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Teacher–Student Relationships and L2 Motivation

Abstract

Positive relationships with teachers are important for students' L2 motivation. However, little is known about how interpersonal interactions stimulate motivated behavior. Drawing on studies of teacher–student relationships, theories from positive psychology, and the psychology of unconscious self-regulation, this case study examines moments of teacher–student interaction and explores influences on students' engagement and motivation. Observations ($N=15$) were carried out in two classrooms, and interviews with the focal teacher of this study and her students were conducted. Data were analyzed using a grounded theory ethnography approach. Findings indicate that moments of close personal contact and their influences may differ in emerging and mature teacher–student relationships. While in emerging relationships moments of contact can have immediate influences on engagement and motivation, in mature relationships influences on learning behavior may be less pronounced and involve unconscious motivational processes. The study's methodological limitations are discussed and proposals are made for future ethnographic and experimental work.

Keywords: L2 motivation; engagement; teacher–student relationships; contact; positivity resonance; unconscious motivation

Teacher–student relationships and educational outcomes

People have a fundamental psychological need to feel connected to others, and the desire to form social bonds is among the most powerful of all human motives (Baumeister & Lery,

1995). Often, engagement in activities that are not intrinsically motivating will take place because the person believes such actions to be expected or anticipated by someone with whom they experience, or want to experience an attachment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In educational contexts, the need for relatedness—the feeling of being connected to others—can function as a powerful motivational force for acting in ways that favor interpersonal relationships (e.g., Walton et al., 2012). When needs for relatedness are satisfied, students become better equipped to meet the cognitive and affective demands of school (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

Positive relationships with teachers have beneficial effects on educational outcomes (Wubbels et al., 2016), and correlations between positive teacher–student relationships and academic competence and achievement are commonly found (e.g., Gest et al., 2005; Valiente et al., 2008; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). Positive relationships with teachers can offer support to students dealing with the demands of school and stimulate positive learning behaviors (Roorda, Koomen, & Spilt, 2011). In trusting teacher–student relationships students are more generally motivated to learn (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Wentzel, 1999, 2009) and show greater engagement during lessons (Claessens et al., 2016; Skinner, Wellborn, & Cornell, 1990; White, 2013). Importantly, longitudinal research shows that students who experience a sense of connectedness with a teacher also maintain motivation over time (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

Although studies that specifically investigate links between teacher–student relationships and educational outcomes are not found in SLA, findings indicate that the teacher–student relationship is likely to have an important influence on students’ motivation as well in language learning. For example, Joe, Hiver, and Al-Hoorie (2017) show how teachers’ emotional and academic support of students and the teacher’s engendering of mutual respect within the classroom, impact strongly on students’ motivation and willingness to

communicate. In research on language teacher strategies (e.g., Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012), certain strategies are found to be important across contexts, among them the teacher's positive attitude and behavior, the teacher's promotion of students' self-confidence, and the teacher's ability to develop and maintain good relationships (Lamb, 2017). Tellingly, in studies examining the effects of strategies on students' motivation (e.g., Moskovsky et al., 2012), teacher behavior has emerged as the most important factor. In his state-of-the-art review of the motivational dimension of language teaching, Lamb (2017) concludes that successful interpersonal communication and positive teacher–student relationships play a central role in accounting for students' motivation.

Teacher–student relationships and classroom interaction

Given the importance of positive relationships with teachers for students' learning outcomes, classroom-based research into teacher–student relationships is surprisingly rare. Taking a different approach from studies examining relationships and achievement-related outcomes at the group-level, work by researchers at Utrecht University has focused on the more immediate effects of positive relationships. In particular, this research has examined how teacher–student relationships are constructed in classroom interaction and how teacher–student interactions affect students' situated learning behaviors (Claessens et al., 2016; (Korthagen, Attema–Noordewier, & Zwart, 2014). Best understood as “the generalized interpersonal meaning students and teachers attach to their interactions with each other,” the teacher–student relationship is an abstract construct (Wubbels et al., 2012, p.11). Since all forms of human relationship are nested in time and develop in real-time interactions, the teacher–student relationship can be regarded as an accumulation of multitudes of momentary connections (Korthagen et al., 2014).

In these connections, or “moments of contact,” a process of co-adaptation occurs where participants “influence each other's cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral

responses” (Korthagen et al., 2014, p. 22). In a contact moment, no matter how fleeting it might be, the teacher and student become present to one another, and open and willing for a connection to take place. While moments of contact are highly idiosyncratic, and perceptions of the quality and valence of the interaction highly subjective, Korthagen and colleagues found that in moments of contact, teachers detect a response in the student and experience a sense of connecting. Teachers report that such connectedness is nearly always mediated by non-verbal behaviors such as eye contact, a relaxed posture, and expressions of pleasure.

While research on contact is in its infancy and it is clear that contact moments occur on a continuum of more superficial to more intense, Korthagen and colleagues contend that irrespective of quality, in a contact moment teachers and students share an awareness of “thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing” (p. 30). For the teacher, contact moments involve heightened perceptions of empathy (responsiveness, emotional availability, and intent to understand), and the experience of acting towards the student in a self-authentic manner. In this sense, contact moments share similarities with Fredrickson’s (2013) notion of micro-moments of positivity resonance. In her theorizing of positive emotions, she argues that in moments of potent emotion, the individual becomes invested in another person’s well-being. This generates a positive emotional energy that, for the duration of the momentary connection, is self-sustaining. Similar to a contact moment, in a micro-moment of positivity resonance, an embodied sense of rapport is produced through nonverbal gestures, the connection having a physical dimension that emerges through touch, smiles, eye-contact, shared voice, and similar body-movement patternings (Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson, 2012).

Contact moments and learning behaviors

Moments of contact have an important motivational function. In addition to constituting the building blocks of higher-level relational structures that more generally affect students’

attitudes and motivation (Wubbels et al., 2012, 2014), they also influence students' situated learning behaviors. Engagement can be understood as the student's "active, goal-directed, flexible, constructive, persistent, focused interactions with the social and physical environments" (Furrer & Skinner, 2003, p. 148). Schoolwork engagement involves experiences of energy, perceptions that activities are meaningful and inspiring, and a sense of being focused and involved (Salmela-Aro et al., 2016). Dynamic and highly sensitive to contextual changes (Shernoff et al., 2016), engagement creates the optimal condition for learning. It enhances long- and short-term academic achievement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; King, 2015) and is positively influenced by teacher-relatedness (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; King, 2015).

Korthagen and colleagues (2014) provide valuable insights into the influences of contact on students' situated learning behaviors. Analyses of video-recordings reveal that, in almost all cases, moments of contact have a positive and often immediate influence on a student's engagement. For example, a student might immediately pick up a pen and start writing, or return to a task and work maintaining a high tempo. In interviews, teachers talk about how contact can have noticeably beneficial effects on students' learning. These include the generation of cognitive insights (e.g., the student demonstrating understanding), positive emotions (e.g., the student demonstrating pleasure or calmness), and increased engagement (e.g., the student expressing joy or enthusiasm).

Across longer timescales, perceptions about the teacher-student relationship generated in an interpersonal encounter influence subsequent interactions and thus the relationship's continuing trajectory (Claessens et al., 2016). Analogous to Fredrickson's (2013) conception of how momentary experiences of positive emotions have the continuing effect of broadening cognition and building resources, in the teacher-student relationship the positive emotion arising in a momentary experience of contact can be understood as generating unconscious

incentives that shape subsequent behaviors. Over time, the student's perception of the relationship to the teacher becomes of increasing importance in influencing situated perceptions of moment-to-moment interactions (Claessens et al., 2016). In this way, mental representations of the relationship function as an initial condition for each new interaction.

To appreciate the influence of the teacher–student relationship on a moment of contact, and how a contact moment influences the student's situated learning behavior, account needs to be taken of unconscious goal pursuit. Not all behaviors or motivations are the product of intentionality. In mainstream psychology there is currently wide acceptance that the conscious, agentic self may play less of a role in the production of human behavior and in guiding higher-order mental processes than previously assumed (Bargh, Gollwitzer, & Oettingen, 2010). Research on relational schemas—the mental representations that a person holds of a relationship partner—shows that, when a relationship representation is activated, it can influence a person's perceptions and behaviors in ways of which the individual is unaware and which are unintended (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003).

