

Educational Innovation in Lying Flat Phenomenon—A Case Study of the Balinese Teaching Experience

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Lying flat (Tang Ping) is a prevalent way of life in contemporary countries throughout the world. It is an avoidance behavior chosen by individuals in response to limited social resources and ongoing harsh social competition. Previous studies have demonstrated that the phenomena of “lying flat” has a major negative effect on student learning. In order to investigate the impact of educational innovation on the phenomenon of “lying flat”, we will observe students’ learning behaviors under the traditional education model and innovative teaching methods in our Bali teaching practice to determine the causes of “lying flat” and the means to improve educational innovation. The study found that “lying flat” is caused not just by students’ discontent with their level difference, but also by the conflict between external resources and internal pressure. In addition, educational reforms on three levels, including further stratified education, strengthening teacher education and promoting effective communication between students and teachers, and employing online resources to promote students’ interest in learning, can ameliorate the phenomenon of pupils “lying flat”. This study contends that educational innovation can have a positive effect on the phenomena of “lying flat”.

Keywords: lying flat, educational innovation, reform of educational practice, motivational strategies, science of education

Introduction

Lying flat (Tang Ping) is a lifestyle that is now common in societies around the world; with the development of society, limited social resources, and continued fierce social competition, more and more people are choosing to escape excessive stress and responsibility by “lying flat”, with followers adopting a laid-back attitude to life and rejecting careers, work demands, and social expectations. Lying flat has emerged over the last few months as a rallying cry for China’s millennial generation, especially college students, and this phenomenon is reflected in teamwork. For a team member who is lying flat, the motivation to get the job done is only for the task, not for self-improvement, so they do not put in too much effort or time into it and just expect the job to be done by someone else. And when there is one person showing a “lying flat” attitude, no one is eager to share their works with others, which could cause other individuals to lose the will to work hard.

In further research and observation, we found that the social phenomenon of “lying flat” has not only occurred among the new generation of college students in China. The inherent characteristics of the phenomenon

are becoming more and more apparent in various social activities, especially in the activities of students in the education system as a whole. In this paper, we focus on the behavior of Balinese students in the face of online teaching, and explore the logic and internal reasons for the phenomenon of “lying flat” among students in a relatively backward educational area. The analysis of Balinese students’ behaviors revealed that the large gap between their own level and the English learning requirements of the online teaching program caused a lot of pressure on them to learn English, which led them to avoid the English teaching in the program for a long time and to maintain only a basic level of English, or even to give up further English learning.

Through the analysis of the cases in this paper, we came up with the reasons for “lying flat”: First of all, it is the contradiction of the school education system, the pressure of daily study, and online support education overlapped. “Lying flat” is the self-choice of children to avoid the helpless reality and cope with the uncertain future under the high pressure. “The powerless feel that comes from the lack of matching between external pressure and their own ability” is the main reason for them to lie flat, while the crude learning environment, the oppressive hope of school teachers, and the lack of their own English ability are the main sources of pressure.

With the further improvement of teaching methods and observation of students’ behavior, we found that an effective way to improve the “lying flat” phenomenon is to increase communication with students and motivate them to learn. Research has shown that improving staff competencies and optimizing the structure of the educational system can have a positive effect on motivating students and improving the “lying flat” phenomenon. Based on the observation of students’ before and after behavior, we hope to propose new ideas and solutions for the lying-flat phenomenon and educational innovation.

