Promoting reading
Research and best practice

The Swedish Arts Council Publications Series 2015:3
Foreword – by the Swedish Arts Council

Today we have excellent opportunities for promoting a reading culture. A lively debate about the importance of reading for people’s education and learning and their capacity to participate actively in society has been going on in the media for several years now. The remits of a number of government agencies have been expanded to include the promotion of reading, among them the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish Arts Council. A new Library Act in Sweden clarifies the role of libraries in promoting the status of literature and interest in learning, information, education, and research as well as other cultural activities.

Since the 1990s, the Swedish Arts Council has distributed funds to local and regional reading promotion projects. The work of the Council assumes literature to be an art form and reading to be an artistic experience and the road to learning and edification. Over the years, a string of successful projects have been conducted. But the challenges remain great. International tests still show a downward trend in reading comprehension among the young. The new national targets for literature and reading promotion also emphasise the right of all to have access to high-quality literature. This in itself gives pause for thought and reflection. What is the current state of knowledge in the field? What is our collective experience concerning how we can increase and diversify reading and improve access to literature for all children and adults?

The Swedish Arts Council has commissioned researcher Jonas Andersson to review the current state of knowledge regarding reading promotion methods based on Swedish and international research. This review is addressed to all involved in reading promotion activities such as libraries, organisations, schools and preschools.

With this review, the Swedish Arts Council aims to contribute deeper knowledge and better practices to the ongoing public debate on how the literate can become readers, and how we can open paths to literature for all those who have not yet learnt to read.

Staffan Forssell, Director-General of the Swedish Arts Council
Foreword – by the author

While working on this knowledge review, I have had the pleasure and benefit of being surrounded by people with great expertise in this area. Many thanks to all those at the Swedish Arts Council who have provided suggestions, reflections and comments on this publication. Special thanks go to Lotta Brilioth Biörnstad, Cay Corneliuson, Nina Frid, Susanna Höijer, Maria Telenius, Signe Westin, Henriette Zorn and Andreas Åberg. I alone am responsible for any deficiencies.

Jonas Andersson
PhD in literary studies, researcher and writer
Table of contents

Introduction 7
   References 9
Chapter 1. Reading promotion 11
   What is reading promotion? 11
   State of the research 13
   Reading promotion methods and evaluations 15
   References 17
Chapter 2. Reading 19
   Some approaches to reading 19
   Reading for pleasure or voluntary reading 20
   Effects of voluntary reading 22
   Reading attitude, reading interest, and reading motivation 24
      Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation 25
      Main factors in reading motivation 25
   References 27
Chapter 3. Early reading stimulation 29
   Family literacy programmes 30
   Book gifting 31
   Bookstart 33
   Home visits 34
   The library and the preschool 35
      Preschools with a literary profile 37
      Preschool library in Lund 39
      Give me five 42
      STORYTELLING, PLAYING, READING 42
   Reading aloud 43
      Dialogic reading 44
      Storytime at the library 45
      Bedtime stories from inside 45
   References 46
Chapter 4. Reading role models 50
   Who are children’s reading role models? 50
   Reading and gender 51
   Dads as reading role models 54
      Read to me, Dad! 54
   Peers as reading role models 55
      Reading Champions 55
      Reading buddies 55
Introduction

Young people growing up in the twenty-first century will read and write more than in any other century. Their working and private lives will demand advanced forms of literacy. This was the conclusion reached by a report from the International Reading Association (now International Literacy Association) in 1999. So far, the twenty-first century has been marked by worrying results from measurements of the reading abilities of children and adolescents, presented in studies such as Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Based on these kinds of measurements, there have been calls for action from the authorities and reading promotion organisations of various kinds, both nationally and internationally.

In the final report of the Swedish Government’s enquiry into literature from 2012, the general conclusion was drawn that the status of literature in Sweden is good in many respects. It noted that the reading habits of the population remain fairly stable at a high level, that more literature than ever before is being published in Sweden, and that for being such a small language area, we have enjoyed great success in our exports of literature. But it also identified a number of clouds on the horizon. In particular, the deteriorations in our younger generations’ reading ability and reading habits, which have demonstrably occurred, are cause for concern. Among other things, the enquiry drew attention to the fact that there are still great differences in reading habits between different socio-economic groups, and also to the deterioration in reading ability among the young. It was also noted that this problem is greatest among boys.

Based on the findings of this enquiry, the Swedish Government Bill Läsa för livet (Reading for Life) (2013) proposed national targets for promoting literature and reading. These targets mean that:

Everyone in Sweden, regardless of background and their individual circumstances, is to have the opportunity to develop a good reading ability and have access to high-quality literature.

In order to achieve this overall goal, government efforts are to have the following purposes:

• To improve reading skills compared with the present day,
• That more people regularly read fiction and non-fiction than currently, and
• To increase awareness of the importance of reading for education, learning and participation in social life compared with the present.

Particular priority was given in the Government Bill to reading ability and motivation to read among children and adolescents. It is considered particularly important that improvements be observed in younger children.
This Government Bill states that there is no overall national stakeholder that can initiate, coordinate and monitor reading promotion interventions outside the school. The bulk of reading promotion efforts are local, which means that the sharing of experience is not as extensive as it ought to be, that greater national or multi-regional efforts are not happening, and that reading promotion projects are rarely evaluated. In keeping with the enquiry into literature, the Swedish Government proposed that the Swedish Arts Council should be tasked with initiating, coordinating and evaluating reading promotion efforts of national strategic interest.

During 2014, tasked by the Government, the Swedish Arts Council compiled a plan of action for reading promotion efforts outside the school, in collaboration with the Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM), adult education associations, and the National Library of Sweden (KB). The Swedish Arts Council’s remit includes distributing funds to reading promotion activities as well as initiating reading promotion activities itself. The Swedish National Agency for Education has begun Läslyftet (The Reading Boost) a major skills development intervention for schools, preschools and school libraries, aimed at improving students’ skills in reading comprehension and writing. MTM’s remit includes actively assisting in developing and improving access to literature and information for people with disabilities. Popular education associations conduct reading promotion activities, in particular for adults. The government bill Läsa för livet (Reading for Life) came to mean that some of the state aid to popular/adult education in 2014 was instead channelled into reading promotion activities. Regional, county and municipal libraries have been working with reading promotion for a long time – work that has become topical again due to the new Library Act among other things. County and regional libraries spend a significant portion of their resources on public library reading promotion, and in addition conduct reading promotion activities that directly target the public.

The expansion of the Swedish Arts Council’s remit to include reading promotion allows scope for greater monitoring of interventions, as well as gathering and disseminating methods, evaluations and research in order to raise the standards of future projects. This knowledge review is part of that work.

The Swedish Arts Council’s remit concerns reading promotion outside the school, but it is difficult to draw any clear distinction between reading promotion inside and outside the school, and it is probably not desirable either. Knowledge about reading promotion methods, understood as methods for awakening interest in and creating motivation for reading, is of course equally important inside and outside the school. Moreover, one could point out that public libraries and schools are united in a partially common mission: according to the curricula for primary and lower secondary school (Swedish National Agency for Education 2011) teaching should “stimulate students’ interest in reading and writing”. According to the new Library Act that came into force in 2014, public libraries are to “give particular attention to children and adolescents in order to promote their language development and to stimulate their reading”. In this context, we can also point to Swedish research that has stressed the pedagogical potential that lies in building on the culture and textual worlds that children and adolescents are exposed to outside school (e.g. Olin-Scheller 2006, Fast 2007, Schmidt 2013).

A knowledge review entails a compilation of research and/or experienced-based
knowledge within the area. Reading promotion methods refers to methods for making children, adolescents and adults into dedicated readers. The methods described here target children and adolescents in the first instance, but methods for adults are also described in this review. This knowledge review provides examples of reading promotion methods that have been applied by public and county/regional libraries as well as government agencies, municipal activities, and civil society organisations. Its main focus is on reading promotion activities in Sweden, but it also includes international comparisons. Both reading promotion activities in practice and relevant research in the area are described and discussed.

The review describes how reading promotion efforts are carried out, their purpose, objectives, target groups and collaborators; whether the method is based on prior research, reports or previous work; what results are generated; and if and how the reading promotion effort has been assessed. It is hoped that this knowledge review will serve as a source of inspiration in the formulation of national investments in reading promotion activities, and that it will be useful as a kind of encyclopaedia of reading promotion activities in the early 21st century. It is primarily addressed to librarians, teachers, government officials, organisations and individuals with a special interest in literature and reading promotion efforts.

References
Swedish Arts Council (2014). *Handlingsprogram för läsfrämjande.*
Chapter 1. Reading promotion

What is reading promotion?
In conjunction with the preparation of a National Action Plan for reading promotion, the Swedish Arts Council has defined this concept. Reading promotion means to:

• make readers of the literate
• open roads to literature for those who do not read
• increase access to a variety of literature in different languages and in different formats for readers of all ages
• provide more opportunities for an artistic experience through literature
• remove the obstacles to reading, broaden the repertoire and boost the reader’s self-confidence and identity as a reader.

In the research report *Promoting Reading to Adults in UK Public Libraries* (Kinnell & Shepherd 1998) reading promotion in the library context was defined as “any means by which libraries encourage people to read or to widen their reading horizons”. This means actively encouraging or providing advice on reading, or simply making it easier for library users to make their own choices. The authors of a couple of papers in the subject area of library and information science at the University of Borås define reading promotion as “activities aimed at creating favourable conditions for reading, the stimulus to read and the joy of reading” (Bogren & Oskarsson 2011); and “activities or actions carried out with the aim of stimulating and promoting people’s reading and desire to read” (Ledin 2005). Words like “benefit”, “facilitate”, “encourage”, “stimulate”, “joy” and “pleasure” are prevalent in the context of reading promotion.

Reading promotion is an *activity*, with a specific *intention*. According to the Swedish Arts Council’s definition, reading promotion means opening paths to literature for those who do not yet read. Reading promotion also includes making literature available to people with reading and writing difficulties. Another general target group for reading promotion activities is individuals who, while able to read, rarely do.

In *Slutet på boken är bara början: om läsarsamtal, bokcirklar och bibliotek* (*The end of the book is just the beginning: on reading talks, book circles and libraries*) (2012), Nina Frid describes the library’s reading promotion efforts as *making readers of the literate*. The difference between being *literate* and *becoming a reader* has also been emphasised by researcher Pamela Schultz Nybacka (2005). Nybacka defines a reader as “a person who voluntarily incorporates books and reading into his/her life”. In the English language research literature, the *engaged reader* is sometimes used to describe individuals who want to read, who choose to read, and who take pleasure in reading (Cremin et al. 2014).

Some prefer to use the term reading stimulation rather than reading promotion. This is the term used by Sandin (2011) for example. In the library context, a term more closely related to reading promotion is also used: *literature mediation*. The library manages
literature, gathers it and makes it available, but the library also acts as a mediator of literature (Thorhauge 1995). Norwegian library researcher Åse Kristine Tveit (2004) understands the term literature mediation to mean informing about literature, making it visible, generating the desire to read, and guiding the reader in the selection of literature. Seen in this way, literature mediation is a specific type of reading promotion. In other words: literature mediation is a reading promotion activity, but all reading promotion activities are not about literature mediation. Running a campaign about the importance of reading, for example, is a reading promotion activity, which need not necessarily be about literature mediation.

Sometimes a distinction is drawn between direct and indirect literature mediation. For example, Tveit distinguishes between direct mediation through a personal meeting, and indirect mediation in the form of reading tips on a website, for example. Examples of indirect literature mediation are subject departmentalisation, exhibitions, literature lists and written book presentations, while conversations between borrowers and librarians, traditional forms of book talks and other oral presentations of literature would be regarded as direct mediation. Such distinctions between “direct” and “indirect” can be problematized, particularly if you take into account those forms of mediation that combine the immediacy of speech with the permanency of writing, such as filmed book presentations published on websites.

Litteraturutredningen (The enquiry into literature) (2012) shows that approximately one third of county and regional libraries’ total financial resources are used for reading promotion interventions. Public education organisations are also significant actors in reading promotion efforts in the country. They conduct reading promotion activities for adults in the form of book circles, for example. In international comparisons, non-profit organisations running larger-scale reading promotion projects and campaigns are unusual. The Swedish association Läsrörelsen (The reading movement) is the foremost example of a Swedish non-profit organisation that runs campaigns and programmes aimed at children, adolescents and adults with various sponsors. Another example of a Swedish non-profit reading promotion organisation is Berättarministeriet (The ministry of storytelling), which runs writing workshops for children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 18 years in areas with high unemployment. Several Swedish book publishers also run reading promotion activities. Bonnier Carlsen has been actively involved with promoting the desire to read among children and adolescents, and collaborates for this purpose with Berättarministeriet and sports clubs. Publisher En bok för alla runs a substantial number of reading promotion activities in conjunction with clubs and associations, schools, libraries, and children’s and youth organisations.

Internationally, there are a very large number of organisations working with reading promotion. Recently, South African organisation Project for the Study of Alternative Education (PRAESA) won the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award for its reading promotion efforts with children and adolescents in South Africa. This is the third time since its inception in 2002 that the prize has gone to a reading promotion organisation. Previously the prize has gone to the Tamer Institute for Community Education, which runs reading promotion activities for children and adolescents on the West Bank and in Gaza, and to Banco del Libro (Book Bank), which works to promote reading among children and adolescents in Venezuela. The reading promotion orga-
nisations mentioned in this review include the UK’s National Literacy Trust and Book Trust, which, besides exercising some influence on Nordic reading promotion activities, also regularly publishes useful research reviews.

The most common target group for reading promotion efforts at Swedish libraries is children and adolescents. Reading promotion with adults as the main target group is a comparatively low-priority area. This is apparent in particular in several Masters theses: Ljung (2006) investigated reading promotion activities for adults as conducted by a number of librarians; Hansson & Svensson (2006) studied reading promotion activities for adults with “limited reading abilities”; and Hell Carlsson (2014) investigated the views of chief librarians on literature mediation for adults. That adults are a relatively low-priority target group for reading promotion efforts is by no means unique to Sweden. A study of reading promotion interventions for adults at public libraries, carried out on behalf of the British Library, shows that libraries work on the assumption that adults know what they want to read and have the skills to find the right books, and that adult readers prefer to make their own choices without interference from librarians. When it comes to adults, librarians tend to take a more neutral attitude and provide information rather than offer advice on reading (Kinnell & Shepherd 1998). However, in the last two years, book circles at Swedish public libraries have increased significantly, which can be interpreted as an increased focus on adult readers (Rydbeck 2013).

**State of the research**

How should one best define an area of research such as “reading promotion”? To begin with, by determining what type of reading research is contemplated and not contemplated. Research on reading and learning to read is a relatively new phenomenon, which has increased exponentially in recent decades. So for example, reading researcher Jeanne Chall could state in Stages of Reading Development from 1983 that more reading research had been published in a single year than had previously existed from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the 1960s. The majority of research on reading concerns the acquisition of literacy and the cognitive processes that are fundamental to reading. In recent decades, reading research has moved from a more formal learning context to wider social contexts. There is now a growing body of research in areas such as reading habits, reading preferences and attitudes towards reading.

In this review, research about learning to read will be given very little attention. Instead the focus is on the multi-disciplinary research field that is termed reading engagement. In the field reading engagement, reading within and outside school is studied. It might, for example, deal with reading at home or at work, how people are socialised into different reading roles, the positive or negative effects on reading of schools, libraries or other actors, how reading is impacted by new media, etc. An overview of the field is provided in Ellis & Coddington (2013) International handbook of research on children’s literacy, learning and culture, and in Ross (2006) Reading matters: what the research reveals about reading, libraries, and community. Reading engagement also includes a growing body of research on reading motivation and attitudes to reading. The aim is not to provide any kind comprehensive description of this growing field, which is large internationally and difficult to clearly define. Instead, a select number of examples of research are described that provide knowledge and insight into reading promotion activities. Reading promotion can be
understood as an activity for *increasing reading motivation, broadening reading interests, and improving attitudes to reading*.

A distinction can be drawn between studies in which reading promotion interventions, activities or methods are the *object* of the investigation, and research that indirectly can *form the starting point* for reading promotion activities. Empirical investigations of reading habits are an example of the latter. If the aim of reading promotion activities is to increase the scale of reading within a certain group and get more individuals within this group to identify themselves as readers, it may be of interest to know what the research says about this group’s preferences in terms of genres, to take just one of several possible examples.

Internationally, there is a growing body of research on reading promotion interventions, in particular the measurement of effects of various kinds. Here it is wise to remember how hazardous it can be to make decisions on the basis of just a few studies – two researchers can arrive at diametrically opposed results in terms of the effectiveness of an intervention, and therefore provide arguments for and against the implementation of one and the same activity. In addition, isolated studies can vary considerably in quality and methodological stringency. An instrument for overcoming such problems could be a meta-analysis, which analyses the aggregated results of a larger number of primary studies. Presentations of individual, interesting research results will be combined with presentations of meta-analyses or compilations of research in the different areas.

In a collaborative study from 2009 between the Swedish School of Library and Information Science and the Swedish Library Association (*Svensk Biblioteksförening*) the “effects of reading promotion activities” came in at fifth place in a top-ten list of important research issues that ought to be given priority. Academic studies of the *effects* of reading promotion activities in Sweden are rare. For charting the scope of knowledge about reading promotion activities in particular, two books are worth mentioning. The first is the knowledge review *Studier av barn- och ungdomsbibliotek* (*Studies of libraries for children and adolescents*) (2007) by Kerstin Rydsjö and AnnaCarin Elf, both of whom are active within the subject area library and information science. This review aims to present relevant knowledge in the field of children’s libraries. The study concluded that Swedish research in the field of libraries for children and adolescents is very limited, and the review is therefore based primarily on Masters theses from Swedish courses, even if comparisons are also made with the other Nordic countries as well as the UK and USA. Rydsjö’s and Elf’s review concerns reading promotion activities for children and adolescents.

The second book is *Barnbibliotek och lässtimulans: delaktighet, förhållningsätt, samarbete* (*Children’s libraries and reading stimulation: participation, approach, cooperation*) (2011) by Amira Sofie Sandin, also active in the field of library and information science. *Barnbibliotek och lässtimulans* (*Children’s libraries and reading stimulation*) is entirely dedicated to the reading stimulation activities of libraries and reviews the methods in a total of 93 reading stimulation projects carried out in Sweden from 2001–2010. Concerning research into reading promotion at children’s libraries, the anthology *Barnet, platsen, tiden: teorier och forskning i barnbibliotekets omvärld* (*The child, the place, the time: theories and research into the world of the children’s library*) (Rydsjö et al. 2010) is worth mentioning, in that it provides interesting perspectives on the reading promo-

The book *Som fisken i vattnet – Barnens väg till språk och läsande (Like pigs in mud – Children's paths to language and reading)* (Wilhelmsson 2000) describes 46 reading promotion projects in Sweden based on the categories “Reading projects for younger children”, “Reading projects for older children and adolescents”, “IT projects” and “Environments conducive to reading”. There are also books of an inspirational nature that report reading promotion projects. The book *Läsprojekt. Inspirationsbok för förskola, skola och bibliotek (Reading projects. Inspiration book for preschool, schools and libraries)* (2007) presents 35 projects at Swedish schools and libraries.

In his book *Den goda boken. Samtida föreställningar om litteratur och läsning (The good book: Contemporary ideas about literature and reading)* (2012), Magnus Persson, a researcher who has analysed reading promotion activities from a cultural perspective, looked at Läsrörelsen's partnership with McDonalds for example. Persson did not evaluate the campaign's results but scrutinized Läsrörelsen’s various discourses on reading from a critical perspective. In the study *Synen på skönlitteratur för vuxna på svenska folkbibliotek (Attitudes to fiction for adults at Swedish public libraries)* (Ehrenberg et al. 2013), Persson analysed a number of reading promotion library projects from similar perspectives. Persson is of the opinion that Sweden, unlike our neighbour, Norway, largely lacks relevant, up-to-date research to rely on for conscious strategic efforts concerning literature mediation at libraries.

Reading promotion – or reading stimulation as it is also called – is a relatively common topic for Swedish theses at the Bachelors and Masters levels, especially in the field of library and information science. In only the last ten or fifteen years, hundreds of Swedish Masters theses have been written on reading promotion activities. The higher education institutions and universities that offer courses in the subject within Sweden are the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in Borås (BHS), Lund University, Umeå University, Uppsala University and Linnaeus University. Theses on reading promotion are also produced in other academic disciplines. This applies in particular to the discipline of pedagogy, where reading promotion is often studied from a classroom perspective. The examples of theses in this review show trends in different areas and have not been selected primarily on the basis of any academic quality criteria.

**Reading promotion methods and evaluations**

The reading promotion methods used in children's libraries that Sandin (2011) identifies include holding story-time sessions and song sessions for small children, the development of reference interviews to be able to respond to children’s questions, book games, book clubs, book conversations and booktalk, and activities that offer multilingual children stories in different languages. Reading promotion efforts also include the development of methods to respond to children in need of adapted media such as
talking books, books in Braille, or books with graded levels of difficulty. Methods have also been designed regarding the library space itself, for example, adapting the placement of media to children’s own orientation needs. Reading stimulation efforts also include collaborating with other actors in the child’s vicinity such as the school, preschool, open preschools or child health centres (Barnavårdcentralen – BVC).

In a recently published report on reading promotion interventions from 2011 to 2013 in public libraries in six counties and regions in Southern Sweden, there are examples of story-time sessions, reading aloud, book circles, children telling their own stories and visits by authors (Schmidt 2015). If you take the time to orientate yourself among reading promotion projects and programmes at libraries, you soon detect a repertoire of basic methods, which are varied in terms of content, target groups, practical approaches and technical applications. There are also books of a manual type about reading promotion methods. Such a manual is Läslust och läslist: idéer för högstadiet och gymnasiet (The enjoyment of reading and stratagems for reading: ideas for upper and lower secondary school students) (2005), which deals with book conversations, book circles and reading aloud, for example. Internationally, there is quite a comprehensive body of manual-style literature on reading promotion methods, of varying quality.

The purpose of reading promotion projects is often to try out new methods, or revive old, proven methods. Sandin identifies four overlapping motives for conducting reading promotion projects. It can be about monitoring what others are doing and knowledge development, that is, a desire to develop working methods that respond to new social needs. Projects may also be seen as opportunities to test a new working method, which there is no scope to do within normal activities. Furthermore, projects may be initiated for the development of cooperation. Finally, reading stimulation projects may be perceived as an opportunity for continuing education. In this context, Sandin describes in brief how a number of project reports point out a gap between the formal education of librarians and the skills needed to work in children’s libraries.

What role can research play, then, in the practical work of reading promotion activities? The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) regularly publishes research reports related to library and information services. The report Using Research to Promote Literacy and Reading in Libraries: Guidelines for Librarians (Farmer & Stricevic 2011) outlines how research may be helpful for the planning, assessment and improvement of reading promotion programmes and activities at libraries. For example, research can measure the quality and impact of the activity in question. A project can be considered successful or not with regard to the:

- process: how well a programme or project was planned and implemented
- product: the impact that the programme/project has had on its participants.

Assessing the effectiveness of a reading promotion intervention means answering a number of questions. The more fundamental of these include:

- How many participants were there?
- What was the quality of participation?
- Who didn’t participate – and why?
- How did the participants perceive the project?
• In what ways have the participants been changed as a result of their participation (in both the short and long term)?

For additional relevant questions to ask in connection with reading promotion programme and project evaluations, refer to the IFLA report above.

Sandin (2011) notes that reports and evaluations are often used to show how the funds granted have been used, resulting in the highlighting of what has worked well within a project, and the toning down of what has been less successful. Detailed and more critical evaluations are found mainly within larger projects that have hired external evaluators. But such evaluations are relatively few. The majority of the reading promotion projects and programmes undertaken in Sweden are not evaluated at all, and many researchers have found that there is a lack of critical and analytical evaluations and reports on library projects. This also applies to a high degree to the various reading promotion activities of popular education organisations.

It is important to monitor and evaluate more reading promotion interventions in order to identify possible shortcomings and development opportunities. But research and evaluation is also essential for making the potential merits of an activity visible in a way that is credible and neutral in relation to the project owners. In such a case, research and evaluation can help to document and make visible activities and experiences that deserve to be made visible and disseminated. One can also note the need to set specific objectives that are possible to monitor and evaluate to a greater degree than is currently the case.

References


Chapter 2. Reading

Some approaches to reading
Researcher Sten Furhammar (1997) has divided some common approaches to reading into four main categories. These categories should not be perceived as either static, hierarchical or with clear boundaries in relation to each other.

- **Impersonal experiential reading** is focused on entertainment and leisure, where connections between the text and the reader’s own experiences are rare.
- **Personal experiential reading** means that the reader makes connections between the text and the reader’s own experience.
- **Impersonal instrumental reading** aims to acquire knowledge that can directly be translated into other contexts.
- **Personal instrumental reading** has a therapeutic effect in the form of consolation or existential self-reflection, for example.

There is a connection between what Furhammar denotes as personal experiential reading and reading motivation. The possibility of making connections between what one reads and one’s own life, referred to as subjective relevance, has been highlighted by the research as an important motivating factor. Another factor is the opportunity to make one’s own choices. Here, a well-known dilemma emerges: should the reader decide on the selection entirely, or is there reason to try to influence the reader in new directions? The answer you give depends on how you understand your role as a literature mediator. Furhammar’s typology gives examples of approaches based on the reader’s perspective. Looking at reading from the mediator’s perspective, a distinction has been drawn between the pragmatic, traditionalist and emancipatory approaches. This model occurs in many quarters in the research on libraries and reading promotion (see for example Rydsjö & Elf 2007).

- The **pragmatic approach** means that the teacher/librarian prioritizes that children and adolescents read, without having any views on the content of what they are reading.
- The **traditionalist approach** entails wanting to convey a cultural heritage in the form of stories, Swedish children’s book authors, or key classics.
- The **emancipatory approach** instead focuses on the individual and critical development of the student’s reading.

Many researchers have similarly identified a kind of third position, between public education and demand – or conservator and the market if you wish – related to how librarians perceive their professional roles in relation to library users. In her thesis *Mellom elite og publikum: litterær smak og litteraturformidling blant bibliotekarar i norske folkebibliotek* (Between the elite and the masses: literary tastes and literature mediation among librarians in Norwegian public libraries) (2002), the Norwegian library researcher Jofrid...
Karner Smidt pointed out that librarians often try to find such a third alternative. Maj Klasson (1991) differentiates between the market model, the conservator model and the participatory model or interaction model. In her thesis, Skönlitteraturens budbärare (Fiction’s messenger) (2010), Annelie Lind draws a distinction between a demand-driven, a public education, and a dialogue and conversation-oriented approach. The tension between providing what is being demanded versus broadening borrowers’ reading can be bridged through the dialogue between the librarian and the borrower, Lind asserts. Nina Frid (2012) reflects on how such a third, dialogue-oriented mediator role means that the mediator “meets the reader on the basis of the reader’s perspective and needs, but uses his or her skills and literary knowledge as a strength”.

