In this paper, I introduce a deliberative understanding of the formation of the curriculum and school subjects, going beyond a view of subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises. The basic idea of a deliberative curriculum is developed in relation to curriculum theory and didactics (didaktik), and the disposition of the paper is as follows: I begin by presenting a short conceptual overview of curriculum history, based on Pinar’s (1978) threefold categorization. I then present what I term ‘didactic typologies’, implying different interpretations concerning the formation of curriculum and the content of school subjects. I exemplify the need for a problematization of curriculum by analyzing a recent article by Zongyi Deng (2009) on how to deal with curriculum questions at different levels with reference to ‘liberal studies’, in which he claims ‘that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise’. I then make an extended case for what I call, with reference to Null (2011), a ‘deliberative curriculum’, and try to analyze some of the characteristics and consequences of this perspective for curriculum making, teachers’ professionalism, and classroom activities. Finally, I link and exemplify these three areas to the recent Swedish educational and curriculum history.

Keywords: deliberative curriculum; didactic typologies; Schwab; Reid; Westbury

When thinking about curriculum, we generally – and very soon – arrive at the question of school subjects. And, it is a content-based curriculum, as expressed in school subjects, that has dominated the curriculum scene in most countries’ educational histories (cf. Meyer, Kamens, & Benavot, 1992; concerning Sweden, see Morawski, 2010). Are there other possibilities? In this paper, I want to introduce a deliberative understanding of the formation of the curriculum and school subjects, going beyond a view of subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises.

The basic idea of a deliberative curriculum is developed here in relation to curriculum theory and didactics (didaktik), and the disposition of the paper is as follows: I begin by presenting a short conceptual overview of curriculum history, based on Pinar’s (1978) threefold categorization. I then present what I term ‘didactic typologies’, implying different interpretations concerning the formation of curriculum and the content of school subjects. In the following section, I exemplify the need for a problematization of curriculum by analyzing a recent article by Zongyi Deng (2009) on how to deal with curriculum questions at different levels with reference to ‘liberal studies’, in which he claims ‘that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise’. Finally, I will make an extended case for what I call, with reference to Null (2011), a ‘deliberative curriculum’, and will try to analyze some of the characteristics and consequences of this perspective for curriculum making, teachers’ professionalism, and classroom activities.

Curriculum and school subject formation in retrospect: three models of curriculum research and construction

In a classic curriculum theory article, William Pinar (1978) divided curriculum research into ‘traditional’, ‘conceptual-empiricist’, and ‘reconceptualist’ categories. Depending on which of these perspectives we choose to apply to curriculum questions, we will look at the formation of school subjects and curriculum content from different angles. Within the first two perspectives, curriculum content is seen as more or less directly related to the results of scientific disciplines, although in a much more sophisticated
and developed fashion in the conceptual-empiricist perspective than in the traditional, more administrative approach. Both these perspectives rely on scientific progress and emphasize adjustment of the curriculum to scientifically investigated demands arising from the needs of a technological society. With such an emphasis, school subjects also seem to be created as simplifications of scientific content. Within the traditional perspective, subject experts often have a decisive influence on the framework of an administrative and political compromise. Within the more sophisticated conceptual-empiricist perspective, cognitivism and a discipline-centered curriculum play the primary roles, as after the Woods Hole conference in the United States in the late 1950s.

Within the reconceptualist tradition, closely related in time to the new sociology of education, Goodson (1983, 1988) and Popkewitz (1987) showed in their curriculum history research how school subjects were, instead, legitimized and mythologized by their association with scientific disciplines. Goodson presented a model for the development of school subjects – invention, promotion, legislation and mythologization – and asserted that the representatives of a school subject, once it was established, developed a rhetoric of legitimization that prevented further change.

