



**Independent Project with Specialization in English  
Studies and Education**  
15 Credits, First Cycle

**EFL Students' Analysing and Evaluating  
Skills in Social Media Content**

*EFL elevers analys- och utvärderingsförmåga i sociala mediers  
innehåll*

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# Abstract

This paper is a synthesis of research that presents and reflects on the possible benefits of integrating media information literacy and critical thinking into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum with the intention of facilitating for students' development in their critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language social media content. English is of major significance in the Swedish society and students get some of their news feed from social media in the English language along with their native language of Swedish. The aim of this paper is to investigate which strategies are currently used to promote students' critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language social media content as well as which potential strategies which could possibly be incorporated by Upper-Secondary school EFL teachers in Sweden. Relevant academic articles were analysed showing various findings such as 1) the general importance of critical thinking and media literacy skills, 2) the importance of incorporating media information literacy in teacher training and practice, and lastly 3) the continuous development of critical thinking and media information literacy by age throughout the schooling years. This is an important field to continue to study in order to transform teaching practices and materials with the inclusion of media information literacy and critical thinking in the teaching of EFL in Sweden. In a wider perspective this can be seen as one of many tools to strengthen the state of democracy in Sweden.

*Key words: English as a Foreign language, Media Literacy, Media Information Literacy, New Media Literacy, Critical Media Literacy, Critical Thinking, Fake News, Social-Media*

# Individual contributions

We began with brainstorming different ideas and then searching for academic articles for the topic we chose. All parts of the essay reflect an equal contribution from both parties, Jennie Carolan and Aisha Ali. After finding relevant articles we divided the work of reading and summarizing equally. During the writing phase we worked closely together as a team to compile and construct our paper consisting of the introduction, aim and research questions, method, results and discussion, and conclusion.

We hereby certify that all parts of this essay reflect the equal participation of both signatories below:

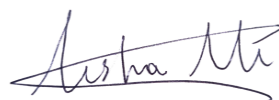
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# 1. Introduction

The starting point of this project is the increased volume of fake content online. This is a challenge particularly for young people who need to navigate, not only in their native language, but also in English as the global language used online. According to the Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics (SCB) 60% of the population states to have seen information or content on the internet they considered to be false or dubious, with the highest percentage being within the age-group 16-34 years old where the result is over 75%. This highlights the significant role Upper-Secondary teachers have in enhancing students' critical thinking and media information literacy when it comes to navigating news and information on social media as they will be needing these methods in their daily lives to avoid misinformation. It is of interest to investigate which strategies have been identified in existing research for English teachers to enhance students' critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language social media content as well as potential practices in Upper-Secondary school in Sweden.

Nygren and Guath (2022) highlight the urgency authorities such as the European Commission put on actions against misinformation. Education is considered to play a key role in the fight against misinformation, making students better equipped to identify misinformation and fake news. The authors expand on the argument of the importance of developing the skill of finding credible information further by stating today's society has a "democratic challenge of misinformation" (Nygren & Guath, 2022, p.549). This will enhance the role of the students being the future upholders of democracy. It's interesting to tie the importance of developing the ability to identify misinformation and fake news to democracy, which is clearly something we no longer can take for granted in Sweden.

Our focus area is on students in Upper-Secondary school, which according to the National Agency for Education in Sweden (Skolverket) is offered to 16-20 year old students, as non-compulsory and free-of-charge. English has been a part of the education in foreign languages since the mid-twentieth century and Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) state, since the emergence of compulsory education in 1962 English has become the first foreign language students in Sweden learn. English is already introduced in the first grade and a passing grade is a

requirement for entering Upper-Secondary school. English is also a key subject and a requirement for further university studies in Sweden. Additionally, Stålhammar (2010) states, English is the language used for informal purposes by the younger people in Sweden, which shows that the influence of the English language in Sweden is even bigger than official statistics show as the informal and digital chats are missing. This shows the importance of including analytical and critical evaluative skills when engaging with English-language digital and social media content specifically within the subject of English. This is also echoed in the core content for English in the current Swedish national curriculum, Gy11, where Skolverket (2010) focuses on the students' ability to assess how relevant and credible sources of information are. Further Skolverket also states that students should develop skills related to critical thinking when reading and listening to different kinds of information from various media sources. This shows the national curriculum's emphasis on the development of students' critical thinking skills in English, but in a very general sense, which leaves it up to the individual teacher to choose how to include it as part of the teaching.

