A TRANSNATIONAL STUDY OF CRITICALITY IN THE HISTORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
A Transnational Study of Criticality in the History Learning Environment

Sergej Ivanov
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Abstract
This study examines conceptions of criticality and its instruction in the History learning environment in Sweden, Russia, and Australia as evidenced in one sample upper secondary class in each country. To achieve this data were collected at macro, micro and meso levels. At the macro level, elements of curriculum theory were used to analyse the policy framework provided to develop students’ criticality in the upper secondary History classroom and to identify the conceptions of criticality as manifested in the policy documents. At the micro level, a content-based, thematic analysis was used to examine how the teachers’ and student focus groups conceptualise criticality and the ways of its teaching and learning. At the meso level, the conceptions of criticality and its instruction modes identified in the policy documents and interviews were used to analyse the classroom data collected in the selected classes.

The combined findings from the three levels of analysis provide a transnational account of criticality and its instruction. They suggest that criticality is conceptualised as a generic skill of questioning at the overarching curriculum level, whereas it is reconceptualised as a discipline-specific skill at the subject level. Discipline-specific conceptions include criticality as source criticism, as meaning making from historical evidence, as questioning historical narratives, and as educating for citizenship. The findings suggest that the visionary criticality objectives of the curricula might be obstructed at other policy levels and by the interviewees’ conceptions of criticality as well as the classroom practicalities.

Based on the findings of this transnational study, it is proposed that harmonisation between the curriculum contents and time allocation might contribute to the promotion of narrative diversity. As argued in the study, narrative diversity is a prerequisite for criticality as questioning historical narratives. To nurture this form of criticality, the policy makers might consider a shift of attention towards the lower stages of schooling that could equip upper secondary students with necessary background knowledge. Further, harmonisation between the teaching objectives and learning outcomes of basic History courses might help avoid excluding certain groups of students from receiving criticality instruction on unclear grounds. This might ensure the equity of education with regard to criticality instruction for all upper secondary students, as required in the national curricula in Sweden, Russia and Australia.
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Part I: Setting the ground
Background

During my school years, the issue of being a critical learner was a recurrent theme in the upper secondary classroom when discussing what is crucial to become successful in our future lives. Not surprisingly, this competence tends to find its way into school curricula in, at least, some countries (Skolverket, 2011 for Sweden; Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012 for Russia; ACARA, 2012 for Australia). Being able to critique entails having an idea of what is right and wrong, good and evil, desirable and ineligible. Given the cultural diversity in the world, these ideas may vary and influence the way students learn to critique in school. It might be particularly tangible when students deal with a history of their own country and a world history in the classroom thus negotiating and constructing a national identity (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009, p. 4).

History lessons are specifically designed to focus on the national and international past in the educational context. Although the History classroom is not the only site of national identity construction, it is the site where criticality development is proclaimed to be an important goal. Thus, investigating what kind of criticality and to what extent it is encouraged and promoted in the History classroom may prove valuable. This might be especially revealing when comparing cases from different national educational contexts, as Confucius once remarked: ‘By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart’ (Confucius & Legge, 1971, p. 318). Before going any further, I first need to clarify the nature of such a practice, how knowledge about it can be gained, and what value this knowledge might have. The next section will further explore the ontological, epistemological and axiological stances that are adopted in the study, linking them to the current theory and methodology in educational research.

Philosophical foundations

One of the essential parts of a scientific endeavour is to signal the stance on the object of research and its existential status, commonly referred to as ontology. In educational and social science research, the main ontological issue is whether the reality is external to an individual or is only a mind construct (Burrell & Morgan, 1985; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Although the borderline between these two views tends to be distinct in earlier works as in Burrell and Morgan (1985) who distinguish between realism and nominalism (p. 4), it is apt to be blurred in more recent research. In addition to a similar antinomy of realism and idealism, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) also identify a number of ‘variants’ of each view, including materialism, subtle realism, subtle idealism and relativism (p. 16). These
variants may be placed on a continuum as illustrated by Figure 1, according to whether our beliefs (materialism) or physical world (relativism) are considered to be epiphenomena.

*Figure 1. Realism–idealism continuum*

Subtle realism and subtle idealism occupy the middle positions, which are characterised by convergence of realistic and idealistic thinking. Both of them presuppose the existence of some reality but differ in attributing it to the external physical world (subtle realism) or to a collective understanding of constructed meanings (subtle idealism). To support the ontological stance of the former against the latter, Hammersley (2007) remarks that although the individual (or for this case the collective) makes sense and gives meaning to phenomena, it is not always the individual who gives existence to them (p. 692). Bhaskar (1978) develops this view further in what is known as transcendental realism. He points out that the real cannot be reduced only to what we experience, i.e. make sense of (domain of empirical). The real also includes those mechanisms that stay undetected directly by our senses but have causal effects on the events and our experience of them (domain of actual). Finally, he claims that there are also some generative mechanisms that exist independently of human perception or detection. This is what Bhaskar calls the domain of real that also incorporates the domains of empirical and actual (Bhaskar, 1978; Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998, p. 5).

The issue of causality, which is often considered to be the 'holy grail' of educational research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 54), is a part of Bhaskar’s understanding of the reality, though with a reservation that causality may be explained but not always predicted (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 225). In educational research, this reality is social and thus open in the meaning ‘impossible to isolate’. Causality in such a reality is not linear since social phenomena are ‘conjuncturally determined and, as such, in general have to be explained in terms of multiplicity of causes’ (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 223). This ontological view correlates with complexity theory as described in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), where a complex (open) system, for example, a classroom, is not reducible to its components and its results are never clearly replicable or predictable (pp. 28–30).

Drawing on Bhaskar’s stance and complexity theory in terms of classroom research, practice cannot be reduced to how the participants (in this case,
the teacher and students) experience it. Neither can it be reduced to the underlying ideology of classroom discourse that is not directly observable to the participants, yet nonetheless impacts on the lesson and participants’ experience of it. Practice should also include some generative mechanisms that may or may not be perceived by the participants but are embedded in the educational context. These three domains constitute an open system where the parts are interconnected and whose close relations bring such qualities to the system that are not deducible from the individual components (see also Elder-Vass, 2007; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 28). I will call this system a learning environment, partly following Brown (2008), who argues that learning environments are open, real, stratified and emergent systems. For this study, learning environment appears to be a more suitable concept than classroom since it emphasises not only spatial constraints of teaching and learning, but also acts as its precursor, facilitator, constituent, and the result.

The above understanding of learning environment, the ontological stance in this study, is illustrated in Figure 2, which is a modified version of Bhaskar’s three domains (1978, p. 13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational context</th>
<th>Domain of Real</th>
<th>Domain of Actual</th>
<th>Domain of Empirical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom discourse</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideology</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiences</td>
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</table>

The logic of educational research presupposes acquiring knowledge about a learning environment of interest. The ways of knowing and learning about it constitute the epistemological stance adopted in the study. Crumley (1999) points out that the researcher should not only ‘acquire true beliefs’ (knowledge) but also ‘have adequate reasons for thinking that such beliefs are likely to be true’ (p. xiii). The adequacy of such reasoning is evaluated against the normative epistemology of research communities (Kuhn, 1970) or communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In social research, Burrell and Morgan (1985) differentiate between the epistemologies of positivism and anti-positivism (p. 5), where the former is focused on revealing regularities and causal relationships in the learning environment, whereas the latter denies the researcher making claims about the learning environment unless based exclusively on the teacher’s and students’
experiences. Similarly, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) identify positivism as an epistemological stance; however, the second strand in their classification is occupied by interpretivism where knowing and learning about the object of study is conducted through both the participants’ and the researcher’s understanding (p. 17). This difference raises the question of the kind of relationship between the researcher and the object of research, i.e. the acceptable way of acquiring knowledge: either through the researcher’s understanding, or participants’ understanding, or a combination of both. Creswell and Clark (2011) distinguish the following four kinds of such relationship: distance and impartiality (researcher’s understanding), closeness (researcher’s understanding backed up by participants’ views), collaboration (negotiated researcher and participants’ understanding), and practicality (various constellations of researcher’s and participants’ understanding) (p. 42).

Given the ontology of learning environment as described above, acquiring knowledge about the domain of real requires accessing information from three main sources: the educational context, classroom discourse, and the teacher and students. This carries implications for methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation in the study, which are inextricably intertwined with the adopted epistemological stance and will be dealt with in detail in the section on the research methodology. Nevertheless, the sources per se have some serious limitations that should be further discussed.

With respect to deciding how to acquire knowledge about the context, Hammersley (2006) raises the issues of controversy over the boundaries of the context (its breadth) and whether the analyst should discover it independently of the participants or as it is generated in social interaction (pp. 6–8). The breadth of the educational context might be virtually infinite, from the circumstances of a single teaching and learning event to the history of human education. In this study, I will approach the issue pragmatically, i.e. the boundaries of the context will be defined and limited to address the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Morgan, 2007). In regard to the issue of the legitimate description of the context, Hammersley (2006) questions whether the participants ‘always explicitly indicate the context in which they see themselves as operating’ and whether their understanding of the context would help to address research questions (p. 7). As mentioned earlier (see Figure 2), the educational context falls under the domain of real, which may or may not be detected by the participants. Effectively, relying on the participants as the only source of acquiring knowledge about the context might prove insufficient. It appears
reasonable to treat the researcher’s and the participants’ understanding of the context as multiple perspectives that complement each other.

The second source of knowing in the ontology of learning environment is classroom discourse. In a very broad sense, *discourse* might be treated as any ‘meaningful semiotic human activity’ (Blommaert, 2005, p. 3). This study approaches discourse in a more narrow sense as *language in use* (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 1), and more precisely as ‘situated language use in one social setting’ (Cazden, 2001, p. 3), in this instance the learning environment. This results in acquiring knowledge mainly through examining the use of verbal communication in the classroom context rather than scrutinising the use of all semiotic means.

The last imposed limitation of the sources is related to the kind of experiences that are accessible through teacher and students. In philosophy, an experience is ‘a stream of private events, known only to their possessor’ (Blackburn, n.d.), which implies that the teacher is the source of teaching experiences, while students are the source of learning experiences but not vice versa. Further, as there is no way for the researcher to know about any of the participant’s experience except for letting the latter reconstruct it verbally or non-verbally for the researcher, the result will be inevitably conditioned by the workings of the participant’s cognitive functions. This, however, does not necessarily mean that acquiring knowledge in this manner is useless. To support this, Bhaskar (1978, p. 249) argues for epistemological relativism noting that it is impossible to know anything except under particular conditions and asserting that knowledge is always socially produced.

The theory of value (axiology), attributed to thinking in general and to research in particular, is often part of a metaphysical discussion about the nature of things (ontology) and ways of knowing things (epistemology) (Hartman, 1967; Vyzhletsov, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell & Clark, 2011). Axiology as an independent philosophical matter owes its genesis to R. H. Lotze who regarded ‘valuations’ (Wertbestimmungen) as concerned with what ought to be (Vyzhletsov, 2010, p. 35). The scientific axiology, according to Hartman (1967), is ‘the framework for the explication of value’ that is ‘the correspondence between the properties possessed […] and the predicates contained’ (pp. 105, 154). In other words, the acquired knowledge has a value if the knowledge possesses all the properties it ought to have (for a different approach to axiology, see Creswell & Clark, 2011). Such understanding of the axiological stance assists in overcoming the issue of its ‘poor fit’ in the philosophy of
knowledge when used synonymously with ethics (Morgan, 2007, p. 58) and is envisaged as contributing rigour to the study.

Considering the ontological and epistemological stances, this study will be a qualitative one. In educational research, there is an ongoing debate over whether, when evaluating the acquired knowledge, qualitative studies should adopt the terminology of quantitative counterparts (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Creswell, 1998), use a ‘parallel’ terminology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) or develop an independent terminology (Eisner, 1991; Wolcott, 1994; Toma, 2011). Further, what properties the knowledge ought to have also depends on the reader of the study, among which practitioners, policymakers and researchers are the main audiences (Floden, 2006). Figure 3 attempts to schematically organise some common properties of knowledge in quantitative and qualitative research and identify those properties in the latter that might be of primary but by no means exclusive interest to different audiences (for a more comprehensive overview, see Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, pp. 179–215; Creswell, 2007, pp. 201–221, Winter, 2000).

**Figure 3. Some common properties of knowledge in quantitative and qualitative inquiry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common properties of knowledge in quantitative inquiry (Toma, 2011; Ritchie &amp; Lewis, 2003)</th>
<th>Common properties of knowledge in qualitative inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practitioners</td>
<td>Policymakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internal) validity</td>
<td>Construct validity (Eisenhart &amp; Howe, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985)/Fairness (LeCompte &amp; Preissle, 1993)/Accuracy (Creswell, 2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical generalisation (Ritchie &amp; Lewis, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transferability (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985)/Consistency (Hammersley, 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability (Lincoln &amp; Guba, 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ontological, educative, catalytic, &amp; tactical authenticity (LeCompte &amp; Preissle, 1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the identified common properties of knowledge in qualitative research, I will delineate the ones that are deemed central in the light of the adopted approach to axiology. Given that the study is a PhD thesis, the crucial audience is the research community, which requires knowledge to be trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Hammersley, 1992; LeCompte &
Preissle, 1993; Toma, 2011). Since the research area of the thesis is language teaching and learning, knowledge should also have pedagogical implications. Constituting the axiological stance, these are achieved if the acquired knowledge is credible (giving a description of the object of study from multiple perspectives), consistent (indicating interrelations within each of the perspectives as well as between them), authentic (being novel), transferable and relatable (usable outside the immediate context of the study in further research and pedagogical practice), and confirmable (transparent for others to make judgements). Some qualitative researchers (Patton, 1980; Lather, 1986; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) also claim that the acquired knowledge is valid (action/pragmatic/catalytic validity) only if it is actually used and leads to some action. Although it might be desirable that the acquired knowledge brings about a change, this can hardly be viewed as an inherent property of knowledge as understood in the study. It is, after all, people who make choices how to use/not to use knowledge (if they have access to this knowledge at all), whether they are practitioners, policymakers, researchers or anyone else.

The adopted ontological, epistemological and axiological stances provide philosophical foundations and guide the quest for criticality in the History classroom around the globe. In the next section, I will outline the contours of criticality in educational research and consider the ways it might be studied.

Meaning negotiation and construction and criticality in educational research

One of the distinctive features of mankind is that we can communicate using a language in its oral or written (or hybrid) form. People communicate to meet the need to do things with words as Austin (1962) put it in his seminal book. We strive to make meaning of the language, or, to be more precise, of the discourse, that we see, hear or produce. Fairclough (2003) claims that the meaning we make cannot be found in the words or expressions alone but resides in ‘an effect of the relations that are set up between them’ (p. 23). To establish relations between these words, we relate them to our background knowledge, the immediate context and a possible future. Effectively, we construct meaning from the resources we possess and those that are made available for us. Flower (1994) distinguishes three types of meaning construction as reproduction, conversation and negotiation. Meaning construction as reproduction facilitates ‘cultural continuity’ and maintains the status quo, while meaning construction as conversation aims at reaching a consensus (Flower, 1994, pp. 58–59). Prawat and Floden (1994) points out that consensus compromises insight since it oversimplifies the complexity of
differences. In education, construction as negotiation might be more desirable as providing ‘an opportunity to surface and clarify points of agreement and disagreement’ and impetus for learning in the classroom (Prawat & Floden, 1994, p. 40). However, not all constructed meanings are given equal authority, which reflects the patterns of power and structures the negotiation process (Flower, 1994, p. 66). It might be particularly compelling to investigate the discourse of teaching and learning in regard to criticality.

In educational research, there is a plethora of approaches to defining criticality (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011) as well as other concepts with similar meaning including critical thinking (Ennis, 1962; McPeck, 1990; Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999b), critical literacy (Freire, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Janks, 2010), critical reading (Wallace, 2003), critical being (Barnett, 1997). These concepts are at times used interchangeably, at other times synonymously or metonymically. In this study, criticality is used as an umbrella term for the concepts in educational research which claim to be critical in one sense or another and have to do with what is expected from teachers and students in the classroom (the educational context), what they do in the classroom (classroom discourse), and/or how they perceive what they do in the classroom (experiences).

From a philosophical perspective, Stables (2003) identifies four modulations of criticality in the humanities and social sciences. These are the ‘but what if’ tradition based on the Popperian empirical falsification method, the discriminatory tradition based on the literary canon, the socially critical tradition based on the assumption of existing social injustice, and the deconstruction approach based on Derrida’s ‘exploratory exercise [...] without a] closure’ (Stables, 2003, p. 669). The ‘but what if’ approach can be characterised as constant and rigorous testing of knowledge; the discriminatory approach — as selecting ‘valuable’ knowledge according to some pre-set criteria, known to a limited number of people; the social critical approach — as revealing social injustice and using this knowledge to change practices; and the deconstruction approach — as exploring the world with an awareness of the impossibility of gaining any complete knowledge and thus remaining open to any knowledge. All these four modulations of criticality are, however, extracted from the Western history of philosophy and might turn out to be less applicable to contexts with other philosophical foundations (see, for example, Chilton, Tian, & Wodak, 2010 on critique in China and the West). From a pedagogical perspective, Phillips and Bond (2004) differentiate between four conceptions of critical thinking: as
a generic skill, as an embedded skill, as a component skill of lifelong learning, and as critical being. This pedagogical categorisation might be extended by the conceptions of critical thinking as necessary intellectual resources (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999b) and a form of critical social practice (Koh, 2002).

Critical thinking as a generic skill presupposes its applicability and transferability to all contexts (Kennedy, Fisher, & Ennis, 1991). This view has been criticised by both proponents and opponents of seeing critical thinking as a generic skill. Johnson (2010) argues for portability instead of transferability, emphasising that a skill can only be ‘repeated in relevantly similar circumstances’ (p. 353). McPeck (1990) denies any transferability and claims that critical thinking is a knowledge-based skill that operates within a certain domain/discipline (an embedded skill), which is also supported in later research on disciplinary literacy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Shanahan, 2009). Domain-specificity of critical thinking is, nevertheless, challenged by the claim that the boundaries of a domain are not clearly defined and thus of little use (Kennedy, Fisher, & Ennis, 1991, p. 24). Rather than being embedded in a discipline, literacy, including criticality, is embedded into a social and cultural context (Street, 1984). Compelling evidence of this assertion has been obtained in studies on literacy (see, for example, Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Kern, 2000; Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2009).

Critical thinking might also be regarded as a skill of lifelong learning, which is necessary to become an autonomous learner (Phillips & Bond, 2004, p. 280). In other words, it is seen as a crucial precondition for the independence of an individual to learn efficiently in and outside the classroom. Other educators believe that it is inappropriate to view critical thinking as a skill or ability (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999a). Rather, it should be treated as a learner’s competence, which constitutes five types of intellectual resources: background knowledge, operational knowledge of the standards of good thinking, knowledge of key critical concepts, heuristics and the habits of mind (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999b, p. 290). Depending on the task at hand, knowledge about relevant concepts from a certain background as well as discipline-specific standards of good thinking need to be available for the learner to be a critical thinker. Further, the critical thinker needs to use some generic strategies of dealing with the task (heuristics) and also needs to have some habits of mind that dispose him or her to use relevant knowledge in an appropriate way. In ‘the learning-amid-contestation epoch’ (Barnett, 2011, p. 7), this might not be enough.
Barnett (1997) claims that one needs to be a critical being to survive and succeed in a competitive environment. This manifests itself in three forms of criticality: critical reason, critical self-reflection, and critical action with the levels ranging from critical skills to transformatory critique within each form (p. 103). This conception of criticality involves mastering skills needed to question the available knowledge (critical reason), reconsidering one’s own identity (self-reflection) as well as making collective efforts to change the world (critical action). In contrast to the conceptions described above, Barnett treats criticality in a wider sense to include not only the cognitive issues as skills, self-reflection and intellectual resources but also engagement in transforming the world, which goes outside the boundaries of thinking only. Similarly, central to criticality in teaching and learning foreign languages is ‘the motivation to persuade, engage and act on the world and self [...] combined with a willingness and capacity to question and problematize shared perceptions of relevance and experience’ (Brumfit, Myles, Mitchell, Johnston, & Ford, 2005, p. 149). In this approach to criticality, adopting multiple perspectives on the world is valued and assists in challenging one’s own understandings. In comparison to adherents of critical literacy, it downplays the issues of injustice in the world that need urgent action but emphasises the rich variety of understandings.

Critical literacy theory presupposes that there is a disenfranchised group of people that need to be empowered through ‘real reading and writing’ to ‘accomplish real work’, which is ‘using reading and writing as tools [...] for political work’ (King, 1990, pp. 21–24). To cover this, Koh (2002) suggests understanding critical thinking as a form of critical social practice (p. 259), which differs from the cognitive view of thinking. Here criticality is to oppose ‘the dominant ideologies, institutions and material conditions of society which maintain socioeconomic inequality’ (Morgan, 1997, p. 6), ‘to pose problems and to act [...] to make the world a fairer place’ (Janks, 2010, p. 19). Critical literacy scholars indicate a strong political commitment to alter the practices that maintain the status quo and serve the dominant groups by setting criticality high on the educational agenda and promoting its teaching in schools. Within this conception, a critical learner should challenge taken-for-granted knowledge, reveal how practices are constructed by ideology and participate in reconstruction of these practices in the real world.

Inasmuch as approaches to defining criticality proliferate, ways to study it are numerous in educational research. The latter differ in focus ranging from the participants through the pedagogical practice to the educational context. I will start with considering some of the ways to focus on the participants, in
this instance students and teachers, and then proceed to more complex ways to approach conceptions of criticality.

Phillips and Bond (2004) analysed students’ experiences of critical thinking through what they call an interview. This consisted of two parts: a semi-structured interview with a focus on students’ understandings of critical reflection (used synonymously to critical thinking) and a think-aloud protocol where students were to verbalise their thinking when dealing with a problem-solving task. The study involved 13 second-year students aged 19–31 pursuing a Management degree at an Australasian university. The results showed a continuum of students’ understanding of criticality along four categories: critical reflection as ‘weighing up’; critical reflection as ‘looking at it from all the angles’; critical reflection as ‘looking back on’; and critical reflection as ‘looking beyond what is there’. From a methodological point of view, the authors reported that the students often lacked the language to describe critical reflection. To counter the insufficiency of students’ metalanguage, Andrews (2007) opted to examine three students’ Master dissertations in the educational field for any signs of criticality. This approach differs significantly from that of Phillips and Bond (2004) in using an a priori conception of criticality to evaluate the assignments. Larsson (2011) went even further and purported to access 19 students’ experiences of critical thinking through the analysis of their written responses to problem-solving tasks in social studies in Swedish secondary schools (p. 98). He claimed that this method is particularly appropriate to examine ‘students (sic) manifested critical thinking’ (Larsson, 2011, p. 4), whereas the rationale for this claim remained less clear. Further research is needed to clarify its potential.

Baildon and Sim (2009) explored the perceived constraints on teaching critical thinking in Singaporean social studies classroom. The analysed data consisted of the online discussion board entries and collective reflection on class entries from a professional development course for 24 social studies teachers in Singapore. The findings indicated that the teachers experienced three main tensions: the perceived lack of time to teach critical thinking due to the pressing need to prepare students for high-stakes examinations, the perceived boundaries of acceptable public discourse which limit the opportunities to teach critical thinking, and contradiction between the teacher’s role of a politically neutral servant and types of critical thinking that interrogate the current political status quo. In the article, the authors seem to be more interested in what critical thinking could not be in the Singaporean context according to the teachers rather than what it is, leaving space open for speculations on what is constrained.
Norlund (2009) interviewed 21 upper secondary L1 teachers about the ways they deal with critical reading of non-fiction in the Swedish classroom. The teachers were regarded as ‘possessor[s] of an institutional role which is both enabling and limiting’ (Norlund, 2009, p. 66, my translation). In addition, she compared conceptions of critical reading in four textbooks in L1 and scrutinised the Swedish national test for the conceptions of reading tasks and approaches to assessing them. Norlund (2009) labelled this approach ‘a recontextual triangulation’, which was adopted to study ‘three actors’ interpretations of curricular matters’ (p. 210). The study succeeded in showing the complexity of interrelations between the educational policy documents and the actors of the pedagogic practice (teachers, authors of textbooks, and exam designers). Surprisingly, it lacked students’ perspectives on critical reading, which was acknowledged but not explained (Norlund, 2009, p. 205). Students, otherwise, might be regarded as one of the key actors of pedagogic practice, whose exclusion could be interpreted as an indicator that the researchers considered the student perspective would not enrich the study.

To study the pedagogic practice of teaching and learning criticality, Brodin (2007) employed an unconventional method to ‘imaginatively experience the phenomenon in practice’ (p. 155). At the imaginary ‘University of Critical Thinking’, she ‘observed’ six lessons in four departments: the cognitive department, the informal logic department, the developmental-reflective department, and the feminist department. Each lesson represented an implementation of a distinct conception of criticality in its pure form, which enabled Brodin to discuss their pedagogical implications. The author disguised her interpretation of some current perspectives on critical thinking as classroom observation, which she crowned with a reflective dialogue with her alter ego. In the dialogue, Brodin (2007) identified three dimensions of critical thinking, such as mastering the world, understanding the world and changing the world (p. 200), which echo Barnett’s conception of criticality as critical reason, self-reflection and action. Brodin’s exceptional account of criticality in the imaginary classrooms provides many insights, however, there is a challenge in such a method. The described examples of teaching and learning criticality appear to be single-factor-dependent where the teachers and students act as marionettes of a certain theory. In other words, there is an assumption of linear causality between the theory and the classroom discourse, which is problematic in such an open system as the learning environment. This hints at the need to conduct real-life classroom observations to explore conceptions of criticality as was done, for example, within a two-year research project Development of Criticality.
among Undergraduates in Two Academic Disciplines: Social Work and Modern Languages at a British university (Ford, Johnston, Brumfit, Mitchell, & Myles, 2005). In addition, this project involved scrutinising of draft student material and final written/spoken products, interviewing students, tutors and department management, analysing of policy documents and classroom data (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011).

The above overview of conceptions of criticality and methods of data collection is by no means a complete one but indicates the main directions in educational research that inform the study. Given the openness of the adopted approach to defining criticality, I will value those methods of data collection that satisfy two criteria: 1) gathering information about the learning environment from the sources as conceptualised in the ontology; 2) allowing me to suspend judgement about the object of research thus negotiating and constructing its meaning a posteriori (see Comparative study framework, pp. 20–23).

As argued at the beginning of this section, we make meaning of the words by relating them to our background knowledge, the immediate context and a possible future. In a similar fashion, research is not only about collecting and analysing data (in this case from the History learning environment) but also entails identifying its niche in previous research and envisaging its contribution to the development of knowledge in the field. The next section will be thus devoted to surveying research of the History learning environment, which shows how the conceptions of criticality might be reinterpreted in this field.

**Previous studies of the History learning environment**

History research is multifaceted and might be divided into many areas. The overview that follows is mainly preoccupied with research in History teaching and learning and draws parallels between criticality research in History and the areas discussed in the previous section. To achieve that, I first provide a brief background on the status of History as school subject, and then examine some concepts in history research that include the root *crit* in any form together with a discussion of concepts related to criticality.

The questions of what history to teach and the way to teach it reflect the dominant ideology and serves to construct identities that fit in the existing society (Eliasson, Karlsson, Rosengren, & Tornbjer, 2010, p. 9). In her study of conceptions of time and historical consciousness among students in the Swedish primary and secondary school, Hartsmar (2001) found that teaching History in these educational contexts might be described as objectivistic transmission of culture and traditions rather than problem
solving and active learning (pp. 240–241). Hartsmar’s finding appears to be surprising since the possibility of being objective in teaching History has been questioned in the educational policy documents since the curriculum reform in 1969 (Englund, 1986). However, it indicates that the linear causality (in this instance, between educational policy documents and pedagogic practice) does not always occur in such open systems as History learning environment. Further, policymakers rarely share the same view on the goals of education, sometimes resulting in sending contradictory messages to the teaching community as was shown in regard to History as an upper secondary school subject in Sweden (Hellstenius, 2011, pp. 137–140), in Australia (Clark, 2008, p. 3) and in Russia (Popkova, 2015). According to Elgström and Hellstenius (2010), the decision of re-introduction of History as compulsory to all Swedish upper secondary students in 2004 became possible as many policymakers during the 1990s had been made aware of the lack of knowledge about modern history and ‘experienced a need to explain events in Europe’ (p. 566). Explanation as the driving force behind the re-introduction might be less than ideal in relation to most of the conceptions of criticality, as the motive behind the reintroduction might lead to the explanation of the events. In relation to the Australian history curriculum, Parkes (2009) argues for a critical pluralist stance towards teaching History rather than a single explanation or uncritical relativism. To achieve this, Parkes (2009) promotes adopting a historiographic approach to teaching and learning History, which allows for narrative diversity in the curriculum but retains students’ ‘capacity to make value-judgements about the historical narratives we encounter’ (p. 128). In the case of Russia, Popkova (2015) challenges the contradictory educational policy that, on the one hand, sets criticality development as a crucial learning outcome in History but, on the other hand, implements the unified state exam that prevents teachers from devoting time to students’ criticality development.

In the anthology of history research in Nordic countries, Helgason attempted to approach criticality in the following way:

[...] critical thinking is conceptualized in a broad manner so as to encompass understanding, which is a precondition of critical thinking and what has been termed critical literacy, which includes understanding and reading in the sense of competence in the encoding of text and several other competences which will be revealed in the following definition [...] by the French educated Icelander Páll Skúlason in 1985: Thinking is critical if it accepts no opinion or statement unless it has first investigated its implications and has found satisfactory arguments in its favour. (Helgason, 2010, p. 164)
The above definition indicates a controversial conception of critical literacy as encoding skills and testing hypotheses, which most adherents of critical theory might find themselves uncomfortable with (see, for example, Freire, 1996 (1968), King, 1990; Morgan, 1997; Janks, 2010). It is even harder to reconcile a further remark with critical theory: ‘Fortunately, most textbooks meant for public use are carefully written and are not on an evil mission to indoctrinate and dominate. The purpose of critical thinking is not to ignite suspicion and distrust under normal circumstances’ (Helgason, 2010, p. 181, my italics). This is, however, not to dismiss Helgason’s argument but to highlight the complexity of conceptions of criticality in history research. His remark might be seen as a reaction against the trend to denounce the regular textbook a priori, thus leaving the History teacher on her/his own in designing lessons. The concept of historical literacy as discussed in Taylor and Yong (2003) appears to be more congruent with that of critical literacy since it is defined as ‘personal, social and political empowerment’ (p. 32), whereas Helgason’s approach to criticality is best conceptualised as working with a topic in a History textbook from four distinctive perspectives. These include the librarians’ perspective (Where do we find information about this topic?), the reading theorists’ perspective (How do we understand the topic?), the philosophers’ perspective (Why this topic?), and the historians’ perspective (Is the information well founded?) (Helgason, 2010, p. 180).

The historians’ perspective is also evident in other conceptions of criticality found in history research. Source criticism is probably the most known form of criticality in Sweden, which was popularised in History seminars at Uppsala University at the turn of the 20th century (Gudmundsson, 2007, p. 8). Since then it has developed as the view on knowledge changed from seeing it as consisting of unproblematic truths to seeing it as tentative and context-dependent truths (Thurén, 2005, p. 11). The latter is also supported in the Australian guide for teaching and learning History and the teacher’s role as a classroom mediator, who should encourage students to question the teaching narrative and treat it only as one of the sources but not as the ‘purveyor of historical truth’ (Taylor & Young, 2003, p. 3). Despite more than a century with teaching source criticism, Backman-Löfgren (2010) suggests that it remains Swedish students’ Achilles heel, which has become even weaker with the introduction of the Internet (pp. 63–65). Another common concept in history research is historical consciousness (in Swedish historiemedvetande), which could be defined as ‘a mental compass that helps [...] to orientate oneself in the flow of time and make meaning of the past’ (Eliasson, Karlsson, Rosengren, & Tornbjer, 2010,
Historical consciousness in practice can occasionally be seen as historical thinking, which is a controversial issue in the field of History teaching and learning (for further discussion see Thorp, 2013). For example, Laval (2011) understands historical thinking as a simpler concept than historical consciousness. She did not expect to find historical consciousness among upper secondary students because of their age and limited life experience (Laval, 2011, pp. 23–24). Ingemansson (2007), however, might find it difficult to agree with this since she claimed to have studied 10–12 year olds’ historical consciousness in the project ‘The Viking Age’ and documented its development. In the US educational research, historical thinking is viewed as involving three main processes that expert historians engage in, such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration (Wineburg, 2001). This conception of historical thinking was later extended by Reisman (2011) to also include close reading.

Given the diversity of the conceptions of criticality in history research, it might be expected that a study of the History learning environment should reveal a similar complexity. As recently as in 2010 Hammarlund stated that there were too few praxis-oriented studies that shed light on the pedagogic practice in the Nordic History classroom or describe alternatives to current models of teaching (p. 118). Since then the situation has changed in Sweden and the number of such studies is growing with a few Swedish universities involved in close research cooperation with schools (Ludvigsson, 2013, p. 9; Schüllerqvist, 2013). However, to the best of my knowledge, none of these studies are particularly concerned with criticality, although, for example, Ledman (2015a) mentions it. The search for Russian PhD-theses and high-impact-factor articles on the topic of criticality in upper secondary History returns no adequate hits. Anna Clark’s (2004, 2008, 2016) extensive studies examine the educational policy and debates about Australian history as well as History teachers’, students’, policy-makers’ and regular Australians’ opinions on teaching History but do not attempt to bring the three domains of the History learning environment together in a comprehensive analysis. This gap in the research provides a spur to embarking on a quest for conceptions of criticality in the upper secondary History learning environment across three national contexts.
Study overview and research design

Aim and research questions

The philosophical foundations of the study have a considerable impact on the research design and methods of data collection and analysis. The knowledge about the History learning environment may be acquired from three sources: the educational context, classroom discourse, and teachers and students. This also sets the limits on the kind of research questions that might be addressed.

Sweden, Russia and Australia have identified criticality in their national curricula as a crucial goal of upper secondary education (Skolverket, 2011; Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012; ACARA, 2012). However, what is meant by criticality and what support is provided for its development both at national and classroom level may vary across the countries; as King (1990) points out ‘there cannot be one thing called critical literacy, nor can there be one way to teach it’ (p. 21). This may be especially revealing when considering discourses of meaning negotiation and construction in the History learning environment as language here is used to build a legitimate picture of the national and international past, which is potentially a politically sensitive issue in any country.

Given the above, the proposed research will seek to answer the following key questions:

- What framework is provided to develop students’ criticality in the History classroom at upper secondary level by educational policy in the sample schools in Sweden, Russia and Australia?

- What do the History teachers do in the sample schools to support students’ criticality?

- How do the students and teachers in the sample schools understand the notion of being a critical learner?

In sum, the study aims at examining conceptions of criticality and its instruction in the History learning environment in Sweden, Russia and Australia.

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1 The research design of this study per se lies within the tradition of Goodlad’s curriculum inquiry that examines various types of curricula (Goodlad, Klein, & Tye, 1979). In the field of educational research in Sweden, there is a number of recent doctoral theses whose theoretical frameworks were informed by Goodlad’s conceptualisation, e.g. Nygren (2011), Ledman (2015a). Although the current study uses some elements of Goodlad’s conceptualisation (see Policy analysis) and might be viewed as dealing with formal, perceived, operational and experiential curricula, its levels of data collection and analysis are arrived at through considering the ontological and epistemological stances adopted in the study.
Australia as evidenced in one sample upper secondary school in each country. My proficiency in all three languages of instruction makes this study possible, giving access to data that are otherwise not often available and compared.

Comparative study framework
The study is a primary small-scale research with an issues-oriented focus, which means that the data are gathered by the investigator himself from a few contexts and concern one educational issue rather than the whole educational system (Ember & Ember, 2001, pp. 12–13; Kubow & Fossum, 2003, p. 20). Within each national context, the educational issue of criticality is examined in the curriculum arena of formulation and arena of realisation (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2014, pp. 171–177). According to Crossley and Watson (2003), a comparative research design has a potential to gain a better understanding of each educational context as well as suggest some improvements to educational policy and pedagogic practice (p. 19). The latter, however, should be done with caution since universally applicable models of criticality development in the History learning environment are highly problematic (ibid., p. 136). The study relies on the general structure for comparative inquiry that consists of six stages: conceptualisation, contextualisation, isolation of differences, explanation, reconceptualization, and application, as proposed and briefly outlined by Phillips (2006, pp. 315–316).

The first stage comprised the formulation of research questions that are equally relevant to all selected countries. These can be found above and are judged relevant as criticality is an objective of upper secondary education in all three contexts, and History is included in the respective curricula.

The second stage consisted of descriptions of issues against the local background. To provide thick descriptions of criticality instruction and to increase their potential for verification, the stage involved ‘triangulation of sources’ (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 276) within each case, i.e. data from each national case was collected at three levels: macro level, micro level, and meso level, as illustrated by Figure 4 and explained below.

As school is a public institution, what is happening in History lessons is regulated by the educational policy. This constituted the macro level of analysis, which served to outline the framework for development of students’ criticality in each country and ask what conceptions of criticality are explicitly promoted in the actual curriculum documents in the formulation arena. This task was undertaken with a heightened awareness of linguistic choices (Englund, 2011) that were evident in the policy documents arguing how these choices as well as other frame factors (Lindblad, Linde,
Naeslund, 1999) might influence the pedagogic practice. Thus, the macro level of analysis corresponds to the educational context in the proposed model of the learning environment. Acknowledging that such factors as family, friends, participants’ socioeconomic status and others might have an impact on what is going on in the classroom, I opted to exclude them from the scope of the study as lying beyond the reach of the educational system.

In an attempt to overcome my own bias and achieve a ‘fusion of horizons’ (Gadamer, 2013, p. 317) in the analysis of the classroom discourse, teacher and students’ perceptions of being a critical learner were examined at the micro level of analysis. One of the methods that permit the researcher to access human perception of the reality is a qualitative semi-structured interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This method has proved to be reliable and efficient across a range of pedagogical studies where similar research agendas were in focus (see, e.g., Berg, 2010; Nygren, 2009). To ensure credibility of the interview data on criticality instruction, two perspectives were examined: the perspective of teachers and that of students. Following Atkinson and Silverman (1997 as cited in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 12), some researchers claim that the age we are living in may be labelled as an interview society, whereas others argue that interviews are ‘very atypical’ of most people’s experience and even foreign to their common sense (Säljö, 2001, p. 113; Bowler, 1997 as cited in Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 664). To mitigate potential uneasiness of the interview situation, a number of measures were taken that are further described in the interview procedure (see Research instrument and data collection and analysis tools, pp. 24–28).

Teachers play a key role in education since they not only interpret educational policy documents and use them accordingly but also bring their personal attitude to criticality instruction. Therefore, it was of crucial
importance to find out what they actually thought about being a critical learner and how they envisaged developing students’ criticality (if at all). This was expected to inform the interpretation of what teachers did in their classrooms and why.

Since students are active participants of the educational process who together with the teacher construct new knowledge, it was further necessary to consider students’ perceptions of being critical learners. Using focus group interviews enriched discussion and created a naturalistic-like whole dialogic environment where the synergetic account of what it means to be a critical learner was negotiated in a group discussion. However, this may have limited the depth of individual accounts, as students’ experiences were likely to serve as a collective entity. The students’ and teacher’s experiences of criticality then assisted in the analysis of the classroom discourse that together constituted the curriculum arena of realisation.

The meso level of analysis addressed classroom discourses of meaning negotiation and construction in History sessions at the sample upper secondary schools. Classroom observations were conducted and accompanied by digital audio recordings and field notes. Although audio recording limits the collected data to verbal communication, it is sufficient to meet the adopted definition of discourse and has proved adequate to contribute to the educational research (see for example, Cazden, 2001; Morgan, 1997). Following Cazden (2001, p. 3), I looked at patterns of language use that affected what counted as knowledge, and what occurred as learning in the observed History sessions. In this study, consequently, those sequences that included criticality instruction as defined by either policy documents and/or the interviewed teacher/students in each country were selected for analysis. This was done given that policy enactment involves translation of policy texts and abstract ideas into contextualised practices (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 3) in the curriculum realisation arena. I further examined the selected sequences of the classroom discourse to see whether any implicit rules of educational talk and practice, so called ground rules of educational discourse (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, p. 47), would emerge. Field notes were primarily used to assist in transcribing the recordings and providing a description of the perceived atmosphere in the classroom as well as the structure of the observed lessons.

The overall design of the contextualisation stage aimed at minimising disturbance of evidence. Conducting classroom observation first and then following up with interviews reduced intervention risks since the specific focus of the study was first revealed in the interviews. An attempt to minimise other effects of classroom observation and interviews was made through following protocols, allocating time for participants to get used to
the presence of the researcher, and striving for being as little intrusive as possible.

The third and fourth stages of the comparative inquiry involved first isolation of differences and similarities from their immediate contexts and their direct comparison and then interpretation of differences and similarities against their respective contexts. Since these stages were closely intertwined and reflected the process of comparative analysis, their results were reported in the concluding sections of the chapters concerning macro and micro levels of data collection, and in the subsequent chapter for the combined evidence from all the three levels.