Popkewitz (1976, 1977) analyzed in some early works how the construction of curriculum content based on the discipline-centered principle (which can be seen as one variant of the conceptualist-empiricist perspective) ignored the social nature of knowledge and the differing approaches existing in different disciplines. He also showed that the scientific logic that was reconstructed did not reflect the conflicts existing in the real-life scientific community. This claim went back to a statement by him that the social sciences ‘involved continual conflict among members about the purpose and direction of study’ (Popkewitz, 1977, p. 42). Popkewitz (1976, 1977) also argued that syllabuses and teaching materials often presented a uniform systems view of the social context, describing society as a closed system whose parts work together in stable harmony. This kind of approach is also realized in the study edited by Popkewitz (1987), and goes together with the more general curriculum history studies presented at the same time by Kliebard (1986) and Franklin (1986; cf. Englund, 1991), as well as the thesis put forward by Meyer et al. (1992). That thesis was that there seems to exist a shared, worldwide primary curriculum, demonstrating that ‘a high proportion of the forces shaping national curricular outlines are to be found at the world rather than the national or subnational levels’ (Meyer et al., 1992, p. 172). However, as Hopmann (1993) stresses in his review of Meyer’s work, ‘the study does not take into account that one and the same heading may have completely different meanings depending on the context in which it is placed’ (p. 481).

So, while the political and ideological character of the curriculum was analyzed and highlighted by educational and curriculum researchers related to the new sociology of education, it was often seen as determined and locked into a bureaucratic rationality (Kliebard, 1975), in terms of mythologized visions (Goodson, 1983, 1988), as being the same all over the world (Meyer et al., 1992), and so on. However, these kinds of analyses were rarely, or not at all, interested in drawing attention to (the possibility of) different interpretations of school subjects or to the potential for an education of another kind than one locked into a pattern of reproduction and social control.

The idea of didactic typologies

In my own dissertation (Englund, 1986), I made use of Pinar’s categorization and of many of the advantages which the new sociology of education offered, but at the same time I rejected what I conceptualized as the over-determined theoretical perspective of that movement, which left no room for, or had only a marginal interest in, different interpretations of the content of school subjects. What I tried to show at that time was that the selective tradition (cf. Apple, 1979; Williams, 1973) was an important part of school subjects, and that there was also room for different choices of content and teaching, both at a more general level, with an ongoing struggle between different educational conceptions, and at a school subject level. Inspired by Barr, Barth, and Shermis’s (1977) analysis of three social studies traditions with respect to their different purposes, methods, and choices of content, I distinguished (in Englund, 1986, ch. 9) five different types of purpose, choice of content, and teaching methods within citizenship education and social studies:

1. Traditional value-based citizenship transmission (national values, obey-oriented), with a concentric principle of teaching.
2. Preparation for the labor market/employability-oriented citizenship transmission for a society in change, focusing on individual competence.
3. Preparation for active, participatory citizenship by means of critical institutional analyses and a manifest/latent perspective of conflict.
4. Social studies based on social science, with the underlying social science disciplines as points of reference.
5. Problem-oriented teaching based on students’ experiences.

Concerning history as a school subject, I proposed a similar typology based on Jensen (1978), who was in turn inspired by Klafki (1963, 1964). I also related these two ‘didactic typologies’ to three different conceptions of education, which gave these school subjects different contexts and meanings: the patriarchal, the scientific-rational, and the democratic conception.
At almost the same time, the Canadian science education researcher Douglas Roberts (1988) developed seven different curriculum emphases for science education (later to be further developed by Östman, 1995): (1) The correct explanation emphasis, (2) The structure of science emphasis, (3) The scientific skill development emphasis, (4) The solid foundation emphasis, (5) An everyday coping emphasis, (6) A science, technology, and decisions emphasis, and (7) The self as explainer emphasis.

What I primarily wish to stress with these examples is that here we have didactic starting points for analyzing different interpretations of school subjects, implying that these can be interpreted and taught in very different ways. Even if there are selective traditions and more or less dominant ways of interpreting school subjects, there are also at all times, in most school subjects, more or less distinctive alternatives constituting different didactic typologies and emphases (cf. Englund, 1997b).

