had this position because it fulfilled five different roles: (1) the use of a textbook functions as a guarantee that the necessary knowledge will be gained and the goals of the curriculum reached, (2) the textbook gives the teaching cohesion, which creates a sense of security, (3) it makes evaluation of students simpler, (4) as well as the rest of the teachers job as it can provide support to teachers who need it, students only need to keep track of one book instead of a multitude of different material etc. (5) The textbook also has a disciplinary role as it provides a clear task for the students to work with.

### **1.1.2 Defining authentic material**

The use of authentic material in language teaching has been a highly debated topic in EFL teaching. Arguments have been raised both for and against the use of authentic material and the arguments are often the same. Authentic material has been argued to increase students’ motivation, be more relevant to the students and better prepare students for real language use. At the same time, authentic material has also been argued to contain language too difficult for some students and that in order to make authentic material useful in the classroom considerable time needs to be invested into writing lesson plans and supporting material (see Kilickaya, 2004; Landsford, 2014a; Landsford, 2014b, for a short overview of both sides of the argument). But what empirical evidence is there for these claims? Kim (2000), investigating attitudes of Korean university students of EFL, found that the students displayed considerably low confidence in understanding authentic material. Yano, Long & Ross (1994) reviewed 15 studies on simplification and elaboration of material. They found that, overall, students subjected to simplified or elaborated text or audio showed significantly higher

understanding than students subjected to authentic texts or audio. Yano, Long & Ross then conducted an experiment in which students displayed significantly higher comprehension when subjected to simplified or elaborated material as opposed to authentic material. There therefore seems to be merit to the argument that authentic material sometimes proves too advanced for students.

Studies supporting the arguments for authentic material can also be found: specifically, studies examining students' and teachers' attitudes towards authentic material. Bacon and Finneman (1990) and Chavez (1998) found that the students in their studies held positive attitudes to authentic material. In addition, Yeung (2011), Al-Musallam (2009), ShuChin (2007) and Homaei (2014) found that both students and teachers held positive attitudes to authentic material. Kienbaum et al. (1986) and Kim (2000) did not find that students preferred authentic material over graded material (simplified or elaborated) but that students attitudes towards authentic material tended to improve after having worked with it. Also, in one of the more cited articles in the field, Peacock (1997) found that authentic material significantly increased students' motivation as compared to graded material. However, in his study, authentic material was not reported as more interesting than graded material, which had previously been (and still is) argued as one of the main reasons for authentic material being more motivating. It therefore seems that while the arguments against authentic material may have some merit, a majority of both teachers and students seem to hold positive attitudes to authentic material. There is, however, also controversy over what authentic material is.

Various definitions for authentic material exist such as: "Authentic materials are taken directly from L1 sources and are not changed in any way before they are used in the classroom" (Abersold & Field, 1997, p. 48), "Materials are authentic if they are unaltered data, and are produced by and for native speakers of a common language and not for second language learners of that language" (Adams, 1995, p. 3), and material created "to fulfil some social purpose in the language community" (Little, Devitt & Singleton, 1989, p. 25). Many researchers have compiled these various but similar definitions into mutual factors exhibited by each definition. According to Kilickaya (2004) a majority of definitions share a common basis of "exposure to real language and its use in its own community" (p. 1) and Danielsson et al. (2006) suggest that most definitions focus on the purpose behind the creation of the material: If its purpose is for language teaching, the material is not authentic and if its purpose is outside of language teaching, it is.

Day & Bamford (in Day, 2004) do however bring up conflicting definitions that do not conform to the common factors present in most definitions, such as texts slightly adapted and/or shortened (Walter, in Day, 2004) and texts from authentic sources, but altered in some way (Richards & Eckstut-Didier, in Day, 2004). Rings (1986) also brings up conflicting definitions: Mollica (in Rings, 1986) suggests that teaching material altered to appear authentic may be counted as authentic material and Kruger (in Rings, 1986) stretches the definition to also encompass text created by and for native speakers, but simplified. Having brought up this ambiguity, Rings and Day come to quite different conclusions. While Rings suggests that texts may contain different degrees of authenticity, Day reaches the conclusion that authenticity is a problematic concept best ignored by teachers in favour of another concept: Appropriateness. Below, each conclusion will be covered separately.

Discussing the existing discrepancies among definitions of authentic material, Rings (1986) recognizes that authenticity is an “elusive concept” (p. 206) and that texts must have differing degrees of authenticity. Rings suggests a ranking system where the most authentic language would be spoken between native speakers without the presence of outside evaluators such as researchers, recorders etcetera. He refers to Weijenberg (in Rings, 1986) who suggests that authenticity of language is decided by three factors: spontaneity, focus on form/ message, and outside monitoring. The more spontaneous a conversation is, the more authentic. If language is planned it is subject to editing and thus becomes less natural, equalling less authentic. Native speakers conversing with each other rarely focus on the form of the language as they speak, but on the message that they wish to convey. Hence, the greater focus on form elicited by the speaker/ writer, the less authentic. Finally, if a conversation is subject to outside monitoring and the speakers are aware, this is likely to affect the conversation and, thus, the authenticity of the conversation. Monitoring also refers to editing of language where increased editing leads to decreased authenticity.

Rings suggested that there is authenticity of both speaker and situation and concludes that the least authentic of texts then would be a written text created by non-native speakers with the purpose of teaching certain instances of grammar or vocabulary. Chavez (1998) built on Rings suggestions of authenticity as comprised of factors and being scalar rather than absolute. She suggested 12 factors to consider when grading authenticity: Immediacy, native inception, native reception, currency, and authenticity of setting, initiative, source etc. In other words, if one subscribes to Rings’ or Chavez’s definition of authenticity, deciding if a material is authentic or not seems to become quite a time consuming as well as advanced process that teachers rarely would find worthwhile.



Day (2004), instead, argues that teachers, researchers, and publishers, overall, hold authentic material in unnecessarily high regard and goes as far as calling it a “cult of authentic materials” (p. 102). Having reviewed the discrepancies in definitions of authentic material, the most prominent arguments both for and against authentic material, and the research supporting said arguments his conclusion is that “we do not know what authentic texts are [and] there seem to be no obvious benefits for using them” (p.110). He also suggests that the focus on authenticity of teaching materials is “meaningless and lacking in pedagogic value” (p. 108). Instead, he proposes that the focus should be on appropriateness. According to Day, appropriateness is decided based on 3 factors: the language ability of the student/students, the variety of English displayed, and the task that the students are to perform with the material.

### **1.1.3 Curricula and syllabi in Sweden**

In 2011, Swedish secondary and upper secondary school received a new curriculum: LGY11 and LGR11 (see, Skolverket, 2011a; Skolverket, 2011b). The previous curricula, LPF94, LPO94 (Skolverket, 1994a; Skolverket, 1994b) and the later modified version of LPF94: GY2000 (Skolverket 2000), have some references to authentic material. In the curriculum for the course English C (the most advanced course of the previous upper secondary curriculum) it is stated that after the course, students “should understand different types of clear, authentic speech in different contexts” (p. 93, author’s translation). Authenticity is also mentioned in a similar way in the curriculum for ”modern languages” (a concept normally used for the teaching of Spanish, French and German in secondary and upper secondary school). In addition, in an introductory chapter to the collected language syllabi of Gy2000 (Skolverket, 2000), Gudrun Erikson argues for authenticity of both text and task as important factors for the validity of the teacher’s grading (p. 45).

