



TEACHERS CAN MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO LEARN

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received May 30 th 2021 Accepted: June 20 th 2021 Published: July 22 nd 2021	Teaching English as a foreign language for Iranian students are required from first grade of guidance school. I have taught English in guidance school high school pre-university and university. Many students do poorly on assignments or in participation because they do not understand what to do or why they should do it. As I faced these problems I asked myself how do I motivate my students to learn English. This article provides some strategies and ideas which increasing students desire to learn.

Keywords: Motivation, student learner high school foreign language

Learning English as an international language has a great importance in different levels of education in Iran, but unfortunately most of the students are not satisfied with their abilities in English after studying it for several years in their school. Certainly there are different reasons for this problem, but one of the reasons which is the concern of this article is lack of motivation. Motivation has been widely accepted by teachers and researcher as of the key factor that influence the rate and success of foreign language learning. Keeping your students motivated to learn is one of the biggest challenges any teacher faces.

However, children and teenagers often haven't made their own decision to attend the English class and they are obliged either by their parents or school to do so. It is sometimes appropriate for teachers to take an active role in trying to improve the motivation levels of a group. A highly motivated group of students is generally a lot easier and more fun to teach. Obviously there's only so much you can do, but most teachers have come across de-motivated students at some time in their careers and it's often worth addressing the problem when you recognise it before it escalates further. Don't however feel personally responsible for a student's lack of motivation. There are often many factors that contribute towards a lack of motivation and these should be taken into account. Here are some ideas that I've put together which may go some way towards increasing motivation levels in a group or at least addressing the problems and bringing them out into the open.

Star charts and effort charts

Star charts are a simple way to acknowledge the effort students make in your class. If your students are too grown up to get stars think up another point

system. Draw up a chart with all the students' names down one side and at the end of each class mark a smiley face or an A, B, C or D for effort. Introduce the idea at the beginning of the class and explain your marking system. Try to get the students to endorse the idea of the chart before you implement it. You could work with the group to decide how they would like their effort to be recorded. When they get used to the idea of this sort of evaluation you can ask the students to rate themselves on their performance in the class.

Set goals

Try to negotiate some realistic goals with the group. What do they want to be able to do in English by the end of the course? Find out, and think of ways of achieving those goals together. Achieving the goals will take effort on both parts, it's not only up to you; so be sure they accept their part of the bargain and take some responsibility for their own learning goals.

Progress markers

All language learners know that there are times when you seem to be getting nowhere and making no progress. You reach a plateau and there seems to be no way to get better. If this is the case for some of your students take a snap shot of where the learners are. By this I mean gather some evidence of their level by keeping a piece of their written work, recording them on tape or keeping the results of a test. Then set a date in the future (end of term or Easter holidays) and tell them they will redo the piece of work at the future date. When they have done this, give them back the old piece of work and look for evidence of improvement. Did they make less mistakes or use a bigger range of vocabulary the second time?



Usually this helps students to 'see' their improvement in a more tangible way.

Questionnaires

How do your students feel about learning English? How do they feel about it becoming an 'international language'? Some students resent the widespread use of English and can even see it as a threat to their mother tongue. Designing a questionnaire about the student's attitudes towards English may be a nice way to bring their feelings out into the open.

Feedback sheets

Asking for feedback on your classes can be a daunting thought! You leave yourself open to both positive and negative comments. However, it is one way to show that you are thinking about your learners. Simple questions such as which activities they enjoy and feel they benefit most from will help you to plan the classes and select activities for each group. Remember that you will never please all your students all the time!

Personalise

Find out what your students are into and base your lesson around their interests. If you discover that a few members of the class like a certain group or singer you could ask them to bring in the CD and make an activity out of the lyrics. Or if there are several members who support the same football team you could get some information from the internet or some pictures of the team and base an activity around that. Personalising classes is also about giving the students to find out about you. Obviously it's up to you to decide how much you want to give away but you will be a lot more interesting to the class than the photo of Billy in their text book! If you haven't already, bring in some photos of friends and family from home to show them. Most students will be fascinated.

Look outside the classroom

Encourage your students to look at how English is used outside the classroom and exploit any examples you can find. The internet is an obvious source of authentic English, but also advertising, tourist information, menus, original version films etc. This should remind students that learning English can be useful in all sorts of areas of their lives. If you have any students who have travelled to an English speaking country use their experiences with the group.

Think to the future

Do your students think they will ever need to use English in the future? Will they have more job opportunities with a higher level of English? If it is the

case that some of your students may answer yes to these questions it may be worth while reminding students of this. Find some local job advertisements where English is required. You could base a lesson around jobs and offer help with writing CVs. For some of the students this may make students think of English as more than just another subject and more as a tool to help them achieve their future goals.

Here is brief overview on motivations that are applied in my classrooms:

1. As English is most common current tool for international business communication, I encouraged the students to see the international value of it
2. As there is no chance to use target language or interact with native speakers, I tried to make the class more real world. As long as completing a realistic task is foremost in their minds, nature takes over and makes them want to do it even if they're not likely to have to use English in that situation in real life, they can still see how it can be used in that situation and that's very motivating.
3. By beginning with the examples, evidence, stories, and so forth and driving at conclusion, later, I could maintain interest and increase motivation and make the lesson interesting and challenging. For example instead of telling them about the grammar rules give them several examples some clues, and then let them work it out for themselves. Often this mental challenging and need for logic has much more motivating than a game.
4. In foreign language classes it is better to get students involved in activities, group problem solving exercise, helping to decide what to do and the best way to do it, working with each other, instead of standing in front of students and lecturing at them.
5. Attending to need satisfaction is a primary method of keeping students interested and happy. They do amount of hard work if they are convinced that they are learning ultimately meets their needs.
6. I used visual aids in lessons. We can provide better learning by attaching images to the ideas we want to convey. Use slides, drawing, pictures, charts or other items to help learner visualize concepts.
7. I shared parts of myself with students, especially little stories of problems and mistakes I made either as children or even recently. Students should know insecurity and error are common to everyone. Students respond with interest and motivations teachers who appear to be human and caring.
8. I used small rewards as positive reinforcement for learning advancements and good behavior. Give out little treats to students who earn high scores on their homework and tests, or provide a modest prize for the winners of group games. I let students watch a popular movies or TV show in English at the end of



productive lesson. For good performance extrinsic motivation in the form of rewards can be helped.

9. I enjoyed the language, and the teaching, and the class. Being energetic in our teaching is a motivating factor in itself, adding energy to the ideas we want to convey will further enhance learning and communication to the ideas.

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