

Motivation

What Is Student Motivation ?

Student motivation naturally has to do with student's desire to participate in the learning process . But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities . Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task , the sources of their motivation may differ .

A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity " for its own sake , for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes " (Mark Lepper 1988) An Extrinsically motivated student performs " in order to obtain some rewards or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself such as grades , stickers , or teachers approval (Lepper) .

The term motivation to learn has a slightly different meaning . It is defined by one author as " the meaningfulness , value , and benefits of academic tasks to the learner regardless of whether or not they are intrinsically interesting "(Hermine Marshall 1987) .

Another notes that motivation to learn is characterized by long – term , quality involvement in learning and commitment to the process of learning (Carole Ames 1990) .

What Factors Influence the Development of Students` Motivation ?

According to Jere Brophy (1987) . motivation to learn is a competence acquired " through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling , communication of expectations , and direct instruction or socialization by significant others: (especially parents and teachers) .

Children's home environment shapes the initial constellation of attitudes they develop toward learning when parents nurture their children's nature curiosity about the world by welcoming their questions , encouraging exploration , and familiarizing them with resources that can enlarge their world , they are giving their children message that learning is worthwhile and frequently fun and satisfying

When children are raised in a home that nurtures a sense of self – worth , competence autonomy , and self- efficiency , they will be more apt to accept the risks inherent in learning .Conversely ,when children do not view themselves as basically competent and able , their freedom to engage in academically challenging pursuits and capacity to tolerate and cope with failure are greatly diminished .

Once children start school , they begin forming beliefs about their school- related successes and failures . The sources to which children attribute their successes (commonly effort , ability , luck, or level of task difficulty and failures (often lack of ability or lack of effort) have important implications for how they approach and cope with learning situations.

The beliefs teachers themselves have about teaching and learning and the nature of the expectations they hold for student also exert a powerful influence (Ranffini) . As Deborah

Stipek (1988) notes, to a very large degree , student expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn .

School goals, policies , and procedures also interact with calssroom climate and practices to affirm or alter student`s increasingly complex learning – related attitudes and beliefs .

And developmental changes comprise one more strand of the motivational web . For example , although young children tend to maintain high expectations for success even in the face of repeated failure , older students do not . And although younger children tend to see effort as uniformly positive , older children view it as a " double – edged sword " (Ames) . To them, failure following high effort appears to carry more negative implications – especially for their self – concept of ability – than failure that results from minimal or no effort .

Are there Advantages To Intrinsic Motivation ? Does it really matter whether students are primarily intrinsically or extrinsically oriented toward learning ? A growing body of evidence suggests that it does .

When intrinsically motivated , students tend to employ strategies that demand more effort and that enable them to process information more deeply (Lepper) .

J . Condry and J . Chambers (1987) found that when students were confronted with complex intellectual tasks , those with an intrinsic orientation used more logical information – gathering and decision – making strategies than did students who were extrinsically oriented

Students with an intrinsic orientation also tend to prefer tasks that are moderately challenging , whereas extrinsically oriented students gravitate toward tasks that are low in degree of difficulty. . Extrinsically oriented students are inclined to put forth the minimal amount of effort necessary to get the maximal reward (Lepper) .

Although every educational activity cannot , and perhaps should not be intrinsically motivating , these findings suggest that when teachers can capitalize on existing intrinsic motivation , there are several potential benefits .

How can Motivation To Learn Be Fostered In The School Setting ?

Although student` motivational histories accompany them into each new classroom setting , it is essential for teachers to view themselves as " Active socialization agents capable of stimulating ... student motivation to learn " (Brophy 1987) .

Classroom climate is important . If students experience the classroom as a caring , supportive place where their is a sense of belonging and every one is valued and respected , they will tend to participate more fully in the process of learning .

Various task dimensions can also foster motivation to learn . Ideally, tasks should be challenging but a chievable . Relevance also promotes motivation, as does " contextualizing " learning that is helping students to see how skills can be applied in the real world (Lepper

Tasks that involve a " moderate amount of discrepancy or incongruity " are beneficial because they stimulate students` curioisity . " an intrinsic motivator (Lepper)"

In addition , defining tasks in term of specific , short- term goals can assist students to associate effort with suces (Stipek) . Verbally noting the purposes of specific tasks when introducing them to student is also beneficial (Brophy 1986) .

Extrinsic rewards , on the other hand , should be used with caution , for they have the potential for decreasing existing intrinsic motivation

What Can Be Done To Help Unmotivated Students ?

A first step for educators to recognize that even when students use strategies that are ultimately self-defeating (such as withholding effort, cheating , procrastination , and so forth) . Their goals are actually to protect their sense of self – worth (Raffini) .

