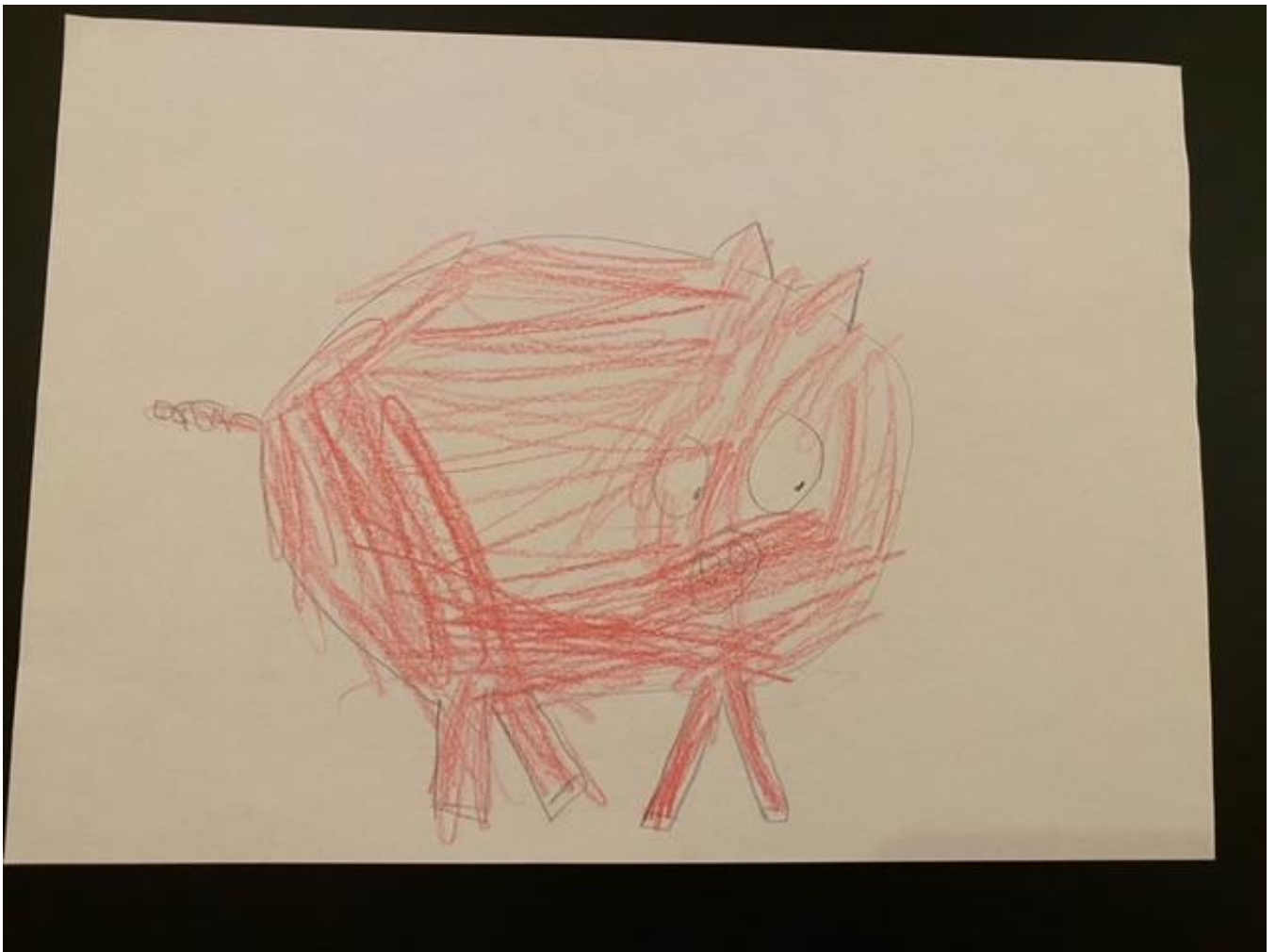


Farm animals



Combining CLT and TBLT in a 1st grade

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Introduction

I have read a lot of material in this module regarding Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT). I was very inspired by especially P. Gibbons' book; Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning; teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom.