The fifth and sixth stages aided in reformulating the initial research questions to reflect the contextualised results of the analysis and in considering their practical application in the transnational context. In axiological terms, these stages reviewed to what extent the results might be transferable and relatable to History classes in other schools. Further, some pedagogical implications for students’ criticality development were discussed.

Data analysis, synthesis and interpretation were conducted following the stages of comparative enquiry as described above. To increase the reliability and validity and to create a ‘sense of being there’ for the reader (Somekh & Pearson, 2002, p. 487), thick descriptions of each national case were provided. It was further necessary to build reflexivity into every stage of collection, interpretation and presentation of data in an attempt to attain credible, consistent and authentic descriptions of the three country contexts.

**Sampling**

Developing Michael Sadler’s idea that only through comparative education can one grasp the true nature of one’s own education (Epstein, 2008, p. 376), samples from Sweden, Russia and Australia were selected and systematically compared to attain a contextualised description and deeper understanding of each country’s approach to students’ criticality development. The rationale behind the selection of the countries was conditioned by the language advantages I had as a native speaker of Russian and a proficient speaker of Swedish and English together with personal and supervisor connections with the gatekeepers in the Swedish and Australian school sectors. Given that I received my school education in Russia but emigrated from the country, received my higher education in Russia and Sweden and established contact with a number of higher education professionals in Australia and had an opportunity to spend two months visiting Australian schools, I could combine insider and outsider knowledge about the selected educational contexts. These circumstances allowed me to interlock the principles of
limitation and informed detachment that facilitate a comparative study (Judge, 2000, p. 155).

The research design and resource availability determine the sampling strategies adopted. Following a number of criteria, non-probability sampling was conducted at institutional, instructional, and experiential levels. At the institutional level, one school and class per country was sampled as belonging to upper secondary education, comparable in terms of location and form of funding, and having History as one of the subjects. At the instructional level, a few consecutive lessons from each case were sampled to provide full coverage of one complete historical topic. At the experiential level, the History teachers in the selected classes were included in the sample, while 6–8 students who represented each class were sampled for focus group interview to include a mix of ability as evaluated by class grades. The size of the focus group was in line with the recommendations given in the relevant research literature (see Morgan, 1997; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996).

**Research instruments and data collection and analysis tools**

Data collection was conducted at macro, meso, and micro levels as described above. At the macro level, Internet and library search as well as expert consultations were used to find official educational policy documents concerning History courses at upper secondary school. At the meso and micro levels, classroom discourse and interviews were audio-recorded and complemented by the field notes. The recordings were further transcribed and translated where necessary.

The design of the research instruments was inspired by that of two larger studies: one investigating the development of criticality among undergraduates at an undisclosed UK university (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011) and one examining teaching of languages at younger ages in seven European countries (Enever, 2011, p. 13). Since these studies had a different focus and examined teaching and learning for differing age groups that do not correspond to the present study, necessary adaptations were made. To ensure comparability, the protocols for data collection were also prepared beforehand, providing rigour to the procedures for observation and interview. These included:

- the observation protocol and observation record form (see Appendices 19, 20);
- the teacher interview protocol and teacher interview record form (see Appendices 8, 9);
To conduct the interviews with the teachers and students, the interview guides in Swedish, English and Russian were also necessary. The following section describes how the interview research instruments were developed.

Prior to the interviews in the main study, I conducted two pilot interviews to test the validity of the question items and to learn the craft of interviewing. The pilot interviews were conducted with one teacher and with a focus group of upper secondary students. Given the proximity of my university base to local schools and the consequent ease of access, both took place in Northern Sweden but in different schools. Findings from the pilot phase provided guidance for the further development of the research instruments. This included development of the interview protocols and record forms in addition to the interview guide for the pilot study (see Appendix 18). Also the question items were rethought. For example, the question about excessive critical thinking was added, which proved to be a good strategy for eliciting interviewees’ perceptions of criticality from various angles (cf Appendices 18, 17, see Appendix 15 for the version in English). Question item 13 in the pilot guide that listed different forms of criticality was removed, as the interviewees appeared to be unable to define or differentiate between these. This was an indicator that the term critical thinking was the adequate choice for the interview guide. Some important findings from the pilot interviews were reported and included in the data analysis.

The protocols, record forms and guides for the teacher interview and focus group interview were prepared for the main study to facilitate confirmation of data collection procedures as required by the axiological stance adopted. The protocols provided a detailed description of a standardised procedure that aimed to secure data comparability across the national cases as well as to avoid omitting any crucial details (see Appendix 8 for teacher interview, Appendix 13 for focus group interview). The procedure had three stages: before, during and after the interview. The protocols detailed guidelines on the participant recruitment, necessary preparations for the interview, ethical protocol, instructions given to the participants, and the step-by-step interview procedure. The interview requirements such as the period, place, approximate duration and circumstances of conducting were also specified as well as facilitators such as water and light snacks. To limit the impact on the usual business of History teaching and learning, the interviews (where
the specific focus of the study was first revealed), were conducted after the observation period was over. I invited the teacher and student focus groups to the one-hour interviews separately to avoid any risk of influence by either party. During the interview the participants were offered water and some snacks to ease the burden of staying after classes (where applicable) and to reduce the stress of the interview situation.

The record forms were used to document the interview situation: date, interviewee and institutions codes, starting and ending times, deviations from the protocol (if any) as well as post-interview reflective comments (see Appendix 9 for teacher interview, Appendix 14 for focus group interview). The record form for the focus group interview also established routines for giving credit for the responses if necessary. The guides covered the key topics to be discussed with the interviewees and included a set of core questions to be posed during the interview. The aim of the core questions was not to prevent the interviewer from asking specifying, probing or follow-up questions but rather to navigate through the interview and ensure that relevant data was collected. The guide had been initially prepared and tested in Swedish and was then translated into English and Russian. The wording of the question items was then reviewed by native speakers of the languages based in my university department to confirm that the questions were likely to be interpreted in the way intended. These steps resulted in the separate interview guides in each language (see Appendices 12, 17 for Swedish; Appendices 10, 15 for English; Appendices 11, 16 for Russian). The interview itself was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.

The interview guide was structured as follows: more general questions preceded more specific ones (see e.g., Appendices 10, 15). The question items were grouped in five sets: (1) background information and core features of History teaching and learning; (2) defining criticality; (3) criticality instruction; (4) criticality in various contexts; (5) alternative conceptions of criticality. The first set (questions 1–5 and 1–4 in the teacher interview and focus group interview respectively) aimed to enable the interviewees to overcome any initial self-consciousness they might suffer as a result of being recorded and to allow them some time to get used to the interview situation. This procedure also aimed to reveal whether the interviewees would mention criticality among the core features of History teaching and learning. The second set (questions 6–10 and 5–9 in the teacher interview and focus group interview respectively) attempted to elicit as many perceptions of criticality as possible. As the policy analysis has shown, the term critical thinking (in Swedish kritiskt tänkande; in Russian kriticheskoe myshlenie) is often used
in the national policy documents to denote criticality\textsuperscript{2}. It also occurs in public debates in all three countries and the pilot interviews indicated that critical thinking was a familiar term for the interviewees and one that provides them space to discuss criticality. For these reasons, the term \textit{critical thinking} was employed in the interview guide. There were a number of elicitation strategies adopted that included direct elicitations of definitions, mapping the values associated with criticality, asking for examples of practical experience and overuse as well as confronting the polar opposites. The subsequent interviews showed that these were efficient in getting closer to participants’ conceptions of criticality and provided them with plenty of opportunities to further refine their understandings in the course of the interview.

The purpose of question 11 in the teacher interview and question 10 in the focus group interview (the third set) was to investigate whether any support to foster students’ criticality was offered in the History classroom as self-reported by the teachers and experienced by the students. The teachers were invited to describe how they achieve this, whereas the students were to recall any instances of criticality instruction. Questions 12–13 in the teacher interview and questions 11–12 in the focus group interview (the fourth set) dealt with context-bound issues of criticality. The discussion was expected to reveal whether criticality was regarded as subject specific or as an inter-subject competence, as well as a school-related or everyday activity. Questions 14–15 in the teacher interview and questions 13–14 in the focus group interview (the fifth set) served as a means to identify any other conceptions of criticality that the interviewees might have had and to allow the interviewees to contribute freely to the discussion of criticality.

After the interviews were conducted, I transcribed them verbatim in the language of the interview but leaving out hesitation words, pauses and the like, as these fell outside the scope of the study, i.e. only verbally manifested meaning was documented. The script was then interpreted in the hermeneutical tradition following the canon as described in Radnitzky, (1970 as cited in Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, pp. 210–211). This approach was slightly modified to fit the study design and make use of the results of the policy analysis. Thus, it included (1) the continuous back-and-forth interpretation process between parts of the interview and the whole; (2) striving to achieve an inner unity of the interpretation, which was free of logical contradictions; (3) testing of part-interpretations against the global meaning of the interview; (4) interpreting the interview as if it was an autonomous text; (5) using the prior knowledge about criticality from

\textsuperscript{2} Another term that is used in the Swedish policy documents that might denote criticality is source criticism (in Swedish \textit{källkritik}). However, it is not found in either Russian or Australian policy documents.
the policy analysis; (6) admitting the interpreter’s bias by making his presuppositions explicit; (7) going beyond the immediately given meaning in the interview, bringing creativity (ibid.).

To facilitate the hermeneutical analysis of the interviews, I used the software Atlas.ti. The interview data was coded with categories that helped in identification of statements as well as in further comparison of the data sets from the national cases. Some of these categories were explicated from the interview questions and data, while others emerged exclusively from the data. The computer-assisted coding provided a visual illustration of the relations between the interviews, which improved efficiency of the analysis. Particularly, it was useful to reveal common and idiosyncratic approaches to criticality across the countries, discussed in detail in the section on comparative analysis of the interviews (see Comparative analysis of interview data, pp. 106–111). The report on the results of the interview analysis was written in a two-perspective fashion and combined the teacher and the student focus group interviews from each national case. The excerpts of the interviews that supported the findings were presented in the original language, accompanied by a translation to English (where applicable) with minor syntactical changes. This was done to allow the original voices of Swedish and Russian participants to be heard and visible in the ‘Englishisationed’ research community as well as to acknowledge ‘how demanding it is to square the circle of semantic equivalence between languages’ (Phillipson, 2006, p. 68).

To document classroom observations, the observation protocol (see Appendix 19) and observation record form (see Appendix 20) were prepared. Similar to the interview data, the recordings of the observed History sessions were transcribed verbatim in the language of instruction and analysed hermeneutically (see Comparative study framework, pp. 20–23). Atlas.ti was used to code the data into family groupings and codes, which facilitated the navigation in the observation data. The families provided higher-order categorisation of the classroom data, while the codes were used to describe the data more closely. Further, the software helped to identify overlaps between the codes and extract relevant citations. The selected excerpts of classroom talk were, similar to the interviews, presented in the original language and translated into English.

**Ethics**

As the proposed research involves collecting primary data from people, clearances from the University Research Ethics Review Panel in Umeå, Sweden and from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria, Australia were sought and obtained. Due to
the Russian regulations, it was sufficient to obtain consent from the participants and the school principal. In Australia, the consent was also sought from the students’ parents/guardians. Despite the differing degree of formal procedures in the selected contexts, the negotiation of access to the classes indicated that the school administrations and History teachers took similar measures to protect the students’ anonymity, guarantee voluntary participation and ensure their well-being while participating in the study.

For the purpose of application and conducting data collection, information sheets and consent forms had been prepared in all three languages. These were different depending on the recipient (see Appendices 6, 7 for Sweden; Appendices 4, 5 for Russia; Appendices 2, 3 for Australia). Although the process of preparing the applications was complex and wearing at times, it proved to be an important stage in conducting research. The ethics application procedure ensured that the necessary precautions related to the protection of the participants were carefully planned for and the design of the study was outlined to the degree that the ethics officers could make sense of it and could anticipate its benefit to the research community and participating schools and individuals.

Before conducting the study, the teachers’ and students’ (for Australia also parents’/guardians’) informed consent to participation was obtained. The participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality and were informed that the collected data would be used for research purposes only. The participating teachers were given pseudonyms as part of the ethics process and the students were referred to as Student 1, 2 and so on for each extract. This meant that the numbering of students was consistent only within one extract. The digital recordings were coded to preserve the anonymity of locations of data collection and identities of the participants and to minimise the risk of breaching confidentiality. A coding book, which is stored separately from the recordings, was prepared. After the present study was completed, the data continued to be stored in a safe location for a potential re-analysis and use for other academic publications in accordance with the participants’ consent. Further, a report to the Department of Education and Early Childhood in Victoria is scheduled to be written and forwarded in Spring 2017.
Study set-up

Sweden

Negotiating access and background information on school

To find a relevant school for data collection may prove crucial to a successful educational study. For the Swedish part of the study, a school in Northern Sweden was sampled on a convenience basis, that is with due attention to accessibility and proximity, and approached in spring–summer 2012. The initial contact was provided by one of the university departments. After some electronic correspondence with the coordinator for Social Studies and History, a meeting was booked. It occurred at the end of June during the summer vacation. The details of the study and participants tasks were described to her and potential participation benefits for the school including obtaining a copy of the thesis with some guidance on how the findings of this comparative study might be used in pedagogic practice were explained. The coordinator seemed to be sympathetic towards the study and promised to discuss a possible participation with colleagues in their planning meeting at the beginning of the autumn term. In response to the follow-up email in September, the coordinator advised me that one of the History teachers volunteered and provided the teacher’s email. The week after, the information sheet about the study was sent to the teacher (see Appendix 7). During the autumn term while waiting for the Ethics Review Panel’s approval, the email contact was maintained to discuss the study, confirming and reconfirming the dates for data collection. The teacher showed a lot of goodwill and found time to reply in her busy schedule.

In February 2013, I booked a meeting to talk about the study with one of the teacher’s classes. In the meeting, the students and the teacher were briefed on the study and received information sheets, consent forms (see Appendices 6, 7) and reply envelopes addressed to my university office. They were encouraged to take a decision on their participation and to post the signed consent form in the enclosed envelope if positive. In between the information meeting and the start of the data collection for the Swedish part of the study in April 2013, the teacher and most of the students sent their consent forms by mail. The rest of the class, except one student, granted their permission in the first week of data collection.

The study school was a municipal comprehensive upper secondary school, which covers Year 10–12 (typically students aged 16–19) of non-compulsory education in Sweden. It was located in a recently renovated two-storey building with spacious recreation areas. The school furniture was new and the classrooms were well equipped. The school building was divided into
three zones so the students mixed with each other mainly in the school canteen in the centre of the building.

In spring 2013 there were three major educational routes within **gymnasium** (a part of the upper secondary school that offers education to students with no learning disabilities), which included a range of higher education preparatory and vocational programmes. About 2000 students were registered at the school, and 12 qualified professionals (a few of them with an additional postgraduate degree) taught History in various programmes. The school had neither statistics for the students’ rate of higher education admission, nor any numbers on the students continuing with History at the tertiary level. Thus the importance of History for a future academic career was not known. The History teachers had regular meetings but they were scattered around different offices that were shared programme-wise. No specific classroom was designated for History sessions, which discouraged the teacher from setting up permanent historical maps, illustrations and the like. This indicated no special status of History as a subject in that school.

*Conducting interviews*

As planned, I conducted the teacher and focus group interviews after the observation period during which the History sessions had been audio-recorded. Both interviews took place the same day (May, 2 2013), a week after the last observed session. I interviewed first the student focus group and then the History teacher to best accommodate the participants’ time constraints and to minimise a potential teacher’s impact on the students.

The focus group consisted of six students with a mix of ability as assessed by the History teacher: four girls and two boys. The ratio of girls to boys in the focus group was similar to that of the whole class. The teacher selected the students for the interview and provided us with a separate group room where no one could disturb us, while the rest of the class had a History session. The interview climate was relaxed and the students discussed the interview questions within the focus group rather than giving answers directly to me. On several occasions there was some laughter, indicating that the students found the interview entertaining. The students contributed approximately equally to the forty-minute interview. All the topics in the interview guide were covered but also a variety of follow-up, probing, specifying and interpreting questions were posed. These were necessary and useful to collect relevant data when the students did not give longer responses to the pre-set question items. At the end of the interview, I asked the students to individually summarise their understandings of criticality. According to my post-interview notes, I was particularly surprised how much
authority the History teacher had among the students as reported by themselves.

The teacher interview took about an hour and was conducted in the shared teacher office. No other teachers were in the office during the interview as they were busy with their classes. The interviewee, Anna (pseudonym), was an experienced female teacher who had worked in school as qualified Social Studies and History teacher as well as an instructor in teacher education for over 20 years. For the last eight years she had worked in the data collection school and taught History and Social Studies to various groups of students. The teacher appeared to feel at ease with the interview situation.

Collecting classroom data
The Swedish classroom data were collected during three weeks in April 2013 in a class pursuing a vocational programme, Child and Recreation programme. During the observation period, there were 13 students on average attending a session. The students were taking the course History 1a1 and had all their weekly sessions in one day from approximately 8.20 until 11.50 including breaks. In total, nine sessions were audio-recorded that amounted to over nine hours of recorded data. One of the sessions included an independent student group work when the student groups were collaborating on an assignment in several school locations. In that case the groups were asked to take a recorder with them to document their discussions. Otherwise, all the sessions were conducted in one and the same classroom and recorded following the protocol. The classroom was equipped with two white boards and a smartboard so the teacher could use her work laptop. The students were also supplied with individual laptops that they could use while being enrolled for the programme.

Russia
Negotiating access and background information on school
Through personal contact with a local department of education in Northwestern Russia, I was able to approach key people in three city schools. All three schools were ranked above average by word of mouth and over 90 per cent of their students continued to tertiary education according to the schools’ officials. The schools were approached in spring term 2012. The invitations to participate in the study with its short description, anticipated impact on the site and potential benefits, had been sent to the relevant emails well in advance.

In School 1, I met its head teacher who also coordinated History teaching and learning. After a short talk about the study, she agreed to provide her full
support and introduced me to a teacher who was expected to run History lessons in Year 11 in February–March 2013. The teacher gave her preliminary consent to participating in the study and invited me to attend one of her lessons. The day after, two History sessions were observed in the class that was planned for the study. The interaction and dynamics of the class appeared to be suitable for the purposes of data collection and the students were briefed on a prospective study. The teacher and I agreed to maintain contact via the head teacher.

During a phone conversation, a History teacher from School 2 was enthusiastic about the study but expressed concern about being recorded. As the study design involved audio recording of the interviews and lessons, the participation appeared to be problematic but the teacher particularly suggested that we should meet to discuss possibilities in person. At the meeting, I confirmed that audio recording would be necessary to collect the required type of data, whereas the teacher proposed taking notes instead. Since note-taking would jeopardise the quality of the necessary data, we agreed not to proceed with the study and reached a mutual understanding that she could be approached if a future study was developed that matches her preferences for data collection methods.

When visiting School 3, I was met by its deputy head teacher. After some discussions, she suggested coming back several days later to meet a History teacher. On the agreed date, the teacher was briefed on the study. She consented to participate with her class and invited me to observe a History session the same day. The class was assigned as a backup spot for data collection.

In-between spring term 2012 and spring term 2013, the contact was maintained with the head teacher from School 1 as agreed. When arranging for the data collection trip to Russia, I emailed the school to confirm their participation and received a positive response a few months before the data collection period. In the trip schedule, there was a week prior to the actual start of data collection to meet with the teacher, discuss her planning for the coming weeks and to obtain the participants’ consent to the study. This week proved to be crucial to successful data collection as the school had to be changed due to the maternity leave of the teacher. School 3 was immediately contacted and access was swiftly granted. Such a development demonstrated that research that involves institutions and humans is highly sensitive to unexpected events. Awareness of this and readiness to act quickly proved to be essential when conducting qualitative research.

In March 2013, the data for the Russian part of the study was collected in a municipal comprehensive school (School 3) that offers education from Year 1 to Year 11. This covers the compulsory schooling in Russia (typically
students aged 7–17). The school had two buildings although all the data was collected in one of them. This three-storey building was made of red brick. It boasted a library, computer classrooms, concert halls, gyms, the dentist’s, a stationery shop and a few food options. There were spacious recreation areas in the building, of which some were poorly furnished. The classroom equipment and furniture might have benefited from some renovation.

There were four major educational routes offered at the school with some subdivisions. This particular school was allowed to select best achieving students (aged 16–17) through an entrance examination to continue at upper secondary level, which had an impact on the classroom mix. In 2013 the school had about 2400 students, of whom about 240 at upper secondary level. The latter enjoyed a team of five experienced and highly qualified professionals who teach History. The school had close cooperation with one of the universities in the city.

The upper secondary History teachers shared a small office. Outside the office there was a noticeboard. At the time of data collection, it contained information about the nationwide educational Olympiads in History and Social Studies, invitations to take part in archaeological excavations in the summer, and congratulations on the Defender of the Fatherland Day (February, 23rd)3.

According to the statistics provided by the deputy head teacher, 99 per cent of the students who completed their studies in 2011 were admitted to higher education institutions in the country and abroad. About 37 per cent of the students sat their Unified State Exam in History but only two per cent started majoring in History in tertiary education, whereas the rest chose other tracks within social science. Almost every year students from the school earn medals in the city- and regionwide educational Olympiads, including History. The school representatives annually attend students’ historical conferences.

**Conducting interviews**

The teacher and the focus group interviews were conducted at the end of the data collection period in Russia on schedule. On March, 21 2013, the day after the last History session had been recorded, I interviewed the History teacher and two days later interviewed the focus group of students.

The one-hour teacher interview took place in the small office that was shared by the upper secondary History teachers. It was once interrupted by one of the teachers who came to fetch her coat and exchanged a few words with the interviewee. At that time, it was rather cold in the office so we sat by

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3 The holiday that used to celebrate only the people who served in the army irrespective of their sex but nowadays tends to be a day set aside to acknowledge the value of males, i.e. Men’s Day.
the radiator. The interviewee, Irina Dmitrievna (pseudonym), was a qualified History teacher with over 25 years of teaching experience. Besides teaching History, she taught social studies and world art culture and had worked as a nursery teacher for a year. Having won the rigorous competition for the post, she started working in the data collection school in 1993. The teacher did not appear to be used to being interviewed as she asked me on several occasions if I was satisfied with the ‘correctness’ of her answers. I had to reassure her that I was interested in her understandings and experiences and had no ready-made answers to the interview items. When the interview was over, a former student came to consult the teacher about a paper she was preparing at the university that indicated that Irina Dmitrievna enjoyed a good reputation.

The focus group interview lasted for approximately an hour and was conducted in the same office as the teacher interview, while the rest of the class had a session in World Art Culture. Several times the teachers came to fetch their coats but none of them interfered in the interview. The group consisted of six students (four boys and two girls) that were selected by the teacher to represent the class in terms of achievement and on the basis of her knowledge of their willingness and ability to meaningfully contribute to the interview. The atmosphere was relaxed and the students seemed to be interested in participating and were generous in their comments. Twice two different students left the room to accept a short call on their mobile phones. My post-interview notes reveal that I was curious to know why my first impressions of the observed sessions appeared to be different from those of the students regarding instances of criticality instruction.

**Collecting classroom data**

The Russian classroom data were collected during three weeks in March 2013 in a class taking a basic course in History. There were 20 students on average attending a session during the observation period. Two sessions were given weekly and occurred on one and the same day from approximately 8.30 until 10.00. In total, six sessions were audio-recorded that amounted to approximately 4.5 hours of recorded data. The sessions were conducted in one of two neighbouring classrooms depending on what kind of equipment was necessary. One of the classrooms was equipped with a computer and a projector, while the other was equipped with a TV-set and a VHS-player. Both classrooms had blackboards. During the observations, the protocol was followed and forms were filled in.
Australia

Negotiating access and background information on school

The identification of a suitable school for data collection in Australia was not a straightforward process and involved some logistic difficulties. Due to the strict local regulations, a clearance from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria, Australia was required before making any contact with schools. Meanwhile, a suitable time for data collection was negotiated with La Trobe University. Through a personal contact at the university, I was kindly guided through and assisted in the lengthy six-month process of preparing an ethics application, which was later approved. As access to schools was negotiated through La Trobe University, a personal university contact made initial contact with one of the city schools and received preliminary consent to participate in the study. Partly due to the complex nature of the initial ethics approval procedure and to the limited time that the university contact had available to give support, there was no direct contact with the actual school. Regrettably, some crucial details of the study design were not communicated to the school to identify a perfect timing for data collection, although these had been provided by myself (see Appendix 3).

When I arrived in a city in Victoria, Australia for data collection, a meeting with a History teacher at the upper secondary school was immediately set up. The teacher was positive about taking part in the study but it turned out that the timing of data collection was not ideal. Her students were at school and available only for the so-called transition period, the time in between Year 11 and 12 of schooling during the planned time for data collection. The lack of the early direct contact with the school due to the regulations and the difficulty of repeating the visit to Australia given that funding inevitably limited the available time caused serious disruptions in the planning of the research schedule. Luckily, the number of History sessions that were scheduled for the transition period was high and comparable to the other data collection schools. A meeting with the principal for approval of the study initiation was booked and the written invitation to participate was forwarded. The permission was granted and the teacher and I worked together to alleviate the situation. The school principal also generously agreed that we could use the school intranet email to send out the information sheets and consent forms to the potentially participating students and their parents/guardians to consider (see Appendix 2). In the email, the principal and the teacher shortly introduced the study and

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4 In Victoria, upper secondary schools are often known as senior secondary colleges.
endorsed it asking the students and their parents/guardians to notify their decision on the first day of the transition period.

The participating school is state-funded and provides education for Year 11–12 students within two broad curriculum programmes, The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The school is known for its academic excellence and is regularly assessed on various international standards. It is partly located in a well-maintained historic building and has a long history, which includes both academic and sporting achievements, which are on display in a room close to the school reception. Access to the school is strictly regulated and the visitors have to register at the reception to receive a visitor’s badge. The large school area is home to eight faculties, all well-equipped, a library, a gymnasium and some canteens for staff and students.

In 2013 there were approximately 1800 students attending the school, of whom about 160 were taking one or more of the available courses in History. There was a team of five History teachers who had three assigned History classrooms where student work, maps and posters with significant people were on display. The statistics on the university admission rate to degree programmes with a focus on History were not available.

Conducting interviews
Given the short time the students were available at school, the focus group interview was scheduled on the second to last day of data collection. The teacher interview was scheduled after the observation period. However, due to a tragic accident with a student from the sample school the day before the focus group interview, the teaching staff were offered counselling and as a result the History sessions were cancelled. For ethical reasons, the focus group interview had to be cancelled that day as well.

The extenuating circumstances led to a complete rethink of the focus group interview. After the previously scheduled interview there was only one occasion left (December, 4 2013) when the students were available in school before going on summer holiday. The History session was late in the afternoon and was the very last session of the spring term. The student motivation to stay for the interview was understandably very low. Only one student volunteered but as it turned out she was able to provide rich data in an interview lasting more than 30 minutes. The student appeared to be a very motivated History learner and eager interviewee. Her background as coming from a well-educated family with a father currently studying for a PhD might have played a role in agreeing to the interview. Due to the school regulations, the interview had to be supervised by someone from the staff. It took place in the library where the interviewee and I could find
a calm spot so we were not disturbed but were visible to the supervisor. To complement the individual student interview, the History teacher and I agreed to arrange a Skype-interview with a group of students in February 2014.

The Skype-interview with the focus group was conducted on February 28, 2014. The students (two boys and a girl), who were selected by the History teacher, sat in front of the computer Skype screen in a small room next to the classroom where the rest of the class had their History session. During the interview, the Skype connection was frequently intermittent and was lost several times, which adversely affected the flow of communication. The interview lasted for approximately 35 minutes and covered the interview guide items one to six only. The reasons for the shorter version of the interview are discussed in the analysis (see Interview analysis: Australia, pp. 93–106).

The teacher interview took place in her office on December 11, 2013, a week after the observation period. The students were already on holiday and this was the last week before the summer break for the teacher. The interviewee, Annie (pseudonym), was a qualified History teacher who had taught the subject for 21 years. She had a BA in Literature and History and a Diploma in education. Her teaching career started in another state, New South Wales, where besides History she mainly had taught English. In addition to teaching History at the data collection school, the interviewee also acted as a coordinator for humanities at the school and was a member of the state panel who reviewed the senior secondary History curriculum in Victoria. During the 40-minute interview the teacher appeared to be relaxed and confident and all the guide items were covered.

Collecting classroom data
The Australian classroom data were collected during the transition period in November–December 2013 in a class taking a course in Australian History. During the observation period, there were 13 students on average attending a session. The students were scheduled to have 6 sessions distributed over three days during the transition period but received instruction only on two of them due to the extenuating circumstances. In total, the audio recordings including the group work amounted to approximately three hours of classroom data. The sessions were conducted in the classrooms equipped with either a smartboard or projector so the teacher could use multimedia materials. During the sessions, the observation protocol was followed and observation record forms were completed.
Lessons learned in study design
The arrangements for data collection in three countries have pinpointed some aspects that are peculiar to school research in the given and perhaps similar circumstances. In the process of data collection, I learned that geographical proximity and direct contact with the participating teachers from the early stage of planning stand out as the most crucial aspects. Effective planning of these aspects allow the researcher to minimise the risks of communication breakdowns, to establish a working relationship with schools, and to set up for reserve schools and approach them in case of emergency. However, when administering a study that involves several countries, this is perhaps not always possible as the Russian and Australian cases have revealed in the study. The presence of intermediaries, although essential in the beginning, led to a very unexpected course of events so a special tribute should be paid to the teachers who despite organisational complications were ready to be flexible beyond any expectations and generously offered their support. Another crucial aspect of data collection that I learned is necessity to account for various hierarchical structures in schools, and to involve all the relevant actors in the decision-making process about school participation by preparing targeted information sheets and/or meeting them to negotiate access. Last by not least, I learned to appreciate such traits of character as perseverance and resilience throughout the data collection process, from the first steps of approaching schools to the final stages of data collection, which made the study possible.
Part II: Analysing the data
Policy analysis

School could be described as a stage where the younger generation scores points in their quest to climb the social ladder\(^5\). The rules of the quest are defined in the national curriculum and other educational policy documents by the older generation that has power to decide what valid knowledge is and control over how it is acquired. In Goodlad’s conceptualisation, these are *formal curricula* whose core features are sanctioned and available in written form curricula (Goodlad, Klein, & Tye, 1979, p. 61). For this reason, the following chapter focuses on the analysis of the policy documents that regulate upper secondary education in Sweden, Russia and Australia to provide a macro context for criticality instruction in the History classroom. Thus the chapter examines criticality in the curriculum arena of formulation.

According to Lundgren (2011), curricula are ‘the basic principles for cultural and social reproduction’ (p. 17), for which pedagogic practice is a fundamental social context (Bernstein, 2000, p. 3). The notion of control is translated into the pedagogic practice as framing, which was initially understood as anything that sets certain time and space limits for pedagogic practices at school (Dahlöf, 1969, p. 60). Later, it was used as an explanatory concept, which constrains and directs the pedagogic practice (Kallós and Lundgren, 1979, p. 30). In current curriculum theory, *frame factors* serve not to predict why exactly something has happened but to foresee what cannot happen in the given circumstances (Lindblad, Linde, & Naeslund, 1999, p. 100). This limitation is attributed to the socially constructed nature of the pedagogic practice, i.e. what frame factors for pedagogic practice exist is a consequence of what is constructed as frame factors by the people involved. Jarl and Rönnberg (2010, p. 89) argue that the frame factors are first interpreted in the classroom. In this way pedagogic practice is seen as a result of transactions between the educational actors rather than subordination of the ‘lower’ classroom level to the ‘higher’ policy level. Although this might be true, the language use in the formal curricula is assumed to contribute to the actual pedagogic practice, as Goodlad (1979, p. 26) pointed out: ‘[T]here probably is more linearity than many teachers would like and less than some legislators might prefer’. This also accords with the proposed ontology of learning environment, which underscores complex relations between the policy documents, classroom discourse and teacher and students’ experiences.

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The language use and approaches to criticality in the History classroom are likely to be particularly interesting as teachers and students engage in building a legitimate picture of the national and international past, situating their country in the world context, negotiating and constructing a national identity. This is perhaps the reason why policy makers in many countries have recently been heavily involved in moulding public opinion on the status of the subject in the school curricula. The Australian, Russian and Swedish contexts provide a good example of the contested status of History in upper secondary curriculum.

‘History wars’ — this is how Anna Clark (2008) describes the tension and debates over the place and role of History in school education in Australia during the last decades (p. 4). In 2006 the then Australian Prime Minister urged to restore ‘our national sense of self’ through History teaching and learning (ibid., p. 90). Parkes and Donelly (2014) describe the PM’s failed attempt to influence the History curriculum as ‘not only seeking a national narrative to unify the nation’ but also as a means of reshaping the History educational discourse to benefit a certain ideology (pp. 124–125). This is, however, not unique to Australia but is a global trend. In Europe history is frequently used in political debates and for justification for language regulation (Erdman & Hasberg, 2011, p. 348). Russia has seen a set-up and dissolution of a committee that aimed to prevent falsification of history as well as ongoing work on History textbooks based on a unitary conception. This work is currently being carried out by acclaimed and controversial historians and experts to command ‘respect to all pages of our past’ (Stenogramma zasedaniya Soveta po mezhnatsionalnym otnosheniyam, 2013). Shortly after what some call annexation of the Crimea, while others call it the Crimea reunification, the Russian president commissioned the relevant governing bodies to include ‘the materials about the role of the Crimea [...] in the history of the Russian Empire, USSR and contemporary Russia’ in the school textbooks (Perechen poruchenii..., 2014).

After many vicissitudes History became compulsory in the Swedish upper secondary curriculum in 2011. The inclusion was justified by, among other reasons, the need to ‘explain events in Europe’ since 1990s (Elgström & Hellstenius, 2010, p. 566). One of the issues to be explained was ‘Crimes against humanity under communist regimes’, which sparked intense debate among leading historians in a national newspaper and led to allegations against the government that it makes the use of History in upper secondary school seem like ‘an ideological battlefield’ (DN, 2008). The above glimpses into the recent past suggest that History is a fiercely contested school subject that has gained currency at the upper secondary level of education in several national contexts.
In the next sections, the Swedish, Russian and Australian contexts are examined to show the place and role of History as a subject in upper secondary school in the respective educational systems as well as to reveal what conceptions of criticality are promoted within the formal curricula. The policy analysis includes examination of some overarching documents as well as History syllabi in all three national contexts. This task is undertaken with a heightened awareness of linguistic choices (Englund, 2011) that are evident in the policy documents arguing how these choices might influence the pedagogic practice. The results of the individual policy analyses are then compared to illustrate the similarities and differences of intended criticality instruction in the selected countries.

**Sweden**

Upper secondary education is the last stage of schooling in Sweden for children who successfully completed their nine years of compulsory studies. It is not obligatory but ‘nearly all students’ continue their studies at this stage (Skolverket, 2012, p. 11). The Swedish upper secondary education is regulated through the Education Act (chapters 15–17), the Upper Secondary School Ordinance, the Curriculum for the Non-compulsory School, diploma goals, and subject syllabi, which are interrelated but do not duplicate each other and should be understood as a meaningful whole (Skolverket, 2012, pp. 14–15). In general, upper secondary education in Sweden, which normally takes three years to complete, is characterised by strong classification of subjects. History is no exception to the rule and, in Bernstein’s terms, distinctly insulated (differentiated), although the historical perspective is required to permeate all aspects of education and knowledge of Swedish history should be acquired in many school subjects (Skolverket, 2011, pp. 5, 7). The introduction of the historical perspective into the curriculum indicates History’s ‘one-way’ influence on other subjects and its high priority status on the current educational agenda.

History was legislated to become an obligatory subject in 2004, a so-called core subject, but was later relabelled into upper secondary foundation subject, which is meant to contribute to ‘personal development and active participation in the life of society’ (Skolverket, 2012, p. 8). There was a gap of seven years between the decision in the Parliament and the actual inclusion of History in the curriculum, which might be explained by the change of government in 2006.

Being one of the nine foundation subjects, History is now in a strong position, which was not the case in Sweden until lately. Elgström and Hellstenius (2010) suggest that this advance was made due to the change in the ideational climate in school politics. According to them, many decision-
makers were made aware of the lack of knowledge about modern history, in particular the Holocaust, and were persuaded that more History at school would solve this (ibid., p. 566). As a result, every student (with the exception of the Technology and Vocational programmes6) should take an obligatory 100-credit introductory course in History, which may be complemented by one or two further 100-credit courses (see Skolverket, 2011, p. 67; Skolverket, 2012, pp. 36–37).

The educational policy documents do not specify correspondence between the course credits and time spent on the course7, whereas the Upper Secondary School Ordinance states that a credit is a measure of the extent of studies (Utbildningsdepartamentet, 2010a, p. 2). The Education Act prescribes though that the minimal total amount of contact hours for higher education preparatory programmes is 2180 hours, and 2430 hours — for vocational programmes for the whole upper secondary education (Utbildningsdepartamentet, 2010b, ch. 16, par. 18). As a frame reference, the estimated time assigned for each of the former courses in History could be used, which is ‘80–100 teaching hours or four weeks of full-time studies’ (Lindmark and Rönqvist, 2011, p. 305). It is also possible to infer from the current History syllabus that each 100-credit History course may run for no longer than one school year.

To examine the use of the notion criticality in the Swedish educational policy documents for upper secondary school, a search8 was conducted in the following documents: the Education Act (Utbildningsdepartamentet, 2010b, chapters 15–17), the Upper Secondary School Ordinance (Utbildningsdepartamentet, 2010a), the Curriculum for the Non-compulsory School (Skolverket, 2011, chapters 1–2), diploma goals (Skolverket, 2011, chapter 3), and the History syllabus (Skolverket, n. d.).

The search in the Act and Ordinance identified no references. Chapters 1–2 in the Curriculum, where fundamental values and tasks of the school as well as overall goals and guidelines are specified, contain three references to criticality. Here critical thinking is regarded as a scientific way of thinking and working (Skolverket, 2011, p. 7), which is then more closely defined as ‘the ability to critically examine and assess what they [students] see, hear and read in order to be able to discuss and take a standpoint in different questions concerning life and values’ (ibid., p. 10). This is, in other words, the interpretation of criticality that is expected to permeate all the national programmes of upper secondary education in Sweden.

6 For students of the Technology and Vocational programmes, the obligatory history course 1a1 is 50 credits.
7 The website Gymnasium.se (n. d.) that specialises in educational consulting in Sweden claims that a study week is equivalent to 25 credits.
8 Search words were Swedish stems kritisk and kritik.
Since diploma goals state what is specific for each programme (Skolverket, 2012, p. 15), it is valuable to investigate how criticality is reinterpreted there. The search showed that in vocational programmes, there is a tendency for emphasising the need to examine critically one’s own vocational practices, whereas the focus in higher education preparatory programmes is on critical awareness and/or approaches to information from different sources. This is potentially an important factor for developing students’ criticality, which might encourage teachers to prefer critiquing vocational practices only in the former case, while teachers might tend to critically approach practices from a wider range of situations in the latter case.

The notion of criticality is further refined in the History syllabus. One of the specific goals of the subject is ‘the ability to search for, examine, interpret and assess sources using source-critical methods, and to present the results using various forms of expression’ (Skolverket, n. d., p. 2). All 23 search hits point at the explicit correspondence between criticality and source-critical methods in History in a similar manner to the following example: ‘Critical examination, interpretation and use of different kinds of source material based on critical source criteria and methods’ (ibid., p. 9). This is another potential frame factor, which might impact on the ways Swedish upper secondary History teachers interpret the notion of criticality and attempt to develop students’ criticality.

The split in different programmes is further reinforced in the History syllabus. No reference to criticality is found in the description of the core content of the course History 1a19, which is obligatory in the Technology and Vocational programmes. The course syllabus states that ‘interpretation and use of different kinds of source materials’ (Skolverket, n. d., p. 3) belongs to ‘what the teaching should cover’ (Skolverket, 2012, p. 50). By contrast, students in the Preparatory programmes who take the obligatory History 1b course are expected to work with ‘critical examination, interpretation and use of different kinds of source material based on critical source criteria and methods’ (Skolverket, n. d., p. 8). The differences in linguistic choices for expressing the core content of these courses seem to widen the gap between the two approaches to criticality in the upper secondary programmes. This analysis indicates that History teachers might pay more limited attention (if any) to developing students’ criticality in the Technology and Vocational programmes.

The main findings in respect of criticality reveal that, although criticality development is seen as one of the crucial goals of education in the Swedish

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9 However, the grade specifications to the course History 1a1 (Skolverket, n. d., pp. 3–4) state that students should base their evaluation on source-critical methods.
curriculum, there might be a strong tendency in the upper secondary History classroom for understanding criticality as exclusively source criticism\textsuperscript{10}. Moreover, there appears to be a deep split in articulating the need to develop students’ criticality between Preparatory programmes on the one hand and Vocational and Technology programmes on the other. The wording of the obligatory History course syllabus for the latter might discourage teachers from supporting students’ criticality development in favour of other educational goals.

