Figure 1 - Gaia follows a step-by-step plan to create a mini saga. The display cards amplify meaning to the video watched prior to the lesson.

FLIPPED LEARNING

A spark to a diversified learning environment

WHEN YOU FLIP THE BLACKBOARD – TIME BECOMES THREE-DIMENSIONAL

A time-independent classroom sparks a student-centred environment, breaking the traditional linear form, so that the working process becomes lively and creative.
(Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015)

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Professions Essay, Fall of 2018

A Flipped Classroom 'sparks' learning

Introduction

The purpose of the school cannot be the school itself.
Education must relate to and have its fundamental basis
in the life that is going to be lived.
"Death is all kinds of literacy that does not coalesce with
a corresponding life."

A lesson is about to take place. The classroom is vibrant with students waiting to receive information from the teacher on today's task. Some students willingly give their full attention as instructions are given, while others reluctantly find a *mental break* in their own preoccupation with stuff or thoughts that have sidetracked their interest. This is a scenario that has unfolded itself on numerous occasions during my own time in the classroom, resulting in the use of necessary classroom management to q*uick fix* the situation and restore the balance of attention, so that those students already attentive do not lose t*heir* motivation to learn. This type of scenario means that the lesson begins by coping with a situation; a chore that is tiring for both teacher and students. Great classroom management may result in a noiseless and organized class, however, not always in a motivated and attentive one.

"The lesson begins by coping with a situation."

Teachers may use classroom management to cope with noise and fussiness, however, managing a class is not equal to *igniting* students' motivation to learn. If anything, *being managed* could block that needed spark for motivation as, "motivation needs to be internally driven rather than externally regulated by teachers" (Ushioda, 2012). A well-prepared lesson could fall on deaf ears, requiring of the teacher to repeat himself a number of times until the information has been *forced* into the minds of the students. And while this process of *force-feeding* information may at times seem a necessity due to scarce time for preparation, a tight curriculum or back-to-back lessons, the matter in question is that valuable time is taken away from actual learning whenever we, as teachers, need to spend the first 10 – 15 minutes of a lesson managing a class and give instructions.

Motivation rocks – But time is precious in the classroom

Whenever instructions are given, there is an underlying factor prolonging the demand for attention, and that is the actual time it takes for students to absorb and comprehend those instructions. What this means is, that with every minute spend on presentation, explaining and motivating students, valuable minutes vanish from the time left for student-centred learning. In addition, students who already seem preoccupied when the lesson begins or have difficulties understanding the given instructions may not perform very well and may require extra attention from the teacher throughout the lesson – or they will simply have to watch how their classmates complete the given tasks and then try to assimilate what *the*y do. This reduces the role of the teacher to that of pushing the students to simply *performing* tasks, as opposed to students being *self-motivated* from the very beginning of a lesson, thus completing the tasks with enthusiasm.

Another concern is the possible escalating feeling of low self-esteem caused by failure to comprehend instructions and performing a task on their own. This may lead to a general lack of motivation over time in completing tasks in the first place. Consequently, lack of motivation results in low productivity and poor grounds for an actual progressive learning environment (Ushioda, 2012). And with students lacking motivation, how are teachers going to combat their own feelings, when their motivation fluctuates over time (Williams & Ryan, 2015)?

Presentations are a necessity to quality learning; without them students had no goals or guidelines and the lesson would be pointless. However, it requires a good set of strategies to catch students' interest and getting them motivated to learn – strategies that are not always at hand in traditional teaching. To break this linear problem, the implementation of new strategic tools is necessary. In a time where technology is redefining what it means to be literate, learning to a great extend comes through the process of producing. Computer technology makes it possible to break free of traditional classroom instructions creating connections between visual and verbal materials (Walker & White, 2013).

Flipped learning – a ready-to-use software

What if students entered the classroom, already instructed from home? What if they had already watched the teacher's presentation at a time of their own convenience, suited to their personal schedule prior to the lesson? And what if motivation was already an installed software in students' minds – wired, and ready to use as soon as they entered the classroom? What if students had already constructed the ideas to a lesson that had not even begun yet? What would this kind of *wired mindset* do to the lesson?

Flipped learning breaks traditional linear teaching by introducing the lesson through video prior to a lesson, whereby time in the classroom is maximized to solving tasks and practice conversation; a method that creates a space for differentiated learning through micro lessons. Flipped learning provides an opportunity for multimodal practice which creates a student-centred learning environment at the same stimulates students cognitively through the use of different senses simultaneously (Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015).

Flipped learning is not just about constructing a video! Knowledge of the creation of multimodal texts or products is key to successfully producing ones which communicate meaning effectively and appropriately (Walker & White, 2013). Therefore, the videos must be dual channelled[*], to avoid overstimulation, as well as different scaffolding must ensure that students can digest the video content rather than merely finding it entertaining. Flipped learning puts the content in perspective in a skewed way that, like *a video vitamin*, can stimulate work in progress (Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015).

> *What if motivation was already an installed software in students' minds …*

In my research, I will seek to demonstrate how flipped learning tools can offer an opportunity to create motivation within young learners in ESL-learning, and how this *pre-motivation* can be utilized in the classroom to allow students to become active creators of the lesson. I will show how flipped learning can be used, not as a substitute for traditional teaching, but as a supplement to help spark that desired self-motivation needed for ESL-learning[**]. I will analyse the effects of flipped learning by clarifying the following questions:

How to plan, execute, evaluate and develop English language teaching to young learners by using flipped learning tools?

How to scaffold learning in a motivational way through implicit feedback?

*balanced so that students experience a positive bridging between various sensory perceptions.

