



**“WHEN ANYONE CAN PUBLISH ANYTHING” - HOW TO EVALUATE SOURCES
 ACCORDING TO TEXTBOOKS FOR DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL CHOICES**

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Abstract

This study emanates from an assumption that the skill of evaluating sources is placed in a complicated field, where an old academic tradition is paired with a contemporary emphasis on the possibilities and risks with modern sources. The aims of the study is to contribute with a description and analysis of these views as they are expressed in textbooks. The material consists of chapters in a range of recent textbooks, some aiming at upper secondary students at vocational programs and some at the more theoretical programs. Of particular interest is the interpersonal structure of the books. Common and diverse ways of addressing the readers are focused. Hence, the study takes a closer look at linguistic features, visual design, student tasks and the presentation of the motives for evaluating sources. The results of the study inform of procedures and choices that are intended to influence students' critical reading. It exemplifies various views of what is desirable in the matter of evaluating sources and to what extent this fact is interfoliated with the type of program the students take. An analysis and a discussion of possible social consequences conclude the article.

Evaluation of sources is a phenomenon with a long tradition in academic contexts. This tradition is now met with a more contemporary tendency; the fact that the Internet is a growing contributor with sources, also in educational contexts. As a consequence of this, there is an ongoing discussion on young people's desirable skills in evaluating sources, textbased or other. Such an encounter between the old and the new creates a possible field of tension, worth examining¹.

The transfer from page to screen and its implications was dealt with by Kress (2003). The importance the transfer will have on literacy situations has political consequences and may involve a shift of power, Kress stated. Likewise, Fairclough (2001) made clear that literacy has a remarkable value in our society but is not distributed in a fair way. The growth of the Internet gives reasons to be optimistic, he pointed out; power inequities may be changed when the Internet is now available to many people.

¹ It should be remembered, however, that parallel to this seemingly dramatic clash between the old and the new, a more gradual development has occurred during the greater part of the 20th century when the educational ideal changed, 'moving away from a formative, structuralistic, hierarchical and firm view of knowledge towards a function-oriented, tentative, questioning and relative one' (Selander 2001, p. 41, my translation¹). This more modern view of knowledge includes that the student 'learns to evaluate information from various sources' (p. 20) and that electronic texts are paid attention to.

The Theoretical Framework

Being a good evaluator of sources can be considered a proficiency close to being good at judging risks. The evaluator needs to weigh the credibility in sources, and possibly reject those that are less trustworthy, or even false. According to Giddens (1991), risk thinking may be considered a characteristic of late modernity. This is contradictory, Giddens argued, and he pointed out how security² nowadays has rather grown and actually dominates the risks. In spite of the fact that there are now less risks in our everyday life, our thoughts are perpetually occupied with them. Every single individual has to look over his or her choices, weigh and evaluate.

Other features of modernity are the encounter between the local and the global and that time and space cannot be clearly protected. From this follows, in Giddens' presentation, that the modern individual is expected to become an expert, to make strategic plans and reflexive decisions in a multiple-choice society. Expert-related issues are interwoven into our daily life; issues that presuppose each individual both to stay critical towards and place trust in. A complicated relationship between risk and trust arises. In my opinion, the amount of sources in general and the Internet in particular is an illustration of this modernity. As far as information and sources are concerned, people's time and place may be occupied in a typically modernistic way. Information, both local and global, is presumably available at home 24 hours a day and modernity might demand this phenomenon to be treated strategically, in a balanced way, in terms of trustworthiness and in making the best choice source-wise. What used to be an academic expert skill, is now demanded from the vast majority of modern people; in this article illustrated in a Swedish context, since the skill is included in curricula for all Swedish young people.

Like Giddens, Beck (1986/1998) reasoned exhaustively on risks and modern society. Risks may be numerous and global and cause a feeling of powerlessness among people. Risks look different today than in the past when they were visible and consequently they need to be approached in a scientific way. Although risks may strike everybody and although they are not distributed parallel to wealth, it does not hinder that the distribution of risks are linked to social class (Beck, p. 49). While wealth has been connected with the upper classes, risks will be something connected with the lower classes. Beck put forward that the skills that are needed when facing risks, are related to education and income. In a safe financial position it is possible to choose where to live and where to be educated³. Through education people are taught how to handle or to refrain from risks. Beck maintained that class society is made even more accentuated, not the opposite. Due to this fact, it is important that education runs counter to such a tendency. This will be accomplished, he argued, through a culturally oriented education at the expense of a more vocationally oriented education. It is of great importance for education to teach how to manage in an insecure society.