Critical thinking and media information literacy are common findings in existing research which highlight their important role in detecting fake content and news online and in social media. Orhan, A (2023) states in his study that critical thinking and new media literacy has a crucial role in detecting fake news on social media, because fake news are most of the time more sensational and entertaining to read than real news and therefore it is more likely for an individual to want to read and listen to fake news. This author also claims many people rely solely on social media for news reporting which then makes critical thinking and new media literacy extremely important to include as part of education. In the interest of giving some specific examples of social media, Pangrazio and Gaibisso (2020) findings show that the most common social media used by students are Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat.

Orhan, A (2023) defines critical thinking as the process of accessing information in a structured manner, not only in regards to the correctness of the information but also which actions to take and when it's appropriate to share information. Nygren and Guath (2022) defines media information literacy as the skills required to navigate content online by accessing, evaluating and drawing conclusions about the political and social influences on online content. Orhan (2023) mentions new media literacy with the same meaning as media information literacy above. These definitions are echoed in Johnston (2020) who defines media literacy as being concerned with the creation, production, reading, communication, and

critical assessment of media and texts. Some authors such as Meyer and Kersch (2022) as well as Pederson (2023) merge the skills of critical thinking and media information literacy resulting in the term critical media literacy, which they define as the awareness of the potential distortion and prejudice of online content and the importance to know how to access and analyse it as well as to not be socialised into specific opinions, values and beliefs. As seen above the variation of concepts with the same meaning is vast, a conclusion drawn from this being the different authors apply the same or similar meaning to media information literacy, new media literacy, media literacy and critical media literacy.

## 2. Aim and research questions

The aim of our study is to investigate which strategies identified in existing research for students' media information literacy and critical thinking in both the Upper-Secondary English classroom, as well as in teacher training. We have conducted our study starting wide including research from different age brackets during a students' education cycles, spanning over more than 15 years. The results from nine studies from different parts of the world are discussed in relation to the Swedish curriculum and English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher practices for Upper-Secondary school in Sweden.

Our specific research questions are as follows:

1. Which strategies have been identified in existing research for EFL teachers to develop Upper Secondary students' critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language social media content?
2. Which potential practices could EFL teachers in Sweden apply to promote Upper-Secondary students' critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language social media content?



## 3. Method

Our information collection method was based on existing record reviews where the primary search method included the use of academic databases to search for relevant articles for our research questions. From the selection of suitable articles we choose to summarise nine of the articles as a part of our research synthesis in the results and discussion section.

### 3.1 Search delimitations

The academic databases we used included SwePub, ERC and ERIC, because they are databases directly related to the education sector and more likely to deliver desired results. We commenced our searches in ERC and ERIC using keywords including “EFL students” AND “social media” AND “critical thinking”, which gave us no direct result, but an endless amount of articles suggested by the databases using SmartText searching. We concluded that the selection of keywords were too narrow, due to the fact that the suggested articles did not include all the keywords and the results the databases, ERC and ERIC, suggested yielded 4356 and 7418 articles respectively. However, we scrolled through the articles to find words in the articles descriptors that would help narrow down our searches. One word we encountered which we found interesting was “media literacy”, a word we had not thought of previously, which would work perfectly in helping us find more specific articles and researches. This brought down our search results from a couple of thousands to around thirty. We also had to separate EFL from students or completely remove EFL to broaden our direct results in the databases. Additionally, we found an article about “fake news”, which we added into our searches and found more similar articles on the topic. The final search words we used are as follows: “media literacy” AND “social media” AND “students” AND “critical thinking”, which resulted in 30 articles.

In the database SwePub the process was a little different, as we had to put in a few different combinations to find any articles initially. We used SwePub in order to find relevant research articles from Sweden, specifically linked to our research questions. We used the same keywords as in ERC and ERIC: (critical thinking) AND (student\*) AND (media literacy)

AND (social media), resulting in 13 articles. Additionally, we used the keywords: “Sweden” & “L2” & “social media” which gave us a further 8 results.

A table of the articles included in the paper can be found in Appendix 1.

## 3.2 Inclusion criteria

Our primary focus for this paper is how to facilitate specifically for Upper-Secondary school students to develop better critical thinking and media information literacy when accessing information and news online as non-native English speakers. The articles we found ranged from Primary School all the way up to University, but after analysing the research articles we concluded that it is of interest to include the development of both critical thinking and media information literacy with age, also the difference of English education levels in different countries. The articles include research both performed on native English-speaking students and non-native English-speaking students which we found could be used as a comparison.