Literature Review

Lying flat represents a low-desire lifestyle, which represents the attitude of some college students toward life: losing motivation to struggle and study hard, living day to day, and having a “sense of powerlessness” for the future (Qi, 2021). The current phenomenon of “lying flat”, the phenomenon of learned helplessness, provides the theoretical basis for a psychological perspective. The phenomenon of learned helplessness was first proposed by American psychologist Martin Seligman as a psychological phenomenon, which refers to the negative pessimistic psychological emotions manifested in the individual’s psyche, thoughts, and behaviors after the organic living organism has been continuously subjected to the experience of failure and frustration (Britannica, 2022). Learned helplessness (LH) has been linked to emotional and motivational deficits in academic performance (Ghasemi & Karimi, 2021). This theory provides an important theoretical support for my study of Balinese junior high school students’ “lying flat”. It means that students’ perceptions of their failures and successes influence their subsequent learning behavior and are likely to impede their perceived competence development (Filippello et al., 2017). This is a negative state in which students feel helpless to change the reality even after studying hard. When a student consistently fails and has negative learning outcomes and attributes them to stable, internal, and uncontrollable factors, he or she is vulnerable to developing school-related helplessness (Weiner, 2010). Motivation can be defined as: “the hypothetical construct used to describe the internal and/or external forces that produce the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour” (Vallerand & Thill, 1993, p. 18, translated from French; Vallerand, 2012). “Intrinsically motivated students want to learn because they are curious, seek knowledge, are interested in self-improvement, and learning gives them satisfaction” (Buckmaster & Carroll, 2009, p. 53). Individuals, according to the organismic approach, want to be

effective (White, 1959), autonomous (DeCharms, 1968), and connected to significant others (Deci & Ryan, 1991) in their attempts to explore, grow, and develop. This innate tendency to grow, however, may be aided, stalled, or stopped due to the organism's susceptibility to environmental influences (Vallerand, 2012).

Educational Innovation Theory

In response to the current lying-flat phenomenon, the consensus view in the field of education to address this problem is to motivate students by furthering the role of education and integrating educational strategies. This paper selects three theories of educational innovation (behaviorism, constructivism and social constructivism, and constructionism), which provide a structured basis for planning and conducting the design of instructional activities (Ertmer & Newby, 2013), and therefore this paper also uses the theories as a basis for designing practical programs for educational innovation.

Behaviorism. The key to behaviorism is to construct, reinforce, and maintain learning stimuli and student responses. The teacher's job under behaviorist theory is to determine which in-class cues elicit student responses and to schedule exercises, i.e., to develop appropriate teaching objectives and instructional guidelines based on student profiles. It is also necessary to improve the teaching environment, such as conducting student regrouping. By arranging the environmental conditions so that students respond correctly in the presence of these target stimuli and these responses (knowledge) are reinforced (Groppe, 1987).

Constructivism and social cognitivism. Constructivism theory emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge and internal mental structures, and that students' thoughts, attitudes, and values have an impact on the learning process (Winne, 1985). This theory focuses on changing the student by encouraging him/her and using appropriate learning programs. Constructivism allows students to remain flexible in their learning patterns rather than forcing them to conform to a strict set of expectations. It suggests the importance of motivational reinforcement, which means that by stimulating, nurturing, and maintaining team members' motivation to learn and achieve, they can spontaneously direct their behavior toward learning. To achieve this effect, teachers can regularly encourage members' progress, build their confidence, and gain motivation to achieve.

Constructionism. Constructionism is a theory that equates learning with the creation of meaning from experience (Bednar, Cunningham, Duffy, & Perry, 1991). For those members who intend to give up because they know little about the upcoming learning task, the use of constructivist learning theory can be used to stimulate interest through interaction between the leader and other group members. This may require advanced communication between teachers, leaders lying flat, and active peer participation in large classes to create a practical and collaborative learning environment.

Based on this study, it is hoped that through innovative educational practices, students can be helped to equate effort with reward, achieve their expected hopes, regain their passion for learning, break free from the anxiety caused by the pressure of survival and class fixation, and liberate themselves from the paralysis of "lying flat" so that they can face their studies and life positively.

English Education in Bali: The Lying Flat Phenomenon and Its Reasons

My impression of Bali is that it is a small island that uses a combination of local Indonesian and English as the language of communication, and that the programs on TV as a streaming medium are in English, so I thought that the children were at least "fluent" and "need to learn more about grammar" before I actually met them. However, though Bali as a world-renowned tourist city, English is widely spoken in the area, according to the

EF EPI (Education First English Proficiency Index) survey (EF, n.d.); the local population has a very low English proficiency rate, ranking 80th out of 112 countries in the world. The majority of the population only speaks the necessary language for communication and is unwilling to learn more English. The reason for this is the disparity between the local demand for English and the level of local education, the difficulty of providing quality English education in local civilian institutions, and the high demand for English in higher education or international education, which further contributes to the lack of motivation of locals to learn English. We have found that there is a clear “lying flat” in the local environment for English learning.

