Every issue of Education Inquiry publishes peer-reviewed articles in one, two or three different sections. In the Open section, articles are sent in by authors as part of regular journal submissions and published after a blind review process. In the Thematic section, articles may reflect the theme of a conference or workshop and are published after a blind review process. The Invited section feature articles by researchers invited by Education Inquiry to shed light on a specific theme or for a specific purpose and they are also published after a review process. This issue of Education Inquiry contains a Thematic and an Open section.

**Thematic section**

The thematic section in this issue concerns Swedish mother-tongue education. Åsa af Geijerstam initially offers some introductory remarks in “Curriculum studies of mother-tongue education in Sweden. Introductory remarks”.

Then, Caroline Liberg, Jenny W Folkeryd, and Åsa af Geijerstam analyse the current and previous curricula of Swedish and Swedish as a second language in their article “Swedish – an updated school subject”, arguing that the old traditions strongly influence the most recent curriculum from 2011. The traditions tend to focus on the formal aspects of language, especially in the early years, and socio-political perspectives of literacy learning and mother-tongue education are invisible in the early years of schooling. The authors also argue that we need an extended view of what can be included in mother-tongue education and how this may be captured with a more delicate meta-language to talk about these issues from a research perspective.

In “‘Beating about the bush’ on the how and why in elementary school science”, Britt Jakobson and Monica Axelsson examine teacher instruction on scientific literacy tasks and teacher expression of ultimate and subordinate purposes during one teaching sequence of a science unit. They use a Practical Epistemology Analysis and Systemic Functional Grammar and transcribed audio recordings of teacher instruction, students’ pair work and written texts. In conclusion, students are mainly involved in hands-on activities and aspects of scientific literacy are not so emphasised. The dominant focus is on “doing”, and the authors argue that this is creating uncertainty and that the learning direction is not always in line with what the teacher intended.

Next, in “The art of listening in an educational perspective. Listening reception in the mother tongue”, Kent Adelmann aims to provide further insights on listening reception as one of the four language arts in Swedish as a school subject. A Swedish example is contrasted with mainstream listening research in the USA. The results indicate that listening research in the USA is indeed influential, but an alternative
theoretical framework for listening is also offered. By combining an educational approach and an alternative theoretical framework the concluding argument is that it is possible to work with an expanding and including perspective in listening research and listening education.

Finally, Anders Sigrell’s article “Whenever I put a black jacket on, I get dandruff. On metonymy as a device for constructive argumentation analysis” starts from that mother-tongue teachers teach argumentation analysis. To this end they use, among other things, a stylistic meta-language, i.e. the tropes and figures of style and Sigrell discusses different ways of approaching the labelling of expressions as “metaphors” or “metonymies”. The argument is that a more pragmatic view on the figure metonymy, indicating some kind of contextual togetherness or contiguity, could aid and sharpen the argumentation analysis. As metonymy is a potential carrier of possibly insidious assumptions and attempts to persuade, highlighting this is also a way to make the persuasive power of language explicit to students.

Open section

We have four papers in the open section. Firstly, in “Neoliberal teacher preparation: Conceptualising a response in the US borderlands” Peter Farruggio and Michael D. Guerrero contend that neoliberal capitalism has promoted the spirit of competition among schools, educators and students through a policy of high stakes accountability for immediately measurable educational outcomes. As part of this trend and in the USA, teacher educator programmes are increasingly made accountable for the impact of their programme completers on student achievement by using standardised test scores. As a response, some programmes have begun to rethink their practices but the authors argue that there is little empirical evidence that improvement is available to teacher educators, particularly for those committed to the preparation of working class Mexican-origin bilingual education teachers. In this article, the authors describe the creation of a context-specific signature border pedagogy aimed at preparing effective bilingual teachers in a majority Latino public university in the South Texas Borderlands.

Secondly, Joakim Lindgren, Agneta Hult, Christina Segerholm and Linda Rönnberg analyse how school inspection in Sweden is portrayed in texts produced by the responsible national authorities, first by the National Agency for Education and from 2008 the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. In their article “Mediating school inspection – Key dimensions and keywords in agency text production 2003–2010” they look at four dimensions and key concepts conveying dominant ideas of inspection and education, and the results suggest that the rhetoric and ideas of school inspection changed when the responsibility for inspection was transferred to the Swedish School Inspectorate. Post-2008, a language with the intention of detecting shortcomings and supporting an ideology of individual rights and juridification is apparent and the article finally discusses some of the implications that this development may entail.
Next, in “The relevance of class in education policy and research – The case of Sweden’s vocational education” Mattias Nylund examines contemporary policy trends in upper-secondary vocational education in Sweden. The article first discusses the more general matter of the relevance of class and how class can be understood in contemporary society. Second, the author demonstrates how problems arise when vocational education is removed from its class context, illustrated by contemporary policy trends in Sweden. This case not only shows that issues of class are largely ignored, but also how policies are adopted that are likely to augment class inequalities.

Finally, in “A cross-national comparison of test anxiety in Swedish and Finnish grade 3 pupils: Measured by the CTAS”, Mikaela Nyroos, Johan Korhonen, Karin Linnanmäki and Camilla Svens-Liavåg conducted a cross-national study to examine the dimensionality of the Children’s Test Anxiety Scale (the CTAS) and to see if there are differences in test anxiety between Swedish and Finnish pupils, and whether these differences are ‘real’ differences or a result of differential item functioning. The results indicate partial measurement invariance with respect to nationality and gender, demonstrating that the CTAS accurately measures latent constructs. However, no differences were found in the levels of test anxiety experienced by Swedish and Finnish pupils and, even if girls reported higher levels of autonomic reactions related to test anxiety, no gender differences in thoughts and off-task behaviours were identified. Finally, the article discusses methodological limitations of the study and implications of the results.