As seen above, the previous curriculum had some, although few, references to authentic material. As a comparison, LGY11 has no reference specifically to authentic material. The only reference to authenticity can be found in the submitted comments to the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011c) where it is stated that “language use in functional and meaningful contexts” (p. 6, authors translation), is language use perceived as “authentic, realistic and relevant” (p. 6, author’s translation). This means that some importance is placed on perceived authenticity but that LGY11 is lacking explicit references to the term “authenticity”.

On the other hand, LGY11 has a new feature called “core content” which states what content teachers should bring up or use in each course. For the course English 5, things such as “content and form in different kinds of fiction” (p.3) and “Texts of different kinds and for different purposes, such as manuals, popular science texts and reports” (p. 3) are mentioned in the core content. Content with arguably the same level of authenticity is also mentioned in the syllabi for English 6, eg. “formal letters, popular science texts and reviews” (p. 7) and English 7, eg. “agreements, in- depth articles and scientific texts” (p. 11). While it would be possible to simplify texts like these, students are supposed to face the language prominent in such texts and a simplification or any other kind of adaption would alter this language into something else. Thus, while the new curriculum lacks explicit references to the term “authentic material” and the previous curriculum did not, one could argue that emphasis on using authentic material in EFL teaching has increased with the arrival of LGY11.

## 1.2 Aims and research questions

With the arrival of the new curriculum, Swedish EFL teachers’ attitudes towards authentic material and other teaching material may have changed. The aim of this study is therefore to increase the knowledge about Swedish EFL teachers’ current use of, and attitudes towards different types of teaching material, with an extra focus on authentic material. The aim is also to, in light of previous attitude studies conducted in the Swedish context, compare teachers’ reported use of and attitudes to different teaching material prior to and after the implementation of the new curriculum.

In order to meet these aims, the following research questions have been posed:

1. What types of teaching material do the interviewed Swedish EFL-teachers predominately use in their teaching and what are the main factors when these teachers choose teaching material?
2. What are the interviewed teachers’ views of authentic material?
3. What are the interviewed teachers’ views of the new curriculum and its positioning towards authentic material?
4. Has the new curriculum affected the interviewed teachers’ teaching and choices of teaching material and if so, how?

## 2 Literature review

This literature review will briefly cover documented teaching effects of authentic and graded material. It will also review studies on teachers use of teaching material in Sweden prior to the curriculum change.

### 2.1 Teaching efficiency of authentic material vs graded material.

In an unpublished paper Torell (2015) reviewed studies that had tested the teaching efficiency of authentic material compared to graded material on the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing). Seven studies were found (Kienbaum, 1986; Weyers, 1999; Gilmore, 2011; Marzban & Davaji, 2015; Young, 1999; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens, 2005; Latifi, Youhannaie & Mohammadi, 2013) that together made up 20 tests on the four language skills (5 tests on speaking, 6 tests on listening comprehension, 4 tests on writing and 5 tests on reading). The results were inconclusive. A majority of tests performed in these studies (12 out of 20) have showed statistically insignificant results. But while 7 tests were significant in favor of authentic material (see, Kienbaum, 1986; Weyers, 1999; Gilmore, 2011; Marzban & Davaji, 2015; Young, 1999; Latifi, Youhannaie & Mohammadi, 2013) only one test showed a significant teaching effect in favor of graded material (see, Young, 1999). Torell (2015) concluded that while authentic material seemed to be more effective than graded material when teaching listening comprehension, more research was needed to ensure any teaching effects at all. Also, a clear majority of the tests above have been conducted on university students and results can therefore only be applied to university students. Thus, very little is known about the effectiveness of using authentic material in upper secondary school or compulsory school.

### 2.2 The use of textbooks and authentic material in Sweden

Studies on compulsory and upper secondary language teachers' attitudes towards authentic material have been conducted in Sweden prior to the new curriculum. This review features a report from Skolverket as well as three teacher degree projects where secondary and upper secondary teachers have been interviewed about their attitudes and use of authentic material and graded material.

In a report based on survey answers from 1327 teachers working in compulsory school years 5 and 9, and 51 interviews of teachers working in years 3, 5, and 9, Skolverket (2006) reports on art-, civics- and EFL teachers' use of teaching material. Among the EFL teachers (constituting 472 survey answers and 17 interviews), textbooks were clearly the most commonly used teaching material. 83 percent working in year 5 and 56% working in year 9 answered that they used a textbook each or almost each class. As a comparison, the second most used material in class, recorded speech, was estimated to be used each or almost each class by 56% of the teachers working in year 5 and by 35% of the teachers working in year 9. Also, 0% of teachers working in year 5 and only 3% working in year 9 replied that they never used a textbook. All interviewed EFL teachers in the report used a textbook as the basis for their teaching, which they complemented with other material. Three main reasons for using a textbook were mentioned in these interviews. The first was that it was comfortable, as it did not require as much planning or preparation. The second, that it was secure and third, the textbook was seen as a guarantee that the syllabus would be covered and students be well prepared for the national tests. The disadvantages mentioned were that textbooks could be perceived as boring and repetitive, that using them could be stressful as they often have an implied tempo in which texts should be read and exercises completed. Some also suggested that textbooks do not take students' differing proficiencies into account.

Danielsson, Langley and Liljekvist (2006) interviewed five upper secondary and two secondary EFL Teachers about their attitudes and use of authentic material, as well as the possible advantages and disadvantages of authentic material, and their views on the relationship between authentic material and the curriculum. In their questions, they focused on what types of teaching material the teachers used, what benefits the teachers saw with using authentic material, to which extent they used and wanted to use authentic material, the perceived relation between authentic material and the curriculum, and perceived potential drawbacks of authentic material.

All teachers interviewed answered that they could conceive of only working with authentic material, expressed very positive attitudes to it, mentioning positive effects such as non-authentic material disengaging from reality and authentic material improving critical thinking, and being "the students' road to development and goal fulfilment" (Danielsson et al., p. 23, author's translation). Common benefits mentioned are that authentic material provides variation from the textbook, that the content can be more suited to the students, is more relevant and in touch with reality, and that authentic material, because of these factors, sparks

interest and motivates students more than non-authentic material. Danielsson et al. (2006) point out that these positive features were all mentioned by the then current curricula (Skolverket, 1994a; 1994b) as important. No teacher in their study saw any opposition between authentic material and the curriculum and while four teachers used authentic material to teach all aspects of language, authentic material was mainly used to teach “cultural differences” and listening or reading comprehension. The factors that still led the teachers to in some extent continue to use textbooks is that the textbook provides more support and safety for the students, that the choosing of appropriate authentic material often is a complicated process and that using authentic material is more time consuming than not.

Eriksson (2010) interviewed five upper secondary EFL teachers about their views of and reasoning about authentic material. Focus was put on how the teachers defined authentic material as well as whether the teachers preferred working with authentic material as opposed to textbooks and whether the teachers used authentic material differently in vocational programmes as opposed to higher education preparatory programmes.

