

WAYS OF MOTIVATING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The word “motivation” is typically defined as the forces that account for the arousal, selection, direction and continuation of behavior. Actually, it is often used to describe certain sorts of behavior. A student who studies hard and tries for top grades may be described as being “highly motivated”, while his/her friend may say that he is “finding it hard to get motivated”. Such statements imply that motivation has a major influence on our behavior.

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Motivation can be defined as a concept used to describe the factors within an individual which arouse, maintain and channel behavior towards a goal. Another way to say this is that that motivation is goal-directed behavior. It can be:

1) “Pair work” or “Group work”

One of the successful ways if the teacher is resourceful and skillful enough to motivate his/her students to participate in the lesson is to use “pair work” or “group work| appropriately. Language is best learned through the close collaboration and communication among students. This types of collaboration results in benefits for all or both learners. In fact, learners can help one another while working on different types of tasks such as writing dialogues, interviews, drawing pictures and making comments about them, play roles, etc. Researches on Second Language Acquisition have shown that learners have differences in mastering skills. While one students is good in drawing, another can be good in expressing ideas verbally; a third other student can be good at role play and imitation. Besides, some students find it less stressful if not much comfortable to learn certain roles or usage of language from their peers and comrades from their teachers. Finally, communicative language teaching requires a sense of community and an environment of trust and mutual confidence which “pair work” or “group work” can provide.

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2) The seating of the students

The way the students are seated in the classroom will often determine the dynamics of the lesson. Indeed, a simple change in the seating pattern can make an incredible difference to group coherence and student satisfaction, and I've seen many other cases where seating has been a crucial element in the success and failure of the lesson. The seating pattern you use may, in some cases, not be fully under your control – if for example, the desks are fixed to the ground or the school has strict rules about not moving the furniture. Students numbers are also going to be an issue. I'll talk about average size classes – anything from 6 to 25. Teachers have different preferences for seating arrangements – groups seated around small tables are often one choice. This is probably the best option for the larger classes in this range but for smaller numbers and with adult or teenage students I think the horseshoe shape which I find has all of the advantages of groups, and none of disadvantages. A horseshoe may be desks in U-shape with a hollow centre, students in a semicircle on chairs with arm-rests and no desks, or students seated around three sides of a large table, with a teacher at one end. In any case, whatever seating pattern you choose or is imposed on you, the class is likely to be more successful if you keep the following principles in mind:

a) Try and maximize eye contact

Both teacher to student and student to student. In full class phase of the lesson, if a person who is speaking does not have eye contact with the others, then attention is likely to drop. This is the main reason I personally think the horseshoe shape to groups is better.

b) Make sure students are seated at a comfortable distance from each other

Make sure you don't have one student alone or outside the group. Besides, try to leave a fair empty but not so much space because large distances between the students will tend to lead to a "muted" atmosphere, low pace, and less active student participation in the class.

c) Think in advance about how you will organize changing partners or changing groups

This is a stage of the lesson which can potentially descend into chaos if it's not tightly controlled, with students wandering aimlessly around not knowing where to go or confidently moving to the wrong place.

d) The Error Correction

It is always asked whether we should correct all students' errors, whenever they occur. The reasonable answer is that if we stop at every single error and treat it with no room for errors to take place, this will lead to a gap of communication and students will be too much afraid to make mistakes. Hence, due to being too much obsessed with making errors, students will be too much reluctant to participate. Thus, teachers should be aware of when to correct errors and how to do without any hurt and humiliation. In a learner-centered classroom, it should be better to correct errors, which students make unconsciously whenever there is a gap of communication or when not treating the error will result in a misunderstanding of the expressed idea.

Concerning the ways of how to correct errors, there are several techniques which the teacher who is seen the monitor, should choose from them according to the type of the error and task where incorrect form of language occurs. Among these ways of correction we can state: self-correction, peer correction and teacher correction.

e) Role Play

This is another technique to vary the pace and the lesson, and respond to the fundamental notion of variety in teaching. Teachers are advised to use the role play activity in order to motivate this students and to help the less motivated learners to take part in the lesson. Besides certain tasks in the Student`s Book are followed by a role -play activity where it becomes a necessity to undergo such an activity. As good examples of that we can state: the hide (item) and guessing game, dramatizing an interview of customer and shop assistant, doctor and patient conversation, etc...

f) Using realia, flash cards, stories and songs in teaching

Realia and flash cards are considered as important tools in teaching especially a foreign language since they play the role of a facilitator in teaching new vocabulary such as fruits, vegetables, clothes items, etc... Besides they are very helpful in drawing especially beginners` attention to follow and match new words to items. In addition, realia is an authentic material that helps the teacher to overcome classroom artificiality. Creating stories with the students is another way of developing speaking and writing skills. Actually, creating stories is grounded in the student`s ability to create a story from their personal experience. In creating stories some issues are revealed such as:

- a) fluency
- b) whether the students have enough language to create the story, and
- c) accuracy.

Teachers are able to demonstrate techniques of using songs in different ways to teach grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and community building because the students like songs and they motivate the students to learn the English language in an interesting way. Teachers can elicit students` ideas about the song through activities such as prediction, mind maps, word splashes, tec. Students discuss questions such as the feelings in the song, what will happen next, etc. and write their responses in an interesting manner. Students may write and present the song which makes them feel and then draw a picture of feelings while listening the song. |Teachers respond to this presentation and ask questions. Then feedback is provided from a) the group.

g) Using audio visual materials: video, computer

Since our educational establishments are equipped with various audio-visual materials such as cassette recorders, videos, computers, projectors, magic boards and many others, teachers should use these materials when teaching. Indeed, they should include the appropriate material to use in planning their lesson plans. For instance, we should include a cassette player in the lesson based on listening while we need to include a computer in an e-lesson

or a lesson about designing a website or an internet page about your school. Whereas we can use an overhead projector in presenting writing drafts for peer correction or to read.

h) Using L1 in the EFL/ESL classroom

Should we or shouldn't we use the students' first language (L1) in the classroom? This is one of the questions which most divides EFL/ESL teachers whether they are for it or against it. The main argument against the use of L1 in language teaching is that students will become dependent on it and not even try to understand meaning from the context and explanation, or express what they want to say within their limited command of the target language (L2). But there are other historical reasons why the use of the students' mother tongue went out of favor.

Initially it was part of a reaction against the Grammar-translation method which had dominated in late 19th and early 20th century and which saw language learning as a means towards intellectual development rather than as being for utilitarian communicative purposes.

But we can say that there are a few cases when we can resort to the students' mother tongue. When there is a gap of communication or total misunderstanding since it can prevent time being wasted on fruitless explanations and instructions when it could be better spent on language practice:

- It can be used contrastively to point out problem areas of grammar. For example, various course books like Headway or Inside-Out, now encourage students to translate model sentences into their own language in order to compare and contrast the grammar.
- It can be used with beginners, when students are trying to say something but having difficulty, they can say it in their own language and the teacher can reformulate it for them.
- When students need to combine the two languages for example in those lessons whose focus evolve around translation and interpreting.

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