The use of literature to develop communicative skills and intercultural competences

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Introduction

Having worked as a teacher for almost eight years, one of the most interesting parts of my job has been to motivate my students to maximize skills and abilities within their potential. There is nothing more frustrating as a teacher than having the feeling that the planned lesson is good, and that you have put a lot of effort into preparing something to make it interesting for the students, and then seeing the classroom full of demotivated and tired teenagers, not wanting to participate if they can get away with it.

Based on those kinds of experiences (luckily not that many), I have been very interested in trying to look for approaches and activities that can spark motivation, and through that participation from the students. With participation comes the natural development of communicative skills, and if the class is working with an intercultural subject, also the development of intercultural competences. This has resulted in my research question:

How can you motivate learners to develop their communicative skills and intercultural competence by working with a young adult work of literature?

Relevance

I think it will always be relevant to investigate how we as teachers can motivate students. Motivation for learning a new language can be many things, but if you want to be able to communicate your thoughts and opinions your motivation for developing a better vocabulary will be increased, and you will most likely want to participate more. An approach leading to development of communicative skills would then need to come from something the students can relate to, something they can have opinions about, and the students need the opportunities to communicate these. This can be exemplified by these quotes from Cook and Richards: "Students will find it difficult learn a second language in the classroom if they have neither instrumental nor integrative motivation, as is probably often the case in school language teaching…" (Cook, 2016, p. 155), and when talking about the overarching principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) "Provide opportunities for the learners to develop both accuracy and fluency" (Richards, 2006, p. 12-13). From the curriculum we can find the relevance for the above easily. Variants of the word participation is mentioned in many of the specific goals, exemplified by: "The student can participate in longer spontaneous conversations and make sense for his/her viewpoints in English" (Undervisningsministeriet, UVM, 2019, p. 8). Motivation is also mentioned throughout the curriculum, exemplified by: "Language teaching must motivate the students to share, take chances, and test their language in many, and preferably untraditional, situations" (UVM, 2019, p. 92).

Intercultural competence is also a big part of the curriculum. It has its own category in the curriculum, straight translated as "Culture and society", and it contains the following description: "The student can act individually in the meeting of cultures internationally, based on understanding of conditions of culture and society" (UVM, 2019, p. 14).
In Byram et al. they mention that the intercultural dimension in language teaching aims to develop learners to be able to speak, mediate, and engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid stereotyping (Byram et al., 2002, p. 9).

All the above can in my opinion be covered by working with a young adult novel. The students will be able to relate to the characters due to age, their curiosity will hopefully be triggered, and the story will be relevant for them, all leading towards increased motivation, and through that, an increased participation. Koutsompo underline this by saying "Literature in a language classroom provides enough space for the learners to comment, justify, and mirror themselves" (Koutsumpo, 2015, page 74).

Method

I initially did a structured interview, where I asked some of the students what they felt they were missing most from English teaching in order to be able to use English properly in the real world. Some of the answers are written in **appendix 1**.

After the interviews I used my lesson plan from module 3 (milestone 2) about working with a young adult novel. I spent 2 x 3 lessons (lesson 1-3 in week 1, and lesson 4-6 in week 3 of the plan, marked with yellow) with the class, and my colleague, their normal teacher, spent these hours as an extra observant, so that I could teach/observe. My role was as a participatory observer. The lessons that I wasn't in charge of was done by my colleague. The lesson plan is visible in **appendix 2**.

I used my colleague as a non-participatory observer, so that I could be fully engaged in participating in the lessons, and still get results for my research. By being fully participating but still observing as much as possible, I also got to interact a lot more with the students during the activities, and it didn't feel unnatural for the students, due to my role as their head teacher in math (Østergaard, 2018, p. 32-33). It can be difficult to observe your own teaching, so having my colleague as a full observer meant that my focus was on teaching, and thereby getting good observations based on my teaching and the approach that I used. My colleague would also notice the differences in participations from the class, compared to normal - something I wouldn't have the chance to compare to. So, my results would be based on student-participation, my colleague's observations on that, and interviews with the same students as before the observations - did they feel a difference in their motivation. The answers of the post-interviews can also be found in **appendix 1**, and these were structured as well.

Theory

Motivation

Teachers usually deals with groups of students and not individuals. But there must be an understanding of the fact that every student is motivated differently.

Cook uses two main kinds of motivation: 1) The integrative motivation, and 2) Instrumental motivation. The former is when we can identify with the culture of the target language and the people who use it. Instrumental motivation is when you to learn languages unrelated to the native speakers. This could be the motivation to pass exams or be able to get a specific kind of job (Cook, 2016).

Integrative motivation can appear for people who can see themselves live in an English-speaking country one day, and instrumental motivation could be that someone wants to learn English based on the career opportunities that comes with learning the language. If integrative motivation is bigger for a person than the instrumental motivation, it means that the person wants to learn the language for getting on with people more than the importance of jobs or education (Cook, 2016).