**Reading for pleasure or voluntary reading**

According to a report from the Swedish National Agency for Education (2007), the school’s teaching of reading and writing is dominated by formal drilling in skills. This is despite the fact that the curriculum and course syllabuses for Swedish and Swedish as a second language emphasise that learning should take place in meaningful contexts, and that language development should always be linked to content.

According to this report, teaching carried out in accordance with the curriculum has been shown to improve students’ results in reading tests. That there is a risk of limiting reading to a matter of improving test results has been raised by the American secondary school teacher Kelly Gallagher who, in an acclaimed book entitled Readicide: How Schools are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It (2009) claimed that through its one-sided focus on test results, schools are engaged in a kind of systematic murder of the desire to read. As a consequence of this “murder”, new groups emerge of aliterate individuals, i.e. people who can in fact read, but very rarely do. Reading promotion is partly about reaching those who could be described as aliterate in Gallagher’s sense of the word, i.e. the literate who rarely or never read. According to Gallagher, the factors that contribute to the murder of students’ reading enjoyment include schools ignoring the importance of students’ recreational reading.

The teaching of reading in schools is often positioned as distinct from reading for pleasure. The term reading for pleasure or pleasure reading is widely used in reading promotion contexts, and has, in the research, a number of rough equivalents. Some related concepts are voluntary reading or free voluntary reading, independent reading, leisure reading or recreational reading, and ludic reading. In the study Lost in a book: the psychology of reading for pleasure (1988), Victor Nell uses the term ludic reading (from the Latin ludo meaning to play/playful) to mean pleasurable reading that you are absorbed in for its own sake. Reading researcher Stephen Krashen (2004, 2011) uses the term Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) as the designation for extensive reading that is done voluntarily.

On assignment from the UK reading promotion organisation, the National Literacy Trust, researchers Christina Clark and Kate Rumbold (2006) wrote a useful overview of the research concerning reading for pleasure. They define reading for pleasure as reading of one’s own free will, for one’s own enjoyment or satisfaction. This term also includes reading that is started on someone else’s behest, but which is then pursued voluntarily. Thus, the term reading for pleasure says something about the goal or purpose of the
reading (the individual’s pleasurable reading experience), and something about the conditions under which the reading occurs (voluntary). Unlike recreational reading, which by definition occurs outside of school and working hours, reading for pleasure is something that also occurs in the formal teaching and learning context.

In *Barn berättar. En studie av 10-åringars syn på läsning och bibliotek* (*What children say: A study of 10-year olds’ views on reading and libraries*) (2011) researcher Åse Hedemark makes an important point: While it is appropriate to strengthen the link between reading and pleasure, when it comes to developing reading stimulation methods in the public library context, more support should be given to the child’s interest in reading to learn about things than currently occurs. Reading for pleasure is a more or less accepted term in the research that is of interest to this review. However, the alternative term *voluntary reading* should be used here as far as possible, meaning reading that is done of one’s own free will and in the pursuit of one’s own interests. This is important for primarily two reasons: (1) Even if pleasure is a common motivation for people to read in their spare time, there are many more motivations for reading voluntarily, and these need not necessarily – or at all – be concerned with pleasure.

(2) It is questionable whether the most effective argument for reading is that it gives pleasure to the reader. In some instances, it may be downright counter-productive to promote “reading for pleasure”. In the anthology *Literacy and Motivation: Reading Engagement in Individuals and Groups* (2001), researcher Michael C. McKenna points out that the attitudes to reading developed during childhood and adolescence generally deteriorate over time. One attempt to explain this phenomenon is by the fact that more and more competing recreational activities are being offered to children and adolescents. It is likely that these activities, whether they are sports, computer games, films/movies, listening to music or something else, give as much or more pleasure than reading. If pleasure or enjoyment are perceived as the primary goals of reading, the consequence is that it may be difficult to argue for setting aside time specifically for reading.

**Effects of voluntary reading**

There are many good effects of voluntary reading. But before these effects are looked at, something needs to be said about the value of reading literature. Danish library researcher Beth Juncker (2010) is of the opinion that different concepts of culture apply to the cultural sector and the education sector, respectively. While the cultural sector with its aesthetic philosophy and theory is *autotelic*, the education sector, with its vocabulary of pedagogical and didactic concepts is *instrumental*. An autotelic activity is something that you do for its own sake – the word comes from the Greek *autos* (self), and *telos* (goal). In his book *Varför läsa litteratur? (Why Read Literature?)* (2007), Magnus Persson examined the legitimation foundations for reading literature in schools and in higher education, and expressed the view that school is dominated by an *instrumental* view of reading literature, in that it is often legitimised by reference to values other than literature itself. How then is reading literature perceived in the context of the public library’s activities? Since the public library belongs to the cultural sector, according to Juncker, it should of course be marked by an *autotelic* view of literature. But in that case, why are reading promotion activities at public libraries so often motivated by reference to
a decline in reading comprehension, described in PISA reports and the like? Literature has, of course, a value in itself, so why justify reading promotion with values other than literature itself?

Declaring reading to be potentially “useful” is often perceived as reducing reading to being merely useful. But the fact that an activity is in any way “useful” does not rule out the possibility that it has a value in itself. Incidentally, this does not just apply to literature, but to all cultural practice. As historian of ideas David Karlsson (2010) has pointed out, the issue of culture having an intrinsic value or being useful is based on a false assumption of an antipathy between the two. It is not a question of either or. At first sight, a division between autotelic and instrumental culture may appear to be elucidating. But such a division is also liable to overshadow the fact that cultural activities often have both an intrinsic value and an instrumental value. Thus, there is nothing contradictory about viewing the reading of literature as an activity with intrinsic value, while simultaneously giving it further legitimacy by referring to the positive educational and social effects of reading. Furthermore, a useful effect of reading literature, in the form of improved reading skills, is also in turn an instrument and a prerequisite for being able to benefit from the intrinsic value of literature in the first place.

The fact that free voluntary reading can have positive effects on language development has been known for a long time. In a thesis on voluntary reading among pupils in primary and secondary school, Du Toit (2004) describes research that has demonstrated the positive effects of voluntary reading such as extended vocabulary, improved writing skills, better results in reading tests, and more positive attitudes to reading in general. A positive correlation between reading enjoyment and reading skills has been shown in many studies; see for example Clark & De Zoysa (2011) and Clark (2011). The relationship between reading frequency and reading skills has also been mapped; see for example Clark & Douglas (2011) and Clark (2011). In a meta-analysis of 99 studies, Mol & Bus (2011) confirmed a well-known positive spiral regarding reading: children who read a lot improve their reading ability, and children with good reading ability read more, further improving their reading ability.

Several international research reports exude high hopes for the potential of voluntary reading to combat exclusion and raise educational levels. A summary of the benefits of reading for pleasure can be found in the report Research evidence on reading for pleasure from the Department for Education in London (2012), for example. Citing a number of studies, Clark & Rumbold (2006) list the effects of voluntary reading such as improved reading ability and writing ability, improved comprehension, grammar and vocabulary, a better attitude to reading, increased self-confidence as a reader, greater inclination towards voluntary reading later in life and increased general knowledge – but also better understanding of other cultures, increased participation in society, and greater insight into human decision-making.

In the study Regionalism and the Reading Class (2008), sociologist Wendy Griswold termed the portion of the population who regularly engage in reading for pleasure “the reading class”, and noted among other things that affluent people read more. A number of studies show that children from less endowed social circumstances generally read less for pleasure than children from more privileged classes. In Litteraturutredningen (The enquiry into literature) (2012), it was found that the highly educated are twice as
likely to read books at least once each week compared with the less educated. At the same time, there are a number of studies that give support to the potential of voluntary reading to generate social mobility. A comprehensive UK study that examined the cognitive effects of reading for pleasure over time points to reading for pleasure in leisure time as more important to children’s learning than parental level of education (Sullivan & Brown 2013). The extensive OECD study Reading for Change (2002), which covered 32 countries, showed similarly that reading engagement in the form of regular reading for pleasure is more important for the reading ability of children and adolescents than their parents’ occupational status. All in all, the report Reading for Change provides strong arguments for voluntary reading as an effective social lever for change. That voluntary reading is associated with a number of social and educational benefits is also confirmed by Clark & Akerman (2006) in their study Social inclusion and reading: an exploration.

**Reading attitude, reading interest, and reading motivation**

While *reading attitude* refers to the feelings and ideas that the individual has about reading and *reading interest* refers to preferences in terms of genres and subjects, etc., *reading motivation* is about an internal condition that results in people wanting to read (Clark & Rumbold 2006). Based on these definitions, it is fully possible to have a positive attitude to reading, in combination with a weak or non-existent motivation to read. In fact, this is quite common. The idea that reading is something good and important is widespread among those who choose not to read. The reverse – that is, a negative attitude to reading in combination with a strong motivation to read – is also quite possible, but perhaps less common. A negative reading attitude is commonly accompanied by a low level of reading motivation. For this reason, reading promotion is also about influencing reading attitudes in a positive direction.

As has been pointed out many times, the purely cognitive perspective on reading is insufficient: the mere fact that someone has the ability to read, does not mean that he or she will engage in reading. Since reading is a strenuous activity that you can choose to do or not do, motivation is also necessary (Baker & Wigfield 1999). Reading motivation concerns not only those who are already literate; it is also fundamental for learning to read (Verhoeven & Snow 2001). It has hardly gone unnoticed in the research that motivation is of great importance for the development of reading ability, but the relationship between learning to read and reading motivation has not, according to some researchers, received the attention it deserves (Du Toit 2004). American reading researcher Linda Gambrell (2011) has criticized the insufficiency of a school education which only provides students with the ability to decode and understand text: if pupils are unmotivated to read, they will never achieve their full potential in reading and writing ability. At the same time, she perceives an increase in research on reading motivation in the last two decades as a sign of recognition of its important role. Researchers John T. Guthrie and Allan Wigfield (2000) have argued that reading motivation is of central importance to what is termed the Matthew effect, that is, the phenomenon that good readers tend to become better readers, and poor readers tend to become worse: a high level of reading skill increases motivation to read, and a high level of motivation leads to more reading, further improving reading skills. Conversely, a low level of reading
skills reduces the motivation to read, and a low level of motivation leads to less reading, and so on.

**Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**
In reading research and in educational contexts there is an overall distinction drawn between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. *Intrinsic motivation* means being motivated by something for its own sake. *Extrinsic motivation* means engaging in something on the basis of externally formulated values or requirements. For example, when a child reads to live up to a teacher’s or parent’s expectations, this is a case of extrinsic motivation. Reading to get good marks, be rewarded or win prizes are examples of extrinsic motivation. Both types of motivation are important for reading promotion among the young. However, there are indications that children who read for the external results that reading is expected to give them, tend to get less out of their reading. There is also evidence to show that externally motivated readers are more inclined to read at surface level than readers with an internal motivation. Generally, both types of motivation have come to be associated with different learning strategies and types of learning – internal motivation with “deep learning” and extrinsic motivation with “surface learning”. On the other hand, studies indicate that extrinsic motivation can serve as a means of achieving internal motivation (see for example Wang & Guthrie 2004).

**Main factors in reading motivation**
Based on research in the field of *reading engagement*, Linda Gambrell (2011) has compiled seven rules for stimulating reading motivation. These rules are intended for the teaching of literature in schools, but apply equally to reading outside school. They are reproduced here in abbreviated form. These rules acquire an additional degree of urgency when positioned in relation to the *actual* situation regarding the teaching of reading in Swedish schools according to a report from the Swedish National Agency for Education (2007). Gambrell’s rules are listed in the column to the left, and in the column to the right are some observations in summary from the report of the Swedish Agency for Education, in the form of verbatim quotations (translated here into English).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when their reading tasks and activities are relevant to their own lives. When students make connections between what they read and their own lives, they become more involved and engaged in understanding the text.</td>
<td>Conversations about the content of texts and students' interpretations and experiences related to reading are not common. [---] The reading of literature to provide a perspective on students' own experiences and the world around them is reported in only a few studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they have access to a broad range of reading material. A broad range of genres and types of text, newspapers and Internet material has a positive effect on the quality and extent of students' reading experiences. Providing a rich variety of reading material communicates that reading is a valuable and worthwhile pursuit.</td>
<td>The texts that students encounter for reading in school are largely from textbooks and exercises in textbooks, or exercise materials that the teacher has produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they get plenty of time to read.</td>
<td>Students' independent reading is often something outside their regular classroom activities, and its content is seldom discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they have the opportunity to choose what they will read.</td>
<td>For very young students, books are often supplied to them in boxes from the municipal library. Consequently, fiction books are selected by librarians, not by teachers who know their students and know what they are interested in, and what might challenge them. [---] The research shows that books are often poorly matched with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they have the opportunity to interact socially with each other around the text they have read. Social interaction includes talking to others about books, reading with others, borrowing and sharing books with others, talking about books with classmates, and sharing written texts about books with others.</td>
<td>Conversations about the content of texts and students' interpretations and experiences related to reading are not common. [---] content is seldom discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they have the opportunity to successfully tackle demanding texts. Here, it's important to strike a balance between texts that are too difficult, where the reader is likely to give up, and too lightweight, where the reader risks becoming bored.</td>
<td>The research shows […] that teachers generally lack knowledge about current literature for children and adolescents and fiction. [---] Studies consistently show that many teachers lack education and knowledge about current literature for children and adolescents, and about potential approaches to teaching literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more motivated to read when they are given incentives that reflect the value and importance of reading. In surveys, rewards related to reading have shown excellent results.</td>
<td>No such practice is apparent from the report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To summarise: the factors essential to motivating children and adolescents to read include the perceived relevance of the literature to their own lives, access to a broad range of reading material, plenty of time for reading, freedom of choice in the selection of reading material, and the opportunity for social interaction around what has been read. The teaching of reading in Swedish schools – as it is largely practised according to the Swedish National Agency for Education’s report from 2007 – is therefore contrary to what the research says about reading motivation on virtually every point. Add to this the fact that research on reading outside school has demonstrated a positive correlation between literacy and access to books in the home (Clark et al. 2011); that children who own books read more frequently and benefit more from their reading than children who do not (Clark Poulton & 2011); that children who come from homes where reading is valued have a greater tendency to evolve into readers (Clark & Rumbold 2006); that reading for pleasure is strongly influenced by the relationships between teachers and children as well as children and their families (Cremin et al. 2009); and that a large number of studies indicate that parents and the home environment are crucial for children’s reading (see for example Close 2001) and a picture begins to emerge where socio-cultural factors are being allowed to greatly determine who become readers and who do not.

References
Cremin, Teresa; Mottram, Marilyn; Collins, Fiona; Powell, Sacha & Safford, Kimberly (2009). Teachers as readers: building communities of readers. Literacy, 43(1), pp. 11–19.
Chapter 3. Early reading stimulation

Children who read better than their contemporaries read more, and thus become even better readers. Children who do not read well, read less, with the result that they fall even further behind. This has been referred to as reading’s “Matthew effect”. A “Matthew effect” means essentially that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer – the effect is named after the verse in the Bible’s Gospel according to Matthew, which says that “Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them”. The Matthew effect has been used to explain the gradually increasing gap between strong and weak readers (Stano-vich 1986). The Matthew effect in the context of reading argues for reading motivation and literacy being mutually interdependent. Children who learn how to decode text early tend to accumulate positive experiences of reading. Reading becomes a part of their own identity and it then becomes natural to seek additional reading experiences. The consequence of this is an upward spiral with rapid progress in literacy and reading activity. Conversely, children who are late in learning to read tend to read less, which means less practice. They don’t identify themselves as readers and ultimately avoid reading altogether. Researchers have shown that the Matthew effect does not apply to all readers (Scarborough & Parker 2003). Literature educationalist Gunilla Molloy (2007) has pointed out the risk of the Matthew effect giving rise to negative thought patterns in the pedagogical context – weak readers being regarded as hopeless cases. On a more positive note, the Matthew effect is indicative of the importance of early interventions to strengthen the child’s positive relationship to literature and reading.

That the home is often the place where the child’s reading interests take shape seems intuitively reasonable and there is evidence of this in many quarters. The research points to a strong correlation between access to written language in the home and developed literacy. Being surrounded by individuals who read, having access to books, magazines and newspapers in the home, and simply being in an environment where reading is valued are all essential for a child to become a competent reader (Eurydice 2011). Parental engagement is particularly important for the child’s reading development. Parents who enjoy reading and want to share the experience with their children convey a positive attitude to reading, which can be crucial to a child’s literacy. Early reading activities in the home lay a foundation for the child learning to read in school.

There is consensus among researchers about the significance of parents for the child’s early language learning. In the research on the influence of the family and home environment on the child’s reading development, there are plenty of examples of the long-term effects of early parental engagement – for an overview, see for example Bonci (2011) and Eurydice (2011). In her thesis *Tidig språkstimulering av barn (Early language stimulation in children)* (1993), Ann-Katrin Svensson points out that the importance of early language stimulation is consistently emphasised in various research orientations. Svensson summarises the conclusions of some of the research on the importance of
early language stimulation and points out that by providing information to parents, it is possible to influence the degree of their interaction with their child, and the quality of the stimulation that the child receives in the home. Parents armed with knowledge about the importance of stimulation for their child’s development stimulate the language development of their children more than other parents, and these children are then more successful in learning to read and write than children that have been given less stimulation. The thesis *Tidig språkstimulering av barn (Early language stimulation in children)* is one of several studies that support the type of reading promotion activities described in the following.

**Family literacy programmes**

Parents who regularly support their child’s learning in general and reading development in particular play a crucial role in the child’s reading motivation and reading ability. Parental engagement in the home is particularly important for the child’s reading development during early childhood, and has significant implications for the child’s linguistic and cognitive abilities as well as reading interest and reading motivation. A growing body of research is demonstrating the positive effects of *family literacy interventions* or *family literacy programmes*, that is, reading promotion initiatives addressed to whole families, often in regions of social vulnerability. The term “family literacy” is attributed to researcher Denny Taylor, who used it to describe middle-class families’ daily reading and writing activities in an ethnographic study. In the now classic study *Family literacy* (1983), Taylor documented the early attempts of small children to read and write for several purposes and in several contexts –including writing notes, reading product wordmarks, notices, traffic signs, etc. Taylor concluded that the parents of these children were not consciously aiming to teach the child to read and write, but instead were contributing to the child’s reading and writing development by encouraging them to take part in various activities that entailed reading and writing.

*Family literacy* can thus refer to literacy activities that families engage in on a daily basis. A *family literacy* project refers to a type of project that, based on a recognition of the family’s important role in the reading and writing development of individual family members, addresses whole families to provide support and encouragement in this development. For a more detailed discussion of the concept of *family literacy*, see for example Brooks et al. (2008).

There are several types of *family literacy* initiatives; a number of variants can be found for example in a report that brings together and describes a number of projects in Canada (Thomas 1998). It is common in *family literacy* programmes to encourage parents to read aloud to their children, and/or to provide families with free book packs. Reading promotion programmes of the *family literacy* type are found in many places around the world. In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Carpentieri et al. (2011) examined the efficacy of a series of reading promotion initiatives in Europe targeting families with children, with an emphasis on families in socially vulnerable groups. This survey included studies of successful and innovative examples of programmes implemented in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The study is based on a review of six meta-analyses of reading promotion programmes targeting families with children, which in turn constitute analyses of a still
small but methodologically stringent body of quantitative research in the area. Such programmes have demonstrated high efficacy in terms of both improving children’s literacy and parents’ capacity to give their children support.

Four factors determine the success of a project, according to the report: financing, the quality of the project, collaboration, and research into the efficacy of the methods used. Some projects add a fifth factor: support by media. A new project ought to have two pilots: a first in order to gain knowledge about what adjustments need to be made to satisfy the needs of the participants; and a second to evaluate the project’s efficacy. The main question to be asked in the implementation of a reading promotion project is not whether it will work, since most projects tend to work to some degree. The question that should be asked instead is how well the project worked in comparison with other feasible alternatives. Interestingly, the report observes that family literacy initiatives exhibit greater efficacy than many of the pedagogical interventions carried out within the school setting. Nor do they need to compete with school-based intervention programmes, but may instead be a complement for improving the child’s reading ability.

**Book gifting**
Since children’s librarians were established throughout Sweden in the 1960s and 70s, there has been a long tradition among them, of outreach with reading promotion methods. In the twenty-first century, libraries have increasingly focused on the very young, with library environments having been adapted in particular to small children and their parents. One of the most common outreach tasks of public libraries in Sweden is to distribute free book packs and organise parent groups in collaboration with child health centres (barnavårdscentralen – BVC), work that has been going on for decades (Corneliuson 2007). This collaboration generally includes the participation of children’s librarians in parent education. The report *Dags att höja ribban!? (Time to raise the bar!?)* (Rydsjö 2012) reviewed and compiled a number of studies of projects and activities carried out in this collaboration between child health centres and libraries, with the aim of stimulating the language development of small children. Sweden’s Library Act stipulates that public libraries are to pay particular attention to children and adolescents in order to further their language development and stimulate their reading. One of the tasks of child health centres is to check, support and monitor the child’s language development. As Rydsjö points out, these two public institutions – the library and the child health centre – are brought together in this common task.

In order to clarify the degrees of collaboration between libraries and child health centres, a proposal for its taxonomy has been drawn up, describing seven different levels, the highest of which entails joint planning, implementation and evaluation of activities, with the lowest level being that the child health centre simply serves as a channel for the library’s information (Ögland et al. 2010). An extended charting and description of the current status of this collaboration between public libraries and child health centres in Sweden indicate that Swedish libraries and child health centres are collaborating when it comes to free book packs, but that deeper, long-term partnerships that are monitored and evaluated are uncommon (Lundh & Michnik 2014).

The most common method of collaboration between child health centres and libraries involves the distribution of free book packs to children under two years of age.
A survey shows the difficulties of reaching new Swedes and children with disabilities using this method (Corneliuson 2007). Overall, the challenge with reading promotion efforts is to reach out to the groups in greatest need. For some projects, ‘language bags’ have been produced, which besides books also contain other materials such as bookmarks, toys depicting characters from children’s books, etc., to use with parents and children. In the report, Rydsjö stresses the importance of knowledge about children’s literature in languages other than the majority language. Abroad, there are various ways of working with children’s multilingualism. In the UK, as part of the Bookstart programme, books are offered in more languages than English, while in a similar programme in Denmark (Bogstart), the choice has been made to give all families books in Danish.

There are at least two established ways of handing over a package of books to a family. There is some disagreement around which of these is preferable. Many projects have used gift cards supplied to parents via the nurse at the child health centre, which can then be redeemed for a free book pack at the library. This is to encourage parents to become active visitors to the library. The Bookstart programme also requires that the child become registered as a borrower. This method has proven to have a disadvantage: in many studies, it has been found that parents with limited reading abilities refrain from visiting the library. It has therefore been proposed that, where necessary, the package of books should be provided directly to the parents, and to let the nurse at the child health centre decide what is most appropriate. In Sweden, the distribution statistics in many places have been low where the library has been the distributor; parents have simply not visited the library to pick up their package of books. The statistics have been better when staff at the child health centre have distributed book packages directly to parents. However, this method places higher demands on the library to work with outreach in other ways (Corneliuson 2007).

In this context of free book packs as a reading promotion method, it is worth mentioning a British study that shows strong links between reading enjoyment, attitudes to reading and book ownership (Clark & Poulton 2011). The importance of giving books in the work of improving reading habits and attitudes to reading is also reflected in a series of evaluations reported by Rydsjö. Rydsjö’s suggestions for best practice include supplying age-appropriate books and free book packs on a number of occasions during the preschool years, which has also occurred as part of Bookstart internationally. The most common has been to distribute free book packs on a single occasion, in all cases to children under the age of six months. In some programmes, free book packs have been distributed on three additional occasions, usually at the ages of 18 months, three and six years (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2014). The Danish programme Bogstart involves four free book packs distributed when the child is six months, one year, 18 months and three years old. In the UK, there is also a special programme for two-year-olds and their families, called Bookstart+.

Generally, book gifting programmes are aimed at small children and their parents, but free book packs also form part of reading promotion activities with other target groups. An example is the Letterbox Club Sverige project, which involves sending free book packs to children aged 8–10 in foster care, once each month for six months. About 30 children from a total of 8 districts in the City of Stockholm took part in a pilot
project. This project was carried out jointly by the City of Stockholm’s social services department, the Department of Social Work at Stockholm University, the Stockholm regional library, and Bokspindeln (The book spider), the latter being a platform for reading promotion projects and tasks. The free book pack contains a fiction book and a non-fiction book, a letter from one of the authors, and a letter from a nearby library. As well as providing free books, the pack is also intended to serve as a reminder that the library exists. This activity has a British forerunner in the Letterbox Club, which is based on a similar concept. The British Letterbox Club was evaluated using before and after measurements with the standardised instruments on a large number of children during the first two years of the project, and the results showed significant improvements in literacy in both years (Griffiths et al., 2010). Just like Bookstart, the Letterbox Club works under the auspices of the British charity BookTrust, and more evaluations of the Letterbox Club are available on this organisation’s website.

**Bookstart**
The British book gifting programme Bookstart began as a project in Birmingham in 1992, on the initiative of the reading promotion charity organisation BookTrust. In 2013, Bookstart was represented in 38 countries on all continents. The British Bookstart is a programme that involves, among other things, distributing free books to families with children aged 6–9 months via child health centres. Bookstart is a highly collaborative project that entails partnering between a number of professional groups and organisations, such as disability organisations of various kinds (Cooling 2011). Bookstart reaches over two million children and their families each year (Bird 2014). BookTrust’s website describes the activity as the flagship of BookTrust’s portfolio of book gifting initiatives. There are now also extended Bookstart programmes tailored to specific target groups. For example, Bookstart Corner has a particular focus on socially disadvantaged families.

Bookstart has been the subject of several studies and evaluations over the years and it would be too much to give an account of them all here. A number of reports on Bookstart, Bookstart Corner and Bookstart+ are available on the BookTrust website. For example, Bookstart has been evaluated by researchers Barrie Wade and Maggie Moore several times, and they have been able to establish good results from the programme. The programme Bookstart+ was evaluated by O’Hare & Connolly (2010), who were able to demonstrate, among other things, improved attitudes among parents to reading with their children and increased library use as results of the programme. A major study of Bookstart (NCRCL 2001) conducted at the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature at the University of Surrey in Roehampton reported the following results:

- Increased reading (more often and more) with infants and small children by parents/guardians
- Increase in the number of library memberships for children
- More parents/guardians valuing reading for infants and small children
- Increased self-confidence in reading aloud to children
- Greater awareness of the role of reading in speech and language development.
An analysis of the questionnaires addressed to parents who had participated in Bookstart showed that 71 per cent of parents had purchased more books for their children as a result of Bookstart, and that 28 per cent spent more time on books with their children (Wade & Moore 2003). For a summary in Swedish of the evaluations of this project before 2012, the reader is referred to Kerstin Rydsjö’s report. A major research project on the effects of the Danish Bogstart programme began in 2013, led by researcher Dorthe Bleses, who had previously participated in a detailed evaluation of the programme (Bleses & Andersen 2011). The study had the intention of including all families that had received free book packs between 2013 and 2016. The project aims to examine, among other things, to what extent Bogstart has affected the communicative and language development of children in Bogstart families.

