English teachers’ perceptions of teaching reading and reading strategies to students with dyslexia

Johanna Grönblad
English teachers’ perceptions of teaching reading and reading strategies to students with dyslexia

Johanna Grönblad

Abstract

This is a study about English teachers’ perception on teaching students with dyslexia reading and reading strategies and their knowledge gained on the subject matter. The aim was to identify, describe and analyse the teacher’s perceptions of teaching Swedish students with dyslexia in four Swedish mainstream secondary schools. The data for this study was collected by interviews from four English teachers in four different mainstream secondary schools. The results show that English teachers get too little in-service training from their employer about dyslexia and reading difficulties. In addition the English teachers need to become more familiar with what reading strategies are and what new learning assisting materials students with dyslexia can make use of, such as new applications and the new HELP-program.

Keywords

- Dyslexia, in-service training, English, learning assisting materials, reading strategies
Table of contents

1. **Introduction** ......................................................... 1
   1.1  Aim and research questions .................................. 2
2. **Background** .......................................................... 2
   2.1. Theoretical background ........................................ 2
        2.1.1. Dyslexia in first language acquisition (L1) and its multifaceted definition .... 3
        2.1.2. Research on students with dyslexia learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as second language (ESL) ................................................................. 4
        2.1.3. Assisting learning materials in English for students with dyslexia ........... 5
        2.1.4. Teaching and improving self-confidence for students with dyslexia in the subject of English .......................................................... 6
        2.1.5. Reading strategies in general ................................ 7
    2.2. Curriculum, English syllabus and assessment ............. 8
3. **Method** ................................................................ 9
   3.1. Informants ....................................................... 9
   3.2. Material ........................................................ 9
   3.3. Procedure .................................................... 10
   3.4. Validity and reliability ........................................ 10
   3.5. Ethical considerations ....................................... 11
   3.6. Methods of analysis ........................................ 11
4. **Results** ................................................................ 11
   4.1. Description of material ....................................... 11
        4.1.1. Teachers’ perceived difficulties in English for students with dyslexia ...... 12
        4.1.2. Learning assisting material used for students with dyslexia .................. 12
        4.1.3. English Teachers’ perceptions of teaching students with dyslexia .......... 12
        4.1.4. Reading strategies taught in the subject of English ......................... 13
        4.1.5. Assessment of students’ reading skills and reading strategies ........... 13
        4.1.6. Teachers’ in-service training about dyslexia and ways of gaining knowledge about dyslexia ......................................................... 14
5. **Discussion** ........................................................... 15
6. **References** ............................................................ 18
7. **Example 1** .............................................................. 22
8. **Appendices** ............................................................ 23
   Appendix 1 .......................................................... 23
   Appendix 2 .......................................................... 24
   Appendix 3 .......................................................... 25
   Appendix 4 .......................................................... 26
   Appendix 5 .......................................................... 29
   Appendix 6 .......................................................... 32
   Appendix 7 .......................................................... 38
1. Introduction

In today’s Swedish society and global world Swedes have to be able to speak, read and write in English in almost every working sector. In addition, the overall societal demands on literacy skills (language sounds, spelling, word meaning, grammar and patterns of word formation) in Sweden are very high, as barely any manual jobs exist on the job market any longer and higher educated people with literacy skills are more likely to get a job (Smythe, Everatt and Salter, 2004). These facts are also accurate according to SCB’s (Statistics Sweden) recent report from 2011 which asserts that increased demand for post-secondary skills in the job market is expected up to year 2030.

SCB’s (2011) forecasted future and Smythe et al.’s (2004) facts put high pressure on English teachers to teach English to all students including those with reading difficulties defined as dyslexia. The English teachers also have to follow the new Swedish Education Act from 2010 which states that all students are to be included in the schools’ education according to their needs:

“I utbildningen ska hänsyn tas till barns och elevers olika behov. Barn och elever ska ges stöd och stimulans så att de utvecklas så långt som möjligt. En strävan ska vara att uppväga skillnader i barnens och elevernas förutsättningar att tillgodogöra sig utbildningen. Utbildningen syftar också till att i samarbete med hemmen främja barns och elevers allsidiga personliga utveckling till aktiva, kreativa, kompetenta och ansvarskännande individer och medborgare.” (The Swedish Education Act, 2010:800, 1 Ch., 4§).

Working with inclusion in the classroom is fair to all students. However, The Swedish School’s Inspectorate (2011) recently pointed out a lack of knowledge of how to teach in an inclusive classroom and urged teachers to attain new knowledge about reading and writing difficulties. Also, according to Sandberg (2010) eighty-one percent out of thirty-three English teachers, lack knowledge from their education about reading and writing difficulties. Sandberg (2010) also asserts that the municipalities give no further in-service training and many teachers also experience a lack of time, few extra teaching materials and substantially oversized classes.

In addition compulsory school teachers’ time scheduled during a normal working week is not enough set for in-service training (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2013), as approximately seven percent of their scheduled working hours per day are put to in-service training and reflection of their work (2013:55). The teachers also pointed out in the report that the time needed for gaining in-service training and reflection is mostly taken from their free time at home (2013:7). These facts show that teachers need much more time for reflecting and gaining new knowledge, foremost knowledge that concerns their students’ development and even more importantly knowledge about cognitive diagnoses such as, dyslexia and other reading and writing difficulties.

---

1 “The needs of all students and children should be taken into consideration in their education. All children and students should be given the guidance and encouragement they need accordingly. An aim is to compensate for differences between the children and students’ different backgrounds to fulfill the education. The education also aims to co-operate with the homes of the children to facilitate their personal development in becoming active, creative, qualified, and responsible individuals and citizens.” (author’s translation) (The Swedish Education Act, 2010:800, 1 Ch., 4§).
1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this degree project is to identify, describe and analyse the English teachers’ perceptions of teaching Swedish students with dyslexia in four Swedish mainstream secondary schools. The multifaceted definition of dyslexia is defined and linked to English as L1 (first language) secondly to both English as second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). Further, different reading strategies in accordance with the syllabus in English are also described. Dyslexia is also linked to inclusion and its implications. In order to investigate this matter the following research questions have been developed;

- What difficulties do English teachers in four Swedish secondary schools encounter when teaching students with dyslexia?
- What perceptions do English teachers have of their teaching of reading and reading strategies to students with dyslexia?

2. Background

2.1 Theoretical background

This paper will start by describing dyslexia and L1 and will later include dyslexia and ESL and EFL. As most research is done about the L1 and dyslexia, this will be more described.

The term ‘dyslexia’ or to be more specific ‘dislexie’ was coined in 1883 by Kausman. The first morpheme in the word ‘dys’–means difficulties and the second morpheme ‘lexis’ means word (Smythe et al., 2004:3). However, others claim that Doctor Berlin coined dyslexia in 1887 to describe an “isolated reading difficulty” (Selikowitz, 1998:11). The term ‘dyslexia’ has no explicit definition which is only coined by one person.

In Sweden ‘dyslexia’ did not exist as a diagnosis until around the 1980’s, as in the 1970’s people with dyslexia were considered mentally and socially disturbed according to Andersson (see Smythe et al., 2004). Later in the 1980’s reading problems were connected to issues dealing with maturity, with a lead towards an interest in assessing and diagnosing reading and writing difficulties. FMLS (Förbundet för skriv- och lässvårigheter), The Swedish Association for Persons With Difficulties in Reading and Writing/Dyslexia, was also established during this time due to an increasing interest in the new phenomenon dyslexia and society’s raised awareness of it. In the 1990’s a major political change took place and with a new agenda for people with reading problems, the problems were raised and this was organized by FMLS (Smythe et al., 2004).

The criterion used for diagnosing a student with dyslexia is problematic. The problem lies in ”the increasing numbers of SpLD” (Specific Learning Difficulties) where several diagnoses can coexist in one student (Smythe et al., 2004:4). This may be seen in figure 1 from Wood, Littelton, and Sheehy (2008:13):
As can be seen in figure 1, a specific writing difficulty is called dysgraphia and a specific arithmetic difficulty is referred to as dyscalculia. Further, students with attention problems are defined as having attention deficit disorder (ADD) with or without hyperactivity, and a student with a semantic pragmatic language disorder has difficulties understanding the meaning and the communicative function with the language. Finally, an Asperger syndrome diagnosed student can lack interactional language skills among other skills.

Hence, dyslexia is intermittently defined as a SpLD which might also deal with other difficulties as mentioned, and these are combined with a reading and writing difficulty (Smythe et al., 2004:4). The issue whether dyslexia is a SpLD or not is debatable. The debate is focused on what dyslexia in itself is and whether or not it is a diagnosis. “The demanding literacy society today” could have an impact making it a diagnosis, and in contrast dyslexia could also be seen as “another way of learning a language.” (Wood et al., 2008:13).

2.1.1. Dyslexia in first language acquisition (L1) and its multifaceted definition

Much research has been done on dyslexia and first language acquisition (L1), consequently dyslexia is a multifaceted diagnosis where the disciplines of neurology and psychology disagree with each other about the definition of dyslexia (Harley, 2008, WHO (World Health Organization), 2010, Peer and Reid, 2000). Harley (2008:249) points out the difficulty of defining dyslexia and how the media often interpret dyslexia as a reading and writing difficulty, when it in fact has to do with a reading difficulty that mostly is connected to dysgraphia, a writing difficulty. The definition of dyslexia is not only confusing for parents, students, and society in general but also for teachers who are teaching students with dyslexia. According to Smythe et al. (2004:218) teachers also dislike using the word ‘diagnosis’ when talking about dyslexia as it “belongs in a medical paradigm” and not “the pedagogical field”.

The signs and symptoms of dyslexia in L1 differ, thus diagnosing a student with dyslexia is very problematic. Researchers know that there exist two dyslexias; the acquired dyslexia “which is due to brain damage such as stroke”, and developmental dyslexia which is a “disruption of a particular function in the brain without any trauma” (Harley, 2008:220). Hence, children with developmental dyslexia have an impairment of the normal acquisition of reading while people with acquired dyslexia had a normal acquisition before the trauma occurred. This paper will explain developmental dyslexia, which children grow up with and its complexity (Harley, 2008:249).

Developmental dyslexia is first of all a cognitive diagnosis which occurs in the brain (Harley, 2008).
The complexity with developmental dyslexia lies in the proposed two subtypes of developmental dyslexia (Harley, 2008:251). The first subtype is called surface dyslexia where children are poor at reading irregular words but are not so troubled by non-words for example; “Siant”, while children with the second subtype; phonological dyslexia, are poor at reading non-words and thus make many phonological reading errors (Harley, 2008:250-253). It is suggested that students with developmental dyslexia also have visual deficits, meaning the students have problems controlling and fixating ideas in the brain, making letters move around the page (Georgiou, Papadopoulos, T. C., Zarouna, E., & Parrila, R., 2012).

