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DIVERSITY IN SEXUALITY EDUCATION – HIGHLIGHTS AND SILENCES IN SWEDISH BIOLOGY TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

Shortcomings in sex- and relationship education, SRE, concerning content related to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) and queer perspectives, are expressed in a report from The Swedish School Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2018). Drawing on the report this study critically examines the content in five Swedish biology textbooks for 13- to 16-year-old pupils. The first part of the study analyses quantitatively the representations of LGBT, homosexuality, queer, intersex, asexuality, and crip, or disability, by calculating an estimated percentage of content coverage. The results show that LGBT content is represented in all five books. There are none or only a few representations though, of queer, intersex, asexuality and crip. The second part of the study is a qualitative examination of sexualities through gender, queer and crip theory. Among the results are examples regarding hormones and puberty that reinforce stereotypical gender binaries, focusing on differences instead of similarities, thereby missing the potential to render visibility to intersex and trans-persons. There are also descriptions of reproduction and genitals, where the man is depicted as norm. If gaps in knowledge and diversity regarding gender, queer and crip are to be filled, further development of textbooks is important.