This summer, I went to participate in a typical short-term mission trip organized by LEANIN and Bali NGOs. The participants were small in size, and each mission trip lasted from one week to about three weeks. In the implementation of the teaching activities, each member of the team came from a different university, with different experiences and learning backgrounds; although all of us could teach through LEANIN means, we had the common identity of “international students” and at least one year of full English learning experience, but in the actual lesson, the unexpected problem came up.

Through my laptop camera, it was a humble, dilapidated classroom with the ocean through the window, no desks and chairs, and there just three little girls instead of the nine people the agency instructor told me I needed to face. There girls were with an average age of 13. They were huddled cross-legged in front of the computer, crammed into my line of sight. Contrary to my expectations, the children had a very poor grasp of English. Introducing themselves was the most fluent part of the lesson, and then they said, “We don’t understand, teacher”. Even though I adjusted the difficulty of the prepared classroom games and switched to simpler vocabulary, as a non-Indonesian learner, I was only able to converse with the class in English. The language difference was like a barrier that prevented my curriculum from being accepted by the girls. After I emphasized the game twice but it was still not understood by the students, one teacher in that classroom but I cannot see, tried to translate in Indonesian, and the presence of her voice pulled back the eyes of two children who were no longer looking at me but at the ceiling. But the situation did not improve except after letting the first part of the game go on.

After me was a student from UC Berkeley who introduced herself in very fluent English, but apparently the children did not respond to her lengthy introduction, nor did they understand the meaning of what English sentences she put together in fluent connected speech at a faster pace. After preparing a more complex and challenging curriculum than I had, she was confronted with a much longer period of silence from the children. They had given up trying to grasp the key words in this intense English environment and sat silently in the camera with a “lie down” attitude.

The “lying flat” here is not only during my group’s lesson, but also after the many online teaching and English teaching sessions they have encountered since childhood; they were still only able to “introduce themselves” and say “I don’t understand”. At the same time, I also noticed that the offline teacher who was matched with the online tutor had a distinct accent and stuttering in her English, and was obviously not able to teach English fluently and with high quality even after being separated from the online tutor.

This led me to ask: Through our knowledge of the country, we discussed the reasons for the prevalence of the “lying flat” phenomenon. However, as we can see from the chart below, Indonesia itself has relatively good educational resources and standards compared to other countries in the world.



Figure 1. Universal upper secondary completion.

Source: GEM report team analysis using household survey data. Accessed: Oct. 3, 2022 (Access, n.d.).

This figure shows two types of children, one for children who complete their education level three or five years later than the official completion age, who are defined as timely completion. Other children who complete later than this are defined as ultimate completion. Here are four folds, from top to bottom, Indonesia (timely), Indonesia (ultimate), World (timely), and World (ultimate).

Looking at the figure above, in Lower Secondary, for example, there is just one percentage point gap between timely (89%) and ultimate completion (88%), and higher than the World timely students (74%) and World ultimate students (78%)

As the figure shows, Indonesia's regional completion rate is much higher than the world average, with virtually no gap between children receiving timely education at the lower secondary level and those eventually receiving it, and a high school completion rate of 67%, and globally 55% of youth completing upper secondary school.

However, this phenomenon still existed during our teaching, and the children's poor English expression skills and indifference to learning made us think deeply. Therefore, we further explored the reasons for the phenomenon of "lying flat" in the local area: The reason why the phenomenon of "lying flat" among children was formed is, in my opinion, mainly based on the dual influence of internal objective conditions and external trends, and the strategy adopted by the external conflicts and pressure. The teaching area itself is poor in teaching resources and difficult conditions, the teaching facilities are not fully equipped, there is a lack of effective teaching tools and educational infrastructure, there is a lack of teachers with good English skills, the poor family conditions and school environment cannot help the children's English learning too much, the selection and training mechanism of online teaching college volunteers is not strict, and they are in contact with college students who have been well trained around the world since they were young. The "class gap" spread to them has become

a burden, making them subconscious aware that they cannot break free from their “background of origin” even if they try hard. So these children choose to escape for the purpose of self-protection for a short period of time. “Lying flat” is the psychological state of rebellion, anxiety, confusion, and even extremism when they face the psychological gap between their “real self” and their “ideal self”.