In Sweden, Bokstart is running as a pilot scheme inspired by the UK’s Bookstart and Denmark’s Bogstart. Starting in March 2015, three pilot projects have been running in parts of Gothenburg, Landskrona and Södertälje.

**Home visits**

Home visits as a reading promotion method were tested in the 1980s in an outreach project called BokNallen (Markaryd), which became part of a wider municipally financed language programme. The BokNallen project was evaluated as part of a licentiate thesis by Ann-Katrin Svensson, who reported many good results in terms of the children’s language ability and parental awareness (Svensson 1989). Internationally, home visits are a proven reading promotion method where families with children are the target group. Bryant & Wasik (2004) and Gomby (2012) have each summarised the research on the home visit method within the family literacy programmes. The benefits of home visits as a reading promotion method include being able to meet the family as a group on their own terms, at times that suit their schedules. Furthermore, home visitors can get information about the child’s home learning environment and the cultural and/or socio-economic factors that may impact on the child’s reading development. Home visitors are also afforded the opportunity to tailor the programme material to suit a specific family’s needs. One of the key factors that determine the quality of the implementation of home visits in family literacy programmes is the training of staff, which raises questions of budget and resources. The staff who carry out home visits need a range of skills, such as a good ability to observe, listen and ask questions.

In her doctoral thesis Tidig språkstimulering av barn (Early childhood language stimulation) (1993), Ann-Katrin Svensson investigated whether or not language stimulation programmes that include home visits could increase parental involvement in the child’s intellectual and language development, and whether it is possible to influence children’s language and general development in this way. The starting point for the study is that there is a need for more information to be provided to parents concerning the importance of language stimulation. In the study, a type of intervention programme similar to Bookstart was carried out, with free book packs and home visits. The results showed improved attitudes among parents to reading, and increases in reading and borrowings from the library. However, Svensson points out the limitations of the study, related to what is termed the Hawthorne effect – the alteration of behaviour by the sub-
jects of a study due to their awareness of being observed; they act differently than they would if they were not being observed. It is possible that the parents who were included in the study increased the language stimulation of their children not due to the information they received, but because they were being observed and the expectations on them as a result of the study. Despite such limitations, Svensson’s thesis points out the opportunity presented by this type of program to positively impact both language development of children and parental involvement.

The library and the preschool
An important collaboration concerning the language development and reading motivation of younger children is between the library and the preschool. According to the curriculum for preschools, they should strive to develop in every child:

- Nuanced spoken language, vocabulary and concepts as well as ability to play with words, tell stories, express thought, ask questions, argue and communicate with others;
- An interest in written language and comprehension of symbols and their communicative functions;
- An interest in images, texts and different media as well as an ability to use, interpret and converse about these;
- Creative abilities and an ability to communicate experiences, thoughts and experience using many forms of expression such as play, images, movement, song and music, dance and drama.

Collaborations between public libraries and preschools are a matter of course in many parts of Sweden. Several projects have also been initiated with the aim of developing collaboration between libraries and preschools, for example the *Leka-språka-lära* (Play-talk-learn) project, which ran from 2002 to 2004, initiated by what was then the Schools’ Development Agency (*Myndigheten för skolutveckling*) and the Swedish Arts Council. Public libraries play an important role in children’s access to literature and as an additional source of pedagogical skills. Preschools are not subject to the Education Act in terms of access to school libraries, which makes the issue of access to literature in the preschool a matter of particular concern. In a compilation of a number of Masters theses, it is apparent that many preschools do not see libraries as obvious collaborators (Rydsjö 2003). The knowledge review *Studier av barn- och ungdomsbibliotek* (*Studies of libraries for children and young people*) by Rydsjö & Elf (2007) concludes that collaboration between libraries and preschools has waned in many parts of Sweden due to funding cuts and organisational changes implemented in the 1980s and 1990s. The working methods have also changed. This applies for example to book talks, which have come to target adults in the company of children rather than children themselves. *Litteraturutredningen* (*The enquiry into literature*) (2012) found that many, but far from all, preschools had established collaborations with public libraries. A report from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2012), which covered a total of 42 preschools, points out that the staff at some preschools have a conscious method of choosing books and placing books in the preschool, while many “seem to have an unreflective approach to handling children’s literature, and treat it more as a pastime than learning opportunity”.
In the study *Att läsa och skriva i förskolan* (*Reading and writing in the preschool*) (2011) researcher Carina Fast emphasises the difference between teaching children to read and provoking an interest in reading among children. The book is based on a research study conducted at the *Plantan* preschool in Uppsala, where the staff work in a very conscious way to awaken the child’s curiosity about written language. How preschools work to generate interest in reading was also the subject of a study entitled *Litteraturläsning i förskolan* (*Reading literature in the preschool*) (Damber et al. 2013), which deals with the teaching staff at a number of preschools in Sweden working with “the extremely important task of firmly establishing curiosity about and enjoyment of reading”. The study is based on observations made by 40 students from Kristianstad University, Malmö University and Mid Sweden University, as part of the preschool teacher programme and the *Förskollärarlyftet* (continuing education programmes for preschool teachers). Over one week in December 2010, observations were carried out at 40 different preschools in different parts of the country and in different socio-economic areas. The authors, who work at the three universities mentioned above, discuss what function reading literature might have in theme-based activities in the preschool and provide concrete suggestions for planning based on themes to do with nature, animals, the environment or family constellations.

*Reading literature in the preschool* stressed the importance of activities in the preschool that give the child an early relationship to the written language. This is especially important for children who come from homes where there is a lower frequency of reading and writing activities in the home. By way of introduction, the study concludes that reading literature appears to be a remarkably neglected area in many preschools’ educational activities. Below are some of the observations made in this study, with regard to the practicalities of reading literature at the 40 preschools, summarised in point form.

Major differences were seen between the preschools with regard to the amount of time devoted to reading sessions: a reading session can last for anything between two and forty-five minutes. All in all, the authors considered the time spent on reading at the observed preschools to be very short.

- The preschools that participated in the study gave the impression of lacking an underlying purpose or deliberate policy in their choice of literature, which instead appeared to be “quite haphazard”. There were only isolated examples of selecting literature with any connection to a more overarching theme.
- The most common context in which reading took place was in what was termed “the reading quiet time”. The reading sessions appeared often to have a primarily “disciplinary function”.
- There were very few conversations in connection with the reading, and where they did occur at all they were “rarely developed, put into a context, or otherwise related to themes that have to do with the child’s own lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) or experiences/experience”.
- There was rarely any follow-up on the reading in the form of, for example, conversations, working with images or dramatizations.
- The study also showed great variation in terms of the availability of books. While some preschools were well-endowed with books, others turned out to have relatively few books, or in one case none at all.
To summarise, to the extent that the observations above can be seen as representative, we are presented with a rather gloomy picture of the reading of literature in preschools. As was found, how reading is being taught in Swedish compulsory school, according to a report from the Swedish Agency for Education, is diametrically opposed to what many researchers have identified as the most important factors for motivating children to read. The observations from the study *Litteraturläsning i förskolan* (*Reading literature in the preschool*) could also be lined up against the research’s emphasis on *relevance, access, time, choice, and opportunities for interaction*.

What, then, are the reading promotion methods proposed by the authors to improve the situation? The methods that the authors advocate include a variant of reading aloud that consists of a dialogue between the children and/or between the children and the teacher before, after and during the reading. This method means that the teacher reads *with*, rather than *to*, the children; that the children are actively engaged in the reading. Another method advocated by the authors consists dramatizing the literature, so as to become more engaged in the story. Reading and writing in the preschool is regarded as a social practice that entails processing and generating meaning out of what has been read together, during and after the reading, within the framework of an overall thematic content. According to the authors, the literature used in preschools ought to “qualify as thematic content”, that is, the selection of literature should be guided by the theme chosen to work with and the link between the literature and the theme ought to be strong. It could well be added that the way in which the literature is used in the preschool also provides a picture of how reading is valued, and the importance attached to reading. In a later study, Damber & Nilsson (2015) point out that “[a]ctive reading, rather than passive quiet-time reading, also gives children the insight that reading is an important activity, not just something you do to fall asleep”.

The study *Litteraturläsning i förskolan* (*Reading literature in the preschool*) also points to the relationship between access to books and an increased interest in reading; how interest in books increased markedly among the children during visits by a book bus. However, many preschools in the country do not have access to either a book bus or a nearby library. The authors therefore recommend that access to a library for preschools should be regulated in the same way as for schools. The following gives some examples of reading promotion activities where there is collaboration between libraries and preschools.

**Preschools with a literary profile**

An activity that goes beyond the more traditional methods are preschools with a literary profile. Since 2005 in the municipality of Mölndal, there has been a push towards greater collaboration between preschools, family day-care providers and libraries—a collaboration that currently embraces seven preschools and a group of seven family day-care providers. The preschools with a literary profile are a further development of two projects: *Bulleribok*, which ran in Mölndal from 2002 to 2004; and *Alfons, Ellen, Kotten och alla andra*, which ran in Västra Götaland province during the same period. The names of both projects are direct references to classic Swedish children’s literature. The book *Inte bara läsvila: tankar och idéer från samverkansprojekt mellan bibliotek och förskola* (*Not just quiet-time reading: thoughts and ideas from collaborative projects*)...
between libraries and preschools) (Widerberg 2008) reports on experiences gained in the latter project. In the context of these two projects, the idea arose of having specially qualified preschools with a literary profile, where stories and reading literature would form a recurring theme in daily activities.

The literary profile preschool aims to give the children daily positive reading experiences. The following criteria apply to preschools with a literary profile – very similar criteria apply for family day care providers with a literary profile:

- Teachers select books and reading methods consciously and organise positive reading sessions at the preschool every day.
- The preschool’s staff development plan includes each year continuing education in the fields of reading promotion efforts and language development.
- The public library’s children’s librarian presents new books each year.
- When recruiting new staff, the preschool’s profile is made clear along with the requirements placed on the applicant. New staff receives a thorough grounding in working methods and procedures.
- The teachers spread knowledge and stimulate other preschools in the municipality to work consciously with books and reading.
- The preschool has a good basic collection of books that is continuously renewed. Books are visible and available to the children. The children’s librarian provides guidance in purchases.
- Books and/or stories are always used as part of theme activities.
- The preschool collaborates closely with the public library and all the children visit the mobile library/book bus or the public library at least twice per year.
- Activities are organised so that the time is made available to plan, implement and evaluate this profile.

At each preschool with a literary profile there is a literature representative, who is a preschool teacher responsible for literature. The literature representative is responsible for the literature at the preschool influencing both the social and physical environments. Preschools with a literary profile receive a visit from a book bus once each month, and all the children aged 3 to 6 years select one or more books each. What particularly distinguishes the collaboration between a literary profile preschool from the traditional collaboration between libraries and preschools is that preschools, family day care providers and libraries have an agreed form of collaboration made manifest in the form of a diploma. Compliance with the criteria is checked by a group of representatives from both activities. Every two years, the collaboration is reviewed and assessed.

Ann-Katrin Svensson (2013), senior lecturer in education at Borås University, has conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the activities of literary profile preschools. This evaluation interviewed librarians, family day care providers, preschool teachers, preschool directors, operations managers and compulsory school teachers about the activities. The children have been monitored using national tests in Year 3 of school and some children from the same school year were also interviewed about their reading habits. The evaluation sought to determine whether or not these activities had increased children’s access to literature, and if so, how this had affected the staff’s
and the children’s ideas and feelings about literature and reading. In addition, the evaluation aimed to study whether the work at literary preschools had impacted the children’s reading development, and to identify positive and negative factors in the collaboration.

Svensson’s evaluation showed that the collaboration had led to a valuable exchange of knowledge between the two professions. The working methods of the preschool teachers had been altered towards greater responsiveness to the children’s thoughts and ideas and more conversations with the children. Both the preschool teachers and the family day care providers had updated their work with literature. The librarians had got an insight into how children’s literature might be used in the thematic activities of preschools, which has resulted in them reading the new children’s literature they receive with this in mind. The evaluation also points to greater access to literature and higher borrowing rates. Preschools with a literary profile work to bring literature to life in different ways through art forms such as theatre and music, and with aids such as hand puppets, literacy bags, flannel board stories, tablet computers, etc. All the teachers thought that these activities had a positive influence on the children’s attitudes to books and reading. Among other things, the results of the evaluation show that children who have attended a literary profile preschool:

- Know how to think about and discuss literature
- Have a habit of conversing about stories and literature
- Have very great access to stories and literature
- Know how to use a library

The evaluation also points to the difficulty of measuring whether children who have attended a literary profile preschool demonstrate a greater interest in literature and better language skills than children who have not done so.

In this connection, it would be interesting to know more about the socio-economic circumstances of families who choose to place their children in a preschool with a literary profile. A more comprehensive research project on the long-term effects of literary profile preschools could form the basis for a reform of the preschool’s activities with literature at the national level.

**Preschool library in Lund**

The *Preschool library in Lund* is an activity aimed at increasing parents’ awareness of language development and the importance of reading for the child’s continuing development. The preschool library began as a project with support from the Swedish Arts Council in 2011 and is currently operating at nine preschools in Lund. These preschools have an internal library with a reading corner and the district children’s librarian visits the preschool regularly for talks with the staff about teaching literature and suggestions for books. The staff at these preschools have also worked with stories within different themes. A key feature of this activity has been the lending of literacy bags to parents with a selection of books in Swedish and other languages. The report on the project indicates that this has been met with a particularly positive response. The method has entailed the district librarians’ visiting the preschool one morning per week and bringing the children
and staff together to talk about books and stories. In this context, the librarian is seen as an additional resource, who provides the preschool staff – in particular the reading representative – with certain skills and inspiration. There has been a special emphasis on finding literature in the children’s mother tongues. The project *Alfons öppnar dörren – om invandrarbarn och språk* (*Alfons opens the door – about immigrant children and languages*), which ran from 2001–2003 in two residential areas with high densities of immigrants in Halland and targeted multilingual children and their parents, is cited as a source of inspiration. For a description of this project, see Pettersson (2004).

**Give me five**

Many reading promotion projects aim to establish deeper collaborations between preschools and libraries. One such project was *Give me five: barn, böcker, berättelser* (*children, books, stories*). Literature as an art form was emphasised in this project. *Give me five* was implemented with the support of the participating municipalities in Västerbotten County, the County Library in Västerbotten, Region Västerbotten and the Swedish Arts Council. The project ran in Västerbotten from autumn 2010 to spring 2014 and focused on five-year-olds. The project entailed a journey of discovery involving children, librarians and other adults close to the child in the world of the picture book. Both the children and teachers were encouraged to work with “important picture books of high artistic quality” and “often other books than the obvious choices”. A starting point was that a picture book is a work of art that “can be used to explore both your own world and the worlds of others”.

One of the goals of the *Give me five* project was to focus on the child.

An inventory of what the children wanted at many preschools was done before the project began. In addition, creativity as an educational method was emphasised – painting, dressing up, singing, rhyming, dramatizing, retelling, dancing, making collages or building models. Teachers of the arts, illustrators, authors and other professionals participated in continuing education courses and workshops on picture books and how they can be used in educational activities. The collaboration resulted in the staff of the libraries and the preschools accessing each other’s skills and the library becoming a fixture and familiar location for the children. The project also has its own blog. A report on the project was written by Ulla Wiklund (2014).

**STORYTELLING, PLAYING, READING**

*BÄTTA, LEKA, LÄSA* (*STORYTELLING, PLAYING, READING*) is a large-scale project involving collaboration between schools and libraries, with a focus on children aged 1–3 years. The project was initiated by the NGO *Läsrörelsen* (*Literacy Movement*). It began in autumn 2013 and ran until spring 2015 in all 31 municipalities in the counties of Sörmland, Västmanland and Örebro. The project team chose to work with only one picture book over a longer period of time. The overall aim was to increase and stimulate children’s earliest encounters with literature. Among the project aims was to increase knowledge among preschools and libraries about children’s literature and how to teach it to small children, to stimulate parental engagement, and to extend and stimulate small children’s early encounters with literature. A research project, “*Läsa med de yngsta* (*Reading with the very young*)” was also linked to this project activity, and
involved two researchers from the Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg, whose aim was to study the project using qualitative methods. All the children participating in the project were given the book that the preschool worked with. The project also produced an article on pedagogical methods (von Baumgarten Lindberg 2013).

**Reading aloud**

Programmes and projects aimed at informing about the importance of and encourage reading aloud to children are numerous. There is good reason for this. In the mid-1980s, the *U.S. Department of Education* published a report entitled *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson 1985) – a report that came out of alarming school results. The report presented research on reading and recommendations were derived from the results. Since virtually everything in the school curriculum is based on reading, children’s reading should be viewed as both the cause of and solution to the problem, it was argued. The report underlines that the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is to read aloud to children.

The positive effects of reading aloud on children’s language development are well documented. It is well known that reading aloud enriches children’s vocabulary and capacity to express themselves. Reading aloud is also a way of awakening an early interest in books and reading. Reading aloud can also be an introduction to how a story works. For children, at the very least reading aloud can mean a first encounter with literature as an art form. It has been pointed out that reading aloud in the home results in children reading on their own (see for example Krashen 2004). In the book *Läsa högt för barn* (*Read aloud to children*) (Dominkovic et al.2006), reading aloud is seen as one of the most important steps for creating reading motivation and a positive attitude to reading. The article *Reading aloud to children: The Evidence* (Duursma et al.2008) summarises a range of evidence for the positive impact of reading aloud. Among other things, it emphasises the importance of parents, by reading aloud to their children, conveying a positive attitude to books and reading, which can be crucial for their reading development. The research has also drawn attention to the link between reading aloud and student achievement. The importance of reading aloud has been stressed by Wells (1986), for example, who investigated the relationship between early experiences of written language and later school success. A comprehensive study that claims to be the first to investigate the long-term effects of reading for pleasure over time has been conducted at the Institute of Education at the University of London (Sullivan & Brown 2013). According to this study, where the reading behaviour of close to 6000 children was investigated, children whose parents have regularly read aloud to them score better on tests that measure vocabulary, spelling and mathematics than children whose parents did not spend time reading aloud to them. The question is, of course, whether reading aloud alone caused these positive results, or if children whose parents regularly read aloud to them have also been positively impacted by other factors.

A person who reads aloud with feeling can bring the text to life, which can be a particular asset for children with reading difficulties. Through reading aloud, children who can read can access texts that they do not yet have the capacity to read themselves. Reading aloud is also a way of being part of a story community, of sharing a common
reading experience that creates bonds and frames of reference between parent and child, siblings, or within a group at a preschool. For very young children in particular, reading aloud can form a substantial part of their psychological connections with others. In her book *Den meningsfulla högläsningen* (*Meaningful reading aloud*) (2012) compulsory school teacher Anne-Marie Körling provides practical tips on how to make use of reading aloud in the home, at school and at the library in order to enrich and develop the literacy and vocabulary of preschool children and students. Inspiration and practical tips are also provided in the book *Reading Magic* by Mem Fox (2001). A book about reading aloud that has had a major impact internationally is *The read-aloud handbook* by Jim Trelease, which was first published in 1982, with many subsequent editions. An updated version was published most recently in 2013.

**Dialogic reading**

The best kinds of reading aloud include reading aloud with feeling, using one’s gaze and one’s body while reading and engaging the child by asking questions. The didactics of reading aloud are also about using the book’s illustrations in a way that adds meaning to the story, and not allowing the pictures to draw attention away from the story’s language content. The best results are achieved by having prior knowledge of the book you are reading, and in particular studying the pictures in advance in order to be able to better discuss them. A variation on reading aloud that is often advocated consists of a dialogue between the children and/or between the children and the reader, before, during and after the reading. This method involves reading *with*, rather than *to*, children. A common name for this method of reading aloud is *dialogic reading*. There are studies in which the effects of reading aloud on children’s language development have been measured, and the effects of dialogic reading have been compared to other, less interactive forms of reading aloud. According to a meta-analysis of this kind of research, dialogic reading has the biggest impact on language development for groups of younger children (Mol et al. 2008). But the question of if and when dialogic reading is to be preferred is not just about language development, but also about the degree of engagement of the listener, and the motivation that can arise out of this engagement. It should be added that Swedish research in this area has pointed out that deficiencies in reading comprehension among children who read fluently are generally not detected until around the age of 10 (Elwér 2014). Engaging the child early in dialogue about what has been read makes it possible to detect and intervene in time where there are deficiencies in reading comprehension.

In recent years, reading aloud for adults has become a popular feature at Swedish public libraries. Some libraries also organise reading aloud at nursing homes for the elderly. As part of a national project *Läskraft!* (*Reading power!*), which was a partnership between the *Centrum för Lättäst* (now part of the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media), *Demensförbundet* (The Dementia Association – Sweden’s National Association for the Rights of the Demented), *Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan* (an adult education organisation), the national library, and a dementia nursing home organised reading aloud for people with dementia. The project ran from 2009–2013 and has now become a part of regular activities (Kåberg 2013). Reading aloud can be a way to bring together different generations. There are projects where the older generations read aloud to the
younger generation, but also the reverse. In Germany for example, there are reading promotion initiatives called Books build bridges (Bücher schlagen Brücken), initiated by the organisation Stiftung Lesen, where young people read aloud for the elderly. Reading aloud as a way to bridge the generation gap, in other words.

**Storytime at the library**

Story time is one of the activities that has been going on for a long time in the children’s departments of libraries. In the Projekt Sagostunden (The Storytime Project) (Region Library Stockholm), storytime activities were surveyed in Stockholm County by means of a questionnaire and an observational study. This project also tested National Library of Sweden's quality model for storytime sessions. The results were reported in Leonards plåster (Leonard’s bandaid) (Borrman & Hedemark 2015). This report states that almost all municipalities in Stockholm County offers storytime sessions. These are often held at a library, equally divided between the main library and branches. There are some outreach programmes, but these are not common. For example, two municipalities stated that they offer storytime via their open preschools. The most common form of story time entails a combination of reading aloud from a book, with storytelling and singing. Generally, one of the library’s regular employees is responsible for this activity. Storytimes in languages other than Swedish do exist, but are less common.

Storytime for children at the library often uses aids such as puppets, flannel board stories, flipcharts and slates. For inspiration on how puppets can be used in reading promotion, see for instance the book Leading kids to books through puppets (Bauer 1997). Sound, light and scents can also be used for the purpose of illustration and to generate associations. Rhymes, chants and songs are also commonly used during storytime at the library. The Läskonster (Reading arts) project, which ran from 2007–2009 as a collaboration between the Mid-Sweden Regional Libraries, focused particularly on bringing literature to life with the aid of additional art forms such as visual art, theatre and music. Hand puppets, teddy bears and other toy characters are used during storytime as props, and storytimes are even dramatized through dressing up. Working with a drama teacher, the project worked on dramatizing the stories, where children acted not only as audience but also as participants in the drama. After the performance, the children took the story home with them in the form of a book (Hedenström et al 2010). A follow-up study of the Läskonster project showed that above all, the project had led to library staff interacting more with others than in the past (Danielsson 2011). So for example, a collaboration was established between a library and a cultural centre that offers schoolchildren visual arts, drama and music. One of the libraries dramatized a picture book for six-year-olds in collaboration with a visual arts teacher, a drama teacher and a music teacher and also conducted dramatized storytime sessions on the theme of ghost stories, all of which accorded with the overall objective of the project – to get more art forms involved in reading promotion activities.

**Bedtime stories from inside**

A reading aloud project of slightly different nature was the Godnattsagor inifrån (Bedtime stories from inside), a collaborative project between the library and correctional services (the prison system) with the aim of giving parents who are in prison the opp-
ortunity to record bedtime stories on CD for their children. The project ran in Malmö from 2008 –2010 with support from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the Swedish Arts Council, and the Swedish Inheritance Fund (Arvsfonden). The project was unique in that it was the first time a Swedish library was allocated funding for crime prevention activities. The project came out of a report from the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, which complained of the fact that children have little opportunity to maintain positive contact with parents who are in prison. The project was also based on research showing that children of parents in prison risk suffering emotional problems. The project aimed to strengthen the relationship between children and parents in order to reduce the negative effects of children and parents being separated in conjunction with a prison term. The project took inspiration from similar interventions in the UK, but unlike its predecessor, The Big Book Share (The Reading Agency), was carried out in the form of study circles.

The aim of the Bedtime stories from inside project was to provide more opportunities for prisoners to share and participate in their children’s emotional, social and intellectual development in positive ways, and to highlight the importance of stories and fairytales for children’s maturing process and learning. The project was evaluated by Annelie Björkhagen Turesson (2011), senior lecturer in social work at Malmö University. The evaluation was based on participant observations, questionnaires and qualitative interviews and reported that 95 per cent of the fathers who participated developed a greater interest in reading to their children as a result of the project. The evaluation also reported that close to 90 per cent of the fathers and mothers who took part felt that the project had aided the strengthening of their relationships with their children.

References
Brooks, Greg; Pahl, Kate; Pollard, Alison & Rees, Felicity (2008). Effective and inclusive practices in family literacy, language and numeracy: a review of programmes and practice in the UK and internationally. Reading, CfBT Education Trust.


Fox, Mem (2001) Reading Magic: How your child can learn to read before school – and other read-aloud miracles Pan Macmillan


O’Hare, Liam & Connolly, Paul (2010). A Randomised Controlled Trial Evaluation of Bookstart+:
A Book Gifting Intervention for Two-Year-Old Children. Belfast: Centre for Effective Education, Queen’s University Belfast.


Chapter 4. Reading role models

Who are children’s reading role models?

That children and adults learn by imitating others is well known. The use of reading role models in reading promotion activities seems intuitively reasonable. A role model can be a person whose behaviour you imitate, but also someone whose values and ideas you share. There are a number of examples of reading promotion programmes and projects targeting children and adolescents in their free time that use role models adapted to specific target groups.

Who, then, are the most important role models for reading? The most important form of influence on children’s reading during their first few years of life is parents reading to their children and parents reading themselves. In fact, a child learns to speak and communicate long before he or she starts school by imitating significant adults in their environment. That parents are important role models for a child’s reading may seem obvious. Early reading habits, like most habits, are an imitation of adult behaviour. If parents find reading positive and meaningful, their child will likely follow them in this. Textbooks as well as research studies and student theses that treat the parent’s role as a role model for reading often stress the importance of parents having an interest in reading first and foremost (see for example Nilsson 1986, Brink 2000, West & Knochenhauer 2006). Consequently, reading promotion for children and adults cannot easily be regarded as two separate areas.

Many studies have examined how parents’ reading habits in their free time influence their children’s reading behaviour. Wollscheid (2014) based a study on 757 children aged 10–19 years. According to its results, both parents have the biggest impact on the reading behaviour of their daughters. However, the study also lends support to what is termed the gender-stereotype hypothesis, according to which fathers have a greater impact on the reading behaviour of sons, and mothers on daughters. The study also reported that the reading behaviour of mothers had a stronger impact on younger children’s reading socialisation, while the reading behaviour of fathers appears to have a stronger impact on older children.