## 3.3 Exclusion criteria

An exclusion we applied was to only include “peer-reviewed” papers and to limit the timeline to the last 10 years, which means from 2014 to 2023. We also chose to exclude articles which brought up the use of social media in classrooms but did not focus on the critical thinking aspect in their research, as this was irrelevant to our study. Another example of an article we chose to exclude included social media, but with the focus on storytelling.

## 4. Results and discussion

We have synthesised and compared the findings from the different peer-reviewed academic articles to explore the need for critical thinking and media information literacy within the education system. Three common themes were identified: 1) The importance of critical thinking skills and media information literacy, 2) The role of the education system and teachers and 3) Continuous development throughout the schooling years. Our focus is on 16-20 year old students in Upper-Secondary school in Sweden, in combination with understanding the role of critical thinking and media information literacy in earlier and later age groups.

### 4.1 The importance of critical thinking and media information literacy

A common concern expressed by the authors of the research analysed in this paper is the increased volume of fake content online, which highlights the importance of media information literacy and critical thinking. Orhan (2023) claims that fake news is damaging both to the individual and to the wider society; the individual is at risk of making damaging decisions based on incorrect information and in the society as a whole there is an increased possibility for the lack of trust in different types of media. The author has completed a study on 157 university students in Turkey and states that critical thinking and new media literacy is very important in the fight against fake news on social media, because information needs to be objectively evaluated without effect from emotions or a bias for a certain outcome. Further he states that critical thinkers actively look for evidence to be able to trust the information they read or listen to and are therefore less likely to share fake news. Orhan also claims new media literacy is crucial for media consumers to be able to avoid the acceptance and spreading of fake news. The author's study is built on previous empirical studies by Escola-Gascon et al. (2021) which highlights the importance of critical thinking as it improves the ability to detect fake news on social media. Additionally, Guess et al. (2020) state that students who train their skills in new media literacy as part of their education are better equipped in detecting fake news.

In relation to the ability to identify fake news Nygren et al. (2020) carried out an analysis testing students' ability to identify the sender, evaluate proof and compare real and fake news. The test group consisted of 400 students aged 16-19 in Upper-Secondary school in Sweden. The research was based on the answers from the students on four separate questions related to the didactic triangle, namely: Who?, How?, What? and Why?. According to Kansanen et al. (2017), the didactic triangle is the relationship between the teacher and students in a pedagogical context. The didactic triangle is interactive in its nature and is responsible for students' development, not only intellectually, but also socially and emotionally (pp. 44-45). Nygren et al.'s (2020) research found that students find it difficult to separate news and ads which is of concern. They claim students' skills in the ability of identifying manipulated pictures is key to making the right assessment in relation to real and fake news. Additionally, the authors concluded that critical thinking is crucial for the students to be able to identify and assess the sender (who), the layout texts are presented in (how), the actual content of the information (what) and potential bias in the text (why).

An additional study has been completed by Nygren and Guath (2022) involving 2,216 Upper-Secondary students in Sweden, where they performed an online survey and a performance test investigating students' skills in evaluating online content. The author's study evolves from previous research on civic online reasoning, meaning the ability to access and evaluate digital content. The theory of civic online reasoning revolves around three dimensions, namely: sourcing (who is the source of the information?), evidence (is the digital content based on reliable information?) and corroboration (do several independent sources verify the content?). Their findings include the importance of developing the students' education, specifically attitude towards finding credible information online and the skills of evaluating texts and images online. An interesting part of their findings is the students' self-rated abilities of being source critical online, where they mostly rated themselves at a high level. This is misaligned with the actual results, which showed a poor ability to detect credible and fake news. Nygren and Guath are using the word "misinformation" in their study, which is important to define more closely. Meyrer and Kersch (2022) carried out a case study on critical media literacy related to fake news reporting about COVID-19. This study was completed in English as a second language (ESL) classes in Brazil involving 16-17 year old students identifying real or fake news, and how this process helped the development of their critical media literacy skills. The authors make an interesting distinction between

misinformation and disinformation. They define misinformation as false information unintentionally spread, where disinformation is false information that has been intentionally spread. The difference between misinformation and disinformation is an important distinction, which is something Nygren and Guath don't take into consideration in their research and further they don't give a clear explanation to exactly what they mean by misinformation.