A majority of the teachers in the study defined authentic material as material originally not intended for teaching. Eriksson discussed this as these teachers seeing authenticity as an aspect of the text. One teacher instead defined authenticity as something contemporary and relevant to the reader, which, according to Eriksson, is to put authenticity in the interaction between the text and the reader. A majority of the teachers also answered that they preferred working with authentic material and only one teacher reported using textbooks more than authentic material in some groups. Those who used textbooks did so to clarify aspects of teaching for the less proficient students, whom the teachers agree are more prominent on the vocational programmes. All teachers answered that authentic material better prepared students for reading real texts and other positive aspects of authentic material mentioned were that the material was “for real”, was fun, motivating and interesting.

Israelsson (2007) interviewed three secondary EFL Teachers and one upper secondary EFL teacher about their choices of teaching material and how they thought their choices affected the students. Three of the teachers reported using textbooks. Two arguments for using textbooks were brought up. All three teachers who used textbooks thought they were useful when the teacher did not have time to prepare use of other material and two teachers thought textbooks were especially useful when they wanted to focus on specific language structures: “they provide the teacher with fitting exercises that let students practice a variety of skills” (p. 18). While two of the teachers used authentic material to complement the texts and exercises in the textbook, the two other teachers mainly taught through authentic material,

arguing that they and the students enjoy authentic material more and that students develop more when using this material. They mainly taught through exercises that let the students communicate, leading Israelsson to suggest that these teachers subscribe to Krashen's (1982) notion of acquisition of a second language rather than learning. Krashen's language acquisition hypothesis stated that acquisition of a language was obtained through being exposed to it. These two also mention the importance of enjoyment for successful learning. Israelsson (2007) also suggests that the two who teach predominately through communication exercises, teach according to Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) that states that language is acquired when the subject is exposed to language that he/she does not yet master.

Use of material varied between teachers but according to Israelsson (2007) there seemed to be a trend that newer teachers tended to use textbooks more than experienced teachers. Also, in a concluding note, Israelsson suggests that authentic material provides more rewarding experiences and keeps the job interesting for the teachers.

### **3 Method**

Since previous studies researching Swedish EFL teachers' attitudes to authentic material had been interview studies using semi-structured interviews, and part of the aim of this study was to compare results with these previous studies, a similar method was chosen. As stated by McKay (2006), semi-structured interviews make sure that the same topics have been covered in each interview while leaving some freedom to react and adapt to participants' responses.

Eriksson (2010) and Danielsson et al. (2006) mention that the same questions could have been researched with a quantitative method such as surveys, which would have lent broader but more shallow answers to the questions. Results would have lacked the in-depth answers seen in these studies. Also, McKay (2006) suggests that interviews is an effective research method when focusing on respondents' attitudes, as this study does.

#### **3.1 Participants**

The participants in this study were chosen via a selection of convenience. Participants were either asked to participate via a post in a Facebook group for teachers or face to face. 7 teachers agreed to an interview, 6 of which worked in the upper secondary school and 1 working in compulsory school years 7-9. The participants were working at three different schools located in the outskirts of a major city in the west of Sweden.

Table 1: Depicting descriptors of the participants.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Additional subjects</i>	<i>Years teaching</i>	<i>Courses</i>
<i>Teacher 1</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>English 5-7</i>
<i>Teacher 2</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Swedish</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>English 5, 6</i>
<i>Teacher 3</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>English 5, 6. Special school- equal to years 7-9</i>
<i>Teacher 4</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>History, Film</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Introductory English- English 5</i>
<i>Teacher 5</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>English 5-7</i>
<i>Teacher 6</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Swedish, Swedish as an L2</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>English 5-7</i>
<i>Teacher 7</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>PE</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>Years 7-9</i>

### 3.2 Material

As one of the aims of this study is to compare results from this study with similar studies conducted before the curriculum change the interview guide used in this study (see appendix 1) was created to resemble those in Danielsson et al. (2006) and Eriksson (2010) with a few exceptions. McKay (2006) points out that, given the relationship between interviewer and participants, participants' answers in an interview may reflect what the participants "think they should say rather than what they actually do" (p. 51). To decrease the risk of the respondents' answers catering to any supposed "correctness" of response perceived to be implied by the interviewer, the interview questions started out being about teaching material in general and only after a while were questions asked specifically about authentic material. This was done despite Danielsson et al. and Eriksson starting out asking about authentic material. Also, for the same reason, a lot of questions used in Danielsson et al. and Eriksson have been altered to focus on teaching material in general instead of only authentic material.

Two control questions have also been used, both asked before the question they controlled for: The first control question asked how long teachers had been using the material that they used now. Answers on this question were compared to answers about whether they had changed ways of teaching or teaching material following the change of curriculum. The



second control question was whether the material that the teachers mentioned that they used could be categorized in any way. The question was used as an opportunity for the interviewed teachers to begin talking about authentic material without explicitly being asked to. No teachers contradicted themselves in the first control question and this question will therefore not be brought up in the results.

### 3.3 Procedure

The interviews were conducted on the teachers' respective schools at times chosen by the teachers. The interviews were recorded on a cell phone in order to make sure no information was lost or forgotten as well as to allow the interviewer to focus on follow up questions.

As most of the participants were native speakers of Swedish, the interviews, with one exception, were conducted in Swedish. Although the participants were teachers of EFL their command of Swedish were expected to be better than their command of English. Thus, it was assumed that the setting would be more comfortable and less stressful for the participants if the interview was conducted in Swedish.

### 3.4 Analysis

As the interviews, with one exception, were conducted in Swedish, the interviews were also transcribed in Swedish and thematised in Swedish. Parts that were singled out for citations were then translated into English by the author. This means that the authenticity of the citations below could be questioned. Kvale & Brinkman (2014) point out that the transcription of an interview poses several problems simply because spoken language and written language are not the same: pauses, tone and body language are often missed in transcriptions, and transcriptions that try to take such aspects into account often end up with a text that is less intelligible than one that did not take said aspects into account. Consequently, the transcriptions in this study have only taken pauses into account when they are considerable (judged by the author), and have not taken tone or body language into account. On the other hand, laughter has been noted, as laughter may indicate that answers where it occurred were less serious in nature.

For the purposes of this paper, the definition of authentic material by Abersold and Field (1997) will be used as a guideline for coding and analysis: "Authentic materials are taken directly from L1 sources and are not changed in any way before they are used in the

classroom” (1997, p. 48). The definition provides clear differentiations between authentic and non-authentic material (when information is taken from L1 sources or not) and for when authentic material becomes non-authentic (when the material is modified in any way). Consequently, the term non-authentic will be used for material that does not correspond to Abersold & Field’s definition of authentic material. The term graded material will in this paper mean material that has been simplified or elaborated in order to increase clarity and adapt the material to a language learning group.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

In order to accommodate to the Swedish research council’s (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011) guidelines for ethical research, prior to the interviews, participants were informed that:

- The interviews were part of my degree project for the teacher programme at Gothenburg university
- Participation was voluntary and at any time, up until submission of the paper, the participants could revoke their participation.
- The participants’ names and schools would be anonymized
- The information gained from these interviews would only be used in this paper
- If the participants wished to see what had been written about them in the paper, prior to submission, they could ask for excerpts.
- The focus of the interview would be teachers’ choices of teaching material, their reasoning behind these choices and the connection between the new curriculum and these materials.