To be consistent the definition of dyslexia or specific reading disorder, as WHO (World Health Organization, 2010) defines dyslexia, will be used:

“The main feature is a specific and significant impairment in the development of reading skills that is not solely accounted for by mental age, visual acuity problems, or inadequate schooling. Reading comprehension skill, reading word recognition, oral reading skill, and performance of tasks requiring reading may all be affected. Spelling difficulties are frequently associated with specific reading disorder and often remain into adolescence even after some progress in reading has been made. Specific developmental disorders of reading are commonly preceded by a history of disorders in speech or language development. Associated emotional and behavioral disturbances are common during the school age period” (2010:98).

This is a brief description of the main features in dyslexia used for this paper: A student with dyslexia may have multiply impairments in the development of reading skills such as comprehension, word recognition, oral reading skills, and reading for themselves. Visual perceptual problems and cognitive abilities may also be seen in students with dyslexia. As the research questions are not linked to spelling difficulties (dysgraphia) this is not linked to the definition when dyslexia is mentioned. Emotional and behavioral disturbances connect to the definition of dyslexia for this paper as low self-confidence and dyslexia is described later.

This definition is also recommended by The National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden (2011) in their classification of diseases and health related problems (Internationell statistisk klassifikation av sjukdomar och relaterade hälsoproblem, 2011:198). As has been indicated earlier, several other definitions exist, due to the complexity of the diagnosis.

### 2.1.2. Research on students with dyslexia learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as second language (ESL)

Work written about ESL or EFL and dyslexia is sparse; however the interest seems to be increasing (Peer and Reid, 2000). This paper will therefore mention some research how EFL or ESL and dyslexia might be different from L1 and dyslexia. In addition, the terms ESL and EFL will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

According to Downey and Snyder (2000) difficulties in learning a foreign language are related to the students’ verbal and written language abilities in their L1. In addition, lack of motivation in learning a foreign language and feelings of anxiety in having to communicate are difficult steps to overcome in learning EFL.

Phrases and words are learned by first entering the short-term working memory and then to be remembered they are transferred to the long-term memory (Reid, Fawcett, Manis and Siegel, 2008:6).
Thus, memorization is very important when learning a second language such as English, and students with dyslexia will need support in memorizing words and phrases from their English teacher as they usually lack this word recognition skill. Students with dyslexia will however vary to which degree they have difficulties in learning ESL. With this knowledge some students might have no difficulties in learning to read in English in comparison to reading in Swedish. This phenomenon is called, dyslexic preference for English reading and there is evidence that this phenomenon may exist in languages with shallow orthographies, however further investigation is needed (Miller Gurun, 2000).

There is a difference between the Swedish and the English language which might have an impact on the learning of English as a second language. When comparing the orthography (the written appearances of words) in English and Swedish, the languages are different even though the languages are both Germanic in their origin (Harley, 2008:7). English has a shallow orthography and the letters are not spelled as they sound, for example, in an irregular word as “steak”, the grapheme “ea” is not pronounced (Harley, 2008:220,221). However, in Swedish orthography with its letters nearly always correspond to the pronunciation (Holmes, 2008:1). This implies that the reader can connect the written appearances of the words mostly to the phonemic sound of the word in Swedish, but with a few exceptions (Helland and Kaasa, 2004). Helland and Kaasa (2004:43), also mention that there is a difference if the student with dyslexia reads a language with deep orthography as they will have greater difficulties with the alphabetic phase; the connection between grapheme-phoneme, compared to reading a language with a transparent orthography such as Swedish as where the difficulties lie in the orthographic phase: a whole word recognition.

2.1.3. Assisting learning materials in English for students with dyslexia

There exist assisting materials for students with dyslexia to make use of, and a few of them will be mentioned here.

Speech synthesis is a common learning aid to use for students with dyslexia. It is a computer program that reads the text on the computer, making the connection between grapheme and phoneme easier for the students with dyslexia. A popular speech synthesis is called DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System, 2004) and it is available as cd–rom or digital mp3 and must be ordered from TPB (Talboks–och punktsskriftsbiblioteket2) to the nearest library. When using DAISY, the students with dyslexia also need to get access to their own headphones and recorder to be able to listen to the audio books. In addition giving them their own or copied workbook will able them to highlight or mark different words with different colors which can make them remember the words more easily. Finally, the exercises or instructions given by the teacher need to be explicitly described and read to the student (Sandberg, 2003:18.2).

Watching TV–programs and films without subtitles is also a good way to practice English for students with dyslexia. There are also online newspapers made for English as second language learners such as www.schooltime.com, which is published with audio versions. Translation-pens are also a satisfying learning tool as it reads aloud the word when it is scanned into the pen. It is also beneficial if the teacher creates wordlists with a limit of words to be practiced first of all orally. These words need to be within a context or connected to pictures to facilitate the memorization of the words, as students with dyslexia lack this skill (Holmberg, 2007, Sandberg, 2003:18.3).

2 The Audio book- and embossed printing library (Author’s translation)
For written schoolwork, students with dyslexia and an additional load of dysgraphia, can make use of SpellRight (2005) which is an adapted computer program for Swedes, Danes, Norwegians and Finns who make phonological spelling errors in ESL. There are also other computer programs to use for example Gustavas (Gustavas Bokförlag, 2010); a dictionary which can be found on Internet or on CD-rom and automatically finds the misspelled word that was searched for. Spell check in Microsoft Office (2010) is another computer program which marks misspelled words and grammar mistakes in the document when typing.

The parents also need to be involved in the learning process and when it comes to homework, Peer and Reid (2000:270-271) assert that homework in writing need to be discussed between the English teacher and the parents of a child with dyslexia. Alternate alternatives than writing their own homework could be that the students record the homework orally at home with the help of their parents.

HELP (Holmberg English Learning Program) (2007) is a new computer program for students with dyslexia learning ESL. This computer program facilitates the learning of ESL with an additional teaching from the teacher in forms of reading tasks, text discussions, process-writing and grammar. Thus this computer program is not a single language learning program. The basic approach behind the program is the Orton- Gillingham direct multisensory approach where all senses are used when learning the language, making it an inter-language experience. This means that the words are learnt in both a visually, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile learning way (see Gillingham and Stillman, 1969). This approach is also supported by a study in Poland to improve dyslectic students’ ability to relate phonemes to their graphemes (Nijkowska, 2004). In summary, this program focuses on the different sounds of words in connection to how they are spelled, which also guides the student with dyslexia into grammar and morpheme-based learning, where grammar is taught through the connection between the sound(phonemes) and the spelling of the word(graphemes) (Holmberg, 2007). The HELP-program is not only adapted to be used for students with dyslexia, actually students with no diagnosis will surely benefit from practicing more on the connection between phonemes and graphemes (Holmberg, 2007).

Most textbooks which are adapted to secondary school students in year 7-9 of English also have alternate formats to facilitate the learning of English for students with dyslexia. For example, Good Stuff A-D can be purchased with a speech synthesis program, as e-book and in other versions with or without pictures. (Anpassade läromedel till Punktskrift, Textview, DAISY ljud, DAISY text och ljud, 2013).

Assisting technology and applications for smartphones and tablets are being developed nowadays, and it is probably just a matter of financial support and awareness before the schools adapt and use these applications.

2.1.4. Teaching and improving self-confidence for students with dyslexia in the subject of English

Before the materials and learning strategies are chosen, the teacher has to create a good learning environment. As English is usually learned in an explicit learning environment, this will create more pressure on the students with dyslexia as they may lack “good memorizing skills” (Helland and Kaasa, 2004:45). Thus, making the students with dyslexia feel included in school and also repeatedly teach them English will compensate for their learning disability. However, according to Holmberg (2007:5) it is almost taboo in the Swedish schools to create an explicit learning environment as the students are
to take responsibly for their own learning of English. Despite this attitude, students with dyslexia need this explicit learning environment where the teacher uses all senses and illustrates, demonstrates and discusses the dyslectic students’ needs. Students with dyslexia need an explicit and structural teaching of English (Holmberg, 2007:2) and with the help of speech synthesis programs and other adapted material, as mentioned in the previous section, the teaching of reading and writing becomes structural in English.

Dyslexia is a cognitive diagnosis as mentioned and children often feel stupid when their reading skills are impaired in English. Children and teenagers mostly try to hide it by either a distracting behavior or high ability in school (Reid et al., 2008:5). Thus, students with dyslexia often have emotional problems with being different from other students in school (Undheim, 2009). English teachers have an important role for these students and can make them feel that they can read by supporting and giving them encouragement for every step they do, in other words the teachers need to follow their reading development. In addition it is also stated in the Swedish curriculum that the school should stimulate each student towards self-development, to mention a few: “The school should stimulate each pupil towards self-development and personal growth. It should focus not only on intellectual but also practical, sensual and aesthetic aspects. Health and lifestyle issues should also receive attention.” (Curriculum for compulsory school and leisure time, 2011:12).

Studies conducted by Undheim (2009) in Norway, showed that fourteen-year old students with dyslexia have a higher propensity to feel psychologically worse than other age–matched students. Their stress–level at school was also higher and they showed symptoms of depression and received lower grades and had lower self-esteem. Undheim (2009) also concluded that students with dyslexia have to apply themselves more than their fellow students to achieve higher grades, which puts a lot of stress and anxiety on them. Their attendance in class and participation in discussions at school are usually higher than other age–matched students, because students with dyslexia have to compensate for their learning disability and attend class and take part in discussions (Undheim, 2009:96).

There is also the issue of making the dyslectic student read aloud or not in the classroom for their classmates. Experience of having deficits for reading aloud can be linked to feelings of low self-esteem that may contribute to lack of progress (Peer and Reid, 2003:41). Hence it is of importance that the teacher creates a “working together co-operatively” environment, where everyone is included in the classroom and accepted, no matter what difficulties they might have in English (Urquhart and Weir, 1998:222). Reid et al. (2008:13) also reports on the positive impact of a co-operative learning environment, as the students with no diagnosis also were helped by the students with dyslexia as they get the opportunity to talk about the work, and their own understanding was clarified and their attention focused by having the chance to explain something to another student.

2.1.5. **Reading strategies in general**

Learning to read with a particular cognitive reading strategy is very beneficial in today’s fast paced reading society. The three types of reading strategies which are useful when learning to read will be presented below; First; reading for gist – *skimming*, second; reading for specific information – *scanning* and third; looking for inferences, reading comprehension – *reading for detailed comprehension* (Harmer, 2009). As the students with dyslexia need to practice on their cognitive abilities, the teacher must know how to use these strategies in English and teach them explicitly in accordance with the new English syllabus that has the aim to teach;”different strategies to support communication and solve problems when language skills by themselves are not sufficient” [ ]. (Curriculum for compulsory school and leisure time, 2011:32).
By learning these strategies the students will also activate bottom-up and top-down approaches. Bottom-up is linked to word recognition and arrives from the “perceptual representation of the word to the mental representation.” Top-down is linked to word production and arrives from the “mental representation to the sound of the word” (Harley, 2008:21). The bottom-up approach will become difficult for students with dyslexia as they have problems with “word recognition” according to the classification of dyslexia by WHO (World Health Organization) (Internationell statistisk klassifikation av sjukdomar och relaterade hälsoproblem, 2011: 198).