Nygren and Guath's (2022) conclusion highlights the complexity of judging credible content online, but at the same time its crucial role as part of the education system to uphold the state of democracy. This is closely in line with the curriculum, Gy11, for Upper-Secondary school in Sweden where Skolverket (2011) states that in accordance with the Education Act (2010:800) the Swedish school system is required to stand in line with the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society rests. Further the above findings are also echoed by Skolverket (2011) in the Gy11 Subject Syllabus for English in Upper-Secondary school; the aim of the subject states the importance of developing the skill to access, evaluate and choose information from different sources. As part of the core content the importance of strategies for source-critical approaches when listening to and reading communications, from different sources and in different media is also highlighted (Skolverket, 2010).

The two studies by Nygren et al. (2020) and Nygren and Guath (2022), which were performed on Upper-Secondary school students in Sweden, both highlight the need for critical thinking and media information literacy as a developmental area. This means it's inclusion is crucial in the Subject Syllabus for English in Sweden for Upper-Secondary schools, to ensure that all teachers actively apply both critical thinking and media information literacy in their teaching material. Additionally both the articles are suggesting potential practices for teachers in Sweden to enhance critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with digital content by either following the didactic questions of Who?, Where?, How?, Why?, or in different words expressed as civic online reasoning based on sourcing (who?), evidence (reliable information?) and corroboration (independently verifying the content?). These are two examples of models or approaches the teachers and students in Upper Secondary School can use to become more source critical and develop the ability to evaluate whether or not online content is real or fake.

In the syllabus it is not mentioned which specific strategies to use for critical thinking and media information literacy when engaging with English-language digital content that should be taught in Upper-Secondary schools in Sweden. Therefore, it is dependent on the individual teachers' motivation to include the skills mentioned within their teaching content. EFL teachers in Sweden have a huge opportunity to expand the learning material related to developing the skills of critical thinking and media information literacy.

## 4.2 The role of the education system and teachers

A running theme in the articles mentioned in this paper is the authors noting the importance of adding media information literacy alongside critical thinking into teacher education. Media information literacy is expressed in different ways: media literacy, media information literacy or critical media literacy. However, the authors are referring to the same thing, namely the ability to critically assess information and spot biases whether they be political or social. According to Curiel and La-Rosa (2022) there is a need for the introduction of media literacy in the school curriculum, with key global organisations such as the UN wanting to introduce media information literacy in schools as a measurable skill. This is the reason the authors decided to investigate how well Secondary school students in Spain are doing in terms of distinguishing between information and opinion on social media, as well as differentiating real news from fake news. One of the goals with the study was to investigate the importance of adding media literacy to teacher training to ensure for more teachers to be specialised in communication. This was reiterated by the teachers who took part in the study, who suggested introducing media literacy in the early years of the students' education considering how early students are introduced to media.

Pederson (2023) echoes this same sentiment as he provides a theoretical outline for the importance of including critical media literacy in Korean English education. The author also presents the need for critical media literacy to be included in English teacher training, due to a society which is increasingly socio-politically polarised. According to him, citizens in our societies need to be shaped with the ability to think critically regarding the ideologically embedded meanings in media and be able to vote based on their interests and wellbeing. This in order not to be socialised into their beliefs solely through social contacts, education and the media. The author also claims critical media literacy is not widely practised in English

education in native speaking nations, having him make the conclusion that this is even worse in EFL classrooms as they tend to focus on form and proficiency. This would make it harder for EFL students to develop critical thinking skills as shown in previous research mentioned by the author. The research results found the students either tend to passively accept the ideological meanings embedded in media or that teachers do not currently focus on the critical thinking aspect of the tasks they assign to students, as the focus lies more on oral or language proficiency. Pederson therefore believes this logically points to the importance of including critical media literacy in EFL teacher training and for it to be applied and adjusted to the relevant grades as an important skill to develop during the entirety of students schooling. He also states that teachers should have a basic understanding of the dialectics of critical media literacy, and its benefits, to better apply it in their profession.