Bernstein (1975/1996) took great interest in middle class students' and working class students' access to educational contents and the chances of social mobility. When educational arrangements in modern times are drawn from the old middleclass, they may be more easily handled by the new middle class but extra problematic to working class children, when (and if) facing the less distinct pedagogy that Bernstein calls *the invisible*. Similarly Gramsci, who also took a particular interest in schools and educational power relationships, described the Italian school as withheld through hegemony; 'a system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations' (Burke, 1999, p. 2). Gramsci criticised the Italian school system for calling the vocational school democratic, when it in fact emphasised differences and where 'the mass of the population was kept in its

² For instance concerning health care and hygiene.

³ An example of this is that money enables the individual to buy ecologically produced eggs.

place' (Burke, 1999, p. 6). Education made sure that no counter hegemony was produced and that nothing threatened a societal consensus.

Evaluation of sources is a problematic skill to define. In Bernsteinian words it could be looked upon as an old middle class skill with its roots in archaic literature studies and likewise a skill that in Gramsci's words is associated with bourgeois values⁴. In contrast to this, it can be considered to be a skill useful when instead opposing to the traditional, for instance to ideological and social contents in texts, as the International Reading Association⁵ suggests under the general notion *critical literacy*. A further angle on the ideological and political element has been given by Mulderrig (2003). Mulderrig, who studies education and its placement in society, noticed that critical proficiencies, i. e. being self-regulating, taking risks but also acting in a well-considered way, are proficiencies that are important for employability according to New Labour policy documents. This is being criticised by Mulderrig who pointed out that an earlier intrinsic value for education, now has taken the form of an extrinsic value for economy.

I argue that the perspectives accounted for above, can be used for pointing out that evaluation of sources is placed in a net of sociological and pedagogical late modern issues of great concern.

The Study

The study presented in this article aims to describe and understand how a certain skill is represented in textbooks. Seeing that the proficiency might be linked to questions of equity, my study takes social groups into consideration.

Educational media have often been discussed in the light of its capacity as a value carrier, often in negative terms. Textbook research has focused a myriad of such matters, such as social, religious or cultural ones (Ajagán-Lester 2000; LaSpina 2003; Montgomery 2005)⁶. One example is Härenstam (1993) who has examined the picture of Islam in textbooks. However, it is not as common to find textbook studies concerning skills, why I intend to take a closer look at the materialisation of the literacy-related skill of evaluating sources.

Berglez (2000) has pointed out that encounters, such as the ones where individuals meet institutions, are interesting phenomena to study. In the case of this study, students meet with school as an educational institution via textbooks. The tone and the intention of textbook writers are frequently neglected matters in textbook research (Långström, 1997, as cited by Selander, 2001). To meet this, I have partly chosen to examine *the interpersonal structure* (Hellspong, 2001) in the textbooks at issue. In an analysis of the interpersonal structure, common as well as diverse ways of intentions in the social interplay offered by the books, can be studied. Useful terminology for such an analysis includes *participants*, *sender*, *receiver* and *social roles*. The social interplay in texts can be studied by looking at the way the reader is *addressed*.

Evaluation of sources is to be found as a syllabus goal for the subject of mother tongue in lower as well as in upper Swedish secondary school. From this follows that the proficiency is assumed to be materialised in educational media. The educational text material chosen for my

⁴ The term is used in Burke's presentation on Gramsci (1999).