A very important note to make, when it comes to motivation, is that motivation and learning are connected both ways. According to Cook, this means that successful learning can also create increased motivation. Even though the best motivation comes from within, the teacher can in some cases help students who can't generate motivation on their own, by creating situations where successful learning takes place, and through that increase their motivation (Cook, 2016).

Opportunities and fluency

One of the main parts of CLT is to provide opportunities for the students to experiment and be tolerant of their errors. With this sort of approach, we can provide the opportunities to develop their accuracy and fluency, and thereby link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together (Richards, 2006).

In my research I have chosen to focus on fluency, and how opportunities can help develop that when speaking about thoughts and opinions.

With this approach, there will naturally be a bigger responsibility on the students themselves. This is due to the teacher's role, which will be more of a facilitator and monitor, rather than the role model for correct speech (Richards, 2006).

Gibbons mentions that a way to work with opportunities, and developing extended ways to talk, could be to go from working with "what"-questions, towards the use of "why"-questions. Students need opportunities to talk in extended ways, so they begin to focus on how they are speaking, and not just on what they are saying. They need to be treated as worthy partners in all conversations, and feel confident to be so (Gibbons, 2015). To keep their development going it is vital to make sure that they have strategies to use. "Stretched" language is one example and is when the students need to use language beyond what they are capable of (Gibbons, 2015). Put into other words, the students need to learn how to use different strategies to tackle new things, but still feel the support, when they stall. As Gibbons writes: "… learn how to think, not simply what to think" (Gibbons, 2015).

It is also important to make sure that the students have good knowledge on the background on whatever we work with, before we expect them to be able to read written texts about it, and before eventually speaking about it. This can be done with pictures, diagrams etc., where we can have open class talks about what we are looking at. This will create opportunities to bring in specific words, needed to understand what is written in the texts, and it will give the students a platform of understanding, before going on to read and later form their own sentences (Gibbons, 2015).

The use of literature

Using literature in the classroom can help students improve their use of the English language. Literature is not just written words, it is feelings, thoughts, fantasy, vision, and emotions. It is language charged with meaning, and this is one of the reasons why language and literature are closely related, and an ally when teaching languages (Koutsumpou, 2015).

Earlier there was no real interest in the content of the literature used in language teaching, it was all about memorizing phrases. But with the more modern approaches of communicative approaches, the use of literature has become a communicative activity, because it brings authenticity. This will help make the class interactive, because it can create conversations/opportunities for speaking about what is read/written. It will also help develop the critical thinking abilities and due to literatures often link to personal experiences, it can give motivation for learning a language, and help them grow. Lastly it will also help with working within cultures and give students a sense of more varied and creative uses of the language. This sums up the three main reasons for using literature: The cultural model, the language model, and the personal growth model (Koutsumpou, 2015).

Using literature in teaching will develop three basic language skills at the same time. Reading, writing, and speaking skills will develop if the teacher prepares activities that gives the students the tools for tackling the text. Teachers need to consider the age group of the students, whether the students will be able to understand or relate to the dilemmas the text/novel might present, and so on, other than obviously taking into consideration the level of the language used in the text/novel (Koutsumpou, 2015).

Pre-reading-, while-reading-, and post-reading activities is a way to organize the work a class could do with a novel, short story or text. The pre-reading activities are used to help the students understand "the world they are about to enter", stimulate their interest in the story, and through that, hopefully motivative them for the reading process. Their vocabulary can also become a helping hand in the pre-reading activities, if

the text/novel uses specific words or use of language that the students haven't seen or heard before. While-reading activities help the students understand characters and the plot better. Working with the storyline as they read, their memory of what happens will be better, and they will be better equipped to participate in classroom discussions. Post-reading activities can be used for interpretations, expressing personal viewpoints, and experience with the text/novel (Koutsumpou, 2015).

Intercultural competence

Teaching languages is not about being able to imitate native speakers, but more about being able to navigate in the multicultural world we live in. We need to develop an intercultural attitude in our students, where they have a willingness to suspend disbelief about cultures and understand that their own beliefs and behaviors isn't necessarily always the correct ones (Byram et al., 2002). Our job is to develop these attitudes and skills, that they can use to acquire information for themselves as well as from the teachers. So, the focus when we teach intercultural dimensions is not the transmission of information about other countries! Therefor we don't need to ask ourselves how much more information can we add about a country and its cultures in our syllabus, but how can we develop the competences which will help learners interact with people from these countries, and cultures (Byram et al., 2002).

We need to present the students with materials with contrasting views, so that they can develop their understanding of concepts for analysing texts, more than just being able to read a text for the information it contains. Students can have prejudices and stereotypes about the things the meet in the materials, and it is our job to challenge these thoughts and the ideas behind them. Not challenge the student, but the ideas they have, so we can make sure that the effect of this is positive (Byram et al. 2002).