**Russia**

In contrast to Sweden, upper secondary education is compulsory for Russian students since 2007. According to the federal law, eleven-year education is compulsory in Russia until the age of 18 (\textit{Federalnyi zakon «Ob obrazovanii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii»}, 2012, pp. 201–202)\textsuperscript{11}. After nine years of schooling, students have to choose either an upper secondary stream or a vocational stream, both of which qualify students for tertiary education. The Russian upper secondary education is regulated by the federal law \textit{About Education in the Russian Federation}, the Federal State Educational Standard of Upper Secondary Education (hereafter ‘The Standard’) and model subject syllabi (a national subject syllabus that informs the design of local syllabi). The Standard prescribes that the minimum amount of contact hours is 2170 and maximum is 2590 hours (or 37 contact hours per week) for the whole upper secondary education, which lasts two years (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012, p. 33). It also lists five different educational programmes (‘profiles’) that may include different combinations of subjects that are congruent with the profile to be decided by individual schools. However, all programmes are to include six compulsory subjects, including History.

In the Standard History is categorised as part of the Social Sciences (learning area) that also include Geography, Economics, Social Studies, Law and Russia in the World. These subjects pursue some common overarching aims. History can be taken as a basic or advanced course. Both courses are scheduled to run for two years. Which course is offered depends on the educational programme that the student follows. The course description in the Standard is presented in terms of a set of learning outcomes to be

\textsuperscript{10} Cf the previous History syllabus, where development of ‘critical thinking and analytical way of looking at things’ were the goals of the subject, which ‘promote the ability to critically evaluate historical sources as well as other texts and media’ (Skolverket, 2000).

\textsuperscript{11} The analysis of the Russian policy data is partially reproduced from Ivanov, S., Deutschmann, M. & Enever, J. (2015). Researching language-in-education policies: Evidence from the Seychelles, Russia and the European Union. In E. Lindgren & J. Enever (Eds.), \textit{Språkdidaktik: Researching language teaching and learning} (pp. 85–101). Umeå: Umeå University. The published analysis was conducted as part of the PhD study and was solely written by the author of this thesis.
achieved. In addition, there is a separate History syllabus for each course
that states teaching objectives, generic skills to be acquired, an obligatory
minimum content, specific learning outcomes, and the total number of
teaching hours, distributed amongst the prescribed topics, leaving about 14
per cent of the teaching hours in reserve. The reserve is earmarked for the
variable part of the syllabus ‘to adopt uniquely designed approaches, use
various teaching forms and implement modern teaching methods and
pedagogical technologies’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004a).

The syllabus for the basic course allocates 70 contact hours to History in
Year 1 of upper secondary education and 70 contact hours in Year 2. The
advanced course receives a double weighting of contact hours — 140 hours
each year (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004b). At the basic level, the
reserve is 10 hours per year (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004a). In
practice, these are often used to compensate for the lessons that are
cancelled as a result of public holidays and/or frequent annual occasions
when school is closed for quarantine due to high incidence of infectious
diseases, for instance flu, among the students. The reality of these
interruptions may well be a crucial condition preventing teachers from
working with anything more than the obligatory minimum content, which is
effectively a long list of topics that focuses on the knowledge to be acquired12.

Vyazemskii (2013) characterises the Russian History education as
predominantly academic since acquisition of ‘theoretical and factual
knowledge’ is far more important than application of knowledge in everyday
life (p. 37). However, the advanced course offers more flexibility to teachers
as it allocates 20 hours per academic year for pedagogical innovations
(Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004b).

The latest national curriculum for upper secondary education was
introduced in 2012 and its gradual implementation started in academic year
2013/2014. However, schools may continue to follow the 2004 curriculum
until 2020. The relatively long period of transition offers schools time to
reconsider their approaches to the design of pedagogic practice. At the same
time, it also brings about a significant change when different conceptions of
criticality compete and exist simultaneously. A comparative analysis of these
two curricula for upper secondary school offers the potential to reveal shifts
in conceptions of criticality and the degree of significance placed on them.
This analysis is achieved through searching for words containing the root
krit (from Russian for ‘critical’) and interpreting their status in these two
documents.

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12 This, however, contradicts the set quality benchmarks for historical education that include students’ ability
to analyse and evaluate the historical events rather than the ability to remember and reproduce larger pieces
of information (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004a).
In the preamble to the older curriculum, criticality is not mentioned as an objective but referred to as a generic learning skill in information and communication activities and worded as ‘critical assessment of reliability of acquired information’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004c, p. 9). Similarly, the latest curriculum stipulates criticality as a generic learning skill, worded as a skill to ‘critically assess and interpret information from various sources’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012, p. 6). However, ‘being a critical thinker’ is also described as an objective of personality development and considered as a part of ‘an upper secondary student’s profile’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012, p. 3). This indicates phrasing a wider application of criticality, which transcends the school environment and enters the space of everyday life. Further, it is conceived not only as an ‘external’ skill that upper secondary students should master but also as an ‘inner’ characteristic of their nature. The placement of this conception in the preamble signals that working with students’ criticality development should permeate all school subjects. Although the wider application of criticality is evident in the 2004 curriculum in some subject syllabi, the status of criticality appears lower as it is linked more directly to the subject, rather than being positioned as an overarching objective. In curriculum theory terms, the framing in the latest curriculum facilitates students’ criticality development in all subjects, whereas the framing in the older curriculum makes it significantly less possible in many subjects. As the more detailed new course syllabi are not yet available, it may be informative here to consider how criticality is further interpreted at the History syllabus level in the 2004 curriculum.

Given that criticality is regarded as a skill in the curriculum, this might make it extraneous to the pedagogic practice as there is generally a strong orientation to acquisition of knowledge in History education as mentioned earlier. Further, a striking difference between the basic and advanced courses is that the former does not list criticality as a teaching objective but only as a learning outcome. According to the basic syllabus, an upper secondary student should be able (1) to critically analyse the historical source for its authorship and aims, the time of creation and its circumstances; (2) to use the skills of historical analysis to critically perceive the social information in everyday life. At the advanced level, criticality is referred to as a teaching objective, conceived as developing the ability to understand the historical context of current events and processes and critically analyse them to form an opinion on the world and to relate it to existing worldviews. In addition to the learning outcomes for the basic course, students are also supposed to critically consider the reliability of the source and critically understand the societal processes and situations (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004c,
pp. 114, 128–129). It can be seen then, that the advanced syllabus indicates a more complex conception of criticality, which emphasises its application to contemporary phenomena, assessment of reliability of information, and a scaffolding role of criticality in shaping students’ worldviews. Provided that criticality is both a teaching objective and a learning outcome at the advanced level, this presupposes that considerable time should be devoted to its development in the History classroom. Nonetheless, as in the basic syllabus, most teaching hours are likely to be assigned to cover the prescribed topics of what appears to be a strongly knowledge-oriented curriculum (see Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004b).

A further contributing factor to the framing of students’ criticality development in the Russian History classroom is the structure of the unified state exam, which provides a bigger picture of the constraints on pedagogic practice. Taking this exam is an admission requirement for those students who would like to pursue their academic careers in the socio-political field. The three-and-a-half-hour exam consists of three sections A, B, and C and its design gives a clear indication that it focuses on testing knowledge. Section A and B have multiple choice, matching, gap-filling and chronological tasks, while section C requires that students write short paragraphs, typically 50–100 words except a slightly longer last task of portraying a historical figure. In the latest sample exam paper (Federalnyi institut pedagogicheskikh izmerenii, 2013), 45 points (mainly section A and B) out of 59 are allocated for the items with the preset correct answers. In Section C, items 3–5 include many sample answers but other answers are also acceptable if the argument is supported. In item C5, students are asked to choose one of the two opposing points of views on the historical development and provide arguments to support it. Only item C6, where students are to characterise one of the four historical figures of their choice, has neither preset nor sample answers other than indicating the approximate period of their lives. The knowledge-oriented design of the exam is likely to have a washback effect of moving criticality further down on the priority list for teachers and students.

The analysis of the Russian policy documents has revealed a contradiction between the aims of education and its structure in relation to criticality. Although criticality is stipulated as a teaching objective and learning outcome in History, the frame factors of the 2004 knowledge-oriented curriculum such as time distribution, criticality conception as a skill, and ways of assessing the learning outcomes may hinder the potential for pedagogic practice to be rich in examples of criticality instruction. Many

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13 Item C2 also allows other answers than as provided, however these are restricted to the contents of the extract from the given historical document.
schools might find it necessary to allocate their local extra time resources to achieve this objective. However, how much time and effort that is devoted to this, if any at all given that schools’ accountability rests heavily upon the results of the state unified exams, might be entirely arbitrary.

**Australia**

As education in Australia is officially provided by individual states and territories, its structure differs slightly across the country. In 2008 the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* was signed by all Australian education ministers to meet ‘new demands on Australian education’ (p. 4). This declaration has been used for the development of a universal Australian curriculum. In the process of curriculum development, two streams are identifiable: the one that targets that part of curriculum that covers Foundation–Year 10 (F–10) and the one that targets Year 11–12 (Senior secondary). Currently, the Australian curriculum covering F–10 for English, Mathematics, Science and History is implemented in almost all states and territories with some modifications\(^{14}\) (*Australian Curriculum Implementation Survey*, 2012) except New South Wales where full implementation is scheduled for 2016 (*Memorandum to Principals*, 2012). Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) also developed the curriculum for 14 Senior Secondary subjects, including History. This subject together with Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics and Business constitute a learning area of the Australian curriculum, Humanities and Social Science (ACARA, 2012, p. 15). Two separate courses of History were designed: Ancient History and Modern History. However, as each state and territory has the final say in how Senior Secondary education is organised, it is anticipated that its implementation will take at least several years and the actual syllabi may take different forms. Since the data collection for the study occurred in Victoria, the state is chosen for further examination of the role and place of History at upper secondary level.

In Victoria Year 11 and Year 12 constitute non-compulsory Senior Secondary education upon successful completion of which students receive the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE\(^{15}\)) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL\(^{16}\)). VCE is the path that most students choose, which offers them a number of options upon completion, ranging from employment to tertiary studies. To earn VCE a student must satisfactorily complete at least 16 units of various subjects and levels with each unit

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\(^{14}\) In South Australia schools may opt out of the Australian curriculum in Year 10.

\(^{15}\) VCE is typically undertaken in Year 11–12 but can be started in Year 10.

\(^{16}\) VCAL is a hands-on option that does not include History as a subject and thus is not examined here.
requiring 50 hours of class time or more if decided by the school (VCAA, 2013d). This totals a minimum of 800 contact hours at the upper secondary level, no maximum is set though and students may take as many units as they like. At the time of data collection, there were eight History courses available for the students within VCE: Applied history in the local community, Conquest and resistance, Twentieth century history, Koorie history, People and power, Australian history, Renaissance Italy, and Revolutions; none of which are compulsory. These courses consist either of one or two units in different combinations: Unit 1, Unit 1–2, Unit 2 and Unit 3–4 (VCAA, 2014, p. 15). It is apparent from the policy documents that History courses that cover Units 3–4 (Australian history, Renaissance Italy, and Revolutions) have a higher status compared to others as their assessment is supervised by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the score is used to calculate Australian Tertiary Admission Rank. In 2016 these eight upper secondary History courses in Victoria were substituted by six courses of which a half are new courses (Ancient History: Unit 1–2; Ancient History: Unit 3–4; Early Modern History: Unit 1–2), the other half are reviewed courses (Twentieth Century History: Unit 1–2; Australian History: Unit 3–4; Revolutions: Unit 3–4) (VCAA, 2013b, p. 11)

Overall, History is in a weak position in the upper secondary Victorian school as the subject is optional at the non-compulsory level of education.

**Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design: History** (VCAA, 2004) states no prerequisites for taking Units 1, 2, and 3. However, students are required to have completed Unit 3 to enrol on Unit 4. The Study Design provides a full and detailed description of the units and allocates at least 50 contact hours to each unit (ibid., p. 8). The description includes areas of study of the unit, its outcomes (key knowledge and skills) and assessment procedures. It is followed by a chapter *Advice for teachers* which offers weekly planning of the unit, learning activities for each outcome accompanied by detailed examples of activities, assessment tasks for each outcome as well as a list of suitable resources. All these provide a reliable but rigid structure for History teaching and learning in Victorian upper secondary History classroom.

In respect of approaches to criticality in the Australian educational policy documents, at the national level it is conceptualised as critical thinking, which goes hand in hand with creative thinking, and regarded as a general capability across all subjects (ACARA, 2012, pp. 15–16). Capability here is understood as ‘encouragement of skills and learning dispositions or tendencies towards particular patterns of intellectual behaviour’ (ACARA,

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17 The current six History courses are presented in Figure 5.
This terminology is reminiscent of the approach to criticality in the latest Russian curriculum as a feature of an upper secondary student’s profile and signals that criticality is not only something the student does (skill) but also how the student is (disposition/tendency). Students are encouraged to be ‘broad, flexible and adventurous thinkers’, strategic planners, be aware of their learning and display ‘intellectual perseverance and integrity’. As a skill criticality involves recognising/developing an argument by using evidence and drawing conclusions as well as using information to solve problems (ibid., pp. 1–3). In curriculum theory terms, regarding criticality as a general capability presupposes that it should be developed in all subjects.

The new History syllabi for upper secondary school (Ancient History and Modern History) are to be used by the states and territories in designing their respective History syllabi. The syllabi stress continuity of the conceptions of criticality across all years of schooling and consider critical and creative thinking as ‘integral to the historical inquiry process’ (ACARA, 2014a, 2014c). Also, they both promote criticality as a subject specific skill of critical use of sources, which could be compared to source criticism in the Swedish policy documents. For assessment purposes, criticality is conceptualised as a skill required to achieve grade A\(^\text{18}\) that involves critical evaluation of reliable and useful sources as well as critical evaluation of alternative historical interpretations and representations (ibid., Achievement Standards). However, there are intriguing differences in how the rationale and aims of critical thinking in Ancient and Modern History are formulated. The former emphasises criticality as being able to see different perspectives, give different interpretations and contest accepted views, whereas the latter stresses criticality as a means to participate in contemporary debates (ACARA, 2014a, 2014c). In other words, there is no mention in the syllabus for Modern History about criticality as challenging the taken-for-granted knowledge. This leaves little chance that Modern History teachers will allocate time to criticality as scrutinising the dominant narrative, although students are supposed to develop ‘a critical perspective on received versions of the past’ (National Curriculum Board, 2009, p. 5) and ‘increasingly sophisticated understanding of the [...] conflicting perspectives of the past’ (ACARA, 2014c). However, since these syllabi will be reinterpreted at the territories and states’ level, it remains to be seen whether this tendency will be transferred\(^\text{19}\).

\(^{18}\) Grade A is the highest grade that a student can receive. Grades range from A to E.

\(^{19}\) In Victoria, this work was scheduled to be completed in 2015 and be ready for implementation in 2016. The new History study design in Victoria that came into effect on January, 1 2016 is out of scope of this study as it
The Victorian History syllabus in place at the time of data collection lists criticality as one of its aims but conceptualises it exclusively as a skill of meaning making from historical evidence (VCAA, 2004, p. 7). In essence, this Victorian History syllabus has no trace of the wider approach to criticality that is evident in the draft of the Australian curriculum. In addition, this need is not identified in the policy paper on the reform of Senior Secondary Pathways in Victoria. The paper only mentions that an online test in critical thinking is to be developed (VCAA, 2013c, p. 7). This could be contrasted with the syllabus of so-called Extension History, an advanced optional course in New South Wales. According to Parkes and Donnelly (2014), Extension History is specifically designed for keen upper secondary students to go beyond ‘the content-focused mandatory history curriculum’ and aims for ‘a critical consciousness’ to emerge and assist ‘its possessor to navigate the complex terrain of socio-cultural life’ (pp. 127, 130).

The examination of the Australian policy documents indicated that a lot of changes are to come. In an attempt to ensure quality, equity and transparency of Australia’s education system, the new national curriculum is being gradually implemented but organisation of upper secondary education will still remain the primary responsibility of the states and territories, who have a final say in what courses to include. As a result, only one of the proposed History courses (Ancient History) was introduced in Victoria in 2016, whereas Modern History is not available as an individual course. Topics of Modern History are currently included in a number of different courses. Given the earlier identified controversy of the approaches to criticality in the Modern History syllabus, it remains to be seen how the issues of contestability and historiography, which are meant to counter viewing the past as unproblematic (ACARA, n.d.), will be addressed in History syllabi in different states20. In the Victorian educational policy at the time of data collection, criticality was regarded as a skill of meaning making from historical evidence, i.e. something one can learn to do. The national curriculum conceptualises criticality as a generic and subject specific skill and also as a disposition, i.e. how one is. However, for assessment purposes criticality is seen only as a skill. Perhaps, this reflects an endeavour to resolve the conflict between a trend in education to ‘measurise’ learning as seen from the increasing importance of PISA and other international tests seeking to compare students’ attainment levels and

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20 Interestingly, the current VCE History design states specifically that students are not required to study historiography but instead should be able to describe, explain and evaluate historical interpretations (VCAA, 2015, p. 10).

falls outside the data collection period. However, a quick look at the design suggests that the policy-makers preferred to avoid the term criticality in the latest History study design (see VCAA, 2015).
the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of nondiscrimination for what people are.

**Comparative analysis of policy**

Comparison of policy from various contexts has been present in academia for over hundred years and has been often used and misused by the policy makers. This is also the field from which educational comparativists emerged. Although compelling evidence has been collected that teaching and learning transactions and unique experiences of the people involved are equally essential to understanding and explaining the pedagogic practice (Alexander, 1999a), examining a variety of policies serves several important functions. It illuminates the policy formation, suggests why policy implementation is a success or a failure, demonstrates alternatives to the home policies, as well as warning against the pitfalls associated with particular measures (Phillips, 1999, p. 11). Comparative policy analysis may also contribute to a finer and more informed interpretation of similarities and differences in the classroom discourse and teachers’ and students’ perceptions in multiple national locations. However, sensitivity in interpretations and caution in drawing conclusions are required to avoid the common weaknesses of comparative enquiries.

The educational policy in Sweden, Russia and Australia (Victoria) offers a varied basis for criticality instruction. The upper secondary level of education is not compulsory either in Sweden or Australia whereas it is mandatory for the Russian students. The heavy two-year Russian schedule includes a total of contact hours almost identical to the total distributed over three years in Sweden and around three times more than the minimum in the Australian context. This indicates that Russian upper secondary students spend significantly longer time in the classroom (31–37 hours a week) and their learning is more often teacher-led than the learning of their counterparts in Sweden and Australia. Assuming that the teaching is effective and efficient, the impact of classroom encounters is greater in Russia compared to the other two countries, and less time is available for the Russian students’ learning beyond the classroom. This suggests that scaffolding criticality development in the classroom should be an important task for the Russian teachers.

At the subject level of criticality instruction, History is accorded the privileged status of a compulsory course at upper secondary level in Sweden and Russia, while it is optional in the Victorian schools. The attempts of the Australian government to introduce a compulsory course in History have so far been unsuccessful. It is evident then, that the structure
of History courses in each of the three contexts studied has followed a different logic in its formulation. Figure 5 illustrates the three structures.

**Figure 5. Structure of the History courses at upper secondary level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Australia (Victoria)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compulsory</strong></td>
<td>History 1a (50hrs) History 1b (100hrs)</td>
<td>Basic (140hrs) or Advanced (280hrs)</td>
<td>From 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History 2a (100hrs) / History 2b (100hrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History 3 (ca 100hrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optional</strong></td>
<td>Australian history (100hrs)*</td>
<td>Ancient history 1 (100hrs)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Renaissance Italy (100hrs)*</td>
<td>Ancient history 2 (100hrs)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutions (100hrs)*</td>
<td>Global empires (100hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied history in the local community (50hrs)</td>
<td>Twentieth century history (100hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conquest and resistance (50hrs)</td>
<td>Australian history (100hrs)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twentieth century history (100hrs)</td>
<td>Revolutions (100hrs)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koorie history (50hrs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People and power (50hrs)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Sweden, the courses are organised as progression from a compulsory course in History to the advanced optional course through an intermediate course. The Russian students have to follow either a basic or advanced course in History according to the chosen educational programme. There is no progression implied within upper secondary education but continuity with the previous years of secondary education is evident since the same matters are dealt with at a deeper level. In Victorian schools, the students may take any number of the eight courses (six courses starting from 2016) in History, among which three have a higher status through contributing to the students’ ranking for tertiary admission (marked with an asterisk in Figure 5). Although progression is implied among some of the Victorian History courses, the students are not obliged to comply with it. As a result of the course structure, the Russian students enjoy a greater exposure to History in the classroom than their Swedish and Australian peers for the most part. At the instruction level, this could be explained by a significantly longer list of prescribed topics in the History syllabus in Russia, apart from the heavier schedule. In general, History as an upper secondary subject has a higher status in Russia compared to the other two countries as it is taught at an obligatory level of education, whereas upper secondary school is non-compulsory in Sweden and Australia. Irrespective of how criticality is defined, the above mentioned circumstances set boundaries on its instruction in each national context. In Australia, criticality instruction in History is available for a cohort of teenagers as a result of choices made in two steps: (1) continuing school education; (2) enrolling on an optional
course in History. In Sweden, the students need only to decide to continue school education at upper secondary level in order to avail themselves of criticality instruction in History; while the Russian students do not have any choice and are required to attend upper secondary school and take a course in History.

The status of criticality per se is potentially similar in the selected countries as permeating all school subjects with a reservation for Australia where the national curriculum has not yet come into effect. However, the approaches to defining criticality differ among the countries. Its narrowest conception is found in the 2004 Russian curriculum as a generic skill in assessing reliability of information. The 2011 Swedish curriculum extends this conception and regards criticality not only as assessment of information but also as an ability to use the assessed information to discuss life and values. There is, however, a limitation to the area of criticality use to the academic sphere rather than everyday life. The limitation is overcome in the 2012 Russian curriculum by including criticality in the profile of an upper secondary student. This presupposes that being a critical thinker is a characteristic of the upper secondary students exhibited at all times. As evidenced, the Swedish and Russian curricula appear to share a similar basis for the notion of criticality that is rooted in the tradition of information verification and has evolved over time. In contrast, the Australian curriculum promotes criticality as capability to build or recognise an argument by using evidence and drawing reasoned conclusions, which is strongly linked to creative thinking and complements it. The common feature that all the curricula share is a concept of criticality as critical thinking, although bringing different dimensions to its teaching and learning.

Another striking similarity of approaches to criticality is found in the policy documents at a lower level, the course syllabi. Although criticality belongs to the overarching aims of upper secondary education in all selected national contexts, its scope and focus are differentiated among the groups of students. In Sweden and Russia, the split is conditioned by the academic value — the more academically advanced an educational programme is, the more support for criticality instruction there is in the policy documents. Although criticality is referred to as an educational goal both in the Swedish overall vocational and preparatory programme policies, no teaching objective regarding criticality is set in the syllabus for compulsory History 1a1 course for vocational students. In contrast, Swedish preparatory students are supposed to engage in source criticism in the History classroom.

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21 There is currently no overarching document in Victoria similar to the national curriculum where common goals for senior secondary education are specified. Instead each subject has its own Study Design.
Similarly, the Russian syllabus for the basic course in History states criticality as an educational outcome but does not list it as a teaching objective, whereas the advanced syllabus has a complex teaching objective regarding this. The Russian teachers in Advanced History are to promote the students’ awareness of the historical context so the students are in a better position to analyse the current developments and shape their worldviews accordingly. In the Australian national syllabi for Ancient and Modern History as well as in the Swedish syllabi for preparatory and vocational programmes, the split is determined by the focus of the course. The Australian students are encouraged to be critical in different ways depending on the proximity of the historical events they are dealing with, whereas the scope of the Swedish students’ criticality varies according to their educational programme. The wording of the national syllabi for Ancient and Modern History suggest that the Australian upper secondary students are to contest the mainstream views of the distant past but to be informed citizens when it comes to current matters. In a similar fashion, the Swedish preparatory students should adopt a critical approach to the information from different sources, while the vocational students should limit their criticality to their own professional practices.

The support of criticality instruction may also be evident in the final exam in History courses, if any. In Sweden, there is no national exam in upper secondary History, while Russian and Victorian students sit final exams administered by external bodies. A brief look at the exams (Federalnyi institut pedagogicheskikh izmerenii, 2013 for Russia; VCAA, 2013a for Australia) indicates that, although different in form, they are similar in the kinds of tasks. The students have to show knowledge of history, be able to comprehend and use a historical document to build an argument, to provide a portrait of a historical figure, to evaluate a policy or a historical event as well as to provide arguments and counterarguments for a statement. However, the Victorian students are generally expected to give significantly longer responses (in the form of short and essay-like responses) than their Russian counterparts who are asked to do multiple choice tasks, provide one-word or short answers with the exception of a very few tasks. The structure of the Victorian exam appears thus to encourage criticality instruction in the History classroom for the following reasons. (1) Students are provided with an adequate examination form to demonstrate criticality

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22 As mentioned earlier, the History Study Design in place at the time of data collection promoted a unified notion of criticality as meaning making from historical evidence in all courses in History.

23 Not all Russian students are required to sit the final exam (Unified State Exam) in History but only those who need a History score for tertiary admission.

24 The written examination for the Victorian course Australian History from 2013 is taken as an example.
in any of the above-discussed definitions. (2) Examiners have evidence to assess students’ criticality according to its definition/s found in the respective educational policies. (3) Teachers are motivated to have criticality instruction as the academic success of their students rests, among others, upon criticality attainment. In contrast, History teachers in Russia might be less motivated to allocate time for criticality instruction by the structure of the final exam as students are offered very limited possibilities to demonstrate criticality in the exam. The absence of a final exam in upper secondary History in Sweden neither encourages nor discourages the teachers to have criticality instruction in the classroom.

As evidenced in the policy documents for upper secondary History education in Sweden, Russia and Australia, the notion of criticality is in the process of transformation with some open-ended questions of interpretations by the teachers and students. The policy also promotes targeted kinds of criticality with a wider scope for some groups of students and a limited scope for other groups on unclear grounds. Given the role and place of History as a school subject and the amount of attention it has received from policy makers in the recent decades, conceptions of criticality that are promoted in the classroom may impact on the processes of identity building and serve to achieve very different educational aims. In this regard, the students’ and teachers’ experiences of criticality might contribute further to a deeper understanding of what is meant by criticality in each national context and what educational aims it is likely to serve.
Interview analysis

As outlined in the philosophical foundations of the study, the knowledge about approaches to criticality in the History learning environment may be acquired through examining teachers’ and students’ experiences. The following chapter concerns the evidence from the individual teacher interviews and student focus group interviews that were conducted to access their experiences of criticality in the upper secondary schools in Sweden, Russia and Australia. To secure credibility of the interview data on criticality instruction, the perspectives of teachers and students were examined and combined in the analysis of each national context. The three sections that follow illuminate the findings of the interview analysis within each context that was correlated with the results of the respective policy analyses. Each national section is structured according to a content-based thematic approach and includes the main themes identified in the analysis. The themes are status of criticality, perceived and reported criticality instruction, criticality in diverse contexts, and criticality redefined. In the concluding section all the findings were compared to provide a transnational account of criticality based on the interviews and the policy analysis and to support the analysis of the collected classroom data.

Sweden

The findings of the Swedish policy analysis suggested that (1) criticality conception as source criticism might predominate in the History learning environment; (2) criticality instruction might have a lower priority in the Vocational and Technology programmes compared to Higher Education Preparatory ones (see Policy analysis: Sweden). As the interviews were conducted in a class that followed the Child and Recreation programme (a vocational programme), the collected data offered a chance to further problematise approaches to criticality in this setting.

The procedure for content and thematic analysis was initially conducted on data collected from the student focus group. As an initial step in the process of triangulation, this analysis was compared with that conducted during the pilot phase student focus group pursuing a Higher Education Preparatory programme in Sweden. This comparison revealed an essentially different approach to criticality in the pilot. Subsequently, it was decided to include both the pilot phase analysis of the focus group interview and the main focus group interview in the body of the main study, thus enabling a broader perspective on the Swedish upper secondary students’ experiences of criticality instruction to be taken. In sum, the analysed data included the one-hour teacher interview and the forty-minute focus group interview in the vocational class that was complemented by the one-hour pilot focus group
interview in the preparatory class (for a further contextualisation of the interviews see Study set up. Sweden: Conducting interviews, pp. 31–32).

**Status of criticality**

As outlined in the design of the interview guide, the initial questions concerned the core and the peripheral features of History teaching and learning. The focus of the responses in the teacher and student interview differed. While the students chose to talk about the topics they dealt with in History sessions, for example the World Wars, the teacher concentrated on the goals of History education, as reflected in the following extract.

Lärare: [...] det är jätteviktigt här att eleverna får någon typ utav känsla för historia, att de får någon typ utav historieupplevelse. Att få liksom känna igen sig i historia […] så att historieundervisningen och läsanden av historia ska hjälpa dem att förstå sin egen livssituation […] Och naturligtvis att då samtidigt skapa förståelse för andra länder och andra kulturer, hur det kommer sig att andra […] lever på andra sätt.

Teacher: [...] this is extremely important that the students get some kind of sense of history, that they get some kind of experience of history. To make them orientate themselves in history […] so History education and studying history will help them understand their own life situation […] And naturally then to develop understanding of other countries and other cultures, how come that other people […] live in other ways.

The discussion of the core features of History teaching and learning identified no references to criticality or anything else that was later defined as that in the main study. This provided further evidence to support the hypothesis about the low priority of criticality instruction in a vocational class. In contrast to this, the pilot focus group interview conducted in the preparatory class indicated that criticality was high on the agenda for those students and the perception of criticality as source criticism emerged without being encouraged directly. In addition, the pilot focus group reported adopting different perspectives as another core feature of History teaching and learning that they later defined as criticality. The following extracts from students 1 and 2 reflect this perspective.


*Elev 2:* Jag kan känna att en ganska central del har varit […] vad historia är, typ olika perspektiv man kan se på historien och typ hur man värderar alltså historia och sådana saker.
Student 1: This [the core of History teaching and learning] has been about which sources one can rely on, quite a lot of source criticism — I have got an impression of — [...] what one can look at. Can one rely on what one looks at? Can one really rely on what is written here?

Student 2: I can feel that quite a central part has been [...] what history is, like, different perspectives and, like, how one evaluates the history and such like.

In the main interviews, the first mention of criticality only occurred in response to the direct invitation to define it. The responses indicated that the teacher, Anna, and the focus group shared a common view on criticality as questioning historical narratives for being unreliable and selective as evidenced in the responses below. Unexpectedly, the teacher did not refer to source criticism directly, although it could be argued that she described a small part of it. The students did not go any further than mentioning the term.

Lärare: Jag brukar säga till eleverna att [...] allt som står i en lärobok är ju inte sant därför att det är ju de som har skrivit en lärobok har ju också gjort ett urval av historien [...] för mig betyder det [kritiskt tänkande] att man egentligen inte kan vara säker, hundraprocentigt säker på någonting bara för att det står nerskrivet i en lärobok eller för att det är en lärare säger det. Och definitivt inte för att det står i en tidning.

Teacher: I often tell my students that [...] everything that is written in the textbook is not true because those who had written the textbook made also a selection of history [...] for me, it [critical thinking] means that you cannot really be sure, one hundred percent sure in anything just because it is written in a textbook or because the teacher says so. And definitely not because it is written in a newspaper.

Elev 1: Att man inte bara tror på allt man läser.

Elev 2: Typ ifrågasätta.


Student 1: Not to believe in everything one reads.

Student 2: Like, to question.

Student 3: And one should also remember, how do you say, the history is written by winners. It is always the loser who ends up in the shit really.

Despite similarities in the responses, there was an essential difference in what the interviewees were ready to question. The teacher emphasised that critical students were supposed to question the teaching discourse, which is
the textbooks and the teacher narrative, though she attributed more reliability to the teaching discourse compared to the mass media. The distinction Anna made between a textbook and a newspaper was based on her belief that the former usually underwent a rigorous review in the specialist community before going to press. The focus group, however, viewed the teaching discourse as completely reliable as illustrated by the following example and considered that questioning it was time-inefficient and bizarre. At several occasions the mere idea of that resulted in a laugh or a joke as illustrated in the exchange below. The students instead reported that they were at ease to question their own classmates and Internet sources.

*Elev 1: Man tror egentligen på vad Anna [namnet ändrat] säger även om hon skulle ljuga för oss så...*

*Elev 2: Det skulle vara lite roligt om hon gjorde så här.*

*Elev 3: Hela typ historia!*

*Student 1: We really believe in what Anna [name changed] says even if she lied to us so....*

*Student 2: This would be real fun if she did that.*

*Student 3: Like, the whole history!*

Given the degree of trust that the focus group placed in the teaching discourse, those examples of non-criticality that Anna reported appeared as a natural consequence. In the follow-up discussion, the teacher asserted that students are good at ‘reading the teacher’ and hypothesised that showing the knowledge of what was perceived as facts could be a strategy for low-achieving students to secure a pass in the exam. In the following extract, she also admitted that certain groups of students made her concentrate on teaching facts thus limiting their chances to a higher grade. In other words, Anna conceptualised criticality as a skill that had a high value in the current assessment guidelines but was problematic for certain groups of students to master.

*Lärare: […] och jag kallar det okritiskt därför att [...] man har kopierat min undervisning eller det jag har pratat om på lektioner eller en text i en lärobok. Att man inte gjort det till sin egen kunskap och då kan jag ... tänka asch då, här har jag misslyckats. [...] Och har man grupper, klasser som har [...] svårt att lära sig faktakunskapen [...] så blir jag som lärare [...] tydlig med den där faktakunskapen –*
detta har hänt. [...] Och så kommer man inte vidare i de här reflektionsdelarna som man ska redovisa också för att få likasom högre betyg enligt betygskriterierna.

Teacher: [...] and I call it uncritical because [...] they [students] have copied my teaching or something I have talked about in the sessions or a text in the textbook. When they haven’t internalised the knowledge I might think oh, I have failed here [...] And when you have groups, classes who have [...] difficulties in learning the factual knowledge [...] then I as a teacher [...] focus on the factual knowledge — this has happened. [...] And then they don’t develop in reflectivity that is required to get, sort of, a higher grade according to the assessment criteria.

Although the perception of criticality as advanced and valuable was confirmed in the focus group interview, the students were mainly sceptical about their own criticality in the classroom as illustrated below. In this way, criticality was attributed a status of exclusivity in this very class, which was in line with its limited role in vocational programmes as presumed in the policy analysis.


Eleven 2: Jag tror på det Anna [namnet ändrat] säger. (SKRATT)

Eleven 1: Precis, jag med liksom, känns som att man inte är så kritisk man kanske borde vara.

Student 1: Well, do you really think critically during the sessions? We don’t do that — we just listen.

Student 2: I believe in what Anna [name changed] says. (LAUGHTER)

Student 1: Exactly, me too. It feels like we are not as critical as we perhaps should be.

The perceived lack of criticality among the students was not supported in the teacher interview. Anna reported that the students had a habit of questioning the teachers, which sometimes could be excessive and even abusive, as reflected in her response below. The criticality conception as questioning turned out to have certain boundaries that might have a detrimental effect if overstepped. Although the focus group confirmed that criticality could have a negative dimension if they posed many why-questions, their concern was about the time a session would have taken in this case.

Lärare: Jag tycker att elever är ganska på hugget att liksom ifrågasätta och [...] jag tror att det hänger ihop med [...] deras kritiska fostran genom åren att ifrågasätta lärarna också. Och en del kanske det liksom har slagit över. Man vill gärna sätta dit
Teacher: I think that students are quite good in questioning and [...] I believe it has to do with [...] their critical training to also question the teachers over the years. Sometimes it is, sort of, too much. Students are willing to set the teacher up, test if they perhaps can knock the teacher off balance or make her/him not be able to answer or the like.

The negotiation of the criticality boundaries revealed a contradiction in the perceived practice of History teaching and learning. On the one hand, the teacher conceptualised criticality as questioning the teaching discourse and reported that she encouraged it. On the other hand, neither teacher nor the students reported that this was desirable if exceeded.

**Perceived and reported criticality instruction**

In the course of the interviews, the teacher and the focus group were invited to discuss the value of criticality. The interviewees attributed importance to criticality as ensuring an independent opinion but their ability to vocalise it differed. While most of the students’ responses were uncertain and rather limited, the teacher connected criticality directly with the promotion of democracy and empowerment of the students in the following extract.

Lärare: [...] värdet ligger ju i att vi måste tänka självet också. Det bottnar ju på något sätt i det demokratiska systemet att jag ska till syvende och sist och eleverna också så småningom när de blir 18 år och så få möjlighet att delta i den demokratiska processen. Demokratin kräver att vi har oppositionsbildning och kritiskt tänkande och att olika åsikter får mötas och så. Det är jätteviktigt att man tilltro elevernas förmåga att tänka och uttrycka sig och liksom dra egna slutsatser.

Teacher: [...] the value lies in the fact that we must think on our own as well. It originates in some way from the democratic system that at the end of the day I and little by little the students when they turn 18 get an opportunity to participate in the democratic process. Democracy requires that we have an opposition and critical thinking and that different opinions may compete. It is very important that we believe the students are capable of thinking and expressing themselves and, kind of, drawing their own conclusions.

In the focus group interview, the students acknowledged that they were often encouraged to think critically in the History sessions. The frequent use of the term, however, was reportedly not supported by the instruction directly. Their confusion is exemplified in the response below. Criticality for the focus group appeared to be guesswork rather than an algorithm, which perhaps made it less accessible for some students. In other words, criticality
was considered to be tacit knowledge in the teaching discourse as perceived by the students.

*Elev:* [...] på lektionerna säger väl lärarna typ när ni söker på internet kom ihåg att tänka kritiskt, det gör vi ju. Men det är inte direkt som att vi har haft sådan lektion typ hur man ska tänka kritiskt.

*Student:* [...] in the sessions the teachers tell us to remember to think critically when we search in the Internet, and that is what we do. But it is not so that we have had any session, sort of, about how to think critically.

The reported lack of criticality instruction in the vocational class in the main study was in stark contrast to the perceived practice in the preparatory class in the pilot study as anticipated in the policy analysis (see *Policy analysis: Sweden*, pp. 45–48). Although the instruction was recognised as ‘incredibly important’ by the students, the pilot interview revealed their frustration with too much attention given to criticality at the expense of factual knowledge as revealed below. This concern was indirectly supported in the teacher interview when Anna emphasised the need to learn factual knowledge prior to the possibility of being critical.

*Elev 1:* Jag tycker att det [kritiskt tänkande] har blivit lite [...] för viktigt. Det känns som att det blir ett uttömt ämne till slutet...

*Elev 2:* [...] till viss del så känner jag att [...] det [kritiskt tänkande] tar lite fokus från den faktiska historieundervisningen.

*Elev 3:* Vi måste ju ha grundläggande fakta [...] Det ligger någonting i det, motvilligt erkänner jag.

*Student 1:* I think that this [critical thinking] has become far [...] too important. It feels like it becomes an empty issue in the end...

*Student 2:* [...] to some extent, I feel that [...] this [critical thinking] shifts away the focus from the actual/factual History teaching and learning.

*Student 3:* We must know the basic facts [...] I reluctantly admit that there lies something in it [the need to know basic facts].

The interviews in the main study indicated that the focus group and the teacher had a difference of opinion on the presence of criticality instruction in the History sessions. Anna asserted that she usually posed why-questions to complement what- and who-questions. The teacher assumed that this kind of question with no pre-set answers would facilitate students’ ‘free thinking’. Apparently, the students did not perceive this as
criticality instruction, although they regarded asking ‘questions that require more explanation’ as instances of criticality when they did it themselves.

As a further method of criticality instruction, Anna listed providing an additional perspective on an event when she felt that the students had missed possible interpretations. The contextual use of the phrase ‘the teacher perspective’ below might suggest that in such cases Anna sometimes acted to include the dominant narrative in the discussion.

Lärare: När vi pratar om saker och ting som har hänt så försöker jag låta eleverna få säga hur de tänker omkring en händelse [...] Och [...] det kan ju vara så att jag utifrån mitt lärarperspektiv tycker att det kan finnas fler förklaringar också. Så kan man till det eleverna säger också tillföra ytterligare perspektiv på en händelse.

Teacher: When we talk about something that has happened, I try to let the students say what they think about the event [...] And [...] it can be that from my teacher perspective I think that there can be more interpretations. So I can bring additional perspectives to what the students have said about the event.

The findings of the Swedish policy analysis suggested that criticality might be associated with source criticism in the History learning environment. Anna reported that she had instructed students in source criticism several years ago25 but did not do that in the observed class. The teacher stressed that such sessions required thorough and time-consuming preparations, which prevented her from implementing criticality instruction as source criticism in full in the observed class. Although Anna admitted that there were ready-made units available for instruction, she expressed some scepticism about their reliability and preferred to prepare these sessions by herself as illustrated below.