But do we, as researchers and teachers, think and act in this way? How do we deal with questions to do with the interpretation of different school subjects? In one (dominant?) line of reasoning in today’s hunt for results in schools – what and how do students learn, what are the best routes to efficient learning, and so on – there seems to be a consensus about the crucial role of the teacher and, in particular, the teacher’s didactic competence, but mainly in a perspective of teaching efficiency, with the content of teaching and learning seemingly taken for granted. But should we not also think of this problem in terms of school subjects being – at least potentially – defined and interpreted in very different ways? This also means that they can be and are worked with in different ways, producing different types of knowledge building, capacity for moral judgment, and so on, depending on teaching styles, the scope for active student involvement in discussion which different didactics provide, and so on.

School subject studies today – the need for didactic problematization

A recent article on the formation of school subjects in a curriculum perspective, by Zongyi Deng (2009), reflects the first two traditions from Pinar mentioned above. The first is the traditional, bureaucratic approach, but in this case within the current discourse of educational standards and accountability, which, according to Deng, ‘is undergirded by a very narrow and reductive notion of curriculum content’ (p. 586). The second, the conceptual-emancipist or discipline-centered tradition, has, according to Deng (2009), become central in the teacher education reform discourse over the two last decades. Deng argues that most of that discourse has been influenced by the conceptual framework of Shulman (1987) and his associates at Stanford University – a framework predicated on the necessity of teachers’ understanding and transformation of the content of an academic discipline. However, what seem to be neglected, according to Deng, are the curriculum-making processes entailed in the formation of a school subject – processes that determine and shape the nature and character of curriculum content and, thereby, teachers’ understanding of that content (Deng, 2009, pp. 585–586; cf. Deng, 2007a, 2007b). He also suggests that ‘Shulman and his associates have failed to see the curriculum content as something with (built-in) formative potential and the need for analyzing and unpacking that content for “educative” values and elements in instructional planning’ (Deng, 2009, p. 599).

Instead, Deng explores ‘the broad and complex meanings of curriculum content surrounding the formation of a school subject’ (p. 586). Concluding his analysis, following an examination of the content of liberal studies with reference to the curriculum-making processes involved in the formation of school subjects, the author makes the general claim ‘that a school subject is a distinctive purpose-built enterprise, constructed in response to social, cultural, and political demands and challenges toward educative ends’ (p. 598).

In the example given, liberal studies as a school subject (?), formation follows the three ‘classic’ levels, the institutional, the programmatic, and the classroom, earlier developed by Goodlad et al. (1979) (cf. Doyle, 2008; Hopmann, 1999; Westbury, 2000). The institutional expectations are construed in ambitious terms and translated into specific curriculum aims (cf. Deng, 2009). The content is organized in modules and each module is organized into prologue, key issues and related issues, and finally ‘related values and attitudes that teachers are supposed to help students develop’ (Deng, 2009, p. 590). Deng also stresses that ‘an understanding of the theory of content inherent in a school subject is necessary for the disclosure and realization of educational potential embodied in the content’ (Deng, 2009, p. 595). He also refers to German Didaktik (Klafki, 2000) with regard to the significance of interpreting curriculum content for educational potential.

Deng’s proposal is of course possible in a specific case such as the one referred to, that of liberal studies, but not necessarily in general. I also want to stress that, to me, such a view (school subjects as purpose-built enterprises, with very detailed prescriptions concerning content and teacher actions) sounds rather deterministic and

1 I find this critique of Shulman a little unjust in the light, for example, of Shulman’s intentions with the idea of pedagogical content knowledge and how he later worked on teacher professionalism within the Carnegie Foundation. However, the idea of pedagogical content knowledge does of course have the potential to be instrumentalized.