⁵ www.reading.org

⁶ Englund (1999) reminded us, however, that textbooks also have an equaling potential. While they can be too directing, they can also create a sense of community and convey authorised knowledge and thereby facilitate empowerment.

preceding comparative analysis consists of twelve textbooks, one of them combined with a web-based part. They are united by the fact that they are all meant to be used by students who take the same course, i. e. Swedish A and/or B, two compulsory courses in upper secondary school, taken by all students, irrespective of what kind of program they attend. Students from all programs are qualified for higher education, which motivates why they study the same courses. In this respect, the context is the same. However, the textbooks are aimed at different target groups; students at programmes foremost preparing for further studies or at programs foremost preparing for vocations. The students recruited to the two groups of programs have diverse dominating social backgrounds⁷.

Studying textbooks has its natural restrictions. Firstly, textbooks are but a part of a larger text and context. Kress has stated that texts may include 'range of views' (2003, p. 93). Accordingly, I mean that every lesson may be looked upon as a text. When educational media is being analysed, it is important to remember that the contents of these media form a text together with the teacher's speech, the students' speech and other contents that are offered inside or outside the classroom, in or out of the language lesson and, finally, inside or outside school. Secondly, we do not know how or to what extent teachers or students use the media. Nevertheless, a great deal of the textbooks examined make use of arguments building upon the fact that the books are produced in close collaboration with teachers active at work in classrooms. Thirdly, we do not know how students understand the textbooks. Naturally, texts demand the reader himself or herself to add something to the understanding, or to add something for conclusions (cf Selander, 2001). It should be observed (Kalmus, 2004) that pupils actually are able to do cynical readings as well as resistant ones. Kalmus meant that the textbook is merely one out of many socialisers.

Still, it is not possible to interpret texts in any possible way, according to Gjerstad (2004). In his terms, educational media contributes with "bricks in possible students' constructions (2004, p. 8)". By studying the meaning the media intend to create, knowledge may be added. Educational media should, consequently, not be looked upon as arbitrary materialisations of representations (Fairclough 2001; Jaworski & Coupland 1999; Selander 2001).

The text selection is frequently treated as a weakness in this type of research (Jaworski & Coupland 1999, p. 36). For this reason, my scope attempts to include all textbooks available during the spring term of 2005. In the year of 2000 the curriculum for the subject of Swedish was revised. This means that the selection is limited to textbooks printed later than 2000, twelve books in all. The part that most clearly treats the phenomenon in focus, i. e. evaluation of sources, has been chosen respectively⁸. For this particular article I have made a more specific choice of four books⁹.

Before giving a closer description of the four selected textbooks, I would like to pinpoint that the reader is struck by the similarity in describing the Internet as a place where 'anything may be published by anyone'.¹⁰

⁷ According to statistics from the year of 2000. www.scb.se/statistik/UF/UF0501/1998102/UF73SM0301.pdf

⁸ The books were numbered according to their own description of target groups; or if no target group was mentioned by the publisher, I considered the books to have a middle position and ranged them in-group in alphabetical order.

⁹ I e number 2, 3, 11 and 12.

¹⁰ Book number 1 is the one that can be considered to be closest to the lower secondary school and number 12 closest to adult education.

Book 1: -

Book 2: There [on the Internet], anyone in the whole world may write anything.

Book 3: On the Internet anything may be published and hardly anything be controlled.

Book 4: It is particularly important to be critical of sources when being out on the Internet, since that is a place where anyone may state anything – and they do!

Book 5: The fact is that on the Internet anyone may spread his/her message, and lies and rumors may easily be mistaken for truths.

Book 6: Look for facts, for example in newspapers or on the Internet, as well as in your own ideas and thoughts, of course.

Book 7: It is important to exercise your critical eye in order to choose correctly in the enormous amount of information that you have access to, as important as anywhere on the Internet.

Book 8: Anyone may launch any lies at a web page, including Neo-nazis, racists and other nutcases.

Book 9: The information is not as safe on the Internet./ By now, anyone may search the databases.

Book 10: It is particularly important to be critical of sources when being out on the Internet, since that is a place where anyone may state anything – which they also do!

Book 11: The Internet has become a natural part of the activity at a library.

Book 12: On the Internet anyone may publish anything.

As we can see, the first book does not mention the Internet at all. Among the others, the Internet seems to be the primary source to warn of, pictured with an emphasis on insecurity. Giddens has written about "institutionally structured risk environments" (1991, p.117) and when risks are mentioned and handled at school in connection with sources, it suggests that school should be looked upon as an illustration of such an institutional risk environment.