Teacher: Some years ago I worked with the Ådalen shootings 31 that happened [...] outside Lunde where five people were shot dead by the Swedish military during a workers demonstration. And with the help of texts like newspaper articles, films,

25 History was not a compulsory subject in the Swedish upper secondary school at that time and had to be chosen by the students themselves, which might have resulted in generally strong motivation in students.
more fiction-like accounts, letters and so on, where people approach it from different angles, you can really illuminate how one and the same historic event appear extremely different. But it takes time to collect such different texts or accounts of the same event that happened earlier so it would become really obvious for the students. When it comes to newspaper articles, there are newspapers with different aims that publish for different goals. Then it is important to try to get different newspapers with different political agendas as well. [...] This is efficient to see how one can spin it if desired.

The teacher interview indicated that Anna had a clear instruction procedure for source criticism but never used it in the observed vocational class due to the lack of time for preparation and, perhaps, given her previous responses, due to the insufficient level of the students’ preparedness for it. The focus group confirmed the time constraint and claimed that the length of a session\textsuperscript{26} was not enough to put source criticism into practice. In addition, the teacher singled out newspapers as a source that required special precautions, as in her very first definition of criticality. While Anna was concerned with the newspaper’s political affiliations and consequently their narrative shaping, the focus group paid attention to its status, implying that the narrative of a broadsheet was a more reliable source of information compared to a tabloid newspaper.

The differences in the teacher’s intentions and the focus group’s perceptions of criticality instruction were further illuminated by an example from the session during the observation period that was referred to in both interviews. Anna planned that the students would discuss the Holocaust, consider how they could prevent it from happening in the future as well as how to mitigate its consequences. The teacher considered it a standard procedure that was universally applicable to criticality instruction. As seen in the following response, the focus group, in its turn, interpreted the task as verifying the reliability of the contradictory sources they read about the Holocaust and regarded it as an indirect criticality instruction. This discrepancy provided a useful background to analysis of the classroom data.

\textit{Elev: Vi har [...] ingen träning [i kritiskt tänkande] utan det blir när man söker fakta till olika saker [...] När vi hade [...] olika personer som hade med förintelsen, andra världskriget att göra, då fick vi [...] söka fakta [...] tänka bara: År det här sant eller är det här sant? Man har hittat två olika saker på en sida.}

\textit{Student: We don’t [...] have any training [in critical thinking] but it becomes so when we search for facts about different things [...] When we had [...] different people who were involved in the Holocaust, the Second World War, we had to [...] search for the facts [...] think like: Is this true or is that true? We have found two different things on a page.}

\textsuperscript{26} The average length of a typical session in this context was 60 minutes.
Criticality in diverse contexts

The subsequent discussion in the interviews dealt with peculiarities of criticality in various contexts. The teacher and the focus group were first invited to consider whether there were any similarities or differences in criticality that depended on the school subject. In the teacher interview, Anna chose to concentrate on two subjects, History and Social Studies, that she taught herself. The teacher reiterated the idea of selectivity of historic events that were included in the textbooks as well as the bias against the villains, which was also mentioned in the initial students’ attempts to define criticality. In other words, Anna appeared to strive to raise awareness about these issues among the students and viewed it as a way to develop their criticality in History. However, she problematised the overall status of criticality in History and rendered Social Studies as a more suitable environment for its development in the extract below.


Teacher: It is important that students clearly understand that the history we read has been selected and constructed in this very way [...] So it is obviously important that we understand that all that is written in the History textbook is not true, in so far as there is a bias [...] [Villains] are not as evil or good as it seems. [...] I feel anyway that it is in the nature of the subject that different approaches are thrashed out in Social Studies. History [is] much more [...] a subject like: it has been that way, learn it and remember for future. So I think it is easier for History to become a conservative subject.

In contrast to the teacher, the student focus group made no mention of Social Studies. Instead, the students compared History to Math and Swedish and came to the conclusion that only History was well suited for criticality development. Similar to the teacher, the focus group referred to the bias of the winner’s narrative in History. The students also reported the pattern of criticality: the longer the time distance to an event from now, the harder verification of the facts related to the event, which resembled a core principle of proximity in source criticism (cf Thurén & Strachal, 2011, pp. 14–15). At the end of this discussion shown below, History was characterised as

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27 In the sense of preserving from change and acting to maintain the status quo.
an appropriate subject to pose why-questions, which the teacher considered to be a part of criticality instruction.

*Elev 1:* Historielektionerna är väl de bästa [för att vara kritisk].

*Elev 2:* Ju närmare i vår tid vi kommer så är ju lättare att veta vad som är sant och falskt men ju längre bakåt det går ju svårare det blir [...] 

*Elev 3:* På historia kommer man ändå fråga: Hur kommer det sig att det blev så där? Varför typ?

*Student 1:* The History sessions are the best [to be critical].

*Student 2:* The closer in our time we get the easier it is to know what is true or false but the longer back in the past we get, the more harder it becomes [...] 

*Student 3:* In History you will still ask: How come it was so? Why, sort of?

The data from the pilot focus group interview suggested that the preparatory students, akin to the vocational students in the main study, considered History as a suitable subject for criticality development but for a different set of reasons. The preparatory students appeared to have difficulty in recognising how criticality could be found in the subjects like Math and Science because of their age and insufficient knowledge base. They assumed that they were too young and inexpert to be able to be critical in these subjects. History sessions, however, were reportedly well suited for criticality development at their age and helped them become ‘good citizens’, ‘interpret what is going on right now’ ‘throughout life’ (*Swedish pilot focus group interview, 04/12/2012*). As in the main teacher interview, the preparatory students compared History and Social Studies and found these subjects related but viewed criticality biased in the latter as revealed in the following response.


*Student: [*] if you critically examine, sort of, in Social Studies [*] something that is happening today, you still have something to start with, you often experience it yourself somehow. This is not exactly the same with History. You can examine, you can draw your own conclusions but it is, sort of, based on values in most cases.*

In the further discussion of criticality in various contexts, the teacher and the students were asked to reflect on its similarities and/or differences in
everyday life and History. The interviews in the main study indicated that Anna and the focus group regarded these contexts as significantly different. The teacher viewed criticality in History as a systematic approach compared to the out-of-school environment. Although Anna listed proximity, tendency\textsuperscript{28}, dependence\textsuperscript{29} that constituted three out of four core principles of source criticism\textsuperscript{30} (Thurén & Strachal, 2011, pp. 13–22), she did not use the term in the following description of her approach in History.

Lärare: Jo, det är klart, det är ju förstås [om det finns några skillnader mellan kritiskt tänkande i historielektioner och vardagen]. I vardagen där tänker man kritiskt nästan jämt eller höll jag på att säga [...] det är liksom [...] att man systematiserade historia... Alltså som historiker så har vi lärt in oss att det handlar om [...] om historien skrivas när den händer eller om den skrivs hundra år efter att saker och ting har inträffat så närheten och tendensen och beroendet och vems och i vilket syfte skriver man den här historien. Är det någon som betalar mig för att skriva det här eller? Och då blir ju den historiekritiken mera [...] strukturerad.

Teacher: Yes, definitely, Of course, it is [about whether there are any differences between critical thinking in History sessions and everyday life]. In everyday life where you think critically almost all the time or what I was to say [...] it is like [...] history was systematised [...] That is as historians, we have learned that it is about... if the history is written when it is happening or if it is written a hundred years after something happened, so proximity and tendency and dependence and in whose and what interests this history is written. Is there anyone who pays me to write this, or not? And then the history criticism becomes more [...] structured.

The focus group agreed that criticality in the out-of-school environment had some distinctive features. The students reported the absence of external motivators of criticality in everyday life in contrast to History sessions where they were often encouraged to think critically in various tasks. This resulted in a discussion of whether they were critical ‘automatically’ or not. The other peculiarity concerned the assessment of the reliability of information that depended on its source. In cases where the source was not personally known, reliability was dependent on the level of education: the more academic merits the person had, the more reliable the person was. When the source was known, the personal relations and knowledge of his/her character impacted on the degree of criticality towards the presented information. In addition, the focus group asserted that it was easier to collect information from another source when they dealt with events in everyday life because of their proximity in time. Judging by the following response, it appeared that

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\textsuperscript{28} Motivation for providing a bias.

\textsuperscript{29} Credibility of information confirmed by independent sources.

\textsuperscript{30} The fourth core principle of source criticism is authenticity (Thurén & Strachal, 2011, p. 13).
Criticality in everyday life was conceptualised as finding a reliable source of information that then could be trusted.


_Student: This is not the same critical thinking when you think about the present time and the Second World War. It happened so long ago. For example, when you find an article in Aftonbladet now you can find the answer somewhere else in most cases or someone else has heard how it really was. But it is quite difficult when you think how long ago it [WWII] happened. So there is no one I can ask who has experienced that._

In the pilot study, the preparatory students shared the view of the participants in the main study that criticality differed inside and outside school, a viewpoint which supported its context-dependence. In the following responses, the pilot focus group gave further evidence of the perceived requirement to be critical in school and doubted that they were equally critical in their everyday life.

_Elev 1: Då [i skolan] har man som ett krav på sig att vara kritisk. Jag tror att man är kritisk på fritiden men jag tror inte att du i samma mån och samma motivation liksom kritiskt utvärderar all information du får utanför skolan._

_Elev 2: Jag tror ändå i skolan så är det mera [än hemma] [...] man [...] kollar._

_Student 1: [In school] you are required to be critical. I think that you are critical in your spare time but I don’t think that one critically evaluates all information to the same degree and with same motivation outside school._

_Student 2: I still think that one is more alert to this in school [than at home]._

The comparison of the data from the pilot and main focus group interviews revealed that the preparatory students perceived a negative dimension of criticality in everyday life as reflected below. Dealing with friends actualised a conflict between personal interests/comfort and ‘the absolute truth’. The need to identify oneself with friends could make one ‘switch your brain off’ as the pilot focus group put it.

_Elev 1: Ibland sätter jag [...] bekvämligheten före kanske den absoluta sanningen._

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31 Aftonbladet is a national newspaper.
Elev 2: [...] istället tänker man subjektivt och tar kompisens sida.

Elev 3: Vardag går inte ut på att kritisk granska efter alla kriterier hela tiden [...] Det är ok att släppa ibland.

Student 1: Sometimes I value [...] comfort more than perhaps the absolute truth.

Student 2: [...] instead you think subjectively and take the friend’s side.

Student 3: Everyday life is not about critically examining to meet all criteria all the time [...] It is ok to let it go sometimes.

As a development, the conception of criticality as undesirable and taking too much effort emerged. The preparatory students described ‘taking in information unfiltered’ as ‘liberating’ in everyday life. To justify this perception, the pilot focus group emphasised a threat to their well-being as evidenced in responses 1, 2, 3 below. However, student 4 was of another opinion and viewed criticality not as a threat but as the natural order of things and a habit.

Elev 1: [...] jag skulle inte orka det här.

Elev 2: Jag tror inte att man klarar av [...] 

Elev 3: Jag tror inte att jag hade mått bra [...] 


Student 1: [...] I wouldn’t manage this.

Student 2: I don’t think you can handle [...] 

Student 3: I don’t think I would have felt good [...] 

Student 4: [...] this [critical thinking] is still something that works naturally afterwards. I think you do it more than one actually believes.

**Criticality redefined**

At the end of the interviews in the main study, the teacher and the focus group were invited to define criticality anew. This served to provide the interviewees with an opportunity to recap on their conceptions of criticality and refine their understandings. In her response, the teacher first reinforced the conception of criticality as questioning but then introduced a model of criticality instruction that she called ‘the analysis model’. Anna
emphasised that the model was better suited for Social Studies as the subject dealt with the present time but could be used in History with a modification as evidenced below. The modified instruction served reportedly preventive and alleviating functions: (1) to make sure that new tragedies would be averted in the future; (2) the negative effects of the old tragedies would not linger.

Lärare: Att ifrågasätta sanningar, sådant som någon påstår är sant och rätt. [...] kritiskt tänkande tror jag handlar mycket om att se, titta på konsekvenserna. Vi brukar ju arbeta med det vi kallar för analysmodellen [...] När man [...] tar ett historiskt problem, man kan ju liksom spekulera omkring [...] föreslå vad man skulle ha gjort annorlunda för att inte skulle hända det här [...] Men man kan ju inte de facto förändra det som har hänt [...] för att liksom använda tänkandet för framtiden. Så man kan ge eleverna uppgiften att fundera: om du hade varit med i den här situationen [...] var hade man kunnat bryta den här processen och få den annorlunda. [...] Men sen kan man också även med historieuppgifter idag försöka titta på vilka effekter har den här händelsen fått, vilka konsekvenser den har fått och där kan man ju fortfarande vidta åtgärder mot dåliga effekter som historien har, har gett.

Teacher: To question the truths, something that someone claims to be true and right. [...] critical thinking, I think, is much about seeing, looking at the consequences. We usually work with what we call the analysis model [...] When you [...] deal with a historic issue, you can sort of speculate, [...] suggest that you could have done something differently not to let this happen [...] But you cannot change de facto what has happened [...] to sort of use the thinking for the future. So you can give the students the task to consider: If you had been involved in that situation [...] when would you have been able to stop the process and make it different [...] But then you can also use the tasks in History to try to examine what effects this event has had, what consequences it has had and there you can still take measures against the bad effects that the event has had.

Similar to the teacher, the focus group restated the importance of questioning in their conception of criticality and its context-dependence as demonstrated in response 1 and 2 below. The scarce attempts to connect criticality to source criticism during the interview were supported in response 3, which suggested that the student was aware of a possible bias in the information (cf principle of tendency in Thürén & Strachal, 2011, pp. 18–22).

Eleven 1: Tänka själva, var kritisk mot eller ifrågasätta, viktigt att ifrågasätta – det ska man alltid göra.

Eleven 2: Just i skolan känns det som att det är mycket det tänkandet och ifrågasätta och leta fler källor än bara en.

Eleven 3: Att man tänker på vad man tror själv eller låter vettigt och vad man har för källor och underlag, och allting – vem det är som säger någonting.
Student 1: Think on our own, be critical towards or question, important to question — we shall always do this.

Student 2: It feels there is much of this thinking and questioning and looking for more sources than one.

Student 3: To think about what you believe yourself or what sounds reasonable and what sources and data you have, and everything — who it is who says something.

The analysed interview data suggested that the realities of criticality instruction in the Swedish upper secondary school were complex. The accounts revealed a considerable variation in the criticality conceptions and the perceived practice of its instruction between the teacher and the students in the main study. The responses of the interviewees indicated though that both the focus group and the teacher conceptualised criticality as a skill that is subject- and context dependent. The most common conception of the skill was questioning, that is approaching the information with scepticism. While Anna considered questioning the teaching discourse as a clear sign of criticality, the focus group found this inappropriate and preferred to stay in the comfort zone of questioning their classmates. In effect, what the students could question were the instances when someone in the class attempted to question the teaching discourse. Such a situation might create favourable conditions for the teaching discourse to thrive, which potentially leads to an unproblematised view of history as a single interpretation of an event as presented in the classroom or textbook.

The reasons behind the focus group’s reluctance to question the teaching discourse were reportedly the teacher’s authority as a person who was highly educated in the field and the undesired effect of impeding the session. The teacher interview, however, indicated that there might be further roots. Anna expressed concern that History tended to be a conservative subject where students were supposed to rather learn how it was than problematise. In combination with Anna’s observation that the students were good in reading the teachers, the conservative nature of History might have led to some confusion about the boundaries of criticality among the students. Their confusion might have been aggravated if they had witnessed the practice of misusing criticality to embarrass teachers, which Anna described and understandably disapproved of. Furthermore, the responses in the focus group interview were short, for the most part one-sentence long, which evidenced that the students were not prepared to articulate their views on abstract ideas such as criticality or perhaps were not used to providing detailed accounts. This suggested that the boundaries of criticality might be particularly vague for the focus group that consisted of the vocational
students. In contrast, the responses in the pilot focus group of the preparatory students were on average significantly longer and contained more advanced lines of argument.

In the main study, the teacher and the focus group appeared to reject the hypothesis of the policy analysis that criticality would be realised as source criticism in the History classroom. The teacher reported the lack of time to prepare such instruction and also implied that not all vocational students were cognitively mature enough to embark on tasks in criticality. The focus group, in its turn, expressed uncertainty over what they were supposed to do when encouraged to be critical at various occasions and asserted that they lacked the instruction. However, the discussion of the peculiarities of criticality in History as compared to other subjects revealed that its conception as source criticism was not completely absent. The teacher and, to a lesser degree, the focus group referred indirectly to the core principles of source criticism but the lack of both reported and perceived instruction made this conception much weaker in the vocational History classroom than anticipated. In contrast, the data of the pilot group interview demonstrated that source criticism permeated preparatory History sessions. The interview data also indicated a difference in the function of factual knowledge in the preparatory and vocational classes. While this type of knowledge was viewed as necessary to achieve a higher level of criticality in the preparatory class, an emphasis on factual knowledge was reported as necessary to enable students to be critical at all in the vocational class. The latter led to the kind of simplification of the History syllabus that Ledman (2015a) highlighted in her teacher interview study claiming it would hinder vocational students’ criticality development (pp. 33–34). Thus, the reported absence of source critical tasks in the vocational classroom made this conception of criticality exclusive to preparatory students and provided further evidence of the split between the two main educational tracks that was identified in the policy analysis.

Another conception of criticality found in the interviews was ensuring an independent opinion, an ability which the teacher viewed as a safeguard for a democratic society. Given that Anna considered Social Studies as a more suitable environment for criticality development, it might be argued that she connected this conception of criticality to one of the goals in education for citizenship, that is to create conditions for good citizens to emerge as a result of schooling. The achievement of this goal might be, however, complicated by the focus group’s reported reluctance to question the teaching discourse and their somewhat simplified strategy of trusting a single source that was judged reliable in the out-of-school environment. The reported practices, if they were representative of the participating vocational
class, could potentially limit the opportunities for the students to form a fully independent opinion. The design of the actual study that included the analysis of the classroom data made it possible to only shed light on how this and other conceptions of criticality were realised in the observed vocational History sessions.

**Russia**

The policy analysis has identified some potential pitfalls in implementing criticality instruction in the History classroom, especially for those classes that follow a basic course in History (see Policy analysis: Russia, pp. 48–52). Collecting interview data in one such class gave an opportunity to find further evidence to support the results of the policy analysis. Although this constituted a limitation since the data allowed me only to speculate on the realities of the advanced course, this sample of students was more likely to be comparable to the Swedish vocational students. The following analysis was based on the data that were collected in the one-hour teacher interview and the one-hour focus group student interview in the upper secondary class in North-Western Russia (for a further contextualisation of the interviews see Study set up. Russia: Conducting interviews, pp. 34–35).

**Status of criticality**

Two of the findings in the policy analysis were that (1) criticality was mentioned as a learning outcome but not set as a teaching objective in the syllabus for the basic History course; (2) the syllabus was knowledge-driven. The consequences of these might be traced directly to the differences in the following responses in the interviews, when I asked the interviewees what they considered of central importance in History teaching and learning.

Учитель: На мой взгляд, это прежде всего интерес к истории, [...] уважение к своей истории прежде всего, а у [...]. Любовь к истории, знать историю, уважать, потому что [...] многие ошибки в истории, вот там вот войны начались из-за незнания истории.

Teacher: In my opinion, first of all, interest in history, [...] respect for our own history first and foremost, and also for [...] world history [...] To love history, know history, and respect it since [...] many mistakes in the past like starting wars were made because of ignorance of the history.

Ученик: Я считаю, что [...] нужно привлекать учащихся в какие-то небольшие дискуссии. Я считаю, что так они будут лучше усваивать информацию, у них выработается, может, какое-то логическое мышление. Соответственно они будут и лучше понимать историю и уметь делать выводы, а это на мой взгляд самое основное, что история должна нам преподавать в школе.
Student: I think that [...] it is necessary to involve students in group discussions. I believe that this way they will acquire information faster, they will develop, perhaps, some kind of logical thinking. And as a result, they will understand the history better and will be able to draw conclusions, which is, in my opinion, the most important aspect that we have to learn in History sessions in school.

The teacher articulated the need for knowledge of history and emphasised the disastrous consequences of the lack thereof thus reinforcing the discourse of knowledge that was apparent in the policy documents. The student, who also mentioned the knowledge component, put instead emphasis on understanding of history and ability to draw conclusions, which later would be defined as a component of criticality in the interviews. However, when answering the follow-up questions, Irina Dmitrievna (pseudonym) elaborated her view of the core features of History.

Teacher: [...] nowadays [...] because of the unified state exam, there is an urgent need for students to know terminology, concepts, definitions. But I think that it takes too much time that could be spent on [...] so students [...] could learn to reason, think, so they could ... orientate themselves in history, [...] form their own opinion, their own point of view, their own world view. These should be crucial.

The teacher contextualised the realities of History teaching and learning under the pressure of the high stakes unified state exam. Irina Dmitrievna appeared to view the design of the exam as one of the major hindrances to what she called ‘crucial’ for students and was included in her understanding of criticality as revealed in the course of the interview. In fact, the teacher not only confirmed the findings of the policy analysis but also placed what she associated with criticality instruction in a diachronic perspective. The teacher pinpointed the differences in approaches to criticality instruction depending on whether the students were taking a basic or an advanced course and assumed that only those who took an advanced course ‘really knew and understood history’, which she equated with ‘considering different points of view’. In the teacher’s opinion, this had been possible for most students in the times of the previous curriculum with more assigned contact hours.
Contrary to the teacher’s view, the students acknowledged a variety of points of view in their History sessions. There was, however, an essential difference in the nature of these points of view. While the teacher presupposed that there should be different accounts of historical events for the students to make judgements on, the students were content to evaluate one set of what they called ‘the facts’ and to form their different opinions on that set.

Student: [...] the teacher talks, for example, about the Second World War, the Great Patriotic War. We know the facts, we know what happened, and nobody tells us whether it was the USSR or Germany that did right. We are asked about our point of view, that is every student, who is more or less interested ... has his/her own point of view. And no one suppresses it, no one tries to impose the point of view. We may or may not agree with each other, but in the end every one will have his/her own opinion [...], which is very important.

The beginning of the interviews indicated that the issues of considering different points of view and freedom of judgement were high on the agenda. Although both the teacher and the students defined these issues as the core of History teaching and learning, there was a sharp contrast in their reported experiences. The students felt they were offered opportunities to develop in these aspects, while the teacher felt that the current policy discouraged her from devoting enough time to considering different points of view in her
teaching practice and thus it impeded students’ progress. In this respect, the teacher’s assessment of the situation might be deemed more accurate as Irina Dmitrievna had a long history of teaching the subject and was able to compare her own practices retrospectively. The students were, however, limited in their assessment by their single experience and often compared their sessions to ‘the Soviet times’ that they could not possibly have experienced first-hand but only had heard of.

The subsequent part of the interview revealed that the teacher and students regarded criticality as an essential part of History teaching and learning, although they had not used the term until it was introduced in the interview. This was supported by their understandings of criticality that resonated with the above-mentioned features as illustrated by the following analysis.

When I invited the teacher to define criticality, Irina Dmitrievna responded in the following way:

Учитель: Критическое мышление для меня — это [...] чтобы дети научились рассуждать, рассматривать различные точки зрения, сами представлять свои точки зрения. [...] вот как мы раньше говорили: исторически мыслить — рассуждать, предполагать, делать самостоятельно выводы, давать оценку.

Teacher: Critical thinking for me is [...] that the students learn to reason, to consider different points of view, to express their points of view. [...] as we used to say: to think historically — to reason, to presume, to draw conclusions independently, to evaluate.

The interviewee’s initial response indicated that she defined criticality in terms of a teaching objective that had been previously known to her as to teach students to think historically. The themes of independence and freedom of judgement were recurrent in Irina Dmitrievna’s descriptions of criticality:

Учитель: [...] чтобы дети могли делать собственные выводы, чтобы их точка зрения не была, как бы подобрать слово? Чтобы это была собственная точка зрения, [...] чтобы [...] не было [как раньше, когда] история была у нас идеологизированна.

Teacher: [...] so the students could draw their own conclusions, so their point of view wouldn’t be, how to put it? So it is their own point of view [...] so [...] it won’t be [as it used to be when] the history was ideology-driven.

The students also viewed criticality as a prerequisite of freedom of judgement and many of them conceptualised it as a complex skill that consisted of several subskills as evidenced in the following response.
Student: So, critical thinking is an ability of a person to evaluate the situation, to make their own judgements about the situation and to think critically, that is to be able to analyse someone else’s opinion, to break this opinion down and on this basis to form your own opinion about this issue; in other words, it [critical thinking] is mainly aimed at forming one’s own opinion.

The skill-oriented approach to criticality is similar to that in the 2004 curriculum, although the interviewees’ definitions emphasised the independence in opinion building as the core of criticality instead of assessment of the reliability of information. At the periphery of criticality, the students identified the ability ‘to understand the reasons for the actions... and why something happened’, ‘to consider the issue from different angles... to get some kind of aggregated image’ (Russian focus group interview, 23/03/2013). In addition, they showed awareness that personality as well as one’s experiences and knowledge played a role. Criticality for them is ‘necessary’ as it is ‘getting them ready for adult life’, which could be compared to the 2012-curriculum conception of criticality as a part of an upper secondary student’s profile.

Student: I understand critical thinking as forming one’s own point of view, one’s own opinion on the basis of, first of all, historical facts that we learn in the History sessions, and also, perhaps, on one’s own understanding of the issue, one’s own peculiarities of character and so on. So, in other words, not only based on facts but also on one’s own reflections that are unrelated to the issue.

The out-of-school value of criticality was further confirmed in the interview. The students found it useful in all walks of life, including family and work, using phrases such as ‘the road map to socialisation’ and a facilitator of personal development. The teacher elaborated on the theme of socialisation and drew parallels between criticality and people’s maturity as she constructed it, which she previously had referred to as a core feature of
History teaching and learning. In other words, Irina Dmitrievna appeared to connect criticality development with education for citizenship.

Учитель: [...] это [ценность критического мышления] в общем-то воспитание человека свободного, человека уважающего свою историю, свое государство, свой народ – человека воспитанного, культурного.

Teacher: [...] it [value of critical thinking] is upbringing of a free person, the person who respects his/her history, state, people — a man who is well brought-up and cultured.

Another cross-reference in the interviews was the theme of avoiding mistakes. The teacher emphasised that knowing the history and understanding the reasons behind the events would have helped to avert wars and conflicts, which she regarded as a core feature of History teaching and learning. In the student interview, criticality was allocated for the similar purpose of saving human lives, as was implied in the teacher’s response. However, while the teacher was looking backwards and was sorry the events had not been averted, one of the students seemed to look forward and attributed predictive value to criticality.

Ученик: Критическое мышление [...] помогает не только реагировать на ситуацию, но и предугадывать ее. [...] [чтобы избежать потери] такого большого количества человеческих жизней.

Student: Critical thinking [...] helps not only to react to the situation but also to foresee it. [...] [to avoid loss] of such a big number of human lives.

As evidenced in the interviews, both the teacher and students perceived age as a constraint on criticality. They agreed that upper secondary school was the appropriate stage of schooling to develop criticality. The students identified ‘juvenile maximalism’32 as a hindrance to being critical learners at an earlier age, which resembled dichotomous thinking. Despite this the teacher reported that she started exposing the students to several points of view on a historical event in earlier years of secondary school. Irina Dmitrievna’s observation was that there were usually a few students who were mature enough to grasp it.

Учитель: Вот я всегда уже и в младших классах начинаю всегда детям рассказывать, вот есть несколько точек зрения. Но в младших классах им это еще не очень-то понятно. Но я это все равно делаю для нескольких детей,

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32 An expression used to imply that until a certain age people are characterised by cognitive immaturity and a tendency to see the world in black and white.
Teacher: I always start talking with the students that there are several points of view. But in lower years they are not really ready for this. But I still do it for some students that sit there — two, three, five students, who can understand and make sense of it at this age.

With regard to the value of different points of view, the data showed that there was an indirect debate between the teacher and students. One of them maintained that ‘not certain points of view but facts should be taught in History’. He stressed that evaluation of the facts had to be left to the students. The teacher agreed that such an approach, i.e. ‘to learn history through facts’, was relevant for criticality development but she also mentioned that History textbooks that contained ‘only facts’ and documents were more suitable for optional courses and extracurricular activities rather than for regular courses. Such positioning in the curriculum provided additional evidence for the finding of the policy analysis that criticality was not likely to be prioritised in day-to-day teaching in basic History courses in the Russian upper secondary school.

**Perceived and reported criticality instruction**

Further evidence of the low priority of criticality comes from the teacher’s examples of its instruction. In the interview, Irina Dmitrievna struggled to give any examples of criticality instruction in upper secondary years from the recent past. Her descriptions of the instruction either were examples from earlier years in secondary school or were dated 10–15 years ago. According to her, she used to organise debates and hearings in the upper secondary History sessions on topics such as Gorbachev’s policies and the Russian revolution. During these the students were responsible for the session scenarios, which motivated them to consider the historical figure from different sides, compare them and come to their own conclusions. In another example of criticality instruction, which the teacher called ‘black and white’, Irina Dmitrievna used to start with an introductory session on Khrushchev’s policies. In this session she usually created a negative image of his policies and discussed it with the class. In the session after, she instead used to describe Khrushchev’s policies in a positive light and to discuss them with the class that was then divided into his supporters and opponents. After the second session, the students were sometimes given the task to interview their family members or other people who experienced the times of Khrushchev first-hand about their experiences. The results of these interviews were then brought to the discussion in the final session, where
the students arrived at their own conclusions. In sum, the teacher created
the conditions for the students to become aware that one and the same fact
could be evaluated differently, which she viewed as a component of
criticality.

In earlier years of secondary school, Irina Dmitrievna reported that she
taught the students to evaluate the events, compare them and to characterise
a historical figure. The latter example, which she could even find in her
recent teaching at upper secondary level, indicated that the teacher was
likely to interpret the corresponding task of the unified state exam (see
Policy analysis: Russia, pp. 48–52) as a way to assess students’ criticality.
There was a consensus on this task as the students also referred to it as
developing their criticality.

Despite the teacher’s limited ability to provide recent examples of
criticality instruction, the interviewed students had no difficulties in this.
They regarded the mere opportunity to express their point of view on the
reasons and consequences of some historical events as criticality instruction.
The authorisation of the teacher to use students’ wording of the reasons
and consequences was viewed as a further step in criticality development.
Another instance of criticality instruction was found in one of the recent
sessions as exemplified in the following extract.

Student: [...] there was a slide entitled ‘War results’, which was blank. So the teacher
invited us to decide on the results of the war using those facts [...] that we knew. So I
think this is an example [...] when the teacher tried to develop critical thinking in
each student. And when we had already listed the results of the war, we were shown
[...] the official point of view. So some of the results were the same, some were
different, but every one could still keep his/her own opinion.

The theme of the official point of view was particularly recurrent in
the students’ descriptions of criticality instruction. It functioned as
a benchmark of successful instruction. In the dialogic negotiation and
construction of meaning, the students refined the description of
the instruction, which in the beginning appeared to be indoctrination, as
shown in the following exchanges.
Ученик 1: [Учитель] начинает подталкивать людей к мышлению, начинает говорить какие-либо факты, [...] и которые могут нас натолкнуть на ту точку зрения, которая должна быть.

[...]

Интервьюер: Вот вы упомянули, что учитель подталкивает к какой-то точке зрения, подает какие-то факты. Вы считаете, что это можно назвать развитием критического мышления?

Ученик 1: Ну он подталкивает к формированию собственной точки зрения в первую очередь... Он дает именно факты, на основе которых ты должен сделать собственный вывод. [...] он не говорит, что он не верен, а говорит совпадает ли он с официальной точкой зрения или нет.

Ученик 2: Ну то есть это говорилось не про то, что учитель подталкивает к какой-то точке зрения, он подталкивает к тому, чтобы у тебя сформировалась своя точка зрения. Мы это имели в виду.

Ученик 3: На основе этих фактов.

Student 1: [The teacher] pushes us to thinking, gives us some facts [...] that may form the desirable point of view.

[...]

Interviewer: You mentioned that the teacher pushes you towards a certain point of view, provides you with some facts. Do you think that this is an example of criticality instruction?

Student 1: So she pushes us to form our own point of view first and foremost. She provides the facts on the basis of which, you have to draw your own conclusion [...] She doesn't say that it is wrong but says whether it coincides with the official point of view or not.

Student 2: So we didn't say that the teacher pushes towards a certain point of view but she pushes us to form our own point of view. This is what we meant.

Student 3: On the basis of these facts.

In the course of the interview, the students made a clear distinction between the facts and ‘the official point of view’, which was given in the History textbooks or mediated by the teacher, as the latter being an interpretation of the former. To independently establish causal relationship between the facts that could differ from the official point of view was regarded as an instance of criticality. The teacher was of similar opinion and identified herself and the textbook as the sources that must be questioned by
critical students, although she noted that this had not happened as frequently as she desired in the recent times.

Учитель: Ну, такие вот случаи [демонстрации критического мышления] бывают, к сожалению, сейчас в последнее время как-то реже. [...] Когда ребята [...] начинают ставить что-то под сомнение то, что я говорю или то, что они прочитали в учебнике.

Teacher: So, unfortunately, these occasions [demonstration of criticality] have occurred less often recently. [...] When the students [...] start questioning something I’m saying or something they’ve read in the textbook.

Criticality in diverse contexts
The follow-up discussion revealed the students’ awareness that the mere selection of the facts could impact on their opinions. In this regard, the teacher narrative became influential, which distinguished History from other school subjects according to the focus group.

Ученик: [...] это особенности того, как учитель преподает урок, то есть он тоже имеет какую-то точку зрения. Он ее никому не навязывает, но уже исходя из своей точки зрения и своего мнения он строит урок, может быть, немного по-другому и уже по-другому рассказывает о тех или иных событиях.

Student: [...] particularly, how the teacher gives a lesson, as she also has some point of view. She doesn’t impose it, but because of her point of view and opinion she perhaps plans the lesson a little bit differently and narrates the events differently.

The students also pointed out that ‘the history had been rewritten by the governments not only once’, which further contributed to the unique status of History as the subject where the facts could not be checked ‘either empirically or theoretically’. This made the focus group view the subject as a particularly fertile environment for criticality development. Irina Dmitrievna, who regarded the teacher narrative as a powerful motivation tool, agreed that the teacher’s interpretation of the events could influence meaning construction in History. In addition, she drew attention to the power of the authorities to include or exclude a certain textbook from the list of recommended literature for upper secondary school33 as well as to how the authors of the textbooks formulated the chapter titles. In other words, the teacher showed awareness that both the policy and the discourse

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33 The Ministry of Education and Science updates the list of textbooks that are approved for use in schools yearly. Until school year 2013–2014 the textbooks were further divided into ‘recommended’ and ‘permitted’. One of the criteria for inclusion of a textbook in the list is that the textbook develops critical thinking (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2013, p. 4).
of the teaching (including herself and textbooks) played a role in meaning negotiation and construction and the preferred choice of interpretation.

The discussion of the textbooks with the teacher gave further indication that criticality development was not prioritised and was considered as an extra-curricular activity. Irina Dmitrievna admitted indirectly that the interpretation of the events in the History textbook was necessary for regular sessions within the curriculum. She recollected an occasion when one particular History textbook by Dolutskii, which was later withdrawn, created turbulence in the historical community. The withdrawal, in her opinion, was due to a limited narrative that left too much room for interpretation. However, based on the teacher’s responses, her own reluctance to use the textbook for regular sessions was likely to be attributed to the perceived lack of time.

Teacher: [...] some years ago there was a textbook by Dolutskii. [...] It was interesting because it was factual [...] exactly [...] for critical thinking, which is learning history through facts. There were arguments, documents but the events themselves were almost never narrated. [...] there were memoirs and the like in abundance. It [the textbook] was then withdrawn and now it is nowhere to be found.

34 Here the teacher draws attention to the word choice and uses the verb ‘pick up’ to emphasise that the Bolsheviks took over power without any resistance.
But it was good to use with the students [...] after school hours, in optional courses, clubs and so on but not as a textbook.

During the teacher interview, the role of a particular textbook in the upper secondary classroom was weakened\textsuperscript{35}. Irina Dmitrievna reported that the situation with the textbooks was complicated. According to her, many students did not have either the recommended textbooks or any textbooks, some used the notes from the sessions, and some used Internet sources. The teacher also singled out a group of students who compared two or more textbooks and consulted her about differences in the interpretation of the events, which was an instance of criticality as defined by her.

Along with the nature of facts and the teacher narrative, the students identified further crucial differences for criticality development in History compared to other subjects.

Ученик: Например, на математике особенно теоремы, которые многократно доказаны, не обсуждай и не выведешь из неё собственной точки зрения [...] На истории же каждый факт можно рассматривать [...] с разных сторон.

Student: For example, in Math you cannot discuss theorems, which were proved multiple times, you cannot form your own opinion [...] In History, on the other hand, each fact can be viewed [...] from different sides.

The focus group and the teacher agreed that criticality in the Humanities and History in particular was different from that in hard sciences. The teacher also mentioned that revisions of the facts happened more often than in other subjects. In addition, one of the students emphasised that criticality in History, unlike other school subjects, had to deal with the deeds of real people, which made it very peculiar and was affected by the learner’s worldview. This interconnection of criticality and worldview provided further evidence of circulation of the criticality conception as a learner’s inner characteristic found in the 2012 curriculum.

Ученик: [...] на истории мы изучаем поступки других людей, и главными героями вот этих уроков являются реальные люди, это не молекулы, не клетки, не логарифмы или еще что-нибудь [...] И уже мы исходя из своего мировоззрения [...] будем оценивать, правильно они поступили или неправильно.

Student: [...] in History we learn about other people’s deeds and the protagonists of these sessions are not the molecules, cells, logarithms or something else but the real

\textsuperscript{35} At the time of the interview, there were 41 History textbooks (recommended and permitted) in the official list of the textbooks for upper secondary education (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2011a, b). In addition, it should be noted that no textbook was directly used or mentioned in the classroom during the observation period.
people [...] And on the basis of our worldview [...] we are judging whether they did right or wrong.

Another interconnection of criticality and students’ individual preferences was referred to in the teacher interview. Irina Dmitrievna reported that success of advanced forms of criticality instruction such as hearings on policies or major historic events was conditioned by the students’ own initiative and involvement. The attempts to reuse previously designed lessons often led to resistance from new students and, as a consequence, reduced efficiency of instruction. The limited opportunities to replicate a session reinforced the curricular time constraint on the frequency of criticality instruction, which was, according to the teacher herself, possibly aggravated by her age-related shrinking stamina to go the extra mile.

At the end of the interviews, the teacher and the focus group were invited to discuss whether criticality was any different in the out-of-school environment. Instead of focussing on similarities/differences, Irina Dmitrievna remembered the occasions when instances of criticality in everyday life entered the school space on students’ own initiative. The teacher highlighted the role of criticality in protecting freedom and was pleased that the students were not apathetic about developments in civil society and had their own opinions on them.

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36 This alludes to the biggest rally since the 1990-s that was held in Bolotnaya square on December 10, 2011 in the framework of 2011 Russian protests against alleged falsifications of the election results.
The student focus group were divided over peculiarities of critical thinking in the everyday context. Most of the students assumed that personal involvement was an essential difference between criticality in History and the out-of-school environment as illustrated by the response below. The opportunity to have a temporal and emotional distance from the events in History sessions was viewed as providing fairer conditions for objectivity compared to everyday life. However, one of the students was unwilling to discriminate between these contexts and regarded criticality as a skill that fits all situations with only slight differences.

Student: Of course, there is a difference because what you have to evaluate in everyday life and what you base your point of view on concern you, your relatives or your friends directly. So, if in History we learn about something that is not directly connected with us so we can look at it as a third party, in this case you are an immediate participant of some event. And because of that your point of view could be totally different from that you might have had if you simply were an observer.

Criticality redefined
As revealed in the Russian interview data, the conceptions of criticality were refined both by the teacher and the students. These conceptions were often interconnected and complemented each other and had all included the formation of an independent opinion. There was, however, a major difference in the ideal model of criticality in the teacher and focus group interviews. Irina Dmitrievna emphasised the need to introduce several points of view about an event to develop students’ criticality. This might have to do with her awareness of difficulty in separating the selection of facts presented from the point of view. The policy constraints such as knowledge-driven curriculum in combination with limited teaching hours and the form of the high-stakes state exam discouraged her, however, from implementing criticality instruction in the appropriate way. For her the golden age of criticality instruction was in the 1990s when she had considerably more teaching hours allocated for the course. According to the teacher, the complicated situation with criticality instruction was not true for all schools, particularly not for those where History was taught at advanced level.
Although the focus group saw the inherent connection between the selection of facts and the point of view, the students were sanguine about the possibility of arriving at different conclusions on the basis of the same facts. They adopted a compensatory strategy of considering the teaching discourse, the teacher and textbooks narrative, as ‘the official point of view’. The mere presence and use of the term in their responses indicated that the focus group were alert to the need for questioning it, which the teacher supported. Irina Dmitrievna viewed such an approach to the teaching discourse as a safeguard against a relapse into an ideology-driven society. Judging by her responses, she was cautious about implementing a unitary conception of history and was an adherent of multiple-perspectives and even conflicting narratives in history. However, conditioned by the policy constraints, she admitted that there was a need for a single perspective in the teaching discourse to have a fair chance of covering all the prescribed topics in the curriculum. This contradiction made her encourage those students who could spot any discrepancies in historical narratives on their own and engage them in extracurricular activities, for example the educational Olympiads\textsuperscript{37} in History.

