At British universities, the use of English is no choice at all
- 20% of students come from various background
- Many students report that their classes were taught in English or Swedish
- Textbooks are used in English and Swedish

Information about the textbook survey
- Questionnaire to over 1,000 students
- Students come from many subjects
- All textbooks were taught in English or Swedish
- Their textbooks were in English and Swedish

Results
- Evidence from British lectures suggests that reference to accompanying textbook is relatively uncommon, and preliminary observations in Sweden confirm this. Many frequent intertextual references may encourage learners to consider alternatives, for example: "Did you read this on page 42?"

References

Investigating Swedish students' views on reading
- Most students express positive attitudes towards reading
- However, in practice, they do not engage fully with assigned reading

82% of the students who have regular reading assignments say they do most of them.

60% of the students say that doing the assigned reading improves their chances of passing courses.

92% say that textbooks are an important source of learning in their courses.

When asked, only 23% believe that reading for that day's lecture

Many prefer only the parts of reading that relate to lecture content and/or to a difficult part of the course.

Students agree more strongly on the value of lecture notes and attendance than on that of textbooks.

Students are more likely to read textbooks than lectures.

Textbooks in English were selected with a significant proportion of the students.

Nearly half say they would not choose to have textbooks in English.

Students whose textbooks are in English are more negative about the textbooks' quality.

As part of Stockholm University's "Advance Second Language Use" project, Philip Shaw and Alan McMillan have compiled the English-language reading proficiency of British and Swedish first-year undergraduates in biology. About half the sample of Swedish students scored at the level (above 1 SD below the British average) achieved by 96% of the British students. Although British students read faster and therefore achieve considerably higher scores on timed tests, relatively crude objective tests cannot show that the quality (depth) of their reading is lower; they seem to get to the same quality in terms of relative depth by means of transferred literacy skills. On the other hand relatively few get them and they take longer.


Swedish universities often treat language as an unproblematic choice
- Lectures in Swedish for undergraduates
- Textbooks in Swedish or English
- Most English-language textbooks are written for L1 English readers, even when adapted for non-US markets.

How much incidental learning of terminology and other vocabulary results from these learning situations?

Did you do, or will you do, any reading related to today’s lecture?

Did you do any reading before the lecture?

If you did, was this reading helpful?

Many students report that reading is less helpful than expected.