In Sweden the Upper-Secondary teaching program is a five-year long program where future teachers delve deep into the subjects they will be teaching in, as well as pedagogy and work experience. According to Malmö University's official website, the teaching program for subject teachers with a major in English should equip teachers to be able to facilitate for students in Upper-Secondary schools to develop their critical thinking skills. An additional course focusing on critical media literacy would be a good way for teachers to facilitate this ability in the students. On one hand Pederson's (2023) article can be connected to English taught in Sweden as English is officially taught as a foreign language here. There is, however, a recurring dilemma with regards to whether or not the level of English spoken in Sweden should be a deciding factor in changing English teaching from being taught as a foreign language to being taught as a second language. This is to ensure all countries without a history of English are not grouped together in the EFL category, such as Korea and Sweden in this instance. There are notable differences between the two countries' EFL curriculum, where the Korean curriculum focuses more on oral and language proficiency.

According to Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014), countries who teach English are divided into three categories in relation to global English. These categories include the inner circle, which refers to native Anglophone countries; the outer circle, which refers to the postcolonial territories; and the expanding circle, which refers to countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The dilemma which comes into play is the ever-diversifying expanding circle where, in certain countries in the expanding circle such as Sweden, citizens could be considered more fluent in English than in certain other outer circle countries. According to

the authors, English plays a significant role in the Swedish education system and in the society as the language tends to be incorporated in advertisement, as well as it being an official language in a number of private Swedish corporations. The authors also mention that in most other European countries English speaking movies are dubbed and compare this to how in Sweden English speaking movies are broadcasted in their original language with Swedish subtitles. However, Pederson (2023) mentions that neither native English-speaking classrooms nor EFL classrooms widely practise critical media literacy, which makes this topic relevant to all English teaching classrooms, as it is something which needs to be incorporated across the board regardless of the proficiency in English of any country in particular.

### 4.3 Continuous development throughout the schooling years

Another pattern which appears in the analysed articles is how generally the ability to detect fake news using critical thinking and media information literacy develops with age.

Pangrazio and Gaibisso (2020) investigate social media usage and its challenges for 7-12 year old students in Australia and Uruguay. The survey includes 276 students and the results showed the majority of students are very unaware of the risks online, both the safety aspect and the risk of fake news. The authors' findings highlight the need for both critical thinking and social media literacy to be included in the school curriculum from an early age to support students' online usage.

Moving up to students in Secondary school, Curiel and La-Rosa (2022) surveyed 1651 students between the ages of 11-16 in Spanish secondary schools, and their ability to distinguish between information vs. opinion and real vs. fake news on social media. The results highlight more than half of the students (51.8%) in this age group still have difficulties in discerning between real and fake news, despite considering themselves to be capable of distinguishing between a hoax and news. Their basic skills in media literacy and critical thinking were in deficit, regardless of being used to surfing the internet and a high level of media usage. The authors' conclusions from the survey were that media literacy should be introduced early on in Secondary school, considering how early students are introduced to media. Half of the teachers also believed students are motivated by the introduction of media literacy in schools, and even more so if the information is relevant to their surroundings.



Finally, the authors highlight the need for students to be equipped with defence mechanisms so they do not accept all information online without critically questioning the content.

Advancing to students in Upper-Secondary school, Johnston (2020) investigates 15-18 year old students' evaluation skills of information vs. opinion on news from different platforms including social media. The author carried out a number of tests on 37 students in two Australian high schools. The students answered questions about which social media they use, the purpose for its use and also performed activities to test their evaluation skills of information vs. opinion on different news platforms online. Results showed most of the students (73%) successfully distinguished legitimate news sources over opinion.

Shifting the focus towards Upper-Secondary school in Sweden specifically Nygren et. al. (2020) analysed students' ability to identify the sender, evaluate proof and compare real and fake news. The main conclusions were that only 24% were able to identify ads from news content and only 53% said the trustworthy public funded research article was more reliable than an article written by an interest group within potential financial gain. It is clear Upper-Secondary students still find it difficult to differentiate between real and fake news and their knowledge and skills to identify manipulated pictures is key to making the right assessment in relation to real vs. fake news. Other important findings were the students' ability to identify and assess the sender (who), the layout texts are presented in (how), the actual content of the information (what) and potential bias in the text (why) are key for the student to apply critical thinking.

