

3rd European Conference on Curriculum Studies
Abstract submission template

1.

Presenting author[s]	Carl-Henrik Adolfsson & Daniel Alvunger
Title of presentation	The Selection of Content and Knowledge Conceptions in Teaching in an Era of Standards-based Policy Reforms
Abstract	
<p>This study is part of the project 'Understanding Curriculum Reforms - A Theory-Oriented Evaluation of the Swedish Curriculum Reform Lgr 11'. The paper presents results from classroom studies of teaching in the social studies subjects Civics, History, Geography, Religion in grade 6 (12-13 years old) in six municipalities. The curriculum Lgr11 can foremost be described as a standards-based curriculum. The objectives and standards, but also the content, are prescribed and put in the foreground (Sundberg & Wahlström, 2012; Null, 2011). Our paper is guided by two research questions: How and on what foundation is the selection of teaching content made when prescribed content and learning outcomes is given a central role in the curriculum structure? What content seems to dominate the teaching under a standard-based oriented curriculum?</p> <p>The theoretical framework is based on classical curriculum theory, where Doyle's (1992) perspective on curriculum as "text" is central. According to Doyle, teachers act as authors of "curriculum events" and the students become "co-authors". The conditions for teachers' selection of content is analysed out from the "frame-factor theory" (Dahllöf, 1967; Lundgren, 1972, 1989), focusing on factors that in different ways enable or limit conditions, processes and outcomes. When it comes to analysing the achieved curriculum content in teaching practice, we use Deng & Luke's (2008) three conceptions of knowledge: "academic disciplinary knowledge"; "practical knowledge"; "experiential knowledge". The empirical material consists of semi-structured interviews with teachers, principals and students, teaching-related documents and video-recorded and transcribed lessons.</p> <p>The curriculum Lgr 11 has had several implications for teachers and teaching. Teachers must deal with what can be referred to as a crowding of content where the selection of content occurs in three overlapping "filters". Collegial collaboration is the first link in a vertical chain of selection followed by the individual teacher's choices to the interactive "authoring" in the classroom. The teachers are also under a tight schedule for the different curriculum tasks to fit into an over-arching plan for the semester; knowledge and competences according to the knowledge requirements must be assessed in the "time slots" reserved for each curriculum task in the subjects. Therefore, they employ a strategy of "lending" content between the subjects.</p> <p>The general pattern of teaching is whole class teaching with the teacher as central actor. Because the teacher has to ensure that all students get the ability to reach the knowledge requirements, the lesson content to a great extent is prescribed and comes in the shape of subject matter-oriented facts, concepts and competences. Our study also shows that teachers – more or less – have to neglect initiatives from students in order to keep the lesson on the "right" track. Content that is not considered to fit in the current lesson, for example student's experiences, interests and questions, is to a high degree dismissed. The curriculum seems to promote a combination of what Deng & Luke</p>	

(2008) name as academic disciplinary and practical knowledge conceptions.

Word length	482
Key words	Classroom studies; Standards-based curriculum; curriculum theory; knowledge conceptions
Conference theme (e.g. Curriculum-making)	Curriculum policy and enactment