

Psychology in the curriculum

**- expressions of psychological literacy
and expected usefulness**

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This is a shortened ppt-version of my workshop at the EFPTA conference in Reykjavik in 2018.

“Since psychology is the subject that treats of human nature, explains how and why people feel, think, and act, one wonders why it is not a more common course in the secondary curriculum.”

(John Buren Steed, 1941)

One subject – Many names

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De utgöra skilda delar af vetenskapen om den Subjectiva Anden, under namn af:
Anthropologi, vetenskapen om den Subjectiva Anden såsom med en kropp förenad Sjal,
Phænomenologi, vetenskapen om den Subjectiva Anden såsom förhållande sig till ett gifvet Object,

LÄROBOK ANTHROPOLOGIEN.

TILL BEGAGNANDE VID AKADEMISKA FÖRELÄSNINGAR OCH ENSKILDT STUDIUM.

JEMNTE BILAGOR

PSYKOLOGI

3. J. Cleve.

LÄROBOK

PSYCHOLOGIEN,

Johan Wilhelm Snellman.

PHILOSOPHISK ELEMENTAR-CURS,

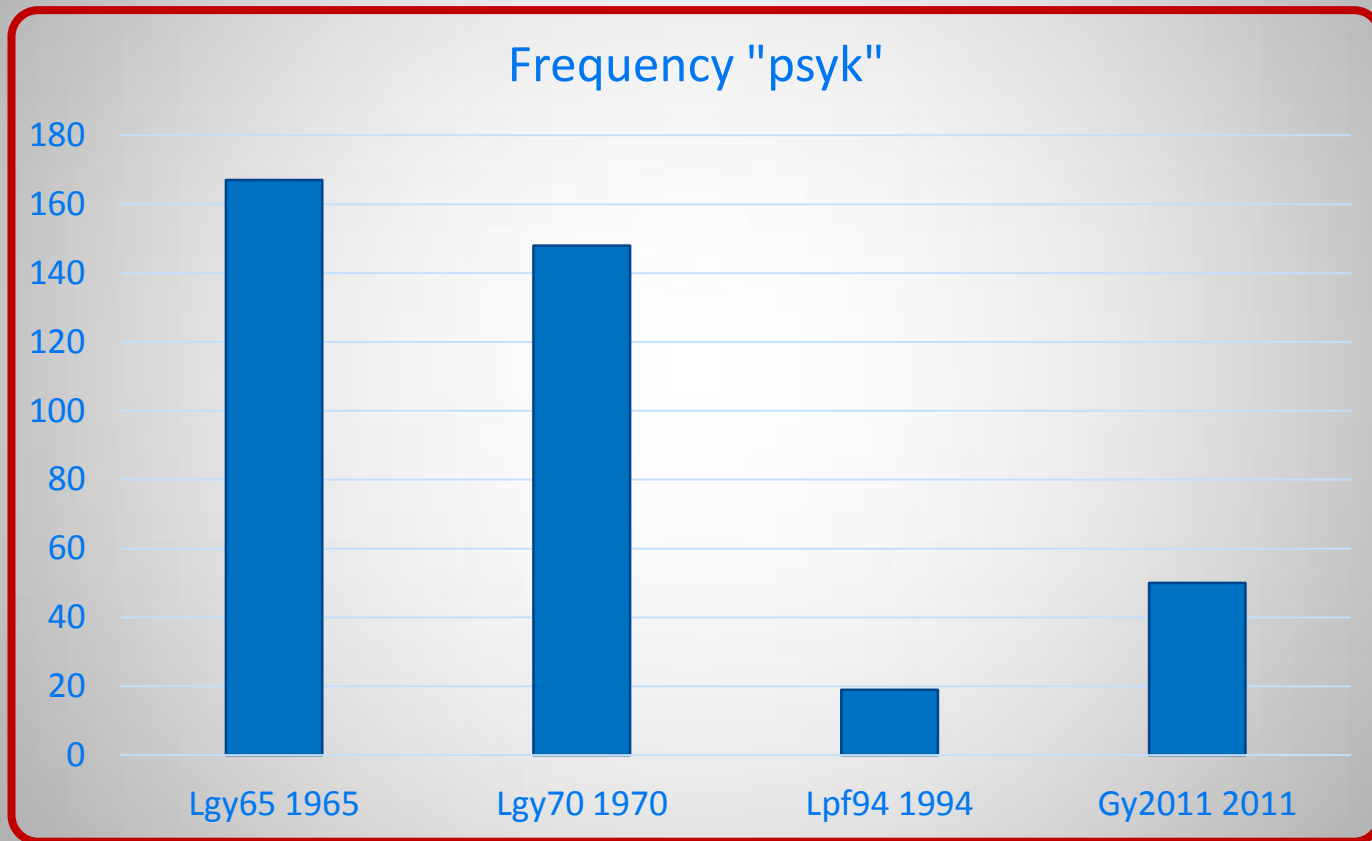
Johan Wilhelm Snellman.