I was thrown "headfirst" into teaching because the teacher I had to observe had to go to the hospital with her son from Wednesday to Friday. I observed the 1st grade class Monday and completed the first half of my teaching plan Wednesday, the second half on Thursday. My teaching focused on the students' communicative skills, both listening and speaking with a main focus on vocabulary expansion. The class was already working with animals; therefore, I chose to keep the topic for my own course to build on what they have already learned. My research question is as follows:

**How can I scaffold communicative tasks in a 1st grade
and evaluate their language development?**

Relevance

It is stated within the common goals for the subject of English that after their 4th year, the students should be able to understand short instructions, questions and descriptions. This goal will progress from the simple understanding of these instructions, questions or descriptions to a more focused listening skill throughout their time in school. Furthermore, the students should be able to describe an object with support and preparation after their 4th year as well. (*Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, 2019*) These two skills are easily combined through CLT and TBLT because through communication students can provide descriptions of a certain object to the class and the class can in turn ask clarifying questions about the object. These "conversations" between the students will eventually provide the students with a larger vocabulary and a knowledge of how to effectively describe something, without the other person actually being able to see the object. One of the main goals in the subject of English is:

"The students must develop their curiosity and awareness of the English language and be able to choose valid linguistic and communicative strategies as a foundation for foreign language."

(Børne- og Undervisningsministeriet, 2019)




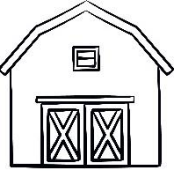

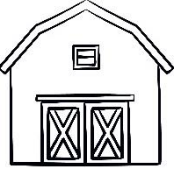
It is relevant for me as a future teacher to learn how to engage the students in communicative tasks with a focus on expanding the students' vocabulary.

The Danish Ministry of Education and P. Gibbons both argue that EL learners develop their linguistic skills most effectively by practicing, speaking and in general communicating with each other. (*Børne og Undervisningsministeriet, 2021*) & (*Gibbons, 2015*).

T. Summer describes the how to plan a TBLT course in a simple way. One will have to take into consideration the pre-, during- and post- tasks. This approach will provide the teacher with a great indicator to monitor the students' progression. (*Summer, 2013*)

Method

I planned a course with a duration of two lessons in a 1st grade. I have attached my lesson plan as appendix 1. I had to make a few adjustments from my original plan because I had agreed with the class teacher that I would complete my first English lesson on Thursday and the second on Friday. When her son became sick and she had to stay home with him, we decided to use my English lesson plan Wednesday and Thursday instead. This change of plans, and the fact that the school printer didn't work, resulted in me having to test the students' pre-knowledge of the topic verbally instead of on paper. This change of method made my evaluation process of the students harder to monitor, because I did not have anything else than my own internal assessment. My original plan was to have the students fill out a "before and after" assessment paper with statements, where they would color in the farmhouse in either red, yellow, or green according to how well they, themselves, think they could accomplish the task described. The paper looked like this:

	Jeg kan nævne de forskellige bondegårdsdyr på engelsk		Jeg kan beskrive de forskellige bondegårdsdyr på engelsk
	Jeg kan synge med på en engelsk sang		Jeg kan læse navnet på forskellige bondegårdsdyr på engelsk
	Jeg kan skrive navnene på forskellige bondegårdsdyr på engelsk		Jeg kan tegne forskellige bondegårdsdyr

I chose to write the statements in Danish because the students are 1st graders, and mother tongue is still incorporated a great amount in the English lessons, so that the students have a better chance to understand the tasks given. I also would have put the statements on the whiteboard, so that I could go through them one by one with the students.

My original idea was for the students to answer this before my two planned lessons and again after. This would have given me a good indication of both the students' progression, but also about the effectiveness of my teaching strategy. Because I had to change my plans last minute, my observations had to be conducted simultaneously with my teaching. This was quite a difficult way to monitor both the students' progress and my own teaching process at the same time. To see what the students have accomplished during the course, I will focus on their final products.

"From a theoretical perspective, a three-part distinction can be made between 1) the teacher's plan, 2) how this plan is put into practice, and 3) which theory of foreign language learning underlies the teacher's plan." (Summer, 2013, s. 1)

This quote gives a good indication of my experience. I had my original plan for my lessons. I then had to modify my plan because of unforeseen events such as a sick child and printer mishaps, and of course number 3: my chosen theory I built my teaching on. In this case my teaching was based on a combination of

CLT and TBLT, with much inspiration from the book “Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning” written by P. Gibbons.

Theory

CLT or Communicative Language Teaching is a methodology based on the theory that second languages are learned most effectively through communication. Furthermore, the dialogue should be as authentic as possible and meaningful, and errors are not important in the learning process.