Empirical results

Interviews

The pre-interviews showed that the students were divided into two groups when it came to knowing about their own motivation. Four of the eight students answered that they didn't really knew what motivated them in English classes, and the other four came with answers that had the same essence, that they were motivated when they felt they could see reason and purpose in what they were doing (see **appendix 1**). Student #7 gave further explanation by saying, that he felt motivated when he could see a way to use whatever they were working on in the future.

When it came to enjoying the lessons, the group of students were again divided into two groups. One group joined student #7, by saying they enjoyed the lessons when they felt they could use what they were working on, and the other group (5 students) felt they enjoyed the lessons more when they had activities that gave them opportunities to speak together, and not only listen to the teacher talking. This is being exemplified by student #8's statement (see **appendix 1**). Student #8 further mentions that she can get nervous to speak when she isn't prepared, or when she talks in front of the whole class. She also mentions this when it comes to how comfortable she would be talking in English with strangers, about everyday topics. Student #6 and 3 other students answered in a similar style but didn't mention being nervous. Instead, they mentioned that they felt they needed to know the topic in the conversation, in order to feel comfortable. Student #7 and the last two students all answered that they felt completely comfortable speaking in English about everyday topics, no matter if it were with strangers. They all mentioned that they enjoy speaking English, and student #7 mentioned the detail, that he wants to go to the US to study one day, and therefor need English (see **appendix 1**).

Speaking English about "normal" things, as student #5 puts it, was something the seven out of the eight students thought of when asked what they felt would make them learn English better. They all mentioned that they felt there was so many subjects, such as history etc., to learn, and that they thought being able to speak about regular things would help them more. Student #2 was a bit more specific with her example, as she mentioned the use of Clio Online or Gyldendal's portals as being too much for her liking. She felt the use of other medias would help her learn better (see **appendix 1**).

It was difficult for six of the eight students to answer what kinds of activities they liked or disliked, but student #1 could add, that if participation wasn't required, or seemed necessary, it would always be boring. Student #4 was the only student who could mention an activity that he liked, which was when the students could talk and do tasks at the same time, combined with some form of creativity (see **appendix 1**).

The post-interviews all gave a clear indication of increased motivation. This is shown in four very clear answers, made by four different students. *"I was really happy that you told us before we started, that one of the focus points was to learn how to talk about opinions and feelings. That is something I have struggled with before, and it something I feel I can use in real-life."* This was said by student #7, and student #4 added: *"I was motivated by the activities where we were talking with our partner, and then creating the timeline while talking about the book"* (see **appendix 1**).

Student #3 gave a very interesting answer, saying *"It was okay. I was a little disappointed in the beginning. I had expected it to be a lot more fun, because I sensed that it was a special course you had made, but I actually like the book. I could relate to the characters because I am Muslim and can also feel outside sometimes. So, my motivation got better I guess."* The book was popular among all students asked.

When it came to the development of communicative strategies, the students themselves found it beneficial. Seven of eight gave indications that they felt they had developed some strategies that would help them communicate better, and student #5 said this: *"I liked that you taught us to use stretched language. I didn't know that was okay to use, and it makes me feel better when I talk about things where I am not sure about the words"*. Student #1 remembered the mentions of strategies but didn't consciously use them (see **appendix 1**).

One student expressed a development in terms of feeling comfortable when speaking English with others. Student #6 felt that talking about opinions and being understood by a partner gave confidence going forward.

Observations

The non-participatory observer (my colleague) and I both saw a very clear signs of curiosity in the class when I introduced different strategies for speaking more fluently, in situations where you feel limited by your vocabulary. It seemed like the students hadn't been introduced to the strategies in a very clear way before. Especially the strategy, "stretched language", seemed to hook the students. My colleague saw that multiple students, who rarely take part voluntarily in the classroom talks, started to ask questions whether it was okay to use a strategy like that in class. When they understood that it is a strategy that can help develop your communicative skills, they were visibly motivated for the upcoming course.

Other students seemed more interested in the part of the introduction, that included one of the focuses of the course, being able to talk about opinions and feelings. The observer heard two girls whispering to each other: "I am so bad at stuff like that! Finally, we get to practice it".

The observer and I noticed a very focused approach to the first activity, talking about the front cover of the book. Again, not having taught the class in English before, I personally didn't think about this, other than it being nice in terms of participation, but my colleague noted that he had not seen the class like this before.

He overheard a pair of boys speaking, and these two boys are normally not very focused in English. But during the activity with the cover, he heard them use stretched language, and really try to use the strategies. This resulted in both boys participating verbally when we made the classroom discussion. Something that these two would not normally do, according to my colleague.