Because interpersonal goals are component features of relationship representations, when a representation of a relationship is activated, so too are the relational goals attaching to it. As Fitzsimons and Bargh (2003) have demonstrated, simply being reminded of a person with whom one has a close personal relationship—for example a best friend—can have the effect of automatically evoking goals and motivations specific to that relationship. In the immediate situation, these goals unconsciously guide behavior.

While a representation of a relationship can arise without the other person being physically present (in a close relationship it is enough if we just think of a relation partner), the actual presence of the other individual will be the strongest possible prime for activation of the representation and the unconscious pursuit of relationship goals. In a learning context, Walton and colleagues (2012) examined the effects on achievement motivation of primes

cueing social connectedness. They found that the triggering of a relational representation impacted on motivation, task persistence, and the accessibility of relationship-relevant goals. Commenting on these findings, these authors argue that social relationships are an important source of self-identity, that motivation is highly sensitive to social relationships, and that small and even trivial cues can bring about large situational shifts in a person's motivated behavior.

Study and purpose

If positive relationships with teachers are important for students' school motivation and learning outcomes generally, in language learning the teacher–student relationship has even greater importance. This is because in classroom settings successful learning requires interpersonal communication (Van Lier, 2013). While in the L2 classroom motivation emerges in the “coming together and intense mutual engagement from moment to moment of teacher and learners” (Lamb, 2017, p. xxx), little is known about how interpersonal interactions stimulate engagement, or the longer-term influences of teacher–student relationships on students' motivation. In research in general education, moments of contact are theorized as constituting the building blocks from which teacher–student relationships are constructed, and are shown to have immediate influences on students' emotions and behavioral orientations (Claessens et al., 2016; Korthagen et al., 2014). Coupling this research with work on positivity resonance (Fredrickson, 2013) and unconscious motivation (Bargh et al., 2010), areas of scholarship at the cutting edge of language learning psychology (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Gregersen, 2016; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016), the purpose of this ethnographic case study is to examine moments of teacher–student contact and the influences on students' engagement and motivation.

The study has two research objectives. In response to Barcelos and Coelho's (2016) call for research in applied linguistics investigating positivity in language learning and teaching

and for studies that address the question “what micro-moments of positivity resonance are there in the language classroom?” (p. 140), the first is to examine the characteristics of momentary connections between teacher and student. Because moments of contact are nested within higher-level teacher–student relationships and are likely to differ as a function of relationship quality (Wubbels et al., 2016), an additional purpose is to consider the nature of contact moments in relationships of differing duration. The second objective seeks an understanding of the influences of moments of contact on engagement and motivation and is inspired by the research question informing the investigations by Korthagen and colleagues (2014): “how does good teacher–student contact influence the student?” (p. 24). Here, the ambition is to develop theoretically-informed insights. For these purposes, two research questions were formulated:

- RQ 1. What is characteristic for moments of contact in emerging and mature teacher–student relationships?
- RQ 2. What influences can moments of contact have on students’ engagement and motivation?

Methodology

The study is part of a larger, multiple case study. In multiple case study projects, individual cases are not generally organized around the research question informing the overall project. Rather, they tend to have research questions of their own (Stake, 2006). In the main project, the purpose was to investigate effective motivational practice in English teaching in Sweden. The methodology for the main project is presented first, followed by the methodology for the current study.

Motivational Teaching in Sweden

In Sweden, students have extensive encounters with English outside the classroom. The major motivational challenge facing teachers is therefore to create goal-directed learning

opportunities that connect with students' out-of-school experiences (Henry, Korp, Sundqvist & Thorsen, in press; Ushioda, 2013). With the purpose of investigating effective motivational practice "through a small lens" (Ushioda, 2016), ethnographic research was carried out in the classrooms of 16 English teachers.

Recruitment

An electronic questionnaire focusing on motivational practices and teachers' awareness of students' out-of-school English encounters was sent to 252 teachers of English in grades 6–9 (students aged 12–16) at 64 randomly selected secondary schools in two regions of western Sweden. An email containing information about the project and a link to the questionnaire was sent to the designated address of every English teacher at the each school. The questionnaire included two multi-item, 5-grade Likert scales. One (Awareness, 4 items, α .78) measured teachers' awareness of students' out-of-school encounters with English (sample statement: "*I believe I know the different forms of English my students are encountering outside school*"). The other (Motivational Practices, 4 items, α .73) assessed the use of activities connecting school and free-time English encounters (sample statement: "*I give my students rich opportunities to use the English they have learnt outside school when working in the classroom*"). An item measuring teachers' perceptions of students' classroom motivation was also included (statement: "*My general experience is that students in my classes are motivated;*" 4 response options: *most of my lessons*–*hardly any of my lessons*). The questionnaire additionally contained an open question "*Describe an activity or task that you have carried out with your pupils which you experience has motivated them.*" Following a series of reminders, completed questionnaires were received from 112 teachers (response rate: 44%).

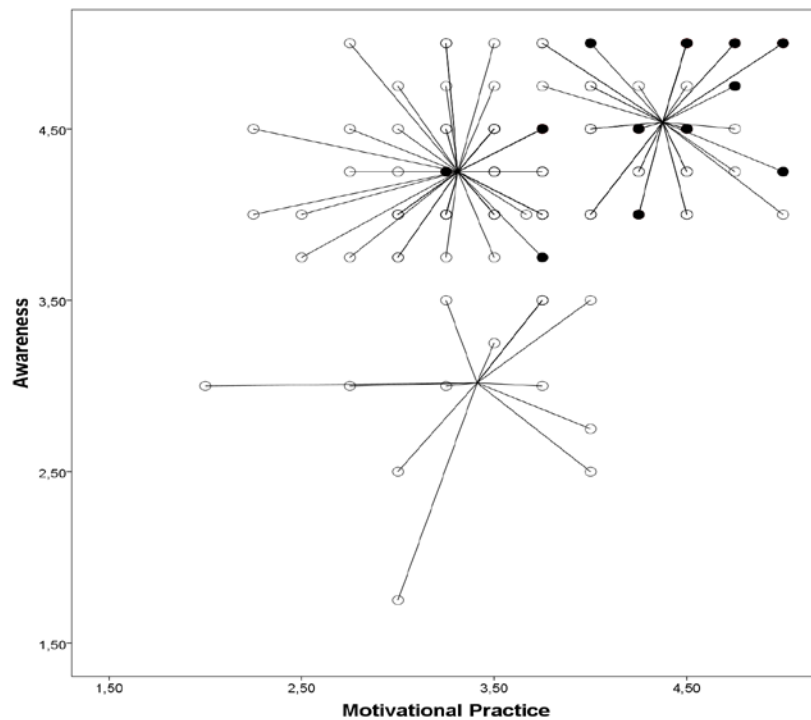
In a *first step*, scores on the Awareness and Motivational Practices scales were used as variables in a K-means cluster analysis. Three meaningful clusters were identified (Figure 1).

Concurrently, a content analysis of the open question was jointly conducted by the authors and the two other members of the research team (cf. Henry, Korp, Sundqvist & Thorsen, in press). Activity descriptions were coded for motivational properties and categorized as ‘low,’ ‘medium,’ or ‘high.’ In each case, discussions continued until a consensus on motivational quality was reached. In a *second step*, teachers with a successful motivation practice were identified. These were teachers in cluster 1 (scoring high on Awareness and Motivational Practices), who scored ‘high’ on the open question and who reported students to be motivated in a majority of lessons. In a *third step*, invitations to participate were sent to these teachers. Not all were willing or able to take part and nine teachers were recruited in this way. Because motivational practice can differ widely, it was decided a priori to investigate the practice of 16 teachers. Additional recruitment was therefore necessary. In a *fourth step*, contact was made with teachers from cluster 2 who scored ‘high’ on the open question and reported having motivated students in a majority of lessons. This resulted in the additional recruitment of three teachers. Four teachers were recruited on recommendations of teachers previously recruited and through personal contacts. None of these teachers taught at schools included in the sample. Finally, in a *fifth step*, a visit was made to each teacher to carry out an initial classroom observation to ensure that the site would be suitable for the research.