A process called "Attribution Retraining" , which involve modeling socialization , and practice exercises , is sometimes used with discouraged students . The goals of attribution retraining are to help students to: (1) concentrate on the tasks rather than becoming distracted by fear of failure , (2) respond to frustration by retracing their steps to find mistakes or figuring out alternative ways of approaching a problem instead of giving- up (3) attribute their failure to insufficient effort, lack of information , or reliance on ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability (Brophy 1986) .

Other potentially useful strategies include the following : portary effort as investment rather than risk , portary skill devlopment as incremental and domain – specific , focus on mastery (Brophy 1986) .

Because the potential pay off – having students who value learning for its own sake --is priceless for parents , teachers , and school leader to devote themselves fully to engendering , maintaining , and rekindeling student`s motivation to learn .

Motivation and Motivating in EFL

Introduction

In grappling with the subject of motivation in the foreign language classroom , we will eschew a discussion of its various types , as they have been researched and talked about to death . In this paper , we will briefly examine a variety of techniques , strategies and micro strategies which teachers can employ in order to motivate their students . As Dornyei (2001 : 116) notes , " teachers skills in motivating learnes should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness " Even though there have been a lot of education-oriented publications providing taxonomies of classroom-specific motives , they fall short of offering an efficient guide to practitioners . Thus , our main goal is to familiarise any putative " practitioners " with a set of techniques and startegies (henceforward , " motivational strategies ") for motivating in the foreign language students .

Power in the classroom

Prior to presenting some of these motivational strategies , it would be of relevance to say few things about the teacher / learner relationship .

Whichever way we look at it , this relationship is riddled with power and status . For many , power plays a large part in the relationship (see " language and power in education " for further details) . The rights and duties of teachers and learners are related to power . For example , many teachers might assert that they have the right to punish those learners who misbehave . In any social encounter involving two or more people , there are certain power relationships " which are almost always asymmetrical " (Wright, 1987:17). Social psychologists distinguish between three different types of power – coercive , reward-based, and referent (ibid). The basis of coercive power is punishment . Some individuals or institutions have the authority to punish others. The basis of the second type of power is reward . Some individuals or institutions have the power to reward what they deem appropriate behaviour . For example , business organisations reward employees with a salary , a bonus etc. The basis of the third type of power is motivation . In this case , individuals or institutions appeal to the commitment and interest of others . In view of this three-fold paradigm, it is of importance to concern ourselves with the fostering of learner motivation, as it is considered to be the most effective and proactive, so to speak, power relationship .

Group processes and motivation

A discussion of motivation and motivational strategies would not be complete without a consideration of group processes , in as much as there is usually a group of people that we as teachers are called on to motivate . Tuckman (1969, quoted in Argyle, 1969) established that a group went through four stages from its formation , which has important implications for the study of the classroom and the use of group activities during teaching .

Stage 1 Forming : At first , there is some anxiety among the members of the group, they are dependent on the leader (that is, the teacher) and they have to find out what behaviour is acceptable .

Stage 2 Storming : There is a conflict between sub- groups and rebellion against the leader . Members of the group resist their leader and the role relations attending the function of the group are questioned .

Stage 3 Norming : The group begins to develop a sort of cohesion . Members of the group begin to support each other . At this stage, there is co-operation and open exchange of views and feelings about their roles and each other .

Stage 4 Performing : Most problems are resolved and there is a great deal of interpersonal activity. Everyone is devoted to complete the tasks they have been assigned .

Experience shows that almost every group goes through these four (or even more) stages until it reaches equilibrium and , thus, taps into its potential . In reality , this process may go on forever, since student lethargy and underachievement norms in the classroom are considered to be basic hindrances to effective teaching and learning (Daniels, 1994) . Against this background, we will try to design a framework for motivational strategies .

A framework for motivational strategies

As we have already said , skill in motivating students to learn is of paramount importance. Until recently , however , teachers were forced to rely on " bag-of-tricks " approaches in

their attempt to manage their classroom and motivate their learners . Good and Broohy (1994 : 212) hold that these approaches have been influenced by two contradictory views:a) that learning should be fun and that any motivation problems that may appear should be ascribed to the teacher's attempt to convert an enjoyable activity to drudgery; and b) that school activities are inherently boring and unrewarding , so that we must rely on extrinsic rewards and punishment with a view to forcing students to engage in these unpleasant tasks .

Reward and punishment may be a mainstay of the teaching-learning process, but they are not the only tools in teachers' arsenal . Dornyei (2001:119) believes that " the spectrum of other potentially more effective motivational strategies is so broad that it is hard to imagine that none of them would work .