Before going on, I do wish to highlight that there are textbooks that differ from a stereotype and that they all carry both tradition and renewal. The choices made by textbook writers naturally show a hope for motivating the students and for attracting teachers. In addition, I would like to emphasise that textbooks are produced under diverse conditions, where the layout and illustration choice may be restricted by the publishers aesthetic policy or design decisions. Even so there are patterns to shed light on¹¹.

Two Emerging Patterns

I now intend to go on to the main part of this article, drawing on the mentioned survey of twelve textbooks. A choice of four books will illustrate two contrasting ways of approaching

¹¹ In the following review I have been eager to pinpoint some major traces in the books. This does not mean that I have neglected contradictory features. One such contradictory example, from the realm of visual design, is that the book that I partly characterise as authoritarian uses orange cubes when listing questions. The book aiming for a more equal interplay with its reader instead uses black points. Taylor (2004) meant that such black points can be seen as reader friendly but also as having a tendency of being a 'reader directive'. Kress (2003) put forward that bullet points of this kind may get the character of bullets fired at the reader. In this respect, the choice of layout represents an authoritative characteristic in the book with the more equally oriented interplay.

students in an educational program diversity. I argue that two different kinds of identities are encouraged. One pattern encourages a leisure oriented student identity while the other encourages a more academically oriented identity. The patterns seem to be related to the kind of program the books themselves define as their target audience

Books for Vocational Programs

Everyday and Leisure

Two books are chosen to represent the vocational programs¹². They both address, directly and indirectly, their readers as leisure text consumers. Some of the critical skills contents are placed in a mass media context, which could in fact tell us that the students are expected to be interested in societal issues. This does not seem to be the fact, though. The news that is offered is namely more science-fictional, dealing with a flying saucer. Another piece of news is expressed like this¹³:

But imagine that the news presenter instead of this would say: "X-design uses child workers in their garment factory in China." You might then get upset and angry without wondering whether these news are true or not. But who says that something is true just because it is being said on the TV or the radio or being written in a newspaper? The journalist who wrote the article about X-design might have misunderstood something. Or it might be one of the the rivals of X-design that has spread the rumour to damage the company.

As shown in the quotation, solidarity is not treated as the main issue when political questions are brought up. Instead, the global issues are more often left aside and the students are to evaluate their own, private leisure media habits or to make personal reflections over:

Why are most news horrible, do you think? What is a fun piece of news, do you think?

The Internet is mentioned as a possible information source when the students are asked to prepare presentations. It is worth noting, though, that the topics suggested from the textbook writers are once again taken from a leisure sphere; the students may present a hobby, a sport 'that you practice', a journey, a book, a person or a trend or how to make something. In another example the students are asked to practice using the Internet by putting together facts about his or her idol. Clearly, the leisure features are found in the cases where students are expected to use sources for text production.

The pictures included in the books show recreational situations. There is a sunbathing, sleeping boy with a newspaper covering his face and a transistor radio close, appearing in a colored photo. Color means fictionality (Tønnessen, 2004). Other pictures are non-realistic. The message with the flying saucer is emphasised by colored photos, representing a dead alien and a non-realistic spacecraft. The pictures seem to be influenced by film aesthetics. It fulfils some of the criteria that Pettersson (2001) presented as giving low credibility to pictures; the motive is unnatural and appears to be manipulated. Using Horsbøl's (2004) terms, it seems as if the writers view the vocationally oriented students as those who to a higher extent risk being bored (or sometimes even fall asleep!).

Close and Private

The interplay with the reader is characterised by a close and private relation. The tasks connect to personal feelings, personal opinions and private habits. Consequently, the authors approach their readers in a close, personal way, using tag questions like 'do you think?', the

¹² One of the books is mainly aimed for students at The Individual Program, a grade detention program, or vocational programs, still for the actual course.