** Flipped learning tools may be incorporated in any subject such as science, history, social studies etc.

Flipped learning tools & the aspect of education through digital media

> *"It is time our classrooms became places where digital and print literacies come together to allow opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes learners will need to navigate complex urban sites and social forms."*
> *(Walker & White, 2013, p. 83)*

Do we protect children from digital media or make them capable users who can make autonomous decisions …

Designed to please and entertain us, digital devices have made a great impact on our lives. Reshaping almost every aspect of contemporary life, technology throws upon us an unquestioned norm that brings the term education to a new dimension allowing technology to become a co-parenting factor in educating our children. Today's children grow up in a digital culture where digital media represents the majority of their life experience (Steiner-Adair & Barker, 2013). With all this TECH dominance, *why* is flipped learning even an aspect of teaching to consider? *Why* incorporate more technology in schools?

At this point it seems reasonable for me to clarify that by 'technology' I am in no sense referring to that of social media which, according to Graeser (2018), poses a potential threat to our democratic society. Social media like Facebook represents a sort of totalitarian state that moderates what their users can and cannot display or say. Social media has become a forced norm if one wants to send a message to a broader audience. However, by using a media like Facebook as a means of communication, democracy is undermined and placed in the hands of young people in Silicon Valley who has created a business that cashes out their users personal data (Gottschau, 2015). Social media is not a democratic forum it is, "a democratised mass destruction weapon." (Graeser, 2018).

By means of technology, I am referring to the use and implementation of digital tools and platforms that enable students to participate in innovative processes, creating stories, diagrams, scientific researches etc. To students, it makes sense to work towards a multimodal product that reflects their experiences and communicates results and argumentation to a defined audience. This didactic scenario stems back to the famous phrase said by John Dewey: *learning by doing* and *reflecting upon the doing*. The latter being just as important as the former to maintain technical terminology and methodological methods of working to create actual learning and not just activism (Bundsgaard, 2017).

One might argue that with all the digital media present in our lives, it should be reduced to a minimum – even banished – from the school. And any school will be able to find sustained reason to uphold their view on reducing the amount of digital media in *their* school. This, largely being due to the fact that the term 'education' is a matter of point of view and that generally, there is no actual agreement as to what the role of the school is – not to mention the role of the teacher (Bövadt, 2017).

> *"The world makes its imprint on man, and this impression is*
> *an opportunity for new insights and practises."*
> *Oettingen, 2016*

However logical as it may seem, to refrain from the implementation of digital media in schools, there lies an unconditional demand for students to learn to become mindful when navigating digital platforms in modern society. This demand for students to learn how to navigate digital platforms is in direct contrast to the general assumption that children are the digital natives. According to Tufte (2013) 'the digital natives' are not yet capable of seeing through the mechanisms that control the media- and consumer world present in our lives today. This point of view is backed up by professor and software developer, Jeppe Bundsgaard (2017), who argues that children growing up with digital devices and therefore is seen as *digital natives* is a bias statement. Based on his research, he has found that students in 8th grade are not very competent in searching the internet for valid information, nor are they capable of producing multimodal products, including quality content, based on reaching a specific target. In fact, very few students possess sufficient critical skills towards information found on the internet, not to mention overall computer skills at a competency level below average (Bundsgaard, 2017).

The role of the school is to prepare students for society.

Education tends to either focus on 'the individual' in preparation for society or 'the society' in preparation of the student. Both methods fail to recognize that, by an individualized process leading to self-education, the very content of learning is being neglected, and that by focusing strictly on the content, education is reduced to stipulations already present in that same content. The key to preparing students for society is an interaction between both approaches (Oettingen, 2016).

So, to prepare for the society that awaits them, students need to get educated in the use of the technology which they will inevitably be influenced by parallel to their socialization in school – the technology they will be exposed to when they enter the job market. The responsibility of digital education lies within the framework of the school – if they can't learn how to navigate the digital platforms in school, where else are they supposed to learn (Bundsgaard, 2017)?

Protecting children from digital media only creates a cleft in their socialization process and identity (Tufte, 2013). Now, why is that? Technology is present in our lives whether we wish to recognize it. Children grow

up surrounded by some form of digital devices. If the end result is to prepare them to being able to participate and demonstrate mutual responsibility in a democratic society in accordance with the formal aims, it is necessary that education integrates the very identify that children otherwise acquire parallel with the school (Tufte, 2013).

Children are not *social becomings* that we can shield and protect from a rising digitized society. They are *social beings* who need proper guidance and adults to take an interest in their own digitized world. The school, as a protecting environment, only adds to children becoming their own masters of a digital lifestyle, strengthening parallel societies online. This is an antidemocratic development – a tension field calling for new strategies and a new pedagogical approach to learning. The solution being a form of learning that seeks to strengthen and link students' own experiences, reflections and communication through a media didactic and media pedagogic approach (Tufte, 2013).

Being able to use technology has become a basic skill, and what this implies, is that the course of other basic skills changes when using technological tools (Bundsgaard, 2017). Although "technology cannot provide the unique human dimension of a relationship essential for healthy neurological and psychological development in human children" (Steiner-Adair & Barker, p.18), intended learning can provide material which extricates already obtained skills and transcends the expression of those skills to become more meaningful (Dewey, 2005).

> The responsibility of digital education lies
> within the framework of the school.
>
> Bundsgaard, 2017

Flipped Learning coming to its own

In a time where technology is redefining what it means to be literate, learning to a great extend comes through the process of producing. Computer technology makes it possible to break free of traditional classroom instructions creating connections between visual and verbal materials. Visuals serve not only as servants of text but as powerful ways of conveying meaning. Concerns over shortened attention spans and superficial thinking are met with anecdotes of people having less patience now with text-based material without visuals (Walker & White, 2013). This is where flipped learning comes to its own.

Through multimodal presentations, flipped learning promotes increased self-determination and better learning for the individual by providing an ocean of opportunities to ignite students' motivation (Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015). The main advantage being that flipped learning presents a genuine opportunity in the implementation of vital elements in education, such as diversified development, enterprise and imagination, in accordance with the formal aims; elements that are being deprioritized and reversed in the Common Objectives of 2015 (Rømer, 2017).