Kvale & Brinkman (2014) discuss informed consent as a balancing act between truthfulness towards participants and giving out information that might jeopardize the results.

Participants were, from the start, not informed that the interviewer also had an interest in authentic material. That information was withheld as it was expected to otherwise affect the participant’s early answers. Withholding this information was deemed to be in accordance with the ethical guidelines from the Swedish research council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011). Also, in order to increase the anonymity of the participants, they have only been given a number and some descriptors as identification. Teachers from the same school may still recognize each other from the descriptors but in order to minimize this risk only descriptors relevant to the results of this paper have been presented.

### 3.6 Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. First of all, due to time constraints, the participants were chosen from a sample of convenience and can thus not be seen as a representative sample of Swedish EFL teachers.

Secondly, the questions in the interview guide have often been broad, opening up for answers relating to both authentic and graded material as well as material for both reception and production. This approach may have been too broad as the interviews resulted in a lot of irrelevant information that could not be used in the study.

Thirdly, Kvale and Brinkman (2014) repeatedly point out that conducting interviews is a skill that takes time and practice to master. According to Kvale and Brinkman, a skilled interviewer is knowledgeable, structured, explicit, friendly, open, controlling, critical, has a good memory, and is interpreting. The interviewer in this interview is a novice and as such it is only probable that he on occasion will not meet the standard for one of these criteria. On the other hand, seven interviews were conducted which should minimize the risk that interpretations are based on results received through a possible error on the interviewer's part. Also, the results can be expected to meet requirements at a basic level, and the standards required for this paper. If this limitation was always considered, very little research would be acceptable as an interviewer gains experience only through practice.

Also, in this paper, some questions from Danielsson et al. (2006) and Eriksson (2010) were modified to be about teaching material in general instead of only about authentic material. While this hopefully has rendered more truthful answers this has also decreased comparability somewhat between studies. This is unfortunate as part of the aims of this study is to compare answers between this study and similar studies conducted before LGY11, on the other hand the advantages should outweigh the disadvantages.

## 4 Results

This paper has investigated chiefly three things: Swedish teachers use of different teaching materials, their views on authentic material and how, and if, the new curriculum has resulted in any change of teaching or choice of teaching materials in the teachers. Tables have been used when deemed necessary to give the reader a better overview of results.

### 4.1 Teachers' choices of teaching material

#### 4.1.1 Textbooks

*“as they are used to textbooks from secondary school you could use textbooks at the onset so that they feel safer. Later I usually move away from those, actually.”* (Teacher 1)

The use of textbooks was widely discussed by the teachers in this study. So much so that it deserves its own headline. Although never brought up by the interviewer, all teachers in this study brought up the subject. As the quote above suggests, teachers see some benefits of authentic material but generally use other material.

With only Teacher 7 (working in secondary school) as an exception, the teachers reported to only use textbooks to a small degree and mainly using other material. There were also many negative voices raised about textbooks, also by Teacher 7, even though she used the textbook as much as other material. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 see textbooks as insufficient saying that “I have never found a textbook to be up to par” (Teacher 2) and “I don't think that I have found any textbooks, neither in Swedish, nor in English, that I think are comprehensive” (Teacher 1).

There was also a clear attitude amongst the teachers that working with textbooks was less inspiring both for the teacher and the students. Teacher 3 describes trying to find assignments outside the book that “actually would meet their [the students'] interests” (Teacher 3). Teacher 3 also points out that if you only work with a textbook, he does not think that you will get very interested students. The same sentiment is expressed by Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 as they explain why they avoid textbooks for the most part: “I can't see myself working with a textbook during the majority of an academic year. That won't work for me. It's too rigid and I don't feel that the lessons will have any life to them if you work that way”

(Teacher 1) and “it gets a little predictable and repetitive, in a bad way, with a textbook. Students haven’t really had the patience to work that way either, I feel” (Teacher 2). Above, teacher 1, 2 and 3 clearly express common, negative attitudes to textbooks: that they are rigid and uninteresting- both for the students and the teacher. The aspect of interest is also brought up by Teacher 7 who claims she would die of boredom if she only were to work with a textbook: “Well, how fun is it to open the book and read about Piccadilly Circus? ‘She went to the theatre to buy tickets and..’ you’re dying, right!? So boring! [Laughter]” (Teacher 7). Instead, she mainly uses the grammar and writing exercises in the textbooks, as she thinks they provide a good basis and progression, and only uses a text when it fits with the current theme of the lessons. Otherwise she looks for texts, clips or other useful material online.

Three of the teachers in the study have expressed a tendency to use textbooks more with younger or less proficient students. Teacher 1 reports that he often starts out using textbooks in English 5, as the students are used to textbooks from secondary school. Teacher 7, working in secondary school, treats her students in year 7 the same way: “Yes in year 7 I use them [the textbooks] a bit more. Then they are new and not so accustomed [to secondary school] so you have to gradually help them over from intermediary to secondary school” (Teacher 7). Teacher 4 who also teaches on language preparatory programmes, equivalent to everything between zero and six years of language studies, reports using textbooks there as it can provide the students with a feeling of security, and an opportunity to work independently: “It can be a comfort for the students [...] But you know it’s because you can start on a pretty basic level and get opportunities to work independently, get homework with word lists and sentences and such. I would argue that it’s a comfort” (Teacher 4). In contrast, he works very differently with his other classes:

On the other hand, on the Electricity and the Vehicles programmes I seldom work with a textbook. This in order to feel that I cover the syllabus and everything that it entails: oral, writing, listening, speaking. To cover all those parts I feel I need specific material, you know, to challenge the students. So, there I work a lot less with a textbook.” (Teacher 4)

With the more proficient students, Teacher 4 chooses to use the textbook a lot less. Like Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, he does not seem to think that textbooks cover enough of the syllabus and does not challenge students enough.

Two teachers (Teacher 1 and Teacher 3) reported having used textbooks more in their teaching when they were newer to the profession: “The first three years when you are new, then I think it feels secure to have a textbook but after that I think you feel capable of

gathering up a collection of your own lesson plans to later pick from” (Teacher 1). It is, based on this quote, assumed that Teacher 1 used textbooks for his first three years. Here he also gives one reason for his own, and possibly other teachers’ use of textbooks: use of a textbook feels secure. The quote also suggests a hierarchy of teaching material: The teacher’s own collection of lesson plans is better than a textbook and after a while teachers will choose to work with their own material. That the textbook is seen as inferior is also displayed by Teacher 3 as he admits that he started off using textbooks a lot: “In my first course I wasn’t... I used a textbook a lot, I shouldn’t deny” (Teacher 3). To Teacher 3, the use of a textbook might be something some teachers would deny, otherwise the last comment would not have been uttered. Hence, the use of textbooks currently seems to be something that is looked down upon by some teachers.