According to a small study in Sweden based on around 300 telephone interviews with boys and young men aged between 13 and 25 years, peers, parents and other adults in their environment were the most important role models for them for reading. According to the interviewees, parents and peers are more important as potential reading role models than celebrities (Redman 2013). A larger British study based on interviews with almost two thousand children and adolescents aged 7 to 15 years produced a similar result. According to this study, the family, followed by peers and teachers, are the most important reading role models (Clark, Osborne & Dugdale 2009). The majority of the interviewees named someone from their closest family circle as a role model, mostly one of the child’s parents. The family is the most important role model for both boys and girls. Outside the child’s immediate social environment, role models come from
both politics and religion, but primarily from sportsmen and women in general and football players in particular. More boys than girls named sportsmen and women among their role models. Many of the interviewees declared that reading tips from known sportsmen and women would encourage them to read. The conclusion of the study is that parents’ important role as reading role models gives support to reading promotion programmes that target families, but that one should also not underestimate the method of using celebrities in efforts to influence the young to read.

Reading and gender
That boys generally demonstrate lower levels of literacy than girls has been established in a number of major studies, as have differences between boys/men and girls/women in terms of reading habits. A compilation of the research on the subject commissioned by the National Literacy Trust showed that girls in the OECD countries not only do better on tests that measure reading ability, they are also more inclined to enjoy reading, read more frequently, think positively about reading and perceive themselves as readers (Clark & Burke 2012).

In Sweden, we have been able to confirm that the gender differences in literacy are virtually identical regardless of social class. Reading researcher Karin Taube (2013) related this to boys reading less in their free time, as a result of a less positive attitude to reading. Women in Sweden read more than men – especially if we look at the reading of fiction. Litteraturutredningen (The enquiry into literature) (2012) noted that in 2007, the proportion of women in the population who read fiction at least once per week was almost twice that of men, and for younger women the figure was almost three times that of younger men. In the OECD countries, on average just over half (52 per cent) of boys aged 15 years spend time reading for enjoyment, compared with almost three quarters (72 per cent) of girls who say that they read for enjoyment (OECD 2010).

How can the difference between the reading habits of boys and girls be explained? The question is complex, but broadly speaking it is possible to discern two types of explanations. Among the more controversial/contested explanations are presumed biologically conditioned differences in “learning styles”. Looking at reading habits from a social perspective has achieved wider acceptance. The gap between the reading habits of boys and girls has been explained by the idea that we are socialised into different reading roles. The term socialisation here is understood as the process by which individuals incorporate their environment’s standards/culture; a process that occurs largely unconsciously. In this field, reading habits can be looked at on the basis of social constructs of masculine and feminine identity. The reading habits of boys, for example, have been understood as the product of a social pressure on boys to adapt to masculine identities, in combination with the stereotypical conceptions of reading as a “feminine” occupation.

Lena Kåreland (2009) has observed that children are socialised into gender-related attitudes to reading fiction. A researcher who has placed special emphasis on the gender aspect of reading is Gunilla Molloy (2007). Both Kåreland and Molloy use the term culture of resistance in describing the boys’ reluctance to read. This concept derives from Paul Willis’s ethnographic study Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs (1977), which describes how a number of school boys from working class back-
grounds establish a culture of resistance with masculine overtones in relation to the middle-class norms and values that they experience are represented by the school. More recent studies such as Mac an Ghaill’s *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling* (1994) has applied the terms to students from middle class backgrounds. More examples of how the concept of a culture of resistance is used in school research in order to describe a distinctively negative attitude to reading among boys can be found in Stig-Börje Asplund’s thesis *Läsning som identitetsskapande handling: gemenskapande och utbrytningsförsök i fordonspojkars litteratursamtal* (*Reading as Identity Construction: Practices and processes of building a sense of community in literature discussions among male Vehicle Engineering students*) (2010).

A British study based on interviews with teachers at 226 British schools divides the probable causes of the reading gap between boys and girls into three main categories: perceptions of cultural norms, home environment, and individual factors (Clark & Burke 2012). The first category includes the fact that reading is not seen as a cool activity among boys, but also that what boys choose to read is not sufficiently respected. This also includes a factor that is often complained about: *the lack of male reading role models*, which can also be related to the home environment of the child or adolescent. Children are influenced by what their parents do and there is a tendency for boys to identify with their fathers. It has been argued that if boys see their fathers mostly engaged in activities other than reading, this can have a negative impact on the boys’ reading motivation. Without reading fathers in the home, there is a tendency for more boys to regard reading as something that you mainly do in school. There are also studies that have shown that mothers have a stronger belief in their ability to improve their son’s reading performance than fathers have (Lynch 2002).

The lack of male reading role models is a common theme in research about boys’ and girls’ reading, in particular in academic journal articles that deal with male reading ability (Clark 2008). The need for male role models also tends to come up for discussion as soon as boys’ reading habits are addressed. Research that studies how boys and girls are socialised into a reader identity has provided the impetus for campaigns in which sports stars have acted as reading role models, as in the British example *Reading Stars* below. That boys choosing not to read can be explained by social norms regarding masculinity is also the basis of a Swedish government decision to invest in initiatives to do with sport and reading. On the whole, male reading role models have become an important aspect of reading promotion activities today.

Some researchers have argued that the source of the problem with boys’ reading habits is a “feminisation” of reading that mothers and a female-dominated preschool and compulsory school have contributed to. It has been argued that women convey assumptions about the purpose and context of reading, the choice of texts and ways to assimilate them that work poorly and, in the worst case, are a deterrent for boys. This is the position taken by American librarian James Sullivan, for example. In his books *Connecting Boys With Books: What Libraries Can Do* (2003) and *Connecting Boys With Books 2: Closing the reading gap* (2009) he tackles the issue of male role models within world of the library. Sullivan champions the idea that the uneven distribution of men and women within the library profession has acted as an obstacle to boys’ reading in a variety of ways. Among other things, he asserts that the genres preferred by boys
have been marginalised as a result of the “feminisation” of literature reading within the library and its activities. However, his thesis is that the library can be made into a welcoming and inviting place to boys by appealing to their wants and needs to a greater degree. To reduce the reading gap between boys and girls, one should start out from books that boys prefer to read. The issue of how to get young boys to read has higher priority than the issue of what they read. Sullivan’s position as a literature mediator may be regarded as pragmatic, according to the typology previously described.

According to many studies, boys tend to prefer books with non-fiction content to a higher degree than girls. Furthermore, boys tend to be attracted to a certain type of fiction. Humour, sport, science fiction and fantasy are common preferences for boys’ reading. Sullivan therefore advocates programmes based on these genres. In order to reach young boys as a target group, he also recommends different types of outreach activities for the purpose of taking the library to where boys congregate. Examples include collaborations between the library and the Boy Scout Movement, the library and the school, and the library and sports clubs. From the other side, we should be working to get men to visit the library. Fathers should be encouraged to read aloud to their children. Sullivan also recommends the use of mentors in reading promotion, a term which appropriately enough comes from one of the key works of Western literature. It is in the absence of his father that Odysseus’s son Telemachus is raised by Mentor.

**Dads as reading role models**

*Read to me, Dad!*

The role model idea is central to reading promotion projects and campaigns that specifically target fathers. Concerning reading role models in the inner family circle, there are several projects and campaigns designed to encourage and support fathers, or fathers-to-be, to act as reading role models for their children, often with the stated aim of influencing negative attitudes to reading among boys. One such project is *Pojkar, pappor och prat om böcker* (*Boys, fathers and talking about books*), which ran from 2006–2007 in four municipalities in Västernorrland province in Sweden, where boys with limited reading abilities in the early years of high school and their fathers were the target group. Male role models were also the main focus of the project *Muhammad from Frostmojället. Berättelser om manlighet i mångkulturella miljöer* (*Mohammed from Frostmo Mountain. Stories of masculinity in multicultural environments*), a collaborative project which ran from 2007–2010 between the county library in Västerbotten and Jämtland county library, with a particular focus on socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Its title was a clear reference to what is considered Sweden’s first children’s book in the realism genre. Another project in which male role models were emphasised was *Läsbryggan* (*Reading bridge*), which was a collaborative project involving ABF, the public library, trade unions, schools and sports clubs. The aim of this project was to change men’s and boys’ attitudes to reading and literature, through organising “Read to me, Dad!” days, for example. The background to the project was an identified need for male reading role models and the need for collaboration between libraries and popular education/adult education associations (Eriksson et al. 2013).

*Läs för mig, pappa! (Read to me, Dad!)* was the name of a larger reading promo-
tion programme conducted as a collaboration between the trade union movement, ABF and *En bok för alla* (a book publisher). The idea for *Read to me, Dad!* came out of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation's (LO’s) reports on members’ leisure habits, and the programme is based on both the gender dimension and class aspect. *Read to me, Dad!* started as a project in 1999 and subsequently developed into a permanent programme. It includes author visits, information about the language development of children, study visits to libraries and the distribution of free books to fathers and children. In 2013, *Read to me, Dad!* activities were carried out at around 30 locations in Sweden and more than 2000 men participated (Lundgren & Kallenberg 2013). Participant surveys and evaluation days were conducted as part of the programme. A guide to the programme has been written by Gunnar Klaesson (2011). A Masters thesis on this programme was written by Emma Larsson (2009).

There are several similar projects around the world, where fathers are encouraged to read to their children and act as reading role models. In Germany, for example, the *Mein Papa liest vor!* (*My Dad reads to me!*) project was initiated by the reading promotion organisation *Stiftung Lesen*. The project description states that one of the project’s aims is to enable fathers to strengthen their role as reading role models. Here, too, fathers are urged to take on a responsibility as reading fathers. The Norwegian project *Les for meg, pappa!* (*Read to me, Dad!* ) stressed the importance of good reading role models, especially among fathers of small children and other male adults. The project was initiated by *Foreningen !les* and ran from 2009–2011.

**Peers as reading role models**

*Reading Champions*

Peers are an important category of reading role model for children and adolescents (Clark, Osborne & Dugdale 2009). That peers influence the reading habits of children and adolescents has been emphasised in research into attitudes to reading in particular (McKenna 2001). Several projects and campaigns have worked with letting children act as reading role models for other children. In the UK, for example, this method has been used to recruit high profile boys at a school to become “Reading Champions”, with the task of encouraging boys to read. A Reading Champion can be nominated for a bronze, silver or gold certificate for their efforts. This activity was initiated by British reading promotion organisation, the *National Literacy Trust*, and has been going on since 2000. *Reading Champions* has a particular focus on boys and men and male reading role models. *Young People and Reading* (Clark, Torsi & Strong 2005) was a study conducted in conjunction with this activity, charting young people’s reading habits, attitudes to reading, and factors that could provide reading motivation.

*Reading buddies*

The idea of role models lies at the heart of the *Book Buddy Reading* programme, whose basic idea is to pair readers who are at different levels. For example, children in fifth grade read to children in preschool, with clear benefits for both parties: the younger children in preschool have an older reading role model, and older children with reading difficulties are offered practice in reading aloud that they can feel comfortable with (McKoy Lowery et al. 2008). Similar activities exist at several schools in Sweden. In
Umeå, the project *Bokbundisar* (*Book buddies*) ran from 2008 – 2011, in which children of infants and primary school age and adolescents of lower and upper secondary school age met regularly for reading aloud and other reading-related activities. This project took inspiration from activities with *Book Buddies* in New Zealand and in the USA. You can read more about *Bokbundisar* in the inspiration booklet *Men läs då!* (*Read why don’t you!*), which was developed within the project (Föreningen Kulturstorm 2011). It emphasizes the dual benefits of the mentorship: younger children get attention from older children, and the older children gain in self-confidence by acting as role models.

**Sportsmen and women as reading role models**

The involvement of sports organisations in reading promotion projects and campaigns is commonplace both in Sweden and abroad. In Sweden in 2013, the Swedish Arts Council was tasked by the Swedish Government to implement a reading promotion initiative with the specific aim of making literature available to girls and boys who engage in sports. The long-term goal of the campaign was to awaken an early interest for reading and boost reading ability and reading enjoyment. The Government’s decision stated that among boys in particular there had been a clear declining trend in reading and literacy in recent years. As grounds for its decision, the Government cited statistics showing that a large and growing group of young boys aged 15 years demonstrated serious deficiencies in reading comprehension. The Government considers this to be a problem of democracy and a gender equality problem, which risks having serious repercussions in the community and contributing to social exclusion. In the Government’s decision, boys’ reluctance to read is associated with social norms of masculinity. One way to change such norms is to reach out to the target group with adult role models. The role model in this case is the sports coach.

The Government task resulted in the *PAUS* project, a national initiative in collaboration with the Swedish Sports Confederation, *SISU Idrottsutbildarna* (sports education organisation) and the Swedish Arts Council. A *reading coach* has been attached to this project to work with inspiring, spreading knowledge and acting as a reading role model. The Swedish Arts Council website lists a number of ongoing Swedish projects around sport and reading as part of *PAUS*. A report from the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis (2014) on gender equality efforts made by the Swedish Government in the area of culture 2011–2014 presented the Swedish Arts Council’s definition of the task involving sport and reading. One of the factors deemed to be key in the future allocation of funds and the project’s potential to succeed is that it should be interpreted as an inclusive task, embracing both girls’ and boys’ reading. Many of the projects that bring together sport and reading have also addressed both girls and boys, while others have had a clearer focus on changing negative masculine gender stereotypes in particular with regard to reading and consequently have targeted boys and men.

**Sport and Reading**

An example of a large-scale reading promotion project involving collaboration between libraries and sports clubs can be found in Sweden’s western neighbour. The project
Idrett og Lesing (Sport and Reading) aimed to integrate the reading into Norwegian sports contexts. The project ran for three years and was financed by the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and the Arts Council Norway. The Idrett og Lesing project was initiated by Foreningen !les, an organisation inspired by similar organisations such as Läsrörelsen in Sweden, Stiftung Lesen in Germany and the National Literacy Trust in the UK and working to promote reading in Norway.

The target group for the Idrett og Lesing project was young people aged 13–19 years. The project involved sportsmen and women at all levels from a variety of sports. All sports clubs included in the project received a large bag containing a varying selection of books. One of the aims of the Idrett og Lesing project was to encourage athletes to integrate reading into their daily lives, particularly during rest periods and when travelling, as a form of relaxation and mental training.

The Idrett og Lesing project entailed librarians visiting sports clubs before and after training sessions. The bag full of books helped to build up a “changing room library”, and the librarian also provided information about various books. Working with sports organisations and the Norwegian Writers’ Union, librarians also offered to visit clubs together prominent athletes and authors with an interest in sport. During the Olympic Games in China in 2008, Foreningen !les delivered bags full of books to Norwegian athletes.

The Idrett og Lesing project was divided into three parts: the book bench, elite/national team and recreational sport. The evaluation of the pilot project has reported good results, including that 76 per cent of the sportsmen and women who participated in the project have read the books they received in the book bag. One of the conclusions from the evaluation was that visits by authors and athletes were an important part of the project. In addition to the direct contact with the athletes, they added their book tips on a website linked to the project. The main objective of Idrett og Lesing was to make children and young people who are very engaged in sports and elite athletes to become more interested and engaged in reading. Among the methods used was “changing room librarians”, book bags, visits by authors and/or sportsmen and women, and the recruitment of elite athletes as reading role models. By profiling famous elite athletes as readers, the project aimed to convey to children active in sports that sport and reading is a “healthy and good combination” (Helvig 2007).

The evaluation for the entire project lists, for example, how many books were borrowed from the book bags, how often the book bags accompanied training or travel, and the degree to which the activity helped to raise interest in literature and reading (Burås Storø 2008). The evaluation also investigated how much the project’s website had been used during the project period. Reading role models in the form of elite athletes stand out in the report as important for getting young people interested in sport engaged in reading.

Reading Stars
Other reading promotion activities that have combined sport with reading have profiled sports stars as reading role models. For example, the Riksidrottsmuseet (the Swedish National Sports Museum) exhibition on the theme of reading athletes drew attention to a number of famous and successful athletes with an interest in reading. The exhibition, which was called Läsning är också en sport (Reading is also a sport) was evaluated by
Aleman & Ögland (2013). In the UK, they have been working for a long period of time with football stars as reading role models, called Reading Stars. That sport can provide reading motivation is the starting point for Reading The Game, an activity under the auspices of the British reading promotion organisation National Literacy Trust. Other notable activities are Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS), a reading promotion programme in cooperation with football clubs. Incidentally, football is a very common sport in this context. In Sweden, there are project-based collaborations between libraries and football clubs with names such as Sparka igång läsningen! (Kick-start reading!) (Huddinge), Kom in i matchen (Get into the game) (Örebro), and Kom till skott med läsningen (Get moving with reading) (Gävle). Literacy bags, author visits, or filmed book tips by famous football players are among the most frequently used methods in such projects.

PLRS has been going on in England since 2003, and is a collaboration between the Premier League, National Literacy Trust and Arts Council England. Since 2009, this activity also exists in Scotland. The project targets weak readers with a strong interest in football. According to a report from 2010, PLRS have five stated objectives:

1. To increase access to public libraries, books and professional football clubs;
2. To improve the attitude to all forms of literacy;
3. To increase self-confidence in reading, enjoy reading and interact socially;
4. To provide motivation to learn more and increase reading ability;
5. To alter the perception of reading and the stereotypically negative image of the reader.

PLRS activities are carried out as follows: Each of the 20 teams from the Premier League nominate a player – a Reading Star – to recommend their favourite book. Each team then collaborates with a maximum of three public libraries, which host a reading club based on the recommended books. Both children and parents participate in the reading club, and together also visit a bookshop, and participate in an event with a published author on the theme of football. A few selected individuals also get to meet their favourite football club’s Reading Star. In 2013, 34,000 students took part in the programme.

The final report from 2013 shows a “dramatic increase” in reading ability, improved reading habits, and an improvement of self-confidence as a reader. The number of children who like “very much” to read is reported as having tripled as a result of participation in the programme. For a more detailed description of the project and the documentation of the results, there are a number of reports available to download from the National Literacy Trust’s website. For a journal article related to the project, see Palmer (2008). This article discusses how libraries can use sport in their reading promotion work and how the notion of “respectable reading” can be expanded to include biographies about sport, so as to strengthen the self-image of boys and men as enthusiastic readers.

In Motion
I Rörelse (In Motion) was a three-year collaborative project between SISU Idrottsutbildarna (a sports education organisation) the Västerbotten County Library, the Swedish State Inheritance Fund, the Swedish Arts Council, and publisher En Bok För Alla, which ran from 2005 to 2007. The objective of the project was to increase reading among children and young people who actively engage in sport. The objectives of the project included
to encourage sports coaches to become reading role models. The target group for this project was children and young people aged up to 18 years, sports coaches, parents, library staff and cultural event organisers. The project was carried out in five municipalities and involved seven libraries and eight sports clubs. The project was evaluated externally using questionnaires, interviews and observations (Bengtson 2006, Bingebo 2008). The final project report was written by the project manager, Kohkoinen (2008).

The activities that the project management organised for the children and young people included putting together book bags in the form of sports bags with the project’s logo, a competition called the Reading Cup, author and lecturer tours, joint cultural and sports camps and booktalks. A calendar was also produced with sporty children providing tips on books. In one participating municipality, a sleepover at a library was organised involving the team, teachers and librarians. Activities also included movement sessions and author visits, boxing at the library and joint cultural and sports camps, where the children got to try out football, writing, karate, filming, shooting, art and drama.

Libraries advise others who want to start similar projects to find a dedicated coach and keep the activities at a moderate level. The sleepover, booktalk and Reading Cup were mentioned as successful by representatives of the participating sports clubs. Some of the conclusions that emerged from the evaluations were that the project kick-off is important for introducing this kind of project. According to the project evaluation, the sports activity coaches did not show any interest in the project. To counteract this, it is suggested to use elite players as reading role models at an early stage.

So, has the project helped to increase reading among children and young people? The opinion was that it is difficult to say. Whether or not the goals were achieved was also rather cautiously formulated. The view was that whether the project increased reading among children and young people cannot be measured in absolute terms. On the other hand, observations made in connection with the various activities showed that the children and young people participated with great enthusiasm. The final report stated that sporty children and young people had increased their recreational reading, for example by reading on the way to competitions. The main aim of increasing recreational reading among sporty children and young people was stated to be achieved through a wide range of activities such as booktalk, author visits, book bags and the Reading Cup. The objective of encouraging the coaches to become reading role models was stated to be partially achieved. The project I Rörelse targeted both boys and girls, but in practice, the overwhelming majority of participants were girls. This illustrates the problem of reconciling an inclusive aim with acting for target groups with greater need than others, in this case boys.

References


Chapter 5. Readers’ Advisory and book presentations

Readers’ Advisory
The specific form of service that entails providing suggestions for reading (particularly in the USA) is termed Readers’ Advisory. Readers’ Advisory is a form of literature mediation, and in the same way that we can differentiate between direct and indirect literature mediation, a distinction can be drawn between direct and indirect Readers’ Advisory. For instance, a direct Readers’ Advisory service might be in the form of a conversation, during which a series of questions are put to a user for the purpose of making a non-judgemental inventory of the person’s interests and providing him or her with reading tips and advice on the basis of these. In Sweden, the interaction/communication between the librarian and the user includes the equivalent of a readers’ advisory service. This interaction has the aim of meet his/her needs for information, but may also more specifically be about providing advice and tips in the user’s choice of reading. The Swedish Children’s book catalogue can be mentioned in this context as an example of an indirect Readers’ Advisory service. The Children’s book catalogue is published each year by the Children’s library in conjunction with the Swedish Arts Council, and features a selection of current books for children and young people with the purpose of providing guidance and inspiration for reading. A current example of a digital reader’s advisory service is the book browser developed for the Kista City Library, which provides tips on books and information about availability on large touchscreens that are easy to navigate.

In a comparison between the past and the present, Readers’ Advisory services have meant that the relationship between the reader and the librarian has become less and less didactic in nature. If in the past librarians generally felt that they knew what was good for the reader and guided the reader in certain specific directions, they have now become more of a link between the book and the reader. A Readers’ Advisory service is one of the most fundamental functions of a public library, but is also used in the bookshop context in both its direct and indirect forms. For example, online bookshop giant Amazon has a well-developed system for guiding the reader based on given preferences – a form of Readers’ Advisory service, albeit with a commercial purpose. A recommended book on Readers’ Advisory is Saricks (2005).

Booktalk
Book presentations in the form of what is termed booktalk is one of the most common reading promotion methods used in the public library, and indeed has been described as the dominant method in literature mediation activities in children’s libraries (Törnfeldt 1994). Booktalk is a much more common activity in the reading promotion activities of public libraries among children and young people than book circles, for example. How the method is used at Swedish libraries for children and young people is the subject of a number of papers and thesis projects. Booktalk can have several different target
groups, and the anthology *På tal om böcker (Talking about books)* (2005) points out that booktalk can play an important role for weak readers in particular. A number of papers from the 21st century on booktalk as a method are also about its effects on low levels of literacy. There are many handbooks on the topic; only a few will be mentioned here.

The booktalk method boils down to talking about books in order to stimulate interest in reading. Booktalk can convey enthusiasm for reading and also help readers to find books that they like. A booktalker who presents a novel for example can provide a glimpse of where the plot takes place, introduce some of its characters, and recount the main conflict without revealing the resolution. Booktalk at Swedish public libraries is often about fiction. An academic paper based on 119 surveyed children's librarians in the Swedish province of Skåne shows for instance that non-fiction books occupy very little space in booktalk activities in comparison with fiction; around 90 per cent of booktalks are about fiction in all the age categories studied (Mauritzon & Wijk 2008). This could be seen in relation to boys’ general preferences for non-fiction.

The purpose of the book presentation or booktalk is to get the listener sufficiently interested in the book to read it (Bodart 1980). Generally, a booktalk is by one person, but a booktalk can also be staged as a conversation before an audience, such as between two librarians (Frid 2012). A number of practical tips for conducting booktalks can be found in the anthology *På tal om böcker (Talking about books)*.

Internationally, the literature about booktalk is extensive. In particular, this applies to handbook type books about booktalk. The majority of these books are about booktalk that targets children and young people. An exception is *Something to talk about: creative booktalking for adults* (Cyr & Gillespie 2006), which is addressed solely to adults. *The Booktalker’s Bible* (Langemack 2003) lists the golden rules of the booktalk as (1) Read the book; (2) Like the Books You Booktalk; (3) Know Your Audience; (4) Booktalk; (5) Don’t Tell the Ending; (6) Leave a List.

The booktalk method has been used for a long time but has undergone radical changes over time with regard to selection, pedagogy, approach to the audience, objectives, the implementation and the anticipated results. A number of papers at Bachelors and Masters levels have contributed comparative historical perspectives on booktalk activities in Sweden (see for example Kamienski 2010). Bengtsson (1998) wrote that during the 1970s, booktalks were heavily influenced by the notion of popular education, while during the 1990s greater emphasis was placed on the personal reading experience. In *På tal om böcker (Talking about books)*, booktalking is described as the best reading promotion method. Booktalk is said to be a proven and effective method. However, what is meant by “effective” in this context, or for whom it is effective, is not gone into. What, then, is the impact of traditional book presentations or booktalk on reading? As far as I know, there is no major Swedish scientific investigation seeking to answer this question. Some thesis projects on booktalk point to an increase in the borrowing rates for the books that librarians have chosen to talk about, but these are individual observations rather than any kind of major statistical survey. The doctoral thesis, *The effect of booktalks on the development of reading attitudes and the promotion of individual reading choices* (Nollen 1992) is one of a number of English language doctoral theses that have examined traditional forms of booktalk and its impact on borrowing rates and attitudes to reading (see also Bodart 1985, Dahl 1988, Reeder 1991). These theses are conclusive: books that have been the subject of
Booktalks show significant increases in circulation, but, on the other hand, booktalks have no appreciable effect on attitudes to reading.

**Filmed booktalks, book trailers, book blogs and other digital book tips**
The nature of booktalks has changed over time, in particular as a result of technological innovations of various kinds. *The tech-savvy booktalker: a guide for 21st-century educators* (Keane & Mr Carey Cavanaugh 2009) is a book that gives examples of how today’s booktalkers utilise everything from scanners and digital cameras to computer programs such as PowerPoint and iMovie, websites like YouTube and Amazon, etc. A Swedish project that embraced the potential of digital development to bring booktalks up-to-date was *Crossover*, which ran from 2009 – 2010 as a collaboration between the Southeast County library and the Regional Library in Kalmar. As part of the project, booktalks were filmed and published on YouTube.

