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<https://skoleliv.dk/debat/art6352377/Jo-mere-vi-keder-os-jo-mindre-lærer-vi>

Danske skoleelever – oversat fra dansk til engelsk, Josephine Steen 29.11.2018

Well-being

15-year old school pupil: the more we are bored, the less we learn

The problem with boredom demands action, says 15-year old Sarah, who not only is a pupil in 9th grade but also board member of Danish Pupils Board. In this article she presents 5 proposals for a better school day.

No matter how great it would be, a day in school can never be the same as a day in Tivoli. However, that should not justify that every third pupil, including myself, is bored in class. This is one of the greatest problems in schools, and we have to do something about it. "Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø" states in their analysis 'From Boredom to Well-being' that "frequent boredom is linked to pretty much everything, that you don't want in school". The "survey of well-being" shows, that every third pupil in lower secondary education (7-9th grade) experiences the lessons as boring, either 'often' or 'very often'. The more we are bored, the less we will get out of school, and that concerns both learning and well-being. The numbers shout for action.

Boredom is especially interesting in a pedagogical context, as an engaged pupil most definitely learns more, than a pupil who is bored. So, if we want to prioritize pupils' learning, we need to solve the problem.

Boredom can be understood as a mild form of "lack of well-being", so if we wish to prioritize well-being, we have to take the problem seriously, when it appears in this size.

“I am mostly bored, when the teaching is either too hard or too easy” Sarah Bærentzen, pupil

Definition of boredom

Boredom is an emotional state, where short-termed boredom is perceived as a springboard to new actions, whereas long-termed boredom or frequently occurring boredom is perceived as cause of lack of well-being, which is potentially harmful to health.

The results of the report are alarming, yet not surprising. I do get bored once in a while when we work on a topic that I don't find interesting. There must be room for this, as everything cannot be equally exciting.

However, I am mostly bored when the lesson is either too hard or too easy; when I have been seated for too long; or when we are too many pupils in class. That is, on the other hand, a kind of boredom we need to move away from. This brings us to the 1 million dollar question: How do we make the school day more interesting?

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In the following section, Danish Pupils Board presents five proposals:

1. Student involvement

The easy answer would be to ask the pupils. We must practice student involvement and be included in decision-making processes when lessons are planned. Achieving a sense of ownership of our own learning will increase our motivation. Everyone knows that food tastes better when you have cooked it yourself.

2. Alternative teaching methods

Good teaching is in my perspective varied teaching. Today, we have more options of teaching than "just listening to the teachers". We will achieve better learning if we alternate between teaching using the blackboard, project work, discussing in smaller and bigger forums as well as individual work – maybe something completely different. One method is not necessarily better than the other, but we will get the most out of a good mix.

3. Physical activity in class

We require physical activity in all contexts in order to stay focused. It is therefore important that we learn how to make use of the 45-minutes of physical activity in the best way possible. We cannot reinvent the wheel every day. Therefore, we need to simplify the exercises. The physical activities are especially lagging behind in the last years of school (lower secondary education), which I believe to be one of the reasons why more pupils are bored.

4. Practice-oriented teaching

All pupils have different ways of learning. This has to be taken into account in the best way possible, so that all pupils feel that they are being challenged appropriately. This not only has to do with the level, but also *how* we do it. Practice-oriented teaching is often perceived as a breath of fresh air, which we need more of.

5. Open school

Last but not least we have to bring the outside world into the classroom and the classroom out into reality (Open school). This helps discovering meaning of one's learning (outcome), which motivates to further learning. There is nothing more demotivating than not being able to see reality or purpose of one's learning.

There is thus a long row of initiatives that can be implemented in order to prevent the issue of boredom, if it is prioritized highly enough. It should. School days cannot all be fun and games, but the objective must be that we as pupils find it more interesting, exciting and educative and less boring to go to school. Everything goes hand in hand.