When using flipped learning, the social aspect is greatly influenced – and this is where it gets really interesting – since the world's focus lies on digital media, using flipped learning can help create a reflectional

approach towards media, at the same time assuring quality through the constructive and purposeful use of those media and platforms. The active student-centred environment provides opportunities where students' social processes, in fact, become multimodal.

The Research

Figure 2 - Imagination is more important than knowledge

Preparation

A school culture is a
patchwork of perspectives.

Germeten &Bakke, 2014

I am going to carry out my research with students in a grade 4 class. The students I will be working with call themselves, *Gaia*.

Prior to my research, the class (and the school) has not been exposed to flipped learning, nor are they familiar with the digital platform, School Tube, which I intend to use for my research. Thus, I need to correspond back and forth with the school and School Tube to arrange a trial period so that I may work with one or two applications from the platform with the students during my research. As the trial period is going to include the entire school, other teachers will have the opportunity to test out the platform simultaneously in their own

classes. Consequently, this could mean that whatever my research concludes may possibly affect the school's decision on the use of flipped learning tools and digital media through School Tube. This aspect, in itself, becomes a motivational factor for conducting my research.

> "Language is the most important
> tool for cognitive growth."
> Cameron, 2001, p. 8

Observation is an old man's memory (Jonathan Swift)

Now, that the framework is in place, I am arranging to observe Gaia in 3 – 4 modules of 75 minutes per module. The observation is then followed by a total of 4 lessons of 75 minutes each, where I will be teaching in accordance with my research. The set timeframe is the outcome of my own estimated judgment of how much time I will need to complete my research together with the time available to the school.

The observation will give me insight in the structure of the class and the possibility of determining students' English language proficiency. I will also have the opportunity to possibly view their digital media skills, and collaboration, and whether the focus is on spoken language or grammar as well etc. I will get to experience firsthand what motivates them and most importantly – the approach and methodology they are being exposed to. Through participant observation, you are right in the middle of social processes and as such have optimal terms for experiencing what characterizes routines and 'common' interactions between people. The empirical data bases itself on firsthand experience (Szulevicz, 2015).

> *It is not the proportion of time spend in the field that*
> *determines the quality of a research. Having a focused*
> *project where the empirical content is based on presence*
> *and firsthand experience is what matters the most.*
> Szulevicz, 2015

Being a *stranger*, I need to fit into Gaia's structure so that I may implement content that supports their current learning. However, I intend to bring my own philosophy into the classroom, too. A communicative classroom should adopt to a teacher's own philosophy, the learning environment and the culture (Hedge, 2000).

Timing is everything. It enables the teacher to evaluate what to implement in the lesson to achieve the objectives. However, "effective teaching is dynamic and responsive, not static and over-programmed" (Butt, 2008, s. 31). My *timing* therefore needs to be as adequate as possible.

> *Effective teaching occurs when you master*
> *great lesson planning and then let go of it …*
> Butt, 2008

The aspect of planning a flipped learning lesson

I am going to use Pixton from School Tube to have Gaia create comic strips. As I observed Gaia, I saw that they were currently working on poetry and stories in Danish Language; at the same time they were watching a cartoon, Muzzy, which appeared to have a great motivational influence on the students. Gaia also worked on writing short evaluations of read poetry and finding connections and contrasts, metaphors and ambience in Danish subject. This was matched by using gambits to complete sentences about everyday language in English subject.

As such, my observation granted me an opportunity to structure my lessons and work cross-curricular by incorporating taught topics from Danish and English language. The importance of working cross-curricular is stated by Gibbons (2015) – not only are the meanings explored; listening, speaking and comprehension is amplified through an abundancy of message and idea sharing activities.

I had observed that tasks were carried out both individually and in pairs, and that pair work around stories resulted in a great deal of idea sharing, so I decided that pair work would be more suitable for the tasks Gaia would be working with.

Imagination over ability

To make comic strips is to create stories. It is to use imagination over abilities to create what the mind perceives. "The advantage of creating an animated cartoon is the professional appearance" (Walker & White, 2013, p. 91). Turning a children's story book into a tool for language learning is concerned with the teacher being able to deploy a range of skills to set the learning in progress. The authenticity of the task is motivational and will help create independent students (Cameron, 2001).

To create a comic strip, I need to find a quick way to instruct Gaia and navigate them through technical issues that may arise when logging on to a new platform and using an application for the first time. In my observation, I did not get an actual idea of Gaia's digital skills, since they had no computer-related work, so I am a bit clueless in regard to how in detail, I need to be. However, I am aware that CMC assist more quiet students in bridging the gap between lack of confidence and expressing themselves in English (Cameron, 2001), so I will make sure to do my presentation in a way that does not exclude anyone from getting a great head start on the project of creating a comic strip. I must construct the videos in a way that provides the students with adequate information on how to use the platform and work in Pixton without losing their attention. Sufficient scaffolding needs to be provided so that students find the multimodal presentation comprehensible and feel inspired to follow the given examples rather than simply finding the video entertaining (Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015).

Wiring students' minds

"A story creates a world of characters who talk to each other and this discourse world presents opportunities for communicative activities and work of discourse skills."
Cameron, 2001, p. 176

Strategic planning is worthless – unless there is first a strategic vision (J. Naisbitt)

In the first lesson, Gaia will use the features in Pixton's beginner's version to create a story around a fast-food restaurant. In the video they are encouraged to produce language in the speech bubbles that follow with each picture. With a 75-minute lesson, I let them complete a word search about fast-food prior to the main activity. This will give them a reference for spelling food words and ideas to build their stories from. The word search is part of a worksheet (adapted to their current subject activities) and contains a gap fill exercise with known gambits and speech bubbles with the characters from *Muzzy*. I have created the word search with additional hidden words that students who finish early may circle. These words are not related to food and as such introduces new words that may challenge their minds and inspire them to creating more complex or diversified stories. To keep myself on track, I have of course created a solid lesson plan.