Digital book presentations also exist in the form of book trailers, in other words, short films featuring books visually in a format similar to the movie trailer. Book trailers often include music and images designed to create a certain atmosphere around the featured book and may also contain spoken dialogue. On YouTube, book trailers are produced by both amateurs and professionals. The Swedish website boktrailler.se features short films on current books and authors from Swedish publishers. The American web portal Digital Book Talk offers book trailers with amateur actors. This website provides access to training materials for registered booktalkers to produce and upload their own book trailers. This kind of book trailer is generally round 2–3 minutes long. The effects of Digital Book Talk have been investigated in the context of a research project by Gunter & Kenny (2008), who stress the potential of this activity to improve attitudes to reading among reluctant readers in the category of “digital natives”, i.e. those who have grown up in an age when computers and the Internet were already a substantial part of society. For research into the use of digital technology in connection with booktalks and similar reading promotion methods, see also the article *Rethinking Reading Promotion: Old School Meets Technology* (Chance & Lesesne 2012).

Åse Kristine Tveit (2004) distinguishes four elements that a reading advisory published on the Internet ought to include: an interesting introduction, a brief description of the main characters, a brief description of the action/themes and genre where appropriate, and facts about the book in the form of author, title, publishers, year of publication and the like. Among the many book blogs and other websites that offer book tips, Barnens bibliotek (Children’s library), is worth mentioning – a digital initiative for children offering tips on books to read and help with finding books, where children can also add their own favourite books. This site is also available as an app. A blog that has specifically focused on adolescents between 10 and 20 years of age is Bokfreak.se (book freak). Another book blog that has attracted a lot of attention, not least because of its name, is bokhora.se (book whore), which publishes book reviews of both old and new literature, divided into genres such as chick lit, crime novels, poetry, etc., and themes such as children’s book week or Father’s Day. This blog also presents non-fiction books such as cookery books and biographies, and regularly features interviews with authors. The blog also contains the radio podcast programme bokpodden (the book podcast).
International digital book tip blogs include LibraryThing, one of many websites that allow users to catalogue and categorise their books and compare what books they own with other users. LibraryThing has existed since 2005. The company is part-owned by Abebooks which in turn is owned by Amazon. Versions of LibraryThing have also been launched for libraries. By linking up the Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs) of different libraries, more user-friendly and interactive functions have been created for libraries.

The paper Bloggarens val: En studie av lästips på bloggar (The blogger’s choice: the study of readers’ advisory services on blogs) (Andersson & Holmgren 2011) investigated the similarities and differences between private blogs and libraries’ blogs, what is typical of the book tips provided by bloggers and the motives behind them. The paper’s authors conclude that there are many similarities between the private blogger’s way of presenting books and libraries’ methods of displaying literature and providing readers’ advisory services. In general, bloggers choose to write about recently published literature and the majority of their readers’ advisories are about novels. Concerning libraries’ blogs, the paper’s authors ask themselves whether the library’s readers’ advisory service represents the stock in the library or the blogger’s personal preferences.

References
Bodart, Joni (1985). The effect of a booktalk presentation of selected titles on the attitude toward reading of senior high school students and on the circulation of these titles in the high school library. Dissertation: Texas Women’s University 1985.


Chapter 6. Social reading

Today there is a tendency in research as well as reading promotion practice to emphasise the social dimension of reading. The book *Social readers: promoting reading in the 21st century* by American school librarian and researcher Leslie B. Preddy (2010) clearly illustrates this trend. Preddy talks about reading promotion’s three Rs: Reading, Role models and Relationships. According to Preddy, to develop readers, you need time for reading; reading role models in the home, school or elsewhere; and socialisation through reader relationships. Reading has not traditionally been perceived as a group activity, but for a generation where social interaction is continuous, reading also needs to become social, she argues. To generate reading motivation and improve attitudes to reading, schools and libraries ought to be working to establish a habit among children and young people of sharing their reading experiences. Young people will become engaged by literature if they get to talk about it.

In a sense, reading is always social. In recent decades, research surrounding the actual process of learning to read has come to stress the importance of the social and cultural context within which all reading development occurs. The rise of the notion of literacy is testimony to this in particular. Literacy understood in its expanded meaning is the ability, not only to read and write, but also to understand and use a variety of other symbol systems within a culture. In reader-oriented literature theory, the term *interpretive communities* is used to refer to a group of readers whose ideals, norms and interpretation conventions determine the understanding of a literary text (Fish 1980). The practice of reading, from basic learning to read to advanced interpretation, in many ways can be regarded as a social practice. In addition, all “reading habits” — including reading alone in the privacy of one’s home — are socially produced and conditional on a “social infrastructure”, which includes, for example, the material conditions necessary for book production, the education of readers, and the existence of libraries. In itself, the image of the lone, private reader can be regarded as a social construct that romanticises the individual and isolated author or reader (Fuller & Sedo 2013).

How, what, and why we read is determined in a social context. Nevertheless, there is a strong perception of reading as a solitary occupation. American sociologist Elizabeth Long (2003) spoke about a “cultural hegemony of the solitary reader”. A reader is often portrayed as someone who withdraws into a private sphere to become part of a world that others do not share in. However, there are indications suggesting that the image of the isolated reader is not dominating reading culture in the same way as previously. Book conversations, book circles, shared reading tips and digital discussion forums – all of these can be interpreted as a component of a reading culture where ‘the end of the book is just the beginning’, to borrow a phrase from Nina Frid (2012). An example of social reading on a large scale is the *Mass Reading Event* (MSE), such as TV and radio broadcast book clubs. Another example of MSE is reading promotion initiatives which aim to gather together readers in a city or region or a whole country concerning a book
they have all read. The first comprehensive study of MSEs was *Reading beyond the book: the social practices of contemporary literary culture* (2013) by researchers Danielle Fuller and Denel Rehberg Sedo. Shared reading is regarded by Fuller and Sedo as a process that takes place within a network of social relationships. The renewed interest in social reading is linked with the development of technology. Being able to share your reading experiences or discuss reading with others has never been easier. This, in turn, creates new foundations and opportunities for reading promotion activities. The term “social reading” is understood in the following to mean *communication between readers about literature and reading experiences* (Rydbeck 2013). Social reading includes *book conversations* in groups, which occur as part of *book circles* in both analogue and digital forms. Social reading also includes literature discussions on Internet forums and blogs. Examples of social reading include the phenomenon of *Mass Reading Events*. Yet another example of social reading, which will be treated in this chapter, is author visits.

**Book circles**

While *booktalk* introduces books that the audience has not read, a *book conversation* or *book discussion* involves in-depth reading of already-read books. A book conversation can most easily be defined as a conversation, with or without a facilitator, around a book that all participants have read. In comparison with the book conversation, book-talk in its traditional form can be seen as a form of one-way communication. An influential and oft-cited name in relation to talking about books is Aidan Chambers, whose reader-oriented theory of literature talks about how a book’s meaning is ‘negotiated’ when talking about a book (Chambers, 1994). Chambers distinguishes three types of sharing in a typical, everyday conversation about a book: sharing enthusiasm (what the reader likes and dislikes), sharing puzzles (i.e. difficulties), and sharing connections (discovering patterns). Chambers’ model for book conversations, which he calls a “Tell me talk”, has been applied in several reading promotion projects, for example in the major project *Läskonster* (*The arts of reading*). Among the idea and inspiration books about book conversations are Kjersén Edman’s *Tala om böcker: boksamtal på bibliotek, i skola och på nätet* (*Talk about books: Book conversations in libraries, schools and on the web*) (2013) and Katarina Eriksson Baraja’s *Boksamtalets dilemma och möjligheter* (*The dilemma and opportunities of the book conversation*) (2012). The potential of the book conversation in the school context is particularly apparent in Michael Tengberg’s doctoral thesis *Samtalets möjligheter. Om litteratursamtal och litteraturreception i skolan* (*Potentials of Discussion. On Literature Discussions and Literary Reception in School*) (2011).

A standard form of organised book conversations in groups is the book circle. Book circles, reading groups, reading circles and literature circles are assumed to be synonymous in the following, and refer to *an organised group of readers gathered together physically or meeting in some other way to discuss their reading experiences* (cf. Rydbeck 2013). Immi Lundin notes in the book *Cirkelbevis. Läsecirklar på bibliotek* (*Circular evidence. Reading circles at libraries*) (2004) that reading groups or circles are not a new phenomenon, but that there is renewed interest in them. With reference to British research about reading groups, she points out that the reading group has a key reading promotion function, and talks about the great development potential for the library in
this context. There are plenty of books available that provide practical advice on how to start and hold book circles, and Lundin gives many examples. The following presents a small selection of research on reading groups in Sweden and abroad. It is the reading promotion potential of the book circle which is the focus of this survey and not the book circle phenomenon in itself.

Pamela Schultz Nybacka (2011) considers that research about book circles mainly revolves around the three questions: the circle's scope, organisation and group identity. Research about book circles mainly concerns English-speaking countries and as yet research in Sweden is limited. An influential study about home and library based reading groups and somewhat of a pioneering work is Jenny Hartley’s *The Reading Groups Book* (2002). The study, which included around 350 reading groups, describes the emergence of literature circles and how they are organised. According to Hartley, book circle participants are decidedly independent, want to decide for themselves what to read, and dislike marketing.

In Sweden, Petra Söderlund studied the preferences of recreational readers, their reading habits and their ways of reading, evaluating and talking about literature, and compared the interaction in a reading group with Internet-based discussions. The results of her study were presented in her doctoral thesis *Läsarnas nätverk. Om bokläsare och Internet* (Readers’ network. About book readers and the Internet) (2004). In her doctoral thesis *Bookonomy: The Consumption Practice and Value of Book Reading* (2011), Pamela Schultz Nybacka investigated all male, all female and mixed book circles. The name of an ongoing project being led by researcher Kerstin Rydbeck is “Läsarnas cirklar. En litteratursociologisk undersökning om socialt läsande och läsargemenskaper i dagens Sverige” (Readers’ circles. A sociological study of social reading and reading communities in contemporary Sweden). This project is studying traditional book circles where people meet in real life (IRL). Entirely digital book circles are not being studied. However, Rybeck notes that social media such as Facebook and the like have blurred the boundaries between digital and traditional book circles.

The project description makes a distinction between independent book circles and organised book circles. While independent book circles operate without any links to organisations or external support, organised book circles are tied to a public library, an adult education association, a bookstore or some other type of organisation. The project is studying both these types of book circles and its methodology is divided into quantitative and qualitative parts.

Some academic journal articles related to the project have been published, including an article on Swedish book circle activities with a particular focus on public libraries and book circles organised by adult education associations. In this article, Rydbeck (2013) expresses the opinion that the discourse on reading habits and reading promotion efforts has had a primary focus on what people read, how much time they spend reading, and how they get access to books. However, the reading situation is rarely observed or problematised. Rydbeck sees book circles as a form of reader community, understood as “a locally organised, defined group of readers who gather for regular meetings to discuss literature and reading experiences”. The article looks at the quantitative development and distribution by gender and age of book circles.

Both in Sweden and abroad, book circles in their traditional form of meetings IRL
are a female-dominated activity. The typical book circle participant in Sweden is a woman of retirement age. For example, the proportion of women participating in book circles organised by adult education associations in recent years has hovered between 80 and 85 per cent. The overwhelming majority of book circle participants are people aged 65 years or more. Rydbeck notes a sharp rise in recent years in the number of participants in the oldest age category.

Rydbeck estimates that two thirds of Sweden’s municipalities offer book circles. Book circles at public libraries have increased markedly in recent years. Since book circles appear to have become a tool to attract adult readers, Rydbeck sees this increase as an indication that public libraries have strengthened their reading promotion efforts that target adults. Referring to the National Library of Sweden statistics, Rydbeck notes that between 2007 and 2011 there was a 189 per cent increase in book circle activities at Sweden’s public libraries. Since then there has been a further marked increase: In 2011, 5,400 book circle and reading group sessions (closed meetings with literary orientation) were held at Sweden’s public libraries. In 2013, close to 6500 book circle and reading group sessions were held. In 2014, that figure had risen again to 11,000 sessions, constitute an increase of around 70 per cent in just one year. Since 2011, the number of book circle and reading group sessions has more than doubled.

It is a bit tricky to compare the statistics of adult education association book circles with those organised by public libraries, because they are conducted in different ways. Among other things, the National Library of Sweden’s statistics on book circles report the number of books circle sessions, but not the number of book circles. Within adult education, book circles are counted as a subcategory of study circle. However, the trend appears to be that while the number of book circles organised within adult education associations is falling, there has been a dramatic increase book circles held within public libraries.

The UK has a well-developed tradition of hosting reading groups at public libraries that is worth taking note of. A major survey of reading group activities was carried out in 2002 by the reading promotion organisation The Reading Agency on behalf of the London Libraries Development Agency. The study shows how libraries can use reading groups strategically, and why they should. The survey charted private reading groups as well as reading groups organised by libraries. The study is predominantly quantitative, even if qualitative aspects such as members’ attitudes, motivation and experiences of the circles are also reported. It identifies a number of advantages of reading groups for their members and the libraries that host them, proposes best practice for their organisation and administration, and identifies opportunities for various forms of collaboration. A more detailed description of the report can be found in Lundin (2004). A report that The Reading Agency produced in 2004 in connection with the development of a National Action Plan for public libraries’ work with reading groups is also of interest. This report listed the positive effects of reading groups as more and broader reading, higher lending rates and consumption of books, but also how reading groups help to increase knowledge and a sense of community.

An example of a current study of reading groups is Reading Groups, Libraries and Social Inclusion: Experiences of Blind and Partially Sighted People (Hyder 2014). It is a longitudinal research study of reading groups for the visually impaired. Hyder recounts
some of the stories of the participants about themselves as readers, and talks about practical concerns such as format and accessibility. The study also discussed the complex issue of what a reader is, as well as cultural attitudes towards alternative formats such as the audiobook. Hyder sees reading groups for the visually impaired from a social justice perspective, and also discusses to what extent reading groups are an effective means of social inclusion. Hyder’s study is interesting from both the accessibility perspective and the media perspective.

**Book circles and gender**

A research report that directly addresses the question of the reading promotion potential of book circles is *Literature circles, Gender and Reading for Enjoyment* (Ellis & Pearson 2005). The report is based on a research study conducted at the University of Stratchlyde in Glasgow and explains how teachers and students experienced literature circles at four schools in Scotland. The study showed the impact that literature circles had on reading ability, reading engagement and reading attitudes, in particular with regard to gender. The report concluded that the literature circles increased enthusiasm for reading as well as improved attitudes to reading and reading behaviours. Both the boys and girls who participated in the circles showed significantly more positive attitudes to reading in school and reading generally. According to the researchers, the literature circles function best when the teachers did preparatory work to facilitate the collaboration, when the students were involved in the choice of literature, and when the groups met at a predetermined time and on a regular basis. The study also showed that conducting literature circles led the teachers to question and develop their own approaches to their work with students’ reading ability and attitudes to reading.

The students who participated in Ellis’ and Pearson’s study found enjoyment in articulating and communicating their own reading experiences. For the circle participants, the ultimate goal was not to come to grips with what they read, but saw the circle as the beginning of the creative interaction around the text. According to the report, belonging to a reading group led to the students becoming more deeply engaged with their reading. The literature circles offered the students a space to talk about books and define themselves as readers. This was particularly important for boys, whose social networks did not otherwise appear to offer any such opportunities. Ellis and Pearson summarise the report as follows: By participating in different types of literature circles, children can learn to become readers who read a lot and widely, and who regard reading as a social activity where they can make friends.

One could add to this report a study by Norwegian library researcher Jofrid Karner Smidt (2012) that poses the hypothesis that men perceive reading literature as something private to a greater extent than women do. Smidt observes that literature serves a faintly symbolic, social purpose for a number of adult men interested in literature, which means that they position themselves outside the form of social influence that is so important for women’s interest in literature. When the literature has a social purpose, according to Karner Smidt, it is also likely that the reading of literature will increase. That reading is regarded as a private pursuit may contribute to many boys and men losing any motivation to read. If this is true, it provides a very strong argument for promoting social reading for boys and men in particular.
**Bokcirklar.se and other digital book circles**

A number of digital book circles have started in Sweden in recent decades. *Bokcirklar.se* is a web-based reading promotion effort with reader discussions in focus, and something of a pioneer in the area of online book circles in Sweden. The initiative behind *Bokcirklar.se* was taken in 2007 by then librarian Nina Frid and the project is now being run by all of Sweden’s county libraries. In 2011, the adult education associations began collaborating with *Bokcirklar.se* to offer virtual literature circles. In *Slutet på boken är bara början (The end of the book is just the beginning)* (2012), Nina Frid writes that the inspiration for the website came from the traditional book circle. Frid stresses the reading promotion potential of the book circle:

> A person who identifies as a reader with others reads more and wants to progress in their reading.

According to Frid, the purpose of *Bokcirklar.se* is to strengthen identification as a reader and promote the reading conversation. The aim is to coordinate and encourage a strong reading movement comprising both IRL and virtual book circles, give readers a voice, and to highlight the role of the library in providing support and a place to meet for talking about literature and for meeting other readers and authors. According to Frid, the inspiration for *Bokcirklar.se* came from the Danish *Laeseklubben* on Litteratursiden.dk, which was in turn inspired by the British *Reader Development* movement. *Reader Development* will be looked at in more detail below.

Unlike a regular book blog, *Bokcirklar.se* is a virtual reader community, where you can write a reading diary and provide your own reading tips. You can also visit virtual chat rooms for book circles at set times. Authors and booktalker librarians regularly make appearances as guests on the site. Another activity that is part of *Bokcirklar.se* is the annual awarding of the “Big reader prize”.

As is the case for book circles IRL, the members on *Bokcirklar.se* are largely women. However, the percentage of members of the male sex is somewhat higher than for book circles IRL. In autumn 2011, there were roughly three thousand members of which approximately 63 per cent were women and 23 per cent men, with about 14 per cent of unknown gender (for the most part, libraries and publishers). The average age of members was somewhere around 40 years, compared with the book circles organised by adult education associations, where the overwhelming majority are people aged 65 or older.

There are a number of papers on reading groups, and in particular online book circles. For example, Bergkvist (2008) investigated how virtual book circles can be used as resources for libraries and librarians. Balling (2007) studied the Danish *Laeseklubben* and digital book circle in relation to the librarian’s role. Toftgård (2011) also provides a perspective on social reading online and concludes that reading groups are just part of a greater reading movement online. Toftgård also observes that participants of digital book circles have changed their behaviour when it comes to discussing books. Participation in digital book circles entails not only discussion about the reading experience after the book has been read, but also during the time it is being read; a tendency that Toftgård sees as a result of the daily use of social media.
**Book circles and Reader Development**

*Reader Development* is a key concept in British discourse about reading groups (Lundin 2004). Reading promotion organisation and enterprise *Opening the Book* describes the basic principles of the concept on its website. *Reader development* aims to:

- Increase people’s confidence in and enjoyment of reading
- Open up reading choices
- Offer opportunities for people to share their reading experiences
- Raise the status of reading as a creative activity.

*Reader Development* stresses the reader’s creative role. The book *Reading and Reader Development: The Pleasure of Reading* (Elkin et al. 2003) describes the concept as an extension of reader-oriented literature theory as it has been developed by Louise Rosenblatt, Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser. The *Reader Development* movement was founded by librarian Rachel van Riel at the beginning of the 1990s. Van Riel wanted to shift the focus from *reading* to the *reader* and began using the term *Reader Development* instead of *Reading Development*.

While reading development is about acquiring reading skills, *reader development* is about the reading experience itself. Immi Lundin points out that the reading group has played an important role in this shift of perspective, which subsequently came to be well-established within reading promotion efforts in the UK. *Reader Development* has also advocated a shift of emphasis in reading promotion efforts from the quality of the book to the quality of the reading experience. *Reader Development* has apparently not had any great impact in Sweden as yet, but it has attracted the attention of Immi Lundin and Nina Frid, among others. The latter’s initiative *Bokcirklar.se*, for example, has taken inspiration from the *Reader Development* idea. More examples of practical reading promotion efforts based on the *Reader Development* idea can be found in the books *The reader-friendly library service* (Van Riel et al. 2008) and *Reader development in practice: bringing literature to readers* (Hornby et al. 2008).

**One Book, One Community: The OBOC programme**

Fuller and Sedo (2013) have studied social reading on a mass scale as part of TV and radio broadcast book clubs under the collective name of *Mass Reading Events* (MSE). The research has identified a breakthrough for this type of mass social reading in *The Oprah Winfrey Book Club*, which started being broadcast on TV in 1996. When the host of the programme drew attention to a certain book, it became almost immediately a bestseller – a phenomenon that has come to be known as “The Oprah Effect”. Another type of MSE is a reading promotion initiative that aims to bring together readers in a city, region or entire country around a book that all have read. The research uses the term OBOC for this type of MSE, an acronym for *One Book One Community*. As the name suggests, this type of MSE means that *one* – usually but not always fiction – book is selected to then be the basis of many activities that people in a given geographical area are invited to take part in. These activities include everything from book conversations to evenings with authors, to community events where people gather for creative fun, and canoeing excursions. The OBOC event usually includes showing of
film versions, theatrical dramatisations and staged readings of the book. The *One Book* programme has become particularly widespread in the USA, Canada and UK. Fuller and Sedo have no precise statistics, but estimate that more than five hundred OBOC programmes exist worldwide.

*Mass Reading Events* have their apologists and their detractors. The phenomenon has been met with everything from enthusiastic exclamations in style of “reading is the new rock n’ roll” to not quite so rapturous comparisons with the collective consumption of fast food. American literature professor Harold Bloom is in the latter camp. In *Mass Reading Events*, Fuller and Sedo see a social and cultural phenomenon that both reproduces and shapes ideas about what reading may involve. To reading as an individually transforming, educative, existential, therapeutic, creative or even civilising experience, with the renewed interest in social reading on a mass scale you can add yet another aspect: reading as a means of building communities.

A commonly occurring variant of the OBOC model is One City One Book. In Sweden, for example, there are such events for the cities of Stockholm, Uppsala and Gothenburg: *Stockholm läser*, *Uppsala läser* and *Göteborg läser*. Author Helena Sigander was the initiator of *Stockholm läser*, which started in 2002. She also ran the project from 2002 to 2008. Her inspiration came from the USA, where similar events exist in a number of cities. This initiative enjoys the support of the Swedish Arts Council and the City of Stockholm, and since 2011 *Författarcentrum* (the Writers’ Centre) and Stockholm City Library are responsible for the project. One criterion for a *Stockholm läser* book is that its plot takes place at least in part in Stockholm, or is written by a writer with clear ties to Stockholm. The project began in 2002 with Hjalmar Söderberg’s *Doctor Glas*, and with only a short break has continued on an annual basis since then.

OBOC programmes may also cover entire regions or provinces, for example the province of Norrbotten in *Norrbotten läser*. The OBOC programme includes a guessing competition on Facebook about the choice of book for the year, which is announced on World Book Day – the theme day established by UNESCO in 1995 as 23rd April each year – and also includes tours by the author of the selected book. A further example is that of *Hela Halland läser*, where participants are initially invited to come forward with suggestions for a book whose author either lives in or writes fiction about, the province of Halland. One of the objectives of the project *Umeåregionen läser* is specifically to strengthen the status of local literature.

**Author visits**

Author visits for the purpose of reading promotion occur in the form of individual events and also as part of various types of reading promotion programmes and projects, both within Sweden and abroad. In a similar way to book circles, author visits may be either IRL or digital. For example, as a digital substitute for IRL author visits, the British website *Behind the Bookshelf* offers short films of interviews with famous writers about their writing. The book *Programming author visits* (Watkins 1996) claims that author visits are one of the best ways to generate or intensify curiosity about books among children and young people – even if no actual evidence in support of this claim is presented.

Each year, approximately 2,500 author visits are conducted in Swedish classrooms,
among other things to stimulate interest in reading in order to improve students’ reading ability (Bergman & Persson 2013a). According to the National Library of Sweden’s statistics, 3,200 author visits occurred at Sweden’s public libraries in 2014. The Masters thesis Författarevenemang på svenska folkbibliotek (Evenings with authors at Swedish public libraries) (Ahlberg 1999), which was based on questionnaires sent to 275 libraries, showed that adults are the most common target group for author visits and these visits are usually by authors of fiction. An example of author visits targeting a younger audience is the annual visit in Rinkeby of the Nobel Prize winner for literature, an activity that has been going on since 1988.

In their research project Författaren i klassrummet (The author in the classroom), Lotta Bergman and Magnus Persson (2013b) took on the previously relatively unexplored area of author visits. They conclude that author visits are generally one-off events: the author comes to a lesson, reads from and talks about his/her books, answers questions and that is the end of it. Some visits are more ambitious and include extensive preparations as well as subsequent arrangements. In this project, Bergman and Persson followed more protracted and ambitious arrangements around author visits and investigated what perceptions of the function of literature, its value and use were negotiated in the encounter between the author, the teacher and the students at authors visits in schools. They observed that the students’ work with a novel in the context of an author visit generated various types of conversations about for example text interpretation, connections to one’s own experiences, political and aesthetic questions, etc., – in short, elements that justify deeming such author visits as a form of social reading. They also discuss the transformation of reading into a performance in the context of an author visit, where the author’s reading aloud, with the aid of various dramaturgical devices, becomes a staged performance.

References
Balling, Gitte (2007). Virtuelle læseklubber – på vej mod bibliotek 2.0. Royal School of Library and Information Science Denmark
Chapter 7. Summer reading programmes

School students tend to fall behind with their learning over the long summer holidays and students from families of lower socio-economic status tend to fall behind even more. Over time, this creates ever-greater gaps. The phenomenon is termed \textit{Summer Learning Loss} (Cooper 2003) or the \textit{Summer Slide} (Smith 2012). Concerning reading specifically, terms such as the \textit{Summer Holiday Reading Dip} and the \textit{Summer Reading Setback} are used. \textit{Summer Reading Programmes} are often regarded as a means of combating these effects.

At Swedish public libraries, summer reading programmes have gone under the name “the Summer Book”. In a Masters thesis in library and information science, the summer book has been defined as a reading promotion method where children are required to read a number of books over the summer and then rewarded if they succeed (Karlsson & Steen 2006). The current national programme \textit{Sommarboken (The Summer Book)} has departed from the method of reporting and rewards, and instead placed the emphasis on book conversations in various forms. This kind of no-obligation variant of the Summer Book programme has been studied by researcher Linnéa Lindsköld (2015), who investigated children’s experiences of participating in the reading promotion project \textit{Sommarboken 2014}.

Abroad, summer reading programmes often follow a kind of read-and-report structure, where the children get to report on what they have read, orally or in writing. Often the children are required to read a certain number of books, with some form of reward in sight. In the research, programmes of this type have been called \textit{Incentive Programmes} (McKenna 2001). An example is the British programme called the \textit{Summer Reading Challenge}. This programme includes thousands of libraries in the UK and requires children to read at least six books over the summer holidays. They are then rewarded for their efforts. The programme is offered through public libraries and has a particular theme each year. The organisation behind the program is \textit{The Reading Agency} which continuously publishes evaluations of the activity on its website. The programme is financed by the \textit{Arts Council England} and a number of sponsors.