I noticed that when the class was working with questions about what they thought the book would be about, after hearing me read out the beginning, some of students found it difficult to keep the focus. My colleague on the other hand had quite a different view. He thought that the class was very focused in this activity as well. The reason for my way of looking at it was due to some students joking about stereotypical things, when it came to afro American community, and the culture that goes with that. The joking made it seem unfocused to me, but all groups did answer all questions, and every group participated when we rounded off the activity in the class. When I challenged the students' thoughts in terms of their stereotypical jokes, the class responded in a serious way, and the atmosphere in the class quickly took a turn towards curiosity on how to get to understand the book's important opinions. I did not make a big deal out of their comments, but by having the talk on how and why students from Denmark can still benefit from understanding foreign cultures, we saw a visible change in how the students were working. This will be unfolded more further down, when mentioning the creative activity.

From what we observed during reading- and partner activities the book itself was popular among the students. What both me and my colleague noticed, that was the biggest positive feedback for me, was that the students were good at remembering to use the strategies when they were talking with their partner. My colleague noted: "The explicit focus from the start on strategies, combined with a book that seems to be relevant for them, have made them go up a gear I haven't seen personally in two-three years".
I personally had interactions with students who asked if I had more books available like the one, we were reading. Some students were even visibly touched by the book, as some of the parts of the storyline are quite intense.

The creative part of the course was creating timelines. The whole class wanted to share their timelines with the visual content, and even though there was a big difference in terms of quality, the discussions within the groups were on a new level, according to my observing colleague.
We saw a very serious approach when the students were working on their timelines. "Respect" was a keyword that my colleague had written down, referring to how the students approached visually designing photos of the characters from the book. I sadly didn't have time to collect permission from parents to share the work in this assignment.

Analysis

The interviews showed that some students are aware of their own motivation when it comes to learning English, and others aren't. I would imagine that this is representing the norm in schools around Denmark, but I would like to begin my analysis by focusing on the students who knew about their motivational factors. Student #7 is a very clear example of someone who has a big integrative motivation, due to his dream of studying abroad (Cook, 2016). The students, who knew that they get motivated when they can see reason and purpose in what the class is working with, could in my opinion be interpreted as students with integrative motivation as well. The reason for this interpretation is that these students want to be able to communicate in English, without mentioning that its only due to upcoming exams or tests. This is then backed by what Cook describes as when integrative motivation is bigger for a person than the instrumental motivation, it often means that the person wants to learn the language for getting on with people (Cook, 2016). Does this then mean that the other half of the interviewed students are not integrative motivated, and

therefor instrumentally motivated? I don't think I can answer that based on my interviews or observations, but I would use a point from Cook again, that motivation and learning are connected both ways (Cook, 2016). This viewpoint suggests that motivation at least can be created if successful learning take place, and based on the post-interviews and the observations, motivation looks to have been created. An example of this point was my colleague's observation that the class seemed very motivated and focused after the introduction to the strategies. This underlines that the teacher in some cases can help students who can't generate motivation on their own, by creating situations where successful learning takes place, and through that increase their motivation (Cook, 2016). In my course the successful learning came with the clear objective in using strategies, but also knowing the class well enough to find a novel that would suit them, and would challenge them in the right way, combined with lots of opportunities to use the strategies in focus.

Motivation is needed to develop communicative skills when learning a new language. That would make sense to most people. But one thing is to be motivated to learn, another thing is to have the opportunity to do so. A big takeaway from my research has been how much opportunities to develop communicative skills (in my essay mostly mentioned with the word "strategies") affect motivation.
Student #5 said in the post-interview: "I liked that you taught us to use stretched language. I didn't know that was okay to use, and it makes me feel better when I talk about things where I am not sure about the words." And when we combine that with one of the observations made, where two girls were talking: "I am so bad at stuff like that! Finally, we get to practice it", we can see that there definitely was a motivation going forward using this newly learned strategy. Another reason behind using the strategies was to further develop the fluency, a communicative skill, when the students are speaking. When we want to achieve something like that, we must remember that the students are not learning what to say or think, but more how to approach the situation and the communication along with it (Gibbons, 2015).

As some of the students mentioned, there was a motivation coming from practising speaking about regular stuff, in this course meaning opinions, feelings and thoughts. Student #6 uses the word confidence: "Yes, I think so. After I told my partner about my opinion on the gang in the book, and she understood me, I got some confidence in talking a bit more. I also liked the strategy about using other words to try and explain things when I don't know the right words." Confidence, or maybe feeling safe in a class where errors are tolerated, is one of the things Richards mentions. A main part of CLT is to provide opportunities for the students to experiment and be tolerant of their errors. With this sort of approach, we can provide the opportunities to develop their fluency, and thereby link the different skills such as speaking, reading, and listening together (Richards, 2006). When we do this, there will naturally be a bigger responsibility on the students themselves. This is due to the teacher's role, which will be more of a facilitator and monitor, rather than the role model for correct speech (Richards, 2006). I felt this personally, since I didn't spend time correcting the communication I heard, but spend more time facilitating the discussions, backing the good thought-processes, and highlighting the creative and thoughtful inputs in classroom talks.