Field Ethnographies

During the 2015/2016 academic year, ethnographic research was conducted by the four researchers. In externally-funded projects team ethnographic research is increasingly common (Creese et al., 2008). Because team ethnography has the advantage of maximizing the coverage of people and events (Clerke & Hopwood, 2014), it was suitable for studying English teachers’ motivational practice across different sites.

Figure 1.

K-Means Cluster Analysis With Participants in Bold

Note. Some points represent more than one teacher.

Each researcher observed four teachers, spending on average of 15 days with each. In two cases, teachers co-taught with a colleague. The practice of these co-teachers was also observed. During these periods, three types of data were collected: (a) *field data*: observations of lessons, including informal conversations with teachers and students, (b) *interview data*: semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with students, and (c) *documentary data*: lesson plans, teaching materials, and artifacts produced by students.

In carrying out observations, the aim was to generate a descriptive corpus of field notes that could provide a record of classroom events and experiences with a focus on students'

motivation. Using the ‘teacher’s motivational practice’ category in the Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) instrument (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), and additionally incorporating examples of practice theorized to generate motivation in contexts where English is extensively encountered outside the classroom (Henry, 2013, 2014), an inventory of motivational practice was created. This was used as a guide to practice of potential interest. Using a common schedule, a semi-structured interview was carried out with each teacher. Generally 1 hour long, interviews explored lesson design strategies, the teacher’s pedagogical approach, and perceptions of students’ motivational responses (sample questions: *‘Do you notice differences in your students’ motivation from one lesson to another or during a lesson?’*; *‘Are there particular activities that you have carried out where you have been aware that they have been (particularly) motivated?’*). Teachers were also asked about specific events observed in their classrooms.

Focus group interviews lasting between 45 and 60 minutes were carried with students (two groups per teacher). Again, a common schedule was used. Questions focused on experiences of English in and out of school, and activities experienced as motivational (sample question: *‘Have there been any times – any particular things you did in English – in the last few weeks when you have felt more motivated than normal in English classes? Why was this, do you think?’*). Students were similarly asked about specific events and activities observed in the classrooms.

Team Ethnography

When research takes place across different sites, designs need built-in space for information-sharing and opportunities for team-members to “talk through what they think they are beginning to understand” (Erickson & Stull, 1998, p. 58). Specifically, it is recommended that observers witness and discuss the same event, read the fieldnotes of other members, and hold regular debriefing sessions (Creese et al., 2008; Erickson & Stull, 1998). Prior to the

start of the research, and working in pairs, practice observations of English lessons taught by teachers not participating in the main study were carried out. Subsequently, all four team members met to discuss the field notes and the emerging interpretations. Further, during the first month of the research, observations were conducted concurrently. At the end of the first week, and again after the end of the third week, the four team members met to share experiences and discuss the generated data.

Ethics

In accordance with relevant ethical guidelines, each teacher, the students, and the students' parents/guardians were informed in writing about the study, its procedures, and ethical codes. Written informed consent to participate was obtained from the teachers and the students. For students in grades 6, 7, and 8, (i.e., those under 15), consent was additionally obtained from parents/guardians.

Analytical Procedures

In line with established procedures for multiple case studies (Duff, 2008), the field data were entered into NVivo 11.0. Here, ethnographic descriptions of each observed lesson (including field conversations) constituted a unique source ($N = 258$). As appropriate in a multiple-case study where the aim is to map common themes across the dataset, a constant comparison analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) was conducted. Together with Sundqvist, the authors carried out analyses of the totality of the field data. Based on the insights gained from time in the classrooms and from the theories of language teachers' motivational practice informing the project's purpose, a set of codes was initially created. Thereafter, each ethnographic description was closely read by the team members individually. Joint discussions then took place, and sections of the fieldnotes were assigned to different codes. When situations arose where an existing code/subcode did not seem to cover an observed event, a new code was created or an existing code modified.

Teacher–Student Relationships and L2 Motivation

During the fieldwork it became clear that, while motivational practice differed widely among the teachers, positive teacher–student relationships were a feature of nearly all the classrooms observed. In L2 motivation research, the influences of positive teacher–student relationships have not previously formed the main focus of theoretical or empirically-based work, thus making it a suitable topic for a case study. In case study research, the case selected is always a case of something (Duff, 2014). Here the phenomenon studied is the motivational influences of teacher–student relationships. This is examined within the context of a single teacher’s practice—the “case-in-context”—and “against the backdrop of existing theory and research” (p. 5).

The teacher, Matilda (a self-chosen pseudonym), was selected for the following three reasons. *First*, her interactions with students evidenced a warmth and openness characteristic of the teachers in the main study. *Second*, during the observation period she taught two classes. One was entirely new (a grade 6 class) and the other she had been teaching for 3 years (a grade 9 class). This allowed comparison of teacher–student interactions in emerging and mature relationships. The *third* reason was that in both classes students were working with a similarly focused writing activity that involved identity expression and out-of-school experiences. The similarity of these activities further facilitated comparison of teacher–student interactions and understandings of their influences on students’ motivation.

The fieldwork was carried out by the first author. It comprised 13 classroom observations (8 in the grade 6 class, and 5 in the grade 9 class), field conversations and an hour-long semi-structured interview with Matilda, and two student focus group interviews, one group from each class. Interviews were conducted in Swedish and transcribed verbatim. Documents collected included lesson plans, assignment outlines, and student texts. These data were analysed using a grounded theory ethnography approach (Charmaz, 2006; Kubanyiova, 2012,

2015). While this is similar to ethnography in encompassing observation data and participant perspectives, it differs in that, instead of focusing on the description of cultural phenomena, concern resides with the development of conceptual understandings (Kubanyiova, 2012, 2015). The data were analysed by the first author using a multi-stage, holistic approach. First, repeated close readings were made of the 13 field observations. Next, close interactions between the teacher and her students were identified. Then, the identified situations were read alongside with the interview transcripts. Thereafter, and based on insights gained from the analyses, theoretical perspectives were brought in. Outlined in the earlier review of the literature, these derived from research into teacher–student relationships in general education, psychological theories of relatedness and relationships, and theories of unconscious motives and behaviors. From this point onwards, analysis continued as an iterative process. From the descriptions of situated interactions, broader and increasingly abstract understandings of teacher–student relationships and their influence on students’ engagement and motivation were developed. To enhance interpretive validity, analyses were discussed continuously with the second author, and drafts of the paper were sent to Matilda for comments and feedback.

Results and Discussion

The school at which Matilda worked was in the center of a large city. A popular school, it enrolled students with widely differing social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Housed in a 19th-century building, classrooms were spacious and bright. Matilda—who as a teacher and a person describes herself as “positive and enthusiastic”—had taught at the school since graduation 16 years earlier. As previously mentioned, both classes were working with activities providing students with opportunities for identity expression. In the grade 6 class students worked with an activity called ‘The Book About Me’ (Appendix A). A low-risk, self-disclosure activity aimed at fostering familiarity (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), the focus was on home and family experiences. Under chapter titles such as ‘Me and My School,’ ‘This

is Me,' and 'My Dreams About The Future,' students were encouraged to write about different aspects of their lives, interests, and aspirations. The activity generated great enthusiasm. Many students produced large amounts of text, not only during class, but also in their free time. In all the observed lessons, there were periods where most of the students worked with focus and energy:

EXCERPT 1: Interview with Matilda

It is a very dry assignment really, but they really want to write and they are actually very engaged. They write about the things that interest them. Many of them really get enthusiastic writing about the future. It gets their fantasy going, it's almost like you can see how they are full of ideas when they are writing.