The difference in the ideal model of criticality rendered the experiences of its instruction contradictory. While the teacher reported not devoting any considerable time to that, the focus group identified numerous occasions of such instruction. The students compared their experiences to the mythological Soviet times and expressed confidence that their History sessions were not ideology-driven as they used to be then. The perceived lack of explicit indoctrination practices and possibility of having one’s own opinion were considered both as the guarantee and the evidence of criticality instruction. Although Irina Dmitrievna confirmed these claims, she considered that they were not enough for criticality instruction to take place and could identify rare occasions for developing students’ criticality. In other words, she regarded the described practices as prerequisites for criticality instruction but not as examples of it. Working under curricular constraints, the teacher reported that she prioritised a form of criticality instruction that was identical to the task in the unified state exam where students were supposed to characterise a historical figure.

The interview data showed that similar to the 2012 curriculum criticality was conceptualised both as a skill and a personality trait. As a skill, criticality was attributed the following cognitive processes: reasoning, comparing, characterising, evaluating and drawing conclusions. In almost all responses, comparison and conclusion were the invariant elements in the core of

\textsuperscript{37} An annual contest for students in different school subjects where they are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
criticality (formation of an independent opinion), which the teacher considered not only as an important teaching objective in History but also as an objective in education for citizenship. Further, criticality was regarded as a context-dependent skill, for which History offered an appropriate environment. Unlike other subjects, where the interviewees struggled to identify the facts they could question, or as in everyday life, where personal involvement compromised judgement, History provided ample opportunity to evaluate the actions of the real people, where the facts could and had to be questioned and compared. However, the application range of criticality was not limited to History sessions but also included the out-of-school environment, particularly the political context. The ultimate goal of criticality could be summarised by the following response in the teacher interview.

Учитель: [...] чтобы они [ученики] могли сами отделять, что для них является правдой, а что – ложью.

Teacher: [...] so that they [students] could decide for themselves what is true for them and what is false.

The relation between criticality and the personality of its bearer differed in the focus group and teacher interviews. Irina Dmitrievna viewed criticality as a trait that characterises a good citizen, who was cultured and independent in making judgements. In her understanding, criticality as a disposition might be regarded as a final product of History upper secondary education, when criticality as a skill has been transformed into a personality trait. The focus group considered criticality and personality as interrelated rather than the former being a part of the latter. The role of a personal worldview was judged to have an influence on what someone was critical about and how far criticality could go. Such an approach allowed multiple forms of criticality to co-exist and be legitimate. This and earlier mentioned discrepancies between the teacher’s and students’ reported experiences on the one hand, and similarities between the findings of the policy analysis and the reported practices on the other hand, provided an interesting background to approaching the classroom data.

**Australia**

While in Sweden and Russia, the educational policy is regulated at the national level, each state in Australia has a final say in formulating the educational policy. Thus, the differences in approaches to criticality at the national and state levels are expected. In the current version of the Australian national policy, criticality is defined as a skill of
recognising/developing an argument by using evidence and drawing conclusions as well as using information to solve problems at the overarching curriculum level and complemented by critical use of sources at the History subject level. At the time of data collection, the Victorian History study design narrows criticality down to a skill of meaning making from historical evidence. In the following section, the collected interview data in Victoria, Australia is analysed. The data consisted of three interviews that were conducted with a class that took a course in Australian history in the state of Victoria. This included a forty-minute teacher interview, a thirty-minute individual student interview, and a thirty-five-minute focus group Skype-interview with three students. The data offered an opportunity to explore approaches to criticality in a History course that has a high status due to the external examination. Results from this external exam count towards a total achievement score that qualifies a student for entry to higher education and are included in the student Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (for a further contextualisation of the interviews see Study set up. Australia: Conducting interviews, pp. 37–38).

**Status of criticality**

As in the other two national contexts, the beginning of the interviews aimed at examining what the teacher and the students considered central and peripheral in History teaching and learning. The teacher and student interviews indicated that History was considered a school subject that aimed at understanding the current situation through understanding the past as reflected in the following interview extracts.

*Student: In school? Again probably just having ... gaining that knowledge to put things into perspective about today and who we are, I just think it is a vital thing. [...] And I think it is important that we understand what's happened in the past [...] not to make the same mistakes.*

*Teacher: Central importance for me is understanding our society is the way it is now so I think anything I teach in History I try to connect to the students' experience and my experience now. And maybe I use the teaching of History to explain a lot of the values, beliefs, attitudes, things like that that we hold now. So I guess, I think the human experience is on the journey I guess. And what I teach in History explains part of that journey. I think that's central.*

The interviewees promoted a dynamic picture of history and stressed the interrelation between the past and the present. The teacher, Annie (pseudonym), expanded on that emphasising that the value system a society shares is rooted in its history, which makes the school subject of History an explanatory one. As evidenced below, she also emphasised that studying
development over time through a narrative was as important as putting an event in its context.

Teacher: What I think is downplayed a little bit is the power of the story of history so the actual narrative. For me it’s really central [...] I think that’s what students that love history fall in love with history about, it’s a story, it’s the story of the journey ... that narrative needs to fly through, I think, the teaching of history. So looking at primary sources without looking at the story is to me ... disconnecting and not very engaging.

The responses in the student interview suggested that the kind of narrative that might be preferred would include the process of nation building with a focus on the achievements rather than on some negative parts of the history. Although the student admitted that learning about the latter had to be done, she felt uncomfortable with it as exemplified in the following.

Student: Probably, the wars and everything, the conflict is not as important as say the progression of culture and everything so it’s important but focussing on more positive parts of history in how we progressed as a nation so I feel that is more important [...] I don’t like hearing about what happened with the aboriginal people. I’m kind of disgusted in that it actually happened and I feel so much responsible, so for me learning about that what’s occurred — I feel quite negatively about it, I don’t like learning about it as much but I think we have to.

In contrast with the face-to-face interviews, there was a static picture of history in the Skype interview as shown below, and the students considered History a descriptive subject that consists of individual items rather than a development over time.

Student 1: What it was like back then.

Student 2: You really need to know the facts, crucial dates and events.

The beginning of the interviews demonstrated that neither the teacher, nor the students mentioned criticality as an important goal of History teaching and learning. The interviewees also did not refer to criticality as defined in the examined Australian policy documents or as defined by themselves at a later stage of the interviews. In addition, the individual student interview revealed that learning the history of the disenfranchised aboriginal people might invoke a feeling of disgust to the point that opting out of this might be welcomed. Although the student acknowledged the importance of this part of History, the burden it meant was perceived too heavy to bear and thus best avoided. All the above tentatively suggested that
criticality was not among the priorities that were explicitly discussed and promoted as an essential part of History teaching and learning in the Australian data collection class.

When I invited the interviewees to define critical thinking, they indicated that the concept of criticality had fuzzy boundaries. This was particularly obvious when I posed follow-up questions as evidenced in the following.

*Student:* It's being able to analyse and evaluate things in more depth, so, *I think with history, yeah we need to think about things a bit more critically and not judge but I don't know, being able to look at things in more depth. Comparing, I guess.*

*Interviewer:* Could you develop a little bit, if you can, what is meant by critical in this thinking?

[*] *

*Student:* [...] it could mean two things. So it could be looking at something in a very particular way, usually described as negative, but it could be critical — it's important, it's important thinking.

In response to my invitation to define critical thinking, the student conceptualised it as in-depth analysis that includes comparing. However, she appeared to be unsure how thinking in general differed from critical thinking at the beginning. In the Skype-interview, the students struggled with the term and maintained that they were not familiar with either the term *critical thinking* or the phrase *think critically* as illustrated below. Further attempts to approach the term from different perspectives did not succeed and it became clear that the students were struggling with this concept. Thus it was decided to bring the Skype interview to a close at this point.

*Student 1:* I don't really know what critical thinking is.

*Student 2:* The term critical thinking is not really big over here, I've never heard it before.

The teacher interview also pointed to some degree of confusion about the term *critical thinking* that was used interchangeably with *analytical thinking*. In Annie’s initial response, criticality was conceptualized as dealing with perceptions, source criticism and complex causality as evidenced in the following extract.

*Teacher:* Critical thinking in History is considering perceptions. It's about looking at any document and thinking about the motivations behind its creation. It's about the background of the person who created the document, primary or secondary and the bias associated with the document. It's also questioning what caused certain
events or certain movements and understanding the complexity of those causes that are always multifaceted, and looking at the society from each level. From, you know, the upper cl... the upper sort of levels right down to the well in some cases slave population so it’s to me, yeah, that’s what analytical thinking is.

Interviewer: Critical?

Teacher: Critical, sorry. Critical thinking, which I would connect with analytical thinking.

Interviewer: Are these similar concepts?

Teacher: Yeah, I would definitely connect these two concepts.

The teacher and student interviews revealed a difference in understanding the value of criticality. While the teacher emphasised the importance of criticality in students’ everyday life, the student regarded it as a means to reach a deeper understanding of the school-related topics. In relation to everyday life, the student appeared to apply a perception of criticality as ‘important thinking’, that is evident later in the interview (see Australia: Criticality in diverse contexts, pp. 102–103).

Teacher: Well, it’s about not taking what you learn on face value, about thinking, about thinking, about [...] different perspectives and yeah, I think it’s absolutely essential because those skills go into what you do in everyday life for our students. You know what they say on the media, and I think critical thinking is vitally important.

Student: It helps us to have a better understanding and by having a better understanding we get more out of the topic. So by thinking about things in a more critical way we are gaining more from what we are learning about.

In the course of the face-to-face interviews, the student and teacher refined their conceptions of criticality. The student regarded critical thinking as a dynamic ability that builds upon previously acquired background knowledge and experiences and develops over time as indicated in the following quote. She assumed that upper secondary students would show a higher degree of criticality compared to primary school students.

Student: Having learned about 20th century for two years in a row I have a good background knowledge to come into the next lot of 20th century classes, and having done a lot of Australian history in my Humanities classes in Year 10 I can now jump into that next class because I thought critically in the past about it. And I’ve analysed and evaluated and all of that work. By having that prior knowledge near I can come into this, having that knowledge a lot stronger and I can have a better input and think more critically about that information because I think the older you become the more critical you will think about things.
Student: [...] I don’t think someone at primary school level could think as critical about what we’re learning as say one of us. That progression as well so between the ages I think is vital in keeping that information and being stronger in obtaining it.

In the discussion of criticality, the teacher added a further dimension of being able to draw conclusions, which was indirectly backed in the student interview although the student only mentioned the ability of analysing and processing historical events rather than knowing about them. Later in the interview, Annie also emphasised that despite the meticulous nature of the History syllabus, it provides a solid framework for developing this dimension of criticality as shown below.

Teacher: [...] I think it is because as historians our students need to draw conclusions and [...] that example I gave before about changes in Australia, students ... could say everything changed because in small ways everything did change but they have to actually be able to discern, you know, [...] what is the difference between a big change and a little change and so being too critical may stop you from drawing conclusions that need to be reached.

Student: [...] It [thinking uncritically]’s just you are taking in the information but not really ... analysing, not processing really what’s happened just knowing about it.

Teacher: They [Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority] don’t state the conclusions in the curriculum so one of the areas that they meant we look at is the impact of what settlement had on indigenous people but they don’t list what the impacts are. So it gives you a framework for what you need to look at but they don’t list what were the changes. It says you must explore the changes that occurred in Australian history during the World War I but nowhere is there listed all those changes. So it’s up to the students in the class to draw their own conclusions.

The interviews offered a mixed picture of the status that criticality enjoyed in the selected Australian upper secondary History class. Although there was some apparent confusion about the term critical thinking in the beginning of the face-to-face interviews, the respondents managed to identify the uses of criticality in the History learning environment and outside the school, which was evident in their reasoning. These uses are further examined in the section Criticality in diverse contexts. The teacher’s remark about the policy framework that facilitated the students’ ability to draw conclusions suggests that criticality was among the goals that were perceived as important in History. The student Skype-interview indicated, though, that the term critical thinking was not well established. The differing nature of Skype-communication that complicates efficient management of group dynamics and the intermittent connection limited the opportunities to explore these
students’ understandings further. Apart from the Skype interviewees, the respondents indicated, however, that criticality development was a vital educational task.

**Perceived and reported criticality instruction**

The interview data showed high correspondence between how the teacher described her criticality instruction and how the student perceived it in practice. The teacher had a clear view on how she worked with students’ criticality development and provided ample examples from her teaching practice. In the interview, Annie pointed out that criticality instruction had to do with challenging the stereotypical picture of the past through a scaffolded viewing of a historical event from more than one perspective as described in the following extract.

*Teacher:* So having an understanding that sometimes students [...] bring a stereotypical sort of opinion about what has happened in the past. So I think when students are challenged with saying that in fact experiences are multifaceted, that’s when their critical thinking, you know, comes into play. But students have to be taught particularly when responding using their critical thinking, they have to be given a scaffold about how to respond to something, ensuring that they do think of the, you know, both sides not just one side, or one point of view.

The student interview confirmed that the reported criticality instruction was implemented in the History classes as shown below.

*Student:* Well, from a white person’s perspective from that time, it [Australia] could be seen as uninhabited so it was almost a positive thing for them that they would getting... were gaining a lot from taking over the land. But having seen, learned about the white people and the natives I feel more for the natives than I do for the white even being a white person. [...] having heard both of the sides I’ve developed a different view for them.

The teacher proposed that students’ criticality could be developed through a careful design of questions to the learning material and scaffolded answers. Annie reported to encourage her students to examine motives behind the historical documents as well as to analyse their multimodal meaning.

*Teacher:* I think by questioning, asking students questions about what they are saying and reading, and [...] by designing scaffolding answers so that they are sort of forced to be a little critical in their thinking.

[...]

*The questions [...] about you know what was the background of the person who wrote the document, why would they have used... I am always saying that when we study a document in history that, particularly a painting or visual document, I*
always say that, you know, nothing is by accident. So why did they use that colour, what is it that they are trying to express? How is in their view you are going to respond to that, how are they supposed to feel about it.

Even in this case, the student interview offered evidence that the above described criticality instruction was recognised as such and practised by the History teacher. The student emphasised also that teachers played a significant role in students’ criticality development and could serve both as a role model and a facilitator by:

Student: [...] setting up questions and putting questions in place for us students to think critically.

[...]

By providing us with visual images, different resources, you know. Thinking in more detail about how they are gonna present the information because I think there are two different kinds. There is obviously a teacher who might just read from the textbook and not really again challenge, whereas a critical thinking teacher, a teacher that thinks critically, that’s better English, challenges us and gets us to think critically about everything we’re learning. So even in just the few classes I’ve had with Annie [pseudonym], being able to get us thinking critically about everything we’re learning is a really positive thing.

One of the approaches to criticality instruction that was described by Annie corresponded to the understanding of criticality as a skill to develop an argument by using evidence and drawing conclusions found in the national Australian policy documents (see Policy analysis: Australia, pp. 52–56). In the following example of the instruction, the teacher stressed the role of explicit guidance in students’ criticality development.

Teacher: [...] Another topic looking at World War 1 and the way in which Australia changed. [...] there isn't a textbook that just lists: 'Number one — Australia changed in this way, Number two'. Students have to draw their own conclusions, they have to look at, be guided to look at different aspects of Australian society during World War 1, and then they need to draw, you know, their own conclusions about — by looking at the evidence about, you know, the experience of women wasn’t the same at the beginning of the war, throughout the war and at the end of the war. You know the role of young men etc, the role of religion in Australian society, that sort of thing. Yeah, that’s certainly a time when they, students really need to test, you know, come up with criteria to what would suggest a change and they need evidence to support that so, that would be another example [of critical thinking].

According to the teacher, criticality could be also developed through comparing. In the interview, Annie referred to a lesson where the students had to compare ‘the attitudes of the Australians towards indigenous rights at two different points of time’. The student interview data indicated that this
approach to criticality was taught and practiced in History as evidenced in the following quote.

*Student:* [...] critical thinking... so be able to then develop a better understanding so, for instance, like comparing what happened to the Jewish people during the Holocaust and what happened to the Aboriginals when ... so being able to compare things, analyse things. I've demonstrated that myself being able to... after being taught that... being able to look at in a different way and compare, just link things, the information.

As a further approach to scaffolding students' criticality development, the teacher reported that she assisted the students to reconstruct the historical context of the events and to highlight anticipated value systems of their actors. The following two extracts from the interviews describe the reported approach and suggest that it was adopted consistently in the History classes.

*Teacher:* So part of that critical thinking is having the students look through a lens of understanding that these [Australians at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century] are people of very different backgrounds. It was a different time, there were different values so having students, perhaps, understand the decisions that were made through a different lens than the lens that they are looking through I think is part of critical thinking as well, is understanding that different times have different contexts and so when looking at motivations that people of that time you have to put their values and belief systems in context.

*Student:* So when I was reading about, his name Josh, no John Bateman, he... the profile that we have on him, being able to then think back to that time and think about his circumstances, what he was experiencing, to put ourselves in his shoes, just visualise what he was going through, I guess, and what was to come out of that, and to see the progression and the outcomes of what he was doing at the time. I think that was thinking critically.

The perceptions of criticality instruction evident in the interviews revealed that criticality was considered a skill that could be developed in students under the guidance of a teacher according to a certain algorithm. The following extract from the student interview illustrates this view and suggests that criticality is a skill that needs purposeful instruction and a lot of practice to be learned not only in History but also in other school subjects.

*Student:* [...] my English teacher [...] from last year said to me: 'I am not gonna teach you what to think, I am gonna teach you how to think'. So I feel that in his classes he helped developed in us a skill. And we didn’t, as I said just take in the information, we could then develop an opinion on it, we could break it down. So in that I guess it’s a lesson but I feel like I had many lessons in that to not just say things as they are, to be able to, you know, have a different look of what it is, objective, to what’s going on.
And being able to analyse and evaluate things differently and not just accept what it is supposed to be, to take in.

**Criticality in diverse contexts**

The teacher and student interview indicated that criticality was considered a skill that could be applied in various school subjects. Both the teacher and the student considered the Humanities as a group of subjects where criticality, although being a similar skill, differed in its focus and proximity to the examined events as exemplified in the following responses.

*Teacher:* [...] So a lot of similarities, I think because especially in the humanities, and I’ve taught English, Sociology, especially in the Humanities, I think, being able to read, critically read text is very, very similar. You certainly bring similar skills. Um, but critical thinking, say in English, is more about the why the language is being used, you do that to an extent in History. In English it’s about the construction of that language and, yes, there is a place for that in History but we wouldn’t focus on that. We would focus much more on the impact of that document, on what it has to say about a particular event or a particular idea or that’s much more we are interested in rather than sort of deconstructing the language and to find how it’s been written in a persuasive manner or in a certain manner. It’s more about deconstructing the language, whereas in History it’s about drawing on other things that help that paste to make sense.

*Student:* [...] it’s a little bit more difficult to think critically about the things that had happened a long time ago because I have no real experience in that time whereas the things I am learning today like the book I’ve just read and that I’m analysing could be a lot more simple in that I can refer back to it [...] so I think that learning history and critical thinking [is] a little bit more difficult because we don’t have all of the resources of the present day as we do in, say, English where we have the books and the resources, and it’s happening right now, cause it’s the present.

The interview responses suggest that the boundaries of History as a school subject define the boundaries of criticality, which implies that the interviewees conceptualised criticality as an embedded skill. The teacher pointed out that a critical reader in History is mainly focused on the extralinguistic features of a text such as its context and impact, while criticality in English may be mainly focused on the linguistic features of a text. The student appeared to regard criticality as more challenging in History than in English since she could not rely on her own observations or experiences. In the following quote, the student developed this idea and assumed that criticality in History could be hindered by a selection of the facts.

*Student:* Yeah, I think it [criticality in History] is more challenging for me, I enjoy History and I like the challenge and I think that’s half of the reason I’m so passionate about it and that it challenges me a little bit more than English. [...] I don’t think I’ll
ever truly know what they [people in the past] went through but I can only go on what is being recounted and brought to what we’re learning so.

Interviewer: Right, do you mean that it’s somebody else’s account of the events?

Student: Yes, so we can only really know what is being told to us.

Apart from varying contexts of criticality in the school environment, the teacher also saw it as playing a major role in students’ everyday life. Annie considered criticality one of the school skills that made the bridge between students’ school and out-of-school lives and could help the students navigate the information-dense world of today. Similarly to the school use of criticality, she suggested that criticality in everyday life was about understanding motives and purposes of texts as evidenced in the following response.

Teacher: [...] I think even now those critical thinking skills are even more important because students have such great access to the media and to information in all different sorts of forms. So actually getting students to be reading critically and understanding the motivation behind what is being written and the purpose behind what is being written I think is very important so [...] I think there is a big connection between what they are learning in school and what they are doing outside of school.

In her interview, the teacher, however, identified an aspect of everyday life where criticality could be harmful. Annie found that some interpersonal relations could be hurt if criticality was not put aside.

Teacher: What are the differences though, I think in everyday life, in everyday life sometimes to get along with people you just need an acceptance of who they are so at times there’s no place to be critical. Sometimes in everyday life you just need to be, without going through this analysis.

The student interview did not suggest a similar transferability of criticality from school to everyday life. The student appeared to link criticality in everyday life to making major decisions. In the out-of-school context, she arguably interpreted critical as important, crucial as shown in the following.

Student: [...] so, kind of, make a decision as to what is appropriate, so [...] it’s a time when it’s ... not really you can’t fail, like there are always other options, but I think at this age it’s not pressure but just... it’s kind of time to start making big decisions and I think it’s where a lot of critical thinking comes in because part-time jobs, school, you have to think about things. Critical thinking, um earning money, about saving for things like cars, for university so handling money, whether to save money, things like that, so thinking critically about that I guess. [...] I’m sure there are other things in everyday life, but they are probably the two major ones that most people would be experiencing in my age anyway.
Criticality redefined

The conducted interviews provided nuanced understandings of criticality and identified its main dimensions and approaches to instruction. In the same fashion as critical thinking was associated with creative thinking in the national curriculum (see *Policy analysis: Australia*, pp. 52–56), the interviewed teacher connected critical thinking to analytical thinking. This overlap of the terms might partly explain the initial respondents’ confusion over the term *critical thinking* and its boundaries, which, however, was clarified in the course of the face-to-face interviews.

The teacher and student interviews indicated that criticality was conceptualised as a skill that has some common features across various contexts but is applied differently depending on the context. According to the interviewees, criticality involves scrutinising motivations behind the creation of a text and its perspective, which is followed by drawing conclusions or, as the student put it, ‘present[ing] your opinion’. This perception resembles the definition of criticality in the national curriculum but limits the kind of evidence that is examined to motivations and perspectives behind a text. In the teacher’s view, these motivations and perspectives are not necessarily expressed verbally only but could also be conveyed through the choice of a colour and the like, which adds a multimodal dimension to criticality. In the student’s view, the examination is facilitated by the background knowledge that has been accumulated over the school years, which results in a potentially higher degree of criticality in the upper secondary students compared to students at earlier stages of education. All of the above suggests that the respondents had a developmental cognitive approach to criticality as an embedded skill in the school context.

In the out-of-school context, the respondents showed a difference of opinion in their understanding of criticality. While the teacher implied transferability of the skill to the out-of-school context thus maintaining a homogenous conception of criticality through various contexts, the student put emphasis elsewhere. For the student, criticality in everyday life was associated with crucial and important decisions thus focussing on *what* rather than *how* in thinking. This resulted in two distinctive conceptions of out-of-school criticality in the interviews.

The interview data implied that criticality had a high status in the selected Victorian upper secondary school. The respondents reported numerous examples of criticality and its instruction in History sessions as well as in other schools subjects. Given the involvement of the teacher in the panel for curriculum revision and her close proximity to the policy makers, this provided a unique chance to examine how policy intentions that were
learned first-hand might have been translated into perceptions of criticality. In her interview, the teacher considered that the state policy document on History offered a framework for students’ criticality development. In her opinion, the document, despite its meticulous lesson planning and very thorough instructions on what and how History should be taught and learned, required that the students drew their own conclusions. The student interview also suggested that students’ criticality development was supported both at secondary and upper secondary level, which reflects continuity between the levels and importance of criticality as an educational goal.

According to the interviewees, teachers play a key role in the development of students’ criticality. While the teacher advocated explicit criticality instruction, the student noted that in addition to guidance teachers also set an example by being critical, which she experienced and appreciated in her History sessions. The interview data suggested that the teacher’s reported instruction was aimed at constructing historical evidence in collaboration with the students as a result of which the students were supposed to draw their own conclusions. This approach goes hand in hand with the definition of criticality in the state policy documents as a skill of meaning making from historical evidence (see Policy analysis: Australia, pp. 52–56) and indicates that the state educational policy was implemented in the History classroom since the teacher’s and student’s accounts of criticality instruction were concurrent. The analysis of the Australian classroom data may further support or refute this hypothesis.

In her interview, the teacher described a number of ways to collaboratively construct historical evidence that included asking questions about what is being read and said and scaffolding students’ answers, comparing, scrutinising motivations and perspectives. On closer examination, all these approaches appear to serve one and the same goal of reconstructing the historical context of an event as illustrated in the following extract where the teacher chose to work on the approach of comparison.

*Teacher: [...] This example is about comparing the attitudes of Australians towards indigenous’ rights at two different points of time. So the periods of time are only five years different, but basically in 1967 there was a vote to change our constitution and it was about allowing indigenous people to be counted in our census, they were not counted prior to then. And it was about allowing the federal government to make laws about indigenous people. And in Australia’s history any changes to the constitution had to be made through a vote, through a referendum. Only eight out 42, I think, have ever been passed, and this was passed with like 90 per cent of population voted yes, which is extraordinary and unprecedented in our history. So we look at the attitudes of people of that time and why so many people voted yes, why so many people were accepting of what indigenous people were really fighting for during that time. And then we look five years ahead at 1972 when there was...*
another protest movement by indigenous people and this one was about land rights and the attitudes during those two periods of time were very very different. So we saw almost unanimous support in 1967 but we see some support but much less support in 1972 so students have to then work out why, what the differences were. So that would certainly be when they really, they have to critically think about what was different about those quite close periods of time, what was different about the issues that made Australian attitudes quite different. So that would be another example.

In a nutshell, the reported criticality instruction comprised reconstruction of the historical context of an event by the students under the guidance of the teacher and drawing conclusions on the basis of collected multimodal historical evidence and students’ background knowledge. As revealed in the interview analysis, the teacher and student had very similar and consistent conceptions of criticality and its instruction in History in the selected Australian class, which facilitated the analysis of classroom data.

Comparative analysis of interview data
As was highlighted in Judge (2000), comparative analysis of education professionals in particular and of educational issues in general benefit from adhering to the principle of contrast (pp. 155–157). In this section, the teachers’ and students’ responses are compared and contrasted to provide a transnational account of criticality as emerging from the interviews conducted in the main study. Figure 6 summarises the background information on the participating teachers and students from the national contexts.

Figure 6. Overview of the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Irina Dmitrievna</td>
<td>Annie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's education</td>
<td>Equivalent of Master of Arts in Education (Majors: Social Studies and History)</td>
<td>Equivalent of Master of Arts in Education (Majors: History and English)</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts (Majors: Literature and History) Diploma of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's working experience</td>
<td>&gt;20 years (since 1993) Taught History/Social Studies Teaching and Learning at tertiary level</td>
<td>&gt;20 years (since 1985)</td>
<td>&gt;20 years (since 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4 female &amp; 2 male (age: 17 yrs)</td>
<td>2 female &amp; 4 male (age: 17 yrs)</td>
<td>2 female &amp; 2 male (age: 17 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>History 1a1 (compulsory)</td>
<td>Basic History (compulsory)</td>
<td>Australian History (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviewees in all national contexts, with the exception of the Skype-interviewed students who were reportedly not familiar with the term critical thinking, emphasised the importance of criticality.
The common view shared among the interviewees was that criticality is a discipline-specific and context-dependent skill. In the case of History sessions and formal schooling contexts, criticality was conceptualised as the skill of challenging the teaching discourse that includes the narratives presented by the History teacher and/or the History textbook. The invariable component of criticality as a skill was that of drawing one’s own conclusions and forming an independent opinion. In the Swedish context, this component was the only one explicitly mentioned, while the Australian and Russian interviewees included also using background knowledge, reasoning, comparing, characterising and evaluating as the components of criticality in History.

Although criticality as questioning the historical narratives was promoted in the interviews, the students’ responses reflected a continuum of approaches. The Swedish students, who appeared reluctant to question their History teacher and reported that they accepted her narrative as being reliable and unbiased, could be placed to the left, the Russian students, who, although aware of the impact of the narrator’s point of view on the History narrative itself, were eager to form their individual opinions on the basis of the same set of facts from the teaching discourse, — in the middle, and the Australian student, who pointed out that the facts found in the teaching discourse are selected and determine what kind of conclusions could be drawn, — to the right. The teachers’ responses echoed the students’ perceptions considerably. The Swedish teacher pinpointed the conservative nature of History as maintaining the status quo, which appears probable in the examined context for the following reasons. First, the students reported not to question the teacher’s narrative. Second, the teacher herself found that only certain groups of students were prepared to be critical, which contributed to the dominance of the teaching discourse. Thirdly, the policy analysis indicated exclusivity of criticality for students pursuing higher education preparatory programs, while the participating class was vocational. Constrained by the format of the state unified exam and the number of contact hours allocated to the basic History course, the Russian teacher preferred to use such textbooks that provide a framework for interpretation of the presented facts rather than a textbook that presents bare facts and authentic documents. However, she also reported that the students were free to read any textbook that they found and that the students could ‘feel the history through’ the teacher’s narrative in the first place. In a similar fashion, the Australian teacher considered the teacher’s narrative as a powerful motivation tool that assisted the students in navigating through the primary sources.
The interviews in the three national contexts indicated that in order to develop criticality as questioning the teaching discourse the students need to satisfy the criteria of age, cognitive maturity and background knowledge base. The interviewees found that History at upper secondary level is an appropriate environment to develop criticality with the exception of the Swedish teacher, who regarded Social Studies as a more suitable subject in which to do this so given the conservative nature of History. In contrast, the Russian teacher equated critical thinking with historical thinking.

The issue of proximity to the events examined was recurrent in the interviews, which was viewed both as a hindrance and opportunity. According to the students, the temporal distance, on the one hand, leads to a dependence on external primary and secondary sources, which might be biased and selected to somebody’s advantage. On the other hand, the temporal distance decreases personal involvement with the event and increases the chance for an objective view of it. The Russian students, however, stressed that judgement about any historical event is based on the worldview of a particular person thus transcending the simple view of criticality as a skill and embracing the conception of criticality as a learner’s inner characteristic.

The comparative analysis suggests that the interviewees attributed various weights to criticality in relation to the democracy task prescribed by the curriculum in all three national contexts. The Swedish and Russian teachers emphasised the value of criticality for ‘the democratic process’ and ‘being free people’ respectively. In contrast, the Australian interview identified no references to democracy or education for citizenship but criticality was conceptualised rather as a means to meet the challenges of the information era and to help the students navigate through a lot of information sources and evaluate them. This might explain why the discourse of criticality as a characteristic of good citizens that was apparent in the European interviews was absent in the Australian interviews.

Despite the similar conception of criticality as questioning the teaching discourse, the reported frame factors of criticality instruction and its practice varied in the sampled schools. The Swedish and Russian teachers perceived a lack of time for criticality instruction. While the Swedish teacher attributed the lack of time to the hours that she had to design History sessions, the Russian teacher attributed it to the ratio between the contact hours within the basic History course and the amount of factual knowledge to be acquired by the students in terms of completion of the syllabus and receiving a high grade in the case of those taking the Unified State Exam. Effectively, the perceived lack of time originated from the school policy of allocating hours to the teacher for holding the course in the Swedish case, while it originated
from the national policy in the Russian case. Both teachers highlighted the need to design unique teaching materials for criticality instruction for each new group of students, which makes the use of ready-made units problematic and inefficient and as a result the preparations time-intensive. In contrast, the Australian teacher perceived no policy constraints for criticality instruction, which might be traced to the differences in its reported practice.

The teacher interview data indicated six major modes of criticality instruction in the examined national contexts. These modes were source criticism, why-questions, analysis model, debates and hearings, ‘black and white’, characterising a historical figure, and reconstructing the historical context. All of the modes included the component of ‘looking from different perspectives’ of one sort or another but differed in how much control over discussed perspectives the teachers exercised.

The Swedish teacher reported that she used to instruct students in source criticism by providing them with various types of texts that depicted one and the same historical event from different perspectives. The students were supposed to assess proximity, tendency and dependence of the texts, while the assessment of their authenticity was omitted arguably because the teacher selected the texts herself controlling the possible interpretations. In the observed class, however, the teacher reported that she did not use this mode of criticality instruction but instead used (1) the analysis model to alleviate the consequences of tragedies and to avert new ones and (2) posed why-questions that supposedly did not have pre-set answers. Even in the why-question mode the teacher exercised control over what interpretations would be dominant since she acknowledged adding ‘the teacher perspective’ in those cases where the students’ interpretations were considered insufficient. In contrast, the Russian teacher reported that she designed ‘black and white’ sessions where she would present two opposing views, one after the other, on the same historical issue and let the students form their own interpretations through discussions and interviews, when possible, of the people who witnessed the event. In this case, the teacher, although exercising control over what issue and initial opposing perspectives are brought up, arguably offered students more space for arriving at genuinely independent conclusions. In the other mode, debates and hearings, the Russian teacher reported involving the students in the design of the instruction from the very beginning to the end where they were responsible for the session scenario. However, this mode, which may further reduce the teacher’s control over the discussed perspectives, was reportedly

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38 From the teaching discourse.
not used in the observed class due to the time constraints. In the mode of characterising a historical figure, the Russian teacher reported that she did not prescribe the use of any specific sources. In comparison to the previous national contexts, the Australian teacher’s mode of criticality instruction by reconstructing the historical context occupied the middle ground in terms of control. Although the issues and perspectives were strictly set by the meticulous History syllabus, the teacher assumed that the students were free to draw their own conclusions. According to her, this was possible through interpreting the motivations of the multimodal texts within their reconstructed context, thus providing grounds for independent conclusions.

The student interview data showed that the reported criticality instruction was not necessarily perceived as such by the students. Judged by the responses, the national cases range from no correspondence through partial correspondence to almost full correspondence. In the Swedish case, the students felt that they did not receive any instruction in criticality and regarded it as tacit knowledge. This supports the hypothesis of the policy analysis that the Swedish vocational students might receive limited criticality instruction in the subjects that are beyond the scope of their future profession. The Russian students, in contrast to their teacher who reported few occasions of criticality instruction, found numerous instances when they were empowered to question the teaching discourse, or ‘the official point of view’ as they called it. This partial correspondence reflects a contradiction of the basic History syllabus that states criticality as the learning outcome but not as a teaching objective. This may also reflect the assumption that the teacher might be discouraged from devoting considerable time to criticality instruction because of the format of the State Unified Exam. Despite the apparent confusion of terms in the Australian case, the teacher and student interviews indicated very high correspondence between the reported and perceived criticality instruction. This might imply that either criticality instruction was very explicit or the interviewees had quite similar conceptions of what it meant to be a critical learner and, consequently, have a clear vision of how to secure high criticality attainment in History that, as argued in the policy analysis, adds to a high score on the final exam.

Given the various degrees of correspondence between the reported and perceived criticality instruction, a further investigation of the pedagogical practice through the analysis of classroom discourse might provide additional evidence of how dominant conceptions of criticality are negotiated and enacted in the History learning environment of the selected national contexts. The analysis might also illuminate how such dilemmas as (1) exclusivity of criticality instruction and inclusivity of its democratic value, (2) the limited criticality instruction and its vital role as facilitator of personal
development and immunity to indoctrination, (3) the meticulous centralised lesson planning and opportunity to draw independent conclusions are being solved in the Swedish, Russian and Australian upper secondary classrooms.
Classroom discourse analysis
This chapter provides an analysis of classroom data from the History sessions in the upper secondary schools in Sweden, Russia and Australia that were audio-recorded to investigate how the conceptions of criticality and its instruction found in the policy and interviews analyses are enacted in the pedagogic practice cross-nationally. The chapter is divided into three sections covering the findings of the classroom discourse analysis in each national context and followed by a transnational discussion of pedagogical practices regarding criticality instruction.

Sweden
The Swedish classroom data consists of the transcriptions from the observed History sessions, completed observation forms and samples of the teaching materials. On the basis of the collected evidence, each week of observations is briefly described to provide an overview of the audio-recorded sessions. Figure 7 establishes a reference system that identifies various sessions in the analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prelude to WW II</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII</td>
<td>I-II</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust</td>
<td>II-III</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outline lesson description
In the first week of data collection, the topics of the three consecutive sessions were ‘The prelude to World War II’ and ‘World War II’. In Session 1, the History teacher showed a recent news report about white supremacists and invited the class to discuss it. Then the students were encouraged to write the events that were connected to the military escalation on the brink of WWII on the white board. Afterwards, two videoclips with the military
parades in Nazi Germany and contemporary North Korea were shown with subsequent discussion on the parallels between the past and the present. Session 1 was concluded with listening to a Swedish adaptation of the song entitled ‘Soldat Soldat’ (Soldier Soldier) by Wolf Biermann. In Session 2, Anna talked about the first years of WWII using a PowerPoint presentation that also included a YouTube clip with Churchill’s address to the nation. For the rest of the session, the class watched a 20-minute documentary on the course of events in the first years of WWII that had English as the original language but was dubbed into Swedish. Session 3 was devoted to individual student work on a set of four questions on the prelude of WWII. The questions were published on the intranet and each of the questions had a reference to the pages in the textbook Perspectives on the history A (Perspektiv på historien A) by Hans Nyström and Örjan Nyström. To answer the questions the students were encouraged to use this textbook and PowerPoint presentations from earlier sessions. Session 3 was concluded with a whole class review of the answers.

During the second week of data collection, the observed class dealt with the topics of WWII and the Holocaust. In Session 4, the History teacher first elicited what the students remembered from the previous week. Afterwards, the teacher continued to talk about WWII referring to a PowerPoint as in the previous week, while some of the students made notes. In the second half of the session, the class watched a 25-minute US documentary titled Allied Victory dubbed into Swedish. In the beginning of Session 5 students were invited to write what they knew about the Holocaust on the white board. The session was continued with a teacher’s talk about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism referring to a PowerPoint presentation. Prior to the talk, the teacher lit some candles, which was perhaps intended to emphasise its solemnity. During the rest of the session and the beginning of Session 6 the class watched an episode of the BBC-produced documentary Auschwitz: The Nazis and ‘The Final Solution’ and was invited to share their ideas about the film. At the end of Session 6, the teacher read out an excerpt from the poem written by Helder Camara that the teacher called AntiNazi Profession of Faith.

In the third week of classroom data collection, the class continued to work on the topic of the Holocaust and began the new topic of the Cold War. In Session 7 the teacher distributed some copies of the government-sponsored book Tell Ye Your Children (Om detta må ni berätta) about the Holocaust and set the tasks for the students to look through the book and choose any paragraph for presentation to the whole class. The students were supposed to motivate their choices and offer some ideas about how to prevent such tragedies from happening again. They worked in three groups in different
rooms for about 35 minutes and then gathered in the classroom for presentations. The session was finished with the teacher’s summary and conclusions. Sessions 8–9 were conducted without a break and devoted to the Cold War. The teacher talked about the aftermath of WWII supported by a PowerPoint presentation that also included YouTube clips with Churchill’s *Fulton speech* and some songs performed by Chuck Berry and Elvis Pressley. Afterwards the class watched a 40-minute Australian-produced documentary *The Cold War: part 1* dubbed into Swedish followed by the teacher’s conclusion.

**Classroom data analysis**

The collected classroom data confirmed the teacher’s account that criticality instruction as source criticism was not used as a purposeful mode of instruction. However, the recordings and the field notes reveal one instance where two principles of source criticism, proximity and tendency, were arguably tangential to the interaction between the teacher and the students. This is illustrated in the following extract from Session 6.

*Extract 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Lärare: [Elev 1], du tog upp om den här mannen som var tysk SS-soldat.</th>
<th>Teacher: [Student 1], you brought up this man who was a German SS-soldier.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elev 1[^39]: Ja, han var ju konstig.</td>
<td>Student 1: Yes, he was strange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lärare: Vad var det du sa om [honom]?</td>
<td>Teacher: What did you say about [him]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[...]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elev 1: Ja, men att han sa ju typ att judarna hade gjort honom någonting när han var liten och att det aldrig kunnat ändra och att han fattar nu att det var ju bara ett påhitt. Det var svårt att förstå vad han egentligen känner, alltså om...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student 1: Yeah, like he said that the Jews had done something to him when he was little and that could never been changed and that he understands now that it was just an invention. It was hard to understand what he actually feels, like about...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elev 2: Men det kan ju faktiskt vara så att de hade gjort någonting. Så det vet inte vi. Någon kan ju tro...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student 2: But it could actually be so that they had done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^39]: Please note that numbering of students is consistent only within each extract.
something. So we don’t know that. Someone can believe...