So, based on this we can almost create a circle of connection between opportunities, strategies, and motivation:

Another thing that I will mention regarding this circle is what student #1 mentions: "I always know that it will be a boring lesson, if I don't have to participate, and can get away with just sitting in the corner and not speaking." When participation is not required it will affect motivation and the outcome of the learning from activities (Gibbons, 2015). That's why I was so happy with the level of participation. It is a proof of at least either some level of learning or at least an increased motivation compared to prior the course.

The part about being confident and safe in the class environment to express yourself is good segway towards developing intercultural competences in the classroom. The Danish curriculum is full of specific goals that require the teachers to teach the students competences that they can use in the globalized world. So, in order to develop these competences, the link between motivation, opportunities and strategies will also make its mark here. According to Byram et al., we need to make the students able to navigate in a multicultural world. This will have to come through developing their attitudes, and their willingness to suspend disbelief and stereotypical thinking (Byram et al., 2002). Based on my observations I would like to think, that if we can develop the classroom culture, where the students participate, feel comfortable doing so, and having the strategies to challenge themselves with subjects not yet known to them, we enhance the chances of developing good intercultural competences. We as teachers don't need to focus too much on sharing information about different countries and their cultures, as much as we need to focus on teaching the students how to interact with people from these countries/cultures, and collect relevant information by themselves (Byram et al., 2002).

The development of intercultural competences can look different through different eyes. What I first thought looked like students not taking things seriously, was actually a sign of the first step when it comes to developing these competences. Once we are able to speak about other cultures, and what might include some stereotypical views, then it will give us the opportunity to challenge these views and develop the competences to have a more nuanced view on things. It is important that we don't challenge the student personally, but instead the ideas/thoughts that they share (Byram et al., 2002). It will be natural for students to have some sort of stereotypical thinking when they first start to work with a new culture, because quite simply, its new to them. They have no prior knowledge. The development of intercultural competences should then move them towards keywords like respect, curiosity, and understanding when they face new cultures in the future.

The timelines that the students created were a good sign of these competences being developed. My colleague's note of the keyword "respect" showed me that understanding of not wanting to create a stereotypical visual display of the characters in the book had been developed, and that the students wanted to make a serious visual contribution to how they thought the characters would look. They showed me, that some of them went from having an ironic approach, to actually understanding that maybe their own beliefs and behaviours were not necessarily the right one to begin with (Byram et al., 2002).

So, in order for us to develop the competences, we need to have developed the communicative skills to be able to have respectful interactions with new cultures, whether if its through conversations or through reading, that we then discuss. We need to present the students with different materials with contrasting views, so that the development of analysing texts makes them able to read text for the information that they contain (Byram et al., 2002). This is where the novel we worked come in.

The books content helped create talks and discussions that could help develop the intercultural competences due to the authenticity of the content. Literature can bring authenticity and through that it was possible to create activities that were interactive. Group- and class conversations, again creating opportunities, now including the development of both communicative skills, using strategies towards fluency, and

intercultural skills through using the conversations to express feelings, thought, and opinions about the content of the book. According to Koutsumpou, having conversations of these sorts and developing critical thinking, combined with the fact that literature often link to personal experiences, we create motivation for learning and inspire growth for the students (Koutsumpou, 2015).

We noticed that the students were touched by the story of the novel, exemplified by student #3 (see **appendix 1**). This is good proof that literature is emotions (Koutsumpou, 2015). It contains feelings, and these feelings were the centre of many of the conversations in the groups. It was a joy to see the concentration of these talks, and especially experiencing the full circle of the research question → Students using literature as a common starting point, and then individually and collectively developing an understanding of how a communicative strategy can create freedom to express feelings and opinions about content of cultural character.

The fact that the students could relate to the novel was probably also a big key factor in terms of motivations for the activities. Even though some of the students mentioned that they like group-activities, the fact that they liked the novel must have played a part as well. The pre-reading activities gave the students the knowledge needed to understand new words, and we noted that these words were used multiple times. The use of pictures and short clips in my introduction gave the students opportunities to get familiar with the kind of language they were going to work with in the course (Gibbons, 2015). It stimulated their interest for the novel, and due to our introduction, I was rarely asked to help translate. I often saw/heard students independently searching online for meaning when they were unable to understand words. But it happened as a curiosity from the partnership, as the wanted to work with the task they were given. This combined with the high level of participation clearly affected their abilities to remember the storyline as well (Koutsumpou, 2015).

The post-reading activities have not taken place yet, since my colleague and the class has not yet reached that point in the course, but I would imagine, based on what I have seen and heard so far, that the participation level will be very high. The skills and competences that I have seen being developed, combined with the very authentic content of the novel, indicate that the overall motivation for this course should be intact.

To round of off the analysis it could be mentioned that my normal role in this class potentially could have been a source of error when it comes to the results of the research. Being their normal head teacher, my relationship with this class is strong, and even though I don't teach them English normally, our relationship could still have affected the results, for example in the interviews. I tried to underline the importance of honesty from the students in the interviews, but I know that these students also want me to feel good and be happy about what they say. So, all the positive results are obviously positive, but I am not sure if the results are as positive as they seem. Children often want to please their teachers (Cameron, 2001), and this could be one of those situations. I don't feel the results are worthless due to this, but it is still something to be vary of.