Reflecting on the activity's relationship-building function, Matilda explains that the texts provide her with valuable insights into students' home lives and out-of-school interests. Emphasizing how this is "the most important thing", she explains that it gives her an opportunity to gain knowledge that she can store away and activate in subsequent interactions:

EXCERPT 2: Interview with Matilda

When I think about the children—well I remember names very easily, and I quickly know who they are—and so when I think about them, I am thinking probably a little about who they are and where they are from. What language mum and dad speak at home. So that is a little how I am thinking when I see them in front of me.

In Matilda's grade 9 class, students worked with an activity called 'My Roots' (Appendix B). This involved interviewing an older relative about experiences early in life, and comparing these with the students' own lives. Essays were written in process form, and at the end of the activity students shared their experiences of carrying out the interviews and of gaining insights into their relatives' often difficult early lives. The activity provoked positive

responses, perhaps because many of the students had relatives whose teenage years had been spent in very different geographical and cultural settings. Working with the project, students would not only tell Matilda about how they had become fascinated by their relatives' stories, but also how the interviews had gone on for much longer than initially intended, in some cases stretching to several hours. In class, students worked with the different stages of the project in a climate of calm, and in each observed lesson students worked for prolonged periods focused on their texts.

That these activities generated positive responses is perhaps not surprising. In language classrooms, it is typically students' situated and discourse identities that are invoked (i.e., as students and as participants in a structured activity; Richards, 2006; Ushioda, 2009, 2011a). Activities that enable students to use the target language to express interests and experiences of their own can therefore engender higher levels of personal involvement, effort, and investment (Ushioda, 2011b). The opportunities for creativity that the activities provide are also important. A central component of effective language teaching, creativity can lead to outcomes such as enriched classroom work and enhanced motivation (Densky, 2016). Storytelling provides opportunities for creative self-expression, with positive effects on motivation recognized by practitioners (Jones & Richards, 2016). Further, since these students have varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to document and share personal histories ('The Book About Me'), and to become authors of their own representation ('My Roots') can positively influence their investment (Darvin & Norton, 2014). Sample extracts from students' texts are provided in Appendix C and D.

RQ 1: What Is Characteristic For Moments of Contact In Emerging and Mature Teacher-Student Relationships?

Contact Moments in Grade 6.

In this class, teacher–student interaction centered around the purpose and requirements of the activity, and questions involving language. In conversations with students, Matilda emphasizes that while the texts enable her to assess language skills, they also provide opportunities for interpersonal communication:

EXCERPT 3. Field observation

Of course it is graded, but mostly it's about you having the chance to write about who you are. Not so much that I need to know, but I am always curious, but so that you can think about and write about who you are, who you were, and who you want to be. So it's like a book about you in the past, present, and in the future. And I will keep these books until grade 9. And it's so much fun to get them back then and to read them then.

She emphasizes that the texts are private, and will not be read by people other than herself:

EXCERPT 4. Field observation

It's me, Just me. It's just you and me. You can write whatever you like. You can write the craziest things that happened to you when you were a baby. Whatever you like. But it's for me. It's just you and me.

Generally, these messages are communicated individually, as Matilda moves from desk to desk. In addition to providing information about the activity, Matilda also encourages students in their work, constantly offering praise. In these developing relationships, Matilda appears to have already gained insights into the students' lives outside school, which she demonstrates in personal interaction (cf. Excerpt 2). For example, to one student she says, "For you I know that you need a few pages to write about your family, I know that." To a girl writing about her sport, and who asks about an English translation, Matilda says, "you shouldn't ask me because you are the athlete."

While the class was writing, Matilda would constantly move from one student to the next. Coming to a student, she nearly always bent down or crouched at desk-level.

Characteristically, when an interaction sequence was over, she would move to a central part of the room, enabling her to quickly identify students needing attention. Among the moments of contact occurring during Matilda's continuous movement around the room, two types were recurrent. After arriving at a desk and reading a text, offering input, or giving encouragement, she would slowly raise herself up. Maintaining close eye contact, she would stretch her arms high above her head, clasping her palms together to form a point. This she did while saying to the student, "do you remember, it is the *I* that is most important". For a moment, she would pause in this exaggerated pose, the whole time maintaining eye contact. Then she would move back to a central space. Matilda also made the I-shape in interactions with groups of students:

EXCERPT 5: Field observation

Then, to the class Matilda says: "Don't forget the *I*, the most important letter". Matilda stands up and stretches. Many of the kids do the same. Some sitting at their desks stretching. One stands up next to Matilda and stretches "Because it is you, and who you are and what you think, that is the most important" says Matilda.

After these interactions, students would immediately return to their texts and resume writing.

The second recurrent form of contact involved the disclosure of personal information. Having read a student's text or discussed a particular event or experience, Matilda would link the student's story to an anecdote of her own, often from childhood or as a parent. Then, when other students sitting nearby became interested, she would shift her gaze and, drawing them in, recount the story, often in Swedish:

EXCERPT 6. Field observation

Matilda sits next to a boy and engages in a discussion of crazy things that he has done as a baby. She then tells a story about when her daughter was a baby, and how, when they were visiting friends, she had written on the friends' leather sofa with a permanent

marker. This engages the four other pupils immediately around them. Soon the whole class becomes involved in asking about the story. “What happened?” students ask and Matilda explains how the families remained friends and how the sofa was old and while it was very embarrassing it was OK because the family sold the sofa and got some money to buy a new one. I see that the pupils are, for a moment, captivated by this, watching Matilda, who is now sitting round facing the class, waiting to hear what happened next. Matilda then, standing up, says to the whole class, “You know, you can write about these crazy things that you did in the chapter about ‘Me as a Baby,’ and you can interview your parents to find out what you did, and I can’t wait to read these crazy things!” It is not just the last 10 minutes of the lesson, but the last 10 minutes of the day. Yet these pupils are captivated by Matilda’s story and, when she has finished, the group of girls in front of me begin talking about themselves as babies and things their parents have told them.

As with the *I*-shape, after Matilda had moved on the student/students would return to the activity, in this case the group of girls sharing insights into experiences from their earliest years.

Contact Moments in Grade 9

For many of these students, Matilda had been their English teacher from the time they started at the school. In the focus group interview, students talk about how they appreciate her as a person, her way of working, and how they feel relaxed and at ease in her classroom. As one student puts it, “I have known her for a long time and so I am always a little more comfortable in English lessons.” The atmosphere in the classroom was invariably calm, and in most lessons most of the students would work for prolonged periods planning, discussing, and writing their essays. Even though lessons were 90 minutes long and took place either

early in the morning or immediately after lunch, students talked about enjoying English and being in Matilda's classroom:

EXCERPT 7. Focus group interview

Boy 1: It is like that you look forward to English.

/.../

Girl: Well it is like, as I have said, I don't particularly look forward to science and maths lessons, but with English I do.

Boy 2: Yes and it is Matilda who is the main reason, actually.

Girl: Yes.

Boy 2: Because she makes things fun, so you look forward to her lessons.

As with the 6th graders, Matilda spent her time moving from one student to another, engaging in conversations about their compositions. In the role of facilitator, she encouraged students to give voice to experiences and feelings and to write in ways personal to them. While the activity and Matilda's pedagogical role are similar in both classes, moments of close personal interaction differ. Unlike in the grade 6 class when she would shift between interactions with individual students and interactions with groups, here such shifts were rare. Mostly, Matilda's time was spent in one-to-one interactions. Moving slowly from desk to desk, she engaged in discussions about the importance of voice, the strategic use of rhetorical devices, and the need to maintain a first-person perspective.

Although interaction sequences were more prolonged than in the 6th grade, fleeting moments of contact were also observed. Of a different nature to the intense, eye-to-eye contact moments in the 6th grade class, these momentary interactions evidenced a sense of intimacy. They also appeared as highly individualized and, in some cases, unique within a particular relationship:

EXCERPT 8. Field observation

Matilda arrives and is immediately straight into her greeting routine. Shaking hands. Then I notice that one pupil gives Matilda a clenched fist. Not a hand. They bump fists. Matilda smiles. When he does this the boy has his eyes on the floor. Afterwards he looks up and smiles at her. They have clearly done this before. Then with the next pupil it is back to handshaking. I later remark on this. Matilda tells me that she and this boy always do this. Sometimes she has done the whole multi-movement routine with other pupils. But she has always done this with this boy. When I have seen him in the corridors he hangs out with a group of boys with ‘attitude.’ He clearly has status within this group. But in Matilda’s lessons he is always quiet, sitting at the front, and is from what I can see nearly always focused, and almost never talking with other pupils or doing stuff on his phone.