2 A point that may be noted here is the choice of the broad concept of liberal studies as a school subject. This specific school subject might, in accordance with Deng, be seen as a potential invention (Westbury, 1984), and may have been ‘designed to overcome the constraints that typified many secondary academic subjects by providing a “more contextualized and politicized curriculum”’ (Deng, 2009, p. 588).
instrumental, referring to a curriculum content with specific prescriptive limits, and thus too linear and evolutionary. This model also seems to seriously underestimate the inherent struggle between different social forces at all levels over both the formation of a school subject such as liberal studies and the different possible interpretations of the curriculum content of a school subject.

Although there is a clear intention to analyze the broad and complex meanings of curriculum content surrounding the formation of a school subject, what this view of subject formation seems to neglect is the different interpretations of how to ‘curricularize’ a specific school subject: what is the most important knowledge, how should the subject perspectivize different things, and so on? It also neglects the fact that these different interpretations seem to be forgotten when school subjects are constructed as ‘purpose-built enterprises’.

However, I may be misinterpreting Deng. If he considers these kinds of differences to be built into his ‘purpose-built enterprises’ (which I find hard to see or discover), his approach might be characterized in a way that I would call deliberative (see the next section), in spite of all his prescriptions.

Nevertheless, I consider that it is necessary once again to analyze the many possible interpretations of different school subjects, and also to leave it to the professional teacher to decide more about their content and about ways of working. This seems even more important today, when there are many new tools, such as communications technology, and so on, and insights into the classroom situation, such as the crucial role of the teacher–student encounter (no education without relation), our recent understanding of the language and communication in use in meaning-creating processes, and different subject-specific ways of learning and knowing.

**Toward a need for a deliberative curriculum**

What I wish to propose and revitalize through this paper, then, is an approach to the formation of school subjects and curriculum content that rests on a deliberative understanding of education and curriculum content, going beyond a view of school subjects as distinctive and prescribed purpose-built enterprises.3

Thus, I will attempt to (re)develop and restructure a perspective on the formation of curriculum content in which social forces and social groups such as subject teachers’ associations – as well as teachers as professionals – struggle for and defend different purposes of education, and in which different ways of choosing content and teaching are the result of ongoing struggles and deliberations over the establishment and ‘correct’ interpretation of school subjects and curriculum content, without creating a definite ‘purpose-built school subject’ (Englund, 1986, 1997a, 1997b, 2007a, 2007b). This view of curriculum content and school subjects implies that we see them as contingent moral and political constructions that are constantly reshaped, without definite limits, capable of being interpreted and realized in different ways, politically contested at all levels, and in an ever-changing situation in relation to the struggle between different social forces.

While I regard my didactic typology for social studies and Roberts’s seven emphases of science education, presented above, as possible points of reference for future analyses of this kind, I find it necessary, at the same time, to ask the question how new kinds of didactic typologies can be created for the different school subjects of today.

But how are different school subject intentions – or should we call them different literacy intentions? – to be investigated and distinguished from each other? Some of what has been said up to now would do as a starting point, but I think that understanding different teacher (literacy) intentions is also very much a matter of understanding relations, the pedagogy of relation, and the insights of that perspective (cf. Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004; Englund, 2004b).

The first of these insights concerns the intersubjective and communicative character of the encounter between teachers and students and between students. The second has to do with the potentially different meanings arising through choices (primarily by the teacher) of teaching content as an offer of meaning. The third insight concerns teaching and its ever present and possible relationship with the political and moral dimensions and with the aspect of democracy. The field taking shape concerns the experiences (in a wider sense) which teachers and students have the possibility of gaining in schools, and the importance of democracy as a norm within that field. (Englund, 2004a, p. 14, my tr.; cf. Englund, 1998)

There are examples of studies of this kind – seeking to find different interpretations and different ways of working within a school subject – in Englund (2004b). What should be underlined is that such studies do not just explore the different traditions to be found in curriculum documents, textbooks, and the general school subject debate. They can of course also involve an analysis of teachers in their day-to-day work. Eva Hultin (2006), for example, supplements the dominant didactic typologies of literature teaching by combining a text analysis of curricular documents with a study in which she distinguishes four different conversational genres in the teaching of literature: (1) the teaching examination, (2) text