If a teacher knows the students, then he/she can help students based on a better understanding of what they need and when. This means knowing what the student need in terms of support here and now, but still letting them develop without supporting too much (Cameron, 2001). So, obviously the relationship between students and the teacher is important, and goes hand in hand with motivation, due to some of the points from earlier in the analysis.

Reflection

The first thing I want to take from my research is, that I want to remember the importance of giving clear objectives. In this course the clear objective on strategies, why these were important, and that they could do for the students, created a very visible motivation. Motivation is not just about subjects or interest; it can also be something as simple as learning a strategy, as long as it makes sense.
Motivation is literally bound to everything when it comes to learning a new language, but I especially noted the part from Cook, where it's said that successful learning can help motivation. The reason this caught my eyes is that many texts about motivation states, that motivation must come from within to be of the best kind. Personally, I don't think students can have integrative or instrumental motivation constantly, so to be aware of how I can support the students in potentially creating a motivation by giving them success in their learning, inspires me. This opens the door to in situations where the students seem disengaged.

My second takeaway from the essay is, that working with a novel can hold so much more than "just" reading. In the process of working with the novel we touched so many different competences, and these can be developed through activities along the way. Both communicative skills and intercultural competences. A novel can be chosen based on knowledge of the group of students, with an important thing being whether they can relate to the characters or have the abilities to understand the potential differences in background.

The third thing is maybe not the right thing to write in an essay during the education to become a teacher, when the following will be so obvious, but the importance of having a high-level of enthusiasm, and how that rub off on the students is something I will keep reminding myself of. I have never thought about it when teaching math, but I know I bring it in math, because my students tell me I do. Maybe its because I am so comfortable in the subject of math. Being new in teaching English, I will definitely take that positive note with me, how much the students participated partially due to my own enthusiasm for the course. I really felt I brought energy, excitement etc., and maybe my relationship with the class rubbed off as well. So, in the future, if the students seem uninspired, then maybe I am not really creating an environment that spark anything.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

The interviews were structured, so every student got the same questions. They were talking to me one-on-one, and I talked with 8 students in total. All questions are listed below, and with them some of the answers. I have included answers that were made by more than one student, or answers that I found particularly interesting for my essay. Some of the answers are adjusted a bit so they make sense in English, but I have tried to use the student's own language, if they answered in Danish.

Pre-interviews

1) Do you know what motivates you in English classes?
   Student #3: *"Not really. But I can always feel when I am and when I am not."*
   Student #7: *"I get motivated when I can see a reason for what we are doing. You know, when you think you can use it in the future."*

2) When do you enjoy the lessons the most?
   Student #7: *"Like before, when I can see that I can use it."*
   Student #8: *"When we don't just listen to the teacher talking but do activities where we get to talk in smaller groups. I can get nervous when I talk in front of the whole class, and I don't have a paper with notes or something."*

3) Are there specific activities you like or dislike more than others, and if so, which?
   Student #1: *"I always know that it will be a boring lesson, if I don't have to participate, and can get away with just sitting in the corner and not speaking."*
   Student #4: *"I really like when I can talk and do tasks at the same time. Uh, and also when we can be creative - you know, when the teacher doesn't have ONE answer."*

4) Would you feel comfortable speaking in English about everyday stuff with someone you don't know?
   Student #8: *"When I can prepare my answers, but not just random talks!"*
   Student #6: *"Yeah, I think so. But only if it is about something I know of."*
   Student #7: *"Yes. I like to speak English, but sometimes I use wrong words at the wrong time. But I still like it, because I want to study in the USA one day, so I need English."*

5) Is there something you feel would make you learn English better?
   Student #5: *"If we could learn ways to talk about normal things. We learn a lot about history, and facts, but I am not sure I could talk about how I feel, and things like that."*
   Student #2: *"If all we read is not from Clio or Gyldendal. I hate the portals."*

Post-interviews

1) Did you feel an increase in your motivation before and during the lessons? If yes, why do you think that was?
   Student #7: *"I was really happy that you told us before we started, that one of the focus points was to learn how to talk about opinions and feelings. That is something I have struggled with before, and it something I feel I can use in real-life."*

Student 8#: *"I don't think I was in the beginning, but when we got to do so much in groups, I liked it a lot!".*

2) Did you feel more/less motivated during specific activities?
   Student #2: *"I got motivated by the fact, that we didn't use portals, and that we had to create things ourselves."*
   Student #4: *"I was motivated by the activities where we were talking with our partner, and then creating the timeline while talking about the book."*
   Student #3: *"It was okay. I was a little disappointed in the beginning. I had expected it to be a lot more fun, because I sensed that it was a special course you had made, but I actually like the book. I can relate to the characters because I am Muslim and can also feel outside sometimes. So, my motivation got better I guess."*