EXCERPT 9. Field observation

A girl who has been working all the time asks about the grading system in schools way, way ago. Matilda sits on the girl’s desk and talks about the grading system, telling about how it was when she was in school. She talks about the way the norm-referenced system worked, using her own experiences as an example.

EXCERPT 10. Field observation

Another boy with headphones on (hood up) is tapping his feet. Probably to the beat of the music he is listening to. Matilda asks him to stop. He doesn’t. Maybe he hasn’t heard her? (although I doubt it). She goes up to him and gently strokes his hand. “Can you stop tapping your feet, (name)”. The boy stops. He doesn’t look up at Matilda. But he stops. All of the pupils are still writing.

Each of the contact moments in these excerpts is situated within a particular teacher–student relationship. Without exception, Matilda shakes the hand of every student entering her classroom. However, it is only with the boy in Excerpt 8 that she bumps fists. On no other

occasion in the classes observed did Matilda sit on a student's desk, thus marking the event in Excerpt 9 as unusual. A similarly personalized form of contact takes place in Excerpt 10, when Matilda asks the boy to stop tapping his feet. This student (who, like the fist-bumping boy, also has 'attitude') never looks up from the text he is writing. In all three instances, the interactions are understated, subtle, and unobtrusive. While the fist-bumping and the stroking of the student's hand indicate trust and closeness, in the context of a student-initiated conversation transporting teacher and student away from the topic and into an area of apparently common interest, sitting in this way appears natural.

RQ2: What Influences Can Moments of Contact Have on Students' Engagement and Motivation?

Because relationships constrain real-time interactions, the influence of a contact moment will be a function of the quality of the relationship within which it is nested (Wubbels et al., 2016). As we have seen, the contact moments observed in the two classes differ. As the foundations upon which nascent relationships are being constructed, in the grade 6 class there is little individual variation. In the grade 9 class, where relationships are well established, contact moments are highly idiosyncratic. Here, contact moments have a renewing or affirming function. In considering how these different types of contact might influence students' engagement and motivation, we begin with the grade 6 class.

Among the multitude of interactions between Matilda and the students, two particular and recurring types of contact moment were identified; the creation of the *I*-shape (Excerpt 5) and strategic self-disclosures (Excerpt 6). As Korthagen and colleagues (2014) have shown, following a moment of contact engagement is stimulated. For example, they describe how after close personal interaction with a teacher, students would immediately return to the task and continue working. Here, following situations when Matilda made the *I*-shape, students would resume writing (Excerpt 5). They also describe positive feelings manifested in

expressions of joy, calmness, re-assurance, and enthusiasm. When Matilda told a story about her life, students would be captivated by her anecdotes and stimulated to similarly recount stories of their own (Excerpt 6).

Further, Korthagen and colleagues (2014) suggest that in a moment of contact, the student can develop cognitive insights about the learning activity. As Fredrickson (2013) argues, a momentary experience of positive emotion can broaden a person's thought–action repertoire. This has the effect of widening the array of thoughts and actions currently in awareness, and effects are evident in social and physical actions, as well as intellectual and artistic behavior. For example, the experience of joy can create playfulness, a desire to stretch ambition, and the urge to be creative (Fredrickson, 2004). In the context of a writing activity focused on previous experiences and future aspirations, moments of contact where Matilda emphasizes connectedness (Excerpt 4), demonstrates that she sees the student as a person (Excerpt 5), and reveals who she is outside school (Excerpt 6), can function to momentarily expand the student's 'thought–action repertoire' and to stimulate cognitive insights. In the context of the story-telling activity, this can stimulate the student's desire to give expression to their experiences.

In the grade 9 class interactions lacked such intensity. Rather, they appeared natural, relaxed, and part of an established 'way of acting.' Equally, noticeable changes in students' learning behaviors during or immediately following a close interaction were not observed. To understand the influences of a moment of contact in the context of a mature and positively-valenced teacher–student relationship, it needs to be recalled that in the micro-moment that a connection occurs, a perception of the higher-level teacher–student relationship is likely to be generated. The bumping of fists (Excerpt 8), Matilda's sitting on the desk (Excerpt 9), and her touching a student's hand (Excerpt 10) can all be understood as cues that can generate relationship representations and the interpersonal goals attaching to them.

In close and well-established relationships (e.g., among family members or close friends), relationship representations are generally easily accessible, so much so that the mere presence of a relationship partner can function as cue for activating a representation.

When a relationship representation is activated, so too are the goals and the motivations that attach to it. Once activated, interpersonal goals and motives influence behavior both consciously and unconsciously. Irrespective of whether these influences operate in concert or alone, effects can be substantial. Understood this way, the moments of contact in excerpts 8, 9, and 10 can stimulate a motivational response through the activation of interpersonal goals involving relatedness. As Ryan and Deci (2000) explain, the sense of being connected to another person is central in the internalization of motives that are not exclusively intrinsic, and a person's energy to pursue an activity can be stimulated when actions are "prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel (or want to feel) attached or related" (p. 73). Thus, while motivation for the essay-writing activity might initially be set in motion by perceptions pertaining to the teacher–student relationship (the effect being that non-intrinsic motives become more internalized), in a contact moment the experience of relatedness is reactivated. When this happens, internalization processes are re-triggered, thus having a positive influence on motivation.

Of course, the design of the research does not allow access to students' perceptions immediately downstream from a moment of close interaction with a teacher. However, because motivation arising in a moment of contact can be unconscious as well as conscious, even with opportunities to explore responses in an immediately subsequent interview, insights generated might only give a partial picture. With this limitation in mind, in the focus group interviews students were specifically asked whether they thought about Matilda when writing, the aim being to consider whether experiences of relatedness might influence motivation. For the grade 6 students, who had only had Matilda for a few weeks, thinking

about her when writing the book chapters was not something they appeared especially aware of. Rather, the thought processes they talk about are mostly self-reflexive and directed to self-portrayal:

EXCERPT 11. Focus group interview

I: Can you write whatever you want in the book, do you think?

Girl 1: Umm . . .

Girl 2: Nja . . .

Girl 3: Yes

Girl 4: No . . .

Girl 3: Well . . .

Girl 4: Yes you can...

Girl 1: You can because it is only Matilda who is going to read it and not anyone else.

But like, I wouldn't write . . .

Girl 2: I wouldn't write a lot of personal things

Girl 3: Umm . . .

Girl 2: Not me either

I: So, you are writing a book about yourself, and it is for you. But Matilda reads it?

Girl 3: Mmm

Girl 4: Mmm

I: Do you think about her when you are writing?

Girl 1: Umm

Girl 2: No

Girl 3: No

Girl 1: Well, not directly

Girl 4: Or sometimes it's like. Sometimes you can think about that.

Girl 1: Yes

Girl 4: But it is like that I am writing a book to myself, that I am going to have when I am older.

As these girls seem to suggest, any sense of writing for Matilda, or that they may be thinking about her when writing, is not something of which they are particularly aware. Indeed, in the context of a relationship that is just beginning, communicating in a closer way through revealing insights of a personal nature is something requiring caution. Although the activity is enjoyable, and it is only Matilda who will be reading the texts, self-disclosures need to be carefully considered. Two of the girls do indicate that, on occasion, they can think about Matilda. However, their reflections are rather vague (“Well, not directly”), and qualified by reference to the main incentive (“But it is like that I am writing a book to myself”).