It takes me two days to complete the first video, and I am surprised to find that it lasts eight long minutes. There is no way I can cut down on the content without ruining the build in motivational aspect, which is crucial to the concept of flipped learning (Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015), however, I realize that the reason for the lengthy video is due to the technical instructions which will not be present in the following videos, thus making them less lengthy and more digestible. The videos are going bring the term scaffolding into to the centre of learning, through which students, despite their knowledge and background, have a free space where they can 'make sense' of the language and, with guided and assisting teaching approach, 'are safe' to grow (Cameron, 2001).

Now, here is the thing about flipped learning – before you even start your first lesson, you need to also have the second video planned *and created*. As soon as the first lesson finishes, students will be given immediate homework (in the form of a video) to watch prior to the following lesson. This kind of planning ahead deviates from traditional planning, where one might change a few things – or even the entire lesson plan before the next lesson. Creating a multimodal presentation requires great planning and anticipation. This is not easy when not knowing the class and is why the observation proved very valuable to me (although I did not get confirmation on whether they were capable digital users). Therefore, my second video is planned and created, before I enter the classroom the first time as the actual teacher.

In the second video, I show Gaia how to use the advanced version in Pixton allowing them to really get creative with design, layout and shaping their characters. This part is what I consider being highly motivational to students as they get to be the sole creators of their own universe. For this second lesson Gaia will get another worksheet to complete prior to working on their comic strips. The worksheet, which follows a continuity from the precious worksheet, evolves around fast food and gambits to use when creating speech bubbles and as such, students are once again implicitly being scaffolded into the activity.

Gaia will test out the features in Pixton, creating stories with speech bubbles and by doing so, practice and develop their technical skills together with English language proficiency. The lessons are highly differentiated due to the variable outcome of stories each pair feels motivated and confident in creating. From here the lesson is open!

According to Biesta (Bövadt, 2017) the question of good education is a week project, since, as a teacher, you can never ensure the outcome. Evidential pedagogy seeks to eliminate the open question by reducing the educational achievements to a scientific question of cause and effect – a matter of input and output. Biesta's thoughts are supported by those of Rancier (Bövadt, 2017), who says that a learning environment that does not emancipate turns students into fools; that the teacher should strive towards taking on an oblivious approach (as opposed to a Socratic approach) to expect that students are initiating in exploring; that they possess the capability to find answers in their own way.

This is as far as my planning goes … for the moment

To emancipate is also to enforce authenticity into the classroom. Should this authenticity be enforced by the idea that 'product implies process;' i.e. the building blocks of the language are to be learned in a structured approach, where students learn different strategies to compensate for lacking resources? Or should students be, "involved in tasks which encourage them to take risks and negotiate meaning" (Hedge, 2000, s. 71). Well, I will try and use both in my teaching.

In my first video, I provided the building blocks to lay the very foundation for using the main tool i.e. Pixton. In my second video, I continue to structure the layout of the blocks, however, anticipating that students are capable of finding answers in their own way (Bövadt, 2017). Now that the layout is scaffolded, I will look into the actual execution of the lesson.

"Authenticity can only be achieved when the reader can interpret the intentions of the writer and respond appropriately to them."

Hedge, 2000, p. 68

Lesson One – Execution

In my observation, I noticed how complex instructions were either given in Danish or in combination with English language, since a good handful of students otherwise found it difficult to understand. As such, my first video is presented in the students' (and my own) native language, Danish, to ensure that they comprehend this first and crucial video introduction. Presenting in their native language will create a familiar feeling within the students as they, in a safe learning zone, get accustomed to my voice and way of communicating. Once my voice and way of communicating is registered in their minds, I will be able to rapidly scaffold them into comprehending my instructions in English through the use of multimodality in my coming flipped learning videos.

Hattie &Timperley (2013) state that criteria for success is greatly enforced when the teacher presents examples of possible good results prior to the actual process; that Inspiring students through the use of role models can be very effective when motivating students and getting them to understand the purpose of what they are doing. Therefore, I have modelled an example in my presentation for the students to follow, either as a complete guideline or as a springboard to their own creation.

> *"To see a finished product made by an outside person contributes to igniting the spark to initiating the task with a driven mind-set."*
> *Hachmann & Holmboe, 2015*

Can you eat a cow?

As an opener, I ask students to recall what they are going to do for this first lesson. I am surprised to find that Gaia has understood what to do and have no questions in regard to comprehending the instructions in the long video. A handful of students have not watched the video; however, this was an issue I had anticipated and planned on utilizing this scenario to make use of peer scaffolding.

I want the first part of the lesson, where Gaia is completing the worksheet about food, to run smoothly, allowing everyone to have a successful feeling of teamwork in solving the word puzzle, thus finishing around the same time. I therefore have them work in groups of four, allowing them to collaborate. Most groups finish about halfway through the set time frame, so this is where those extra hidden words really came in hand. I do not know whether those vocabulary words were ever introduced in their lessons, but I do know, that they were able to find them and ask questions about words of which they doubted the meaning of. One student *cleverly* asked: "Is 'cow' food?" My answer: "If you cut it into pieces, it is!" Another student had found the word, 'work' and wanted to confirm that it was not related to food, to which I could confirm that it was not.

See, I had not told Gaia the categories of those hidden words; not in the video and not in class. Despite, they were capable of thinking out of the box. **Motivation is not black and white.** It is not external or internal. Motivation should be regarded as a feeling of mental imagery coming from a learner's sense of autonomy, relatedness and competence. These are key ingredients to self-determination (Williams & Ryan, 2015).

25 minutes into the lesson, students were relieved from their groups and paired. The few students who had not watched the video were paired with students who had. I watched closely as they navigated through School Tube and Pixton by following the guidelines presented in my video. The eight-minute long video seemed to have wired their brain cells, as they all managed to log in and follow the procedure in setting up a storyboard correctly in Pixton. I paid close attention as peer scaffolding was taking place and students helped guide each other through the process. Here, scaffolding might be confused with students performing the teacher's role of explaining, however, this is not the case. Students helped each other amplify meaning and prepare themselves and peers for written tasks. Getting a chance to scaffold a *fun* task to peers enforces interpersonal skills and fun and beneficial learning (Gibbons, 2015). Peer scaffolding turned out to be a great resource.