The reading strategies are taught through the teachers’ choice of pre-, while- and post-reading activities. Cataldi (1997) along with Urquhart and Weir (1998) give examples of pre-reading activities such as “thinking about the title before reading the actual text”, which could be linked to Gibbons (2009) who gives an example of pre-reading activities such as “activate learners’ previous knowledge and understandings” (Gibbons, 2009:87). Gibbons (2009:93-100) also provides examples of while-reading activities, such as scanning for information, and post-reading activities such as reading comprehension and true/false statements.

In the end; “There is no one magic way to teach reading: learners need to be shown a variety of strategies to use in reading texts, and take on a range of reader roles to do so.” (Gibbons, 2009:105).

2.2. Curriculum, English syllabus and assessment

The new curriculum (2011) and syllabus in English (2011) is linked to assessment of reading strategies in English for students with dyslexia.

The new curriculum (2011) states the importance of overcoming difficulties and enhancing self-esteem among all students in this excerpt;

“The foundations for a sense of security, and self-esteem are established in the home, but the school also has an important role to play in this context. Every pupil has the right to develop in school, to feel the joy of growth and experience the satisfaction that comes from making progress and overcoming difficulties.” (Curriculum for compulsory school and leisure time, 2011:13).

Thus, children with dyslexia have the right to be given the support they need from their teachers in the subject of English.

In the new Syllabus for English (2011) the teachers of English have some new goals to achieve as it is the teachers’ goals to teach reading strategies to all students; “Strategies to understand details and context in spoken language and texts, such as adapting listening and reading to the type of communication, contents and purpose.”(2011:35). It is also the teachers’ responsibility to “stimulate, guide and give special support to pupils that have difficulties”(Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011:16). There is an important article in the Swedish Education Act for the teachers to follow when assessing the final grade in English. This article makes it possible for the students with dyslexia to achieve a passing grade, as the teachers in English can make exceptions with concerns to their disability. See below:

“Om det finns särskilda skäl får det vid betygssättningen enligt 19 och 20 §§ bortses från enstaka delar av de kunskapskrav som eleven ska ha uppnått i slutet av årskurs 6 eller 9. Med särskilda skäl avses funktionsnedsättning eller andra liknande personliga förhållanden som inte är av tillfällig natur och som
3. Method

This study will interview four English teachers in four mainstream schools in Sweden about their perceptions of teaching reading and reading strategies to students with dyslexia. For this study qualitative interviews were conducted as this study wants to explore the perceptions from the teachers interviewed. Observations were not chosen as a research method, as this paper is developing a theory around dyslexia rather than testing a theory. Hence, a better understanding of dyslexia and dyslexia in inclusive practices are necessary before doing observations. All in all this research is mainly aiming for the informants’ perceptions and knowledge of teaching students with dyslexia in English.

3.1. Informants

In this study English teachers in mainstream secondary schools in Swedish suburbs were interviewed. Selected teachers had varied teaching experience as a teacher. They are all qualified teachers and one teacher is a qualified special needs teacher. Informant A is a qualified English and French teacher but has also taught all subjects except music for four years. The informant has more than over thirty-eight years of teaching experience. Informant B teaches Swedish and English and is a special needs teacher, and has seven years of experience as a teacher. Informant C teaches English only, but has taught French in the informant’s homeland, however that was over twenty years ago. The informant has also worked for six years in an upper secondary school for special education in Sweden. This informant has approximately eighteen years of experience as a teacher. The last informant, informant D teaches English, German and Swedish, and has approximately fourteen years of experience as a teacher with a hiatus for maternity leave.

3.2. Material

For the research questions to be answered this study needed qualitative–interview questions with a possibility for open-answers, hence the interview-questions were somewhat adjusted for each interview, but focused on the research area to attain the information needed from the informants (Johansson and Svedner, 2010:30) (see appendix 1). The research questions about the difficulties with teaching English to students with dyslexia were asked to attain more open answers around the subject itself, further questions were narrowed towards reading strategies and general experiences of teaching students with dyslexia. In addition this study needed information about what type of in-service training the informants were given from their employer about English and dyslexia and reading difficulties.

1 21 § If there are certain circumstances when assessing a student’s work, articles 19 and 20 §§ will be applied, saying that some parts in the requirements for a passing assessment can be discounted for when assessing at the end of year 6 and 9. By certain circumstances mean disabilities or other personal circumstances that have not occurred by themselves and which cause an obstacle for the student to attain a certain assessment goal. (author’s translation, The Swedish Education Act, 2010:876, Ch.10, 21§)
These are some examples of the research questions that were asked to the informants; “What general difficulties do you think students with dyslexia experience in the subject of English?” and “Do you get any extra teaching training from your employer in the subject of English connected to dyslexia and reading difficulties?” (appendix 1).

3.3. Procedure

The qualitative interviews were conducted in May 2013 in either a quiet café or at the school where the teachers work. All interviews were recorded with a mobile–phone and word-by-word transcribed afterwards and only used for the purpose of this study. The interviews ran smoothly for approximately 20 min and open–ended and adjustable questions were asked, according to the recommendations given by Cohen Manion and Morrison (2007). The informants were given the choice to either answer the questions in English or in Swedish, in consideration to the informants being English teachers. However the special needs teacher preferred to speak in Swedish (see appendices 1 and 2). The problem with giving them the choice to answer in either English or Swedish might have influenced my result, as those who spoke English sometimes had problems finding English words for Swedish expressions. Taken into consideration that they are all English teacher, the informants were assumed to be comfortable to speak English in any type of situation.

3.4. Validity and reliability

Reliability and validity are important for both qualitative and quantitative studies (Cohen Manion and Morrison, 2007). The validity addresses the trustworthiness, depth and richness of the data to the reader. For example the approach used to gain information to the informants, and the neutrality or objectivity of the researcher. The reliability or as more precise the neutrality, consistency and transferability, in other words this qualitative study would provide similar result in another study (Cohen et al., 2007).

For this qualitative study the validity was kept high by sending the four informants a letter of consent by e–mail before the interview, and this letter was signed and read by all four informants before the interviews started (see appendix 3). To also assure a great extent of validity, the exact purpose for this study was not mentioned in this letter, so that the teachers would not look for more information about the topic for this study (see appendix 3).

The collected results were treated in a correct way to ensure the validity, for example, recordings were made of all interviews and transcriptions were made afterwards. The informant’s different teaching background also gave the result depth and validity. The informants were also selected from different schools to ensure the validity giving richness to the paper, as the results had deviated answers.

For the reliability of the interview, all interviews were semi–structured; some questions were adapted to each informant to enable unanticipated but important answers to be raised (Cohen et al., 2007:150). However, questions were made beforehand and were kept as guidance throughout the interviews. In this way, reliability was high as all the informants gave answers to all questions.

The informants were interviewed one on one to assure the reliability, so the influenced of environmental factors were kept in a minimum in this study. In addition no interference was possible during the interviews from the outside world. The “face validity” – asked questions measure what they should measure (Cohen et al. 2007:150). To assure this the interviewer had a calm voice at the
interviews and reformulated questions if misunderstanding occurred to seek for reliable answers from the informants (see appendix 4). Unfamiliar definitions such as skimming, scanning and reading for detailed comprehension were described to the informants to avoid any misinterpretation and low validity. Since this study was looking at the perceptions of teaching students with dyslexia, the definition of dyslexia was not defined to the interviewees by the interviewer. Otherwise this study could have become biased.

The transcriptions were not sent back to the four informants for confirmation, otherwise the answers could have be biased with theoretical answers instead of knowledge from practice and experience from the informants. Meaning the validity of this study would decrease then.

3.5. Ethical considerations

A study comes with a responsibility, the writer/researcher has a responsibility for the humans that participate and for some cases the information about the study should be revealed to them and in some cases not (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). All four requirements from Vetenskapsrådet (2002) were followed and first of all the informants were informed of their participation and the necessary information about the study were given (see appendix 3). Second, adults (teachers) were interviewed and all teachers and schools anonymously made according to Vetenskapsrådets Codex rules and guidelines for research (2002). The teachers could also freely decide not to participate any longer in this study (see appendix 3). Third, the teachers were told that their answers were only to be used for this study (see appendix 3). Fourth, before the teachers decided to participate in this study they were contacted by e-mail with an attached letter of consent explaining the project (see example 1 and appendix 3). The attached letter of consent was written according to the guidelines given by Vetenskapsrådet (2002).

3.6. Methods of analysis

The transcriptions of the answers from the four informants were divided into different themes. The reason for making themes afterwards was to take away biased thoughts and make the result more reliable (Johansson and Svedner, 2005:94-95).

4. Results

4.1. Description of material

All four informants’ answers are divided into six themes which correspond to the answers that the informants gave to the same question. However since this was a semi-structured interview the questions were somewhat adapted to each interview, meaning some questions asked are not necessary not linked to each theme. The first theme is linked to what most of the informants said about reading and writing difficulties and dyslexia in the subject of English, the second theme is about learning assisting material used for students with dyslexia, the third theme is about the teachers’ perceptions of teaching students with dyslexia, the fourth theme addresses the reading strategies that the teachers teach their students and the fifth theme is about the teachers’ way of assessing their students’ reading
skills and reading strategies skills. The final theme is about the teachers’ in-service training about dyslexia and the ways they gained their knowledge about dyslexia. All themes have been created according to what was most useful for this study, this means that some answers from the interviews from the informants were less irrelevant and will not be analyzed in this study.

### 4.1.1. Teachers’ perceived difficulties in English for students with dyslexia

According to the informants’ answers regarding difficulties experienced when teaching dyslexic students all of them indicated that writing and spelling in English were the most problematic.

Informant A said “you could more or less guess what they are trying to say when it comes to the spelling” (appendix 4). Informant A also said that students with dyslexia have problems writing about a theme, making the texts incoherent. Informant B said that it was problematic for the students to make themselves understood by an English speaking person, and if the students have difficulties writing in Swedish it is even more difficult to write in English. But as a Swedish person informant B said that he or she could more easily understand where the mistakes come from in their communication (appendix 5). Informant C said that it varies to which extent they have difficulties but overall they lack writing skills, but most difficulties lie in the lack of self-confidence (appendix 6). Informant D said that students with dyslexia have most challenges in writing in English (appendix 7).

### 4.1.2. Learning assisting material used for students with dyslexia

When the informants were asked about the learning assisting material used to facilitate the learning of English for students with dyslexia, all of them mentioned that the students use computers and computer programs. Informant C mentioned the DAISY-program and audiobooks (appendix 6). Informant A mentioned SpellRight (appendix 4). Last but not least, informant B mentioned “Talsyntes”-“Speech synthesis” (appendix 5) and informant D said that they work a lot with different types of media to facilitate the learning of English such as audio-books, and they also use a platform called Learnify on Internet were the teachers upload authentic texts for the students to read (appendix 7).