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3Once again, I would underline the uncertainty of my preliminary evaluation of Deng’s example of liberal studies. It should also be noted that Deng seems to be inspired, at least in part, by a tradition which I will characterize in this article as ‘deliberative curriculum’, and my intention is to try to analyze and question the coherence between the example given by Deng and the broad tradition of deliberative curriculum that I will present.
oriented talk, (3) culturally oriented talk, and (4) informal book talk. Such research findings provide a sophisticated collection of different modes of teaching/communicating in their broadest sense—different ways of choosing content, communicating that content, organizing the interplay between teacher and student, and so on. This collection could serve as a base, a reservoir, for didactic discussions among teachers and others.

To summarize this section, I have attempted to show that curriculum content is always socially constructed and may be a result of struggling social forces that pave the way for different interpretations, resting on different political and ideological visions; but also that curriculum and school subjects are in practice interpreted, designed, and performed by unique teachers in ways that we might try to characterize for further comparison and evaluation.

From curriculum studies to didactics to deliberation
An analysis of curriculum and school content as a socially constructed and interpretable outcome of struggles and compromises will show how school subjects can be interpreted and realized in very different ways. Perhaps, the most crucial kind of knowledge for teachers is to get to know their school subjects in such a way—historically, and in terms of the consequences of different choices of content and ways of teaching for different groups of students—that they are able to deliberate (with each other) and make discerning and optimal choices regarding how and what to teach and communicate to their students.

If, as previously observed by Deng (cf. Deng & Luke, 2008), school subjects are ‘uniquely purpose-built educational enterprises, designed with and through an educational imagination toward educational ends’ (Deng & Luke, 2008, p. 83), how open to conflicts and struggles between different interests and social forces over curriculum and school subject formation will future curriculum making be? Curriculum documents and, within them, plans for teaching in different school subjects have to be and always are compromises between different views and perspectives (cf. Englund, 1986), but how much of those different interests and perspectives should they expose and make explicit for future classroom interpretations and deliberations by teachers and students?

Toward a deliberative curriculum
I will refer here to a tradition of ‘deliberative curriculum’ thinking described in a work by Wesley Null (2011), in which he draws attention to some central researchers who have created this tradition and outlines some of its characteristics. Null begins by referring to William Reid (1978), who first underlines that ‘curriculum is a public good to which all citizens can contribute, provided they are willing to think clearly about the types of problems that curriculum poses. He views curriculum problems as

moral, practical problems that are best resolved when numerous constituent groups provide input’ (Null, 2011, p. 151). Reid stresses the public aspect of the curriculum, implying, as I see it, that the ‘public has to define itself’ (Dewey, 1927/1984; cf. Ljunggren, 1996a, 1996b), while ‘acknowledging the views of others who may disagree with our most deeply held beliefs, and strengthening our ability to engage in the kind of practical reasoning that leads to the resolution of curriculum problems’ (Null, 2011, pp. 151–152). Or, as Reid himself puts it:

The method by which most everyday practical problems get solved has been variously called ‘deliberation’ or ‘practical reasoning’. It is an intricate and skilled social process whereby, individually or collectively, we identify the questions to which we must respond, establish grounds for deciding on answers and then choose among the available solutions. (Reid, 1978, p. 43)

