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MOTIVATING STUDENTS IN EFL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT: Motivation is the most important issue in our lives, because we cannot be happy and successful, if there is no motivation in our lives. Firstly, we should motivate ourselves and then we should help our friends and colleagues to motivate themselves. If we can learn how to motivate our learners, we can experience many enjoyable courses. Motivation has been defined by Cherry (2014) as:

" the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge."

This paper deals with the motivational games and activities which we can use for our students in ELT classes and for ourselves. Different language levels will be considered and useful websites and books will be suggested to find and to use these kinds of games and activities.

KEYWORDS: Motivation ; Vision; Useful Web-sites; Sample Classroom Activities

INTRODUCTION

There are always lots of obstacles and problems in our daily lives. These obstacles and problems sometimes make some people unhappy and they feel themselves weak and unhealthy. Motivation is essential to struggle against the problems people have. People feel themselves stronger when they know how to motivate themselves. Motivation has been a very important element in learning and teaching for ages. It is still very necessary in all areas of teaching and learning.

This study is based on the classroom observations of my own teaching situation to answer the question " How can I motivate my students to make them more active and more talkative during the EFL or the ESL classes such as reading, speaking, listening and writing? "

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What is motivation?

Hadfield and Dörnyei state (2013:1) that;

"Language teachers frequently use the term "motivation" when they describe successful or unsuccessful learners. This reflects our intuitive belief that during the lengthy and often tedious process of mastering a foreign/second language (L2), the learner's enthusiasm, commitment and

persistence are key determinants of success or failure. Indeed, in the vast majority of cases learners with sufficient motivation can achieve a working knowledge of an L2, regardless of their language aptitude, whereas without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language."

According to the online dictionary, Thesaurus, the word of "motivation" is defined as:

- 1- the act or an instance of <u>motivating</u>, or providing with a <u>reason</u> to act in a certain way: I don'tunderstand what her motivation was for quitting her job.
 Synonyms: motive, inspiration, inducement, cause, impetus.
- 2- the state or condition of being <u>motivated</u>: We know that these students have strong motivation to learn.
- *3-* something that <u>motivates</u>; inducement; incentive: Clearly, the company's longterm motivation is profit.

Motivation and Its Influence on Language Level Performance

Motivation has a great role in language learning and in language learning performance. Students who can motivate themselves successfully and students who are motivated professionally by their instructors achieve their goals in language learning.

It is widely recognised that motivation is a highly important variable that may either facilitate or hamper learners' achievement. (Sartore, Sollier and Soto, 2012: 76).

As it has been stated by Wilmolmas (2013: 904) that; http://www.litu.tu.ac.th/journal/FLLTCP/fllt_conference2013.html

"Motivation is considered significant in its role in language learning success. Along this line of thoughts, students' motivation toward English language learning can, to a certain degree, influence their learning results. It is worth investigating how students become successful or failed in learning English because it might affect their motivation and the way they learn the language."

Motivating Language Leaners Through Vision

It is known by every educator that a positive vision of ourselves is a motivational resource which often encourages us to do lots of things effectively. If we motivate ourselves through a vision effectively, we can also achieve to motivate our learners through some visions effectively.

The following toolbox on a frame work for developing a vision-centred teaching practice has been stated by Dörnyei& Kubanyiova (2014: 32):

Toolbox. A Framework for Developing A Vision-Centred Teaching Practice

Motivational conditions for motivational desired future language selves	Key facts of a vision-centred practice	
The learner has a desired future self-image (vision) which is related to but is also different from his/her current self-concept.	Creating the language learner's vision	
The vision is elaborate and vivid.	Strengthening the vision through imagery enhancement	
The vision is perceived as plausible but not comfortably certain, and it does not clash with other parts of the individual's self-concept, particularly with the expectations of the learner's family and peers.	Substantiating the vision by making it plausible	
The vision is accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategies that act as a roadmap towards the goal.	Transforming the vision into action	
<i>The vision is regularly activated in the learner's working self-concept.</i>	Keeping the vision alive	
The learner is also aware of elaborate information about the negative consequences of not achieving the desired end state.	Counterbalancing the vision by considering failure	

Psychology in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Psychology in foreign language learning is one of the most important issues in foreign language education. Learning and teaching always depend on the pschology influences and effects. Positive psychology and positive emotions in foreign language education are important, because instructors or teachers who have knowledge on positive psychology can understand their students more efficiently and students in their classes can be motivated more professionally.