The beautiful thing about this first lesson was, that all introduction was pre-installed in the minds prior to the lesson, so that Gaia utilized that lesson by being creative rather than having to spend time figuring out all the technical aspects and forward those issues to me. As a teacher, this meant that my role became to assist students in constructing words and short sentences acting as a *floating dictionary* to accommodate the sensations of their creative minds. **The classroom was vibrant with creators.**

Gaia worked with great motivation and were eager to show how they were developing their stories. I was surprised to find that not a single student procrastinated or lacked ability in terms of creating a story – and this was at a time, where I had not yet introduced connectors or scaffolded any communication. The diversified environment resulted in some students mastering all aspects of the beginner's version towards the end of the lesson whereas others were able to use most of the tools in Pixton. Since I had only given instructions on the very basic features, however, presented more features in my *teaser*, this showed me, that scaffolding sets students up for success by aiding them in the ability to impart meanings. It is the nature of support that is the key to scaffolding (Gibbons, 2015); in this case multimodality and inspiration.

The lesson finished in a highly unusual way, that I personally have not had the privilege of witnessing prior to this research and which would proceed in all four lessons: **students were so engaged in their work that they had lost track of time and strongly opposed to shutting down their computers and end the lesson – time became a three-dimensional aspect.** This scenario could be presumed as a reversed process of being defined by digital devices – instead the devices were being defined by the students. Ironically, Steiner- Adair & Baker's (2013) quote can be contradicted: "… *those screens suck children away (…) they are 'happily plugged in*.'

"My role became to assist (…) acting as a floating dictionary to accommodate the sensations of their creative minds."

Lesson Two

Scaffolding in a motivational way

"motivation is less a trait than a fluid play."
Williams & Ryan, 2015, p. 113

To sustain the motivation that was achieved from the first lesson, I needed to keep a flow in my lessons whereby students' own motivation was derived externally through the content of my videos. Motivation <u>cannot</u> be seen as a static feeling but rather as a continuum from strongly extrinsic to the strongly intrinsic (Williams & Ryan, 2015). There were more technical aspects in my second lesson and if I had to present those in the classroom, it would be time consuming and difficult to follow; thus, students would undoubtedly feel frustrated with all the technical details and I would most like lose their attention. With the flipped learning video, I had created, students could pause, and practice suited to their time and individual schedule and needs.

Due to the progressing complexity of this task I chose to advance my presentation from instructing in Danish to an almost complete presentation in English in my second video. Now, remember that this decision was made *prior to the first lesson*. It may seem like an utter disaster to match the difficulty of a task by advancing the language learning, however, research shows that language development equals meaning making (Gibbons, 2015). Students learn gradually from external dialogue to inner speech – learning how to think not what to think; the teacher seeks to provide connectives that enable students to construct rather than simplifying a task. (Gibbons, 2015). As such, I trusted that by repeating connectives through multimodality, and by scaffolding rather than simplifying (Gibbons, 2015), I would accomplish that students were able to, not only understand, but also to feel inspired and motivated.

Pre-installed software generates diversified learning.

In the second lesson, Gaia would start with another worksheet including a dialogue and a gap fill exercise about food. The dialogue provided gambits that may serve as inspiration to creating a story. While the purpose of the first lesson was to get comfortable using Pixton, the purpose of the second lesson was to get familiar with the advanced aspects of Pixton. This might seem like a lot of technical stuff to spend valuable learning time doing. However, it is worthwhile keeping in mind, that the students' minds are working simultaneously on the creation of stories through multimodality. The fact that they are not being rushed

through the process, gives them time to allow for creativity to be ignited, scaffolding a scenario in which there is little to no limitations. **Getting comfortable with technical aspects is like defragging a hard drive**; scattered data is collected and cleaned up freeing space for a faster processor – the mind. The students' minds would then have increased capacity in the creation of stories.

> "Part of teaching skill is to identify the particular opportunities of a task or activity, and then to develop them into learning experiences for the children."
>
> Cameron, 2001, p. 20

This time the worksheet was completed in pairs, and some students found it easier than others. The thing causing the most difficulty was spelling the words correctly according to the matching pictures. However, in reference to my observation, the focus was placed on producing sentences rather than getting caught up in spelling. Therefore, I was not concerned with spelling, as the main purpose with completing the worksheet was not the gap fill exercise itself. The real purpose was to get students to read and understand the dialogue so that they might get inspiration to producing a story. **The gap fill exercise functioned as the bridgebuilder to getting students to pay attention to that dialogue.** As Gaia proceeded to creating stories in Pixton, this became noticeable.

With the advanced version being implemented, students were encouraged to start creating new stories. The second lesson went on as the first one; students were deeply engaged in their work, story layout and design. I found that some students were being highly creative and technically very competent. They were using all features in creating their story. The main thing I was concerned with during this lesson was that they produced language in the speech bubbles. My concern with students refraining from producing language and focusing solely on the layout was immediately dismissed. All students enjoyed creating dialogues, and even though some of those dialogues did not make sense to me when reading them (mostly due to odd spelling), the students were capable of providing meaning, as we talked about their stories. Now, this is what I was after – **motivation to speak in English because they were too excited not to.** This scenario provided me with great scaffolding opportunities to help them make sense of what they were communicating. It provided me with the opportunity to give implicit feedback which is when feedback is received unexpectedly and arises when students are engaged in the joy of their work without the awareness and expectations of being assessed, praised or receiving further guidance which in turn is granted through the process of being engaged in their work (Hattie & Timperley, 2013).

Had I begun correcting their spelling my feedback would have been just that – corrective. This would have had a demotivational outcome to students as I would focus on their flaws rather than the magnificent universe they were creating and rather than providing building blocks, I would have demolished their construction. Corrective feedback is the most common among teachers, however, it is the least useful as it is limited by not being generalised to other tasks. Effective feedback encompasses information on *how* to progress (Hattie &

Timperley, 2013). Instead I commented on their effort and asked them to tell me, what they had written. Now, commentary feedback is not to be confused with corrective feedback. Commentary feedback has a greater impact on a student's personal development than grading does (Hattie & Timperley, 2013).