¹³ Presented as supposedly difficult to evaluate.

personal singular pronoun 'you' and colloquial words, such as 'pal'. A closer look at the article on criticism of sources, the one about the flying saucer and the factory in China, reveals that the reader repeatedly is addressed in the pronoun 'you', non-typical for articles, something that is explained by the fact that it is a fictive article written by the textbook authors. What looks like an authentic article with its three columned layout, a preamble, a minor heading and a background in a greyish/beige nuance, has been given a personal ingredient that does not correspond to what is expected from real articles.

Insecurity

The books in question show a relation with its reader that is built on *insecurity*, giving the Internet great attention. A quotation reads as follows:

To critically examine information and where it comes from is particularly important when you are out on the Internet. There, anyone in the whole world may write anything, without you being able to check where the information comes from or whether it is true or false.

The students are made aware that they risk getting fooled, something that is shown in the heading of the fictive article *Do not get fooled!*, and in the following:

On the Internet anything can be published and hardly anything controlled. Loads of information which are not checked by anyone reach millions of people. It is not always a named author or organisation behind texts or websites. Do also remember that webpages are often perishable goods.

When working with material on the Internet it is, in other words, important to critically scrutinise and value what is said. Truths as well as rumours and evident lies may be spread on the net. It is important that you consider whether the information that you get is to be trusted.

The senders repeatedly use imperatives, exclamation marks and modal verbs¹⁴. In connection with using the Internet the responsibility is 'particularly important' or 'extra important', i. e. reinforced in adverbs. When the word 'important' is repeated it stresses the dramatic characteristic of the source, as does the fact that mass media plays 'an important role' and has 'great power' and 'great influence'. The dramatic feature can also be found in expressions like 'there are loads of forgotten pages'. Consequently, there is a rupture between two voices; the friendly and the warning, somewhat parental, one. Parallel to this, it is emphasised that the student is himself/herself responsible for judging and there is an authoritarian tone in the dramatic pattern leaving the student alone with the villains:

There are lots of people trying to influence you with their opinions, even if they want to hide it behind facts. Only you can unmask them!

Guiding questions to be used when practising the critical skill are embedded in an article, the one earlier mentioned. However, it is dubious whether the student understands that this help is embedded in the imaginary article. The questions that are placed after the article do not clearly inform whether the answers are to be found in the preceding article or in the student's mind. The other book has no manifest intertextuality¹⁵ to the resource pages. Consequently, in both cases the linearity is broken. The final part of one of the media chapters has a handwritten so called add-on, saying *Task extra*. It can be said to function as a comment (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), in this case signalling a chance of getting deepening knowledge. From this follows that deeper studies are placed as extras, not included in the ordinary work.

¹⁴ 'Ought to', 'should' and 'must'.

¹⁵ The term used by Fairclough, 1992.

However, even here the tasks have a clear stress on the media habits of the student himself/herself, i. e. a personal aspect.

Books for Academical Programs

School

Moving on to the other pattern, the two chosen textbooks address the students as academically oriented ones. We find that one of the books express that it will make students familiar with the way the academy presents matters. The critical skill, and what is supposed to be critically examined, is placed in an educational context and students are text producers, for instance in connection with using factual literature in order to write good school assignments. Critical reading is defined:

Critical reading, does that mean to sit with one's arms folded, the corners of one's mouth down? No. That would rather be having a negative attitude to reading. To read critically means having a questioning attitude towards what one reads.

The goal of critical reading is above all to make a judgment of the value of the text for a certain purpose, and to make parallels to other texts that concerns the same topic or subject. Critical reading can be recommended in relation to all forms of reading for an educational goal. You should always read critically when you read with educational goals, particularly when your reading is a base for analysis, comparison, and discussion.

Fiction can be the subject of critical reading but does not have to be. Factual text, though, should always be read critically.

These books use fewer combinations of modalities, they have a higher degree of scientific character and a rich amount of text. Colors are less gaudy and the layout not as messy. The text impression is dense and sometimes there is an absence in pictures. Young people are pictured in black-and-white photos as students studying at a desk or searching for sources in a computer. The photos have some of the criteria that give credibility to pictures (Pettersson, 2001) by showing natural and realistic motives that are sharp and clear.