### 4.1.3. English Teachers’ perceptions of teaching students with dyslexia

There were different perceptions by all informants about what it is like to teach students with dyslexia English. Informant A mentioned how he or she tries to make one student think; “I’m going to try to make him think…Ok talk about this in this paragraph….talk about that in the next paragraph” (appendix 4). Informant A also explains how there is a lack of time to assist all the other twenty students, as there are many more with different diagnoses who also need assistance (appendix 4). Informant A also pointed again that there sometimes is a lack of time and motivation from the students with dyslexia or other coexisting diagnosis. The students with dyslexia also need extra time to finish tasks now and then; it depends on their level of motivation (appendix 4).

Before the students with dyslexia are to read a text, informant A said that they could be asked questions on the text to think about while reading. If the students with dyslexia are to read aloud informant A usually let them read aloud privately outside of out the classroom if he or she has time (appendix 4).

Informant B mentioned the PYS-article or as we call it the twenty-first article about assessing in English in The Swedish Education Act, and explained that he or she has this article in mind when he
or she teaches students with dyslexia (appendix 5). Before they are going to read a text he or she tells the students what the text is called and how long they will be reading this text. The students with dyslexia always need to be prepared according to informant B. The students with dyslexia are better at understanding factual texts than fictional texts informant B also points out. Extra time is also mentioned by informant B as the students with dyslexia need more time to finish reading texts but with the extra support they always manage to understand the text. It is however the reading aloud that is more problematic. Informant B also tries to make the students with dyslexia listen to the text as well as read it on their own (appendix 5).

Informant C emphasizes that it is the negative attitude of parents and classmates that makes the dyslectic students hide their diagnosis. To make the students with dyslexia feel like everyone else, informant C mentions that Einstein also had dyslexia among other diagnoses; “I start talking about albert Einstein…” “Do you know who is Albert Einstein?” “The students reply…yes yes he is the smartest person in the world” “ No…” “Yes he did…and he didn’t come to fetch his Nobel Prize as he was afraid of reading aloud” ”Oh…” and then it is a pause and silence and then I think their attitude starts turning as the ones who has dyslexia is mostly taught as the stupid one….Still? Yes… still.[]” (appendix 6)

Before the students with dyslexia are to read a text, informant C mentions the topic and which chapter they will be reading.

Informant D mentioned that the reading is very problematic for students with dyslexia;”I want them to feel the …the story and use the imagination and work on the literature…then I think it is important to let them to listen a lot. []” (appendix 7) Informant D also emphasizes that “English is a true challenge []” (appendix7) however he or she has met students with dyslexia that found it easier to read English than Swedish in school.

4.1.4. Reading strategies taught in the subject of English

All four informants were asked about what they do when their students are practice on their reading strategies when reading texts and if they have taught the following reading strategies; skimming, scanning and reading for detailed comprehension. Informant A said he or she has taught skimming since their former English teacher had not taught the students this before (appendix 4).

Informant B did not understand when I explained to him or her what reading strategies were, but he or she said that the methodology behind how you learn new words, improve your fluency and pronunciation he or she practiced continuously with the students and maybe that could be linked to skimming and scanning (appendix 5).

Informant C responded that scanning and reading for detailed comprehension were taught by him or her. Scanning is taught in each chapter in their textbook Magic with reading comprehension assignments after each chapter and the same goes for reading for detailed comprehension (appendix 6)

Informant D answered that” I think that the way most Swedish English books are designed, you have all these kinds of different types of texts were you practice these strategies []” (appendix 7). However he or she also pointed out that he or she could stress more to his/her students that they are actually scanning or skimming when they are reading.

4.1.5. Assessment of students’ reading skills and reading strategies

There were different assessment methods mentioned by all four informants concerning the students’ reading skills and reading strategies. Yet, all of them mentioned the English National test as a common test for testing reading and reading strategies skills of all students in English. Informant A just
conducted a reading comprehension test to check the students’ reading skills and use of reading strategies (appendix 4). Informant A commented the result and said that some student with no dyslexia did worse than students with dyslexia. Informant A mentioned that he or she gave one student with ADD and dyslexia extra time to read during the National test and then the student passed (appendix 4). Informant A also mentioned that he or she gave the students the opportunity to choose exam questions depending for which grade they were aiming for: “I am not sure that the students with dyslexia gauged that… as I have a hundred students that I teach….but I think most of them passed….because they got to choose either E-questions or C-questions…..or A-questions…corresponding to the grade they were aiming for….and those who do A, doesn’t have to do C and E….they just go into A and answer more difficult…[!]”(appendix 4).

Informant B mentioned that he or she makes the students do three different reading comprehension tests in Swedish and by doing so he or she sees how severe the dyslexia in English is for the students with dyslexia (appendix 5). The informant also indicated that he or she does not put any focus on reading comprehension at the moment, as he or she works with writing right now (appendix 5). Informant B also indicated that article twenty-first is adapted when knowledge in English is assessed, thus the students’ reading skills and strategies (appendix 5).

First of all, informant C said that he or she asks his or her students questions to see if they have understood the text. He or she also looks into the eyes of the students with dyslexia to see if they are blank to look for comprehension. Second of all he or she also emphasizes on asking the appropriate questions to students with dyslexia and to let them reread if there are any difficulties with the text;” if I feel that a child has comprehended quite much…and it was just half the right answers that I got… I advise to reread it once more…because fortunately I don’t have kids who have very high dyslexia…it is ok they can handle the situation quite well…but they appreciate my reading aloud…questions…if you ask you can get information…it is just to ask the appropriate questions I think.[!]”(appendix 6). Informant C also mentioned that a student with very high level of dyslexia answered on the reading comprehension questions better than some of the kids which have no dyslexia at all (appendix 6).

When informant D were asked about how he or she is testing his or her students’ reading strategies and reading skills, informant D responded that they do screening tests at school (appendix 7). A screening test is when the students read a text from the Swedish National Agency for education he or she explains and then they answer reading comprehension questions on the text (appendix 7). Informant D also refers to formative assessment when he or she explains how he or she is measuring the students’ progress. As he or she walks around the classroom to check for comprehension of the text and that he or she also let the students come to him or her and read two and two (appendix 7).

### 4.1.6. Teachers’ in-service training about dyslexia and ways of gaining knowledge about dyslexia

All four informants responded that they get no in-service training in the subject of English connected to dyslexia and reading difficulties from their employee. All informants except informant B (the special needs teacher) pointed out that they would like to receive more information about learning difficulties in general from their employee. However many of the informants pointed out that the information and knowledge that they had on dyslexia had been gain from colleagues, books read in their spare time or part-time courses from the university. Informant B had received some information from a speech therapist but that was all. Informant A gained some knowledge about dyslexia but that was about two years ago and he or she pointed out “even if it was two years ago it doesn’t do you any harm to refresh your memory [!]” (appendix 4).
Informant C said that he or she usually gets information and knowledge from the special needs teacher for example, “give positive feedback and encouragement as they are in this age when they don’t want to stand out…they want to be normal [ ]” (appendix 6).

Informant D responded that he or she gets too little information and knowledge about reading difficulties and this is worrying her since the national tests are not adapted accordingly; “because since I feel and everything else that we read in our documents in our curriculum…that we should always meet this need…but whenever they sit there in the national test situation…they don’t get the help of listening to the text…they are supposed to read…and I mean that’s what you need in society as well…so it is hard…but on the other hand we live in the twenty-first century…so I doubt that dyslectic people will…I mean they have to write the essay without spell check…I mean no one would ever leave a text without that…so I think…the test is a bit old fashion…it is sad that they don’t use film…because that is also another way of checking someone’s receptive skills…and that’s how most young people today learn English so…it is something to discuss…I think it’s weird[ ]”(appendix 7)

5. Discussion

This degree project wanted to investigate the English teachers’ perceptions of teaching English to students with dyslexia in four Swedish mainstream secondary schools. The multifaceted definition of dyslexia was described and linked firstly to L1 and secondly to ESL and EFL and teaching students with dyslexia. Reading strategies were also described as new phenomena to teach according to the new English syllabus (2010) and linked to assessment. Dyslexia was also connected to inclusion in mainstream education and its implications.

First of all it should be mentioned that the informants’ experience of teaching English might have influenced the result, as the special needs teacher only have seven years of experience compared to the rest of the informants which have over 10 years of experience.

The perceptions from the informants concerning teaching students with dyslexia were problematic for example, lack of time from the teachers to teach these students, lack of motivation and self-confidence among the students with dyslexia, the need of extra time and preparation for the students with dyslexia, the issue of hiding the diagnosis due to the negative attitude of their parents and classmates, and finally the problem of having to struggle with reading texts all the time. There were also some non-problematic perceptions from the four informants, first of all they said that the students with dyslexia somehow find their ways to deal with their reading problems, they are sometimes even better at reading in English than in Swedish, they are good at listening and they are better at reading factual texts than other texts.

In summary of this, the informants’ perceptions brought up interesting and perhaps common perceptions from a lot of other teachers as well. These findings are also linked to what theory says about the importance of teaching with an explicit learning environment, and teach according to the direct multisensory method with all senses as Holmberg (2007) asserts. However, since this research did not observe any taught lessons, the teaching methods will not be analyzed. The teachers also need to strive to enhance the self-confidence among the students by making dyslexia non taboo in the classroom which also was mentioned by informant C (appendix 6). Assisting learning material should
be given to the students with dyslexia and students with no diagnosis should co-operate with the students with dyslexia as it also benefits their learning of English (Reid et al., 2008:13, Urquhart and Weir, 1998:222).

There is a difference between dyslexia and dysgraphia, as learnt from this paper. Dyslexia is a reading difficulty that mostly goes along with a spelling and writing difficulty – dysgraphia (Harley, ch. 8, 2008). Notable from the informants’ answers about the difficulties with dyslexia was that all of them answered spelling and writing. This raises awareness of the lack of knowledge of what dyslexia is among teachers and also special need teachers in English. All of the informants are not special need teachers except informant B, thus it is not a wonder that they lack knowledge of what reading and writing difficulties are. However if we should work for inclusion in school, all English teacher should be able to teach to all students no matter disabilities, hence the special need teachers’ knowledge is needed to all teachers of English. Fortunately informant C has a general interest in learning disabilities, as he or she has read books and taken courses on his or her spare-time to learn more about learning disabilities. Having to use your spare-time for extra teaching training is not fair, which also the Swedish National agency for Education (2013) recently pointed out in a report.

In summary of this, the awareness of what dyslexia is defined as and how students with dyslexia are to be taught in school by their English teachers is needed. This is important since, Swedish schools needs to accommodate all types of learners including those with dyslexia. Despite the truth, the interest in this topic luckily seems to be growing (Peer Reid, 2000).