3) After the course, do you feel you have learned any new strategies for speaking, that you feel will help you in the future? If so, which?
   Student #5: *"I liked that you taught us to use stretched language. I didn't know that was okay to use, and it makes me feel better when I talk about things where I am not sure about the words."*
   Student #1: *"I remember you told us about different strategies, but I didn't really think about them when we were talking in class."*

4) Do you feel more comfortable about the idea of talking to others in English than you did before? If so, why?
   Student #6: *"Yes, I think so. After I told my partner about my opinion on the gang in the book, and she understood me, I got some confidence in talking a bit more. I also liked the strategy about using other words to try and explain things when I don't know the right words."*

Appendix 2

Lesson plan:

This lesson plan was developed during milestone 2 for module 3:

I have made my plan based on a pre-, while-, and post task-structure. I have made the lessons for an 8th grade class, with 3 lessons per week, a double lesson and a single. Therefor the lesson plan will be shown in weeks, and not lessons only. Lesson 1-2 (and 4-5) are in extension of each other, and lesson 3 is a separate lesson!

My idea would be to use this plan as part of bigger subject about "Black lives matter". Before the lessons below I would work with a theme I would call "Black history month", inspired by the annual events in February in America. This would give the students some knowledge about historical events, facts about the culture in focus, and potentially enhance their vocabulary a bit before starting the process of reading the novel. After that week 1-3 would be done, which would focus on pre- and while-activities, including reading in the class. After Week 3 there would be reading individually at home as homework for two weeks, where the class would work with other activities as part of the focus on "Black lives matter". After those two weeks week number 4 from the plan would be held. This week contain post-activities. I have decided to do this, so the students have a realistic timeframe to read the book, and I would limit stress.
If I had students who were struggling to read during the lessons where we read at the school, I would supply them with audio books for the two weeks at home, and potentially at the school as well, depending on the severity of their reading difficulties.

Pre: Week 1

Content	Activities	Goals from the curriculum	Teacher role, and how the students are working
Lesson 1: 1) Introduction to the novel 2) Pre-reading activity joint in the class (Shadow reading) 3) The teacher reads out loud	1) Classroom talk: Building a bridge from the subject of "Black lives matter" to the novel. Introducing the plan for the 4-week plan (15 min) **+ introducing focus on developing strategies for speaking more fluently.** 2) The class looks at the cover of the book and will together predict what they think the book is about, and why (15 min). 3) The teacher reads out the first three pages. Any questions regarding words or phrases will be talked about in the classroom. (15 min).	The student can participate in unprepared conversations. The student can understand varieties of English from different authentic situations.	1) The teacher manages the class talk and introduction, tries to make as many as possible participate in the talk. 2) The teacher manages the class talk, tries to make as many as possible participate in the talk. The students are participating by joining the conversation, and putting words to their predictions. 3) The teacher is the narrator and will act as a helper afterwards for students with questions, so all students feel ready to start reading the book.
Lesson 2: 1) Pre-reading activity with a partner 2) Class-talk 3) Reading to a partner (Shadow reading), including while-reading activity	1) After the teacher is done reading, the students will partner up with the student next to them and answer some questions together. The questions are questions like: "After hearing the first three pages, what do you think the book is about now?", "Is your idea about the plot of the book changed after hearing the first three pages?". So, the questions are made to make the students talk about ideas and thoughts, based on listening (15 min). 2) The students will quickly share their answers with the class (5-10 min). 3) For the last part of the lesson the students will again partner up, and read out loud to their partner, switching halfway through a page. During their reading they must create a family tree for Starr. This will make the students get a visual image of the family constellation, with all the new characters. They must include friends to Starr as "leaves" on Starr, where family is branches. They can also add pictures online of people that they will imagine look like the characters in the book. If the pairs don't finish chapter 1, they must read that at home before lesson 3.	The student can give examples on differences and similarities between culture and society from their own country and an English-speaking country. The student can exchange simple and prepared information about facts. The student can understand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	1) The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help expressing specific things. The students work in pairs. 2) The teacher manages the class talk and makes sure everybody has a change of sharing. 3) The teacher acts as a helper again, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help expressing specific things. The students work in pairs.
Lesson 3:	The students will again read out loud to each other. This lesson will be about chapter 2-3.	The student can understand main viewpoints in authentic texts.	The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help

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Content	Activities	Goals from the curriculum	Teacher role, and how the students are working
Reading to a partner (Shadow reading), including while-reading activity	The reason why I planned this is due to the importance of the events in the two chapters. The while-reading activity will be to write a joint summary of the two chapters, as they read the text. So, together they will decide to stop, and add to the summary. If they for some reason don't finish the chapters, they must read the rest at home, and finish the summary individually from where they reached together.	The student has knowledge about reading aids.	expressing specific things. The students work in pairs.