*“People learn a language best when using it to do things rather than through studying how language works and practicing rules.”
(Richards, 2006, p. 2)*

This method is best achieved through group or pair work, where the conversations will flow more naturally and therefore be more authentic because the students will have to be creative and answer each other with whole sentences instead of only using “yes” or “no”.

The teacher’s role in this method is more of a monitor or facilitator (Richards, 2006, p. 5)

*“In planning language courses within a communicative approach, grammar was no longer the starting point.”
(Richards, 2006, p. 9)*

Making mistakes when speaking is not a big deal because the student will soon realize their error themselves by communicating.

“Link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together, since they usually occur so in the real world.” (Richards, 2006, p. 13)

Combining tasks of different varieties scaffold the students to get a better understanding of the language. Listening to a song and watching a video at the same time gives the students a visual aid as to what the lyrics are about and, in this manner, they can link the words with what they see. Repetition of the same words presented in different ways helps the students to understand the meaning of the words more effectively.

TBLT – Task Based Language Teaching combined with CLT will provide the opportunity for the teacher to work with “Information Gap Activities”. This approach is centered around the learner, and not the goal itself. (Summer, 2013, p. 9)

“More authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information.” (Richards, 2006, p. 18)

Information gaps are essential tasks in language teaching according to P. Gibbons. She writes about the fact that communication should not only be encouraged but required in especially group tasks. (Gibbons, 2015, p. 56) If the task given has a gap in information, the students are REQUIRED to communicate with each other to solve the task.

Language “stretching” is a great way to scaffold the students when they have to expand their vocabulary. One should be mindful not to push the students too far out of their comfort zone, as this would have a negative impact where the students start to doubt themselves instead. (Gibbons, 2015, p. 26+27)

Message abundance is crucial for young learners to effectively obtain the information that are given. Using a combination of different tools for the same information gives the students a bigger chance of understanding what the teacher is trying to teach. (Gibbons, 2015, pp. 42-46)

Analysis

By analyzing the individual tasks, I included in my lesson plan, it is clear that by using a good variety of tasks, multimodal tools and presentations, the lesson plan has a message abundance.

I started off by presenting the topic of what we were going to work with and linking the topic “farm animals” with the topic the students had worked with the week before “pets”. By linking the two together, I provided the students with a link to something they are already familiar with. I chose to present the topic and the tasks in Danish because I wanted to make sure that everyone understood the assignment.

Unfortunately, I was not able to let the students fill out the questionnaire which would have made my evaluation process much easier. Instead, I asked the students, in Danish what farm animals they knew and if they knew their names in English. Less than 1/3 of them knew the animals they were asked about. This gave me some indication of their prior knowledge.

I had found a YouTube video with the song “Old MacDonald had a farm” with a simple cartoon for the students’ first interaction. They were encouraged to sing along and surprisingly almost everyone joined in. The video was very effective because it had both the names of the animals written, a video with the animals and a catchy tune. This provides many different impressions for the students and therefore the video has the ability to engage more students than if I had merely talked about the animals.

After the video I had a picture of a drawing of the different farm animals on the white board. I engaged the students in a conversation about the animals and what they could remember from the video. This time a little over half of the class had something to tell about the topic. I asked them about the different features that defined the animals and wrote some of the words down next to each animal. I included an example of this drawing as Appendix 3.

For the last task of this lesson, I had printed out a drawing for the students to color in (see Appendix 3 as a beautiful example!). Simultaneously I walked around and asked questions about the animals, color, number of legs, fur or feathers, the name of the animal in English etc... This gave me a little more information as to where the students were in their learning process individually. I tried to let the students have some time to think of their answers if they didn’t have one right away and here, I would also remind them of the white board and what we had written there. This helped some of the students who didn’t participate in the “whole class” task before, I think because they had the opportunity to talk without the entire class listening.