The target group for the \textit{Summer Reading Challenge} is children aged 4 to 12 years. The participants are encouraged to interact with the books in the form of writing, drawing and making things. The children who participate get stickers, posters, banners, bookmarks and medals. Summer book programmes may include a variety of reading promotion methods such as competitions, book conversations, book-related craft and making activities, author visits, storytelling and rewards. In the following, the focus will lie on two things that often distinguish a summer book programme internationally: quantitative reading accomplishments and rewards.

That extensive reading can generate positive qualitative effects such as extended vocabulary, improved writing skills, better results on reading tests and more positive attitudes to reading in general has already been dealt with. A number of investigations
have shown that summer reading programmes help to increase reading, and in view of the fact that such programmes are often designed in such a way as to require participants to read a considerable number of books during the summer break, any other result would of course be surprising. Incentive programmes may markedly increase the quantity of children’s reading, but does increased reading lead to a positive attitude to reading? According to researcher Michael C. McKenna (2001), a number of more fundamental questions need to be answered first. Firstly: Has increasing the amount of reading helped the child to achieve greater fluency in his/her reading? If so, can one expect that the reader’s ideas about what reading can offer them will be changed in a positive direction? Secondly: Has increasing the amount of reading resulted in the child being offered a body of reading material that he/she finds important and interesting? The reader’s positive expectations of what reading can offer them is enhanced when the reading and the reader connect in such a way that the reading experience acquires a personal significance.

Whether or not external rewards can generate reading motivation in children or, on the contrary, undermine their motivation is one of the many controversies of reading research. There has been criticism that rewards risk becoming the sole reason for children to read, with the result that reading motivation ceases the moment the reward is no longer present. There are studies that indicate that rewards do not appreciably affect reading motivation. There are also investigations where rewards have proven to have a negative impact on intrinsic reading motivation (Clark & Rumbold 2006). However, these studies have involved the children receiving reading tasks that they found interesting even before the reward was introduced, and the results would probably be different if this was not the case. Several researchers have found that rewards related to reading such as books affect intrinsic motivation in a positive direction (see for example Gambrell 2011). Researchers who have investigated the effects of rewards on attitudes to reading have similarly advocated reading related rewards (McKenna 2001).

**The effects of summer reading programmes**

A number of primarily Canadian, US and UK studies have reported the positive effects of summer reading programmes on students’ reading abilities, reading habits, reading enjoyment, self-confidence, and library use. Some of this research has been compiled in a report from Library and Archives Canada (2006). This report deals with programmes implemented in Canada, the USA and the UK. For example, a study of the *Summer Reading Challenge* conducted by the University of Leicester in 2003 was based on 380 interviews with children who participated. This study found that 78 per cent of participants felt that they had improved their reading ability through their participation in the programme. The reading abilities of students with similar social backgrounds who did and did not participate in the programme, respectively, have also been compared and significant differences were noted. One of these studies found that children who participated in a summer reading programme for only a short period read at a higher level than children who did not participate at all (Celano & Neuman 2001). Is this higher level of reading ability due to the programme or, on the contrary, have students participated in the programme because of it? Questions of this kind are scrupulously avoided throughout the report.
The research literature on summer reading programmes often deals with the extent to which the programmes have managed to counteract Summer Learning Loss. A large number of articles have been written on this subject. For example, in the article *Summer reading and the ethnic achievement gap* published in the *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, Kim (2004) argues that reading 4–5 books over the summer is enough in itself to decisively counteract the losses otherwise incurred over the summer break. Among a number of larger studies that have investigated the effects of summer reading programmes, a doctoral thesis, *The Effectiveness of Summer Reading Programs in Public Libraries in the United States*, is worth mentioning (Locke 1988). Deshommes (2013) investigated the effects of participation in summer reading programmes on primary school students’s grades. Another doctoral thesis worth mentioning is *Building a nation of readers: multiple perspectives on public library summer reading programs* (De Groot, 2009). This study took a broad approach to summer reading programmes and tried to answer the question of how children, parents and library staff experience such programmes.

There are a few larger studies that have investigated the effects of summer reading programmes on students’ grades in school. Barbara Heyns’ *Summer Learning and the Effects of Schooling* (1978) has long been regarded as the definitive study on the subject, and still today is often cited by librarians as a source of arguments for summer reading programmes. A more recent study is *The Dominican study: public library summer reading programs close the reading gap* (Roman et al. 2010). The study was the result of a multi-annual research project at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University, and aimed to answer the question of whether public library summer reading programmes improved the grades of socially disadvantaged students, in particular in third and fourth grade in primary school. It reported a number of positive results, including that the children who participated performed better on tests that measure reading ability than children who did not participate. On the whole, this study is evidence for summer reading programmes being able to play a significant role in bridging reading gaps and argues that public libraries have a vital role to play. A useful handbook on summer reading programmes that takes up everything from research to planning and evaluation is *Fiore's Summer Library Reading Program Handbook* (Fiore 2005). Its proposals for best practice for summer reading programmes include well-defined target groups, effective marketing strategies and evaluation methods, and experienced staff. The literature on summer reading programmes also points to the importance of effective marketing of the programmes to parents with children of school age, where libraries should be stressing the educational benefits of summer reading programmes to parents. Furthermore, summer reading programmes should be characterised by effective collaboration with schools. For example, the *Summer Reading Challenge* is a programme that works best when libraries, schools and local authorities all work together. The school can identify groups of children and their families to offer practical support, so that they can participate, and monitor the progress students make in relation to the programme.

In addition, the school can make personal contacts with parents, and encourage siblings, older friends, and reading buddies to accompany younger readers to the library. The school can also connect the students’ summer reading to the autumn
term’s teaching programme by referring to the texts read as part of the summer reading programme.

In conclusion, one could ask whether reading promotion outside school in the form of summer reading programmes organised by public libraries ought to be in the business at all of making demands in the form of a certain amount of reading, and based on the international examples reported here, the answer must be: why not? Researcher Mats Dolatkhah (2013) has pointed out a paradox that reading promotion activities often need to manage: there is an association between the development of good reading ability, experienced enjoyment of reading and being able to decide on one’s own reading, and there is therefore a risk involved in running reading promotion activities in a way that associates reading with achievement of results. However, he also notes that it is problematic for those institutions whose mission is in fact to work in ways that develop and promote reading if children do not in fact experience that they enjoy reading, and would themselves prefer to spend their time on something other than reading. How do you best promote reading and reading development among children who do not have any great intrinsic interest in reading, he asks himself – and this is really the most salient question to ask in the context. The kinds of demands made need to be decided from case to case of course, but there is nothing to indicate that one should completely exclude them from reading promotion activities. Emphasising freedom of choice, with regard to both participation and what to read, does not preclude requiring some results to be achieved. Why not follow the UK example and use the word challenge instead?

References
Roman, Susan; Deborah T. Carran & Carole D. Fiore (2010). The Dominican study: public library summer reading programs close the reading gap. River Forest, IL, Dominican University, Graduate School of Library & Information Science.
Chapter 8. Making reading accessible

The library space
British author of literature for young people Aidan Chambers has pointed out that all reading must be done somewhere and where we read affects how we read. Chambers has described children’s and young people’s reading as a kind of circle in which the various stages lead back to the beginning again:


In The Reading Environment (1991), from which the model shown above is taken, Chambers stresses the importance of facilitating the process of reading by providing special places for reading, which also indicates that reading is valued; and to put out books and display them, which is both a way of providing tips on books to read and showing that reading is valued.

Selection presupposes a range to choose from, and the selection should be broad and varied. In addition, the selection must be available and presented in a way appropriate to the intended target group. Making books accessible can mean, for example, making it easier for children to make their own choices through the location of the books. Most libraries are furnished in such a way as to allow reading on site, but it has been pointed out that the media themselves often dominate the library space in a way that makes it more inviting to experience them elsewhere. As we will see however, various activities are being pursued to make the library into a reading environment to experience in the here and now. In Studier av barn- och ungdomsbibliotek (Studies of libraries for children and young people) Rydsjö and Elf (2007) discussed the various functions of a
library as a cultural centre, centre of knowledge, information centre, and social hub. The Danish Ministry of Culture’s report *Fremtidens biblioteksbetjening af børn* (*Future library services for children*) (Enemark & Poulsen 2008) emphasises that in future, the children’s library ought to be a place where you can be, learn and do. Two Danish library researchers, Casper Hvenegaard Rasmussen and Henrik Jochumsen (2010), have discussed what this might mean in concrete terms for the design of the library space. They describe a historical process from the 1930s to the present day in which library services for children and young people have changed from having been an extension of the school and an information service to promoting children’s own interests more and more, within a less restrictive institutional framework. In parallel with this development, there has been a shift in how we view children – from having been regarded as adults in the making (*becomings*), they are now seen to be very much *beings* in their own right. As indicators of this development, Rasmussen and Jochumsen mention that books are supplemented with other media, the concept of quality has been broadened, and educational activities are combined and supplemented with play, gatherings, and experiences. This in turn affects the design of the library space, which has less and less of an institutional character.

Rasmussen and Jochumsen describe how the library space has evolved from having been a collection of books to becoming a much more alive and versatile institution grouping together the individual user and media, culture and other users – a development which has been summed up in the phrase *from collection to connection*. They compare what was the traditional library with a supermarket in the sense that both constitute a rationally organised warehouse for goods and for books, respectively, where the visitor usually has an idea in advance of what to take home. The library as a place to be means an expansion of the library’s function as purely a lender of books and other media. This expansion has been deemed necessary not least due to the fact that the library’s function as a lender of books and other media has shrunk in pace with information, knowledge and experiences being digitised. The fact that the activities of children’s and young people’s libraries have shifted their focus from content and collections to engagement with the library’s users has meant in particular an increased interest in the design and architecture of libraries – as evidenced by, for example, the anthology *Designing Library Space for Children*, which is part of the IFLA Publications Series (Bon et al. 2012).

The staging of the library in terms of its content can be counted as part of the library’s reading promotion efforts, that is, the library’s more active role in giving users advice and encouraging reading, broadening their reading horizons, or simply making it easier for them to make choices. The idea of the library as a place to be is interesting in this context. Traditionally, the library was largely designed for users who knew what they were looking for in advance. But since a significant proportion of visitors to public libraries are not goal-oriented borrowers – or borrowers at all – library research has begun to discuss the idea of serendipity, meaning opportunities for serendipitous discoveries in the material. Thus, Danish library researcher Lennart Björneborn (2008) expects a number of serendipity factors to be included in the physical design of the library. Factors that make it easier for users to make new and unexpected discoveries include arrangements of material that make it easy to study material found in the here and now, which Björneborn calls “stopability”. It should also be noted that orienta-
tion of the library space can take on both social and playful forms. For example, in connection with library tours, book games of various types have been used. One such game particularly enjoyed by children and used within the project Läskonster (The arts of reading) involved letting the children play the part of books to be placed at specific locations in the library. This meant that tips on reading and information about shelf displays became part of a playful interaction between the children and the library staff.

There has been more experimentation than ever before with both the space and new forms of mediation. Rasmussen and Jochumsen see a trend towards setting the stage in libraries in new ways, and exemplify this with everything from spectacular and lavish American “experiential” libraries in which books are combined with various attractions; to Danish “bookless” libraries in which ninety per cent of physical books have been put into storage to make way for other types of media. However, both researchers note that there is not much to suggest that users themselves have any great interest in the idea of the library as an experiential place. Studies have shown that users instead give priority to the more traditional aspects of the library’s basic functions and various forms of service. That libraries support public education, for example, is seen as more important than that libraries are social hubs in the local community. Good service and the distance to the nearest library are considered more important than that events are held at the library or that the library offers places to study. This is according to studies carried out in Denmark. Interestingly, a study by the Swedish Library Association (2011) based on telephone interviews with approximately 800 users came to similar conclusions. According to this study, skilled staff and friendly reception were among the aspects that were valued the most highly by users. Furthermore, users tend to value the library’s most basic functions when it comes to accessibility, such as convenient opening hours, being able to easily find what you are looking for, and easy physical access to the library. Generally, users and the surveyed staff are in agreement in these evaluations, but there are also notable differences. For instance, over half of the staff think it is very important that the library is a place where you can socialise with others, compared with less than 1/8 of users who were of the same opinion. In conclusion, users want the library to be within easy reach and offer a tranquil environment with a knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly staff, as well as a rich selection of books.

In parallel with the development of the library space as a meeting place for those interested in culture and literature, alternatives have also arisen in the form of what are termed literaturhus (literature centres). In the 1980s, the first Literaturhaus was established in Berlin; an example which has since been followed in several places in Germany and in the rest of Europe. With the opening of Literaturhaus in Denmark in 2005 and Litteraturhuset in Oslo in 2007, Scandinavia acquired its first literature centres of this kind, and since 2013 there has been a litteraturhus in Gothenburg. The literature centre’s activities include lectures, exhibitions, continuing education seminars, author visits and reading groups.

Reading promotion activities inspired by the literature centre concept are represented in the project Läskonster (The arts of reading), which ran from 2007–2009 and included some fifty public libraries in Middle Sweden from a total of nine counties (Hedenström et.al. 2010). The aim of the project was to introduce new methods of reading promotion to public libraries and develop initiatives for children’s reading at childrens’ libraries. The
project stressed the importance of the library space itself for stimulating reading. The Läskonster project took inspiration from LesArt, a literature centre in Berlin which profiles itself as the only literature centre in Europe for children and young people (Hedenström & Lundgren 2011). “Literature centre” came to represent a number of different activities within the Läskonster project – everything from a caravan (the counties of Sörmland, Västmanland and Örebro) to mobile “story cupboards” (Uppsala County) or “digital literature centres” in the form of web-based writing workshops (Östergötland County). There is an obvious question in whether or not the public library is in fact already a literature centre, and Stockholm County chose to work on the basis of that idea. The final report described, among other things, a vision for a literature centre in Sandviken. In 2014, the literature centre Trampolin was opened in Sandviken, which was presented as Sweden’s first literature centre for children and young people.

**Room for children**

The design of new library spaces can be more or less grounded in research. In Rum för barn (Room for children – the Children’s library) at Kulturhuset (the House of Culture) in Stockholm for example, both the design of the space and the library’s activities are grounded in educational theory. In a conference paper presented by the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in Borås, researcher Lena Lundgren (2007) claimed that it is unusual for libraries to be based on educational theories in this way. Rachel van Riel argues that the physical presentation of the library is the area that is most in need of innovation and describes Rum för barn as a model worthy of imitation (Van Riel 2012). In 2003, the Swedish Library Association published a number of recommendations for the children’s and young people’s arm of the public library, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and when Rum för barn was built in 2005, it was with the ambition of developing a library based on the child’s perspective throughout. For example, the traditional classification system was abandoned and the books are instead arranged in such a way that the children themselves can find them. In Rum för barn, the physical design of the space has been given more scope than is usual in more traditional libraries. Cubby houses, towers, staircases, doll houses and secret chests, an aquarium with piranhas and much more are part of the staging of this library space. The idea behind the Rum för barn was that play should provide a route to the books. How this has worked in practice was investigated in a Masters thesis by Linn Samuelsson (2007).

**Bookstocks at other locations**

There are many reasons for libraries to work with outreach activities, due to something as concrete as physical barriers for borrowers to get to the library, for example. Many public libraries therefore offer a home delivery service for books to all those who cannot get themselves to the library. Several research papers have been written about this form of outreach activity. For example, Helgesson (2006) has investigated these activities from the user perspective and Eriksson (2010) from the mediator perspective. But outreach activities might also be about overcoming cultural barriers. Librarians who have participated in projects involving sport and reading, for example, have indicated that they have developed better contact with young people they have met in the young peoples’ own space, rather than in the library.
Among the outreach activities of public libraries, there is a tradition of establishing physical book stocks at places other than inside the library building and its branches; a type of outreach activity that has undergone a certain amount of renewal in recent times. Reaching out by establishing new bookstocks can mean everything from more obvious variants such as libraries in waiting rooms, to the more experimental, such as libraries at indoor public swimming pools. As part of an effort to move parts of the bookstock to places other than the physical library locale, communal laundry room libraries have been established in many parts of the country, for example. The cloakroom library is another variant, as is the changing room library. Workplace libraries have a long tradition to fall back on, and after a period of decline appear to be enjoying renewed interest. This also applies to mobile libraries of various kinds, such as book buses and book boats. During the summers in Borås, large sections of the lending service have been moved out onto the street in order to offer a drive-in library.

**Workplace libraries**

One of the more established variants of bookstocks in locations outside the library walls is workplace libraries. Mats Herder’s sociology of literature thesis, *Arbetsplatsbibliotek i Sverige. Studier av en uppsökande folkbiblioteksverksamhet och dess framväxt (Books at work: studies on public library extension services in Sweden and their development)* (1986), provides a history of workplace libraries. Workplace libraries for educational purposes have existed since the nineteenth century, established by employers and/or philanthropists. From the end of the nineteenth century, workplace libraries were established by representatives of the labour movement. These libraries were usually not located at the workplace, but in Folkets hus (the community centre) or in someone’s home. Workplace libraries in the form of seamen’s libraries have been in existence since 1916, and still exist today. These were paid for by seamen’s trade union organisations, but during the 1930s began receiving aid from the state. In the 1970s, a more comprehensive trial involving workplace libraries began subsequent to the Swedish state enquiry into literature of 1968. For a period of twenty years, workplace libraries grew up rapidly and were seen as an effective way to gain new readers. But what is the situation with workplace libraries today?

A comprehensive report on workplace libraries was written by Peter Almerud (2004), commissioned by the Swedish Arts Council. A workplace library is defined in this report as a library containing general literature located at a workplace and for the employees’ recreational reading and that someone takes responsibility for and that is continuously renewed. The report showed that, since the end of the 1980s, workplace libraries have become marginalised in cultural policy debate and in the activities of public libraries. On the whole, the workplace library as an activity appeared to be declining; for example, a halving of the number of workplace libraries since 1990 was reported. In 2003, it is estimated that there were around 1200 workplace libraries, of which 500 were under municipal direction, 400 under trade union direction in collaboration with En bok för alla, and 300 were independent workplace libraries. There is much to indicate that this figure has dropped further since then. In a report from 2010, Nina Frid states that workplace libraries are facing major challenges. The adult education working group for a reading boost in Sweden gave a similar picture in a report from 2013, which
Almerud divides the development of workplace libraries into three phases:

- A trial period in the early 1970s.
- An establishment and development phase with the support of cultural policy initiatives, in particular state aid, from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.
- A cutting back and stabilising period from the end of the 1980s onwards.

Many of the workplace libraries started by trade unions were initiated as part of larger reading promotion projects. Almerud thinks that a well-functioning workplace library can be an effective way of promoting reading because the books are made available, and because the existence of a workplace library at a workplace affects attitudes to books and reading among employees.

Since the workplace library has a reading promotion function regardless of who is responsible for it, Almerud stresses that renewed efforts should not just cover workplace libraries within the framework of the public library, but also independent workplace libraries, and workplace libraries operated by trade unions. In her report, Nina Frid expresses the opinion that workplace libraries would have the greatest opportunities for development if unions, companies, the Swedish Writers’ Union, ABF (the Workers’ Educational Association) and the Swedish Library Association all work together on the issue, irrespective of who is principally responsible for any individual library.

**Truckstop libraries**

A relatively new form of workplace library is the truckstop library. The first truckstop library in Sweden was opened in 2004 at the roadside café Tönnebro, an initiative of the Swedish Transport Workers Union and the Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union (HRF). The truckstop library acts as common workplace library for these unions and through its lending of audiobooks and paper books it aims to increase the availability of books – and thereby increase reading among café and restaurant employees and professional drivers. Some truckstop libraries offer download stations where you can borrow audiobooks by downloading them directly to your computer or mobile phone. There are currently twelve truckstop libraries in Sweden. A map of the truckstop libraries in Sweden is available on the website of the Swedish Transport Workers Union. A Masters thesis in library and information science studying truckstop libraries has shown that there are professional drivers who borrow up to 8–9 audiobooks per month from these libraries, while they virtually never read books in paper form (Andersson & Hjertström 2006).

**Book buses, book boats and other mobile libraries**

A “mobile library” means quite simply a library that does not stay in one place. This definition is also the basis of the report *Mobile Library Guidelines* (Stringer 2010), published by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). This report provides guidelines for mobile library activities and contains a number of colourful examples of mobile libraries, including a Thai elephant library. A history of mobile libraries in Sweden could begin with what were termed travelling libraries, an activity initiated around the turn of last century by the adult education associations, workers’ libraries, and the student unions Verdandi and Heimdal. This activity subsequently
came to be replaced by book buses, which even today are a common form of mobile library. Book buses are one of Sweden’s public library outreach activities and have existed for close to seventy years – the first book bus started operation in Borås in 1948. The inspiration for book buses in Sweden came from the USA and the UK, where book buses began to be used in the 1920s, from having previously offered mobile libraries by horse and cart. In Sweden in 1975 a state subsidy for book buses was introduced which resulted in an increase in book buses. Book buses, understood as a kind of mobile library branch in specially fitted out vehicles, operate today in roughly one third of Sweden’s 290 municipalities. The fundamental idea behind a book bus is to make a library service available to all, regardless of their place of residence. Incidentally, there is nothing about book buses in Sweden’s Library Act. However, the Act does state that public libraries are to be available to all, and adapted to the needs of users. Book buses and other mobile libraries are a means of effecting such availability. With the aid of book buses, libraries can get to readers instead of the other way around.

A history of book buses in Sweden is provided in a Masters thesis in Library and Information Science (Lysebäck & Norrström 2000). It shows that during the 1970s and 1980s, book buses were more or less taken for granted while the 1990s saw a decline in them. The decline in the number of book buses in the 1990s was in part a result of cutbacks in library funding generally, which had an impact on the library’s outreach activities. The need for mobile libraries has varied over time and can be seen in relation to the increase in private car ownership and the expansion of communications networks, as well as increased access to the Internet.

Book buses often have their own names. In Falkenberg for example, it is called the Owl, and is a bus with approximately 4000 media items including books, CDs with music and stories for children, periodicals and audiobooks for children and adults. There is also a mobile library for small children called the Bumblebee, which carries some 1000 media items, primarily picture books, easy fact books and CDs for children, but also books on teaching children and child development. The municipality of Falkenberg has operated its mobile libraries since 1976. In August 2014, the mobile libraries in Falkenberg and the Swedish Libraries Association held a Nordic conference entitled Mobila möten (Mobile encounters), which brought together 200 people and 20 mobile library vehicles from the four countries over two days.

The idea behind the mobile library is an old one, of offering a library service to sparsely populated rural areas. For this purpose, besides buses and other wheeled vehicles, Sweden also deploys book boats in several areas. For example, there has been a book boat operating in the Stockholm archipelago since 1953. The book boats tour for one week every autumn and spring and carry around 3000 books. This activity is operated by the regional library in Stockholm and financed by the Stockholm County Council. Book boats are sometimes given literary sounding names. In Norway, for instance, a number of smaller coastal cities are visited by the book boat Epos (Epic).

The Bubble
Caravans can also be used as mobile libraries. In the counties of Södermanland, Västmanland and Örebro, a project entitled Bubblan – berättelse på väg (The Bubble – stories on the way) ran between 2010–2012. “Bubble” is the affectionate name in Sweden for the
classic Volkswagen beetle or bug (officially, the Volkswagen type 1 car), and here referred to the small size of the caravan. Inspired by similar projects in Denmark, this project used a similarly small mobile unit in the form of an old caravan, painted in a way that children would like. The project organisers called Bubblan a “mobile experiential centre”. Bubblan was one of the many ideas for literature centres that arose in the project Läskonster (The Arts of Reading), which was dealt with above. This project included visual storytelling, relay painting, magnetic poetry, the creation of animated films, book-themed dances, and reading aloud. The focus within the project was on storytelling in various forms, with a strong emphasis on children’s participation. The project aimed to reach children and young people who might otherwise not visit a library.

During the first year of the project, its focus was a variety of storytelling activities with children aged 9 to 12 years; the second year of the project was devoted to children aged 13 to 18 years; and during the project’s last year, the target group was children from 0 to 6 years. High season for Bubblan activities was during the summer, when the caravan visited youth festivals and public housing apartment block areas (miljonprogram areas). Bubblan was also presented at the children’s book fair in Bologna, which is the world’s biggest children’s book fair. Bubblan – berättelser på väg was funded by the Swedish Arts Council and evaluated externally by Eva Bergstedt (2012), a freelance journalist who also holds a Masters in Library and Information Science (see also Eriksson 2013). The evaluation was conducted using questionnaires and interviews addressed to library staff, library managers, and collaborators. However, the children’s own experiences of the project have not been evaluated, despite the project’s strong emphasis on children’s participation in other respects. Reaching out to children and young people who otherwise might not visit a library was clear as one of the goals of the project, and it would have been useful to know something about the extent to which that goal was achieved. Worth mentioning in terms of research into similar reading promotion efforts using mobile library activities for children is the UK thesis The promotion of reading on children’s mobile libraries in the United Kingdom (Bamkin 2012). This doctoral thesis showed, among other things, that mobile children’s libraries in the UK reach out to children who do not come into contact with books in other ways, and that the mobile library provides quite a different experience to the bricks-and-mortar library.

Communal laundry libraries, cloakroom libraries and other alternative lending activities

One of the alternative lending activities that libraries have developed is the communal laundry library. Communal laundry libraries are found in the form of smaller spontaneous libraries, in other words a collection of books that has been placed by private initiative in a shared community or communal laundry room; and in larger, organised forms in collaboration with public libraries and other actors. For example, in Smedjebacken, the communal laundry library has been set up in cooperation with ABF Dala Finnmark, the tenants’ association Malmen and the Dalarna County Library, with funding from the Swedish Arts Council. The communal laundry library is a room connected to the laundry room where neighbours can socialise and share their reading experiences. The public library is responsible for the selection of books and supplies the room with a stock of current, quality fiction and non-fiction, audiobooks and picture books. In connection with
the establishment of the laundry room library, a book representative was also trained. Lectures and author visits have also been held as part of this activity.

Another method for increasing the availability of books is the cloakroom library at preschools. Cloakroom libraries have been used in reading promotion efforts to foster reading aloud among parents, as in the project Läs för mig (Read to me) in the province of Halland. The idea is to offer parents books to borrow in connection with dropping off and picking up their children, by means of an easily managed lending system. Some libraries such as the public library in Mönsterås have offered cloth library bags in the cloakroom filled with a selection of books to read aloud. These book bags, which may be the size of a shopping bag or a larger sports bag, are a very common feature of the public library’s efforts to make literature available and have sometimes been shown to have a significant impact on the children’s reading. In the evaluation of the Norwegian project Idrett og lesing (Sport and reading), for example, book bags stood out as the most important element of the project.

Yet another example of making literature available at new and surprising places is the Gotland County Library’s project, in collaboration with the local KFF after-school recreation centre, to establish mini libraries in Gotland’s public baths. Public baths libraries should have reading corners and media for all ages. The combination of library and swimming also occurs in various forms of library outreach activities at bathing beaches. This kind of “Biblio Playa” activity, inspired by similar activities in Spain, has been used at a number of bathing beaches in Sweden, such as in Södertälje.