From a retrospective interview it is impossible to know whether a relationship is of a quality sufficient to generate an unconscious representation of a relationship partner and, if it is, whether such representations are actually activated. Nevertheless, for these students it would appear that the teacher–student relationship is probably insufficiently developed for this to happen. As one girl says, “I wouldn’t write a lot of personal things.” Consequently, it is unlikely that moments of contact generate unconscious pursuit of interpersonal goals. Rather, in these nascent teacher–student relationships, it is the warmth and energy of the conscious experience of a connection with a teacher that generates positive emotions, fuels enthusiasm, and momentarily broadens students’ thought–action repertoires.

In the grade 9 interview, students were similarly asked whether they thought about Matilda when writing. Here reflections were somewhat different:

EXCERPT 12. Focus group interview

Boy 1: When you write, you just write more and more. It's fun and you want to achieve something. Something Matilda wants us to do. So Roots is a good thing. It is almost like you don't want to stop writing.

/.../

And when you write, well then you think about all the instructions you get before, and you follow them. And when you do it, well it is she who has written what we should do. So when you are doing it, you write to her. And it is like you are listening to her. And so I think it is a bit of both actually. You think about Matilda and you also think about how to write.

Boy 2: When I write texts, well I haven't thought about the teachers directly. I just write. I haven't thought that I am writing to Matilda, or to anybody else. I just write.

Girl: Well it's like Matilda has told us before, we should really focus more on writing a text that would work for anybody, and that anybody could read it, not just Matilda.

As in the grade 6 interview, the responses of individual students differ. One of the boys says that when he writes a text he never thinks of any of his teachers. The girl is more ambivalent, talking of the importance of not thinking about Matilda (the text's actual recipient), and of focusing more on the intended recipient. However the first boy (cf. Excerpt 10), explains that when writing he not only thinks about how Matilda has framed the activity ("it is she who has written what we should do"), but also about her in a more relationally-oriented sense ("you think about Matilda and you also think about how to write"). As Fitzsimons and Bargh (2003) have demonstrated, the mere psychological presence of relationship partners can generate representations of the relationship and activate interpersonal goals that operate outside of the person's awareness and which influence perception and behavior. Examining what this boy says, we can see how, in addition to conscious forms of achievement motivation ("It's fun and you want to achieve something. Something Matilda wants us to do"), and the intrinsic

pleasure of sharing identity experiences (“you just write more and more”; “It is almost like you don’t want to stop writing”), unconscious motivation is also generated. Because a representation of the relationship is active while he is writing (“it is like you are listening to her”), motivation is influenced by the pursuit of interpersonal goals (“So when you are doing it, you write to her”).

To be sure, since the mere presence of a relationship partner can function as a cue for relationship representations, interpersonal goals operating outside of awareness are likely to have a general influence on motivation. In a mature teacher–student relationship, a representation would be expected to be cued as soon as the student enters the classroom, or simply thinks about an upcoming lesson. However, as Fitzsimons and Bargh (2003) make clear, the actual presence of a relationship partner will be the strongest possible prime for a relationship representation, meaning that its effects—the activation of interpersonal goals—will also be stronger. In a moment of contact when a close connection is experienced, the effects will be strongest of all. Moreover, in comparison with conscious forms of motivation, the unconscious influence of interpersonal goals on behavior and motivation may endure beyond the immediate experience of connectedness.

Conclusions, limitations, and future research

For many people, language learning is an activity that mostly takes place in classrooms. However, little is known about how motivation evolves in these environments, or in the everyday interactions between students and teachers (Ushioda, 2009, 2013, 2016). Because L2 motivation research has tended to focus on learning processes at a general level, there is a need for work that adopts a narrower empirical focus, and which can shed light on motivation as it emerges in particular activities and in situated interactions (Ushioda, 2016). Narrowing the empirical focus and adopting a grounded theory ethnography approach (Kubanyiova,

2015), the current study explored a relational dimension of L2 motivation arising in interactions between student and teacher.

Researching events and interactions in classrooms is fraught with difficulty. Investigations need to take account of the complex realities of the classroom as a social space and strive for ecological validity. They need also to be instigated by genuine pedagogical questions and driven by theoretically informed understandings of how “the real world of the classroom operates” (Larsen–Freeman, 2016, p. 389). However, while the research lens might be narrowly-focused on a particular learning environment, when theory is used to make sense of the contextualized interactions between teachers and students, insights into the influences on motivation that emerge from these relations can have wider resonance. Indeed, even though a relational analysis of emergent motivation might only be “anchored in one specific classroom event”, it can yield important insights into the evolution of motivation in and through teacher–student interactions, and contribute to theory-building in a broader sense (Ushioda, 2016, p. 572).

By closely examining moments of teacher–student interaction, the study offers conceptually grounded explanations of how momentary connections influence language students’ engagement and motivation. Insights suggest that in teacher–student relationships of different quality, contact moments and influences on learning behavior differ. In emerging relationships, moments of contact can generate immediate, conscious responses that take the form of greater engagement and increased motivational energy. In mature relationships, contact moments appear to have a different function. Here, when a momentary connection with a teacher occurs, representations of the teacher–student relationship are likely to be cued (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003). These representations have the effect of activating interpersonal goals, which, operating outside the student’s awareness, generate motivation that is relationally-directed (Bargh et al., 2010). These influences can be enduring, momentary cues

of social connectedness influencing motivation and persistence beyond the immediate moment of contact (Walton et al., 2012). In teacher–student relationships, the effects of moments of contact accumulate over time. In positively-valenced relationships they progressively strengthen the relationship, creating a “relational stance” that mediates the student’s perception of being psychologically connected with a teacher (Rodgers & Raider–Roth, 2006, p. 274). It is the effects of this relational stance that, over longer timescales, are reflected in the results of group-level research that demonstrate the central importance of the teacher for students’ L2 motivation (Lamb, 2017).

Because language learning takes place at the micro-level of social activity, and involves interpersonal interactions with other individuals within recurring contexts of use (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016), the insight that a mental representation of a relationship with a teacher can constitute a source of motivation is important. As in educational research where the influence of relatedness also tends to be similarly overlooked (Skinner et al., 2008), L2 motivation research has focused more on constructs such as identity, self-efficacy, and autonomy. Equally, while a growing body of work is now exploring mental imagery involving visions of future-oriented target language (TL) interaction and imagined relationships with TLspeakers (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014), the motivational effects of imagery connected with a current teacher–student relationship remain largely unexplored. For all language students, but particularly younger students and those in settings where opportunities for authentic interactions with TL speakers may be few, the teacher–student relationship can be an important source of L2 representations.

Limitations and Future Research

As well as an individual difference, motivation needs to be understood “as arising collectively among networks of individuals connected to one another in social relationships” (Walton et al., 2012, p. 530). While the current findings represent continued work in

understanding L2 motivation as a relational phenomenon that develops through interactions of individuals in networks and contexts (Mercer, 2015; Ushioda, 2009, 2016), there are substantial empirical limitations. Exploration of the influences on internal psychological functioning of real-time interactions in real-life settings places high demands on research undertakings. It is for this reason that in developing theories of mental functioning, cognitive psychology has largely relied on experimental designs. Given the argument here that interactions in positively valenced teacher–student relationships generate motivation that is both within and outside of the individual’s awareness, further study of these processes needs to be conducted using appropriate methodologies.

As regards conscious sources of L2 motivation, research could usefully be carried out using a design-based approach (Larsen–Freeman, 2016; Reimann, 2011). In the current study, video-recordings would have provided a richer picture of verbal and nonverbal behaviors around focal interactions and events, thus enhancing analytical precision. Video-supported observations made in classrooms where teacher–student relationships are known to be positive and where the teacher is introduced to the literature on teacher–student interactions and encouraged to create space in lessons for frequent moments of contact, would be of particular value. Another limitation is that the interviews were largely decontextualized, and conducted in groups. To improve understandings of students’ experiences and emotions around moments of contact, individual interviews using stimulated recall techniques could be conducted in closer proximity to focal interactions.