[...]

Lärare: Men det kan ju ha varit att han på sin gård där han bodde kanske vid något tillfälle var mobbad utav ett par judiska barn eller något sådant där. Vi vet inte exakt det...

Teacher: But it could have been that he was once bullied by a couple of Jewish children or something like that. We don’t know for sure...

Elev 2: Nej, det är svårt.

Student 2: No, this is difficult.

Elev 1: Man kan ändå inte straffa alla för det. Dra alla över en kam.

Student 1: You still can’t punish all for that. Lump everyone together.

Lärare: Jo, sen vet vi ju att man var väldigt utsatt för nazistisk propaganda också under den där tiden så att... att man kan ha lärt sig som barn att judar är elaka...

Teacher: Yeah, and then we also all know that people were very exposed to Nazi propaganda during that time so that ... as a child one could have learned that Jews are evil...

Turns 4–6 in Extract 1 indicated that the students and teacher were engaged in negotiation around the idea that the childhood memories could be fragmentary and as a result not completely reliable. In turn 9, the teacher suggested why there could be a bias in the former soldier’s memories. Source criticism was not, however, the instructional focus here, instead the focus was on eliciting an opinion on the BBC-documentary in general. The unfolding of the discussion within Session 6 and the similar instructional incidents in other sessions also did not suggest that Extract 1 illustrated the purposeful criticality instruction as source criticism.

The analysis of classroom data was not able to confirm that the students received regular criticality instruction in the mode of why-questions with no pre-set answers. In the collected set of data, the why-questions were used to elicit the responses to factual questions as shown in Extracts 2–3 from Sessions 2, 8–9 respectively. At least some similar responses reproduced the wording provided either in the History textbook or in the teacher’s PowerPoint presentations.

Extract 2

Turn

Lärare: Ja, första världskriget. Precis samma väg tog de. Och varför går man genom Holland–Belgien? Varför går man inte direkt till Frankrike?
Teacher: Yes, the First World War. They took exactly the same route. And why did they go through Holland–Belgium? Why didn’t they go directly to France?

Elev 1: Därför de hade ju sådana där försvarslinjer.

Student 1: Because they had these lines of defence.

Teacher: Ja, man kallar det för Maginotlinjen [...]

Extract 3

Turn

Lärare: Och varför tror ni att man efter andra världskriget var så mån om att se till att Europa byggdes upp och fick ekonomi som skulle fungera och så?

Teacher: And why do you think it was so important to make sure that Europe was built up and the economy would function again after the Second World War?

Elev 1: Därför att man såg vad som hade hänt efter första världskriget.

Student 1: Because people saw what happened after the First World War.

Lärare: Ja, precis. Vis av skada så ville man inte att det skulle återupprepas det som hade hänt under mellankrigstiden när ekonomin kraschade och tyskarna fick det jättesvårt ekonomiskt. Och i den här nöden så kunde Hitler komma fram med sitt budskap och lova guld och gröna skogar. Så syftet var att få fart på ekonomin och undvika kriser.

Teacher: Precisely. Taught by bitter experience, they didn’t want the events of the interwar period to happen again when the economy crashed and the Germans suffered financially. And in this time of need Hitler could push his agenda and promise the moon and the stars. So the aim was to make the economy grow and avoid crises.

The last teacher’s turn (12) in Extract 2 was shortened but followed the same pattern as turn 15. Here, the teacher confirms the expected short form of answer from a student and provides a full answer to her own question. The classroom data suggests that the pattern of posing why-questions to the students implied limited opportunities for the students to contribute and the students were either not encouraged to develop their responses or not provided with any scaffold to develop a longer response. The latter was evident in the case of watching a news report on white supremacists when the teacher first invited students to contribute but having managed to receive only one short response opted to develop it herself.
The pattern of minimal student contribution is also consistent with the incidents after the class watched the documentaries. Despite the fact that the class spent a total of approximately 125 minutes watching those four documentaries, the postviewing tasks amounted to seven minutes in total, of which the teacher’s talk comprised a five-minute summary of the documentaries. This prevented the students from expressing their opinion of what they watched and might have hindered the students from forming an independent opinion about the historical events viewed, which was perceived as the core of criticality in the interviews.

In the interview data, criticality was conceptualised as questioning the historical narrative for being unreliable and selective. The examination of the Swedish classroom data did not identify any incidents of questioning historical narratives for being unreliable and selective except for the incident presented in Extract 1. The classroom data indicated that the students sought to master the dominant narrative rather than questioning it as seen in the following extract from Session 3.

**Extract 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Elev 1:</th>
<th>Lärare:</th>
<th>Elev 1:</th>
<th>Student 1:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Är det ettan?</td>
<td>Ja.</td>
<td>Is it the first?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Is it like they wanted to take the German-speaking regions back?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Elev 1:</td>
<td>Lärare:</td>
<td>Student 1:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lärare:</td>
<td>År det typ att de ville ha tillbaka de tysktalande områdena?</td>
<td>Hm. Ja, bland annat, bland annat. Men det är lite mer än så. Det är inte bara de tysktalande. Om det vore så då skulle han inte behöva ta Norge och hela faderutten. Utan läs. Har du någon bok, [Elev 1]? Annars får du låna min. Ska ni ha den mellan er kanske?</td>
<td>Hm. Yes, among other things, among other things. But it is a little bit more than that. If it were so then he wouldn’t need to take Norway and all of this. Read instead. Do you have the textbook, [Student 1]? Otherwise you could borrow mine. Perhaps you could share one between you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Student 1:</td>
<td>Elev 2:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>[...]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Lärare:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Elev 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lärare:</td>
<td>Ah. Och så det med Lebensraum också.</td>
<td>Yeah. And also that with Lebensraum.</td>
<td>Är det här som är svaret? Hitler strävade efter...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

40 The first question reads: What objectives did Hitler have in his foreign policy and what did he do to achieve his objectives?
Student 2: Is it the answer? Hitler strived for...
Lärare: Mm, ja.
Teacher: Mm, yes.
Elev 3: Ja, det är det som står i boken. För det första är [oklart], och sen är det.
Student 3: Yes, this is what is written in the textbook. First, it is [unintelligible], and then that.
Elev 2: Då tar vi det där.
Student 2: Then we take this.
Lärare: A, där har ni. [...] Yeah, you have it. [...] [...]
Teacher: Ok. Number four.41 What does the non-aggression pact mean? And then it is the Soviet Union and Germany that we are dealing with. It is those two that reach an agreement with each other. And I need to add that in the History textbooks it sometimes reads Non-aggression Pact and sometimes the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.
Elev: Men vad är svaret då?
Student: But what is the answer then?
Lärare: Jo, men det kommer, vi kommer till det. Jag ville bara förklara för det, ni kanske kommer att se det i andra sammanhang.
Teacher: Oh, this comes — we come to that. I just wanted to explain that, you perhaps will see this in other contexts.

Since Extract 4 represents the whole class check after the students worked individually on the set of questions, the students routinely made sure that their answers were approved by the teacher as seen in turns 18–24. The routine appeared to be well-established so when the teacher in turn 26 did not provide the answer to question 4, this caused confusion as reflected in turn 27. At the end of the check, one of the students concluded with a comment that they were very good/clever42 that day, indicating that this mode of working was generally valued.

41 The fourth question reads: What does 'Non-aggression Pact' mean, why did the enemies, the Soviet Union and Germany, sign it and what effects did it have on Poland and Finland?
42 Swedish duktiga.
The classroom data from Session 5 hints that there was another established routine that was performed if criticality was misused as described in the Swedish interview data. The interaction between the teacher and students, shown in Extract 5, implies that Student 1 violated one of the ground-rules of the classroom discourse as perceived by the students.

Extract 5

Turn

Lärare: Och de här förföljelserna [...] kallar man för pogromer [...] så då vet ni att det betyder perioder av starkare förföljelser av det judiska folket.

Teacher: And these persecutions [...] are called pogroms [...] so now you know that it means periods of more intensive persecution of the Jewish people.

Elev 1: Men erkänner de att de dödade Jesus?

Student 1: But do they admit killing Jesus?

Lärare: Jesus själv var ju jude.

Teacher: Jesus was himself, as all know, Jewish.

Elev 1: Han var väl kristen.

Student 1: He was, I think, Christian.

Lärare: Nej, kristendomen, den kom ungefär 300-talet efter Kristus, efter det vi kallar för Jesus död och uppståndelse.

Teacher: No, Christianity emerged about 300 years later after what we call the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Elev 1: Men hur ser judarna på det? Det är det som frågan.

Student 1: But what do the Jews think about it? This is the question.

Lärare: De tror ju inte att Jesus var Messias som de kristna tror. Det är ju där som konfli[kt]...

Teacher: They don’t believe that Jesus was the Messiah, as the Christian believe. This is, as you know, the conflict...

Elev 1: Jamen, det är inte det jag frågar. Tror du att judarna dödade Jesus?

Student 1: Yes but this is not what I’m asking. Do you think that the Jews killed Jesus?

Lärare: Nej, de tror inte att de dödade Jesus i form av Guds son.

Teacher: No, I don’t think they killed Jesus as the son of God.

Elev 1: Nej, men tror du att de dödade Jesus?

Student 1: No, but do you think that they killed Jesus?

Elev 2: Kan vi gå vidare?

Student 2: Can we go on?

Lärare: Ja, det var en konflikt däremellan.

Teacher: Yes, there was a conflict between them.

16
Elev 3: Vadå tror [Elev 1]? Du vet väl att de dödade honom inte.

Student 3: What do you [Student 1] mean? You should\textsuperscript{43} know that they didn’t kill him.

[...]

Lärare: Jesus spikades på korset av en folkmassa som krävde att han skulle bli avrättad, ja. Och det var i Palestina.

Teacher: Jesus was crucified by the crowd that demanded that he would be executed, yes. And this was in Palestine.

Elev 2: Nu går vi vidare.

Student 2: Now we should go on.

As the interaction in Extract 5 unfolded, Student 1 tried to elicit an answer from the teacher on who was to blame for the execution of Jesus Christ, which was not the topic of the session. In turns 31–38, the teacher avoided giving a straightforward answer to the student’s question in turn 30. The student apparently recognised the teacher’s reluctance and proceeded to repeat the question in turns 34, 36, and 38. In turn 39, Student 2 interfered in the exchange and proposed to leave the digressive topic. Student 3 supported Student 2’s suggestion and implied that Student 1 had asked a nuisance question. Thus turns 39 and 41 may be interpreted as an attempt to enforce a ground-rule of the classroom discourse of not interrupting the teacher’s narrative, a theme which is corroborated by the Swedish focus group interview data. In turn 42, the teacher answered the question and signalled by the verbal and non-verbal means\textsuperscript{44} that the discussion was over, which was immediately supported in turn 43. When an interruption was not resisted by the rest of the class, the teacher frequently used the Swedish phrase \textit{i alla fall} (English: anyway) to signal that further discussion was not welcomed. The classroom data suggests that it could be those incidents that the teacher rendered as misuse of criticality in her interview.

The scarce examples of questioning the teaching discourse and students’ strenuous efforts to oppose its interruptions provided further evidence that criticality instruction was problematic in History, which was labelled as a conservative subject in the Swedish teacher interview. The classroom data pointed to students sharing this perception of History. As illustrated in the following extracts from Sessions 1, 3 and 7, the students considered History as a set of facts to be learned during the whole observation period.

\textit{Extract 6}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Elev 1:</th>
<th>Instuderingsfrågor?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Student 1:</td>
<td>Study questions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{43} In the meaning expected thing.

\textsuperscript{44} During the observation, I documented this incident in the observation form under \textit{Critical moments}.
Lärare: Frågor att öva på inför [...] ett prov på det sen.
Teacher: Questions to practise before [...] you get a test on this later.

Student 2: Shall we make notes at once? Tell us.
Teacher: [...] You don’t need to make notes now, not in the beginning. I’ll tell you when. Ok.

Extract 7

Elev: Tillhör de här frågorna testen som vi ska få sen?
Student: Do these questions belong to the test we will do later?
Lärare: Ja, precis. Det här är övningsfrågor också inför testen.
Teacher: Yes, exactly. These are also questions for practise for the test.

Extract 8

Elev: Om man kan de där, alltså frågorna, kan man klara provet?
Student: If we know those, like, questions, can we pass the test?
Lärare: Ja, ja. Det ska inte vara någon tveksamhet där.
Teacher: Yes, yes. There shouldn’t be any doubt there.

In Session 1 the teacher introduced a list of the study questions covering the topics the class had worked on during the observation period. Four of the five question sections had a heading that corresponded to each topic and tested the students’ knowledge, that is the ability to reproduce factual information. Given the limited questioning of the teaching discourse and students’ efforts to guard against interruptions, the following student’s request in Session 7 may be seen as logical and expected.

Extract 9

Elev: Kan vi få de här svaren?
Student: Could we get these answers?
Lärare: Förlåt?

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45 The original list of questions covered only the first three topics and had in total 25 questions. The teacher revised the list of questions in Session 7 to include two questions on the Cold War. In addition, two of the questions concerning the prelude to WWII were merged into one.
In turn 56, the teacher clearly indicated that her expectation was that the students worked independently and her role was only to assist them in understanding whether their answers were reasonable. However, taking into account the wording of most questions — for example, ‘Who were Germany’s allies (the Axis powers)?’ — the role of the teacher would likely be limited to confirming or refuting students’ recounting of facts, an approach inconsistent with any mode of criticality instruction that was identified through the policy and interview analysis.

In contrast, the fifth section of study questions entitled ‘the questions for you to develop your own thinking’ included two questions that were congruent with the mode of criticality instruction as the analysis model. The questions were the following: ‘If you were to “change the historical course of events” what would you pick and change? Give your reasons’ and ‘Based on your knowledge about Nazism, Hitler, WWII, and the Holocaust, what are, in your opinion, the most important lessons to learn and use in life so it never happens again?’ In both cases, the students were to discuss how they could or would prevent the tragic events from happening again. The corroborative evidence from the interview and classroom data suggests that this is related to bringing up good citizens who make ‘good choices’ as the teacher put it in Session 5 below.

Extract 10

Turn

Lärare: Föröfventlen är det svarta hålet i modern världshistoria och europeisk historia. Därför kommer det alltid att vara alla vuxnas ansvar att lära barn att det goda valet alltid finns och man vet och inser vart ett dåligt val kan leda till.

Teacher: The Holocaust is the black hole in the modern world and European history. That’s why it will always be the adults’ responsibility to teach children that there is always the good choice and that they know and understand what a bad choice leads to.

[...]

123
Teacher: If we conceal this then [...] we can’t know what humankind is capable of doing, and we must know this and understand in order to make good choices in the future.

Judging by the classroom data, the role of the teaching discourse in the upbringing of good citizens was substantial as it was the teacher whose long and elaborate turns were present in the sessions with minimal contribution from the students. Interestingly, while working in groups outside the classroom, one group of students mentioned the preventive function of criticality in Session 7 as shown in Extract 11.

Extract 11

Turn

Elev 1: För att det inte ska hända igen – det är väldigt svårt att stoppa sådant här men det man måste tänka på är att alla människor ska få tycka det vad de själv vill och försöka alltså ha alltid kritiskt tänkande och så vidare.

Student 1: So this will not happen again — it is very difficult to stop something like this but one thing one must think about is that all people should be able to think what they want themselves and try to always have critical thinking and so on.

Elev 2: Att låta människor tycka vad de vill.

Student 2: To let people think what they want.

The exchange in Extract 11 was also unique since this provided the only identified case of direct reference to criticality in over nine hours of recording from the Swedish classroom data. At the same time, another group of students that worked in another room on the same task (preventing a new holocaust) suggested that it could be achieved by ‘spreading the knowledge’, ‘not letting all the power be in one person’s hands’, ‘having the courage of your convictions’ and ‘treating everyone as equal in dignity and rights’. These and other ideas were then supported and developed by the teacher during the whole class check as evidenced in Extract 12.

Extract 12

Turn

Lärare: Ja, tack ska ni ha alla tre grupperna [...] Kunskap, att informera, att diskutera med varandra, demokrati som

Teacher: Yes, thank you to all three groups […] Knowledge, to inform, to discuss with each other, democracy as the social system, type of society — these, at least, contribute towards that such things won’t happen again. This is, of course, no guarantee; people can be cruel even in democracies. To have the courage of your convictions and help the vulnerable. A multicultural society, that is […] knowing someone who is of another skin colour, hair colour, religion, culture, makes it easier not to feel enmity towards others. Resist racism and accept that all are equal in dignity and rights. […] I think these are the good things that you have proposed and that we really should grasp these, each of us, and reflect on how I treat my friends. You are presumably going to be parents, very many of you, and then you would bring up the next generation who will play in the school yard and also accept everyone and that everyone is equal in dignity and rights […] And then of course next elections in Sweden, in 2014, and then we have an opportunity to vote for a party that you think will work well with those things. So this is the democratic path that we can take to change the situation for the better.

As seen in Extract 12, the teacher reinforced the students’ inputs concerning values that they discussed and at the end of turn 61 made an
explicit connection between these values and the choices that were considered good ones in a democracy. In other words, the teacher’s turn served not only a purely educational function in History but also a viewpoint related to moral/cultural upbringing of good citizens, and therefore education for citizenship.

Summary

Against the background of the findings of the policy and interview analysis, the close examination of the Swedish classroom data suggests that the educational policy sends the unclear message concerning criticality and its instruction. This might lead to confusion about what teaching objectives and learning outcomes are crucial in vocational classes. The lack of evidence of the prescribed criticality instruction as either questioning or source criticism might be a result of this confusion in the observed upper secondary class. Although the Swedish teacher was under the impression that questioning frequently occurred in her History sessions, this was not supported by either the student focus group or the classroom data. The lack of questioning was further corroborated by the teacher’s own assumption that History is a conservative subject that presupposes a single dominant historical narrative that is taught and learned. Given that the policy is identical for all vocational students taking the compulsory History course, the finding might have a bearing on how criticality instruction is framed in other vocational programmes and classes.

In the absence of a consistent policy on criticality, the teacher appeared to focus on criticality instruction as the transmission of values to bring up good citizens, an approach consistent with the goals of education for citizenship. As identified in the teacher interview and classroom discourse analysis, this mode of criticality instruction was justified by its assumed value in preventing new tragedies like the Holocaust from happening again. Although the classroom data indicated that the students were aware that this view on criticality could have a preventive function, they tended to consider criticality a safeguard for an independent opinion. The focus group interview and classroom data pointed, however, to the lack of instruction and scaffolding for the development of an independent opinion in students. The students’ role was frequently limited to reproducing the factual information that they had learned and listening to the conclusions that were drawn by the teacher on the basis of either the presented information or the teacher’s broader knowledge. Despite the fact that the students had background knowledge on the discussed events, no scaffolding was offered to build upon their knowledge and develop reflective skills. The few attempts to divert the teaching discourse were perceived as unproductive, mainly by the students.
themselves, and verbal and non-verbal means were used to restore the dominance of the teaching discourse and its exclusive right to set the agenda and interpret the historical events. This was in line with the findings of the focus group interview where the teaching discourse was considered entirely reliable and not eligible for interruptions.

**Russia**
The Russian classroom data consists of the completed observation forms, samples of the teaching materials and transcriptions of the observed History sessions during the three weeks of data collection in the upper secondary school. To provide the context of the observed sessions, each week of data collection is briefly described according to the gathered evidence.

**Outline lesson description**
In the first week of data collection, the class dealt with the pre-war period and the overview of World War II during the two consecutive sessions. Session 1 started with a check of what the students knew about the international situation in the 1930-s, which was concluded with the evaluation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. One of the students was invited to show on the map what countries the other students were talking about. In the second part of the session, the teacher used a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the periodisation of WWII and the reasons behind it. The students took notes and asked the teacher to repeat some sentences. In Session 2 the teacher continued with the presentation that included showing four video clips from a documentary that was dubbed from English into Russian. Each four-minute clip was followed by a whole class teacher-led activity where the students were invited to summarise the contents of each clip. The clips were devoted to the beginning of WWII, the plan of the Blitzkrieg, the invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands, and the Dunkirk evacuation. Session 2 was concluded with a short discussion of whether WWII could have been avoided.

During the second week of data collection, the observed class worked on the topic commonly referred to in Russia as the Great Patriotic War. Session 3 started with the revision of the previously taught material on the reasons of WWII. Afterwards the teacher distributed handouts with a list of comprehension questions to be completed while watching an episode of the Russian documentary *The Second World War: Day by Day. Russian Version*. The 20-minute episode was about the defeats of the Soviet army

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47 The period of WWII from the 22 of June, 1941 to the 9 of May, 1945.
48 Despite the title, some members of the internet community describe the documentary as giving an unfavourable and biased picture of the Soviet army and leadership.
in the beginning of the war and was shown in short pieces with a subsequent comprehension check after each piece. In Session 4 the teacher invited the students to propose some reasons for the defeats that were not mentioned in the episode and also added some reasons herself. Afterwards the class watched another extract from the documentary, which was followed by the teacher’s summary. In the second half of Session 4, one of the students gave a six-minute prepared talk entitled *The qualitative changes in the power balance in the international arena*. The session was concluded with a discussion on whether it would have been possible to reduce the number of casualties at the beginning of the war.

In the third week of observations, the class continued to deal with the third period of WWII\(^{49}\) and started the topic of the Cold War. During most of Session 5 the teacher spoke about WWII using a PowerPoint presentation, while the students took notes. At the end of the session, one of the students gave a five-minute talk on the versions of Hitler’s death, which led to a lively discussion during the break. In Session 6 the teacher continued her presentation also allowing time for student discussions and another four-minute student talk on the Nuremberg Trials. At the end of the session the teacher was about to introduce the topic of the Cold War but was interrupted by a student, who gave his opinion on how WW2 could have been averted. After a few minutes, the teacher interrupted the student and started the new topic. After the session the student initiated a continued discussion with the teacher.

**Classroom data analysis**

The collected classroom data confirmed the teacher’s account that criticality instruction in the form of either debates and hearings or ‘the black and white’ were not used in the observed class. However, the classroom data indicated that in a number of cases the teacher’s instruction followed the pattern that she and the students perceived as criticality, that is ‘to reason, to consider different points of view, to express [own] points of view’ *(Russian teacher interview, 21/03/2013)*.

The examination of the data suggested that the teacher relied on the students’ knowledge of the studied historical events and expected students to provide a detailed account of the event to facilitate reasoning. The teacher would typically review the students’ knowledge at the beginning of a session and would continue checking with the students until she was satisfied with the scope and detail level of the responses, as illustrated by a shortened example from Session 3 in *Extract 13*. 

\(^{49}\) 1944–1945
Учитель: Здравствуйте, садитесь. [...] Ну, давайте повторим. Когда началась Вторая мировая война, [Ученик 1]?

Teacher: Good morning, sit down. [...] All right, let’s revise. When did the Second World War start, [Student 1]?

Ученик 1: 1 сентября 1939 года.

Student 1: On the first of September 1939.

Учитель: [...] Так, хорошо. Назовите причины Второй мировой войны, причины, [Ученик 2].

Teacher: [...] Ok, right. Name the reasons for WWII, the reasons, [Student 2].

Ученик 2: Вторжение Германии в Польшу.

Student 2: The German invasion of Poland.

Ученик 1: Это не причины.

Student 1: These are not the reasons.

Учитель: [Ученик 2], ты вопрос слышишь? Причины войны, не с чего началась война, а причины войны.

Teacher: [Student 2], do you understand the question? The reasons, not what it started with. The reasons for the war.

Ученик 2: Растущая...

Student 2: Growing...

Учитель: Причины войны, пожалуйста, [Ученик 3].

Teacher: The reasons for the war, please, [Student 3].

Ученик 3: Ну, самая первая причина – это условия Версальского договора, что побежденные страны были максимально унижены по этому договору; стремление стран-агрессоров к мировому господству; территориальный передел мира; усиление неравномерности развития капиталистических стран и боязнь лидеров капиталистических стран распространения идей и практики социализма и коммунизма.

Student 3: So, the very first reason is the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles that the defeated countries were tremendously humiliated by its conditions; aggressive ambitions of particular countries to dominate in the world, to redraw the national borders of the world; the intensification of imbalance of development rates among the capitalist countries and the capitalist leaders’ fear of dissemination of the communist ideas and practice.

Учитель: Так, хорошо. Итак, [Ученик 2] уже нам сказал, что вторая мировая война началась с нападения на Польшу. Хорошо, [Ученик 4], пожалуйста.

Teacher: Ok, good. So, [Student 2] has already told us that the
Second World War started with the invasion of Poland. OK, good, [Student 4], please.

As evident in Extract 13, the revision routine was well-established in the observed class and indicated cooperation between the teacher and students. Seven students out of a total of 17 actively participated in the revision task during Session 3. At a point when the routine was broken in turn 66 by Student 2 failing to interpret the teachers question in the intended way, Student 1 immediately interrupted and pointed this out. In turn 67, the teacher made it clear that she expected a different answer and in turn 69 stopped Student 2, possibly to show that she was not satisfied with the pace and readdressed the question to Student 3. The interaction in the extract suggests that there was a ground rule of educational discourse to answer the revision questions quickly and concisely as evidenced in turn 70.

The student contribution levels to the revision routine were high during the observation period and the teacher sometimes had to stop a student to involve other students as seen in the following extract from Session 1.

Extract 14

Turn Учитель: Так, хорошо [Ученику 1]. Остановись, пожалуйста, пока. [...] В чем еще проявлялась напряженность в международных отношениях в 30-е годы? Пожалуйста, [Ученик 2].

Teacher: OK, good [to Student 1]. Please stop for now. [...] How else did the world tensions manifest themselves in the 30-s, [Student 2]?

In the revision routine, the students would often reproduce the teaching discourse as in turn 70 when the student read her notes from the previous lecture and her summary of the relevant chapter in the History textbook. However, some of the responses were based on sources outside the teaching discourse and included a variety of books written for a target audience of historians rather than upper secondary school students. To secure the routine, the teacher usually set some revision for homework as shown in Extract 15 from Session 4.

Extract 15

Turn Учитель: [...] Итак, записываем домашнее задание. К следующему уроку вам выучить, повторить первый и второй период Великой Отечественной войны.

Teacher: [...] So, write down the homework. Learn and revise the first and second periods of the Great Patriotic War by the next session.
Further analysis of the classroom data indicated that the teacher used the revision routine to proceed with a reflective task, similar to that in turn 74 from Session 1 below, to develop students’ reasoning, which was perceived as an element of criticality. The following extract provides an example of this step-by-step procedure.

Extract 16

**Turn**

**Учитель:** [...] Вот какую можно дать оценку этому договору [пакт Молотова-Риббентропа]? Пожалуйста, [Ученик 1].

**Teacher:** [...] So how will you evaluate this treaty [the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact]? Please, [Student 1].

**Ученик 1:** Ну вот если бы Германия полностью держала слово, выполнила бы договор, то можно сказать, что как бы для Советского Союза договор имел довольно-таки благоприятные.

**Student 1:** If Germany had kept its word and observed the treaty, then we could have said that the treaty was favourable for the Soviet Union.

**Учитель:** Хорошо, скажи, пожалуйста, [Ученик 1], и все остальные, подумайте: а вот, заключая этот договор, действительно Советский Союз рассчитывал на то, что Германия не нападет на Советский Союз в ближайшие там 10 лет, 15 лет [...]?

**Teacher:** Ok, tell us, then please, [Student 1] and the rest of the class, think about whether the Soviet Union expected that Germany would not attack the Soviet Union in the next 10–15 years [...]?

**Ученик 1:** Нет.

**Student 1:** No.

**Учитель:** Нет, не верили, конечно же, да? Т.е. желание было оттянуть [...] войну, [Ученик 2].

**Teacher:** No, of course they didn’t, did they? That is there was a wish to postpone [...] the war, [Student 2].

**Ученик 2:** Заставить их пойти в другую сторону.

**Student 2:** To make them go in another direction.

**Ученик 3:** Это же привело к тому, что Германия и начала военные действия...

**Student 3:** This led to Germany starting the hostilities...

**Учитель:** Так, значит [...] вторая оценка.

**Teacher:** Ok, [...] this is another point of view.

**Ученик 3:** В результате этого договора, получается, что СССР развязало руки Германии, потому что возможно бы Германия не начала свою агрессию, ну столь большую агрессию в отношении других стран из-за
боязни того, что будет воевать на два фронта, на несколько фронтов.

82 Student 3: As the result of this treaty, the USSR let Germany off the leash, because, perhaps Germany wouldn’t have started its aggression against other countries fearing that it had to fight at the two fronts, or several fronts.

[...]

Учитель: Итак, две точки зрения [...] ограничившимся двумя [...]

83 Teacher: So, two points of view [...] let us restrict ourselves to them [...]

[...]

Ученик 1: Ну вот если бы не было этого пакта о ненападении, то Вторая мировая война все равно бы случилась [...] но это было бы несколько позже, потому что, хоть и говорят, что этот пакт, он способствовал началу войны, но война все равно бы началась.

84 Student 1: But if there hadn’t been any non-aggression pact, the Second World War would have started anyway [...] but it would have been a little later, because although this pact contributed to the outbreak, the war would break out anyway.

Учитель: То есть, война все равно бы началась, да? Да. И об этом свидетельствует, мы еще с вами об этом не говорили сегодня, ну и нет у нас такой возможности по количеству часов, но об этом свидетельствует подготовка Германии к войне. Так разработан еще весной 39-года план Вайс, это нападение на Польшу.

85 Teacher: Do you mean that the war would break out anyway? I agree. And this is supported by, we haven’t talked about it yet and we don’t have an opportunity to do that because of the limited lesson time, it is supported by the German preparations for a war. Fall Weiss was designed as early as the spring of 1939, which is the invasion plan of Poland.

In turns 75–82 in Extract 16, the students in cooperation with the teacher arrived at two points of view on the historical document, which the teacher found satisfactory. However, this was questioned in turn 84 and an additional interpretation was offered. In turn 85, the teacher agreed to the proposed interpretation, supported it with some historical evidence and complained about the lack of time to consider multiple interpretations in a proper way. In other words, the interaction in Extract 16 suggested that conflicting historical narratives were accepted in the teaching discourse and
background knowledge was used to develop students’ reasoning as an element of criticality instruction that was constrained by the allocated teaching hours in relation to the scope of the History syllabus.

The classroom data indicated that the teacher took several measures to secure that the students had the background knowledge necessary for reasoning. When the students, for example, watched documentaries, the teacher did comprehension checks after each video clip as well as at the end of the unit by asking students to summarise its contents as evidenced in Extract 17. In addition, the students had to fill in the written document that was to be handed in to the teacher for assessment, which set a clear objective for the students while watching.

Extract 17

Turn
Учитель: [...] Ну, а теперь повторим. Итак, пожалуйста, скажите, каким образом можно было уменьшить потери в началный период войны?

Teacher: [...] So, time to revise. So, tell me please how the casualties in the beginning of the war could have been reduced?

In turn 86 from Session 4, the teacher posed a type of question that was aimed at eliciting a summary of the documentary as well as at reasoning and drawing conclusions since the documentary itself did not include any recommendations for reducing the casualties but described the course of the events in the beginning of the war on the territory of the Soviet Union. This suggests that the teacher provided purposeful and explicit instruction in drawing conclusions, which is a further element of criticality as perceived in the Russian interviews.

As the Russian teacher acknowledged in her interview, the results of such instruction were, however, not likely to be much different from the dominant historical narrative. Although the students were often to draw conclusions independently and form their own opinion, the latter would be similar to the one that was present in the teaching discourse as illustrated in the following extract from Session 6.

Extract 18

Turn
Учитель: [...] Ну, а теперь источники победы Советского Союза над фашистской Германией. Вот как вы думаете сами, какие источники мы можем назвать?

Teacher: [...] So now to facilitators of the Soviet Union victory over Nazi Germany. So, what facilitators, in your opinion, could you name?

88 [...] [Several students share their opinions]
Учитель: [...] давайте теперь посмотрим, какие вот историки называют источники победы Советского Союза в войне. [...] Ну, в принципе, вам не составляет труда, ведь вы практически сами все назвали [...] все источники.

89 Teacher: [...] let’s see what facilitators of the Soviet Union victory in the war the historians mention. [...] So, in principle, it was not that hard for you, you mentioned almost everything by yourselves [...] all the facilitators.

In turn 87 the teacher invited the students to express their own opinions on what they saw as facilitators\textsuperscript{50} of the Soviet Union victory over Nazi Germany and in turn 89 commented that the students covered most of what they called ‘the official point of view’ in the interview. In the teacher’s understanding this was not sufficient to be critical, which is perhaps reflected in the wording of turn 90 below, when she introduced the topic in Session 5.

Extract 19

Turn

Учитель: [...] Итак, мы с вами изучили, может быть, не очень подходит сюда слово, глагол, но познакомились, освежили в памяти первый и второй периоды Великой Отечественной войны. Значит, и сегодня мы с вами начнем опять же изучать, тоже мне не очень нравится этот глагол для нашего количества часов, заключительный этап Великой Отечественной войны.

90 Teacher: [...] So, we have studied, perhaps this verb, doesn’t really fit here, we have acquainted ourselves with, refreshed our memory of the first and second periods of the Great patriotic war. So today we will start studying, again I don’t like this verb because of the number of the contact hours, the concluding period of the Great patriotic war.

In Extract 19 the teacher, through her word choice and metalinguistic comment, drew attention to her frustration over the hindrance of the allocated time to meaningful studying of the prescribed historical events. The classroom data also gave indications that the teacher had to limit those historical narratives that were not included in the teaching discourse, which led to student frustration in turn 94 as exemplified in Extract 20 from Session 6.

\textsuperscript{50}The teacher deliberately avoided using the word reasons.
Учитель: Ну хорошо, [Ученик], но мы возвращаемся уже...

Teacher: Ok, thank you [Student] but now we go back to...

Ученик: [Учитель], там самая большая проблема в этот момент была в том, что Гитлер на самом деле очень сильно блефовал, и он сам сказал, что мы были на грани большого провала. Как признавался Геринг на Нюрнбергском процессе, Гитлер однажды подошел к нему и сказал, что на самом деле вы были правы насчет того, что линия Зигфрида пала бы за три недели, и так как для взятия Богемской линии обороны, которая находилась в Судетах, нам нужно было 35 дивизий, а на западной границе у него оставалось 5 плюс в резерве...

Student: [Teacher], the biggest problem was that Hitler was, in fact, heavily bluffing, and he admitted himself that they were on the brink of a complete failure. According to Göring’s testimony at the Nuremberg trials, Hitler once came to him and said that he was right that the Westwall would not stand three weeks, and since they needed 35 divisions to seize the Bohemian line of defence, that was situated in Sudetenland, they had only 5 divisions and some reserves on the Western border...

Учитель: Хорошо, [Ученик] У нас сейчас уже времени нет обсуждать, давай-ка так холодную войну.

Teacher: All right, [Student]. We don’t have time now for further discussion; let’s proceed to the Cold War.

Ученик: Ну е-мое!

Student: That’s not fair!

As seen in turn 91, the teacher indicated for the student that it was time to proceed to a new topic, but the student continued to deliver his additional narrative further in turn 92 that led to a decisive act of classroom management by the teacher in turn 93 that was justified by the lack of time.

Judging from the collected data, the lack of time was also used as a pretext for another routine, namely the dictation routine. During the observation period the students were expected to write down the teacher’s words, which was arguably used to secure that the dominant historical narrative was disseminated in the whole class. As evidenced in Extracts 21, 22 and 23 from Sessions 1, 2, and 3 respectively, the students were aware of its importance and took measures to document it.
Turn

Ученик: Можно еще раз?

Student: Could you repeat it?

Extract 22

Учитель: Этого же года, 39 года. 28 сентября 1939 года в Москве был подписан германо-советский договор о дружбе и границе.

Teacher: The same year, 39. On the 28th of September 1939 the German-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Demarcation was signed in Moscow.

Ученик 1: 28-го чего?

Student 1: The 28th of what?

Ученик 2: Сентября.

Student 2: September.

Ученик 1: А года какого?

Student 1: What year?

Ученик 3: 39.

Student 3: 39.

Ученик 1: Что было сделано?

Student 1: What happened?

Ученик 2: [Ученик 1], ты издеваешься?

Student 2: [Student 1], are you kidding?

Ученик 1: Нет!

Student 1: No!

Ученик 2: Германо-советский договор о дружбе и границе.

Student 2: The German-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Demarcation.

Extract 23

Ученик: Писать это?

Student: Shall we write it down?

Extracts 21–23 suggest that the dictation routine was well-established and the students were active in maintaining it as seen in turn 95 and 105. If someone could not keep up with the routine as evident in turns 97, 99 and 100, the other students would assist in re-establishing it without the teacher’s involvement. This, however, did not prevent the students from questioning the teaching discourse if deemed necessary and appropriate as exemplified in the following extract from Session 3.
Extract 24

Turn

Учитель: [...] Ну, и запишите хронологические рамки [...] значит, 22 июня 41 года по 9 мая 1945 года.

106 Teacher: [...] Now write down the chronological framework [...] so from the 22nd of June 41 to the 9th of May 1945.

Ученик 1: Не 9-го, 8-го фактически.

107 Student 1: Not on the 9th but on the 8th in fact.

Учитель: С 8-го на 9-е.

108 Teacher: Overnight, between the 8th and 9th.

Ученик 2: Может это было 9-е, откуда ты знаешь?

109 Student 2: Perhaps it was the 9th, how would you know?

Учитель: Ну официально считается 9 мая [...]

110 Teacher: So officially it is the 9th of May [...]

Ученик 1: Фактически боев уже не было.

111 Student 1: There were, in fact, no battles.

The interaction in Extract 24 pointed to the possibility of questioning the teaching discourse as well as the possibility for a student to have a divergent opinion under the condition that the official point of view or, in other words, the dominant historical narrative was known. Although turn 109 implied that another student attempted to maintain the teaching discourse, neither the teacher in this very incident nor other students in similar incidents during the observation period made efforts to suppress the divergent narrative, which further supported the hypothesis that conflicting historical narratives could co-exist in the sampled Russian upper secondary class.

Summary

The analysis of the Russian classroom data suggests that the conception of criticality as reasoning and drawing one’s own conclusions based on students’ background knowledge was enacted in the observed class. The teacher provided instruction that enabled students to demonstrate their criticality and the teacher encouraged and scaffolded this to the degree that she deemed possible under the given time constraint that was anticipated in the policy analysis. In doing this, the teacher relied on the dictation and revision routines to ensure the students possessed the necessary knowledge base as well as on engagement in dialogue with the students and building upon their existing knowledge. The extensive use of routines contributed to the establishment of the dominant historical narrative, which the teacher made the students aware of, as exemplified in turn 89, which was further corroborated by the finding of the Russian focus group interview analysis
indicating that the students differentiated between historical facts and the official point of view.

The examination of the classroom data identified that student criticality was further supported by acceptance of co-existing conflicting historical narratives in the classroom discourse. This facilitated the occurrence of incidents when the students questioned the teaching discourse, although those incidents were not numerous. This confirmed the teacher’s interview claim that students infrequently demonstrated criticality. Based on the findings of the policy and teacher interview analysis, the low occurrence levels might be attributed to the absence of specific genres of criticality instruction, such as debates and hearings and ‘the black and white’, that were not introduced in lessons by the teacher on the grounds of the lack of time. In other words, the policy constraints of time and the scope of the syllabus were evident in the observed upper secondary class taking the basic History course. As a result, the class did not study divergent views on historical events at a rate that the teacher would find sufficient. However, this did not entail complete absence of criticality instruction.

**Australia**

The Australian classroom data consists of the completed observation forms, samples of the teaching materials and transcriptions of the observed History sessions during the transition period in 2013, which covered two weeks of data collection in the upper secondary school. To provide the context of the observed sessions, each week of data collection is briefly described according to the gathered evidence.

**Outline lesson description**

In the first week of data collection, the teacher met the class for the first time and introduced the course to the students. Annie divided the class into table groups to work on a quiz entitled *Remembering History* with a focus on what a primary and secondary source is. While the table groups were working on the quiz, the teacher monitored the discussions and understandings in each table group followed by a whole-class comprehension check. Afterwards the teacher invited the students to define the term *national identity* and discuss first in the table groups. This was followed by a whole class discussion of what an Australian national identity is on the basis of a four-minute video clip with an Australian comic Adam Hill presenting an alternative national anthem at the 2006 Melbourne Comedy Festival. The session continued with instruction in the multimodal analysis of primary documents, during which the students analysed four pictures representing Australian history: pictures of an Aboriginal
Australian, European settlements in Victoria, the Eureka Rebellion and a picture of a certificate giving the results of the 1899 Australian Federal Referendum. Annie concluded the lesson with a brief description of the course contents for the rest of the academic year.