While: Week 2-3

Content	Activities	Goals from the curriculum	Teacher role, and how the students are working
Lesson 1: Individual reading	These 45 minutes are for the students to focus on reading. It will give the teacher the opportunity to walk around and help the students that might need it. Because the book is so long, I find it only fair that they have a bit of time at school to read as many pages as possible.	The student can understand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if students struggle with reading, understanding, or with concentration.
Lesson 2: Individual reading, including while-reading activity	After a short 10 min break, where the students can get some air after reading, they will keep reading, but starting a creation of a timeline, of what they have read so far. The students can add what they find important for the story.	The student can understand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if students struggle with reading, understanding, or with concentration.
Lesson 3: Individual reading, including while-reading activity with a partner	In this singe lesson, the students will read individually, but work on their individual timeline with the partner next to them. This is to create talks about what they put on their timeline, and why.	The student can understand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if students struggle with reading, understanding, or with concentration.
Lesson 4: While-reading activity with a partner	In the beginning of this new week, the students will be advised to get to chapter 12 during the week, in order for them to not have too much reading to do in the two "mid-weeks" before the final 3 lessons. The first activity the students will be doing this week, is to begin a visual process on their timeline. They must create images that they think fit what they have put on the timeline. They can draw, or find pictures online, that they think to show the		The teacher acts as a helper again, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help expressing specific things. The students work in pairs.

	situations they have put on their time-lines. They will again be working with their partner.		
Lesson 5: Reading to a partner, in-cluding while-reading activity	In the final lesson of the day, they will get the opportunity to read as much as possi-ble, while still adding to their timelines. They will be reminded, that they should strive towards reaching chapter 12 before the week ends.	The student can under-stand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	The teacher acts as a helper again, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help expressing specific things. The students work in pairs.
Lesson 6: Individual reading	In this single lesson, the students can simply read individually. They can also choose to read out loud to each other. During the following two weeks, the mid-weeks, the students have to finish the book at home, and work on their time-lines.	The student can under-stand main viewpoints in authentic texts. The student has knowledge about reading aids.	The teacher acts as a helper, who can help if students strug-gle with reading, understand-ing, or with concentration.

Post: Week 4

Content	Activities	Goals from the curriculum	Teacher role, and how the students are working
Lesson 1: Post-reading activity with a partner	The class have now read the book, and they have this lesson to put the final touches on their timeline, that by now could be called a story map as well, due to the pictures/drawings.	The student can produce multimodal texts in English. .	The teacher acts as a helper again, who can help if the pairs hit a block, or if students need help expressing specific things. The students work in pairs.
Lesson 2: Post-reading activity joint with the whole class.	In this lesson, and in the final one, the stu-dents will present their timelines/story maps, and explain what they have added, and why. They will also put words on why they have chosen the pictures/drawings they have.	The student can present on the basis of read infor-mation.	The teacher manages the presentations, and helps the student presenting, if they struggle.
Lesson 3: 1) Post-reading activity joint with the whole class. 2) Short round-up	1) The final students will present their timelines/story maps because it isn't real-istic that everyone can present in one les-son. 2) After hearing the final presentations, the teacher will round off the work pro-cess with the book.	The student can present on the basis of read infor-mation.	1) The teacher manages the presentations, and helps the student presenting, if they struggle. 2) The teacher manages a round-up, and make sure that the students have the oppor-tunity to comment on the les-sons.

Summary of the novel

Very shortly put the book is about a young Afro-American girl, Starr Carter, who lives in an area called Gar-den Heights. She is the daughter of father (Maverick) who was previously involved with the local gang King Lords but now the owner of the family grocery store, and a mother (Lisa) who is a nurse. She has an older

brother Seven, with who she has the same father, but not mother, and Starr's younger brother is called Sekani.

The book starts out at a party in the neighborhood of Garden Heights, which is predominantly an area with Afro-American people. Starr meets an old friend, Khalil, at the party, that she hasn't spoken to for a long time. Gunshots interrupt the party, and Starr flees with Khalil. On their way home they get pulled over by the police, and even though Starr has a suspicion that Khalil is involved in the gang community, due to his appearance, she is mostly worried due to the way white policemen treat young black people. During the interaction, the policeman (#115) shoots Khalil, and this creates the topic of the book: Justice for black people, civil rights, and police brutality.

Starr faces the huge dilemma of choosing between fighting for justice for her friend or hide away from the cynical spotlight that ultimately can lead to harm to her family. Throughout the book we also hear references to a past event, where Starr's friend Natasha gets killed by gunshots in a gang shooting, in which she wasn't a part of.

News about that the police won't prosecute #115 eventually makes Starr decide, that she wants to fight for justice for Khalil's death. With the help of an activist, April, Starr ends up doing an interview where she opens up about Khalil selling drugs for King Lords, and by telling this she put heat on herself and her family. Despite this, she testifies in court, but the court still decides not to indict #115. Starr vows to continue the fight for justice, not just for Khalil but for all black people killed by the police.