The tasks are higher order ones where students are expected to know what it means to 'make parallels', 'draw well thought out conclusions', 'analyse', 'compare' and 'discuss'.

Distant and Public

The text writers create a sense of community with the reader in using the pronoun 'we', a tag question and a connecting adverb¹⁶. Thus, this way of being personal has a different character; after having included the reader in a 'we', the writers turn to addressing the readers as 'you'; in the plural, not in the singular. The other example address the students in a reasoning and to some extent formal way. On the whole, the language in both books is more formal, for example in using the word 'classmates', (instead of 'pal' that was used in the other type of book), nominalisations and verbs in the passive, a 'man'-address as well as the generic pronoun 'one'. Moreover, the language tends to be difficult and archaic, for example in words such as 'outermost'. Both the books use the word 'skribent', a Swedish word with a Latin origin showing its formal professional meaning and signalling an academic approach. The initial, reiterating sentence of a quotation is of a classical origin in its rhetorics:

How shall we handle all the knowledge that we get, how shall we know what our sources are worth, how shall we be able to separate the bad sources from the good ones?

Students move in a public sphere, supposedly interested in politics, for instance when they are asked to practise critical skills by scrutinising a political party programme.

¹⁶ In Swedish, 'ju', which corresponds to a tag question.

Security

The books in question place their tasks directly after the expository text. Besides, when a reference is given to a resource page it is done in a manifest way. Various sources and web pages are gone through exhaustively and the student is guided how to value these:

Compare your Internet sources with encyclopedias and factual literature. Rather inform about the printed sources if you find the same information in these.

To sum up, the instructions are both more detailed and give more elaborated guidance in weighing and evaluating. It is argued for what sources generally are considered most trustworthy. ‘Avoid what is too private’, the student is requested when it comes to homepages. Along with the guidance, the books express trust in the students’ ability and independence. One book suggests: ‘Sometimes you will certainly not agree with us – then, look at our text just as some compasses and not as a map!’. There are also verbs in the present tense which may signal that the student moves forwards like in a reported style.¹⁷ These books are not as imperative; the phrase ‘you get the opportunity’ gives a less demanding impression and the language is devoid of superlatives. The Internet does not get a prominent position in the quotation about critical reading (above). There are two possible reasons; either the Internet is neglected or it is considered to be a natural source¹⁸. Nevertheless, the Internet is not dramatised to the same extent as in the pattern facing the vocational students.

Possible Social Consequences

Two discourse patterns have been presented, with different ways of addressing their receivers. One pattern is more informal. Taking everyday experience (and everyday language) as a starting point, can, on the one hand, be a way of reducing hierarchies (Fairclough, 2003). On the other hand, the discourse of *counseling* that is apparent in for example schools:

... is superficially indicative of an unwonted sensitivity to individual needs and problems. But it seems in some cases at least to have been turned into a means to greater institutional control of people through exposing aspects of their ‘private’ lives to unprecedented institutional probing. (2003, p. 60).

The vocational books include personalising features in their attempt to show confidentiality, a plausible example of synthetic personalisation, ‘the simulation of private face-to-face, discourse in public mass-audience discourse’ (Fairclough 1992, p. 98). Swedish teachers of lower secondary school, interviewed by Dovemark (2004), seem to exemplify resembling ways of emphasising pupils’ feelings and needs for security and a close contact between teacher and pupils.

It is worth noting that the Internet for the vocationally oriented students is not treated as useful in a vocational context. The receivers are not addressed by the senders as future professionals, something which could have been expected (although not very desirable, in Beck’s reasoning). The social frame of a text and the real situation do not always agree (Hellspong, 2001). Here an example of such a disagreement emerges; the institutional real,

¹⁷ This can be viewed as parallel to gender-related textbook research where *men* have been found “to create, to change, to make happen, to control” (Susanne V Knudsen, 2003, in a reference to Kuzmic, 2000).

¹⁸ The Internet is, at another place in the book, treated as a natural information source which speaks for the latter interpretation, i.e. that the students are presupposed to use the Internet.

expectedly formal, situation does not agree with the more informal, personally constructed social frame. The participants might be given confusing social roles.