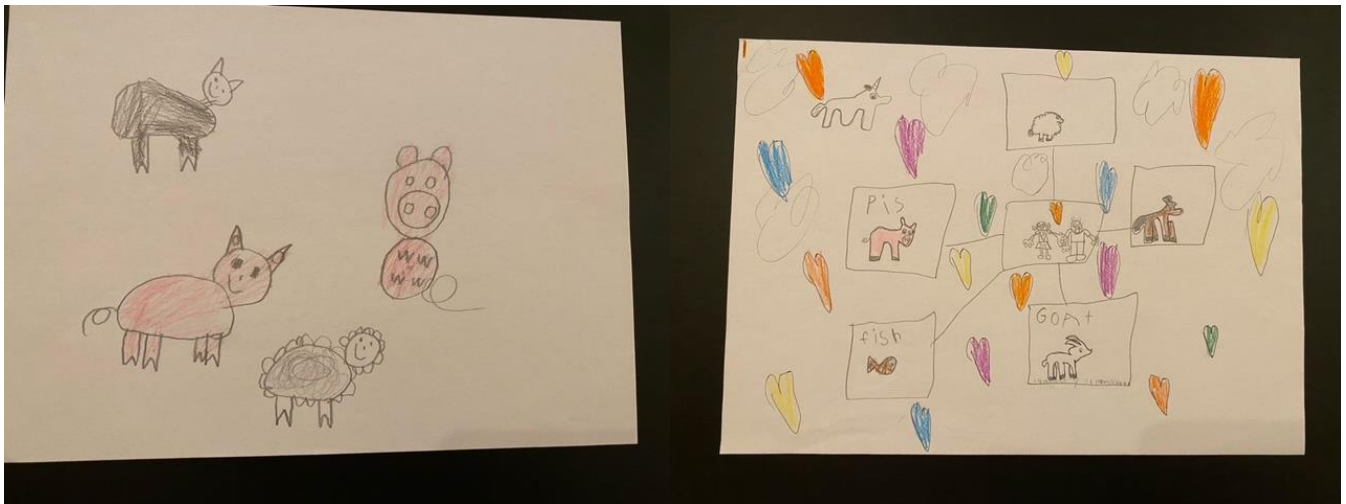
The following day I had the opportunity to finish my teaching course for my research.

I started off with a repetition of all the animals and the descriptive words we had worked with the day before. I had a cartoon drawing on the white board and the students were asked to help me name and describe the animals both in Danish and in English. This task would scaffold the students for the final task of the day where they had to, with help if needed, engage in a simple conversation with me about an animal of their choosing, only describing the animal, not telling the name.

My second task I had planned for the students was originally a game where the students would be provided with 5 pictures of different farm animals and 5 cards with the names of these animals. Then they would have to pair them together like a “card turning game”. Unfortunately, the school printer was still out of

commission, which meant I had to improvise again like the day before. This time I chose to grab some paper, cut it into smaller pieces, write the animals' names by hand and scramble them up. Then the students had to pick a random piece of paper and tell me which animal they got, go to their seat, and draw a picture of the animal. They had 15 minutes for this task, so if they finished their first drawing, they were encouraged to exchange their card with another and draw again. This exercise gave the students the opportunity to see and pronounce the names of the animals we were working in a new way.

There are a few examples of the students' great masterpieces:



For the final task, I again put the picture of the cartoon farm animals on the whiteboard, just so the students had something visual to refer to if they needed it. I went over the rules for this task, because it is a "communicative" task, the students would have to

1. *Listen carefully and not just guess every animal.*
2. *Only guess ONE animal per turn*
3. *Wait for our turn and not just shout our guesses*
4. *Show by hand if we wanted to guess*
5. *Everyone will have a turn if they want to try and describe an animal. No one can try twice, because then would need much more time.*

I started off the game by describing an animal for the class. The students were very eager to guess, and some had a little trouble waiting for their turn. I paused the game and reminded everyone about the rules. The students seemed to understand the rules this time, because they behaved accordingly for the remainder of the lesson.

The students were extremely engaged in the assignment, and everyone wanted to try without exception. Some needed more scaffolding in the conversation, but everyone managed to complete the task. I provided the students extended thinking time, so that they would have the opportunity to find the words they struggled with themselves instead of me having to. I used simple questions to help the students forward in the conversation.

Reflection

I have found that CLT and TBLT are very compatible. Providing the students with tasks where they must communicate with each other is a very effective way for them to expand their vocabulary, challenge themselves to be creative in their language use and gain confidence.

Communicative language teaching is incredibly effective for the students to develop their language skills. I found that the tasks I had planned where there was a gap of information for the students to try and fill, were the most effective in terms of the students wanting to speak English. Some students were shy and had reservations when they had to speak in front of the class, but their concerns went away rather fast when they sat in front of me and had to converse with me instead of focusing on the entire classroom. This I found was more comfortable for those students who didn't enjoy speaking out loud.