#### 4.1.2 Other material

*“there are many advantages with working in projects or themes where students work with something bigger that is later going to turn into something [produced by the students].”*  
(Teacher 2)

The teaching material most frequently mentioned as something that is used by the teachers are articles (usually from newspapers), literature, and clips from TV/ films or the internet. Two teachers mentioned using old national test and two more mentioned having students train specifically for the national test. Unfortunately, these two did not specify the material that they used.

Table 2: depicting the most prevalent types of material that teachers used.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Used by</i>
<i>Tv/film clips</i>	5	2, 3, 5, 5, 7
<i>Articles</i>	5	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
<i>Literature</i>	5	2, 3, 5, 6, 7
<i>Old national tests</i>	2	2, 4

One teacher seemed to stick out from the rest of the teachers. Teacher 7 works in secondary school (year 7-9) and while she reported using a textbook roughly 50% of her teaching (for grammar and other form exercises) this is not what makes her stand out the most. In her teaching, she works in long-spanning themes (as long as 4 months) and she likes to teach

culture studies, especially in conjunction to teaching other things. She also has the most international approach to teaching as the students have e-pals from other countries that they write to about holidays etc. and several times she has had visiting foreigners invited into the classroom to talk about their countries.

When asked about the rationale behind the material used, the most common themes brought up by the teachers were: that the material fit with the current theme or aims (see table 3), that it achieved variation, specifically between the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening), that it was relevant or motivating to the students, that the material was current, and that material was chosen based on the students' language abilities. Throughout the interviews the teachers also frequently mentioned the national tests and it was found that 5 of the teachers also chose teaching material that would prepare students for the national tests.

Table 3: depicting the most prevalent rationalizations behind teachers' use of teaching material.

<i>Based on</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
<i>Theme</i>	7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
<i>Relevance</i>	6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
<i>Prep, for national test</i>	5	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
<i>variation</i>	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
<i>currency</i>	4	1, 3, 4, 5
<i>Student's aptitude</i>	4	1, 4, 5, 7

The national test does indeed seem to be on the teachers minds as, despite never asked about by the interviewer, the national tests have been brought up by all teachers except Teacher 1. The national tests are most frequently talked about by Teacher 2 and Teacher 4 who both mention using parts of old national tests as exercise material. Teacher 4 also points out that the hearing tests on the national tests often use speakers with, what he refers to as, less common accents such as Australian, Irish, Welsh etc. and that it is important to prepare students for these less common dialects. Other things that teachers reported as affecting their choices of teaching material were the curriculum, the reliability of the source, and the teacher's own enjoyment.

## 4.2 Definitions for and attitudes to authentic material

Although all interviewed teachers reported using material that for the purposes of this review is considered authentic material, none of the teachers ever used the word “authentic” to describe the teaching material they used. It was only after the interviewer had asked about the teachers’ views on and use of authentic material that they acknowledged some of their material as authentic. They also did not use the term much even after the term had been introduced into the interviews.

When asked to define authentic material, the most repeated answer was that the material should be non-adjusted. Five teachers mentioned this as a part of their definition. The second most important criteria for authentic material was that it had to be “for real”, which was mentioned by four teachers in their definitions. Relevance for students and that the material should not be originally for teaching were mentioned by two teachers each.

Table 4: depicting the most prevalent themes in teachers’ definitions of authentic materia

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
<i>Non-adjusted</i>	5	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
<i>For real</i>	4	2, 4, 6, 7
<i>Relevance to students</i>	2	1, 5
<i>Not originally for teaching</i>	2	3, 7

Teacher 7 displayed three of the themes in her definition and was, therefore, the teacher with the definition that best corresponds to the views of the group. When asked to define authentic material she answered “well, that is what I’ve labelled ‘for real’. Material not made for school but made for, well, society. It is sort of non-adjusted” (Teacher 7).

In addition to their definitions, teachers also gave examples of what they saw as authentic material. Most commonly mentioned were articles and TV or film clips, especially newspaper articles and clips from news broadcasts. These were mentioned in direct connection to the definition of authentic material by four of the teachers (Teacher 2, 3, 4 and 6). The other teachers also mentioned using these materials and from their interviews it was interpreted that they see these materials as authentic although these teachers did not say so in conjunction to their definition of authentic material. Literature was also mentioned by three of the teachers (teacher 1, 5 and 7), although Teacher 5 did not say so in conjunction to her definition.



The teachers answered that they use authentic material between 20 and 50 percent of the time, except for Teacher 5 who answered that all of her material was authentic. This does not quite correspond to the definition of authentic material used for analysis in this paper: “Authentic materials are taken directly from L1 sources and are not changed in any way before they are used in the classroom” (Abersold and Field, 1997, p. 48). Teacher 5 mentions using YouTube clips created specifically for teaching English as a second language and also using Anime films originally in Japanese but with English voiceovers. She does acknowledge that this is not what usually would be seen as authentic material but that she would count it as such:

The arts students love anime so I said that as long as they have English voiceovers they could watch whatever they wanted. [...] but I guess that as long as it is of interest to them and, I guess it’s not really authentic as it is not originally written in English, it is Japanese, but it has to do with their subject: drawing and graphic design. So I was thinking why not. So even if for some people, it wouldn’t be authentic because it is not originally in English I don’t really care. (Teacher 5)

She gives no clear definition for her views on what authentic material is but uses “being from the news” as a defining factor and relevance for the students as an important part.

### 4.3 Teachers views of the new curriculum

*“Well what do I think about that? I think that they say you should use authentic material.”*  
(Teacher 6)

Four of the interviewed teachers (teachers 2, 4, 5, 6) thought that the new curriculum directly supported use of authentic material and no teacher thought it opposed it. The teachers that thought the curriculum supports use of authentic material justified their views by referring to passages in the curriculum, as Teacher 4 does below:

Interviewer:

Ok, so if I understand you correctly, you think that the standpoint of the curriculum is that it [authentic material] should be used?

Teacher 4:

Yes. Yes, I would say that I’ve interpreted it that way. I don’t think it [the curriculum] says that you can but that it says that they [the students] should get opportunities to be exposed to [?]. then again, sometimes it can be written articles but it can also be news, TV-broadcasts. What’s important is that there is a connection to English somewhere. (Teacher 4)

What passage in the curriculum Teacher 4 refers to is not clear but, based on his answers to other questions, it is possibly a part of the core content for the course English 5: “Texts of different kinds and for different purposes, such as manuals, popular science texts and reports” (Skolverket, 2011d, p. 3). He points out that authentic material is not explicitly mentioned as a concept in the curriculum and that its use or non-use is up for interpretation by the teacher. He then refers to a passage in the curriculum that could suggest use of authentic material and uses that for his interpretation: that teachers should use authentic material.

This argumentation has been used by most teachers to justify their views of the curriculum: “[the curriculum] Promotes it [Authentic material]. Definitely. Now I don’t have it clearly imprinted in my head but it says coherent and spoken language in different dialects and from different places so I think it sure promotes that picture.” (Teacher 5) and “You should, like be able to understand the surrounding world, have some knowledge about other countries and cultures and such. Yes, where English is spoken, and be able to explain and compare to the circumstances in Sweden. [...] and authentic material, it is also used in the construction of the national tests, you know, so to use it feels like a given.” (Teacher 2). The passages referred to by Teacher 2 and Teacher 5 are probably “Coherent spoken language and conversations of different kinds, such as interviews” (Skolverket, 2011d, p. 3) and “Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions, as well as social, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. The spread of English and its position in the world” (p. 3).