In the other more formal pattern the social roles may be considered more consistent with what are expected in a school context. It expects students to be eager to learn and encourages educational ambitions. However, the middle class approach, for example in the generic pronoun 'one', which is a middleclass pronoun, might give reduced access for students from lower classes (Fairclough, 2003). Some participants are not included in the formality that is common in prestigious practices (Fairclough, 2001).

Obviously, it is a complicated matter to come to conclusions what supports the individual student and what does not. It is likewise difficult to tell what works towards or against social mobility. Nevertheless, one aspect of possible social consequences of these diverse ways of addressing its readers, is the fact that the National Test of Swedish has particular requirements. According to the nationwide grading instructions students in their essays should 'go beyond the purely private' to reach the higher grades, something that would speak for every student's need to get acquainted with using a more formal content. Most often at the National Test one more personal topic is given, which, however, does not give the opportunity to get the highest grade. A recent topic was *A place where wild strawberries grow* which in Swedish metaphorically means *My favourite place*. For some students this well-known topic turned out to be a problematic one requiring a lot of originality. The speech part of the test, which among other things intends to test the student's ability to use sources, propose topics that may seem complicated in the light of what some of the textbooks offer familiarity with.

What has discovery expeditions meant?
 When earth was flat
 Translating – the art of the impossible?
 "Wherever I hang my hat"- that is where I belong
 Manga and Bollywood films – mass culture from the other side of the globe

Further support for the fact that the private and the public have not been made equally evident to students is found in a study with university students at a teacher programme. They found it difficult to select and evaluate when expected to think in a scientific way (Ask & Sandblad, 2003). The phenomenon differed depending on what programme the students had attended. Students from two vocational programmes did not feel as well prepared for university studies as those who had attended the more theoretical programmes. When asked to write factual essays about sustainability, far from a recreational context, two types of texts were found among those who were not as successful as the others; one that was not formal and distant enough, but aggressive and arguing in an unscientific way, and one that was informal and private, resembling a life story.

Discussion

It seems as if there are diverse ways of what is desirable in evaluation sources or practising critical skills. Foremost, the textbooks for the vocational programmes exemplifies a contemporary 'dramatising of the risks' (Giddens 1991, p. 173), mainly concerning the Internet sources. The growth of a certain late modern phenomenon colonises space as well as time by letting people having constant access to them (cf. Giddens, 1991). The fact that all textbooks, with one exception, include Internet issues confirms that the Internet is considered to be what students have common access to. From this follows that they also have difficulties

in avoiding it. Students have the chance to use it, but also need to know when not to. This demands complex work from the students; work that includes to act rationally as well as to let feelings aside (cf. Giddens 1991, p. 171). Everyone has to become his own expert but in different ways (cf. Beck, 1986/1998, Giddens, 1991). It leads to the question whether people are provided with common ways of balancing between choices, which is not the fact according to the present study. It shows that the vocational students are those who, at least by textbooks, are particularly left to their own responsibility. School books do not equally distribute ways of handling knowledge or sources. Those who are socialised into evaluation of sources may end up in a world of constant weighing and judging, but are also instructed by textbooks how to do this, and may meet the need for the scientific approach (cf Beck, 1986/1998).

The pedagogy that meets groups of students in this old middle class matter could be characterised as *invisible* (Bernstein, 1975/1997) in blurring the traditional borders between family, home and school and perhaps even making efforts to regulate leisure. The vocationally oriented students, thereby, do not via their textbook as easily get acquainted with ways of evaluating sources for educational aims.

Success is made into the responsibility of each individual. This self-regulation in the form of lifelong learning is motivated by the unstable situation on the labor market (Mulderigg, 2003, p. 5). Literacy, where I regard evaluation of sources to be an advanced form, is highly valued in our society unequally distributed (cf. Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough hoped for a change but when diverse groups of students are called upon diverse ways of handling the Internet, I mean that the optimism of its democratising potential risks being futile. In this sense, textbooks as an institutional materialisation actually run counter to its democratising potential. In Gramsci's words my study could be looked upon as revealing a hegemonic phenomenon, where school, in a less perceivable way, contributes to maintain a polarised situation.

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