**Book reps and reading reps**

Book representatives, or book reps, have an important function in workplace libraries. They are responsible for the workplace library and may be assigned the task of handling the lending, providing a reading advisory service to their workmates, and providing information about the library. Almerud’s report on workplace libraries states that an engaged book rep at a workplace probably has a better chance of promoting reading than a librarian, whose presence at the workplace is usually limited to a few times each month. To provide training and a source of inspiration for book reps at workplaces, the seminar Boken på arbetsplatsen (The Book in the Workplace) has been conducted for many years at Brunnsvik Folk High School outside Ludvika. This is a seminar involving a mutual exchange between the members of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and writers with working class roots as well as social commentators. The seminar is aimed at book reps and others who work with workplace libraries and reading promotion projects, and to all those who plan activities involving books and reading.

Ombud i läsningens tjänst (Reps in the service of reading) is another project aimed at training reading reps with the aim of increasing access to literature and participation in the digital society within care for the elderly and the disabled. The reading rep course is delivered in the form of a study circle and is primarily about reading aloud and finding easy-to-read texts. After completing the study circle, participants are registered as reading reps at the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM), which regularly informs reading reps about new easy-to-read books, and also sends the magazines Läsombudet (The Reading Rep) and Boktidningen Lättläst (Easy to Read Books Magazine) to the reading rep’s workplace (Nygren 2014). The Ombud i läsningens tjänst project was a collaboration...
between the Stockholm Regional Library, Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (an adult education association), MTM, and eight public libraries in the county of Stockholm. The report for the first year of the project listed 55 trained reading reps (Nygren 2013).

There have been several similar projects for the training of reading reps for different target groups. For example, the project Läslust i Värmland (Reading enjoyment in Värmland), which ran from 2001–2003, aimed to make reading with the reading rep a natural part of everyday life for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism. The project was a collaboration between the Swedish National Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability (FUB), the Autism association (now the Autism and Asperger Association) in Sweden, Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan, the County Library and Region Värmland, what was then The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille (now MTM), and MTM (Torvaldsdotter 2003).

### Availability via digital media

#### E-books

It is easy to see the reading promotion potential in the enhanced availability and many reading options that have arisen with the advent of smartphones and tablets. It is just as easy to see in the same technology a potential threat to reading. In the light of several studies of boys’ and girls’ preferences regarding reading on a screen, the Riksdag report *En bok är en bok är en bok? – en fördjupningsstudie av e-böckerna idag* (A book is a book is a book? – an in-depth study of e-books today) (2013) makes a cautious assumption about the reading promotion potential of the e-book for boys. In the summary of the research on the impact of e-books on reading motivation and literacy, made on behalf of the National Literacy Trust (Picton 2014), the conclusion is drawn that it is too optimistic to assume that e-books are a path to reading for people who do not read printed books. On the other hand, e-books, just like printed books, can be used in reading promotion efforts. Reader surveys indicate that reading e-books and paper books is not a matter of either/or. The majority of the research on children’s and adolescents’ on-screen reading has so far focused on its impact on literacy. There is much more to know about the impact of e-books on attitudes to reading and reading motivation. A study that compared students’ reading motivation when reading paper books and when reading e-books, respectively, has indicated that the content is more important for reading motivation among children and young people than the format per se. However, students tended to prefer e-books when they were offered a greater number of books to choose from and the option to choose their own e-books (Jones & Brown 2011). Most likely, the reading potential of the e-book lies in the possibility of making greater quantities of literature available, which in turn permits choice and thus provides motivation.

#### Talking books

A talking book is a recorded, narrated version of a published book, and is intended for those with reading impairments. Talking books are produced in Sweden by the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM), which was previously named the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille. MTM works to ensure that individuals with reading impairments are offered literature in a form that is accessible to them, and is also tasked with making available, producing and distributing easy-to-read literature to the extent that
these needs are not met in the commercial market. Before 1950, the visually impaired could only borrow books in Braille from Sweden’s Association for the Blind. But after audiotape technology was developed, public libraries and MTM began to build up a book collection of talking books of non-fiction and fiction for adults as well as children. While in other countries it is usual that a central library for the blind lends media directly to the visually impaired, in Sweden already in the 1950s there was collaboration with public libraries. This model of collaboration has been very significant for reaching new readers, such as people with dyslexia. From the 1950s, books were recorded on audiotape, with a transition during the 1970s to cassette tapes. During the 1990s, there was a transition to CD format and now in the twenty-first century, audiobooks have become downloadable via the app Legimus. MTM offers talking books with text (i.e. talking books which additionally contain the text and images from the printed book), easy-to-read books, books for reading practice, books in different languages and books for language practice. You can read more about MTM’s talking book activities on the Agency’s website. For an inquiry into how talking book activities are experienced by users of libraries, see the report Talande böcker och läsande barn. Barn berättar om talboksanvändning (Talking books and reading children. Children describe their use of talking books) (Lundh 2013).

References
Hedenström, Solveig, Holmén, Annika & Lundgren, Lena (2010). Läskonster: nya former för lässti-
Chapter 9. Concluding remarks and recommendations

Reading promotion can be understood as an activity for increasing reading motivation, broadening reading interests, and improving attitudes to reading. In this knowledge review, the methods for achieving these have been sorted into the categories early reading stimulation, reading role models, readers’ advisory services and book presentations, social reading, summer reading programmes and availability/accessibility.

The first chapter of this book narrows down the concept of reading promotion. It also provides an introduction to the state of the research and in what ways research can be helpful in the planning, evaluation and improvement of reading promotion programmes and activities.

The book’s second chapter presents some key concepts. While reading attitude refers to the feelings and ideas of the individual about reading, and reading interest refers to preferences in terms of genres and subjects, etc., reading motivation is about an internal condition that results in the individual wanting to read. The factors essential to motivating children and young people to read include the perceived relevance of the literature to their own lives, access to a broad range of reading material, plenty of time for reading, freedom of choice in the selection of reading material, and the opportunity for social interaction around what has been read. This chapter concludes that the teaching of reading in Swedish schools – as it is largely practised according to the Swedish National Agency for Education’s report from 2007 – is contrary to what the research says about reading motivation on virtually every point.

Added to this is that research on reading outside school has demonstrated a positive correlation between reading ability and access to books in the home; that children who own books read more frequently and get more out of it than children who do not; that children who come from homes where reading is valued are more inclined to evolve into readers; that reading for pleasure is strongly influenced by relationships between teachers and children, as well as between children and their families. Together with a large number of studies indicating that parents and the home environment are crucial for children’s reading, a picture begins to emerge in Sweden of socio-cultural factors being allowed to determine to a very high degree who become readers and who do not.

The teaching of reading in school is often positioned as distinct from reading for pleasure. Reading for pleasure has been defined as reading of one’s own free will, for one’s own enjoyment or satisfaction. The concept occurs most often in reading promotion contexts. Reading for pleasure is also a fairly well-established concept within the international research. The term reading for pleasure denotes voluntary reading, for one’s own pleasure or enjoyment. The second chapter of the book puts forward a couple of arguments in favour of using the alternative term voluntary reading – understood as reading done of one’s own free will, and out of one’s own interests. The term “reading for pleasure” risks reducing the purpose of reading to primarily a matter of enjoyment, which in turn provides only a weak argument for reading in competition with other
leisure activities. Researchers have pointed out that the cultural sector and education sector are covered by different cultural concepts. The cultural sector, with its aesthetic philosophy and theory, is *autotelic*, while the education sector, with its vocabulary of pedagogical and didactic concepts is *instrumental*. Consequently, the school is dominated by an instrumental approach to reading literature while reading literature as part of reading promotion activities within public libraries, for example, is more likely to be perceived as something you do for its own sake. At the same time, reading promotion efforts are often justified by falling literacy standards, which ultimately tend to give reading an instrumental legitimacy even there. This knowledge overview stresses that reading can be declared “useful”, without thereby being reduced to only a matter of usefulness. But the fact that reading has many instrumental ‘benefits’ does not rule out that it has value in itself. At first sight, a division between *autotelic* and *instrumental* culture may appear to be elucidating. But such a division is also liable to overshadow the fact that cultural activities often have both an intrinsic value and an instrumental value. Thus, there is nothing contradictory about viewing the reading of literature as an activity with intrinsic value, while simultaneously giving it further legitimacy by referring to the positive educational and social effects of reading. Furthermore, a useful effect of reading literature in the form of improved reading skills, is in turn an instrument and a prerequisite for being able to benefit from the intrinsic value of literature in the first place.

The fact that free voluntary reading can have positive effects on language development is well known. In the other chapters in this knowledge review, research is described that has demonstrated the positive effects of voluntary reading, such as extended vocabulary, improved writing skills, better results on reading tests, and more positive attitudes to reading in general, as well as a positive correlation between reading enjoyment and reading ability. Studies that have charted the link between the frequency of reading and reading skills have also been noted. Meta-analyses of large numbers of studies confirm a well-known positive spiral regarding reading: children who read a lot improve their reading ability, and children with good reading ability read more, which further improves their reading ability.

Several international research reports exude high hopes for the potential of voluntary reading to, for example, combat exclusion and raise educational levels. Researchers have pointed out the effects of voluntary reading such as improved reading and writing ability, improved comprehension, grammar and vocabulary, a better attitude to reading, increased self-confidence as a reader, greater inclination towards voluntary reading later in life and increased general knowledge – but also better understanding of other cultures, increased participation in society, and greater insight into human decision-making.

Sociological studies have shown that affluent people read more, and a number of studies show that children from less privileged social circumstances generally read less for enjoyment than children from more privileged classes. In Sweden, for example, it was found that the highly educated are twice as likely to read books at least once each week compared with the less educated. At the same time, there are a number of studies that give support to the potential of voluntary reading to generate social mobility. A comprehensive study that examined the cognitive effects of reading for pleasure over time points to reading for pleasure in leisure time as more important to children’s learning
than parental level of education. In a similar way, it has been possible to point out that
ingagement in reading, in the form of regular recreational reading, is more important
for the reading abilities of children and young people than their parents’ professional
status. All in all, there are strong arguments for free reading as effective social leverage.

Reading researchers sometimes refer to the “Matthew Effect” of reading. A “Matthew
effect” means, essentially, that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer – the effect
is named after the verse in the Bible’s Gospel according to Matthew, where it says that
“Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not
have, even what they have will be taken from them”. The Matthew Effect has been used
to explain the gradually widening gap during school years between the strong and the
weak reader. Children who are better readers than their contemporaries read more and
thus get even better at reading. Children who do not read well read less, with the result
that they lag even further behind. Teachers have warned that the Matthew Effect is
likely to give rise to negative thought patterns in the teaching context, where weak read-
ers are seen as hopeless cases. On a more positive note, the Matthew effect is indicative
of the importance of early interventions to strengthen the child’s positive relationship
to literature and reading.

In the third chapter of this book, attention is drawn to reading promotion activ-
ities that target younger children. There is consensus in the research regarding
the importance of early language stimulation. Parental engagement is particularly
important for children’s reading development. Family literacy programmes is a col-
lective name for initiatives that utilise this knowledge, and in a variety of ways aim to
courage families to stimulate the language development of their children, or inform
parents about the importance of early engagement in language development. Interna-
tional research reports that have compiled a significant number of quantitative measu-
rements of this type of programme indicate a large effect in terms of both improving
children’s literacy and the capacity of parents to provide their children with support.

Frequently used methods within programmes that target families with child-
ren are book gifting and reading aloud, in combination with information about the
importance of early language stimulation. Internationally, there are a number of
variants of Family literacy programmes. An example from the UK is Book Start, which
began in the beginning of the 1990s and can now be found on all continents. Book Start
has been evaluated several times, and, as a consequence of the programme, the follow-
ing has been observed: increased reading (more frequently and in greater amounts)
with infants and small children by parents/guardians; an increase in the number of
library memberships for children; more parents/guardians placing a value on reading
for infants and young children; increased self-confidence in reading aloud to children;
and increased awareness of the role of reading in speech and language development.

An internationally proven method of family literacy programme is conducting home
visits to families. The benefits of home visits as a reading promotion method include
being able to meet the family as a group on their own terms, at times that suit their
schedules. Furthermore, home visitors can gather information about the child’s home
learning environment and the cultural and/or socio-economic factors that may impact
on the child’s reading development. One of the key factors that determine the quality
of the implementation of home visits in family literacy programmes is the training of
staff, which raises questions of budget and resources. The staff who carry out home visits need a range of skills, such as a good ability to observe, listen and ask questions. Swedish research has indicated that language stimulation programme activities that include home visits can increase parental engagement in the child’s intellectual and language development, and also have a positive effect on the child’s language and general development.

In Sweden, public libraries have for decades collaborated with child health centres to distribute free books and organise parent groups. Another important form of collaboration for the language development and reading motivation of very young children is between the library and the preschool. Public libraries play an important role in children’s access to literature and as an additional source of pedagogical skills. Collaborations between public libraries and preschools are a matter of course in many parts of Sweden. However, there are studies that show that many preschools do not see their local library as an obvious collaborator. There are also major differences between preschools in respect of the time they spend on reading aloud to the children. Studies have also indicated that “reading quiet time” is the most common context in which reading occurs, and it has been noted that this thereby reduces reading to a “disciplinary measure”. It has also been noted that there are big differences in access to books at preschools. Whereas some preschools are well equipped, others have relatively few books and some preschools have no books at all. Preschools are not subject to Sweden’s Education Act in terms of access to school libraries, which makes the issue of access to literature in the preschool a matter of particular concern. Several initiatives have been taken to strengthen the position of literature in preschools. The section on early reading stimulation in the third chapter of this book describes some good examples of collaborations between libraries and preschool. These include preschools with a literature profile, where stories and reading literature are a consistent theme in daily activities.

Reading aloud is one of the most important methods used to stimulate children’s language development and generate interest in books and reading. The positive effects of reading aloud on children’s language development are well documented. Reading aloud helps to enrich children’s vocabularies and their capacity to express themselves. Reading aloud can also awaken an early interest in books and reading and for children it can mean a first encounter with literature as an art form. Researchers have been able to conclude that children who have been read to at home read more on their own, and a positive correlation has also been found between reading aloud and good grades in school. There is plenty of evidence of the positive impact of reading aloud and one can add to this the fact that parents, by reading aloud to their children, convey a positive attitude to books and reading which can be crucial for the children’s reading development. A variation on reading aloud that is often advocated consists of a dialogue between the children and/or between the children and the reader, before, after and during the reading. This method involves reading with, rather than to, children. A common name for this method of reading aloud is dialogic reading. There are studies in which the effects of reading aloud on children’s language development have been measured and compared with the effects of dialogic reading and other, less interactive forms of reading aloud. According to a meta-analysis of this kind of research, dialogic reading has the biggest impact on language development for groups of younger children.
the question of if and when dialogic reading is to be preferred is not just about language development, but also about the degree of engagement of the listener, and the motivation that can arise out of this engagement.

Reading aloud is part of public libraries’ storytime sessions, which usually combine reading aloud from a book with storytelling and singing. Reading aloud is also included in many different reading promotion projects. A project of slightly different nature entails giving parents who serving time in prison the opportunity to record bedtime stories on CDs for their children. In recent years, reading aloud for adults has become a popular feature at Swedish public libraries. There are collaborative projects involving reading aloud for people with dementia, and there are reading promotion initiatives that involve young people reading aloud to the elderly.

The fourth chapter of this book describes programmes and projects that in various ways use reading role models. That children and adults learn by imitating others is well known. The use of reading role models in reading promotion activities seems intuitively reasonable. A role model can be a person whose behaviour you imitate, but also someone whose values and ideas you share. There are a number of examples of reading promotion programmes and projects targeting children and adolescents in their free time that use role models adapted to specific target groups.

The most important form of influence on children’s reading during their first few years of life is parents reading to their children and parents reading themselves. After all, children learn to speak and communicate long before they start school by imitating the significant adults in their close environments. Textbooks as well as research studies and student theses that treat the parent’s role as a role model for reading often stress, first and foremost, the importance of parents having an interest in reading. Consequently, reading promotion for children and adults cannot easily be regarded as two separate areas.

Many research studies have examined how parents’ reading habits in their free time influence their children’s reading behaviour. There are studies that show that both parents have the biggest impact on the reading behaviour of their daughters. Researchers have also found evidence for what is termed the gender-stereotype hypothesis, according to which fathers have a greater impact on the reading behaviour of sons, and mothers on daughters. Judging by a number of studies, the most important reading role models for children are their immediate family, followed by their peers and their teachers. There are also studies that have identified reading role models among sportsmen and women in general and football players in particular.

That boys generally demonstrate lower levels of literacy than girls has been established in a number of major studies, as have differences between boys/men and girls/women in terms of reading habits. It has been shown that girls in the OECD countries not only do better on tests that measure reading ability, they are also more inclined to enjoy reading, read more frequently, think positively about reading and perceive themselves as readers.

Broadly speaking, it is possible to distinguish between two types of explanations for the reading habits of boys and girls, and of men and women, respectively. Among the more controversial/contested explanations are presumed biologically conditioned differences in “learning styles”. Looking at reading habits from a social perspective
has achieved wider acceptance. The gap between the reading habits of boys and girls has been explained by the idea that we are socialised into different reading roles. For example, the reading habits of boys have been understood as the product of social pressures on boys to fit in with masculine identities, in combination with stereotypical conceptions of reading as a “feminine” occupation. Researchers have used the term culture of resistance in describing boys’ reluctance to read.

The lack of male reading role models is a common theme in research about boys’ and girls’ reading, in particular in academic journal articles that deal with male reading ability. The need for male role models also tends to come up for discussion as soon as boys’ reading habits are addressed. For example, research that has studied how boys and girls are socialised into a reader identity has provided the impetus for campaigns in which sports stars have acted as reading role models. That boys choosing not to read can be explained by social norms regarding masculinity is also the basis of a Swedish government decision to invest in initiatives to do with sport and reading. On the whole, male reading role models have become an important aspect of reading promotion activities today.

Some researchers have argued that the source of the problem with boys’ reading habits is a “feminisation” of reading that mothers and a female-dominated preschool and compulsory school have contributed to. It has been argued that women convey assumptions about the purpose and context of reading, the choice of texts and ways to assimilate them which function poorly and, in the worst case, are an actual deterrent for boys. It has also been asserted that the uneven distribution of men and women within the library profession has had a negative influence on boys’ reading. Some have maintained that the genres preferred by boys have been marginalised as a result of the “feminisation” of literature reading within the library and its activities. However, it has also been pointed out that the library can be made into a welcoming and inviting place for boys by appealing more to their wants and needs. To reduce the reading gap between boys and girls, one needs to base activities on books that boys prefer to read. The issue of how to get young boys to read has higher priority than the issue of what they read.

According to many studies, boys tend to prefer books with non-fiction content to a higher degree than girls. Furthermore, boys tend to be attracted to a certain type of fiction. Humour, sports, science fiction and fantasy are among the most common preferences when it comes to boys’ reading, and for this reason programmes based on these genres have been advocated. To reach young boys as a target group, different types of outreach activities are recommended, with the aim of taking the library to where boys congregate, and also to get men to visit the library. For example, it has been recommended that fathers should be encouraged to participate in the library’s reading aloud sessions for children.

The role model idea is central to reading promotion projects and campaigns that specifically target fathers. Concerning reading role models in the inner family circle, there are several projects and campaigns designed to encourage and support fathers, or fathers-to-be, to act as reading role models for their children, often with the stated aim of influencing negative attitudes to reading among boys. The fourth chapter of this book gives examples of these kinds of programmes and projects carried out in collabo-
ration with ABF, public libraries, trade unions, schools, and sports associations – programmes based on both the gender dimension and social class aspect of reading.

Another important category of reading role model is peers. That peers influence the reading habits of children and adolescents has been emphasised in research into attitudes to reading in particular.

Several projects and campaigns have worked with letting children act as reading role models for other children. In the UK for example, this method has been used to recruit high profile boys at a school to become “Reading Champions”, with the task of encouraging boys to read. The idea of role models lies at the heart of the Book Buddy Reading programme, whose basic idea is to pair readers who are at different levels. For example, children in fifth grade read to children in preschool, with clear benefits for both parties: the younger children have an older reading role model, and older children with reading difficulties are offered practice in reading aloud that they can feel comfortable with. Similar activities occur at several schools in Sweden. In projects that have utilised this model, mentorship has been found to have dual benefits: younger children get attention from older children, and older children boost their self-confidence through acting as role models.

Other projects and programmes have utilised reading role models who are outside the immediate social environment of children and young people. The role model idea is key in reading promotion activities that have involved sports organisations. Other reading promotion activities that have combined sport with reading have profiled sports stars as reading role models. In the UK, there is a long history of working with football stars as reading role models, referred to as Reading Stars. The fourth chapter of this book describes some examples of projects that have brought together sport and reading. An important conclusion that can be drawn from these projects is to be clear about what audiences you want to reach. Projects that have brought together sport and reading as a way of reaching boys, and then – in order to not appear to exclude or stigmatise either gender – have appealed to both girls and boys, have ended up with a majority of girls among their participants.

The fifth chapter of this book is about reading promotion activities that involve providing readers’ advisory services and book presentations of various kinds. In the library context, the term more closely related to reading promotion is used: literature mediation. The library manages literature, gathers it and makes it available, but the library also acts as a mediator of literature. The term literature mediation is understood as informing about literature, making it visible, stimulating reading enjoyment, and guiding the reader in their selection of literature. Seen in this way, literature mediation is a specific type of reading promotion. Researchers have distinguished between direct mediation through a personal meeting, and indirect mediation in the form of reading tips on a website, for example. Examples of indirect literature mediation include subject departmentalisation, exhibitions, literature lists and written book presentations. Conversations between borrowers and librarians, traditional forms of booktalk and other oral presentations of literature can be regarded as direct forms of mediation. Such distinctions between “direct” and “indirect” can be problematized, particularly if you take into account the forms of mediation that combine the immediacy of speech with the permanency of writing, for example filmed book presentations published on websites.
The specific form of service that entails providing suggestions for reading (particularly in the USA) is termed *Readers' Advisory*. *Readers' Advisory* is a form of literature mediation, and in the same way as we can differentiate between direct and indirect literature mediation, a distinction can be drawn between direct and indirect *Readers' Advisory*. For instance, a direct *Readers' Advisory* service might be in the form of a conversation, during which a series of questions are put to a user for the purpose of making a non-judgemental inventory of the person’s interests and providing him or her with reading tips and advice on the basis of these. In Sweden, the interaction/communication between the librarian and the user includes the equivalent of a readers’ advisory service. This interaction has the aim of meet his/her needs for information, but may also more specifically be about providing advice and tips in the user’s choice of reading. In a comparison between the past and the present, *Readers' Advisory* services have meant that the relationship between the reader and the librarian has become less and less didactic in nature. If in the past librarians generally felt that they knew what was good for the reader and guided the reader in certain specific directions, they have now become more of a link between the book and the reader. A *Readers’ Advisory* service is one of the most fundamental functions of a library, but is also used in the bookshop context in both its direct and indirect forms.

One of the most frequent reading promotion methods used at public libraries is book presentations in the form of booktalk. Booktalk is a much more common activity in the reading promotion activities of public libraries among children and young people than book circles, for example. The booktalk method boils down to talking about books in order to stimulate interest in reading. Booktalk can convey enthusiasm for reading and also help readers to find books that they like. The booktalk method has been used for a long time but has undergone radical changes over time with regard to selection, pedagogy, approach to the audience, objectives, implementation, and anticipated results. It has been concluded that booktalks during the 1970s were heavily influenced by the notion of popular education, while during the 1990s greater emphasis was placed on the personal reading experience. No major Swedish study has been published that seeks to answer the question of the impact of traditional book presentations or booktalk on reading. Some thesis projects on booktalk point to an increase in the borrowing rates for the books that librarians have chosen to talk about, but these are individual observations rather than any kind of major statistical survey. A number of English language doctoral theses which have investigated traditional forms of booktalk and their impact on lending rates and attitudes to reading are conclusive however: books that have been the subject of booktalks show significant increases in circulation, on the other hand, booktalks have no appreciable effect on attitudes to reading. Booktalk at Swedish public libraries is often about fiction. A study indicates that approximately 90 per cent of booktalks are about fiction in all the studied age categories. This is a remarkably high figure in the light of what we know about boys’ interest in non-fiction.

Booktalk activities have changed character over time due to technical innovations of various kinds. One can point to examples of how today’s booktalkers utilise everything from scanners and digital cameras to computer programs such as *PowerPoint* and *iMovie*, websites like *YouTube* and *Amazon*, etc. There are also projects that have made use of the potential of digital developments to breathe new life into booktalk
activities. Digital book presentations also exist in the form of book trailers, in other words, short films featuring books visually, in a format similar to the movie trailer. On YouTube, book trailers are produced by both amateurs and professionals. The Swedish website boktrailer.se features short films on current books and authors from Swedish publishers. The American web portal Digital Book Talk offers book trailers with amateur actors. The research has identified a potential in this activity for improving attitudes to reading among reluctant readers in the category of “digital natives”, i.e. those who have grown up in an age when computers and the Internet were already a substantial part of society.

As regards book blogs, it has been concluded that there are many similarities between private bloggers’ way of presenting books and libraries’ methods of displaying literature and providing readers’ advisory services. In general, bloggers choose to write about recently published literature and the majority of their readers’ advisories are about novels. Library blogs seem to often reflect the blogger’s own personal preferences in terms of literature.

The book’s sixth chapter is about social reading. This chapter concludes that there is a tendency in research as well as reading promotion practice to emphasise the social dimension of reading. It is argued that reading has not traditionally been perceived as a group activity, but for a generation where social interaction is continuous, reading also needs to become social. To generate reading motivation and improve attitudes to reading, schools and libraries ought to be working to establish a habit among children and young people of sharing their reading experiences. Young people will become engaged by literature if they get to talk about it. In a sense, reading is always social. In recent decades, research surrounding the actual process of learning to read has come to stress the importance of the social and cultural context within which all reading development occurs. The rise of the notion of literacy is testimony to this. Literacy, understood in its expanded meaning, is the ability not only to read and write but also to understand and use a variety of other symbol systems within a culture. In many ways, the practice of reading, from basic learning to read to advanced interpretation, can be regarded as a social practice. In addition, all “reading habits” – including reading alone in the privacy of one’s home – are socially produced and conditional on a “social infrastructure” that includes, for example, the material conditions necessary for book production, the education of readers, and the existence of libraries. In itself, the image of the lone, private reader can be regarded as a social construct that romanticises the individual and isolated author or reader.

The questions of how, what, and why we read are determined in a social context. Nevertheless, there is a strong perception of reading as a solitary occupation. A reader is often portrayed as someone who withdraws into a private sphere to become part of a world that others do not share in. Researchers have described this as a cultural hegemony of the solitary reader. However, there are trends indicating that the picture of the isolated, solitary reader is not quite as dominant in reading culture as it once was. The renewed interest in book conversations, book circles, sharing reading tips and digital discussion forums can be interpreted as a component of a reading culture that has become very much social. An example of social reading on a large scale is the Mass Reading Event (MSE), such as TV and radio broadcast book clubs. Another example of
The renewed interest in social reading is linked with the development of technology. Being able to share your reading experiences or discuss reading with others has never been easier than now. This, in turn, creates new foundations and opportunities for reading promotion activities. The term “social reading” is understood to mean communication between readers about literature and reading experiences. Social reading includes book conversations in groups, which occur as part of book circles in both analogue and digital forms. Social reading also includes literature discussions on Internet forums and blogs, as well as author visits.