The "silent time" where the students had to sit quietly and work with a special folder with different assignments in the morning before the actual lesson began, I found effective. The students calmed down and adjusted their minds for learning purposes. I also liked the fact that they had a "noise" button for the teacher to place on the white board to show the students that their noise levels were too high, and they had to tone it down.

I had an easy time connecting with the girls in the class, but the boys proved to be a challenge, which I had not considered would be an issue. Fortunately, I connected with them in PE, which was a surprise. I also, in this class, encountered a vast number of different backgrounds, this would be very interesting to focus on for a future research question, student diversity and differentiation.

For my next research at a primary school, I would do a few things differently. For example, I would prepare all my material that needed printing a few days before I needed them. This time I did not have the opportunity to do that, which resulted in me having to adjust my lesson plan quite a bit.

All in all, I loved working with CLT and TBLT combined in this manner, so I would definitely consider using this approach again.

Conclusion

<https://www.studietube.dk/video/8030933/90c01891e24799f4e0285ec295331003>

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Appendix 1

Lesson plan

Lesson: English	Class: 1 st grade	Title of lesson: Farm animals	Duration: Two lessons
Lessons' Aims: For the students to cooperate through communication and see if they can help each other guess what animal is being described.			
Learning objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can understand short instructions, questions and descriptions. • The student has knowledge of simple linguistic actions. 2. Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can describe an object with support and preparation. • The student has knowledge of descriptive language use. 3. Linguistic focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can understand the most frequent words and phrases within close topics. • The student has knowledge of meaning fields in vocabulary. 4. Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student can participate in linguistic games. • The student has knowledge of English-speaking games. 			
Subject content: Challenge the students on their communicative skills, both listening and speaking. Vocabulary expansion.		Cross-curricular links/themes/competences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and crafts – coloring the drawing is a creative skill • Music – the students are encouraged to sing along 	
Resources: Paper		Advance preparation (room/equipment): Computer, projector, whiteboard, prints of material	
Learning activities (lesson one)	Time	Teaching strategies/actions	
Teacher presentation of the topic and assignment, followed by a simple questionnaire about which words the students think they can do	10 min.	Presentation in mother tongue will ensure that all the students understand the assignment. The questionnaire provides the teacher with valuable information for evaluation of the students learning progress.	
A youtube video of “Old MacDonald had a farm”. The students are encouraged to try and sing along.	5 min.	Giving the students an introduction through lyrics and visuals (song and video).	
The teacher talks about farm animals and lets the students name all the different animals they can and what defines them.	15 min.	Actively listening and engaging in conversation makes the students more engaged in the task and gives them the opportunity to participate.	
The students are provided with a piece of paper with a drawing of different farm animals. They must color the drawing. The teacher walks around the classroom and asks random students about the names of the different animals.	15 min.	The children have time to reflect on the new words they have been introduced to and see the animals again in the drawing. The teacher gives the students opportunities to repeat the names of the animals.	

Learning activities (lesson two)	Time	Teaching strategies/actions
A drawing of different farm animals is on the whiteboard. The students are asked to describe the animals, colours, spots, how many legs, feathers, fur, horns etc...	10 min.	Trying to describe the animals will help scaffold the students in the last task where they have to guess what animal is being described.
Drawing game. The students will choose different cards with animals written on them. They have to draw the different animals from the cards.	15 min.	Seeing the written names again and again will help the students memorize the names better.
Students take turns trying to describe a farm animal of their choosing to the class. The rest of the class will try to guess which animal it is.	20 min.	Listening for information and using descriptive language. Evaluation. Comparing with the first task the teacher has the opportunity to see if the students have made progress and expanded their vocabulary
Assessment opportunities, objectives and evidence: The teacher has numerous opportunities to assess the students' progress, both when the students are doing the tasks on their own and collectively with the whole class.		

Appendix 2

Field observations

I had the opportunity to complete my observation and research the same week where I had to complete my observations for my internship next year.

It was somewhat chaotic because the teacher who was supposed to be my "supervisor" the entire week, only attended school Monday. The rest of the week she and her son were in the hospital because he contracted RS virus and therefore needed medical attention.

My observations are very general of the class, and my lessons were conducted Wednesday and Thursday. I have tried to sum up the most essential points of my observations.

MONDAY

First double lesson of the day is math.