The above findings show a slightly different picture of Upper-Secondary students' skills, in the area of critical thinking and media information literacy, compared to the study by Johnston (2020) in Australia which is interesting. Johnston's study was carried out on a small number (37 students) of native English-speaking students in Australia compared to Nygren et. al's study of 400 students in Sweden. The higher number of students involved in the testing in combination with Nygren et. al's study having been carried out in our geographic area of interest makes it more reliable for the purpose of this analysis and discussion. It would, however, be reasonable to note that with the results of Johnston's study of Upper-Secondary students in Australia there is a clear positive development compared to the survey by Pangrazio and Gaibisso of the younger students in the same location. This indicates when students in the same geographical area are getting older and progressing through the school

system, they do develop their critical thinking and media information literacy, which could also be applicable in the Swedish context. A possible reason is that they are getting older and more mature in combination with the development in their learning over time from their teachers, parents or peers. However, Johnston's study also showed that the Upper-Secondary students still failed to recognise bias when it came to identifying financial, political and organisational affiliation. This shows there is still a strong need to include critical thinking and media information literacy in the school curriculum for Upper-Secondary school, especially due to the risk this could have towards democratic societies. This is also reinforced further as the studies are conducted in the students' native language and it can be assumed that students find critical thinking difficult and media information literacy even harder in a second or foreign language, which is something that needs to be a focus area within the education system in Sweden.

Advancing above Upper-Secondary school, Orhan (2023) has completed a study on 157 university students in Turkey. His findings showed that the adult students surveyed are proficient in detecting fake news using critical thinking and media literacy. This means experienced students, who attend university, naturally develop the skills of critical thinking and new media literacy, which is very positive. On the other hand, the need to be able to detect fake news may be at its highest during the teenage years when the students are still vulnerable children. Also, a caveat to consider is in regards to adults who don't attend university, with potential further research related to if university students have a higher level of media information literacy and critical thinking than the students who transfer straight into working life after completing Upper-Secondary school.

The reliability of the results is based both on the number of students involved in the research, but also the method used and how applicable to the results are to the research questions. As mentioned above, the reliability of the two articles by Nygren et al. (2020) and Nygren and Guath (2022) are high, as the studies were performed on Upper-Secondary school students in Sweden and included a large number of students, 400 and 2216 respectively. The studies from other parts of the world are less applicable to the research question related to potential practices for EFL teachers in Sweden, due to the different schooling systems and societies surrounding them. This is something we have taken into consideration when making our conclusion based on the previous research analysed.

## 5. Conclusion

The explosive development of digital media has presented an even bigger challenge for the consumers to be able to evaluate if content is real or fake. The results from previous research and also the conclusions can be divided into three different perspectives, namely: 1) The general importance of critical thinking skills and media information literacy, 2) The role of the education system and teachers and lastly, 3) The continuous development throughout the schooling years. Firstly, numerous research projects globally have shown the importance of critical thinking and media information literacy in the fight against misinformation and fake news online, in particular for social media which is the main media channel younger people receive their news feed from. Secondly, another conclusion is the key role of teachers and the importance of adding media information literacy and critical thinking into the pedagogical element of teacher training. This to ensure the teacher's ability to develop the students' skills to critically assess information and spot biases whether they be political or social. Lastly, another important finding shows the ability to evaluate digital content using critical thinking and media information literacy seems to naturally develop with age, with critical development between Secondary school and Upper-Secondary school, and further during University studies.

In this paper it is shown that the concerns stated in the articles mentioned regarding the abundance of misinformation online is pertinent. These concerns include “democratic challenge of misinformation” (Nygren & Guath's, 2022, p. 549), as well as Stålhammar (2010) highlighting Swedish youth's abundant access to media from a young age largely in English. The development of students' critical thinking and media information literacy skills is something which the educational system should consider in order to prevent the youth, who are the future citizens of this democratic country, from believing everything they read online without taking the necessary precautions.

A conclusion in relation to potential practices for EFL Upper-Secondary school teachers in Sweden is the urgent need to include media information literacy and critical thinking in the Subject Syllabus for English to ensure that all teachers actively include it in their teaching material. Potential practices for teachers to enhance students' critical thinking and media

information literacy when engaging with social media is to actively include and together with students practise the application of the didactic questions; Who?, Where?, How? And Why?. The didactic triangle and the related questions are already a central part, and therefore should not involve a major change in the teacher training, but at the same time would make a crucial difference to the teaching of media information literacy and critical thinking.