Three teachers (teachers 1, 3, 7) did not think that the curriculum directly supported authentic material but also that it did not oppose the use of authentic material. Like Teacher 4, Teacher 3 thought that the use or non-use of authentic material was up to the teacher’s interpretation, as authentic material is not explicitly mentioned in the knowledge requirements:

well, it doesn’t say flat out, I think, anything about authentic material in the knowledge requirements. Instead, here I think that you, yourself, may incorporate it. ‘How do I want my students to manage oral or written production’ or how you look at how English is used in the rest of the world and such. More that you yourself have to incorporate it. In the knowledge requirements, it does not specifically say, I think. (Teacher 3)

Here, Teacher 3 is only referring to the knowledge requirements. This could mean that he has not considered the core content or other parts of the curriculum or that the knowledge requirements affect his teaching decisions more.

Teacher 1 only pointed out that he saw no problem working with authentic material based on what is written in the new curriculum. Teacher 7 was unsure about the new curriculum's stance on authentic material and did not know what to answer until asked if there was anything written in the curriculum that would oppose the use of authentic material. She then confidently answered that there was nothing, with the motivation that the curriculum for English gives a lot of freedom to the teacher, compared to other subjects. The relative freedom that the English syllabi gives the teacher is a recurring theme among a majority of the teachers (teachers 1, 2, 4, 7) as they compare the English curriculum to that of Physical Education, Swedish and History. A common argument is that other subjects have more precise core content or more core content to make time for, as illustrated by teacher 7:

You almost feel more controlled in PE as you have so much to make time for. English feels very free, I think. You should learn to write and you know those things, but that can be done in so many ways. You can use a textbook all the way from year 7 to year 9 or you can do the things you find fun. (Teacher 7).

The same was said about the subject of Swedish: "English is narrower in its content than Swedish. [...] Swedish is broader as you are supposed to cover language history and language sociology and such. More aspects and more varied content." (Teacher 2). Additionally, all teachers pointing out this relative freedom mention it as a good thing.

#### 4.4 Teachers have not changed as an effect of the new curriculum

*"I see nothing that has affected me. I am sure there have been some changes concerning the curriculum, what is expected to be brought up and what to talk about and such but in reality, in the classroom, that does not make much of a difference for me".* (Teacher 4)

Most teachers in this study answer that they have not changed their teaching or their teaching material considerably since the change of curriculum 2011. The most common answer for why no change has taken place was that they did not think the curriculum had changed that much:

The difference specifically in the subject of English is not that great, you know. There is still the same approach to language learning and the communicative approach is still there, right, and has been moved over. And the national tests that have a big washback effect on what we choose to teach and such, they are same, same but different. They have not changed either (Teacher 2).

We see here that Teacher 2 thinks the curriculum has stayed more or less the same and points at the national tests as an important deciding factor for what teachers will teach (as also pointed out under 2.1.2 Other material).

Teacher 3 also points out that, as far as he knows, textbooks have not changed considerably since the reform either. This statement is somewhat contradicted by Teacher 1, suggesting that textbook creators clearly have made an effort at adapting textbooks to the goals in the new curriculum, especially textbooks for the Swedish courses but not as much in English.

Those who reply that there has been a change in the curriculum (Teacher 4, Teacher 7) point out that the main change has been in the grading system:

no... I probably don't think that [there has been a change] [...] I think it has improved and especially everything with the new grading system. There I see the biggest change, probably, that the teacher can have a clearer dialogue with the student [...] so I think that if there has been a change it has been for the better, but then again, I don't really think there is much of a difference. (Teacher 4)

Teacher 4 does not think that the curriculum has changed considerably but that the knowledge requirements have become clearer and thus easier to explain and discuss with students.

Teacher 7 instead points out a difference in how the knowledge requirements are interpreted or used:

I don't think that the curriculum has affected me as much as the grading system. I think it has had a greater impact. For example, that you no longer can compensate reading comprehension with listening as you could before. You can't compensate as before, so that has affected me more than the rest. [...] I think that for the most part the things written there are pretty self-evident and nothing that I don't manage. (Teacher 7)

Here, Teacher 7 points out how a concrete change in the curriculum has affected her grading.

Furthermore, she does not say that the curriculum has not changed, as most of the teachers in this study, but that the rest of the curriculum suggests things that they already do.

## 5 Discussion

The purpose of this study has been to find out more about Swedish EFL teachers' choices of teaching material, their views on authentic material and how these choices have been affected by the new curriculum. Also, in order to see examples of potential change, responses from this study will be compared to responses of similar studies conducted before the curriculum change (Danielsson et al. 2006; Israelsson 2007; Eriksson, 2010).

The use of a textbook or not was widely discussed by the teachers in this study, as well as the teachers in Danielsson et al. (2006), Israelsson (2007) and Eriksson (2010). The majority, in all studies, have reported that they use textbooks very little, but most have also reported that they do on occasion. Israelsson suggested that there seemed to be a tendency for less experienced teachers to use a textbook more than more experienced teachers. Two teachers in this study reported that they used textbooks a lot at the beginning of their careers but among the teachers in the study there was no connection between years in the profession and current use of textbooks. So, as the statements of these two teachers may be used to strengthen Israelsson's claim it may also be that the use of textbooks has become less popular through the years and as a result teachers have used it less.

Eriksson also found that teachers used textbooks more with less proficient students. The same tendency was found in three teachers in this study. One used the textbook a lot in language introductory classes as it provided students with the ability to work independently with what they needed and two of the teachers both use textbooks more with their youngest students to let them gradually get used to the new educational stage, as they think working with textbooks provide the students with a sense of security.

That textbooks provide a sense of security was also argued by the teachers in Danielsson et al. (2006). The self-evident fact that the use of textbooks saves time, brought up in Danielsson et al., was also repeated by teachers in this study but the point that the teachers in Israelsson and Eriksson brought up, that textbooks are useful when wanting to highlight certain language features, was not mentioned by more than one teacher in this study. Teacher 7 mentioned using mainly the grammar exercises in her textbooks, partly for the ensured progression it provides. Therefore, while the usefulness of textbooks for highlighting language features is not as frequently mentioned and maybe not as popular an opinion anymore, it seems like the idea that textbooks provide a sense of security is a long-lived opinion among teachers that still influence their use of textbooks.

Nonetheless, most teachers in these studies had negative opinions of textbooks. Many teachers, both in this study and in Danielsson et al. (2006), Israelsson (2007) and Eriksson (2010), seemed to discuss textbooks and authentic material as opposites, where the advantages of one type of material revealed the disadvantages of the other: where authentic material takes time, the textbook does not, where authentic material provides variation, the textbooks are rigid and predictable. It is also possible that the perceived rigidity and predictability of the textbook is why teachers think it provides this sense of security.