During the second week of data collection for the observed class, the planned four-hour historical town tour was cancelled due to a tragic event. Students met again for a regular one-hour session on the last day before the exam and vacation period. In this session the class dealt with the topic of colonization. The teacher started with showing a satirical eight-minute video clip entitled *An Occasionally Accurate History of Australia*, covering the period 1770–1919. After the clip, she invited students to name nations that were colonised and to read aloud *Understanding the Patterns of Migration to Port Phillip* from her self-prepared teaching materials. The text introduced the key terms for the session such as colonialism and push and pull forces. The teacher then gave a PowerPoint presentation about the history of colonisation of Australia in the area of contemporary Victoria and from time to time engaged the students in her talk. The session was concluded with individual student work on the reasons for John Batman and Penelope Selby (early settlers) deciding to settle in the Port Phillip District. This included reading and analysis of primary and secondary history sources and the creation of a fact file about Penelope Selby on the basis of the extract from *Double Time, Women in Victoria — 150 years* by Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly.

**Classroom data analysis**
The collected classroom data suggested that the students received explicit criticality instruction as meaning making from historical evidence. To ensure that the students were able to make meaning from historical evidence, the teacher first checked if the students were familiar with the terms primary and secondary source as illustrated in *Extract 25* from the first week of data collection.

*Extract 25*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>We are doing a bit of a quiz trying to remember some concepts about history so what a secondary source is and a primary source. Hey, how’re you going?</td>
<td>Very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can’t remember?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>The only one that I know is what century it is.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>So what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>19th.</td>
<td>Student:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher: Excellent. A primary source actually comes from the time so if we were looking at world war one and we saw a letter from one of the soldiers that would be a primary source. A secondary source is [...] historians have used a number of primary sources to draw conclusions so basically a secondary source is historians’ ideas. [...] And then think about what secondary source would be inappropriate to use? Would your painting of World War One [...] would you be able to write about it in your exam? No, probably not. What we want is well-known historians and their opinions. All right? So you’ll be able to put those in your own words. Go for it. Of course you can.

In turn 118 the teacher defined the terms and made the students aware that only using secondary sources that were written by ‘well-known historians’ was appropriate in the school context. In a subsequent discussion with one of the table groups, the teacher emphasised further that secondary sources and facts that originate from them had to be questioned as evidenced in the following.

**Extract 26**

Turn 119 Teacher: If I asked you to go and do some research on the environmental debates in Tasmania in the 1980s. What would you do?

120 Student 1: The Internet.

121 Teacher: Ok, what would you find on the Internet?

122 Student 1: Facts.

123 Teacher: You would find facts. Who would have written those facts?

124 Student 2: Anybody really.

125 Teacher: Anybody? Ok so that’s what we will call secondary sources. How would those people have written those facts, what would they have used?

126 Student 3: Technology.

127 Teacher: What would they have used?

128 Student 1: Like reports.

129 Student 3: Ah.

130 Teacher: If you were a person, very learned [...] about the environmental issues in the 1980s and you were...

131 Student 1: Expert.

132 Teacher: If you were an expert what would you be looking at? Would you be just, you know, listening?

133 Student 1: Looking at the evidence, like the environment itself.

134 Teacher: Yeah.
Student 4: Written by someone who in fact lived there.
Student 1: Yeah.
Teacher: Exactly, that’s a primary source. A primary source, documents that were from the actual time so it might be a letter that an environmentalist wrote, it might be a photograph of the protest, it might be a newspaper article describing the day the environmentalists stood in front of the diggers, they are all primary sources. Secondary sources is when someone looks at those primary sources and draws conclusions and creates facts. And that’s why we always question the facts.
Student 2: Yeah.
Teacher: Because a lot of the times it is not very objective.

In turns 119–134 the teacher presented the students with a problem to find out how they would solve it. In the interaction she scaffolded the students’ answers by questions and by providing a sentence with a missing word for the students to fill in as in turn 130. In the second week of data collection, the teacher offered the students an opportunity to work with a secondary source to identify the facts about a historical figure, Penelope Selby, and create a fact file about her as seen in Extract 27. Further examination of whether the facts from the secondary source were questioned remained beyond the scope of the collected classroom data.

Extract 27

Turn
140 Teacher: What I’d like you to do now is that I’d like you to read the information about Penelope Selby so I want you to just work by yourself to do this. And I want you to just underline any piece of information that you think is really significant and then I would like to try and create a fact file about her [...] 

Although Extracts 25–26 suggest that primary sources were considered more reliable than the secondary ones, the teacher made it clear that even the primary sources had to be questioned as shown in the following.

Extract 28

Turn
141 Teacher: Very quickly we are going to say that in Australia, something those new settlers celebrated was the fact that it didn’t matter who you were: you were the same as everybody else in this nation. We’re going to test that, you’re going as really good historians, you would think: ‘Is that really true? Were people equal? Were people treated equal and given equal opportunities and
are they still?’ So we’re going to test that right throughout the next year. All right.

In turn 141, the teacher encouraged the students to question the primary sources, which claimed that everybody was equal in the Australian nation as well as to challenge their stereotypical picture of the past. This evidence corroborated the results of the interview analysis. The classroom data indicated that the teacher connected the stereotypical picture with the notion of identity that was introduced in the first week of data collection as illustrated in the following extract.

**Extract 29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Student 1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>What do we mean by Australia’s identity?</td>
<td>How we are seeing ourselves and how the rest of the world does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Student 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Oh, what an amazing definition: how we see ourselves and how the rest of the world sees us. Where is [Student 2]? Can you tell me one way how we see ourselves, one word to describe how we see ourselves?</td>
<td>Globalised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Student 2:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>We’re a globalised nation. Ok. In 2013. What about [Student 3]?</td>
<td>We use technology in Australia. [Student 4]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Student 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>Technology.</td>
<td>Technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Student 4:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Lazy.</td>
<td>We’re lazy. Interesting! This term is really important. We’re going to see how this changes right from when white people came to Australia to today and we’re going to see key events that signal a change in how we express ourselves and see ourselves as a nation. Ok. [Student 5], can you tell me one event that you think might have influenced the course of the Australian history?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Student 5:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>World War One, Two.</td>
<td>Ok, and how do you think they influenced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>Student 5:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>The increase in population, the outbreak of disease and the feminist movement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in **Extract 29**, the teacher first elicited the students’ stereotypical picture of Australia’s identity. In doing this, the teacher involved a number of students and actualised their background knowledge. As the next step of instruction, the class was invited to watch a comic historical video clip with a specific learning objective of analysing the perspective of the author in turn 154, which was followed by discussions in the table groups and concluded with a whole class check. All the steps were articulated and clearly connected
to each other, which indicated the explicit nature of criticality instruction as evidenced in Extract 30.

Extract 30

Turn
154 Teacher: Speaking of the Australian identity... Ok, what I want you to do is we are going to look at a clip, a comic historical document from about 2007. What I want you to think about is what this suggests about Australia’s identity. All right? So feel free to jot down some things what things what you think this says about Australia’s identity in 2013.

155 [...] [The clip is on]
156 Teacher: So just renew a table group. What is in that clip [...] that makes us think about our identity and things that we say about it? What is he saying, Adam Hill saying about our identity? Just talk amongst your table group for a minute or so about that.

157 [...] [Student 1], what do you think about us as a nation?
158 Student 1: I kind of think this like Australians think that the other anthem is too formal [...] 
159 Teacher: Ok, did you hear that? Sorry to interrupt cause I know you’re having really good conversations about the clip. [Student 1] concludes that maybe Adam Hill’s saying that the formality of the national anthem doesn’t appeal to us as people, that we like much more of informal communication. Do you think that it’s correct?
160 Student 2: Yeah.
161 Teacher: Yeah? So all that’s certainly what Adam Hill is saying: we relate much more to something [...] that reaches the common person a little more perhaps. [Student 3], what do you think? What does it say about us? What is it that we celebrate?
162 Student 3: [Silence]
163 Teacher: Does anyone know the original song that it comes from?
164 Student 4: Working class.
165 Teacher: Yeah. Why did they choose that song of all those famous Australian songs?
166 Student 4: Cause most Australians are just working class people.
167 Teacher: So Australians identify themselves and celebrate the fact that many of us are working class people [...] Name someone you know that’s perhaps rich.
168 Student 5: Clive Palmer.
Teacher: Would you put them [rich people that were named by the students] as someone that would represent the original advanced Australia fair?

Student 6: I don’t even think Clive Palmer represents Australia at all.

Teacher: That’s a fair comment as well [...] 

Extract 30 illustrated how the teacher scaffolded the meaning making from the historical evidence. When Student 4 proposed that the clip was to be interpreted as if Australian people identified themselves as working class people in turn 166, the teacher attempted to bring another perspective on the Australian identity in 167, which was not supported by Student 6 in turn 170, and the teacher signalled that several perspectives were accepted in the teaching discourse in turn 171. In other words, the interaction in the extract points to the acceptance of contradicting perspectives in the observed Australian teaching discourse51.

The classroom data also suggest that the teacher provided explicit instruction in analysis of visual and multimodal primary sources and scaffolded the analysis. In Extract 31 from the first week of data collection, the teacher described the analysis in ways that bear a striking similarity to how she defined a component of criticality in her interview as examining the values of the creator of a document (see Interview analysis: Australia, pp. 93–106).

Extract 31

Turn 172 Teacher: [...] One of the most important things as historians that you need to be able to do and you are going to develop your skills in doing this right throughout the year so you will have already done a little bit of this in your previous historical journey but actually looking at primary sources, looking at documents from the period of time that we are studying is an extremely important skill to have. Being able to read what is happening and the ideas that come from that and the values of the person who created the document and the people viewing or reading the document is a very very important skill to have and we’ll be doing a lot of it. And an important skill to have is being able to annotate. Can anyone tell me what that might mean?

Student: Label the diagram, label the picture.

51 However, it might also be argued that the teacher framed the discussion so the students came to the conclusion that the rich people do not accurately represent Australia.
Teacher: To basically label the diagram or the picture, or label and underline keywords and put ideas in a written document. So that's all we're going to be doing for the rest of today. What I am going to get you to do in your table groups is have a look at the document and label what you see in that document. And what I've done is I've got these important words and terms that you might want to use when you actually come to write up an analysis of a document but we are nowhere near ready for that yet. We just really start getting skills for analysis [...] 

In turn 172 the teacher ascribed importance to the analysis of primary documents and indicated that the analysis, which required mastering certain skills, was an essential learning outcome of the course in Australian history. As seen in turn 174, one of the skills required for the analysis was annotation, which might be viewed as the product of criticality, that is its manifestation as a written text. The following extract illustrates how the teacher envisaged the heuristics of annotation. This corroborated the Australian interview data that criticality was considered a complex skill to be developed in students under the guidance of the teacher.

*Extract 32*

Turn 175 Teacher: [...] So what I'm asking you to do is to write around these primary sources and I want you to do this in your table group. You can do it individually first and then compare if you would prefer. But what do you look for? The sorts of things you look for is what is being portrayed in the foreground. [...] So in this case, it's an aboriginal person. But what is this?

176 Student: Dog.

177 Teacher: Yeah, it's a dog. You know, we might draw conclusions [...] it might be a dingo, but at the moment it's looking like a dog. What's in the background? Why have the artist chosen to put this in this background? Ok. Have a think about why the trees are portrayed and the sky is portrayed. What colours are being used? And eventually you might be thinking about: 'What is this artist, why is this artist representing Australia in this way?' This was a painting that was eventually taken back to Britain as being a representation of what Australia was like during the early European settlement. [...] how is that aboriginal person clothed? How are they standing? What do they have in their hand? What is the tone of the piece? Later on if you
look on the back [...] we’re seeing a scuffle at the Eureka Rebellion in Ballarat during the gold mining years. What’s the tone of that compared to the tone of this image that you see here?

[...] What feeling [...] is it creating for the person looking at? Or what feeling comes from the people being represented here.

[...] Basically, you can think about what is happening. So obviously what is happening is the most significant question to ask in this image rather than [pointing at another picture] in this image. So not a lot happening here, basically there is an aboriginal person being portrayed with the dog, perhaps in the middle of their settlement, which is very sparse. And whose perspective is being represented? Sometimes that question is really important because sometimes documents are created to try and persuade people to think in a certain way and that helps us to see the values of people during the time. So for the rest of the time, so you have got fifteen minutes what I’d like you to do is to have a look at all of these documents and I want you to annotate them. Each of you, I would like you to annotate on your own document but I’m very happy if you are to talk with your group about what you see and what you notice. Ok? Go for it.

In *Extract 32* the teacher encouraged the students to analyse the meaning of the pictures’ foreground (turn 175) and background (turn 177), the use of colours, the posture of the people depicted, the tone of the pictures (turn 177), the feelings that the pictures provoked (turn 178) as well as the actions depicted in the pictures and represented perspectives with associated values (turn 179). This suggests that the observed multimodal analysis required the analysis of a number of aspects of the pictures against students’ background knowledge of the depicted events. As the initial step to ensure that the students learn to perform the analysis, the teacher designed questions and made leading comments about the learning materials to scaffold students’ answers as evidenced in the following interaction with the table group of two students about the picture of the Eureka Rebellion with a goldminer pushing the trooper’s gun away in the foreground during the first week of data collection.
Extract 33

Teacher: How are these being portrayed? Think about how he is, what can you say about this man [pointing at the gold miner]?

Student 1: He looks poorer.

Teacher: Yeah, what else?

Student 1: Hmm.

Teacher: Look at his clothing.

Student 1: A different job.

Teacher: Yeah, he is actually a gold miner.

Student 1: Yeah.

Teacher: But see how he’s got muscles.

Student 1: Mm, yes.

Teacher: He is portrayed as being very strong.

Student 1: Mm.

Student 2: Oh yeah, he is like pushing the gun away.

Teacher: Yeah, and he hasn’t got a gun, has he?

Student 2: No.

Teacher: So what’s that saying about this man, how would you describe him? Say [...] whose perspective and what opinions and attitudes do you think, which one, do you think, is seen in a more favourable light?

Student 1: That one.

Teacher: Yeah.

Student 1: Cause he doesn’t have anything and he is still winning.

Teacher: That’s exactly right. So you might want to write that as well.

Although the initial students’ answers in turns 181, 185 and 192 were superficial, the teacher persisted in leading the students to make meaning of the picture as the interaction unfolded in Extract 33. Under the guidance of the teacher, the table group proceeded from the descriptive level of analysis to the interpretive one in turns 196 and 198, which the teacher considered as a necessary learning outcome of the course as seen in the following.

Extract 34

Teacher: Just to get your head around some of this historical thinking and historical perspectives. [...] I would love to see you guys really thinking about what this is representing, not just writing what is being seen but maybe what messages behind it and a lot of you’re doing that really well at the moment so that’s great.
In *Extract 34* the teacher emphasised the need to go beyond the descriptive level of analysis, valued the students’ attempts to interpret the multimodal primary sources, which she associated with historical thinking, and encouraged the students to proceed with examining messages of primary sources.

**Summary**

The analysis of the Australian classroom data suggests that the conception of criticality as meaning making from historical evidence, which was present in the Victorian educational policy, was enacted in the observed class. To facilitate criticality the teacher attempted to ensure that the students differentiated between primary and secondary sources and questioned the stereotypical pictures of the past reflected in primary and secondary sources as well as in understandings of the national identity. Given that the interview analysis indicated that criticality had to be developed under the guidance of the teacher, Annie purposefully provided explicit criticality instruction that included bringing alternative perspectives to the teaching discourse and scaffolding students' analysis of multimodal primary sources, as evident in the collected classroom data. Due to the time limitations and extenuating circumstances, only the initial stages of criticality instruction were observed and the scope of the instruction could later perhaps turn out to be wider than represented in this data set. However, the observed sessions indicated that the teacher aimed to use both oral and written forms of control to assess students’ criticality development.

On the basis of the classroom data it was evident that the teacher could assess criticality development in the interaction with students and fine-tune her instruction to scaffold the transition from the descriptive level of analysis to the interpretive level of analysis. The latter was regarded as necessary to demonstrate criticality. Although the other way to assess students’ criticality, that is writing annotations, was initiated, it was not fully implemented during the data collection and only the first students’ attempts to write an annotation were observed. The classroom data gave, however, further support for the view that the educational policy did not constrain the teacher from providing criticality instruction in the observed Australian upper secondary class.

52 In the teacher’s understanding of the term.
Part III: Learning from the evidence
Transnational discussion of criticality and its instruction

Alexander (1999b) suggests that the data from a sample as limited as just one class per country may provide useful insights into the national educational system if the adopted research methods allow for ‘prob[ing] beyond the observable moves and counter-moves of pedagogy to the values these embody’ (p. 158). The current study does not intend though to make any claims about national cultural values that the classroom data embody but sets out only to reason about the values and attitudes that were expressed in the respective interviews and enacted in criticality instruction within the framework that was provided by the respective educational policy. In doing this, I address the research questions of the study on (1) the policy framework that regulates criticality instruction in the upper secondary History classroom in Sweden, Russia and Australia (Victoria), (2) understandings of being a critical learner identified in the interview data from three upper secondary classes in the selected national contexts and (3) the observed criticality instruction in the selected History classrooms. The comprehensive discussion of the collected data offers a transnational account of criticality and its instruction in the History learning environment rather than its distinct national features unique to the countries, although remarks about cross-cultural similarities and differences are made. With Barnett’s (1997) theory of critical being as the underlying construct for discussion, the following sections examine the identified conceptions of criticality in the History learning environment.

Criticality as a generic skill

The collected interview and classroom data indicated that the conception of criticality and consequently the process through which its instruction was enacted in the History classroom correlated with the ambiguities of educational policy. In all three national contexts, the educational policy promotes multiple conceptions of criticality. At the overarching level criticality is typically conceptualised as (1) a generic skill of questioning, applicable and transferrable to all school subjects (cf Kennedy, Fisher, & Ennis, 1991) in the Swedish and Russian 2004 curricula; or (2) as a generic capability, which along with the skills also includes learning dispositions and tendencies as in the Australian and Russian 2012 curricula. In Barnett’s (1997) terms, the curricula indicate that criticality is mainly conceptualised as critical reason in the domain of knowledge, that is: being critical of propositions, ideas and theories (pp. 65–75). As such, it is seen at the lowest level of critical reason as a skill or a set of skills. This, according to
the interviewees, is age-appropriate for upper secondary students, who have already reached some cognitive maturity and have some background knowledge in various subjects. The Australian and Russian 2012 curricula further suggest some awareness of learning and reflexivity on one’s own understanding. This recommendation corresponds to Barnett’s second level of critical reason incorporating reflexivity although this is articulated vaguely. The curricula conception lacks however any signs of Barnett’s (1997) critical self-reflection and critical action, which is perhaps not surprising given that he struggles to find evidence of these even in higher education contexts.

**Criticality as source criticism**

In contrast to the overarching level, criticality is conceptualised as an embedded skill (McPeck, 1990) at the syllabus level in the selected educational contexts. The policy wordings signal clearly that the skill is embedded in the discipline and should be understood as something historians do, thus providing further evidence that criticality is conceptualised as the lowest level of critical reason involving discipline-specific skills (Barnett, 1997). This indicates that the educational policy in the selected contexts promotes the conception of criticality as a set of generic skills, learning dispositions and tendencies but that the shape of their manifestations in History differ from other subjects (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011, p. 72). Although the examination of the policy wordings suggested that Sweden and Russia might have shared the conception of criticality as source criticism, the collected interview and classroom data revealed that a critique of sources was employed in the Australian upper secondary class but not in the other two. These findings suggest that the discipline-specific conception of criticality as a set of skills to critique sources exists in all three educational contexts. This conception is however not enacted in either the Swedish vocational class or the Russian class pursuing the basic course of History due to the framing policy factors such as time constraints in both countries and the knowledge-driven curriculum and washback effect of the unified state exam in Russia.

The course syllabus for History 1a1 that is obligatory for Swedish vocational upper secondary students excludes critical examination of sources in the core content of the course although this is included for preparatory students. However, vocational students are still required to use source-critical methods in order to get the top grade for the course. The student interview data indicated that this was also the case for the sample class — the teachers encouraged them to think critically, arguably to receive the top grade, but provided no explicit instruction on how to do that. The combined
findings from the policy, interview and classroom data suggest that, despite the overarching learning outcome of upper secondary education, the status of criticality as source criticism is low in the vocational compulsory History course and the implementation of the overarching teaching objective is still impeded in a similar fashion as expressed in Lena Johansson’s remark as long ago as 1970.

*It is advantageous to give the future élite some training in critical ways of thinking [...] However, giving the majority of citizens the chance to question society in a systematic way would endanger its stability; therefore for compulsory, two-year upper-secondary, and vocational school pupils the emphasis is placed on learning to accept, while for pupils at the three- and four-year upper secondary schools and for university students slightly more stress can be laid on learning to call in question.* (Cited in Englund, 1986, p. 282)

Similar to the Swedish vocational compulsory History course, the Russian syllabus for the basic History course fails to list source criticism as a teaching objective but stipulates it as a learning outcome leaving it up to the students themselves to master these discipline-specific skills without the support of a teacher’s guidance. Neither the interview data nor classroom data offered any evidence of criticality instruction as source criticism in the sample Russian upper secondary class. In combination with the time constraints that were identified by the Swedish and Russian teachers, the above mentioned ambiguities in the respective educational policy appear to prevent the discipline-specific conception of criticality as source criticism from making its way to the History classroom, whether it is intended or not.

**Criticality as meaning making from historical evidence**

Although the conception of criticality as source criticism was not identified in the Australian educational policy, the interview and classroom data indicated that critique of sources as a necessary step in meaning making from historical evidence was practiced in the sample Australian upper secondary class. The Australian teacher ensured that the students possessed one of the intellectual resources necessary for criticality such as knowledge of key critical concepts (Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999b) and explicitly taught the students the concepts of primary and secondary sources. It should be noted though that the reported and observed critique of sources did not apply all the principles of source criticism such as proximity, tendency, dependence and authenticity (Thurén & Strachal, 2011). The data suggest that only the tendency of a source, i.e. motivation for providing a bias, was of particular interest in the observed class since multimodal primary sources were examined to identify their perspective and the motivations behind their creation. According to the Australian interview
data, drawing conclusions and/or presenting an independent opinion should then follow critique of sources. This implies that the conception of criticality as source criticism is a part of criticality as a discipline-specific skill of meaning making from historical evidence in the educational policy in Victoria.

There is some evidence from the collected data that meaning making from historical evidence might be supported by the use of students’ background knowledge (cf. Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999b). The Russian classroom data indicated that the teacher purposefully made use of the students’ background knowledge through the revision routine and comprehension checks, which were followed by reflective tasks, drawing conclusions and attempts to form an independent opinion. Although the Russian data suggested that criticality is conceptualised as reasoning and drawing conclusions on the basis of background knowledge, which might be perceived as a generic skill, both the teacher and students clearly labelled it as discipline-specific and appropriate in the context of the school subject History. Thus, it is comparable to the conception of criticality as meaning making from historical evidence.

Similar to her Russian counterpart, the Australian teacher was cautious about leaving the students at the descriptive level of analysis and encouraged her students to proceed to the interpretative level of analysis, which required drawing conclusions and forming an opinion. In contrast, the Swedish teacher reported that she felt forced to stay at the descriptive level and focus on teaching the facts rather than teaching students to reflect on them. This was also evident in the classroom data. Thus, the analysed Swedish data confirms the concern about the lack of ‘substantive knowledge of history’ among vocational students revealed in Ledman’s (2015b, pp. 86–87) teacher interview study. Drawing on the categories of Barnett’s classification, the finding implies that the sample Swedish vocational students would hardly be in a position to demonstrate criticality within the domain of knowledge since they lack the ‘declarative knowledge’ necessary for being critical of information presented to them (Johnston, Mitchell, Myles, & Ford, 2011, p. 75). Although the individuals’ background knowledge within the class may vary, the combined data suggest that the class might experience difficulty in meaning making from historical evidence apart from reproducing the dominant historical narrative.

**Criticality as questioning historical narratives**

The conception of criticality as questioning historical narratives emerged in all three national data sets but evidence of whether this occurred in the classroom is unclear. The scope of questioned historical narratives also
differed across the national samples. While the Swedish and Russian teachers were explicit as well as other historical narratives thus indicating that their narratives were not the only legitimate source of ‘historical truth’ (Taylor & Young, 2003, p. 3), the Australian teacher was silent about which narratives to question. According to the latter, the teacher had to play an active role in developing students’ criticality as questioning historical narratives by introducing various points of view on events and challenging stereotypical opinions. The Australian classroom data suggested that the teacher introduced what she considered an alternative point of view challenging the stereotypical picture of the Australian national identity (see Extract 30, pp. 143–144). This illustrates that although meaning construction was structured as negotiation (Prawat & Floden, 1994, p. 40) in this sample class, it was the teacher’s interpretations that were given authority (Flower, 1994, p. 66) in deciding what stereotypical picture the students had. However, in the subsequent discussion the teacher introduced a view that differed from the previously selected alternative view thus promoting narrative diversity (Parkes, 2009). Whether this was accidental or whether this incident was an intentional first step towards the development of a subsequent well-established practice in the sample class is beyond the scope of the collected Australian classroom data. Nevertheless, there is a fair chance that this was intentional given the concurrence of the interview and classroom data.

The Swedish and Russian interview and classroom data did not enjoy the same level of concurrence. Although the Russian teacher was concerned about insufficient narrative diversity due to the policy constraints and low frequency of questioning the teaching discourse, the classroom observations revealed a mixed picture. The official point of view as it was labelled in the student interview represented the dominant historical narrative of the teaching discourse and functioned as reproduction in meaning construction (Flower, 1994). The combined Russian data suggested that the dominant historical narrative was supported by the classroom routines and the design of the unified state exam. However, the observation data indicated that on several occasions contradicting narratives were brought to the classroom discourse and accepted (see e.g., Extract 16, pp. 131–132), which implies that meaning was in some cases constructed in negotiation. The fact that the teacher did not require that the students use a specific textbook might have further supported narrative diversity since only the official ministerial list of recommended and permitted History textbooks included 41 items at the time of data collection. More often though the classroom data pointed to meaning construction as conversation (Flower,
that strived for a consensus (see e.g., *Extract 18*, pp. 133–134). In these cases there was a diversity of opinions on one and the same narrative, i.e. *intra-narrative diversity*, rather than diversity of narratives on one and the same event, i.e. narrative diversity.

The Swedish teacher, on the contrary, claimed that the students often questioned the teaching discourse, while the student focus group interview and classroom data provided very little evidence of that. The Swedish classroom data also hinted at the ground rule of educational discourse (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) of not interrupting the teacher’s narrative in the observed class (see *Extract 5*, pp. 120–121), which might have hindered questioning the teaching discourse. Judging from the Swedish interview and classroom data, the students chose to trust their teacher’s narrative fully in the same fashion as Helgason (2010, p. 181) proposed that students were expected to rely on the History textbooks. As argued in the analysis of the Swedish data, this approach was likely to lead to the reproduction of the dominant historical narrative. This might have contributed to the cultural continuity (Flower, 1994) in the sample upper secondary vocational class but was unlikely to promote criticality as questioning historical narratives and consequently Barnett’s critical reason. Instead, the data suggested that the dominant historical narrative was used to actualise the democratic values that might be viewed necessary for good citizens, which is in line with Ledman’s (2015b) finding that History in the Swedish vocational programmes plays a crucial role in education for citizenship (p. 91).

**Criticality as educating for citizenship**

The comparative analysis indicated that the conception of criticality as educating for citizenship was recurrent in the Swedish and Russian interview, whereas this conception was not identified either in the Australian policy or interview data. On the premise that the classroom data is analysed using the conceptions originating from within each national context, the Australian classroom data is excluded from this discussion.

When the Swedish and Russian interview data was combined with the classroom data, the similarities and differences in what kinds of citizens were intended became clear. The Swedish data suggested that critical citizens should share certain values, such as equality in dignity and rights and multiculturalism. Considering these values as a safeguard for democracy and against new tragedies, the teacher made efforts to pass them on to her students (see e.g., *Extracts 10, 12*, pp. 123–125). Her instruction thus followed the tradition of citizenship transmission by ‘inculcating right values as a framework for decision’ (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 67 cited in Englund, 1986, p. 298). Despite a negative connotation that the term
transmission might have in such contexts, it was, in fact, directed at nurturing critical action, a form of criticality identified by Barnett in the domain of world. Critical action was otherwise infrequent in the collected classroom data across the national contexts.

Similar to the Swedish counterparts, the Russian teacher and students ascribed a preventive function to criticality, whereas the idea of a good citizen differed from that in the Swedish sample. The Russian classroom data analysis did not reveal any explicit transmission of values. The reported aim was rather to bring up free citizens who are, independently of the dominant historical narrative, able to form their own opinions on the basis of their own worldviews. However, as Cherryholmes (1980) notes ‘certain facts, explanations, interpretations, and predictions predispose one to a given worldview’ (p. 135). As argued earlier, the Russian policy constraints prevented the teacher from promoting narrative diversity to the extent that she considered satisfactory and instead forced her to opt for promoting intra-narrative diversity as evidenced in the classroom data. This might indicate that citizenship transmission occurs at such a deep level that it is not accessible for analysis within the framework of the present study. At the same time, there is some evidence both in the interview and classroom data suggesting that citizenship was promoted through a reflective inquiry (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 67 cited in Englund, 1986, p. 298) that involves interrogating worldviews of the History narrators and perhaps rethinking of one’s own worldview. This reflective inquiry opens the door to Barnett’s domain of self and invites the students to critical self-reflection.

To sum up, the notion of criticality as educating for citizenship and its instruction in the History classroom appeared to be crucial in squaring the circle of Barnett’s critical being. The indications of critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action were identified in the transnational discussion of the History learning environment. However, these indications differed in strength considerably across and within the selected national contexts. In the concluding section, I speculate on what we can learn from the findings of this transnational study of criticality and envisage the potential ways forward in the quest for furthering understanding of criticality in other educational and everyday contexts.

**Conclusions**

The present transnational study of criticality in the History learning environment in Sweden, Russia and Australia examined the curriculum formulation and realisation arenas. In the formulation arena, the policy documents that regulate History teaching and learning were studied for their explicit conceptions of criticality and potential frame factors of criticality
instruction. In the realisation arena, the teachers and students’ conceptions of criticality and their reported experiences of criticality instruction were used to make meaning of the observed History sessions in three sample upper secondary classes and to illuminate the policy enactment.

In this study I found that at the national curriculum level criticality is conceptualised as a generic skill of questioning and a generic capability of building/recognising an argument by using evidence and drawing reasoned conclusions. At the syllabus level, criticality is translated into contextualised practices of History teaching and learning and conceptualised as a discipline-specific skill of source criticism and meaning making from historical evidence. The analysis of policy documents identified the following potential frame factors of criticality instruction: the overall knowledge-oriented curriculum design in the case of Russia, the design of the final exam in History in the case of Russia and Australia, and the academic value of the course and time allocation in the case of Sweden and Russia. The explicit conceptions of criticality and frame factors in the arena of formulation might, however, be better understood in relation to the processes of policy enactment in the History classroom in the sample upper secondary classes.

In the curriculum realisation arena, the sample upper secondary classes provided a broad spectrum of contexts for criticality instruction. The class in Sweden pursued a vocational programme, while the Russian students were likely to continue at the tertiary level of education. For the Australian students, History was an optional subject, while it was compulsory for the Swedish and Russian students. The Swedish vocational students experienced a reduced version of the basic course in History and the Russian students attended a regular basic course in History, whereas the Australian students took a History course with a privileged status. The heterogeneous mix of the sample classes offered a unique opportunity for a transnational discussion of the teachers’ and students’ understandings of criticality and its instruction.

In all participating classes, both the teachers and students considered criticality crucial to success in studies and everyday life. In the context of History teaching and learning, criticality was typically conceptualised as questioning historical narratives. The Swedish and Russian teachers specifically mentioned that the scope of questioned historical narratives should also include questioning the narratives of the teaching discourse. The Swedish students, in contrast to the Russian students, did not support this inclusion and reported that they regarded their teacher’s narrative as reliable and unbiased. The Australian student interview indicated...

53 Compared to preparatory programmes.
an awareness that the selection of facts in the teaching discourse limits the range of possible conclusions, while the Russian students considered that independent opinions could be formed on the basis of the same facts. In addition, the Swedish and Russian teachers conceptualised criticality as making a significant contribution to education for citizenship.

The study findings indicated that the Swedish vocational class had very limited learning opportunities to critique sources and question historical narratives. The Swedish classroom data suggested that the students tended to make meaning of historical evidence by reproducing the dominant narrative of the teaching discourse. The overarching curriculum objective of being able to ‘critically examine and assess what they see, hear and read in order to be able to discuss and take a standpoint in different questions concerning life and values’ (Skolverket, 2011, p. 10) was not enacted in the Swedish sample class. One of the reasons might be traced to the History syllabus that the vocational class followed. The syllabus excludes any explicit reference to criticality as a teaching objective however this is not a new phenomenon according to a parliamentary debate in 1980:

*It is regrettable that the centre-right government is not prepared to allow the overriding objectives of schools — such as education for democracy and solidarity, international understanding, conservation of resources, critical thinking, and so on — to exert their full impact on the syllabuses for individual subjects [...] They are ready to agree to overriding objectives as long as they never become more than fine words, but when attempts are made to translate them into everyday practices in schools, they go on the defensive.* (Cited in Englund, 1986, p. 278)

The preceding extract from the debate suggests that despite being the overarching curriculum objective criticality did not appear to find its way into the syllabi. Whether non-inclusion of a discipline-specific form of criticality as source criticism in the current teaching objectives for the vocational History was intentional or not, the current History syllabi were also approved under the centre-right government. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) point out ‘non-decision making is as much an expression of policy as are the actual decisions made’ (p. 4).

There is some evidence that the Swedish vocational students and their teachers are not adequately supported by the educational policy with respect to criticality development given that mastering source criticism is an expected outcome, according to the assessment guidelines. Similar problematics are evident in the Russian basic History course syllabus and analysis of classroom data. In this syllabus, criticality as source criticism is listed as a learning outcome but not as a teaching objective, in contrast to the advanced History syllabus that lists it both as a teaching objective and a learning outcome. Given that the Swedish and Russian teachers reported
that preparing for criticality instruction is time-intensive, it was perhaps to be expected that there would be virtually no instances of instruction in criticality as source criticism in the observed History sessions in these national contexts. In comparison, the Australian teacher did not report any time constraints and the classroom data indicated that she taught her students to differentiate between primary and secondary sources and to analyse multimodal primary sources.

The Swedish and Russian data point to structural issues with regard to instruction in criticality as source criticism in their respective History learning environments, while the Australian data does not exhibit such inconsistencies. The latter might be explained by the fact that the educational policy in the History classroom in Victoria is regulated in principle by a single document. Thus the issues that may originate from the multilevel policies in Sweden and Russia are absent in the case of Victoria. Moreover, the participating teacher was a part of the panel that at that time worked on the History syllabi in Victoria, which might have contributed to the consistency across the levels of data collection related to this sample. This also suggests that the participating teacher possessed special expertise in the policy matters. A further explanation for the high consistency might be the relatively small data set collected in Australia.

In this study, the classroom data indicated that the participating teachers practiced mainly three modes of criticality instruction in the observed sessions. The Swedish teacher focused on criticality instruction as bringing up citizens that share specific values. This was considered to be a measure that might avert new tragedies and produce ‘good citizens’. The Russian teacher, although striving for narrative diversity, made sure that there was at least intra-narrative diversity in her History classroom under the reported frame factors of time allocation and the unified state exam. The Australian teacher taught her students to make meaning from historical evidence through analysis of multimodal sources and also made attempts to nurture narrative diversity. However, she exercised control over which alternative narratives were brought into the classroom. Both the Russian and Australian classroom data revealed instances when contradicting narratives were allowed to co-exist in the teaching discourse, while the Swedish data revealed one consistent narrative in the teaching discourse during the period of data collection.

The study findings suggest that criticality in the History learning environment might take various forms. The promoted conceptions of criticality are conditioned by the educational policy and its frame factors but their enactment is also conditioned by ‘contextual, historic and psychosocial dynamics’ (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 71). All of these were evident in
the collected data and might explain the discrepancies between the curriculum arena of formulation and that of realisation as in many other curriculum studies. In the concluding paragraphs, I highlight those aspects of criticality instruction in the History learning environment that, in my view, deserve special attention and further discussion as well as, perhaps, some action given the evidence from the two arenas indicating the interconnectedness of the data collected from the macro, meso and micro levels.

**Implications for pedagogical development**

In Sweden the reintroduction of History in the curriculum was, among other reasons, justified by the policy-makers’ concern about students’ knowledge of history. The current study and Ledman’s (2015b) study suggest that the teachers working with vocational students share this concern. However, if the upper secondary vocational History course is strongly oriented towards the knowledge component of the syllabus, History teachers might find it problematic to fit in the instruction of criticality as questioning historical narratives in their tight schedules. As assumed in Hellstenius (2011) and evident in the collected classroom data, the teachers are more likely to focus on reproduction of a single historical narrative, whose authority the vocational students are not prepared to question. This implies that History as a school subject in the vocational programmes might serve a conservative function as the Swedish teacher insightfully remarked. To nurture criticality as questioning historical narratives, the policy makers might consider a shift of attention towards the lower stages of schooling that could equip the Swedish students with necessary background knowledge.

The knowledge-oriented curriculum and the reduced amount of contact hours are the likely structural constraints of criticality instruction in the observed Russian upper secondary class and perhaps in other comparable Russian classes. Despite the proclaimed overarching curriculum objective for criticality development, the distribution of funding among various competing teaching objectives suggests that ‘the authoritative allocation of values’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 7) in the current Russian educational policy may hinder criticality instruction. The account of the sample Russian teacher confirmed viability of this claim and identified the time constraint as well as a societal trend towards less narrative diversity as impeding development of independent opinions among students. Under these conditions, the findings that instances of intra-narrative diversity in the Russian classroom data are more frequent than instances of narrative diversity might be expected. Thus, harmonisation between the curriculum contents and time allocation might contribute to the promotion of narrative
diversity in the Russian History classroom, which is a prerequisite for criticality as questioning historical narratives.

The final exam in History in Australia (Victoria) and Russia provide a further context that might have an impact on the realities of criticality instruction. As was argued in the policy analysis, the design of the Victorian final exam encourages History teachers to provide a purposeful and explicit criticality instruction, while the design of the Russian unified exam provides the students with very limited opportunity to demonstrate criticality. As a consequence, teachers in Russia might be discouraged from allocating time to criticality instruction in the History classroom, as confirmed in the teacher interview. There is thus a need for harmonisation of the Russian exam format to ensure this reflects the value of criticality that is stated in the policy documents and expressed in the Russian interviews.

Although criticality is stated as a crucial goal of education in the national curricula in Sweden and Russia, at the syllabus level the Swedish vocational students and the Russian students who take the basic History course lack criticality as a teaching objective in their respective syllabi. This carries implications for the consistency of the educational policy and might well be viewed as an issue of equity. The discrepancy between the teaching objectives and the learning outcomes creates a dubious situation in which these students might be deprived of the teacher’s guidance but are required to demonstrate criticality as the learning outcome. There appears to be an assumption that either these students are already well prepared and do not need any further criticality instruction or they are not suited for it. This, in its turn, raises the issue of equity since the students who study more advanced courses are privileged to have criticality listed both as a teaching objective and a learning outcome in the History syllabi. There is a need, as an initial step, for harmonisation of the teaching objectives and the learning outcomes of the more basic History courses. This might help to avoid excluding certain groups of students from receiving criticality instruction in the History classroom on unclear grounds.

The inconsistencies between curriculum arenas of formulation and realisation so far discussed indicate potential areas for pedagogical action. The suggested harmonisation measures might contribute to improved criticality instruction in the selected contexts although this may not prove to be the panacea. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) propose that the intention of educational policy is to steer change in a particular direction and offer an imagined state of affairs (p. 5). As was argued in the current study, absence of internal contradictions is an essential feature of an efficient policy. Its enactment, however, depends also on the leadership at various levels and the immediate context and participants of the pedagogical practice, that is
the teacher and students, as well as on the traditions and values that they bring into the History classroom.

In Barnett’s terms, this study has critically examined the state of affairs with regard to the conceptions of criticality and its instruction in the History learning environment in the selected Swedish, Russian and Australian upper secondary contexts, which represents critical reason. It has also made a modest attempt to suggest some critical action. To fulfil Barnett’s circle of critical being, critical self-reflection is also required. As further research, an inquiry into the purposes of criticality in each context might perhaps be able to shed light on how our understandings of criticality and ourselves as critical learners are constructed within particular traditions and how they could be reconstructed beyond traditions. This promises to be a quest for critical self-reflection and a transnational critical being.
Summary in Swedish
Kritiska perspektiv i historieklassrummet – en transnationell studie

Bakgrund
Att kunna vara kritisk är ett förväntat studieresultat i ämnet historia på gymnasienivå i Sverige, Ryssland och Australien. Genom att lära sig om sitt lands och världens historia i klassrummet skapar elever en nationell identitet. På historielektioner förväntas elever vara kritiska men vad det innebär kan skilja sig åt i olika utbildningskontexter. Denna avhandling syftar därför till att undersöka hur undervisning i att vara kritisk sker på historielektioner i tre gymnasieklasser: en klass i norra Sverige, en i nordvästra Ryssland och en i sydöstra Australien. Mina språkkunskaper och kontakter i länderna har möjliggjort insamling av data som annars sällan jämförs.