The students with dyslexia need the right learning assisting aids to develop their English language skills. Hence, the teachers have to be aware of what they are assisting their students with, as the assisting material also could be beneficial for students with no diagnosis according to research (Holmberg, 2007). The assisting learning materials for students with dyslexia used by the four informants were for example, SpellRight, DAISY, and audiobooks. However, the interviews do not reveal whether the informants knew how to use these computer programs and how often these programs were used. Hence the knowledge about the learning assisting aids mentioned by the teachers’ will not be analyzed. However the mentioned aids indicate that they do need to know more about other aids or technology which could be of use, for example, applications and the new HELP-program (Holmberg, 2007:6). The HELP computer program (Holmberg, 2007:6) might even other students benefit from, as the connection between phonemes and graphemes often needs to be practiced.

All in all, ICT facilities are noticeably low in Swedish schools according to the European Survey of Language Competences (2011:58). The problem might lie in this conflict between the need for adapted technology for disabled persons and the copyright issues with the authors and publishers. The problem is luckily now being investigated by the government (Peer and Reid, 2004).

According to all informants’ responses they had not recently received in-service training about dyslexia and reading difficulties from their employer (appendices 4-7). These facts are not new, according the Swedish school inspectorate (2011) the problem is linked to the school’s groups and organizational levels. In other words, the teaching content, methods used, circumstances in the teaching environment and the teacher’s knowledge are not developed, because schools put too much effort trying to look at the students’ with dyslexia’s strengths and weaknesses (School inspectorate, 2011:15).

Since three out of four informants (appendices 4-7) responded that they would like to receive extra knowledge about learning difficulties, perhaps this issue has been deprioritized when selecting in-
service training. According to a survey the in-service training in Europe has not focused on language relating topics for language teachers in both Sweden and the Netherlands. (European Survey of Language Competences, 2011:66). Other types of in-service training topics were also mentioned by informant D. Nonetheless the teachers are allowed to get the needed in-service training in accordance to The Swedish Education Act: “§ att varje kommun och landsting skall se till att kompetensutveckling anordnas för den personal som har hand om utbildningen. Kommuner och landsting skall vinnlägga sig om en planering av personalens kompetensutveckling” (The Swedish Education Act, 2010:800, Ch.2, §7).

According to the new syllabus in English (2011) the students have to learn reading strategies which also have to be assessed by the English teacher. Informant B did not understand what was meant by reading strategies (appendix 5) perhaps due to misunderstandings between the informant and the interviewer. Informant D and informant C answered that most English text-books teach these strategies (appendices 6-7.) Informant A had taught skimming and informant C had taught scanning and reading for detailed information (appendix 4).

The teachers seem to be adapting the new syllabus in English (2010). However the syllabus still needs to be more implemented, according to the answers by the informants, as they are not teaching all reading strategies or unaware that they are teaching them. All the informants responded that they assess their students’ reading strategies skills by using reading comprehension tests (appendices 4-7).

Informant C asked his or her students questions to see if they have understood the text, he or she also looked into the eyes of the students with dyslexia to check for comprehension. Informant C emphasizes on asking the appropriate questions to students with dyslexia and to let them reread if there are any difficulties with the text. Informant D also refers to formative assessment when he or she explains how he or she is measuring the students ‘progress, as he or she walks around the classroom to check for comprehension of the text and that he or she also let the students come to him or her and read two and two. These formative assessment examples are emphasizing the importance to;

”stimulate, guide and give special support to pupils that have difficulties” (Swedish National agency for Education, 2011:16). Informant C also explained that the someone who have very high level of dyslexia scored on the reading comprehension better than some of the kids which has no dyslexia. This phenomenon is called, dyslexic preference for English reading and this phenomenon may exist in languages with deep orthographies, however further investigation is needed (Miller Gurun, 2000).

Article twenty-one (The Swedish Education Act, ch.10, 2010:800) was only mentioned by informant B and taken into consideration when he or she was teaching and assessing, however the informant also pointed out that the knowledge hat he or she gained about the student in the Swedish lessons were used to facilitate the learning in the English lessons. However, by doing so the difficulties in English might be misinterpreted, as English has a different orthography compared to Swedish (Harley, ch.8., 2008). Thus making that assumption as an English teacher is not fair to do. Notable is that informant C had the most interest and knowledge of dyslexia according to this study even though informant B is a special needs teacher (appendix 6 and 5). Perhaps because informant B only has seven years of experience as special needs teacher compared to informant B’s eight-teen years of experience as a teacher.

“Every municipality and county council shall provide in-service training to the teaching staff, municipalities and county councils should also have responsibility for the planning of the in-service training.” (author’s translation) (The Swedish Education Act, 2010:800, Ch.2, §7)
There might be some limitations to this study as four schools and four teachers were interviewed and not a larger range of teachers and schools. In addition, Swedish students are generally very good at English, as Swedish students encounter the English language every day outside of school through television, computers, smartphones, radio and music. Hence, English is implicitly taught to Swedish students (European Survey of Language Competences, 2011:57). This means that Swedish students should have an advantage to students with dyslexia but unfortunately with no respond. In addition, FDB would also like to emphasize that the teachers in the teaching program need to be taught more about reading and writing difficulties, and that this matter should be an obligatory in their education (Föräldraföreningen för dyslektiska barn⁵, 2011).

This paper also shows that there is a lack of school-based research. The research fields of psychology and medicine are publishing articles however their information and conclusions disagree about the diagnosis of dyslexia, in a lead towards multiply diagnoses. Also according to Smythe et al., 2004:218) teachers dislike using the word ‘diagnosis’ when talking about dyslexia as it “belongs in a medical paradigm” and not the pedagogical field. Teaching English to students with dyslexia need more research and it has been problematic finding research within this area due to the sparseness of research done (Peer and Reid, 2000, Helland and Kaasa, 2004). From this study, some findings have also been made concerning low motivation and extra time for finishing tasks for students with dyslexia. These are issues that two out of the four informants describe (see appendix 4 and 5). Thus looking at these issues concerning low motivation and extra time needed for students with dyslexia could perhaps be beneficial for further research in the teaching area.

In the end, this paper has raised the awareness that not only teachers of English but the whole society need to gain more knowledge of dyslexia to avoid misdiagnoses and to work for inclusion in schools, making all students feel equal in school for the long term. Treating each student equally is not only stated in The Swedish Education Act (2010:800, Ch.1, 4§) is it also stated in the Salamanca declaration signed by Sweden in 1994. Thus, further research and knowledge are needed in this field and preferably in the teaching area.

6. References


⁵ parents’ association for children with dyslexia


Salamanca declaration (1994)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ämne</th>
<th>Intervju för c-uppsats i engelskämnets - Johanna Grönblad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avsändare</td>
<td>Johanna Grönblad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottagare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datum</td>
<td>03.05.2013 13:09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Institutionen för språkdidaktik.docx

Hej......!
Jag blev rekommenderad att kontakta dig genom....... din lärarstudent. Det är jätte tacksamt att du vill delta i min c-uppsats eftersom jag är på jakt efter fler lärare som kan delta så snabbt som möjligt. När skulle det passa dig bäst att avvara 20 min. för en intervju? plats? tid?

För mer information om upplägget se bifogat brev.

Hälsningar
Johanna Grönblad
lärarstudent i engelska för skolår 6-9 och gymnasiets.
73-700 13
8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Date: 

Interview Questions
Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or Swedish?
Years of experience as a teacher:
Subjects currently taught:
For how long have you taught English? (Including interruptions):
Age of teacher:

1. What general difficulties do you think students with dyslexia experience in the subject of English?
2. How do you deal with these difficulties?
3. How do you work with students with dyslexia when they are to read a text? Do you mention the genre of the text, the purpose for reading the text? Do you mention anything else as well? Do you let students with dyslexia read silently or aloud in class? Which type of text are they usually reading? How come you chose that text?
4. Which of the following reading strategies do you usually teach all your students?
   - Skimming (reading for gist, fast reading)?
   - Scanning (reading for specific information)?
   - Reading for detailed comprehension (looking for inferences, reading comprehension)?
5. Do you work with any specific reading strategies which are specifically taught to students with dyslexia?
6. How do you gauge that a particular reading strategy is useful for students with dyslexia?
7. Do you get extra teaching training from your employer in the subject of English connected to dyslexia and reading difficulties? If yes, what type of extra knowledge have you learned? How often do you get extra teaching training?
Datum: 

**Intervju frågor**

Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or Swedish? 

Erfarenhet i år som lärare:  

Ämnen som läraren undervisar i:  

Hur länge har du undervisat i enbart Engelska? (Inklusive eventuellt avbrott):  

1. Vad upplever du elever med dyslexi har för svårigheter i ämnet engelska?  
2. Hur arbetar du med dessa svårigheter?  
3. Om elever med dyslexi ska läsa en engelsk text vad gör du i så fall? Vad säger du till elever med dyslexi innan de ska läsa en engelsk text? Nämner du något annat?  
   Om du ska läsa en engelsk text i klassen, låter du då elever med dyslexi läsa tyst eller högt i klassen?  
   Vilken typ av engelsk text läser vanligtvis elever med dyslexi? Varför valde du just den texten?  
4. I den nya kursplanen i engelska står det om lässtrategier och jag undrar om du har undervisat några av dessa på dina lektioner samt på vilket sätt?  
   • Skimma (läsa för att hitta en gemensam nämnare i hela texten)?  
   • Scanna (läsa för specifik information i texten)?  
   • Läsa för detaljerad förståelse (hitta svar på frågor om texten, läsförståelse)?  
5. Är det några speciella lässtrategier som elever med dyslexi måste lära sig?  
6. Hur mäter du att alla elever har klarat av att använda lässtrategier?  
7. Får du någon fortbildning av din arbetsgivare om elever i behov av särskilt stöd såsom dyslexi? Om ja, vilken slags fortbildning har du fått?  
8. När fick du någon fortbildning senast?
Kära engelsklärare!


Med vänlig hälsning
Johanna Grönblad
jogr43339@student.su.se 073–7002713
Jag har tagit del av ovanstående meddelande och är beredd att delta.

Ort och datum

Namnteckning
Appendix 4

Transcription 1

Date: May 4, 2013

Secondary school teacher in a mainstream school named X

Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or in Swedish? English

How many years of experience do you have as a teacher? 38…..38…

Subjects currently taught? English only…

For how long have you only taught English, cause are you only an English teacher? Ohh…that’s only 2 years…I’ve done French also…and am…when I was teaching…2000…. to 2004….in XX school …. I did all subjects since I was an intermediate teacher…so I have 4, 5 and 6. … and prior to that I had 5…year 5 and 4…over 15 years….maybe more than that…and that was all subjects except music…. Sorry to ask this but how old are you? 59….