If one accepts that this perceived dichotomy is present in these teachers' attitudes it is, in this discussion, no longer relevant to talk about attitudes to textbooks on the one hand and attitudes to authentic material on the other. Instead these will be discussed together.

The one benefit of authentic material that is mentioned by both Danielsson et al. (2006), Israelsson (2007), and Eriksson (2010) was that authentic material is more motivating for the students. The benefits of authentic material specifically were not asked about in this study but all teachers except Teacher 6 mentioned relevance or motivation for the students as an important factor when choosing material and most teachers reported that they use textbooks very little. One could, therefore, argue that teachers in this study also see authentic material as more motivating than textbooks. The teachers in Danielsson et al.'s study also expressed that authentic material provides more variation and those in Eriksson suggested it better prepares students to read real texts. Variation was another common factor for decisions about material for the teachers in this study and, therefore, likely another perceived benefit of authentic material also among the teachers in this study. In summary, it therefore seems like many of the attitudes among teachers prior to the curriculum change have survived and are present among teachers still. Teachers seem to use the same material more or less as much as before and authentic material seems to command greater status than textbooks, and for roughly the same reasons as before. In other words, no significant changes seem to have occurred.

In support of this conclusion, most teachers in this study also did not report that the new curriculum had affected them to change their way of teaching or their choices of teaching material. While this may seem strange and even suggest that these teachers are committing professional misconduct, many teachers reported that they did not think the curriculum had changed significantly. A few teachers also pointed out the relative freedom that the syllabi for English provide relative to other subjects. It may be that these teachers' ways of teaching and their material already fitted into what the syllabi suggest and therefore did not have to change significantly. Also, as the national test has been brought up so often by the teachers in this

study, it may be that teachers are more expected to and more evaluated based on how well they prepare students for the national tests than how well they follow the curriculum.

Two teachers also pointed out that the change of grading system had affected them more than the changes in the rest of the curriculum. It may be that the grading system informs teacher choices more than the rest of the curriculum, although that is a bold statement to base on responses from only two teachers.

The two most common criteria for authentic material mentioned by the teachers in this study was that the material should not be adjusted and that it should be “for real”. It is assumed that “for real” means depicting real events, persons or places as well as being written in a real first language context. The majority of teachers interviewed in Eriksson (2010) instead defined it as material not originally intended for teaching. This definition was only suggested by two teachers in this study. All definitions mentioned above consider what Eriksson calls features of the text. Eriksson interviewed one teacher who instead saw authenticity as a feature between the text and the reader: a text was authentic if the reader perceived it as authentic. Also in this study one teacher partly saw authenticity as a feature between the text and reader but generally teachers seem to think of authenticity as a static feature of the text. Although the most common defining criteria were not the same in both studies it could be suggested that definitions were fairly similar.

An interesting finding, however, was that teachers in this study, while using what for the purposes of this study would be referred to as authentic material, did not mention the word authentic or that they worked with authentic material, on their own. And while all teachers displayed that they had heard about authentic material and roughly understood what it was, most displayed some difficulty defining it, and did not mention authenticity even after the concept had been introduced in the interviews. It is possible that the types of material that in this study would be referred to as authentic material is still popular among Swedish EFL teachers, but that the term authenticity or authentic is not. Rings (1986) pointed out that authenticity is an elusive concept and Torell (2015) found mostly conflicting results regarding the teaching efficiency of authentic material. When it is hard to pinpoint the boundaries of authentic material, as well as its effects, it is possibly, as Day (2004) suggested, a pedagogically meaningless concept. It is possible that teachers, as suggested by Day, have moved on to instead focus on what material is appropriate to use with different students.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper has examined Swedish EFL teachers' use of different teaching material, their views of authentic material and their adaptations to the new curriculum (LGY11). The research questions of this paper were:

1. What types of teaching material do the interviewed Swedish EFL-teachers predominately use in their teaching and what are the main factors when these teachers choose teaching material?
2. What are the interviewed teachers' views of authentic material?
3. What are the interviewed teachers' views of the new curriculum and its positioning towards authentic material?
4. Has the new curriculum affected the interviewed teachers' teaching and choices of teaching material and if so, how?

In summary, all teachers in the study acknowledged using textbooks to some extent but preferred using other material. 20-50% of the teaching material was said to be authentic. The interviewed teachers chose material based on if it fit the current themes of the teaching, was relevant to the learners, prepared the students for the national tests and/or provided variation. Textbooks seemed to be used more with younger or less proficient learners as they were said to provide the students with a sense of security.

Despite using authentic material, the interviewed teachers did not seem to use the term authentic material. They displayed negative attitudes to textbooks, which they claimed are insufficient and less interesting and inspiring for the students. Other material is thus perceived as more inspiring, interesting, and more sufficient.

The interviewed teachers think that the curriculum supports authentic material and that they, based on the curriculum, should use authentic material in their teaching. They also think that no significant changes have been made in the subject of English in the curriculum change. Consequently, no significant changes seem to have occurred in the interviewed teachers teaching or use of teaching material due to the curriculum change.

The two major findings of this study are that no significant changes seem to have occurred in the interviewed teachers' teaching or use of teaching material due to the curriculum change and that the teachers do not seem to use the term authentic material. The reasons for teachers not having changed seem to be that they see no major changes in the curriculum that would affect them and that the national tests, which they argue have not changed, also have an important impact on teacher choices. As a change in curriculum



supposedly is done in order to achieve changes in teaching, it is possible that LGY11 has not had the desired effect when it comes to the subject of English. This is important to consider, perhaps primarily for policy-makers on Skolverket and politicians involved in school reforms.

Regarding the interviewed teachers' neglect of the term authentic material, it is possible that the term is neglected because it is problematic to define as well as not informing enough. As is suggested by Day (2004), appropriateness may be a more suitable criterion for teachers to use. It is also possible that a change of research focus from authentic material to appropriateness could benefit teachers more.

Considering these findings, future research on teachers' choices of teaching material could focus on what factors teachers focus on when deeming if material is appropriate or not. It would also be of benefit to policymakers to find out how teachers read and use the curriculum in order to make the intended changes as visible as possible. Lastly, as the national tests seem to influence Swedish teachers' teaching and choices of teaching material, Swedish researchers should work to determine the extent of this influence.

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# Appendix 1: interview guide

## Inledande information

- Intervjun del av mitt examensarbete på lärarprogrammet
- Frivilligt, du kan när som helst välja att du inte vill vara med
- Du kommer anonymiseras
- Informationen kommer bara användas till denna uppsats
- Vill du ta del av vad som skrivits om dig innan den publiceras så är det bara att säga till
- Intervjun kommer beröra lärares val av undervisningsmaterial, resonemanget bakom dessa val och kopplingen mellan nya läroplanen och dessa material

## Bakgrundsfaktorer:

Vilka program undervisar hen på?

Vilka kurser?

Egen språkbakgrund?

Hur länge har hen undervisat?