The problems of project matching cannot be ignored. The lack of understanding of the local teaching situation and the actual education level and motivation of the children in the early stage led to the fact that the concrete realization of the overall teaching task was greatly influenced by the subjective will of the volunteers. The problem was exacerbated by the apparently inadequate communication between the two volunteer organizations. Secondly, a strict organizational management mechanism needs to understand the true talent and teaching level of the teaching volunteers, which plays an important role in ensuring that they obey the organizational management, do their duty, and complete their teaching tasks successfully. However, the selection criteria of LEANIN organization are only whether they are overseas students or not, and whether they have the financial ability to pay for the teaching expenses, and they do not provide much training after distributing teaching materials. After the mission, the two organizations did not pay attention to the summary feedback on the effectiveness of the mission, and did not take into account the satisfaction of the local teachers and students, especially the students, with the teachers, teaching contents, and teaching methods, and continued to promote the mission project in a formalistic manner. The children are pushed to sit in the classroom by the teachers’ earnest hope to receive lessons of varying quality, which do not show them the value of learning, and they feel that they have wasted their time and failed the school’s efforts, which brings them pressure, but their own English level is not enough to communicate effectively with the teachers to improve the curriculum. In the long run, “lying flat” is a refuge and buffer for them to escape the clamor of “useless English”.

Educational Innovation: Solutions to the Lying Flat Phenomenon

For individuals, those who “lie flat” will not only deny the meaning of life, deconstruct the value of life, and give up the pursuit of ideals, but will also be depressed and spiritually decadent, and a depressed will will drain the life that should be full, and a decadent spirit will dim the life that should be brilliant. Therefore, we must carry out “educational innovation” to help them find the motivation to learn and get rid of the “lying flat” state.

Teaching is a conscious and purposeful activity. As the designer of this activity, a correct and reasonable curriculum design is an important guarantee of effective teaching for teachers. I will divide the educational innovations for the special online teaching situation of children in “Bali” into three points.

Specific Stratification

First, the most important way to increase student motivation is to use different methods to teach different students. The mechanism of stratification in this middle school split-teaching classes in which students are given to different support teachers and have the teachers teach them is confusing. You cannot rely on the age of students to teach in groups, but should rely on the different levels and types of students to find out the weaknesses of students in the learning process to develop study groups. After the first trial lesson, I designed two questionnaires: One was sent to students to fill out according to their interest and learning level, and one was sent to in-service teachers to fill out according to their understanding of their children’s usual grades/completion of daily assignments/related to English listening and reading comprehension. Based on this, we focused on the students who were “lying flat” in their daily homework and divided them into word recognition and grammar learning

groups according to their learning deficiencies. I also quickly drafted a lesson plan, first determining the curriculum goals for the average Balinese beginner, and then simplifying and reducing the goals for the average student to get the current curriculum goals for these children's level. The three children who applied to work with me had a conversation outside of the curriculum to further understand their mastery of English.

Promote Interactive Effectiveness

Increase communication. The main problem of inefficient online teaching is the lack of immediate and effective interaction between learners, learners and teachers.

Without the appropriate participation and guidance of in-service teachers, students are isolated in the face of unfamiliar teachers, which increases the likelihood of failure or ineffective learning and makes learning less effective. Effective interaction between teachers and students and between student groups is the key to improving classroom quality.

Effective interaction is an important way to improve classroom quality and an important part of distance learning quality assurance. Therefore, I urge local secondary school teachers to join the classroom to learn together. Students simply receive information resources in online teaching courses, because language barriers and teacher inaction make volunteer teachers and students relatively separated/lack of interaction and communication. Students are only passively receiving information and learning from the course, not simply acquiring resources. The current situation of "lying flat" students in the Bali online program requires more guidance from familiar teachers, more interaction between school teachers and students, and encouragement for students to interact with each other.