The central question in designing a framework of motivational strategies is to decide how to organise them into separate themes . The following taxonomy, is based on the process-oriented model by Dornyei and Otto (1998) . The key units in this taxonomy are as follows :

- Creating the basic motivational conditions, which involves setting the scene for the use of motivational strategies
- Generating student motivation, which roughly corresponds to the preactional phase in the model
- Maintaining and protecting motivation, which corresponds to the actional phase
- Encouraging positive self-evaluation, which corresponds to the postactional phase

Creating the basic motivational conditions

Motivational strategies cannot work in a vacuum, nor are they set in stone . There are certain preconditions to be met before any attempts to generate motivation can be effective . Some of these conditions are the following :

- a. Appropriate teacher behaviour and good teacher-student rapport
- b. A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere
- c. A cohesive learner group characterised by appropriate group norms

a. Appropriate teacher behaviour and good teacher-student rapport

Whatever is done by a teacher has a motivational , formative, influence on students . In other words, teacher behaviour is a powerful " motivational tools " (Dornyei,2001:120) . Teacher influences are manifold, ranging from the rapport with the students to teacher behaviour which " prevail upon " and/or " attract " students to engage in tasks. For Alison (1993) a key element is to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the learners, by means of talking with them on a personal level . This mutual trust could lead to enthusiasm . At any rate, enthusiastic teachers impart a sense of commitment to, and interest in , the subject matter, not only verbally but also non-verbally – cues that students take from them about how to behave.

b. A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere

It stands to reason that a tense classroom climate can undermine learning and demotivate learners (see Macintyre, 1999 and yung,1999 for further details) . On the other hand , learner motivation will reach its peak in a safe classroom climate in which students can express their opinions and feel that they do not run the risk of being ridiculed .

To be motivated to learn, students need both ample opportunities to learn and steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts. Because such motivation is unlikely to develop in a chaotic classroom, it is important that the teacher organise and manage the classroom as an effective learning environment . Furthermore, because anxious or alienated students are unlikely to develop motivation to learn, it is important that learning occur within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere (Good and Brophy, 1994:215).

A cohesive learner group characterised by appropriate group norms

As was hinted at above, fragmented groups , characterised by lack of cooperativeness, can easily become ineffective, thus putting paid to the individual members' commitment to learn . There are several factors that promote group cohesiveness , such as the time spent together and shared group history , learning about each other , interaction , innergroup competition , common threat , active presence of the leader (see Ehrman and Dornyei , 1998:142) .

As for group norms , they should be discussed and adopted by members , in order to be constructive and long-lasting . If a norm mandated by a teacher fails to be accepted as proper by the majority of the class members , it will not become a group norm .

Motivation has been called the " neglected heart " of language teaching . As teachers , we often forget that all of our learning activities are filtered through our students `motivation . In this sense , students control the flow of the classroom . Without student motivation there is no pulse , there is no life in the class . When we learn to incorporate direct approaches to generating student motivation in our teaching , we will become happier and more successful teachers .

Why is motivation so important in EFL ?

The issue of motivation , particularly in EFL settings , is so important that other consideration about teaching methodology seem to be pale in comparison . It is the essence of language teaching because of the stark realities of learning English for most of our students . All of the condition that we know contribute to successful second language acquisition are lacking in most EFL contexts : there just isn't enough English input in the environment , there probably aren't enough opportunities for interaction with English speakers , there usually aren't enough strong role models promoting the learning of English , and there may not be widespread enough social acceptance for the idea of becoming proficient in English . Because of these adverse conditions , a learner has to have extraordinary motivation in order to succeed at learning English .

What does the research on motivation tell us ?

The research on motivation defines motivation as an orientation toward a goal . (this orientation may be positive , negative , or ambivalent) . Motivation provides a source of energy that is responsible for why learners decide to make an effort , how long they are willing to sustain an activity , how hard they are going to pursue it , and how connected they feel to the activity .

Because igniting and sustaining a source of positive energy is so vital to ultimate success , every thing the teacher does in the language classroom has two goals . One is , of course , to further language development , and the other is to generate motivation for continued learning . Much of the research on motivation has confirmed the fundamental principle of causality : motivation affects effort, effort affects results , positive results lead to an increase in ability . What this suggests, of course , is that by improving students` motivation we are actually amplifying their ability in the language and fueling their ability to learn .

What specific approaches can teachers take to generate motivation ?

A number of initiatives in SLA researches over the past decade have helped clarify our understanding of motivation and the specific psychological and behavioral components of motivation that teachers can influence in preparing for teaching classes on TESOL methodology . We can identify three levels or layers of motivation in language learning that are " operational, " or accessible to direct influence by the teacher. to the extent that a teacher can tap into any or all of these layers, he or she is more likely to become a " motivating " teacher .