1. What general difficulties do you think students with dyslexia experience in the subject of English? What the most current issue is that I see is that when they write a story for example….for some of them it is the red thread through a story…..the the the spelling…they could use Spell Right…on the computer….they have access to the computer…and you could more or less guess…what they are trying to say….when it comes to spelling…so that’s ok…but when they floss…the red thread…that’s when it is difficulties and I have one student that has dyslexia….very very big….but he doesn’t have the red thread. I have others who have also dyslexia but they manage with the read thread…but in his case it is the red thread….that’s the most difficult part. So you try to make them work with the computers then? Well…yes he has access to his own computer…the only things is that….I going to try to make him think…Ok talk about this in this paragraph….talk about that in the next paragraph…and the good thing with the computer is that you can copy and paste it somewhere else…and see if that is accepted….so I think that’s the biggest dilemma…and where you have time…cause if you say…let’s do this and then meet for “läxhjälp” I have only half an hour and….I have a whole bunch of other kids…..”läxhjälp” is what? It is when they get extra help with their studies in the morning or after school. It’s the time that sometimes just lacks….because he’s got all kinds of activities…and doesn’t think it’s important….til I write to the parents and sometimes I’ll get the support….and sometimes I won’t. There …There’s the other problem….is that during class time…you don’t always have time….because you’ve got your other twenty…and you have Asperger students that need attending too…even…though they don’t put up their hand….you’ve got those who scream out there you know….you know….some of them you’ve met….so to have peace and quiet they have to go to “läxhjälp” after school.

2. So you mention that students with dyslexia have difficulties if they are to write something, what about if they are to read a text? How do you work with them then? Well reading…we could ask questions….that’s pretty easy….that’s umm…they could read at home or….I have
3. Ahh ok…..but what kind of books are they reading…do they also work with texts? Right now we’re working with a text were we followed your idea…OK… we followed up on that were we work also with strategies…because that is expected of us now…like guessing what a word means…we read a text we try to see what a word means…and what the words means…so we’re working with that in the classroom….and he the dyslectic boy is OK…that is not his dilemma…I thinking of one in particular… the reading is OK…it’s the a ….it’s the writing for him.

4. What is the text about? Ahh… he is finishing off law and order ….law and order OK…. we started working with that…like a theme…in this story I told him….he begins his story about a character…his name is Charlie and he meets a man called Smith…little further down in the text he writes Charles as “I”….and I said go back home…you could do it at home now…cause I have a little bit of much to do now…and change it to “you”. As it is Charles….one or the other….I said it is Charles as in “my name is Charles” then continue with “I”….but you can’t say Charles as in third person and then all of sudden “I“ in first person. It doesn’t make any sense.

5. Do they know the purpose for reading this text as well? They have known since grade one. But do you mention it? Not necessary not….But I do mention the goals…for the lesson….what do they have to think about and what is expected….and I stick to that.

6. Do you let students with dyslexia read silently or aloud in class? It depends….if it is a book…that everybody is going to read….which we don’t have many copies of….we don’t have for a whole class….so then it is silent reading….but what I do do …in reading quietly I’ll take them out…and have them read out aloud. All of the students? When I can. Not all in half an hour. I can’t do that…but the ones….that I suspect….have difficulties…and are not passing…those are the ones that I plug out….and have them read out loud to me. When do you do that? When they have to read books and anything else….that they have to read….as long as I can hear them reading… Do you think students with dyslexia need more time to learn? Both yes and no….because….when I let them read…. the boy that has dyslexia….he was the second one to finish….so he is not interested…it is a battle….it is like going up Mount Everest every time….some student just need time….last year I gave one student extra time to read her story when she had to do the National tests….while the others only had 45 minutes….I gave her time….she passed….She has ADD….

7. Which of the following reading strategies do you usually teach all your students?

- Skimming (reading for gist, fast reading)? Yes we just had a test on that, as my students haven’t had a proper English teacher. So when the weak student were looking for an answer…you know…and it’s a copy the…the sentence that says something about this and
that... some students didn’t know how to look...and it didn’t dawn on me...that that
teacher...did nothing... except... “fill-in the blank” exercises....so they haven’t learned
strategies...these kids so now I have to back up and work with that and support them and
teach them these things that they haven’t learned for a whole year.

- Scanning (reading for specific information)?
- Reading for detailed comprehension (looking for inferences, reading comprehension)?

8. Do you work with any specific reading strategies which are specifically taught to students
with dyslexia? No...no

9. How do you gauge that a particular reading strategy is useful for students? We just had a test,
some of them which I consider quite bright kids....didn’t pass...reading comprehension....so I
said to one of the boys...you come on Monday for “omprov” as they call it.....and you do the
ones that you haven’t done OK on. I am not sure that the students with dyslexia gauged that
as I have a hundred students that I teach....but I think most of them passed....because they got
to choose either E-questions or C-questions.....or A-questions...corresponding to the grade
they were aiming for....and those who do A, doesn’t have to do C and E....they just go into A
and answer more difficult...now we have a new curriculum so we have to take that into
consideration too...what do they expect from us....a lot of us a still not sure....and there are
Swedish teachers that sometimes doesn’t understand what it says...I have worked on my
strategies with the kids and one girl....an average girl....she got 20/20....

10. Do you get extra teaching training from your employer in the subject of English connected to
dyslexia and reading difficulties? No....no. but I have had courses for students with
dyslexia...like 2 years ago....even if it was 2 years ago it doesn’t do you any kind of harm to
refresh your memory....talk with other colleagues...not necessarily in my school....get other
input from someone...somewhere else....you benefit and have an open mind..... but we have
just too little time to just sit and talk...like about strategies in language teaching...when we
have these meetings from the municipality every now and then each year...some of the ideas I
really like...some mehh....not my cup of tea....and I have incorporated them into my lessons.
Sometimes I might have to do some changes so it suits my students...this is a thematic
school...and groups change...the chemistry...and some other factors...some years I have very
weak classes...and some years I have very academically strong and in within these classes
that I have I have group 1,2 and 3.
Appendix 5

Transcription 2

Datum: 6 maj, 2013

Secondary school teacher in a mainstream school named X
Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or Swedish? Svenska
Erfarenhet i år som lärare: 7 år
Ämnen som läraren undervisar i: Svenska och Engelska, special lärarkompetens.
Hur länge har du undervisat i engelska (inkluderat eventuellt avbrott)? 7 år
Hur gammal är du? 45 år

1. Vad upplever du studenter med dyslexi har för svårigheter i ämnet engelska?
   Stavningen... framförallt.

2. Hur arbetar du med dessa svårigheter?
   Är det en diagnostiserad dyslexi... så går ju Pys-paragrafen in... i skollagen finns det en paragraf där det står att en om en elev har ett funktionshinder... som inte är av tillfällig natur så kan man bortse från ett enstaka kunskapskrav eller ett par... beroende på vad det är för typ av funktionsnedsättning... och just vad det gäller dyslektiker så är det ju ofta stavningen som är problemet och det blir ju extra framträdande i engelska... därför att i engelska så ska ju eleverna kunna göra sig förstådda... så att en engelskspråkig person kan förstå den personen i kommunikationen och just och skriva då som dyslektiker blir extra svårt... för det är ju svårt även på svenska... Men där är det lättare för mig som svensk att förstå var kommunikationen brister.

3. Om elever med dyslexi ska läsa en engelsk text vad gör du i så fall? Jag upplever att de klarar det ganska bra när de får sina anpassningar... alla våra elever som har dyslexi eller någon form av läs-skrivsvårighet har kompensatoriska hjälpmedel med talsyntes... stavningsprogram... Vad är talsyntes? Det är till exempel när du ska få en ny text... i och med att vi jobbar med data... alla våra elever har varsin Mac Book... så vi jobbar mycket med datorer i princip... så att alla texter finns liksom inne i deras maskin redan... så sätter de igång sin talsyntes... och får texten uppläst...

4. Vad säger du till dyslektikerna innan de ska läsa? Jag berättar för dem vad texten heter och hur länge vi ska läsa den... de behöver alltid bli förberedda... det gäller ju alla elever som har svårigheter... och jobbar vi med läsförståelse är det både fakta texter och skön litterära texter... de är bättre på fakta texter... dyslektiker? Menar du Jaja, o ja asså dyslexi har ingenting med förståelse att göra... om de får jobba på det sättet dem ska liksom... med lite extra tid... och extra stöd... dyslexin påverkar inte alls deras förståelse egentligen, det är när de ska läsa själva som det kan vara lite hackigare... men om vi får lyssna samtidigt och följa med i texten så har en dyslektiker lika god läsförståelse som någon annan. Något annat du tar upp när de ska läsa texter? ähh... just läsförståelse i engelska är inte det som jag lägger fokus på utan det är produktion, eget skrivande... så vi jobbar mycket med det... och mycket hörförståelse.
5. Men om ni skulle läsa en text i klassen hur gör du då, låter du elever med dyslexi läsa tyst eller högt i klassen? *De som vill, dem som vill får läsa högt... och de brukar vilja...*


7. Vilka av följande lässtrategier lär du ut?
   - Skimma (läsa för att hitta en gemensam nämnare i hela texten)?
   - Scanna (läsa för specifik information i texten)?
   - Läsa för detaljerad förståelse (hitta svar på frågor om texten, läsförståelse)?
   
   *Jag har inte hör talas om dem, det är inget som jag jobbar medvetet med förutom läsförståelse... och jag försöker anpassa all min undervisning till varje varje elev... så jag försöker jobba på ett sådant sätt så att det passar alla... med material och metodik... och är det så att... de är så pass stora nu mina elever de går i sjuan... å dem som har dyslexi diagnos... dem äh... jag upplever inte att dem... har jätte stora svårigheter... de kan läsa en text... men sen kanske de behöver en lite luftigare o lite större text... å då fixar jag det till dem... vi jobbar också med ett läsutvecklings schema i svensk... där vi varje termin "lusar" dem så att vi ska kunna veta hur dem läser? Var dem läser? Och vilken typ av litteratur? Så att vi vet var dem befinner sig. Och det använder ju jag i engelskan så jag behöver ju inte göra något särskilt med undervisning av lässtrategier i engelskan... för mig gör jag så...men det kanske är jobbigare för dem som bara har engelska med en klass men jag har ju bara engelska och svenska med mina...det blir lite lättare för mig... jag behöver inte lägga ner någon tid på att lura dem olika lässtrategier i engelskan...utan det går automatiskt...med svenska. Däremot metodiken kring hur man lär sig nya ord... hur man träna upp sitt flyt... och sitt uttal... det är någonting som vi jobbar mycket med... och sen om det har med lässtrategier och göra det vet jag inte.*

8. Är det några speciella lässtrategier som elever med dyslexi behöver lära sig?
   *Nej... alltså... de lässtrategier som jag går igenom det är vilken typ av text... alltså vilken genre vi läser... vad är syftet med läsningen... är det skönlitteratur ja då ska vi läsa det för att det är skönt å bra liksom... men är det en faktatext ja då kanske mer sökläsning... å det är något som jag lär ut i svensk och inte så mycket i engelskan... i och med att jag har samma elever i både engelska och svenska.*

9. Om du då skulle jobba med lässtrategier som du nämnt hur mäter du då att eleverna klarat av dessa?
   *Alla sjuar i X gör ett... tre olika läsförståelse tester varje termin... av tre olika texter... och det är i svenska och det spelar ju över i engelskan... de går ju hand i hand språken... så jag ser det därigenom... Vad för slags tester är det? Lässtandarder heter de, Bo Sundblad och några andra som tagit fram det och alla sjuar ska göra det i X... och jag tycker det är bra.*
Sen i åtta och i nian har vi annat material och sen i nian kommer nationella proven i engelska så att vi gör regelbundet liksom kontroller på hur eleverna ligger till.