Improve the teaching ability of in-service teachers. Comprehensively improving the teaching ability of in-service teachers is the fundamental way to solve the lack of quality teacher resources in schools with weak basic education resources. Vallerand, Fortier, and Guay (1997) proposed in a study with Michelle Fortier and Fre'de'ric Guay, now Professor of Education at the Universite' Laval, that the lower the autonomy support provided by the social context (especially the behaviors of teachers, parents, and the school administration), the less positive the students' self-perceptions of competence and autonomy, and, consequently, the lower students' levels of self-determined school motivation. And the target audience of "online teaching" should not only be the students in the corresponding schools, but also the teachers of the schools should be assisted in teaching. Taking this teaching experience as an example, since local NGOs in Bali and LEANIN have a long-term cooperation program, why not expand the scale and let teachers summarize the content that they feel is difficult to teach, and apply in advance for "air support" from volunteers from key schools, through more than 10 times in a semester or a year for teacher training? Through "online support" serves another educational innovation: helping teachers in weak schools grow quickly into excellent teachers. The increase in the level of teachers allows the students to have a better experience and accumulate their knowledge, which increases their enthusiasm and motivation. At present, basic education information technology facilities are relatively complete; even if school infrastructure is difficult to meet the needs of students "one-on-one" online learning, most schools or individual teachers have the hardware facilities to participate in online teaching and research activities, so that teachers can be targeted to improve teaching to promote student motivation.

Stimulating Interest

How to stimulate students' intrinsic enthusiasm for learning to get rid of the "lying flat" status quo is one of the key points of this paper, and based on the application of big data technology, teachers can integrate relevant

resources to carry out rich teaching design outside the textbook to guide students to learn more knowledge and cultures of different countries. For example, when I was teaching the last lesson, I was unable to take students to China for an immersive visit to the museum, so I chose the content of the visit to meet the students' needs through the Internet, and used 3D real-world visit to let students use online video sharing to visit, in order to enrich students' extracurricular activities and spare time, so that they could learn more knowledge and be exposed to more, for example, excellent Chinese culture. In the online tour learning, teachers also need to do to guide students to learn to use big data technology to continuously enrich their knowledge base and life experience. In addition, I also assign after-school assignments unrelated to English learning, asking them to collect myths and legends and cultural customs about countries around the world, etc., and bring the parts they find interesting to share in class, prompting students to take the initiative to use big data technology and other Internet technologies, so that they can develop good learning habits and independent learning awareness in the process of collecting and learning on their own.

Conclusion

Educational innovation is a long-term and gradual process to improve an educational phenomenon. The online teaching innovation mentioned in this paper should not be a simple pile-up of traditional teaching and online teaching. The phenomenon of "lying flat" in Bali teaching practice is not only because students lose their enthusiasm for learning because they are dissatisfied with the difference in their own level, but also because of the contradiction between external resources and internal pressure caused by the deviation in the selection of teaching resources, the construction of curriculum system, the implementation of teaching strategies, and the design of assessment and evaluation methods. It is also a contradiction between external resources and internal pressure brought about by the deviation in the setting of teaching resources, the construction of curriculum, the implementation of teaching strategies, and the design of assessment and evaluation methods. These contradictions intensify the "learned helplessness" of students. Based on the behaviorism, constructivism, and constructionism of educational innovation, we investigated the impact of educational innovation on the phenomenon of "lying flat" through different teaching methods and modes for local students in a teaching activity. The study found that three levels of educational reform can have a positive impact on the phenomenon of "lying flat": re-stratification of teaching, increasing effective communication between students and teachers while strengthening teachers' personal teaching skills, and stimulating students' interest in learning through online resources. The enthusiasm and attitude of the Balinese students have improved significantly during the time they have been teaching online, as well as the learning outcomes they have achieved. The consolidation of these results requires the educator to invest enough time and effort afterwards. Only through continuous teaching practice and reflection, and further optimization of teaching design, can we achieve our teaching goals more effectively, save the children from "lying flat", and cultivate talents with truly innovative thinking and practical ability.

Our research provides new avenues for future research; based on the socioeconomic and cultural factors unique to Balinese students, we propose educational innovations that will hopefully shed light on the phenomenon of educational "lying flat" in other regions. Here we consider whether these educational initiatives have been effective in addressing the current situation of education lying-flat in China, and what challenges that education will face in a future where the Internet is more and more closely integrated with offline and online education. We also hope that scholars will conduct more research in this area in the future.

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