The philosophical background to and inspiration for the concept of deliberation developed by Reid was provided by Joseph Schwab (1969) and, before him, the philosopher Richard McKeon, who laid the philosophical foundation through his reading of Aristotle for deliberation, later developed for the curriculum field by Schwab (McKeon, 1947; cf. Englund, 2006, pp. 505–506). In his ‘Philosophy and action’ (1952), McKeon develops the inquiry method as the most desirable for connecting theory and practice; it is ‘a method of resolving problems’ (McKeon, 1952, p. 85) and is close to pragmatism. ‘The difference between the two in practice, however, is that deliberators insist that students reflect on the moral framework that guides their decisions. In this respect, deliberative curriculists are as much moral philosophers as they are curriculum specialists’ (Null, 2011, p. 175). McKeon also points out that solving problems depends on communication and agreement, that language is the key to building consensus, and ‘that people must be persuaded in order for solutions to be invented and enacted’ (Null, 2011, p. 174). Null also stresses that the modern endeavor to separate ‘facts’ from ‘values’ is rejected by central representatives of the inquiry-based deliberative tradition such as Schwab, Reid, and Westbury.

Joseph Schwab was a long-time professor of natural sciences at the University of Chicago, but also a humanist ‘who integrated all forms of knowledge toward the goal of shaping students morally’ (Null, 2011, p. 164). As Westbury and Wilkof stress in their introduction to Schwab’s collected works, Schwab ‘believed in discussion teaching’ (Westbury & Wilkof, 1978, p. 7), and in 1969 he gave the deliberative tradition a major thrust with his article ‘The practical: a language for curriculum’, in which he argued that deliberation should be the central method for curriculum making. ‘Following the path of deliberative curriculum does not mean that curriculists cease to be
“scientists”, but it does mean that they subordinate their desire for a systematic science to their role as civic-minded leaders who serve the public interest . . . well-schooled, philosophically informed public servants who shape communities toward civic virtue’ (Null, 2011, p. 168).

Westbury (2000) contrasts the American systematic tradition of seeing teachers as employees, who are expected to ‘implement’ the curriculum, with the German Didaktik tradition, in which teachers are ‘guaranteed professional autonomy’ (Westbury, 2000, p. 17). He also underlines that, within the German tradition (building on ‘Didaktik und Bildung’), teaching without spiritual formation is not teaching at all. Without the formation of character, training might take place, but not teaching. ‘For Didaktik . . . it is the individual teacher who nurtures the self-formation that is at the heart of Bildung’ (Westbury, 2000, p. 31).

At least two characteristics can be drawn from this short overview of the deliberative tradition: first, curriculum making should be a broad task, hopefully engaging all citizens in creating education for the public good; and second, and at the same time, teachers as professionals should be given a crucial decisive role in choosing content and how to teach it. A third characteristic might be deliberation in the classroom, and one suggestion in this direction is that of deliberative communication, put forward by Englund (2000, 2006, p. 512; cf. Moore, 2013).

Deliberative communication implies communication in which (1) different views are confronted with one another and arguments for these different views are given time and space and are articulated and presented; (2) there is tolerance and respect for the concrete other and participants learn to listen to the other person’s argument; (3) elements of collective will formation are present, that is, an endeavor to reach consensus or at least temporary agreements and/or to draw attention to differences; (4) authorities/traditional views (represented, for example, by parents and tradition) can be questioned and there are opportunities to challenge one’s own tradition; (5) there is scope for students to communicate and deliberate without teacher control, that is, for argumentative discussions between students with the aim of solving problems or shedding light on them from different points of view.

**Deliberative curriculum making: Swedish examples**

There are at least three periods or movements in Swedish curriculum history that can be seen as related to different kinds of deliberative curriculum. As noted, three different characteristics can be identified concerning the deliberative tradition: first, curriculum making should be a broad task, hopefully engaging all citizens in creating education for the public good; second, teachers as professionals should have a crucial role in choosing content and how to teach it; and third, there should be scope for deliberation in the classroom. In recent Swedish educational history, these three characteristics have all been clearly present, though without being explicitly related to each other.