10. Får du någon fortbildning av din arbetsgivare om elever i behov av särskilt stöd såsom dyslexi? Nu har jag ju redan en speciallärarutbildning så det behövs inte... men om jag behöver så skulle jag kunna få det... När fick du någon fortbildning senast? Det beror på vad man räknar med utbildning... vi har haft logopeder här på besök till exempel... andra typer av funktionshinder... vi har en elev som sitter i rullstol med alla typer av diagnoser och då har arbetslaget fått mer kunskap kring det... så att det är löpande och är svårt att säga... Har du fått någon mer kunskap om dyslexi? Nej jag behöver inte det... eftersom jag har så mycket i utbildningen...
Appendix 6

Transcription 3

Secondary school teacher in a mainstream school

Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or Swedish? English

How many years of experience do you have as a teacher? 18 years approximately, moved to Sweden 1991, and for 5 years she hadn’t worked.

Subjects currently taught? English for grade 7 and 9.

For how long have you only taught English, cause are you only an English teacher? Ohh…well it is like this when I started in my homeland …I was a teacher of two subjects English and French. But unfortunately my French is lacking sweet and deep and I haven’t used it since I was 21 or so. I did not dare to do something with French so. I am only a teacher of English.

Sorry to ask this but how old are you? 39

1. What general difficulties do you think students with dyslexia experience in the subject of English? First of all I think it is the attitude of their own parents, and their classmates…they don’t want to show. Usually it is like this and it takes very much time that both parents and their kids understand how important it is to have this diagnosis on paper…to get right help…for some of the parents go as far as telling” I don’t think that my kid has any diagnosis” “it is just that he needs more time and other assignments” When we say no it is not working he needs some more help sometimes it is just blank no…so I think first of all it is attitude…as soon as they start getting help…and as soon as they make some progress…they become more positive…and their classmates become more positive…what I usually do is I go work with a new class and I know definitely that there is one in the class with dyslexia I start talking about Albert Einstein... “Do you know who is albert Einstein?” “The students reply…yes yes he is the smartest person in the world” “Do you know that he had ADD, ADHD and dyslexia?” “Yes he did…and he didn’t come to fetch his Nobel Prize as he was afraid of reading aloud” “Oh…” and then it is a pause and silence and then I think their attitude starts turning as the ones who has dyslexia is mostly taught as the stupid one….

Still? Yes still.

2. So if they are supposed to read a text what do mention to the students with dyslexia? Then I usually switch on the CD–rom or we have right now web parts for all the books so I let them listen and read simultaneously and that’s what I encourage them to do….cause I am…fortunately I have very good books…and they have this web part on the books so they can do everything on the website and listen and read and I think this helps very much and then they get very much help from their teachers…special teachers…and they have this Daisy programs… Daisy programs? It is a program used for dyslexic students… I think that each one usually finds…own way of …handling the situation and finding…their own strategies…and I know for example in my classes they are about to say…What do you mean by strategies? For example one person X has dyslexia…tells me that” I usually photo all words and I remember them just like pictures”…another one says that it helps him/ her to
take a piece of paper and cover the whole text...and read one row...and I know eight persons and all of them have quite different strategies. But they usually make progress so for example one student who I met in grade seven and had very great difficulties he couldn’t write at all...it was only computer...and printing...now he doesn’t want to use computer and he do quite OK....and the other one has come as to get grade A....and made less spelling mistakes than someone who had no dyslexia...so they find their ways...it is just to encourage them that’s no problem and say we don’t care about it...just show what you can...and I think...it’s much about self-confidence...I think so.

3. If they are to read a text then, what do you mention then? First of all I try to find out how much they already know...because usually you feel that it’s not something quite knew they always know something about...the things we are going to read...so...OK if it is a detective story...we are going to write..."have you ever read any detective story?" “Have you ever seen films?” “Yes” “what do you know about it?” “What is a detective story?” What is the difference between a love story and a detective story?” and then they come out with some words and I write these words on the whiteboard...and I write some words which I have prepared so it is...always pre-work with words...so we use these words as soon as they have these bricks...we start talking about the text....and then I let them listen....

4. Do you mention why they read this text and how? yes I do...and usually I introduce the topic cause we have...topics for each chapter...for example...one chapter the topic is detective stories...Ok today we start with a new chapter...so you know that the topic of this chapter will be crime and punishment or it will be detective story....that’s how we start so they are aware of the topic of the whole chapter...

5. Do you let students with dyslexia read silently or aloud in class? I first let them listen to the text so that they listen to the right pronunciation...it is not a good idea to let them read aloud...first themselves cause I am sure...they’re going to make mistakes...in pronunciations and intonations...and maybe it will be no good service to them...so I let them to a native speaker and plus I have all the texts recorded by native speakers...so first they listen...sometimes if we’re don’t have an internet connection or if something has happened to the light I will read it aloud...and then I let them read silently...very seldom I let them read aloud themselves...before I introduce a native speaker...only dialects maybe...because it happens that just the new words which I would like them to know correctly...they mispronounce...and this is it...there is some chance that it will stuck in their mind.

6. But are they reading the same text as everyone else? yes they do...and something that they will absolutely...not let me do is to make them feel different....they don’t want me to show that something is wrong...and usually...first before I do something else with them...I ask them how long can I go? “May I give you something else?” May I say that you can go to the computer and print it or type it?” “Yes you may” or “no I will do it at home, don’t say it in
the classroom...so some of them doesn’t even let me say something else...and I don’t want them to pop out as some stranger.

7. When choosing texts how do you think then? It is like this...we have this book it is called Magic...maybe you have heard of it...I think it is from studentlitteratur...very good books I would recommend...and it is like this we have...an almost three texts for each chapter...usually I take two of the text and the third...the most advanced text I leave...for those who want to do something extra...who think it is not so much to do right now I want to do something else...but usually these are texts from the text book...but if I have some detective story I usually choose some extra text connected to it for example...grade seven had detective stories...two stories...so I chose some dossiers from Penguin...books...and it was Sherlock Holmes...they got this text about Sherlock Holmes and they got some reading comprehension assignments...another grade had Charles Dickens...so they got...they got...some dossiers from Charles Dickens or something else...so another class had Agatha Christie...I choose according to the topic of the chapter they are working with...but sometimes things happen for example...it was the death of “The Margret Thatcher” so I changed the whole weeks planning...took Margret Thatcher and the seventies and eighties and the economic problem and crisis...when it was this...big event about the pope...Benedict abdicating...so we chose this one...so it was like they know why we chose something it was not just like we do everything according to the chapter but the reality...sometimes it happens that “oh teacher did you hear this and that has happened? “ “yes I did”...” can we talk about this?” “give me a minute and I will print out something”

8. It says now in the new English syllabus that we should teach reading strategies...I will mention some of these reading strategies and we will talk about them and see if you understand what I mean. Don’t worry.

- Skimming (reading for gist, fast reading)? No...I don’t have time now.
- Scanning (reading for specific information)? Definitely done this one...they use this one for the first text for each chapter cause they have very big reading comprehension assignments after each texts...and then I advise my students to first read the assignment for the reading comprehension...and then read the text itself...and they are very good at just scanning...I think this generation is very good at scanning...they know how to find information...but then I usually give them something more...something more advanced...or especially they have some home reading book I ask them to bring it in...and to do some assignments to get ready for another lecture and then...by choosing one special question I use reading for detailed comprehension...if I am interested of the description of a room or if I am interested in a description of a person then they will have to read some chapters and find out everything they can so...I try to connect it to the topic we have... so do we have a topic with description I will ask them to read a chapter from their home reading material.
• Reading for detailed comprehension (looking for inferences, reading comprehension)? This one too…

9. How do you work with students with dyslexia and reading strategies? You know it is like this I let them do just the same thing…as the whole class does…and if I see that they are stuck…and I will read aloud to them…and then I am very lucky I have another teacher which is my assistant teacher…she can go aside with them and work in the corridor or separately or some of them…which have very much difficulties they go to the special teacher who helps them very much…she has like individual private classes you can say…but usually I don’t accentuate if someone needs extra help…first of all they don’t want to…and then I feel that I don’t need to actually…cause when they come up to me to grade seven they are ready they can handle the situation…those who can’t they can get my help and I read aloud and it helps.

10. How do you gauge that a particular reading strategy is useful for students? I usually ask questions…and if I see that eyes are blank….of course I say maybe we should read it once more… and if I feel that a child has comprehended quite much…and it was just half right answers that I got… I advise to reread it once more…because fortunately I don’t have kids who have this dyslexia… very high dyslexia…no it is ok they can handle the situation quite well…but they appreciate my reading aloud…questions…if you ask you can get information…it is just to ask the appropriate questions I think…Have you tested the students recently on reading strategies? Yes…it was the national examination… recently…for grade nine…and that was a great victory for the students…and even for me….someone who have very high level of dyslexia…it was just two years ago…wrote on the reading composition which was better than some kids who have no dyslexia at all…and then I mean just spelling…and I asked this student how did you managed? And the student answered “I really don’t know I just wanted very much” but then she…this student said… I started reading and I know that this student reads very much very thick advanced books so I said…”reading is something that can save you”...then we had a test and it was actually reading comprehension and listening comprehension…one of these students who have dyslexia…got extra help from my assistant teacher and she made the student read aloud all the questions so she could see if the student understood all the questions…but this is the only thing that we use actually…cause all of them can write and when they write I just make a note that I don’t count spelling mistakes…and for more information you can go to skolgården.

11. Do you get extra teaching training from your employer in the subject of English connected to like dyslexia and reading difficulties? No….no. I haven’t but I have just finished…I have graduated from X …so it was last year…my diploma work…I was lucky to have very good teachers there and it was a course it was about one month when we talked about kids with disabilities…and it was included in the X program, and it included very good courses….with many very different lectures and we had got very much information about reading difficulties...
and dyslexia...I have read many books about kids with difficulties I am interested myself.....so I think it is OK....so the information I got at X...and the information I gathered from the books I read...are quite enough but as soon as I get unsure I go to the special teacher and get help...but it sounds for me like at school it is decided that this is her problems it is not my problem.....as soon as I get a problem I send the kids to her...So what have you learned from her? Give positive feedback and encouragement as they are in this age when they don’t want to stand out....they want to be normal...they want to be like friends...and before even asking...”Do you want my help?” I always ask silently...very quietly... ”Should I ask for the special teacher do you want to go out? And they often I get blank NO...I want to stay in the classroom don’t tell me to get out...