The teacher kicks off the lesson by using the whiteboard and explain how to make retractions. Some of the students are talking quietly and not paying attention. One student in particular is making a lot of noise and yells the answers out loud and says that the tasks are too easy. The pedagogue in the class tries his best to calm the student down and make him quiet.

The students are involved in a game on the whiteboard, and everyone seems to be more involved now that they are a part of the solving process and not just spectators.

Second double lesson of the day is Danish. The students are divided in to three predetermined groups.

Some students are not happy with their given tasks but are told that everyone will get to do each task. In the last rotation three of the boys are playing a board game and gets into an argument. The teacher informs the three that they will have one last chance to behave, and if they can't, they are not allowed to continue their game. A few minutes goes by, and they start arguing again. The game is taken away by the teacher and two of the boys start yelling and arguing with her. The teacher talks to each student, but one of them seems like he does not want to accept the situation. He acts out for the rest of the lesson.

After this lesson, the teacher and I participate in a meeting regarding the three 1st grade classes.

WEDNESDAY

There is a somewhat chaotic feeling when I get to the teacher's lounge this morning. The teacher I am supposed to follow is not going to attend school for the rest of the week because her son is in the hospital with RS virus. Because of this unfortunate situation I suggest to the 1st grade team that I can conduct the first part of my investigation. The students are very engaged in the different assignments I give them. We sing along to a song and the lesson ends with them colouring a drawing of farm animals. One student does not want me to receive his drawing, so he rips it apart and throws it out and tells me what he did. I tell him that I am sad that he did it, but fortunately I have all the drawings from his classmates. He sits back down and seems a little confused of my reaction. It seems to me that he was expecting to be told off, which I do not believe is the correct way to respond.

After the first double lesson a new pedagogue joins me for Danish and LM. He has a very different approach to the students and seems to be in control. The children are very well-behaved and listen carefully to his instructions. When the children are busy doing their tasks, the pedagogue approaches me and tells me that he believes that the students are meant to be focused to be able to learn all the things they are supposed to. Therefore, he does not like when they goof around and talk a lot. After the lesson he engages the students in conversation about their plans after school, Christmas and so on. It seems that the students know how to behave and be focused when they are expected to with this pedagogue.

We end the day playing a game and watching videos about friendship and what it means to be a good friend.

THURSDAY

The day starts with a music lesson. The students are very loud and unfocused. The teacher tries to engage them by playing the piano and singing a song. When this doesn't work, she suggests that they play a musical game, this is somewhat effective, and the students participate for a while. After a short time, the students don't want to play the game anymore, and the teacher gives up trying to engage them. We take the students back to class and end the lesson early.

After the break I am allowed to conduct the second part of my investigation. The students are very invested in the tasks, and everyone tries to participate. One student asks me why I want to keep their drawings and I tell them that I need them for my assignment, because I would like to show my teacher how skilled they are. Because of this comment, some of the students who didn't spend much time on their drawing, suddenly comes to pick up their drawing and draw on it some more. The last lesson for the day consists of watching a movie with the two other 1st grade classes. Not everyone wants to watch the movie, but they are told that it is not a "can" thing but a "must" thing.

FRIDAY

The day starts with sports. The pedagogue from Wednesday is the PE teacher for this class. There is a former classmate visiting today as well. The girls seem quite agitated because of the presence of the former classmate. In PE the students start with a competition between two teams on an obstacle course. After that they are instructed to run back and forth between the walls. The last part of the lesson, the room is divided in two halves: one with rope skipping, hula hooping and hopscotching. The other half is used for a ball game where almost all the boys wanted to play. I participate with the boys to show them that I can challenge them physically and at the same time be a fun person. The boys are deeply invested in the game and some of them band together against me and the other pedagogue.

After PE and a break, the students get cream buns from the girl visiting and cake from me. One of the students asks me why I brought cake, and I tell them that it is a "see you later" cake because I will not join

them on Monday but in the new year. Three of the students start to cry and everyone seem upset. I reassure them that I'll be back. Some of the students get up to hug me. The pedagogue informs the students that those who are done with LM are allowed to have the next lesson off and play games or whatever they want to do. Those who have not completed their tasks are to finish their work. I work with the students who aren't finished with their work. Everyone finishes their work within the lesson, except one, because she does not want to work with her assignments. The last lesson is "library time". The students have this time to borrow new books and return those from last week. Everything goes quite smoothly except for one student who wants to borrow the same book as one of his classmates. We resolve the situation by finding a different book in the same series.

Appendix 3