## intervjufrågor

1. Vad använder du främst för material i din undervisning?
  - a. exempel
  - b. Varför?
  - c. Hur länge har du arbetat med detta material?
  - d. Hur skulle du klassificera detta material?
2. Hur sker urvalet av det undervisningsmaterial som används i dina kurser i engelska?
  - a. Vad är syftet med att använda just detta material?
3. Hur skulle du definiera autentiskt material?
4. Hur stor andel autentiskt material respektive läroboksmaterial uppskattar du att du använder i din undervisning?
5. Arbetar du på olika sätt med olika typer av material?
6. Hur påverkar valet av material elevernas inläring?
7. Använder du olika material för att träna olika språkfärdigheter hos eleven?
  - a. Tala
  - b. Skriva
  - c. Läsa
  - d. Höra
8. Fördelar/ nackdelar med sättet du arbetar
9. Hur ser du på läroplanens ställningstagande inför Autentiskt material?
10. Beskriv om/hur din syn på och val av undervisningsmaterial har påverkats av övergången till den nya läroplanen.

## **Appendix 2: non-translated citations**

### **Teacher 1**

Dom är ju vana att ha läroböcker i högstadiet så då kan man ha läroböcker bara första tiden för att de ska känna en viss trygghet i det. Sedan brukar jag gå ifrån det faktiskt - p. 18

Jag tycker inte att jag hittat några läromedel, varken i svenska eller engelska, än så länge, som jag tycker är heltäckande. -p. 18

jag kan inte se mig själv hålla på med en lärobok huvuddelen av ett läsår, det funkar inte för mig. Det är för stelt och för ... det blir ... det känns inte som att det blir en levande lektion om man håller på så. - p. 18

De första 3 åren då man är ny så tror jag det känns tryggt att ha en lärobok men sedan tor jag att man känner att man kan samla ihop en lektionsbank som man sedan kan plocka själv ifrån. Det som passar bäst. - p. 19

### **Teacher 2**

Jag har aldrig hittat en lärobok som håller måttet. - p. 18

men också upplever jag att det blir lite förutsägbart på ett negativt sätt och lite enahanda med en lärobok. Elever, upplever jag, har inte riktigt haft tålamod att arbeta på det sättet heller. – p. 19

det finns många fördelar med att jobba i projekt och teman och sådär och låta eleverna jobba med något större som ska bli något sedan. - p. 20

att man ska... kunna liksom.. förstå sin omvärld och ha lite koll på andra länder och kulturer och så vidare. Ja där engelska talas och ska kunna jämför med de svenska förhållandena och kunna förklara det. Och det är ju ändå en sån sak som är bra att kunna i livet dessutom så att säga när man ska resa och så och använda sitt spårk. Att man har lite koll helt enkelt och autentiskt material, det används ju även i konstruktionen av nationella proven så att det känns givet att man ska ha det också. - p 26

Skillnaden i just engelskämnet är ju inte så stor. Det är ju fortfarande samma språksyn och den kommunikativa språksynen finns ju kvar och har flyttats över. Och tex de nationella proven som ju har ganska stor washback effekt på hur man väljer att undervisa och vad man tar upp och så. Dom är ju också same, same but different. Dom har inte förändrats heller. Så att i engelskan... nej, inte särskilt liksom. - p. 25

### **Teacher 3**

som faktiskt kanske var lite utefter deras intressen. – p. 18

Alltså det.. alltså det står ju inte rakt ut, kan jag tycka, kring det autentiska materialet. I kunskapskraven. Utan där kan väl jag tycka att man får själv väva in det. Hur vill jag att

eleverna klarar muntlig eller skriftlig produktion eller... eh... hur man.. ser hur engelska används i övriga världen och sådär. Att man själv får nog väva in det lite mer. Just kunskapskraven så står inte riktigt det, tycker jag. – p. 24

Ja... det är ju det där åter igen att min första kurs så var jag ju inte... då använde man ju mycket av lärobok.. ska jag inte sticka under stol med . – p. 20

#### **Teacher 4**

det kan vara en trygghet för eleverna, och då är det ju på en ganska enkel nivå liksom knappt årskurs 7,8,9 sådär. Men det är ju för att man får börja på en ganska enkel nivå och får möjlighet att jobba ganska självständigt och man kan få läxor med glosor och mening och såna saker. Men jag kan tycka att det är en trygghet. – p. 19

Däremot på el och fordon så jobbar jag mycket sällan med bok. Eh... för att jag ska känna att jag kommer åt kursplanerna och.. med allt vad det innebär i engelska med muntligt, skriftligt, lyssna, tala, för att få med alla dom delarna så behöver jag specifikt material känner jag liksom för att utmana eleverna. Så där jobbar jag mycket mindre med bok. – p. 19

Intervjuare: Ok. Så om jag uppfattat dig rätt så anser du att läroplanens ställningstagande är att det ska användas?

Lärare 4: Ja!.. ja det vill jag nog påstå att jag tolkat det så. Jag tror inte det står att man kan utan det står att de ska få möjlighet att ta del av sedan om det är ibland är det kanske i skriftliga artiklar men det kan också vara nyheter, tv-sändningar det viktiga är att det finns en koppling till engelska någonstans och att de får lyssna och då ska ha hört och jobbat med kanske då vad man säger commonwealth, alltså brittisk engelska, amerikans engelska, australiensisk engelska och jamaikansk engelska, alla typer av engelska. – p. 23

Ja, jag ser ingenting som påverkat mig, det har säkert varit viss förändring i text vad gäller läroplan och vad som förväntas vara med och vad man ska prata om och så men i praktiken i klassrummet så innebär det inte särskilt stor skillnad för mig. – p. 26

#### **Teacher 5**

As the interview was conducted in English, no translations were needed

#### **Teacher 6**

Ja hur ser jag på det? Jag tycker att, dom säger ju att man ska använda autentiskt material.  
- p. 23

#### **Teacher 7**

Hur kul är det liksom att gå in i boken och läsa om Piccadilly cirkus? ”She went to the theater to buy tickets and...”, ja man dör ju liksom så himla tråkigt [skratt]. – p. 19

Ja i 7:an använder jag dom lite mer. Då är de nya och inte så vana så man får liksom slussa över dom lite från mellanstadiet till högstadiet. - . p 19

Ja det är ju sånt jag kallar för riktigt. Sådant som inte är gjort för skolan utan gjort för.. ja,, samhället. Det är liksom inte tillrättalagt. – p. 22

Man känner sig nästan mer låst i idrotten för att man har så mycket man ska hinna med. Engelskan känns jättefritt tycker jag. Man ska lära sig skriva och du vet de grejerna och det kan man göra på så himla många olika sätt. Man kan köra textböcker hela vägen från 7an till 9an eller så kan man göra sådant som man själv tycker är roligt. Så det är mer att jag ser det som en väg att nå målen. Så jag känner mig otroligt fri i engelskan och jag tycker det är väldigt kul. – p. 25

jag tycker inte att själva läroplanen påverkat mig så mycket som själva betygssystemet. Det påverkar mer tycker jag. Tex detta att du inte kan kompensera tex läs med hör eller liknande så som gick förut. Man kan inte kompensera på samma sätt. Så det har påverkat mig betydligt mer än det andra. Man tittar ju på det men nu kommer jag knappt ihåg hur det var innan. Ber om ursäkt för diffust svar där. Jag tycker väl att det är ganska självklara saker som står där så det är inget som jag känner att jag... inte får till eller vad jag ska säga. - p. 26