The first layer of motivation :Finding your passion :

The first layer or the central core of motivation is what might be called " finding your passion " I would argue that all successful learning – not only language learning – is somehow connected to learner's passion . Passion , in this sense , means a person`s central goals in life , the things the learner cares about most , the things that move him or her emotionally . I don`t mean that a learner needs to become passionate about learning English in order to succeed rather , the learner needs to find a way to connect English learning to his or her real passion in life .

The teacher can help learners to bring their passion into the classroom in several ways . One is by introducing " hot elements in the classroom – music , movies , fads, current topics , personalities , games and so on – in order to trigger learners` real interests . The teacher can use these triggers to build a class culture . If we introduce or if we allow the learners themselves to bring in , samples of current songs , clippings of famous people , or photos or video clips , we invite greater engagement in the classroom .

Another way of helping learners to find their passion is by organizing class activities around the theme of self- expression . There are a number of approaches here :personalized tasks , idea journals , speaking circles, interactive questionnaires when learners realize that the content of the class is their personal lives , and that the teacher responds to them as people , not just as language learners , we invite a deeper level of commitment and motivation .

A third way of generating passion is through the psychological principle of "immediacy" using yourself as a model of enthusiasm and motivation for learning.

The second layer of motivation : Changing your reality :

In virtually every language learning setting, but particularly in EFL settings, learners cannot make and sustain sufficient progress in the L2 because they do not receive enough instructions, not nearly enough attention in class, not nearly enough input or meaningful interaction or opportunities for serious output. Some studies in language immersion have estimated that a typical learner needs a minimum of four hours a week of quality contact with a language in order to make progress. Even if this estimate is not true for all, learners need more language instruction than we can provide in our classrooms. Learners need more quality instruction – input, interaction, and opportunities for meaningful output – not only to make progress, but in order to maintain a sufficiently strong connection to the language and to build their own motivation for learning.

In my own language teaching and in my material development, I now consider it a major part of my job to help students find opportunities for engaging learning tasks outside the classroom. Helping learners find quality "homework" is essential to maintain quality learning in the classroom. The ideas are endless: direct student to quality language learning websites or "build your own, as many teachers have done" make available quality audio, video, and multimedia learning sources, develop a small library of accessible readers and supplementary materials and self-access quizzes, worksheets and games. Spending classroom time to help students select, share, and evaluate their out-of-class work with English is just as important as covering a lesson in the textbook.

Helping students "change their reality" means moving them toward seeing language learning in a different way. It means helping them take simple, self-directed steps to make choices about learning. The first step is the most important, because it's the one that can ignite this layer of motivation.

The third layer of motivation : connecting to learning activities :

Connecting refers to the engagement of intention, attention, and memory in the activity itself. All teachers want their students to connect with the learning activities we prepare, yet we often fail to take concrete steps that will lead to better connection. Here are a few "connecting principles" that I try to employ in my own teaching materials, such as World View:

- Use personalized warm ups to lead into an activity. This creates relevance – an essential condition for memory to work effectively.

Aim to get all students involved in the warm up.

- Make each learning activity as vivid and tangible as possible. Use provocative topics. Include visual aids (pictures, charts) and tangible references (games, boards, index,

cards) to engage students` attention . Provide variety in your learning activities so that students can try out different learning styles:

(interpersonal, kinesthetic , musical , etc..)

- Make sure that each learner is involved , and every one has an intention in every activity . Assign roles in pair and group activities . Monitor as closely as you can to be sure that each student , especially the shy and weaker ones , remains , active

"It's important to have everyone on board"

-Include inductive learning in your lesson . Be sure that students have an opportunity to discover things on their own – grammar points , pragmatic patterns , new vocabulary . Give students a chance to reflect . It`s always easier to teach deductively through direct presentation , but discovery learning is more meaningful and more permanent .

Provide feedback on all levels of language progress . Progress in language involves more than just gradual mastery of grammar and vocabulary . Give feedback on elements of performance that affects students` motivation : their success in an activity and their level of engagement.

Conclusion :

Becoming a " motivating teacher "

A great deal of research has been done in the area of motivation and why it is so fundamental to second language learning .

The underlying issues related to motivation are complex , but it is clear that every person`s motivation to learn is flexible rather than fixed . As teachers , we can directly influence our students` motivation about learning English.

The " three layers of motivation " is one way of conceptualizing how a teacher influence each student . If we can make progress with our students in each of these layers , we can become more motivating teachers and bring " the heart of language teaching " into our classrooms .

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