While retrospective interviews can offer insights into cognitive processes, including representations of a teacher–student relationship cued during an interaction, what they cannot do is shed light on the unconscious pursuit of interpersonal goals. To explore these effects, experimental methods are needed. So far, L2 motivation research has not given serious consideration to the possibility “of a parallel unconscious motivation influencing language

learning” and the research agenda needs to be expanded to include investigations of unconscious motivational processes (Al-Hoorie, 2016, p. 424). The use of experimental techniques to study the influences of the cueing of relationship representations and interpersonal goals would constitute an important direction. As in studies where participants are primed with different incentives and subsequent task performance is evaluated (e.g., Aarts, Custers, & Marien, 2008; Custers & Aarts, 2007), subliminal priming techniques could usefully be used to investigate the influence of a positive teacher–student relationship on behavior during a learning activity. Studies of this sort would be a valuable step in generating knowledge on this important relational dimension of L2 motivation.

Implications

On a final note, continued investigation of influences of teacher–student interactions on students’ L2 motivation is not merely of academic interest. Research from mainstream education shows that teachers who are introduced to theories about interpersonal influences arising in teacher–student interactions are able to adapt their practice in ways that favor the creation of positive relationships (Roorda et al., 2013). Consequently, alongside providing in-service and preservice teachers with practical education in the ways that nonverbal behaviors impact on TL communication (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2017), education programs should also focus on how teachers’ interactional behaviors influence opportunities for interpersonal connections and how, through moments of contact, motivationally positive teacher–student relationships are constructed.

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APPENDIX A

Student Handout: 'The Book About Me'

The book about me**Name:**

You are going to write a book about yourself, your family and your future.

First you write first draft in your notebook, let me correct it.

You will write about each topic in your notebook before you rewrite the corrected version in the booklet that I will give you.

When you write the final version, try you use your imagination and be as artistic as possible. Use pictures, photos and coloured pencils.

You shall write about the following topics:

- **Front page** Use all your artistic skills to make a nice front page.
- **Me and my family.** Write about all the members in your family, their names and ages, what they like to do and what they are like. What does you and your family do together? Do you have uncles and aunts, grandparents and cousins? Do they live near you? Where do you live and what does your house and neighborhood look like?
- **Me as a baby.** Write about where you were born and some childhood memories. What were you like as a baby? Interview your parents! What were your first words? Did you do any funny things? What kind of baby were you? Do you remember kindergarten and your first school day? What did you like to do and play with?
- **Me and my school.** Write about when you started school. What is your school like? What friends do you have? What do you do in school? What subjects do you like and what subjects don't you like (you'd better not write English...!)
- **This is me.** Describe yourself. What do you like to do in your spare time? What films, TV-programs and music do you like? Who are your friends and what do you do together?
- **My dreams about the future.** What would you like to work with when you finish school? Why do you want to work with that? Where do you want to live? Do you want a big family?
- **Be sure to illustrate your book!** For each chapter in your book you have to draw pictures, have photographs or decorate the pages with lots of colours! Use a pen or a felt tip pen when you rewrite your text in the booklet.

Good Luck and have fun!



APPENDIX B

Student Handout: 'My Roots'

Work plan in bullets:

- * Choose one relative to interview who is significantly older than you (grand-parent!)
- * Think of the different areas you want to research about (make a list or a mind map for example)
- * Write interview questions related to each area. Think of follow-up questions in case of "yes/no" answers.
- * Report your work progress to the teacher, evaluate and recreate if necessary.
- * Interview the chosen relative
- * Write the first draft in class about 700 words, by hand.. **You must have your notes with you!**
- * **Revise the corrected copy you get from the teacher. Ask if you are not sure about something**
- * Do some added research on certain areas.
- * Write your final draft by hand or on a computer
- * Include extra material if possible and adequate (drawings, pictures...) (but it's not the most important thing!)
- * Start with a short presentation of your relative, use clear paragraphs and interesting content that is both educational and entertaining to read. Finish with your own reflections and comments when they feel appropriate.
- * Check your spelling, grammar and sentences. Use a dictionary and a grammar book if necessary.

Evaluation:

Keep this in mind while you work with your project:

I listened carefully to what was explained so I could get started right away.

I worked on my assignment in an efficient way.

I asked relevant questions and used the interview techniques in a proper way

I could start writing my first draft without delay

I checked the corrected first draft and asked relevant questions to the teacher to improve my written essay

I wrote an improved version of the essay and hand it in in time

I presented the comparative result of my essay orally, in class, according to the schedule given me by the teacher **week 38 Thursday**

I checked what I needed to (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and pronunciation)

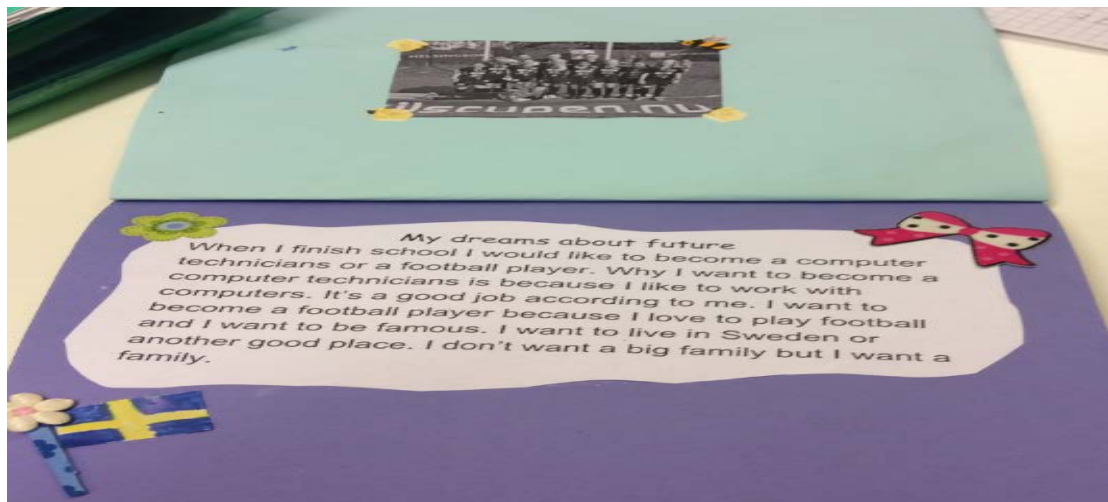
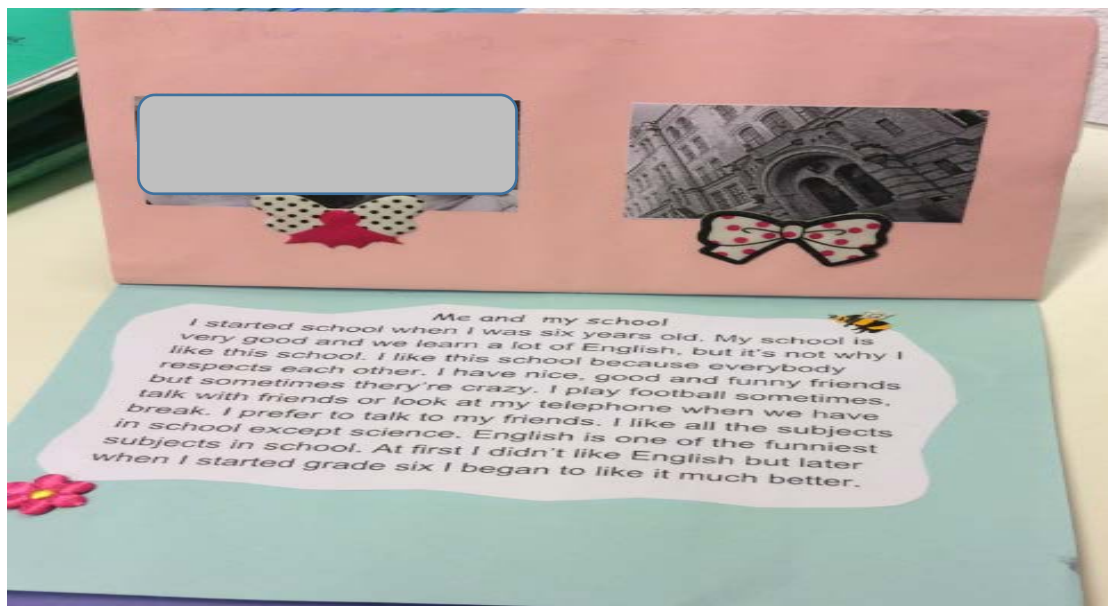
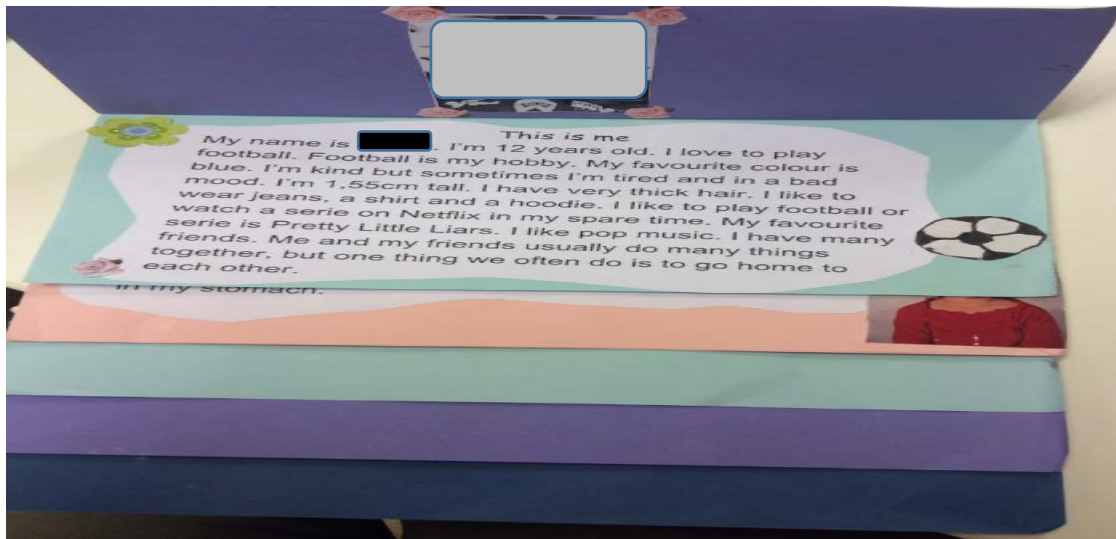
In details:

THE TEACHER WILL LOOK AT:

- Answers clearly developed by pre-investigation
- clear and well stated to create a retelling of a story
- Sum up of answers presented and clear
- Clarification with added facts to the answers
- Length and subject of the essay
- Language well used and paragraphs clearly stated.
- Grammatical usage of the language
- The essay held its goals and was interesting for the reader which means informative and descriptive essay
- Oral presentation (done)

APPENDIX C

Student Text 'The Book About Me'



APPENDIX D

Student Essay: 'My Roots' (Final Draft)

Roots

Growing up in the 60s, in a small town in the northern part of South America, with overly strict parents, is the opposite of growing up in the 2000s, in a city of a small cold country with semi-strict parents. Nevertheless, things are more similar than what we could ever imagine and that is what I am going to tell you about in this essay.

She was the second child of a mother with a golden brown skin and a hair as dark as a late November evening and with a stubborn mind. She had a father with amber eyes and a crazy but clever personality. They lived in a small town called ██████████ with the nickname "the sweetest city in Venezuela". That's right, my mother is Venezuelan. In ██████████, she lived in a big blue house with her parents and her six siblings, her older brother, her three younger brothers and her two younger sisters. Even if the house was very big they had only one bathroom but each family member had one own bedroom except my grandparents who shared the same room. They also had one kitchen, one livingroom, one dinner room and a beautiful garden in front of the house. My mother did actually enjoy living with six siblings because she could have those quirky and hilarious conversations that made them laugh so hard like all oxygen just disappeared out of nowhere. They came up with new games that they used to play in the garden which they always could, since Venezuela is a warm country with 12 months of summer every year. My mom though, thought the weather was too hot. The temperature was always over 20°C+ which she hated but if I was her I would be happier than ever because I really dislike the Swedish weather. My mother had also six siblings which I sometimes wished I have because as far as I'm concerned she would always have someone to play with whenever she was home.

The thing was that my grandparents never did let my mother go out wherever she wanted to go. In fact they didn't let her go outside of the house at all. The only place it was allowed to go to except their home was school. If she or any of her siblings just thined of trying to escape from their home just to meet some friends, my grandpa would punish them by whiping them with his dog whip until he could see any bruises on their skin. If any of the kids had a bad behaviour, their punishment would almost always be stongly abuses. My grandparents were overly strict. Even at their house they had some rules that everyone had to follow. Every sibling had their own schedule, not only in school but also in their home. There was a specific time for everything. Dinner was served at the table at 6.00 pm everyday and it was bedtime at 8.00 pm for everyone in the house. In the morning the first sibling had to wake up at 5.30 am and got 15 minutes to get ready in the bathroom, absolutely not more. When the clock was at 5.45 am the first sibling had to leave the bathroom and the second sibling would wake up and get the next 15 minutes to get ready and so it went. Breakfast was served at 6.50 am and everyone with their school uniform on. Here in Sweden I've never used an uniform at school in my entire life but I'm convinced that both advantages and disadvantages exist in the uniform category. I think the perks about using uniform in school is that nobody can judge you for your style or looks which is something I find very good since today in the 2000s it's all about being judged. People get those first impressions from others quickly just because of what you're wearing. If you're comming to school with expensive

designer clothes then you're spoiled and very rich but if you're showing yourself in school with no brand clothes at all then you're probably poor and got no sense of style at all. It's quite stupid, isn't it? But I understand if Sweden doesn't want to focus a bunch of their money on uniforms as they probably would rather afford the money on books or computers.

However, the uniform is not the only thing that was different compared to a Swedish school today. From grade 1-6 school started always at 7.30 am and ended at 12.30 pm. When my mother was in primary school she went always back home after school and ate lunch at there because the school didn't have any food to give the students. When my mother was in 7th, 8th and 9th grade, she started instead at 12.30 pm and finished her school day at 17.30 pm and she ate lunch before school instead of eating it after school. In my opinion, the school system in Venezuela seemed very adaptable for a youth in my age which my mother totally agreed with. She said that it gave her plenty of time to study at home without any stress.

The Venezuelan school was surprisingly peaceful. The teachers did never beat any of the students even if they did something bad, just like my school here in Sweden. I'm convinced that the school was a big part of my mother's childhood as it was the only place in the whole world where she actually could meet her friends. One thing she said was that she was very lucky with her friends. Everyone was nice and most of all, they were all true friends. They could literally tell everything to each other. Today, every teenager in every single rich country are complaining that they can't trust anyone, not even their "best friend". My mother is convinced that it's because of all these social medias and so am I. Youths now at days gets more insecure about themselves so we don't really know how we should act to get what we want. It's pretty sadly but not many teenagers will admit that it's the truth.

In the 60s they didn't have any internet or social medias so my my mom used to read books and watch cartoons with her siblings. They liked to watch disney movies like Mickey mouse but also Tom and Jerry and the marvel heroes like Captain America and the Hulk. I find it extremely cool that we still have those shows here in Sweden too but with just the little difference that the shows were in black and white back then. Today Sweden is a fairly calm country. Well, Venezuela used to be as calm as Sweden when my mom was growing up. I wished my grandparents gave my mother permission to go out let her feel the freedom because now Venezuela is definitely not the same as it used to be. My cousins can't go to school without their parents being scared that their kids might never come back after they live the house.

After interviewing my mother I realized that I should be thankful of what I have right now here in this small cold country with my semi-strict parents. I also realized that there was more different things about our different cultures we have been growing up to than just the internet and smartphones. Same with the similarities, it wasn't just about the books or TV-shows. I didn't expect this interview would be so important to me but it actually was. Listening to my mother's childhood and what she had been through couldn't be more interesting. But yes, I am very grateful about being raised here in Sweden and next time I'm about to complain about my life, I will think twice before I speak.