1. The decade before the 1980 national curriculum (Lgr 80), a curriculum that is quite citizen-oriented and radical in many respects (cf. Englund, 1986), was actually an attempt to reach many different groups and secure their participation and engagement in curriculum work. During the years immediately following Lgr 80, too, the National Board of Education invited both experts and teachers for deliberations on how to understand and implement the new curriculum. However, this development was cut short by criticism in the late 1980s of the tradition of schools serving the public good, a tradition that rested on a society-centered concept of citizenship. The society-centered tradition of democracy, whose starting point is the idea of a sovereign people, was challenged by an individual-centered idea of democracy (SOU 1990:44; cf. Englund, 1994). This educational policy shift opened up schools to the private good of parental choice and to the new principles of governance in the reforms around 1989/90 (see Englund, 1996; Wahlström, 2002).

2. Later, the national curriculum of 1994 (Lpo 94) included, among its many different, inconsistent, and contradictory directives, another interesting idea that might be seen as partly deliberative, that of participatory management by objectives, which was combined with a social constructivist approach and trust in teachers’ professionalism (cf. Morawski, 2010, ch. 8). From early on, however, this idea was contested by an inbuilt goal system, with ‘goals to be attained’ that left only marginal scope for teachers to act in accordance with the idea of participatory management (cf. Carlgren & Englund, 1996).

3. The ‘value-foundation year’ declared in Sweden in 1999–2000, with the aim of balancing the one-sided tendency to stress ‘facts’ as knowledge, represented another type of investment in a deliberative curriculum as a way of interpreting the basic values of school education through open, deliberative communication in the classroom. In mutual communication, different views and values could be brought face to face, in ‘an endeavor to ensure that each individual takes a stand by listening, deliberating, seeking arguments, and evaluating, while at the same time there is a collective effort to find values that everyone can agree upon’ (National Agency for Education, 2000, p. 6; cf. Englund, 2000, 2006, 2007b; Ministry of Education, 2000).

Within the debate on how to implement the value base, an authoritative opening for psychological ‘evidence’-based programs replaced the ideas from 2000 about open, deliberative communication with manual-based ‘communication’ for behavioral modification (KOMET),
pseudo-psychotherapy (SET), and so on (cf. Englund & Englund, 2012; Bergh & Englund, 2014). What is also noticeable, however, is growing self-criticism from the authorities (National Agency for Education, 2011a) and a ‘renaissance’ for open forms of communication (National Agency for Education, 2011b).

Difficulties in establishing a deliberative curriculum

As these three examples show, it is very difficult to make room for and establish different kinds of deliberative curriculum. Traditional philosophies of education such as essentialism and perennialism are still very strong, and movements to revive traditional schooling return again and again. The various deliberative characteristics and ideas of the examples given were, as we have seen, contested in different ways. The democratic offensive of the 1980s was pushed back by private middle-class forces questioning the Swedish comprehensive school system. Or, to put it another way, ‘the legal basis for it which had been dominant until then, the idea of school education as a social citizenship right for all children, was questioned by a civil rights-based view, which looked at the right of schooling as a family or parental right’ (Englund, 2009, p. 22; cf. Englund, 2010).

The second deliberative movement, built on teachers’ professionalism, was upheld by the National Agency for Education for at least a decade, but was progressively weakened, mainly by increasingly strong top-down governance, as management by objectives was gradually displaced by results-based management (SOU 2007:28), standardization, and marketization, with a fast-growing private school sector (cf. Englund, 2012).

This stronger top-down governance, with the gradual shift from management by objectives to results-based management, also exerted an influence over the third deliberative movement. The latter, advocating deliberative communication in schools, was challenged and partly overruled by national authorities outside education introducing psychologically based anti-bullying programs and behavioral and psychotherapy-based programs aimed at promoting self-control. This intervention by authorities outside the schools sector marks a clear break from the earlier tradition in Swedish education, which had the broad aim of promoting democracy and well-being, a public good in the pursuit of which teachers as professionals were given a prominent role.

In conclusion, developing and achieving schools that work on a deliberative basis to strengthen democracy seems a utopian aim (cf. Simon, 2005). However, in this age of massive transformation of communication technologies, nothing seems impossible, and one empirical result is worth citing:

Students on vocational programmes who participated in deliberative teaching increased their knowl-

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