> *The most important aspect in communication is to form opinions where the students, through conversation and ongoing feedback about progress, can connect learning to their lives and desires for the future.*
>
> Meyer, 2005

Throughout the lesson my function had become to provide implicit feedback by rephrasing what students were saying in relation to their stories, thus indirectly providing them with tools to improve their written dialogues. The purpose of feedback is to reduce the gap between performance and goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2013). Did this kind of scaffolding through implicit feedback help them? They were so eager to creating stories that when they simultaneously talked about their stories, they paid immediate attention to my feedback as I simply rephrased what they said in Danish or tried to say in English.

Feeling motivated through scaffolding and implicit feedback impacted on students' ability to overcoming the barriers of lacking language proficiency, or as Dewey would emphasize, *learning by doing and reflecting upon the doing* (Bundsgaard, 2017). While this second lesson was coming to an end, I had already created the third flipped learning video in which I had anticipated that, although a majority of the students had become confident creators, they still needed the tools to create an actual product that followed a set of criteria, as fluency becomes undesired and a disadvantage if it comes down to, "being able to use any language resources acquired and not being directed into using particular structures" (Hedge, 2000). Thus, Gaia was ready to be firmly directed towards the use of structures to creating a product. The second lesson finished like the first one – students being *swallowed* by those screens.
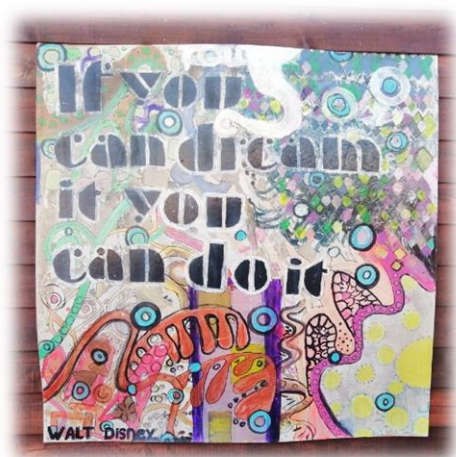
Figure 3 - Inspirational painting at 'Lilleskolen'

> *No event is inherently motivating in itself, thus connecting activities to outcomes that are internally valid to learners is crucial as, "learners primarily are motivated through their own interpretations of an experience"*
>
> Williams & Ryan, 2015, p. 118

Lesson Three

Motivation is concerned with sustaining effort over time. Some
motivation is created around performance, some around mastery.
Motivation can change over time and often do so. Physical and
emotional states are significant and key factors to learning.

Williams & Ryan, 2015

Embarking on the Mini Saga adventure

In the third lesson, Gaia was going to create a mini saga. All instructions and scaffolding were in English through my video presentation. This time I would really push them beyond their capabilities. Their emotional states (Williams & Ryan, 2015) were peaking, so now was the time to really challenge them to maintain that precious level of motivation.

Gaia was to write a screenplay prior to creating the mini saga in Pixton. It was time to firmly *install* Dewey's *famous software* (Bundsgaard, 2017) in their minds since, and I repeat from page 5: *reflecting upon the doing* is just as important to maintain technical terminology and methodological methods of working to create actual learning (Bundsgaard, 2017). I was going to build on the momentum of motivation created in the first two lessons. Now, the students knew that they were capable creators. What they did not know was *what* they were capable of creating …

Through prototypical features, predictability and word occurrences, stories offer space for growth in vocabulary. Repeated patterns create a way into the story for the active listener, providing a natural support for language learning – patterns that suit human psychology. This is opposed to stories (usually found in text books) where characters are merely just moving through a sequence of activities. Children will pick up words that they enjoy. Suspense and clearly contrasted characters assist in capturing the children's interest and thus motivation to learn, along with space for language growth (Cameron, 2001).

*Children will pick up words
that they enjoy.*

Cameron, 2001

The only thing approaching art in a movie is the script (David Bailey)

To complete a screenplay, Gaia was allowed to write in Danish on the worksheet. The reason being that, although they were encouraged to get inspiration from Pixton, the actual multimodality was temporarily being taken out of context. Now, they had to transfer their build-up imagination to a sheet of paper. This would be hard enough in their mother tongue let alone in English language.

The whole concept of getting the students to write a screenplay is to show capability in producing a multimodal product, including quality content, based on reaching a specific target (Bundsgaard, 2017); the target being classmates and teachers. Learners must learn to construct meaningful language going from here-and-now language – requiring the field being embedded in a visual context – to being able to vary the tenors and mode of communication. When students start to construct sentences, meanings and contexts because they make meaning of registers and can connect them to their here-and-now language, then scaffolding is taking place (Gibbons, 2015). My video would serve as the scaffolding tool together with the example on the worksheet which students had had an opportunity to study from home.

In our third lesson, I expected that students might lose some motivation due to the difficulty of the task. To overcome this issue, I planned to encourage students to get the beginning and end picture, of a total of 6-8 pictures, in place first. I used the concept that **knowing where to start and where to finish makes the road less bumpy.** Goals and content are diversified and as such the methods must reflect this. By combining the familiar with the unfamiliar, the new with the old, students become aware of the meaning and context in which they are working, at the same time the educational differentiation creates a space for diversified development (Meyer, 2005).

As anticipated, some students got caught up in details of the story, while others jumped straight to the actual creation in Pixton. Since the former were stuck in the process, I attended to them first. They could not get the first sentence down, so I asked them to tell me what their story was about. One student began to tell the story, and I cut her off after she spoke the first sentence. I shortened that sentence by rephrasing it to include fewer details and had them write it down. To scaffold the ending part, I provided them with cue words and asked them to rephrase the sentence like I had just done. I waited around and nodded as they collaborated into getting it right. Feedback aiming towards self-efficiency and self-regulating skills diminishes the cleft between performance and goals through awareness of where they are in their progress (feed up) and where they strive to get (feed forward) (Hattie & Timperley, 2013).