Metoder


Analysen syftar till att identifiera skrivningar som explicit refererar till kritiska perspektiv och tolka statusen av dessa skrivningar i ett utbildningspolitiskt sammanhang. Vidare identifierar jag några ramfaktorer för historieundervisningen i allmänhet, och för undervisning i att vara kritisk i synnerhet.

På mikronivå genomförde jag semi-strukturerade intervjuer med lärare och deras elever i varje utbildningskontext. Intervjuguiden testades i en pilotundersökning med lärare och en fokusgrupp med elever som läste ett
högskoleförberedande program i norra Sverige. I huvudstudien intervjuade jag tre lärare, en från varje land, och 16 av deras elever. fyra elevintervjuer genomfördes, där tre elevintervjuer skedde i fokusgrupp och en individuellt. Samtliga intervjuer spelades in och transkriberades, och utvalda delar översattes till engelska. Alla deltagande skolor har gott rykte och ligger i medelstora städer i respektive land.

Lärarna i studien är behöriga i historia och har mer än 20 års undervisningserfarenhet. Eleverna var vid studiens genomförande i snitt 17 år gamla. De svenska eleverna gick ett yrkesprogram och läste den obligatoriska kursen *Historia 1a1*. Eleverna i Ryssland och i Australien gick de program som ger allmän behörighet till studier på högskolenivå. De ryska eleverna läste en obligatorisk historiekurs på basnivå, medan de australiensiska eleverna läste en valbar kurs i Australiens historia.

Insamlad intervjudata analyserades innehållsligt. Analysen syftar till att urskilja lärarens och elevens uppfattningar om vad det innebär att vara kritisk samt deras erfarenheter och upplevelser av undervisningen i att vara kritisk, något som kan sägas ingå i *den erfarna och upplevda läroplanen*.


**Resultat**


Intervjuanalysen visar på att lärarna och eleverna betonar vikten av att ha ett kritiskt förhållningssätt i skolan och i vardagslivet. Inom ämnet historia uttrycks det, i samtliga länder, som en förmåga att kunna ifrågasätta
historiska narrativ. Dessutom förknippas det kritiska förhållningssättet med medborglig bildning i Sverige och Ryssland.


**Slutsatser**

Studiens resultat tyder på att läroplanernas ambitiösa förväntade studieresultat för kritiskt förhållningssätt kan påverkas av formuleringar i kursplaner, av lärares och elevers uppfattningar om vad det innebär att vara kritisk samt av andra skolrelaterade omständigheter.

För att bidra till elevers möjligheter att ifrågasätta historiska narrativ skulle man kunna fokusera på att förse elever med nödvändiga bakgrundskunskaper i lägre årskurser. Ett ytterligare utvecklingsområde skulle kunna vara att balansera historiekursers omfattning i förhållande till avsatt tid. Slutligen bör förväntade studieresultat för kritiskt förhållningssätt stämma överens med de instruktioner lärarna får om måluppfyllelse även i kursplaner för ”enklare” historiekurser. Detta skulle kunna leda till en mer likvärdig undervisning i att vara kritisk för alla elevgrupper, vilket ska eftersträvas enligt läroplanerna i Sverige, Ryssland och Australien.
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Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF (2013). Ob utverzhdenii Poryadka formirovaniya federalnogo perechnya uchebnikov, rekomenduemiykh k ispolzovaniyu pri realizatsii imeyushchikh gosudarstvennyh akreditatsiyh obrazovatelnyh programm nachalnogo obshchego, osnovnogo obshchego, srednego obshchego obrazovaniya. Moskva: Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF.


Appendices

Appendix 1. School background protocol form

School background protocol form  
Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

School background

Institution code:

Status of school (funding source, reputation):

Short description of the school building:

Overall impression of the school climate:

Approximate number of students in total:

Approximate number of students at upper-secondary level:

Approximate number of classes at upper-secondary level:

Approximate number of students who study history at upper-secondary level:

Number of history teachers at upper-secondary level:

Approximate percentage of students who continue studying at university level, if available:

Approximate percentage of students who continue studying history at university level, if available:

Any school achievements connected to history:

Any evidence of history status at upper-secondary level (dedicated classroom, posters, equipment, history teachers' involvement in school management and the like):

Other:
Appendix 2. Student info sheet and consent form, Australia

Participant Information Sheet

Professor Janet Enever (supervisor)
Faculty of Arts, Umeå University
tel: +46 90 786 56 74
e-mail: janet.enever@sprak.umu.se

Sergej Ivanov, MA (PhD candidate)
Faculty of Arts, Umeå University
tel: +46 90 786 61 38
e-mail: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se

University Ethics Approval No: 2012-344-310
DEECD Approval No: 2013_002051

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Project: "A cross-cultural study of meaning negotiation and construction in the upper-secondary history classroom"

Purpose of the study
The aim of the study is to examine and compare history teaching and learning in upper-secondary schools in Sweden, Russia and Australia.

What would be expected of you?
Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute in two ways. First, I would visit your school in x-term to observe some of your history lessons in your class. These lessons would be consecutive and agreed on with your teacher in advance. These will be the regular classroom lessons and my presence will not change these lessons in any way from your usual history lesson. With your permission, the lessons would be audio-recorded to ensure that I have an accurate record of what is going on in the classroom. Second, I would invite you and some of you classmates to participate in a group interview about history teaching and learning, which would also be audio-recorded. This would approximately take an hour.
Appendix 2 (continuation)

Potential benefits
The study is envisaged to contribute to a more thorough knowledge about history teaching and learning at upper-secondary educational level in the selected countries and assist in the future preparation of teachers.

Discomforts/Risks
There are no specific risks associated with this study. The only minor discomfort would be the audio-recording of your lessons and the interview.

Confidentiality
I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and school affiliation will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. I will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Results of the study
Any data collected in the study will be used for research purposes only. The results of this study will be reported in a PhD thesis and perhaps in other academic publications. The PhD thesis is scheduled for completion in 2015. You will be offered a comprehensive summary of the results concerning your school.

How do you agree to participate?
If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided. Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, you are free to do so without prejudice and without reason. In this case, none of your words during the lessons or the interview will be cited in the PhD thesis or any other publication.

Where can you get further information?
Should you require any further information, or have any concern, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Sergei Ivanov on the phone or email provided above.

Complaints about research process/conduct?
If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the Regional Ethical Review Board in Umeå on +46 90 786 72 52 or email epn@adm.umu.se.

Whatever your decision on this matter, thank you for devoting some time to reading this information, and considering its contents.
Appendix 2 (continuation)

Umeå University, 901 87 Umeå, Sweden
Department of Language Studies

Information sheet to students and parents/guardians

Sergej Ivanov
PhD Candidate

This information sheet is yours to keep.
Appendix 2 (continuation)

Project: “A cross-cultural study of meaning negotiation and construction in the upper-secondary history classroom”

University Ethics Approval No: 2012-344-31O
DEECD Ethics Approval No: 2013_002051

Consent

I (the participant) have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in the project “A cross-cultural study of meaning negotiation and construction in the upper-secondary history classroom” and agree to audio-recording of the observed classes and a possible interview, realising that I may withdraw at any time without reason and without prejudice.

I understand that all identifiable information that I provide is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the researcher in any form that may identify me. The only exception to this principle of confidentiality is if documents are required by law.

I have been advised as to what data is being collected, the purpose for collecting the data, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Print Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Print Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date Day/month/year

PROVIDED YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY,
PLEASE BRING THE COMPLETED CONSENT FORM TO SCHOOL
Appendix 3. Teacher info sheet and consent form, Australia

Professor Janet Enever (supervisor)
Faculty of Arts, Umeå University
tel: +46 90 786 56 74
e-mail: janet.enever@sprak.umu.se
Sergej Ivanov, MA (PhD candidate)
Faculty of Arts, Umeå University
tel: +46 90 786 61 38
e-mail: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Project: "A cross-cultural study of meaning negotiation and construction in the upper-secondary history classroom"

Purpose of the study
The aim of the study is to examine and compare history teaching and learning in upper-secondary schools in Sweden, Russia and Australia.

What would be expected of you?
Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute in three ways. First, I would visit your school in x-term to observe some of your history lessons in one upper-secondary class. These lessons would be consecutive and agreed on with you in advance. I would not expect you to make any additional preparations because of my presence. With your permission, the lessons would be audio-recorded to ensure that I have an accurate record of what is going on in the classroom. Second, I would invite you to participate in an interview about history teaching and learning, which would also be audio-recorded. This would approximately take an hour. Third, I would ask you to help in selecting student candidates for a focus group interview so they are representative of the observed class.

Potential benefits
The study is envisaged to contribute to a more thorough knowledge about history teaching and learning at upper-secondary educational level in the selected countries. I hope that the comparison of the practices in different countries might identify further ways to improve educational experiences.
Appendix 3 (continuation)

Discomforts/Risks
There are no specific risks associated with this study. The only minor discomfort would be the audio-recording of your lessons and the interview.

Confidentiality
I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and school affiliation will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. I will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity.

Results of the study
Any data collected in the study will be used for research purposes only. The results of this study will be reported in a PhD thesis and perhaps in other academic publications. The PhD thesis is scheduled for completion in 2015.

How do you agree to participate?
If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided. Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, you are free to do so without prejudice and without reason. In this case, none of your words during the lessons or the interview will be cited in the PhD thesis or any other publication.

Where can you get further information?
Should you require any further information, or have any concern, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Sergei Ivanov on the phone or email provided above.

Whatever your decision on this matter, thank you for devoting some time to reading this information, and considering its contents.

SIGNATURE

Sergei Ivanov
PhD Candidate

This information sheet is yours to keep.
Appendix 3 (continuation)

Consent

I (the participant) have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in the project "A cross-cultural study of meaning negotiation and construction in the upper-secondary history classroom", realising that I may withdraw at any time without reason and without prejudice.

I understand that all identifiable information that I provide is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the researcher in any form that may identify me. The only exception to this principle of confidentiality is if documents are required by law.

I have been advised as to what data is being collected, the purpose for collecting the data, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Print Name of Participant ____________________________________________

Signature of Participant ____________________________________________

Date ____________________________________________

Day/month/year

PROVIDED YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY,

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED CONSENT FORM IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE
Информация о проекте «Межкультурное исследование формирования исторической картины мира в старших классах»

В 2012/2013 учебном году я собираюсь посетить ваши уроки по истории, чтобы записать их на аудионоситель и вести заметки. В конце я предложу группе учеников (6-9 человек) дать интервью об уроках истории. Его продолжительность составит около часа. От вас как участника проекта не требуется никакой дополнительной подготовки. Для осуществления проекта необходимо ваше согласие на участие, которое вы можете дать, используя форму на странице 3. Согласие на запись уроков не предполагает обязательного участия в интервью.

Цель данного проекта заключается в сравнительном исследовании обучения истории в старших классах в России, Швеции и Австралии, поэтому я также планирую посетить уроки в шведской и австралийской школах.

Конфиденциальность

Все имена, названия школ и населенных пунктов будут изменены, чтобы исключить возможность идентификации участников, класса или школы. Аудиозаписи уроков и интервью, а также протоколы наблюдения будут использоваться исключительно в исследовательских целях и храниться в недоступном для третьих лиц месте.

Публикации

Настоящее исследование будет опубликовано в форме диссертационной работы и научных статей. Защита диссертации предварительно назначена на весенний семестр 2014/2015 учебного года в университете г. Умео.
Ответственная исследовательская группа

Я буду собирать, обрабатывать и анализировать данные под научным руководством профессора Джинет Эневер (кафедра лингвистических исследований университета г. Умео).

Прекращение участия

Участие в проекте является полностью добровольным, и Вы можете отказаться от участия в любое время без объяснения причин. В таком случае Ваши данные будут анонимизированы, а слова, произнесенные Вами на уроках или в интервью, не будут цитироваться в тексте диссертации или иных публикациях.

Ваш личный вклад

Предполагается, что Ваше участие в проекте принесет пользу не только науке, но также Вам лично и другим ученикам старших классов. Ваше содействие будет способствовать получению новых знаний о процессе обучения истории в разных странах.

Во время интервью Вам также будет предоставлена возможность высказать свою точку зрения об обучении истории в старших классах в диалоге с одноклассниками. Я надеюсь, что участие в проекте окажет положительное влияние как на Ваши успехи в учебе, так и на Ваш личностный рост.

Я буду рад ответить на все интересующие Вас вопросы, касающиеся участия в проекте.

Сергей Владимирович Иванов
Докторант кафедры лингвистических исследований университета г. Умео
Телефон: +7-921-210-46-95 (в России), +46-73-647-16-29 (в Швеции)
Электронная почта: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se
Appendix 4 (continuation)

Согласие на участие в проекте

Заполните, пожалуйста, следующую форму:

Я ознакомился(-ась) с информацией о проекте «Межкультурное исследование формирования исторической картины мира в старших классах», а также имел(а) возможность задать вопросы, связанные с участием в проекте:

Да ☐   Нет ☐

Своей подписью ниже я даю согласие на участие в проекте, описанном на страницах 1-2.

________________________________________________________________________
Дата Подпись

________________________________________________________________________
ФИО (полностью)

Пожалуйста, верните заполненную форму Иванову С.В.
Информация о проекте «Межкультурное исследование формирования исторической картины мира в старших классах»

В 2012/2013 учебном году я собираюсь посетить ваши уроки по истории, чтобы записать их на аудионоситель и вести заметки. В конце периода наблюдения я предложу вам дать интервью об обучении истории. Его продолжительность составит около часа. От вас как участника проекта не требуется никакой дополнительной подготовки. Кроме того, я проведу интервью с группой ваших учеников (6-9 человек) об уроках истории. Для осуществления проекта необходимо ваше согласие на участие, которое вы можете дать, используя форму на странице 3.

Цель данного проекта заключается в сравнительном исследовании обучения истории в старших классах в России, Швеции и Австралии, поэтому я также планирую посетить уроки в шведской и австралийской школах.

Конфиденциальность

Все имена, названия школ и населенных пунктов будут изменены, чтобы исключить возможность идентификации участников, класса или школы. Аудиозаписи уроков и интервью, а также протоколы наблюдения будут использоваться исключительно в исследовательских целях и храниться в недоступном для третьих лиц месте.

Публикации

Настоящее исследование будет опубликовано в форме диссертационной работы и научных статей. Защита диссертации предварительно назначена на весенний семестр 2014/2015 учебного года в университете г. Умео.
Ответственная исследовательская группа

Я буду собирать, обрабатывать и анализировать данные под научным руководством профессора Джонет Эневер (кафедра лингвистических исследований университета г. Умео).

Прекращение участия

Участие в проекте является полностью добровольным, и Вы можете отказаться от участия в любое время без объяснения причин. В таком случае Ваши данные будут анонимизированы, а слова, произнесенные Вами на уроках или в интервью, не будут цитироваться в тексте диссертации или иных публикациях.

Ваш личный вклад

Предполагается, что Ваше участие в проекте принесет пользу не только науке, но также Вам лично и другим учителям. Ваше содействие будет способствовать получению новых знаний о процессе обучения истории в разных странах. Для студентов педагогических вузов особенно ценной может оказаться возможность ознакомиться с Вашим опытом преподавания истории на страницах диссертации.

Во время интервью Вам также будет предоставлена возможность высказать свою точку зрения о преподавании истории в старших классах. Я надеюсь, что участие в проекте окажется интересным для Вас в профессиональном плане.

Я буду рад ответить на все интересующие Вас вопросы.

Сергей Владимирович Иванов
Докторант кафедры лингвистических исследований университета г. Умео
Телефон: +7-921-210-46-95 (В России), +46-73-647-16-29 (В Швеции)
Электронная почта: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se
Согласие на участие в проекте

Заполните, пожалуйста, следующую форму:

Я ознакомился(-лась) с информацией о проекте «Межкультурное исследование формирования исторической картины мира в старших классах», а также имел(а) возможность задать вопросы, связанные с участием в проекте:

Да ☐ Нет ☐

Своей подписью ниже я даю свое согласие на участие в проекте, описанном на страницах 1-2.

________________________________________
Дата                                     Подпись

________________________________________
ФИО (полностью)

Пожалуйста, верните заполненную форму Иванову С.В.

3
Appendix 6. Student info sheet and consent form, Sweden

Information om projektet "En tvärkulturell studie av meningsförhandling och meningsskapande i historia på gymnasienivå"

Syfte och genomförande

Syftet med studien är att undersöka historieundervisning i en gymnasieskola i Sverige, Ryssland och Australien och att utreda vilka eventuella likheter och skillnader som kommer fram. Därför kommer jag också träffa klasser i ett ryskt och ett australiensiskt gymnasium.

När jag är klar med alla skolbesök och intervjuer kommer jag att jämföra vad jag har samlat in. En sådan jämförelse förväntas att ge bättre kunskap om vad som försiggår i historieundervisning i olika länder, vad vi skulle kunna låna från varandra och hur vi skulle kunna berika våra historielektioner.

Konfidentialitet
Alla namn och platser kommer att ges fingerade namn så att enskilda individer, klasser eller skolor inte går att identifiera. Ljudinspelingarna från lektionerna och intervjuerna samt anteckningarna kommer att användas som forskningsmaterial och ingå som ett underlag för resultatet. Dessa kommer att förvaras så att obehöriga inte får tillgång till det.

Studiers resultat
Denna undersökning kommer att rapporteras i form av en doktorsavhandling och eventuellt i artikelform. Studien som helhet är tänkt att presenteras i samband med disputation vid Umeå universitet våren 2015.
Appendix 6 (continuation)

Ansvariga forskare
Förutom undertecknad forskare som genomför datainsamling, databearbetning och skrivande av avhandlingen är professor Janet Ennever vid Umeå universitet ansvarig forskare och huvudhandledare för forskningsprojektet.

Avbrytande
Allt deltagande i forskningsprojektet är frivilligt och du kan när som helst avbryta deltagandet utan att ange något skäl till detta. Så fort du väljer att inte delta kommer dina efterkommande insatser i klassrumssammanträden/mera intervak att anonymiseras och de kommer aldrig citeras i avhandlingstexten eller eventuella artiklar.

Ditt bidrag
Jag hoppas att ditt deltagande inte ska bara till nytta för forskarsamhället utan även för dig och andra elever. Genom ditt deltagande i studien kan du bidra till utvidgad kunskap om de valda ländernas utbildningsområde i ett jämförande perspektiv.

Under intervjun får du också möjlighet att uttrycka dina tanke kring historieundervisning och kanske få nya insikter i samarbete med klasskamrater. Min förhoppning är att detta kommer hjälpa dig att utvecklas både utbildningsmässigt och personligen.

Har du frågor, är du mycket välkommen att höra av dig till mig:
Sergej Ivanov
Tel. 073 647 16 29
Epost: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se

Sergej Ivanov
Doktorand
Umeå Universitet
Samtycke till deltagande i forskningsprojektet om
historieundervisning på gymnasienivå

Som en elev i klass B tillfrågas du om deltagande i studien genom att kryssa nedan.

Jag har tagit del av informationen om projektet ”En tvärkulturell studie av
meningsförhandling och meningsskapande i historia på gymnasienivå”

Ja ☐

Jag har också fått muntlig information om deltagande i studien och möjlighet att ställa frågor
och få dem besvarade

Ja ☐

Härmed lämnar jag mitt samtycke till att delta i studien

Ja ☐

Ort __________________________ Datum ________________

Underskrift __________________________

Namnförtvilligande __________________________

VÄNLIGEN LÄMNA DENNA SIDA MED DINA SVAR OCH UNDERSKRIFTER TILL SERGEI IVANOV
Information om projektet “En tvärkulturell studie av meningsförhandling och meningsskapande i historia på gymnasienivå”

Syfte och genomförande


Syftet med studien är att undersöka historieundervisning i en gymnasieskola i Sverige, Ryssland och Australien och att utreda vilka eventuella likheter och skillnader som kommer fram. Därför kommer jag också träffa klasser i ett ryskt och ett australiensiskt gymnasium.

När jag är klar med alla skolbesöker och intervjuer kommer jag att jämföra vad jag har samlat in. En sådan jämförelse förväntas att ge bättre kunskap om vad som försiggår i historieundervisning i olika länder, vad vi skulle kunna läna från varandra och hur vi skulle kunna berika våra historielektioner.

Konfidentialitet

 Alla namn och platser kommer att ges fingerade namn så att enskilda individer, klasser eller skolor inte går att identifiera. Ljudinspelningarna från lektionerna och intervjuerna samt anteckningarna kommer att användas som forskningsmaterial och ingår som ett underlag för resultatet. Dessa kommer att förvaras så att obehöriga inte får tillgång till det.

Studiens resultat

Denna undersökning kommer att rapporteras i form av en doktorsavhandling och eventuellt i artikelform. Studien som helhet är tänkt att presenteras i samband med disputation vid Umeå universitet våren 2015.
Ansvariga forskare
Förutom undertecknad forskare som genomför datainsamling, databearbetning och skrivande av avhandlingen är professor Janet Enever vid Umeå universitet ansvarig forskare och huvudhandledare för forskningsprojektet.

Avbrytande
Deltagandet i forskningsprojektet är frivilligt och du kan när som helst avbryta deltagandet utan att ange något skäl till detta. Om du under studiens gång väljer att inte delta kommer dina efterkommande insatser i klassrumsmateriell/eventuell intervju att anonymiseras och de kommer aldrig citeras i avhandlingstexten eller andra eventuella publikationer.

Ditt bidrag
Min förhoppning är att ditt deltagande inte ska bara till nytta för forskarsamhället utan även för dig och andra lärare. Genom ditt samtycke till deltagandet kan du bidra till utvidgad kunskap om de valda ländernas utbildningskontext i ett jämförande perspektiv. Att vara beredd att bevilja insyn i ditt klassrum för utomstående är viktigt och uppskattas mycket. Din erfarenhet kan vara speciellt gynnsamt för lärarstudenter och nyexaminerade lärare som kan få möjlighet att indirekt bevinna sina praktiker i historieklassrum i avhandlingstexten.

Under intervjun får du en chans att reflektera över din undervisning i historia. Att kunna sätta ord på vad du gör och förklara vad din undervisning grundar sig på kan leda till nya insikter för dina kolleger runt om i och utom landet och även gyna din egen kompetensutveckling.

Här du frågor, är du mycket välkommen att höra av dig till mig:
Sergej Ivanov
Tel. 073 647 16 29
Epost: sergej.ivanov@sprak.umu.se

Sergej Ivanov
Doktorand
Umeå Universitet
Samtycke till deltagande i forskningsprojektet om historieundervisning på gymnasienivå

Som lärare i klass B tillfrågas du om deltagande i studien genom att kryssa nedan.

Jag har tagit del av informationen om projektet ”En tvärkulturell studie av meningsförhandling och meningskapande i historia på gymnasienivå”

Ja ☐

Jag har också fått muntlig information om deltagande i studien och möjlighet att ställa frågor och få dem besvarade

Ja ☐

Härmed lärnar jag mitt samtycke till att delta i studien

Ja ☐

Ort _____________________________ Datum ________________

_______________________________
Underskrift

_______________________________
Namnfortydligande

VÄNLIGEN LÄMNA DENNA SIDA MED DINA SVAR OCH UNDERSKRIFTER TILL SERGEJ IVANOV
Appendix 8. Teacher interview protocol

Teacher interview protocol          Sergei Ivanov, Umeå university

Interview protocol

Date and place: to be conducted shortly after all the research lessons have been observed in a quiet school environment.
Interviewee: the history teacher from the observed class in a sample school.
Facilitators: still and sparkling mineral water (one 0.5l bottles each), plastic glasses (3 pieces).
Duration: ca 1 hour.
Equipment: digital audio recorder.

Before the interview

1. Arrange a place and time for the interview, which the teacher feels comfortable with.
2. Fill in the name of the interviewee in the coding book (kept separately).
3. Fill in the date, institution code, interviewer, and the interviewee code in the protocol form.
4. Check the battery level and functionality of the recorder.

During the interview

1. Provide a short summary of the study.
2. Go through the ethics protocol: To facilitate the study, I would like to record our conversation today. For your information, only researchers on the project will have access to the recording and your participation is voluntary so you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.
3. Invite the interviewee to take some water.
4. Provide guidelines for interview: approximate duration, no right or wrong answer, you are the expert in history teaching whose experiences are extremely valuable.
5. Invite any further questions.
7. Follow the interview guide, ask probing questions if needed, follow up on topics that appear particularly relevant, alter the order of questions where appropriate.
8. Finish off the interview.
9. Stop the recording and note the ending time.
Appendix 8 (continuation)

Teacher interview protocol

Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

10. Verify the recording.
11. Thank the interviewee, inform about the anticipated date of publication, and ask for permission to contact for clarifications.

After the interview

Post interview comments:
1. Note if all the topics in the interview guide were covered. If not, provide the reasons why they were not covered.
2. Describe the atmosphere during the interview: for instance, relaxed, tense, friendly.
3. Note any critical moments during the interview.
### Appendix 9. Teacher interview record form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher interview</th>
<th>Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Interview record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Institution code:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Interviewee code:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short summary of the study:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics protocol:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview guidelines:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview guide:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending time:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Post interview comments:

All topics in the interview guide covered: yes  no

If no, which are not covered and why:

Other:
Appendix 10. Teacher interview guide, Australia

Interview guide

1) For the purpose of the recording, perhaps, you could start by introducing yourself and telling me about your educational background.

2) Could you tell me about your experience of working as a history teacher?

3) What is, in your opinion, of central importance in history teaching and learning?

4) What do you see as less important in history teaching and learning?

5) What do you view as unimportant in history teaching and learning?

6) The educational policy says that one of the goals of secondary school is to foster students' critical thinking. How do you understand the concept 'critical thinking'?

7) Do you think that critical thinking has any value? If yes, what? If no, why?

8) Can you remember some instances when your students demonstrated critical thinking and describe them (elicit as many as possible)?

9) What might it mean not to think critically? Could you give an example?

10) Is it possible to think too critically? Can you give an example?

11) Could you tell me about how you foster students' critical thinking in a history lesson? Perhaps, you could describe how you achieve this.

12) Is there anything specific in critical thinking in a history lesson that you do not find in other school subjects? If yes, what? If no, in what ways is it similar?

13) Is there any difference between how you yourself use critical thinking in a history lesson and how you use it in your everyday life?

14) Is there anything else that you or students do in a history lesson that you could label 'critical' in any sense? Could you tell me about it?

15) Is there anything else that you would like to add about criticality that we have not discussed?
Appendix 11. Teacher interview guide, Russia

Teacher interview Sergei Ivanov, Umeå university

Вопросник интервью

1) Для проверки работы записи давайте начнем с того, что Вы представитесь и расскажете о том, где и какое образование вы получили.

2) Не могли бы Вы теперь рассказать о Вашем опыте работы учителем истории?

3) Что, на Ваш взгляд, является центральным в обучении истории?

4) Что, по Вашему мнению, менее важно в обучении истории?

5) Как Вы считаете, что в обучении истории не играет никакой роли?

6) Согласно ГОСТ образования, развитие критического мышления является одной из задач школьного образования на старшем этапе. Как Вы понимаете содержание термина «критическое мышление»?

7) Как Вы думаете, имеет ли критическое мышление какую-либо ценность? Если да, то какую? Если нет, то почему?

8) Не могли бы Вы вспомнить и описать примеры того, когда Ваш ученики демонстрировали критическое мышление (получить как можно больше примеров)?

9) Что могло бы означать «мыслить некритично»? Могли бы Вы привести пример?

10) А возможно ли мыслить чересчур критично? Не могли бы Вы припомнить какой-нибудь случай?

11) Расскажите, пожалуйста, как Вы работаете над развитием критического мышления у учеников на уроках истории. Опишите, как Вам это удаётся.

12) Есть ли что-нибудь особенно в критическом мышлении и можно на уроках истории, чего нет на других предметах? Если да, то что? Если нет, чем оно похоже?

13) Есть ли какая-нибудь разница между критическим мышлением на уроках истории и им же в повседневной жизни?

14) Могли бы Вы назвать «критическим» что-нибудь еще, что Вы или Ваши ученики делаете на уроках истории? Расскажите, пожалуйста.

15) Что еще Вы могли бы добавить к нашей беседе о критическом мышлении? Упустил ли я что-нибудь важное?
Appendix 12. Teacher interview guide, Sweden

Teacher interview
Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Interview guide

1) För inspelningens skull, kan du börja med att säga vad du heter och vad du har för utbildningsbakgrund?

2) Kan du berätta lite grann om din erfarenhet som historielärare?

3) Vad upplever du som det centrala i historieundervisningen och varför?

4) Vad upplever du som mindre viktigt i historieundervisningen och varför?

5) Vad tror du är absolut oviktigt i historieundervisningen?

6) Enligt läroplanen har skolan ett uppdrag att ge elever en chans att få träna på att tänka kritiskt. Hur skulle du själv tolka begreppet ’kritiskt tänkande’?

7) Tror du att kritiskt tänkande har något värde? Om ja, vilket. Om nej, varför.

8) Försök gärna minnas något tillfälle då någon elev har visat kritiskt tänkande på din lektion och beskriv det (få fram så många exempel som möjligt).

9) Vad betyder det att tänka okritiskt? Ge ett exempel.

10) Kan man tänka för kritiskt? Något exempel på detta kanske?

11) Berätta gärna om hur du jobbar med att utveckla kritiskt tänkande hos elever på dina lektioner. Hur gär du till väga?

12) Finns det något specifikt i sättet att tänka kritiskt på historielektioner som inte finns i andra ämnen? Om ja, vad? Om nej, vad är som gemensamt?

13) Är det någon skillnad på att tänka kritiskt på historielektioner och att göra det i vardagen?


15) Har du något annat att tillägga om vårt samtal om ”att vara kritisk”, kanske något som vi idag inte hunnit ta upp? Något som du har på hjärtat.
Appendix 13. Focus group interview protocol

Focus group interview protocol  Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Interview protocol

Date and place: to be conducted after the lessons in a quiet environment with seating in a circle or in an oval around the table shortly after the observation period.

Interviewees: 6-9 students from the observed class. If possible, including 2-3 higher achiever students, 2-3 middle achiever students, and 2-3 low achiever students as evaluated by class grades in history.

Facilitators: still and sparkling mineral water (three 0.5l bottles each), plastic glasses (15 pieces).

Duration: ca 1 hour.

Equipment: digital audio recorder, 9 sheets of paper numbered from 1 to 9.

Before the interview

1. Consult the teacher to choose interviewees according to the set criteria: either the last grade in history (if any) or an anticipated grade by the end of the course. Have reserve candidates for each category if possible.
2. Arrange a place and time for the interview.
3. Approach the selected students several days before the scheduled interview and invite them to participate.
4. Fill in the codes of the interviewees in the coding book (kept separately).
5. Fill in the date, institution code, and interviewer in the protocol form.

During the interview

1. Distribute the sheets of paper with numbers to the interviewees so each interviewee has her/his own number visible for you.
2. Fill in the codes of the interviewees in the protocol form according to the assigned number.
3. Provide a short summary of the study.
4. Go through the ethics protocol: To do this study, I would like to record our conversation today. For your information, only researchers on the project will be able to listen to the recording and your participation is voluntary so you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.
5. Invite interviewees to take some water.
Appendix 13 (continuation)

Focus group interview protocol

6. Provide guidelines for interview: approximate duration, free turn taking, no right or wrong answer, you know best how you experience history lessons, experiences in the group may differ.
7. Invite any further questions.
8. Start recording.
9. Follow the interview guide, ask probing questions if needed, follow up on topics that appear particularly relevant, alter the order of questions where appropriate.
10. Finish off the interview.
11. Stop the recording and note the ending time.
12. Verify the recording.
13. Thank the interviewees and inform about the anticipated date of publication.

After the interview

Post interview comments:
1. Note if all the topics in the interview guide were covered. If not, provide the reasons why they were not covered.
2. Describe the atmosphere during the interview: for instance, relaxed, tense, friendly.
3. Note any critical moments during the interview.
Appendix 14. Focus group interview record form

Focus group interview  
Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

**Interview record**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Institution code:</th>
<th>Interviewer:</th>
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**Interviewees:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student code</th>
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Starting time:
Short summary of the study: ☐
Ethics protocol: ☐
Interview guidelines: ☐
Interview guide: ☐

**Turn taking sequence:**

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Ending time:
Appendix 14 (continuation)

Focus group interview

Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Post interview comments

All topics in the interview guide covered: yes ☐  no ☐

If no, which are not covered and why:

Other:
Appendix 15. Focus group interview guide, Australia

Focus group interview guide, Australia

Interview guide

1) For the purpose of the recording, perhaps, you could start by introducing yourselves and explaining a little of how you feel about history in the school curriculum.

2) What is, in your opinion, of central importance in history teaching and learning?

3) What do you see as less important in history teaching and learning?

4) What do you view as absolutely not important in history teaching and learning?

5) The educational policy says that one of the goals of secondary school is to foster students’ critical thinking. What does critical thinking mean to you personally?

6) Do you think that critical thinking has any value? If yes, what? If no, why?

7) Can you remember any instance when you or someone else demonstrated critical thinking during a history lesson and describe it?

8) What might it mean not to think critically? Could you give an example?

9) Is it possible to think too critically? Can you give an example?

10) Could you recall any instance when you received instruction or training in critical thinking during a history lesson? Maybe you could describe what happened.

11) Is there anything specific in critical thinking in a history lesson that you do not find in other school subjects? If yes, what? If no, in what ways is it similar?

12) Is there any difference between how you use critical thinking in a history lesson and how you use it in your everyday life?

13) Is there anything else that you do in a history lesson that you could label ‘critical’ in any sense? Could you tell me about it?

14) Is there anything else that you would like to add about criticality that we have not discussed?
Appendix 16. Focus group interview guide, Russia

Focus group interview

Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Вопросник интервью фокус-группы

1) Для проверки работы записи давайте начнем с того, что вы представитесь и расскажете о вашем отношении к истории как школьному предмету.

2) Что, на ваш взгляд, является центральным в обучении истории?

3) Что, по вашemu мнению, менее важно в обучении истории?

4) Как вы считаете, что в обучении истории не играет никакой роли?

5) Согласно ГОСТ образования, развитие критического мышления является одной из задач школьного образования на старшем этапе. Как бы вы лично описали, что такое критическое мышление?

6) Как вы думаете, имеет ли критическое мышление какую-либо ценность? Если да, то какую? Если нет, то почему?

7) Не могли бы вы вспомнить и описать примеры того, когда вы или ваши одноклассники демонстрировали критическое мышление на уроках истории?

8) Что могло бы означать «мыслить некритично»? Могли бы вы привести пример?

9) А возможно ли мыслить чересчур критично? Не могли бы вы припомнить какой-нибудь случай?

10) Примените, пожалуйста, какой-нибудь пример, где вы работали над развитием критического мышления на уроке истории. Опишите, как это происходило.

11) Есть ли что-нибудь особенное в критическом мышлении именно на уроках истории, чего нет на других предметах? Если да, то что? Если нет, чем оно похоже?

12) Есть ли какая-нибудь разница между критическим мышлением на уроках истории и им же в повседневной жизни?

13) Могли бы вы назвать «критическим» что-нибудь еще, что вы делаете на уроках истории? Расскажите, пожалуйста.

14) Что еще вы могли бы добавить к нашей беседе о критическом мышлении? Упустили ли я что-нибудь важное?
Appendix 17. Focus group interview guide, Sweden

Focus group interview

Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Interview guide

1) För att jag skulle kunna hålla reda på vem säger vad när jag transkribrar inspelningen, börja gärna med att säga vad ni heter och berätta lite grann hur ni upplever historia som ett skolämne på gymnasiet.

2) Vad upplever ni som det centrala i historieundervisningen och varför?

3) Vad upplever ni som mindre viktigt i historieundervisningen och varför?

4) Vad tror ni är absolut onödigt i historieundervisningen?

5) Enligt läroplanen har skolan ett uppdrag att ge elever en chans att få träna på att tänka kritiskt. Vad betyder det för er att tänka kritiskt?

6) Upplever ni att kritiskt tänkande har något värde? Om ja, vilket. Om nej, varför.

7) Försök gärna minnas något tillfälle då ni eller någon annan har tänkt kritiskt på en historielektion och beskriv det.

8) Vad betyder det att tänka okritiskt? Ge ett exempel.

9) Kan man tänka för kritiskt? Något exempel på detta kanske?

10) Berätta gärna om något tillfälle då ni har fått träna på att tänka kritiskt på en historielektion. Hur gick det till?

11) Finns det något specifik i sättet att tänka kritiskt på historielektioner som inte finns i andra ämnen? Om ja, vad? Om nej, vad är som gemensamt?

12) Är det någon skillnad på att tänka kritiskt på historielektioner och att göra det utanför skolan?


14) Har ni något annat att tillägga om vårt samtal om ”att vara kritisk”, kanske något som vi idag inte hunnit ta upp? Något som ni har på hjärtat.
Appendix 18. Pilot focus group interview guide, Sweden

Pilot study
Focus group interview

December, 4, 2012
Sergej Ivanov, Umeå university

Interview guide


2) Berätta vad ni heter och hur det kom sig att ni läser historia.

3) Vad upplever ni som det centrala i historieundervisningen och varför?

4) Vad upplever ni som mindre viktigt/oviktigt i historieundervisningen och varför?

5) Läroplan: skolans uppdrag att eleverna ska träna sig att tänka kritiskt. Vad betyder det för er att tänka kritiskt?

6) Upplever ni att kritiskt tänkande har något värde? Om ja, vilket. Om nej, varför.

7) Försök minnas något tillfälle då ni har tänkt kritiskt och beskriv det.

8) Vad betyder det att tänka okritiskt? Ge ett exempel.

9) Berätta om något tillfälle då ni har fått träna tänka kritiskt på en historielektion. Hur gick det till?

10) Finns det något specifik i sättet att tänka kritiskt när det gäller historielektioner eller är det något liknande i andra ämnen?

11) Finns det någon skillnad mellan att tänka kritiskt på historielektioner och utanför skolan? Om ja, vilken, om nej varför.


13) Om inga svar på 11:
   a. läsa kritiskt
   b. granska kritiskt
   c. handla kritiskt
   d. reflektera kritiskt
Appendix 19. Observation protocol

Observation protocol

**Observation protocol**

*Equipment:* observation protocol form (take several pages of lesson description), five digital audio recorders (including one with a microphone). The recorders are to be placed:

- in advance at all times: one with a microphone is carried by the teacher;
- in advance at all times: one on the observer's desk;
- in case of group work: one for each group. If more than three groups, try to vary selected groups on different occasions;
- in case of pair work: one for each of three pairs, which vary on different occasions.

*Before the first instance of observation*

1. Fill in the names of the students in the coding book.

*Before the lesson*

1. Fill in the date, observer, institution code, teacher code, and the starting time in the protocol form.
2. Draw the arrangement of class furniture in the protocol and note the room.

*During the lesson*

1. Start recording.
2. Note the overall topic of the lesson as defined by the teacher.
3. Note any learning materials that are used.
4. Note time of start of each activity by your clock, and within each activity note modes of interaction, discourses, and critical moments as unfolded during the lesson:
   i. **Activity description:**
      - type: for example, discussion club, role play;
      - subtopic: for example, forming alliances, foreign policy;
      - what the teacher and students do, for example, class listens to a student's account of the event, teacher talks about a chapter in the textbook to students.
   ii. **Modes of interaction:**
      - Plenary teacher-whole class: T-C
      - Plenary student-whole class: S-C
      - Pair work: S-S
Appendix 19 (continuation)

Observation protocol

- Group work: SS
- Teacher-individual/several students: T-xS (x=number of students)
- Individual work: S

iii. Discourses:
- TbD – teacher refers to the textbook;
- TD – teacher refers to anything else but the textbook;
- SbD – students refer to the textbook;
- SD – students refer to anything else but the textbook;
- TnD – teacher constructs his/her own ideas, experiences as defined by himself/herself;
- SnD – students construct their own ideas, experiences as defined by themselves.

iv. Critical moments:
- Inter. – interruptions of the lesson flow;
- Man. – management: use of authority by the teacher to stop anything that disrupts from the lesson flow;
- Cons. – consensus;
- Disag. – disagreement;
- Digr. – digression.

5. Note the ending time.

After the lesson

1. Stop the recording and verify it.
2. Confirm the topic and learning materials used with the teacher.
3. Try to obtain copies of the learning materials used.
4. If the teacher collects/assesses any written assignments, try to obtain some copies of these, where possible, representative samples for the class.

Post interview comments:

1. Describe the atmosphere during the lesson: for instance, relaxed, tense, friendly.
2. Note anything that you find extraordinary about the lesson.
### Appendix 20. Observation record form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation protocol form</th>
<th>Sergei Ivanov, Umeå university</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</table>

#### Observer:
- Institution code:
- Teacher code:
- Number of students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting time:</th>
<th>Ending time:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

#### Draw the arrangement of furniture here:
#### Topic of the lesson:
#### Learning materials and aids:

#### Post-observation comments

---

### Lesson description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Mode of interaction</th>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Critical moments</th>
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</thead>
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## Appendix 21. Coding book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed class (students, Russia)</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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Appendix 21 (continuation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee number</th>
<th>Code in the observed class</th>
<th>Teacher interview, Russia</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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