FÖRSTA HÄFTET.
PSYCHOLOGI.

Historical Overview: Psychology in Sweden

- The Swedish National Curricula for upper secondary school
 - 1965, 1970, 1994 & 2011
- Mandatory - Optional
- In the current curriculum, Gy2011
 - Psychology 1, psychology 2a and psychology 2b
 - Psychology (Ps 1) is only mandatory for students at the social science program and the economist program.

What's in a word..?



(Preliminary findings)

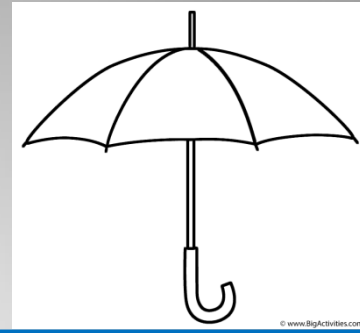
Discussion

What about the aim of and the reason to teach psychology at pre-tertiary school level? According to yourself, according to policy documents?

- Swedish psychology teachers:
 - All-round education, general knowledge
 - Factual knowledge, theories, concepts, and paradigms
 - Scientific schooling. How to be scientific and understand science.
 - Application of psychology, relevant to the students
 - Personal development



Psychological literacy



The term was coined by Alan Boneau and was aiming to describe the core components that a student should acquire when studying psychology (see Boneau, 1990). Since then a number of variations of the definition of psychological literacy have evolved. For example:

”Applying psychological principles to personal, social and organizational issues in work, relationships and the broader community” and ”Being insightful and reflective about one’s own and others’ behavior and mental processes” (McGovern et al. 2010, p11)



Psychological literacy - variations

The level graduate students in psychology reaches

and/or

General ability to know of, understand and apply psychology

Psychological Literacy – in three main features

1. Concepts and theories
2. Science, psychology as a science and scientific schooling
3. Application of psychological knowledge and psychological science

The application of psychology

- Problem solving
- To apply psychology on personal, social or organizational problems.
- To act ethically
- Critical thinking
- To be able to communicate in different contexts
- Cultural competence
- Self awareness
- Metacognition
- Adaptive application of psychological knowledge
- Reflective practice

...and more.

Psychological literacy in the Swedish curricula

	Lgy65 1965	Lgy70 1970	Lpf94 1994	Gy2011 2011
Concepts & Theories	1	2	1	3
Science	4	3	2	1
Application	4	3	2	1

Fig. Psychological literacy in the curricula in Sweden (preliminary results)

Psychological literacy and value for young people

- Clearly stated in the 1965 and 1970s curricula
 - "... their deeper insights into the subject, their ability to draw conclusions and make comparisons and apply it to new problems." (Skolöverstyrelsen 1965, p225)
 - "process their own personality to develop a basic understanding and empathy for others, as well as the ability to work in a group, ... acquire knowledge of people's behavior and experiences in interaction with others, ... Practice the ability to look at man based on her overall life situation as a member of society and individual as well work out to talk to and listen to people in different situations." (Skolöverstyrelsen 1970, p245)
- Almost non-existent in the 1994 and 2011s curricula
 - "The teaching should give the students opportunity to develop the ability to reflect on their own behavior, and their own feelings and thoughts, and through it contribute to increased self-awareness." (Skolverket 2011, p1)

“Knowledge of psychology is becoming increasingly more important in many professions and other vocations.”

(John Buren Steed, 1941)

Surprises...?

- Well...
 - Examples of the migration/integration of psychology:
 - Leadership and organization
 - Groups and group processes
 - Information and communication
 - Trade
 - Commercial communication
 - The human
 - Health and social care
 - Media and media communications
- ...and many more.

Conclusions from Sweden

- Psychology at upper secondary level has changed from more of vocational and life preparation, towards more of theoretical knowledge.
- This is not in accord with societal needs.
- Is it possible that the aspects of applications of psychological knowledge has been appropriated by other subjects?

*... and by doing so, contribute to establish a safe and
prolific awareness in one of the most important
subjects that could made subject for human research.*

*(Zacharias Joakim Cleve, July 18, 1854.
An Endeavor to Textbook in Psychology)*

Wärelä den 18 Juli 1854.

Z. J. C.

Thank you!