When I returned a bit later, I saw that they were able to produce their storyline in a way that was comprehensible. "The more the teacher does for the students that they can do for themselves, the less they will do for themselves. If the teacher praises (or criticizes) students, they will be less self-reliant" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

In between, I tended to those skipping the worksheet and jumping straight to the production. They showed me what they were doing and asked me why they needed to write the story on the worksheet when they were doing it in Pixton. Good question, right! I, myself, hate double work or structures that deviate from where I need to get. So, I asked them to explain the whole story to me picture by picture and was surprised to find, that they had chosen to skip the worksheet because they now fully comprehended the purpose of writing a screenplay. They had their storyline in their minds and were in the process of writing supporting sentences to each picture. As

such, they were fulfilling the task and had found their own way of reaching Rome. Not a shortcut; just a different path.

I am going to sidetrack this particular situation in the classroom, as this form of conceptual competency is subjected to critique. Children learn through processes leading to the creation of a product to be shown to others. In technical terms, this is called *performance in preparation for society* (Læringsteori og Didaktik, 2013). The student participates in learning through an integrated process. *Hand and spirit* determines the meaningful context in which the student develops practical skills – also through the process of thinking (Dewey), and the production of own texts. The student's desire to learn, and thereby conceptual competency, is subjected to critique since the student, by being co-responsible for the learning process risks becoming the subject to his/her own didactical methods (Læringsteori og Didaktik, 2013).

Now, back to those students not completing the material screenplay. I went checking on them frequently to confirm that they were on the right track, in this case, that they actually did complete in Pixton what they otherwise could have done on the worksheet. If the goal had been to produce writing on a piece of paper for display and thereby the worksheet becoming the product, I would have agreed to the critique of conceptual competency, however, in this case the worksheet was a tool to possibly being able to reach the goal (creating a mini saga in Pixton). The tool was provided by me (the teacher) as a means of scaffolding the exercise to the majority of students, however, if this type of scaffolding did not meet with the needs of those particular students, I see no reason why they might not choose a diverse course in reaching that goal. When children try to *'make sense*,' they do so through their own obtained, limited world knowledge. The 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) optimizes learning by measuring what a child can do with skilled help, customized to each student (Cameron, 2001).

Klafki has an interesting way of perceiving this particular matter. He says that didactics is not a set of regulations leading to skills and capabilities. Student and teacher must find the answers together. "The teacher is not a technician, and the student not an object subjected to technical processing" (Læringsteori og Didaktik, 2013).

Now, those students ended up making one of the best presentations, in terms of providing meaning to their story through a multimodal product reaching a target, in the final lesson. A methodological process is like putting together a jigsaw so that it reflects a stimulating climate consisting of good teaching resources and organization and is converted into concrete teaching that aspires imagination and drive (Meyer, 2005). The lesson ended, vibrant with the environment full of creative minds and stimuli. My final video was assigned as homework.

> *"The teacher is not a technician, and the students not an object subjected to technical processing"*
>
> *Klafki*

Lesson Four
Off the beaten path

"Underneath the surface of a good lesson lies a bedrock of teacher understanding about the principles of sound pedagogic practice – teaching is a highly personal activity."

Butt, 2008, p. 3

My final lesson with Gaia was about to unfold and I had once again raised the bar. Working in a fun context with Pixton had encouraged students to think in creative ways that expanded their capability through their encouraged spirits. "Questions or problems whereby students are encouraged to think laterally, in unusual and creative ways that are less bound by constraints of formal logical thinking, can also provide fun contexts for spoken language" (Gibbons, 2015, p. 69). When a sequence of lessons remains open, even the teacher's thinking becomes lateral.

In collaboration with the English teacher, I had decided to make room for student presentations. I had no idea of this outcome when I planned the first two lessons based on observation and research questions. In my final video, I had not mentioned anything about presentations. I did not want to push any students to present or working towards a presentation as being the main goal. Also, the presentation would be a voluntary task. However, as it turned out, everyone wanted to present, and everyone wanted to be the first in line to show *their* story to the rest of the class. This was time-consuming as it would take around 4-5 minutes for each pair to present including connecting each of their computers to the projector. With around 10 groups I would need to clear 40-50 minutes time for presentations.

Gaia was given half an hour to complete their mini sagas. In my video, I had instructed them to create 6-8 pictures with short sentences to each and supporting speech bubbles. I had instructed them to write a maximum of 50 words.

"The provision of challenging tasks and extensive feedback leads to greater student engagement and better performance."

Hattie & Timperley, 2013, p. 24

My instructions served as a means to scaffolding an easy way to constructing a short story by following the guidelines I had provided. With that being said, this was all about breaking boundaries and expanding those guidelines as ever since the first lesson – all thinkable boundaries had been expanded; not by me, but by the students in Gaia.

While a few students got caught up in details, others managed to create multimodality beyond anything I had taught through my videos. I had one final boundary to break with Gaia: their presentations were going to done in English. "Clarity in the expectations to performance is the opposite of performance pressure (…)

performance pressure leads to superficial learning" (Meyer, 2005). Sometimes the unknown is a blessing. The clarity of goals became apparent, when the bar was set, and thus causing the students to perform greater than expected to.

Now, did they possess sufficient vocabulary to present a story in English? Had they done it before? Had I taught them or provided them with adequate connectives to even stand a chance of doing a presentation in English beyond their grade level? I think the answer to all these questions was a big NO! So, in other words, I had not provided Gaia with any scaffolding that traditional teaching proposes in order to complete this kind of task. Or had I? Now, bear with me once again, as I sidetrack this particular process of reaching a goal.