12. How do you get extra teaching training on your own more than this? Usually I go to visit websites, were I can fetch some information or....scan just the literature list that I got from X and I think Ok... I will read this and that book....We read this Gunnison “Eleven's värld”...and it helped...it is about the introduction to child psychology...but there is also one little secret I have worked at “Gymnasiesärskola” for six years and you can imagine how much information I got from there....and I am very grateful...because I learned very much there....where almost every other kid was dyslectic... and this was in Sweden....and I taught many different kids with many different diagnosis....and it was very beneficial...
Appendix 7

Date: May 30, 2013

Do you prefer to answer my questions in English or Swedish? English

How many years of experience do you have as a teacher? I graduated January 1995, so it is been a couple of years now.

Subjects currently taught? German, Swedish and English. It is a lot but it brings me a lot of variety in my work and I enjoy that very much. Of course teaching Swedish is in a way very exciting but also a bit stressful because it is a lot of things you have be in charge of when it comes to dyslectic children and so on, learning disabilities are a challenge. And in English it is so fabulous right now especially in Sweden when all the children get so much input from gaming and just living here. So it’s another way of working really.

For how long have you only taught English? I have been away from it because I had 2 children, but that is the only stop I have made really. But I have had sort of classes in all three most of the years I have been working.

1. What general difficulties do you think students with dyslexia experience in the subject of English? Well I believe it’s not really a big problem in English since many pupils in general are extremely good at speaking and their receptive skills when it comes to listening is of course very good. Many dyslectic children are very audiotive, good at learning by listening, so that is definitely a strength most dyslectic pupils have, not everyone unfortunately, but many. So it’s very important that you as a teacher focus on that and also see those abilities as important as the writing, because of course that is the biggest challenge for them. The writing? The writing…and of course also the reading.

The reading and the writing.

2. So how do you deal with that? Yes always when we for instance, I just finished 2 projects, one in grade 7 and one in grade 9, where we all read novels in English. And of course that is a challenge; of course you start off with easy readers. And we have different levels of books. But our aim is to also work with the novels and use authentic materials and really good novels. Not written for Swedish children but American audience and British audience connected to a theme like horror, and with the dyslectic children I order the same titles in audio version, so they are also better in the discussions and in the work around the novel. So you have to let them listen instead or see a movie instead. You have to offer other types of media. So they work with that on the computer or how is it going? It’s still a bit of a problem because all publishers, I think we are a few years away too, you need to struggle a bit to find audio versions… because they cost a lot still, but thanks to if you work here in Stockholm, you have Cirkulationsbiblioteket and they are very good and gives you quickly the the titles that you need, so they actually help you out as a teacher if you have certain titles that you want they can order them and you can borrow them as well. But still this quite a few…I am missing, because the CD is a bit old school I would say, and we don’t really have, to have a recorder and walk around with that, if you can
plug in your headphones in the computer it is so much easier, so I really long for that, that we can have that type of media instead of the CD.

3. So you were talking about you read novels, like how do you do when you chose novels. Like what do you think of? Do you think of anything particular for the dyslectic students? Well the major problem or challenge for them is of course the actual reading, and also to remember a long story. Of course you need to teach the technique of mind–mapping and so on and all the other study techniques are very important of course. But then we also made reading stops all the time, so it’s sort of; ok where are we now and so on, and sometimes I gave them a mind–map, to have help to follow the discussions. What do you mean with reading stops? Well let’s say that if you reading this novel Cinderella man or Caroline, Let’s have a stop after chapter 4…and then I made assignments for that…and then we read another 4 chapter, so after chapter 8…we also worked a little bit with having different roles in reading groups, that you are maybe people reading the same novel…that’s how I order books to our library now in English that we have 5 of the same titles so we can have reading groups, because of course sometimes you want to read one novel with all the children, but that is hard to find in English, because they’re so very different in their abilities so it’s hard to find that novel that work for a group of 30. But I think it’s a challenge for you as a teacher as well to make that happen, to help them out with mind–maps and also work with vocabulary, and prepare them for the story and so on, and let that take time that is also a problem.

4. So is there any other particular text that you work with? We do… we have ordered… a course book, we have a textbook and a work book, we work very seldom with that but sometimes connected to our work–plan or areas we plan together with my colleagues, and it could be working life, it could be horror, it could be inventions. So if I see something in our course–books… of course we work with that, but very often I use authentic texts, short stories or articles or dialogues that I find. So, we have something called Learnify, which is a platform, so instead of having an English book, you have a course site, where I, me and my colleagues, put together the assignments, that pupils are supposed to work with.

5. But if you are supposed to work with a text in the class and so on, do you let dyslectic students read aloud or silently if they have to do that? Well I never force anyone… then of course they do need to practice reading, even though it’s something that is very hard for them…Aloud and silently both? Well it is very individual, sometimes, well it’s you have to know your pupils you have to see when they are ready. Very often I let them choose if they want to read or if there is a… sometimes we have worked with reading how to read with pauses, and really own the text, really read it well, then maybe they have read in smaller groups or just for me, that is the smallest group they can choose, or the smallest
audience, that is just reading for me...In all classes I have a few pupils like that...but if I teach them 4 years from grade six to 9 eventually most of them... because it is very important to create this safe place for being wrong...to make them feel comfortable... it is ok... is a hard challenge for us teachers to create that safe place because teenagers are very, well not everyone has their control of their impulses and their comments, also it is also part of other diagnosis such as ADHD of course that is also something that of course creates a certain atmosphere in the classroom, and that’s a part of their handicap, so we work a lot with different groups, different groups within the group.

6. Have you heard of reading strategies because now they’ve talked about it in the new syllabus in English, that we are supposed to work with reading strategies? And I was wondering if you have used any of these reading strategies that am gonna mention but I am gonna talk about them so you don’t misinterpret them.

- Skimming (reading for gist, fast reading)?
- Scanning (reading for specific information)?
- Reading for detailed comprehension (looking for inferences, reading comprehension)?

Well, I think that the way most Swedish English books are designed, you have all these kinds of different types of texts were you practice these strategies so...I do it and we do it together...but I think that I could focus more and actually say that now we are practicing how to scan read...now we are doing this...to actually make it a bit more metacognitive...language to use to actually...analyze what you’re doing...I could stretch that more than what I do...but we do have these different kinds of reading going on in the classroom. Do you feel that there are any strategy that the students are particular better at or? Well I believe that when I corrected the national tests I think they scored pretty high on when it comes to finding information, I think that was a shorter text, I think it something about hotel facts, I think that was a pretty high score...then of course the reading between the lines...I definitely could see that there were some problem there so...How about the students with dyslexia do they score the same? Yes, I would say that...in all pupils.

7. So you don’t work with any like specific reading strategy that you do for students with dyslexia? No, I think that I...an important thing is that I don’t...if we read novels...I think it is very important for them not have to use...too strenuous for them...so I want them to feel...the story and use the imagination and work on the literature...then I think it is important to let them to listen a lot...but you actually practice the reading I have discussed this with our special needs teachers here and I believe that this is a field where we can develop a lot more...how do you actually help... because it is so far away from the written language...English is a true challenge of course...it is harder...I mean English could be a real struggle...and sometimes I have met people who on the other
hand think it easier to read English than Swedish... Student with dyslexia?

Yeah... interesting right

8. So were talking about national test, is that one of things that you use to measure that they have understood a special reading strategy for example? Yes it is designed that way... you get that kind of information... Do you do anything else like during the lessons? The reading comprehension we have I mean... we do screening... both at... when we begin with a new group. What is screening? Well most of the time I use texts from Skolverket and it is the old yellow book with texts... and sometimes I find... other types of reading comprehension texts... and it could be... I use it as a part if we have an English test and the end we put... some type of reading comprehension as well. Do you use any other type of test?

9. Or what do you do in the classroom to see if they have grasped a reading strategy? I do a formative assessment and walk around in the classroom to check for comprehension... and also let them come up to me and let them read to me two and two... or if I sit down with a small group and listen to the or... so that's part of... So with the students with dyslexia do you do anything particular for them? Well I think I go to them a bit more often... and describe and maybe check with them in the text if there is trouble... and also help out with vocabulary... before they start reading... so they have some kind of preparation... so of course it is hard to always make it... it depends on the size of the group of course... I believe I can do more but I try...

10. Do you get extra teaching training from your employer in the subject of English connected to dyslexia and reading difficulties? No... too little... But in general how often have you gotten any type of extra teaching training? Not necessarily in English you mean? No, like in languages then and learning disabilities? Well, we had an excellent lady visit us on reading strategies... she is doing a big study on that I can't remember her name... Gunilla or something... Do you know her? She is from Stockholm University... Gunilla Molloy? No that's not her... I can see if I can find her last name somewhere in my head or later on... anyway she was her and... holding a lecture for all of us... and... sometimes me and my colleague we go to... evenings where there is English methods being... presented to us... but I believe it's... my main focus the last couple of years has been formative assessment... so I've done most of my training in that field... so I've been part of a network here in the city and we've met once a month... teachers and I've been in charge of teaching my team how to improve that... in the classroom... and we do learning studies here as well... so I've been involved in that so but that was also in Swedish... What is that? A learning study is from the very beginning it's a Japanese way of looking at a design of a lesson... to plan the perfect lesson... they've been doing it for hundreds and hundreds of years... and now USA and of course Europe
are starting to do this...and you you’re a couple of teachers in one subject and you have of course someone who’s the team leader...and you decide on a subject...and then you decide on one learning object...which is very hard...and then you...have a test with pupils...how good are they at this...I don’t know...using the difference between a and un something like that perhaps...a bit small but still...and then you do a test with that...OK this is the result...OK we need to design a lesson...and then you design a lesson together...you film that lesson...and then you make the test again...have they improved...mmmm...we need to change the lesson a bit...we sit around again...and this is the way it goes...so maybe you do it twice and check with test...what are the critical aspects of the lesson...very interesting...but that of course making us very better. But this came from your employer? Well...our principal...yes. So I think we do a lot but not necessarily reading skills, English skills and dyslectic children. So you would like to have more knowledge about learning difficulties? Yes...because I am also a bit worried since Skolverkets nationella prov...there are still...some strange things going on when it comes to...because since I feel and everything else that we read in our documents in our curriculum...that we should always meet this need...but when they sit there in the national test situation...they don’t get the help of listening to the text...they are supposed to read...and I mean that’s what you need in society as well...so it is hard...but on the other hand we live in the twenty-first century...so I doubt that dyslectic people will...I mean they have to write the essay without Spell check...I mean no one would ever leave a text without that...so I think...the test is a bit old fashion...it is sad that they don’t use film...because that is also another way of checking someone’s receptive skills...and that’s how most young people today learn English so...it is something to discuss...I think it’s weird...Are you still open to get more knowledge about reading difficulties? Yes...I am mean of course the reading is a skills you need...on the other hand you could scan a document with your phone and have it read in your ear so I mean there are apps for everything...it depends on what you should put your energy on as a dyslectic person.