While booktalk introduces books that the audience has not read, a book conversation involves in-depth reading of already-read books. A book conversation can most easily be defined as a conversation, with or without a facilitator, around a book that all participants have read. In comparison with the book conversation, booktalk in its traditional form can be seen as a form of one-way communication. A standard form of organised book conversation in groups is the book circle. Book circles, reading groups, reading circles and literature circles are assumed to be synonymous in this knowledge review, and refer to an organised group of readers gathered together physically or meeting in some other way to discuss their reading experiences. Research on book circles tends to be about the size, organisation and group identity of the book circles. It mainly concerns English-speaking countries and as yet research in Sweden is limited. In a current Swedish research project on book circles, a distinction has been made between independent book circles and organised book circles. While independent book circles operate without any links to organisations or external support, organised book circles are tied to a public library, an adult education association, a bookstore or some other type of organisation. Both in Sweden and abroad, book circles in their traditional form of meetings IRL are a female-dominated activity. The typical book circle participant in Sweden is a woman of retirement age. The proportion of women participating in book circles organised by adult education associations in recent years has hovered between 80 and 85 per cent. The overwhelming majority of book circle participants are people aged 65 years or older. The research points to a sharp rise in recent years in the number of participants in the oldest age category. Book circles at public libraries have increased greatly in recent years. Since book circles appear to have become a tool to attract adult readers, this increase has been seen as an indication that public libraries have strengthened their reading promotion efforts that target adults.

The UK has a well-developed tradition of hosting reading groups at public libraries, as has been noted in this knowledge review. A key concept in British discourse on reading groups is Reader Development. The Reader Development movement has shifted its focus from reading to the reader; reader development instead of reading development. While reading development is about acquiring reading skills, reader development is about the reading experience itself. This movement has also advocated a shift of emphasis in reading promotion efforts from the quality of the book to the quality of the reading experience.

In the UK, the positive effects of reading groups have been noted in the form of more and broader reading, higher lending rates and consumption of books, but also
how reading groups help to increase knowledge and a sense of community. Research on reading groups for the visually impaired has regarded reading groups from a social justice perspective and as a means of social inclusion. A research report from Scotland that directly addresses the issue of the reading promotion potential of book circles showed what impact literature circles have on reading skills, reading engagement and attitudes to reading, in particular with regard to gender. This report concluded that the literature circles increased enthusiasm for reading as well as improved attitudes to reading and reading behaviours. Both boys and girls who participated in the circles showed significantly more positive attitudes to reading in school and reading generally. According to the researchers, the literature circles functioned best when the teachers did preparatory work to facilitate the collaboration, when the students were involved in the choice of literature, and when the groups met at a predetermined time and on a regular basis. According to the report, belonging to a reading group led to the students becoming more deeply engaged with their reading. The literature circles offered the students a space to talk about books and define themselves as readers. This was particularly important for boys, whose social networks did not otherwise appear to offer any such opportunities. By participating in different types of literature circles, children can learn to become readers who read a lot and widely, and who regard reading as a social activity where they can make friends. Such observations are of great interest, in particular in light of the research hypothesis that men regard reading literature is a private pursuit to much higher degree than women. Norwegian library research has observed that literature serves a weak symbolic, social purpose for a number of adult men interested in literature, which means that they position themselves outside the form of social influence that is so important for women’s interest in literature. When the literature has a social purpose, according to this research, it is also likely that the reading of literature will increase. That reading is regarded as a private pursuit may contribute to many boys and men losing any motivation to read. If this is true, it provides a very strong argument for promoting social reading for boys and men in particular. An effective way might be literature circles for boys, based on the group’s identified interests and not restricted to fiction from the beginning.

A number of digital book circles have started in Sweden in recent decades. As is the case for book circles IRL, the members of digital book circles are largely women. However, it is interesting to note that in percentage terms, there are somewhat more participants of the male sex. Reading groups are only part of a larger online engagement with reading. Participation in digital book circles entails not only discussion about the reading experience after the book has been read, but also during the time it is being read; a result of the daily use of social media.

Another type of Mass Reading Event is a reading promotion initiative that aims to bring together readers in a city, region or entire country around a book that all have read. The research uses the term OBOC for this type of MSE, an acronym for One Book One Community. As the name suggests, this type of MSE means that one – usually but not always fiction – book is selected to serve as the basis for many activities that people in a given geographical area are invited to take part in. These activities include everything from book conversations to evenings with authors, to community events where people gather for creative fun, and canoeing excursions. The OBOC event usually inclu-
The showing of film versions, theatrical dramatisations and staged readings of the book. The *One Book* programme has become widespread in, among others, the USA, Canada, and UK. As a result of this renewed interest in social reading on a large scale, one can add yet another aspect – reading as a way of building community – to reading as an individually transformative, educative, existential, therapeutic, creative and even civilising experience. A goal of OBOC programmes can also be to bolster the status of local literature. A commonly occurring variant of the OBOC model is One City One Book. OBOC programmes may also cover entire regions or provinces, for example the province of Norrbotten in *Norrbotten läser*.

Another form of social reading is the author visit. Author visits for the purpose of reading promotion occur in the form of individual events and also as part of various types of reading promotion programmes and projects, both within Sweden and abroad. Each year, approximately 2,500 author visits are conducted in Swedish classrooms, among other things to stimulate interest in reading in order to improve reading ability. According to the National Library of Sweden’s statistics, 3,200 author visits occurred at Sweden’s public libraries in 2014. Adults appear to be the most common target group for author visits, which are usually made by authors of fiction. The research has shown that author visits in Swedish schools are generally one-off events: the author comes to a lesson, reads from and talks about his/her books, answers questions and that is the end of it. Some visits are more ambitious and include extensive preparations as well as subsequent arrangements. It has been observed that the students’ work with a novel in the context of an author visit generated various types of *conversations* about, for example, text interpretation, connections to one’s own experiences, political and aesthetic questions, etc., – in short, elements that justify deeming such author visits as a form of social reading.

The seventh chapter of this book is devoted to what are termed summer reading programmes. *Summer Learning Loss* is the name given to the phenomenon that students tend to fall behind with their learning during the summer holidays and students from families of lower socio-economic status fall behind even more – which over time creates ever-greater gaps. *Summer Reading Programmes* are often regarded as a means of combating these effects. At Swedish public libraries, summer reading programmes have gone under the name “the Summer Book”. The Summer Book has been defined as a reading promotion method where children are asked to read a number of books over the summer and then rewarded if they succeed. The current national programme *Sommarboken* (*The Summer Book*) has departed from the method of reporting and rewards, and instead placed the emphasis on book discussions in various forms. Abroad, summer reading programmes often follow a kind of read-and-report structure, where the children get to report on what they have read, orally or in writing. Often the children are required to read a certain number of books, with some form of reward in sight. In the research, programmes of this type have come to be called Incentive Programmes. The British *Summer Reading Challenge*, which involves thousands of libraries in the UK, entails children being required to read at least six books during the summer holidays and then being rewarded for their efforts.

A number of international investigations have reported that summer reading programmes help to increase reading, and in view of the fact that such programmes are often designed in such a way that the participants are required to read a considerable
number of books during the summer break, any other result would of course be surprising. Incentive programmes can markedly increase the number of books that children read. The extent to which they also lead to a positive attitude to reading and motivation to read more is dependent on whether the greater volume of reading has helped the child to achieve increased fluency in his or her reading; and if the greater volume of reading has resulted in the child being offered a body of reading material that he or she found to be important and interesting. Whether or not external rewards can generate reading motivation in children or, on the contrary, undermine their motivation is one of the many controversies of reading research. There has been criticism that rewards risk becoming the sole reason for children to read, with the result that reading motivation ceases at the moment that the reward is no longer present. There are studies that indicate that rewards do not appreciably affect reading motivation, but there are also investigations showing that rewards have had a negative impact on intrinsic reading motivation. A number of researchers have found that rewards related to reading, such as books, have a positive impact on motivation. Researchers who have investigated the effects of rewards on attitudes to reading have similarly advocated reading related rewards.

A number of primarily Canadian, US and UK studies have reported the positive effects of summer reading programmes on students’ reading abilities, reading habits, reading enjoyment, self-confidence and library use. The reading abilities of students with similar social backgrounds who did and did not participate in such programmes, respectively, have also been compared and significant differences were noted. One of these studies found that children who participated in a summer reading programme for only a short period read at a higher level than children who did not participate at all. This begs the question of whether this higher level of reading ability is due to the programme or, on the contrary, have students participated in the programme because of it. Such questions, however, are rarely asked, if at all, in these kinds of evaluations.

The research literature on summer reading programmes often deals with the extent to which the programmes have managed to counteract Summer Learning Loss. A large number of articles have been written on this subject. For example, researchers have pointed to the fact that reading 4–5 books over the summer is enough in itself to have a decisive impact on the losses that occur as a result of the holiday break. A number of major studies have attempted to answer the question of the effects of summer reading programmes on students’ grades. There is evidence for summer reading programmes being able to play a significant role in bridging reading gaps and that public libraries have a vital role to play. The suggestions for best practice for summer reading programmes include well-defined target groups, effective marketing strategies and evaluation methods, and experienced staff. The literature on summer reading programmes also points to the importance of effective marketing of the programmes to parents with children of school age, and that libraries should stress the educational benefits of summer reading programmes to parents. Furthermore, summer reading programmes should be characterised by effective collaboration with schools. Schools can identify groups of children and families to offer practical support to allow them to participate, and monitor the progress students make in relation to the programme. In addition, schools can make personal contacts with parents, and encourage siblings, older friends,
and reading buddies to accompany younger readers to the library. Schools can also connect the students’ summer reading to the autumn term’s teaching programme by referring to the texts read as part of the summer reading programme.

The eighth chapter of this book is about various ways of making literature available and accessible. This includes everything from providing easy-to-read literature to how to design the library space. The library space has evolved from having been a collection of books to becoming a much more alive and versatile institution, grouping together the individual user and media, culture, and other users – a development that has been summed up in the phrase from collection to connection. The library as a place to be means an expansion of the library’s function as purely a lender of books and other media. This expansion has been deemed necessary, not least due to the fact that the library’s lending function has shrunk in pace with information, knowledge and experiences being digitised. That the focus of children’s and young people’s libraries has shifted from content and collections to engagement with the library’s users has resulted in an increased interest in the design and architecture of the library.

The staging of the library in terms of its content can be counted as part of the library’s reading promotion efforts, that is, the library’s more active role in giving users advice and encouraging reading, broadening their reading horizons, or simply making it easier for readers to make choices. Traditionally, the library was largely designed for users who knew what they were looking for in advance. In the light of the fact that a significant proportion of visitors to public libraries are not goal-oriented borrowers – or borrowers at all – library research has begun to discuss the idea of serendipity, meaning opportunities for serendipitous discoveries in the material. Researchers have found that there is now more experimentation than ever before with both the space and new forms of mediation. A trend towards setting the stage in libraries in new ways has been identified, with everything from spectacular and lavish American “experiential” libraries in which books are combined with various attractions; to Danish “bookless” libraries in which ninety per cent of physical books have been relegated to a warehouse to make way for other types of media. However, it has been concluded that there is not much to suggest that users themselves have any great interest in the idea of the library as an experiential place. Users instead give priority to the more traditional aspects of the library’s basic functions and various forms of service. A Swedish study has shown that skilled staff and friendly reception are among the aspects that are valued the most highly by users. Furthermore, users tend to value the library’s most basic functions when it comes to accessibility, such as convenient opening hours, being easily able to find what you are looking for, and easy physical access to the library. Generally, users and the surveyed staff are in agreement in these evaluations but there are also notable differences. For instance, over half of the staff think it is very important that the library is a place where you can socialise with others, compared with less than 1/8 of users who were of the same opinion. In conclusion, users want the library to be within easy reach, offer a tranquil environment with a knowledgeable, helpful and friendly staff, as well as a rich selection of books.

In parallel with the development of the library space as a meeting place for those interested in culture and literature, alternatives have also arisen in the form of what are termed literaturhus (literature centres). In the 1980s, the first Literaturhaus was esta-
lished in Berlin; an example that has since been followed in several places in Germany and in the rest of Europe. The literature centre’s activities include lectures, exhibitions, continuing education seminars, author visits and reading groups. The design of new library spaces can be more or less grounded in research. In *Rum för barn (Room for children – the Children’s library)* at Kulturhuset (the House of Culture) in Stockholm, for example, both the design of the space and the library’s activities are grounded in educational theory. When *Rum för barn* was built in 2005, it was with the ambition of developing a library based on the child’s perspective throughout. In *Rum för barn*, the physical design of the space was given more scope than is usual in more traditional libraries. The traditional classification system was abandoned and the books are instead arranged in such a way that the children themselves can find them.

There are many reasons for libraries to work with outreach activities, due to something as concrete as physical barriers for borrowers to get to the library. Outreach activities might also be about overcoming cultural barriers. Librarians who have participated in projects involving sport and reading for example have indicated that they have developed better contact with young people they have met on the young people’s own turf, than in the library. Among the outreach activities of public libraries, there is a tradition of establishing physical book stocks at places other than inside the library building and its branches; a type of outreach activity that has undergone a certain amount of renewal in recent times. Reaching out by establishing new bookstocks can mean everything from more obvious variants such as libraries in waiting rooms, to the more experimental, such as libraries at indoor public baths. As part of an effort to move parts of the bookstock to places other than the physical library locale, *communal laundry room libraries* have been established in many parts of the country, for example. The *cloakroom library* is another variant, as is the *changing room library*. *Workplace libraries* have a long tradition to fall back on, and after a period of decline appear to be enjoying renewed interest. This also applies to *mobile libraries* of various kinds, such as book buses and book boats.

Workplace libraries are one of the more established variants of bookstocks in locations outside the library walls. Workplace libraries for educational purposes have existed since the nineteenth century, established by employers and/or philanthropists. From the end of the nineteenth century, workplace libraries were established by representatives of the labour movement. These libraries were usually not located at the workplace, but in *Folkets hus* (the community centre) or in someone’s home. In the 1970s, a more comprehensive trial involving workplace libraries began subsequent to the Swedish state enquiry into literature of 1968. For a period of twenty years, workplace libraries grew up rapidly and were seen as an effective way to gain new readers. Since the end of the 1980s, workplace libraries have become marginalised in cultural policy debate and in the activities of public libraries. On the whole, the workplace library as an activity appears to be declining; for example, in 2004 a halving of the number of workplace libraries since 1990 was reported. In 2003, it is estimated that there were around 1200 workplace libraries, of which 500 were under municipal direction, 400 under trade union direction in collaboration with *En bok för alla*, and 300 were independent workplace libraries. There is much to indicate that this figure has dropped further since then.

Many of the workplace libraries started by trade unions were initiated as part of lar-
ger reading promotion projects. A well-functioning workplace library can be an effective way of promoting reading because the books are made available, and because the existence of a workplace library at a workplace affects attitudes to books and reading among employees. Since the workplace library has a reading promotion function regardless of who is responsible for it, it has been stressed that renewed efforts should not just cover workplace libraries within the framework of the public library, but also independent workplace libraries, and workplace libraries operated by trade unions. It has also been pointed out that workplace libraries would have the greatest opportunities for development if unions, companies, the Swedish Writers’ Union, ABF (the Workers’ Educational Association) and the Swedish Library Association all work together on this issue, irrespective of who is principally responsible for any individual library.

A relatively new form of workplace library is the truckstop library. The first truckstop library in Sweden was opened in 2004 at the roadside café Tönnebro, an initiative of the Swedish Transport Workers Union and the Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union (HRF). The truckstop library acts as common workplace library for these unions and, through its lending of audiobooks and paper books, aims to increase the availability of books – and thereby increase reading among café and restaurant employees and professional drivers. Some truckstop libraries offer download stations where it is possible to borrow audiobooks by downloading them directly to a computer or mobile phone. There are currently twelve truckstop libraries in Sweden. It has been shown that there are professional drivers who borrow up to 8–9 audiobooks per month from these libraries, while they virtually never read books in paper form.

A “mobile library” means quite simply a library that does not stay in one place. A history of mobile libraries in Sweden could begin with what were termed travelling libraries, an activity initiated around the turn of last century by the adult education associations, workers’ libraries, and the student unions Verdandi and Heimdal. This activity subsequently came to be replaced by book buses, which even today are a common form of mobile library. Book buses are one of Sweden’s public library outreach activities and have existed for close to seventy years – the first book bus started operation in Borås in 1948. The inspiration for book buses in Sweden came from the USA and the UK, where book buses began to be used in the 1920s from having previously offered mobile libraries by horse and cart. In Sweden in 1975 a state subsidy for book buses was introduced which resulted in an increase in book buses. Book buses, understood as a kind of mobile library branch in specially fitted out vehicles, operate today in roughly one third of Sweden’s 290 municipalities. The fundamental idea behind a book bus is to make a library service available to all, regardless of their place of residence. There is nothing about book buses in Sweden’s Library Act. However, the Act does state that public libraries are to be available to all, and adapted to the needs of users. Book buses and other mobile libraries are a means of effecting such availability. With the aid of book buses, libraries can get to readers instead of the other way around.

Studies have shown that during the 1970s and 1980s, book buses were more or less taken for granted while the 1990s saw a decline in them. The decline in the number of book buses in the 1990s was in part a result of cutbacks in library funding generally, which had an impact on the library’s outreach activities. The need for libraries has varied over time and can be seen in relation to the increase in private car ownership.
and the expansion of communications networks, as well as increased access to the Internet. The idea behind the mobile library is an old one, of offering a library service to sparsely populated rural areas. For this purpose, besides buses and other wheeled vehicles, Sweden also deploys book boats in several areas. Projects that include various forms of mobile library often have the ambition of reaching out to children and young people who otherwise might not visit the library.

One of the alternative lending activities that libraries have developed is the communal laundry library. Communal laundry libraries are found in the form of smaller spontaneous libraries, in other words a collection of books that has been placed by private initiative in a shared community or communal laundry room; and in larger, organised forms in collaboration with public libraries and other actors. The communal laundry library is a room connected to the laundry room where neighbours can socialise and share their reading experiences. In connection with the establishment of the laundry room library, a book representative is also trained. Lectures and author visits have also been held as part of this activity.

Another method for increasing the availability of books is the cloakroom library at preschools. Cloakroom libraries have been used in reading promotion efforts to foster reading aloud among parents. The idea is to offer parents books to borrow in connection with dropping off and picking up their children, by means of an easily managed lending system. Some libraries have offered cloth library bags in the cloakroom, filled with a selection of books to read aloud. These book bags, which may be the size of a shopping bag or a larger sports bag, are a very common feature of the public library’s efforts to make literature available and have sometimes been shown to have a significant impact on the children’s reading.

Book representatives, or book reps, have an important function in workplace libraries. They are responsible for the workplace library and may also be assigned the task of handling the lending, providing a reading advisory service to their workmates, and providing information about the library. It has been pointed out that workplace libraries with an engaged book rep at a workplace probably has a better chance of promoting reading than a librarian, whose presence at the workplace is usually limited to a few times each month. To provide training and a source of inspiration for book reps at workplaces, various seminars have been conducted in Sweden.

Finally, the chapter discusses some examples of making reading material available through digital media. It is easy to see the reading promotion potential in the enhanced availability and many reading options that have arisen with the advent of smartphones and tablets. It is just as easy to see in the same technology a potential threat to reading. Cautious assumptions about the reading promotion potential of the e-book for boys have been made. According to a summary of the research on the impact of e-books on reading motivation and reading ability, it is too optimistic to assume that e-books might be a path to reading for people who do not read printed books. On the other hand, e-books, just like printed books, can be used in reading promotion efforts. Reader surveys indicate that reading e-books and paper books is not a matter of either/or. The majority of the research on children’s and adolescents’ on-screen reading has so far focused on its impact on literacy. There is much more to know about the impact of e-books on attitudes to reading and reading motivation. A study that compared
students’ reading motivation when reading paper books and when reading e-books, respectively, has indicated that the content is more important for reading motivation among children and young people than the format per se. However, students tended to prefer e-books when they were offered a greater number of books to choose from and the option to choose their own e-books. Most likely, the reading potential of the e-book lies in the possibility of making greater quantities of literature available, which in turn permits choice and thus provides motivation.

An audiobook, sometimes referred to as a talking book, is a recording of published book being read aloud. Audiobooks are produced in Sweden by the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM), which was previously named the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille. MTM works to ensure that individuals with reading impairments are offered literature in a form that is accessible to them, and is also tasked with making available, producing and distributing easy-to-read literature to the extent that these needs are not met in the commercial market. Before 1950, the visually impaired could only borrow books in Braille from Sweden’s Association for the Blind. But after audiotape technology was developed, public libraries and MTM began to build up a book collection of talking books of non-fiction and fiction for adults as well as children. While in other countries it is usual that a central library for the blind lends media directly to the visually impaired, in Sweden already in the 1950s there was a collaboration with public libraries. This model of collaboration has been very significant for reaching new readers, such as people with dyslexia. From the 1950s, books were recorded on audiotape, with a transition during the 1970s to cassette tapes. During the 1990s, there was a transition to CD format and now, in the twenty-first century, audiobooks have become downloadable via the app Legimus.

***

Based on what has emerged from this report, in order to move forward in reading promotion efforts outside school, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Start as you mean to go on.** The importance of early reading stimulation cannot be stressed enough and *Family literacy* initiatives are highly recommended. Initiatives aimed at encouraging and informing parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children is a special priority. Men in particular should be encouraged and urged to read to their children.

- **Identify groups with greater needs than others and work for them.** In order to counteract the Matthew effect, *Summer learning losses* and other factors that create gaps in the reading of children from different socio-economic backgrounds, needs should guide the choice of target groups, and one should be clear about what applies and why.

- **Increase access to literature, regardless of the medium.** Research on reading motivation indicates a correlation between reading motivation and access to a broad range of reading material, which should be understood to mean a broad range of genres and types of texts in different media. The provision of a rich variety of reading material also communicates that reading is a valuable and worthwhile pursuit.
• **Promote social reading.** There is a correlation between reading motivation and opportunities to socially interact around the text that has been read. Social interaction includes talking to others about books, reading with others, borrowing and sharing books with others, talking about books and sharing written texts about the books with others. In particular, social reading ought to be promoted among boys and men, especially given the hypothesis that reading is regarded as much more of a private pursuit among men than among women. When literature gains a strongly symbolic and social function, more opportunities arise among readers to influence others.

• **Use role models.** Everyone, and men in particular, should be encouraged to act as reading role models for their children. Promote activities that involve older children reading to younger children. This kind of mentorship has dual benefits: younger children get attention from older children, and the older children gain in self-confidence through acting as role models. Work to increase awareness of the importance of acting as a role model.

• **Emphasise freedom of choice.** Reading motivation is associated with being able to choose what to read. It should be noted that freedom of choice concerning what to read does not necessarily preclude specific objectives in the form of how much to read.

• **Work on the basis of the needs of the identified (reading) interests of different target groups.** As librarians and teachers, do not let your own reading preferences be your guide. Find out what your target audience’s preferences are instead and work on the basis of these. Let your ambition to broaden children’s reading interests come second.

• **Invest in summer reading programmes with clear objectives, in cooperation with schools and libraries.** Stress the educational advantages to parents. Combine social reading in the form of reading club activities and the like with a certain amount of reading as a goal. Emphasise the joint responsibility of the library and the school. Get assistance from the school in identifying groups of children and their families in order to offer practical support to participate and to monitor the progress that students have made in connection with the programme.

• **Set clear and achievable goals and evaluate them.**

**References**


Balling, Gitte (2007). Virtuelle læseklubber – på vej mod bibliotek 2.0. Royal School of Library and Information Science Denmark


Bodart, Joni (1985). The effect of a booktalk presentation of selected titles on the attitude toward reading of senior high school students and on the circulation of these titles in the high school library. Dissertation: Texas Women’s University 1985.


Brooks, Greg; Pahl, Kate; Pollard, Alison & Rees, Felicity (2008). Effective and inclusive practices in family literacy and numeracy: a review of programmes and practice in the UK and internationally. Reading, CFBT Education Trust.


O’Hare, Liam & Connolly, Paul (2010). *A Randomised Controlled Trial Evaluation of Bookstart+: A Book Gifting Intervention for Two-Year-Old Children*, Belfast: Centre for Effective Education, Queen’s University Belfast.


Roman, Susan; Deborah T. Carran & Carole D. Fiore (2010). *The Dominican study: public library summer reading programs close the reading gap*. River Forest, IL, Dominican University, Graduate School of Library & Information Science.


Rydsjö, Kerstin (2012). *Dags att höja ribban!?: en rapport om samverkan mellan barnhälsovård och...*
bibliotek kring små barns språk- och litteracitetsutveckling. Halmstad: Regionbibliotek Halland.
Rydsjö, Kerstin & Elf, AnnaCarin (2007). Studier av barn- och ungdomsbibliotek: en kunskapsöver-
Copenhagen: Nordiska litteratur- och bibliotekskommittén.
(archives, libraries and museums). Masters thesis.
för kultur- och biblioteksstudier. Library and Information Science. Degree project.
Stockholm: Regionbibliotek Stockholm.
Association.
Matthew effects in children with learning disabilities: Development of reading, IQ and psycho-
Schmidt, Catarina (2013). Att bli en sån˚ som läser: barns menings- och identitetsskapande genom
Schmidt, Catarina (2015). ”Vi packar mängder med böcker, kanelgifflar, saft och kör ut”. En rapport
om läsförbrämjande insatser hos folkbiblioteken i sex län/regioner. Halland: Regionbibliotek Halland.
momssänkningen. Final report on the Book Pricing Commission and the Bookonomy project.
Swedish National Agency for Education (2011). Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritids-
Smidt, Jofrid Karner (2002). Mellom elite og publikum: litterær smak og litteraturformidling blant
Smidt, Jofrid Karner (2012). Når menn leser. Nordisk Tidsskrift for Informationsvidenskap og Kultur-
formidling, årg. 1, nr. 1/2, 2012.
Stanovich, Keith. E. (1986). Matthew Effects in Reading: Some Consequences of Individual Dif-
fferences in the Acquisition of Literacy. Reading Research Quarterly. 21, 360–407.
Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2012). Förskola, före skola – lärande och bärande: kvalitetsgransk-
ingsrapport om förskolans arbete med det förstärkta pedagogiska uppdraget. Stockholm: Swedish
Schools Inspectorate.
Sullivan, Alice & Brown, Matt (2013). Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: the role of
reading. London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education.
Library Association.
Library Association.
rekommendationer för folkbibliotekens barn- och ungdomsverksamhet. Stockholm: Swedish
Library Association.