The *tailormade prescription* for accomplishing goals in accordance with The Common Objectives of 2015 go like this: the turn point of learning/goal-oriented didactics is a sequenced goal-method-approach which, through a scientific approach, clarifies what to learn so that this learning is both measurable and transparent to teacher, student and parents. **The idea is, that teaching must be predictable so that the student's learning process is focused**, which is done through the supreme significance of goal setting to which all other decisions must conform (Læringsteori og Didaktik, 2013). Now, if I had followed this procedure of a so-called goalsetting approach where teaching is predictable, I think it will be safe to say that Gaia would have accomplished none of what they did. As Biesta says, *you can never predict the outcome of a lesson. The lesson needs to be open and not constrained in scientific input/output predictions* (Bövadt, 2017)*. And as Skovmand (2016) points out, the Common Objectives leach out the mission statement of formal aims from education. The Common Objectives is a form of didactics without content and the biggest disaster in modern school history (Skovmand, 2016).

Presentations in English or Daenglish

Seldom have I, in my own teaching, seen young learners being so focused, as Gaia was during those four intense lessons we had together. What the students were supposed to actually learn was not at all transparent to them or their parents during the phase of engagement in creating. However, it surely became transparent and measurable on the day they did their presentations.

The students were encouraged to finish their stories with or without having accomplished the full perspective of a mini saga i.e. bringing the story to a complete composition of 50 words. I thought that those students who were not able to finish did not wish to present. I was wrong! They asked if they, despite not having created 6-8 pictures with sentences, might present anyway.

When Gaia finally got to present their stories, every single student was so enthusiastic about their own presentation that there was no hesitation at all. The fact that the presentation was supported by multimodality i.e. pictures and text, seemed to have a great influence on students' performance. "It is the visions operating under certain facilitating conditions that create a motivating ideal L2 self" (Williams & Ryan, 2015, p.

117). What they lacked in terms of vocabulary, they compensated for by either pointing to the pictures or incorporating Danish words. One student even managed to do a fluent presentation in *Dænglish* – a complete mix of Danish and English – without ever pausing. The words he did not know in English, he simply spoke in Danish. And although some presentations were difficult to comprehend (at least to me) the support of multimodality spellbound all the classmates who had absolutely no trouble understanding the stories being told. A single group got caught up in details regarding layout and the design of characters, however, they had the whole story created in their minds and as such were able to – and with immense enthusiasm – present and describe those very details through the use of words and a lot of gestures in the final lesson. I was prepared to help scaffolding every story, but I found myself in that wonderful situation that the only skill that was basically required of me was my presence in the room. Students ran their own show. "Silence helps to foster autonomy, or the exercise of initiative" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

My own motivation remained intact through all four lessons and was reflected though my videos which in turn inspired students to be creative and engaged in their work. The strength and intensity of one's visions is crucial in sustaining learning. Creating a learning environment where visions are built,

> *To determine a child's abilities in advance is to create inequality.*
> Bøvadt, 2017

manifested and kept alive must be a teacher's biggest task. This requires of the teacher to work with his own motivation (Williams & Ryan, 2015).

Some may think that doing comic strips was the key to students' lasting motivation, however, no event is inherently interesting in itself – motivation is concerned with sustained effort over time (Williams & Ryan, 2015). The vibrant classroom, full of creators engaged in story writing, was the result of a diversified learning environment with resources and visions relating to students' interests which in turn sparked their sustained effort.

Conclusion

It is a revolution that children develop new forms of communication through digital platforms, playing with and developing new forms of language. It is a culture of their own, and it plays a significant role in their socialisation process and shape of identity (Tufte, 2013). Digital media is not equal to social media. It is important to develop a modernised learning platform, so that children do not end up educating themselves online in a system their psychological development is not prepared for. The solution is learning that supports a media didactic and media pedagogic approach, where the purpose becomes to strengthen the coherence between a student's experiences, reflections and communication – **education through the use of media is a must** (Tufte, 2013). According to Klafki, content must be chosen to provide scenarios in which students can work with epochal problems (Canger & Aagaard, 2016). Digital problems are epochal problems.

My research shows, that it is possible to create a diversified learning environment where interest and motivation is sparked through the use of flipped learning and thereby through the use of digital media. The matter in perspective being that students remain anchored in themselves (Rousseau, 1997).

I have demonstrated how scaffolding through flipped learning, and the use of continuous and implicit feedback, can result in ESL-learners being able to overcome obstacles through motivation, and thereby being capable of comprehending and producing English language. Education must relate to and have its fundamental basis in the life that is going to be lived (Grundtvig, 1943). The use of digital media through flipped learning could reverse the process of children being enslaved by digital platforms and social media, thus an opportunity to using technology to serve the purpose of the common good. We must teach students to act as competent producers of content both written and multimodal (Bundsgaard, 2017). To do this, teachers must become multimodal producers themselves. With the concept of *digital education*, a new era of what it means to be a teacher is being defined (Bundsgaard, 2017). Flipped learning is a spark to motivational learning – not a substitute to traditional teaching. The remaining question that lies unanswered is whether the school is capable of lifting the task of digital education?

How is it possible for teachers to educate children in the use of digital media when they themselves are learning simultaneously?

Where to go from here …

Firstly, schools must provide accessible digital means of learning if teachers themselves are to gain motivation needed for teaching through digital media. The platform I had available i.e. School Tube, provided me with the tools necessary to creating interesting content. Producing multimodal content was time consuming due to the explanation of several technicalities; however, expertise is less important than commitment, thus teachers may produce explanatory content or teasers to engage students in a fun lesson. *Motivation is contagious* and with students gradually learning to use the platforms, the technical aspect is diminished.

Is the school capable of lifting the task of digital education? If the school is seen as a network of performing teachers, then each teacher has an opportunity to influence and inspire peers in lifting the task of digital education through their collaborative work with flipped learning. If children cannot learn how to navigate digital platforms in school, where else are they supposed to learn (Bundsgaard, 2017)?

"Working with learners, getting to know them and their dreams, and helping them to realize those dreams must surely be one of the most rewarding occupations available" (Williams & Ryan, 2015, s. 120).

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