

When pupils don't do what they're told (and why sometimes this can be good)

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Negative responses that involve active engagement

- Motivating pupils to engage in learning can be one of the biggest challenges that teachers face
- It can be demoralizing when pupils seem unwilling to engage in an activity that ought to be motivational
- Often, negative responses involve passivity, detachment and withdrawal
- However a negative response can sometimes be manifested in active ways: disenchantment can be productively expressed
- We will look at two cases from a project investigating good practice

Motivational Teaching in Swedish Secondary English (MoTiSSE)

- 2014 – 2017 funded by Swedish Research Council
- Aim *“to investigate good practice in a context where English is ever-present in young people’s lives beyond the classroom”*
- Ethnographic approach --- spending time with successful teachers, and asking *‘What works here?’*
- Our objectives --- to understand, to explain examples of good practice, and to bring them OUT of the classroom

Motivational Practice

Insights from the Classroom

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 Studentlitteratur



Atypical cases

- We observed innumerable situations where, in working with meaningful activities, students demonstrated engagement
- Often this could have flow-like qualities (Shernoff et al., 2016)
- However, we also observed situations where students exhibited negative responses
- Here our focus is on these *atypical* cases
- Because a negative response is unusual, it makes it valuable to study

Case 1 'Study Abroad' (grade 9)

Where would you go if you had the opportunity to study English abroad? England? USA? Australia? Or..? In this assignment you are going to find out!

It's a good idea to start with yourself, a little something about who you are, interests, favorite subjects and your plans for the next couple of years (which high school you are thinking about to choose and why).

After that you move on to the part where you talk about where you would prefer to study abroad. Describe what you have found out about your country/city and perhaps what your plans would be if you actually went

Nästa kille berättar om USA.

-I chose USA because I want to be a streamer and I want to practice the American accent and not a British accent. I would like to be a streamer so I can earn money without having a real job and do what I like.

Han fortsätter att prata lite om olika streamare.

-I'm going to skip high school and go straight to streaming and my backup plan if I don't succeed - I can go to Mc Donald's and sell hamburger or in any fast food restaurant. The reason for USA is that I would like to practice my English and there are a lot of fast food restaurants there.

Nästa kille börjar presentera sig själv.

-I have chosen the country USA and the city San Diego. Why I chose San Diego is because they have a very good football team and famous amusement parks. I like San Diego since it is in California and California is above Mexico because I want to visit Mexico City. I also like San Diego because LA and San Francisco is close. And also two of the best players in counter strike is also there, "cloud9 n0thing". Cloud 9 is a team.

Jag har inte hört talas om dessa så jag blir nyfiken på att höra mer men killen går vidare.

-What to do there? Frågar han retoriskt.

-I will probably sign up for clud9 so I will probably skip the whole school thing and instead play CS and stream.

T är ganska irriterad över att de båda killarna har protesterat och gjort något helt annat av uppgiften. Hon påpekar för dem att det är väldigt svårt att lyckas på Youtube och att man troligtvis behöver en backup (indirekt studier).

Case 2 'Blogging about a journey' (grade 7)

- A journey, an imaginary trip that you make together with your friends.
- To an English-speaking country.
- The journey will last for a fortnight.
- You should write at least one blog post everyday.
- Every blog post has to be signed by the one/the ones who have written it.

When I arrive to the space where [the group] are working the girls are very involved in writing the blog, talking through what they want to say, playing with different formulations, talking with intensity. Emil has the upper part of his body slouched over the desk, his face partly hidden by the hood of his hoodie.

The girls have found out about elephant-riding and for the day's activity are planning a trip to a wildlife sanctuary where they can ride elephants. They talk about how they are going to write a post describing how the four of them go out for the day to the sanctuary and ride elephants.

Elephant

Hello

Today we have ridden on elephants. It was very fun but we were very nervous because the elephant was very big and looked to be dangerous. Everybody joined in.

We met a Swedish family, they were very kind. It was a mom and her three children. They told us that they have lived here for about two years now and they think it's really nice here.

When we were done with the ride, Emil felt sick and he threw up. So we went back to the hotel as fast as we could.

It was a cool experience.

Coca Cola

Hallo India

Hello today I was joined in and ride on the elephants. But i felt sick and trow up. so I went home and drink coca cola and eat. I was angry that I throw up, but what to do.. Tomorrow we will just chill.

From Emil

Emil is Sick

Hi

I'm in the hotel because i am sick today. So i sitting in the hotel and do nothing. I'm looking for tomorrow. They are out in India for look new things. Tomorrow we are going to an restaurant and eat hot food.

From Emil

Conclusions

- In much of the research literature, pupils oppositional behavior has involved cases of *acting OUT*, rather than *acting TOWARD*. (Miller, 2015)
- Sometimes opposition or resistance can take productive forms
- Here the students demonstrated opposition to an undesired identity. They manipulated the activity so that they could 'be' the person that they wanted.
- Through agentic acting, disaffection generated engagement in the activity
- Teachers need to be open to pupils' attempts to manipulate activities. Rather than sabotage or subversion (negative), these acts can be productive.
- In activities that encourage self-expression, space should be built-in for 'identity work', and for 'agentic disaffection'

Thank you for Listening!

Motivational Teaching in Swedish Secondary English:

<https://www.hv.se/MoTiSSE>

Motivational Practice: Insights from the classroom:

<https://www.smakprov.se/smakprov/visa/9789144118482/partner/studentlitteratur/>