The limitations of the study were mainly the limited research on the subject performed on students in Upper-Secondary School in Sweden. We therefore involved research from different parts of the world, which has different schooling systems and different kinds of surrounding societies, which can make it difficult to transfer the findings to the Swedish education system. Another limitation is that the various studies are made at different levels of English such as English as a second language (ESL) and English as a native language (ENL). However, the level of English in Sweden is generally considered higher than many other countries studying EFL, which could potentially bring the Swedish EFL up to par with ESL countries.

Based on our findings an interesting empirical research project in this field would be to investigate how and to which level critical thinking and media information literacy are incorporated currently in the teaching material by EFL teachers in Upper Secondary school in Sweden. Further it would also be of interest to include how teachers think the teaching of these matters can be improved. A suggested method is to combine surveys and interviews with EFL Upper Secondary teachers to maximise the balance between reliability and validity within the empirical study.

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# Appendix 1

<b>Source</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Claim</b>	<b>Database</b>	<b>Search words</b>
Secondary education students and media literacy in the age of disinformation	Herrero-Curiel, E., & La-Rosa, L. (2022).	11-16 y/o in Spanish secondary public schools	Quantitative survey done by 1651 students + 77 qualitative interviews with teachers	Students have a difficulty distinguishing between information and opinion	ERIC	Media Literacy & Students & Social-Media & critical thinking
Fake News Detection on Social-Media: The Predictive Role of University Students' Critical Thinking Dispositions and New Media Literacy	Orhan, A. (2023).	University Students in Turkey, 157 student ages 17-24	157 students as a sample group	Critical thinking dispositions and new media literacies significantly predicted university students' abilities to detect fake news on social media	ERIC	Media Literacy & Students & Social-Media & critical thinking
Living in the World of Fake News: High School students Evaluation of Information from Social Media sites	Johnston, N. (2020).	37 students from 2 different high schools in western Australia (WA)	Survey and series of 8 activities to evaluate information posted on social media	Students trusted TV news more than social media, media literacy instructions in school needs to go from checklist	ERC	students & social media & critical thinking & media literacy

				approach → instructional approach (critical thinking)		
Beyond Cybersafety: The Need to Develop Social Media Literacies in Pre-Teens	Pangrazio, L., & Cardozo Gaibisso, L. (2020).	276 pre-teens aged 7-12 years in Australia and Uruguay	Surveys	The students are very unaware of the risks online, both the safety aspect and the risk of fake news.	ERIC	Students & social media & critical thinking & media literacy
Can High School Students Check the Veracity of Information about COVID-19? A Case Study on Critical Media Literacy in Brazilian ESL Classes.	Meyrer, K. P., & Kersch, D. F. (2022).	18 students in the 3rd year of high school (16-17 years old) in Brazil	The authors applied the framework for multimodal production analysis, which means that a text is analysed based on reference, agency, structure, context and interest, in order to gain a higher level of Critical Media Literacy.	Students developed a higher level of critical media literacy after applying the framework for multimodal production analysis	ERIC	ESL & Students & social media & critical thinking & media literacy
An Argument for Including Critical Media	Pederson, R. (2023).	N/A	A review of literature on CML and its	Results showed that the	ERIC	Critical thinking & English



Literacy (CML) in EFL Curriculum and Pedagogy			application to English as a foreign language (EFL)  1. Situated inquiry 2. Discussion 3. Creation of group multimodal projects	application of CML developed students critical thinking skills, students' acquisition and use of new vocabulary idioms and transform student perception of themselves and their society		teachers & media literacy
Hur motiverar gymnasieelever sina bedömningar av trovärdiga och vilseledande digitala nyheter?	Nygren, T., Wiksten Folkeryd, J., Liberg, C., & Guath, M. (2020).	400 Upper Secondary Students 16-19. In Sweden	Survey	Students find it difficult to separate news and add, and their knowledge and skills to identify manipulated pictures was key to making the right assessment in relation to real & fake news	SwePub	Students & social media & critical thinking & media literacy
Students Evaluating and Corroborating Digital News	Nygren, T., & Guath, M. (2022).	2216 Upper Secondary Students 16-19. In Sweden.	Survey	The importance of developing the students'	SwePub	Students & social media & critical

				education and attitude towards the importance of finding credible information online for them to be able to develop the skills of evaluating texts and images online		thinking & media literacy
Language-related computer use: Focus on young L2 English learners in Sweden*	Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2014).	N/A	N/A	N/A	Swepub Online read on ERIC	Sweden & L2 & social media