As Mercer (2017:20) states:

"Related to mindsets are the thoughts and feelings that represent our sense of self. These are not the 'facts' about ourselves but rather what we believe and feel is true about ourselves. As with mindsets, our sense of self functions in domainspecific terms. This means we an hold multiple sets of beliefs and evaluative feelings about our self in different areas of our lives, and it is possible for these beliefs to be potentially contradictory. For teachers, having a positive sense of self has been found to be a key ingredient in helping to prevent burnout. Among learners, a healthy sense of self is important for motivation and self-regulatory behaviours. However, care must be taken that learners are supported in

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developing a positive but realistic sense of self as an unhealthy sense of self can lead to problem behaviours."

Gratitude in Learning

Students who know how to appreciate themselves and their teachers or professors can be motivated more easily. Students who are grateful for something can feel themselves more motivated while learning new things, because they are aware of the obstacles and the difficulties in life.

As Peterson and Seligman (2004:554) state that;

"Gratitude is a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty. The word gratitude is derived from the latin gratia, meaning 'grace', 'graciousness', or 'gratefulness'."

Peterson and Seligman (2004:554) also denote:

Individuals with this strength would strongly endorse such statements as the following:

- It is important to appreciate each day that you are alive.
- I often reflect on how much easier my life is because of the efforts of others.
- For me, life is much more of a gift than it is a burden.
- One of my favorite times of the year is Thanksgiving.
- *I am basically very thankful fort he parenting that was provided to me.*
- I could not have gotten where I am today without the help of many people.
- It seems like I can even find reasons to feel thankful for bad things that happen.
- I have been so struck by the beauty or awe of something that I felt grateful in return.

Students who appreciate their own lives and students who have positive emotions can easily be motivated and they motivate their classmates, teachers or professors.

The Role of the Course Materials Which Are Used in Our Classes

The role of the course materails which are used in our classes is inevitable. They always effect the motivation in our classes. Therefore they should be selected very carefully. All course materials should reflect the learners' needs very efficiently. Walter (2014: 89) lists the learners' needs as:

- Learners need to learn the language, not just those bits of the language that might happen to emerge in a lesson. Course developers think very carefully about the range of language learners need, and they cover it. Individual teachers don't have the time or the resources for this.

- Learners need classroom time to be used effectively. Typically there isn't much of that time. Course materials offer clear, efficient ways of teaching language.
- Learners need access to extra resources that can be tailored to their needs. Modern courses offer pathways to süit different learners.
- Learners need clear goals and records of progress. Learners value materials because they provide these.
- Learners need teachers who are well supported. Scaffolded by course materials, teachers can replace, reinvent, innovate and fine-tune materials for learners.
- Learners need teachers who have access to professional development activities. Teachers in the majority three-hour-a-week context, and elsewhere, regularly report on how they benefit from the teacher's materials in their coursebooks for their development as professionals.

How Can the Classroom Activities Be Used

The classroom activities in ESL or in ELT classes must be used according to the language levels, age groups and the social backgrounds of the students teachers or professors have in their classes.

It has been stated by Haley (2010:10):

"Providing opportunities for students to learn in ways to which they are most receptive maximizes their potential for success in the academic setting and in real life. Integrating multiple intelligences into the classroom setting does not require a major overhaul of teaching methodology or a total revamping of adopted curricula. In general, supplementing and revising existing lesson plans with creative and innovative ideas will suffice."

There are lots of studies on motivational teaching in foreign language education or in ELT classes. These studies are related with the questionnaires of Howard Gardner (1985). The aims of those kinds of studies are to measure differing types of motivation. (Martinsen, Alvord&Tanner , 2014: 68).

As it has been mentioned by Chen (2010:81):

"I generated seven motivational orientations while using content-based analysis and each category was assigned a descriptive heading to represent students' perceptions of L2 motivation: 1- practical reasons 2- stress of exams, grades, school curriculum, and family members 3- positive attitude towards English, its speakers, and foreign cultures 4- enjoyment of learning and using English 5travel-related reasons 6- fears of negative outcomes in the future 7- ideal future life."

There is a positive relationship between motivation and the success of the tests students enter. According to a research study, an interest in the second language culture can effect the second language studies. (Hernandez, 2006: 605). Therefore

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while teaching English as a second language in our classes, some topics on the English culture should also be handled to motivate the students who learn English as a second language.

Depicting the teaching areas on ELT, it can be said that it is very important to prepare lesson plans and syllabuses according to the different learning styles which the students in ESL or in ELT classes can have.

METHOD

Participants

The participants consisted of 200 university students at Dokuz Eylul University in the city of Izmir in Turkey. Their ages ranged from 19-23.

Teaching Procedure

The participants were asked to reply to the following questions during the 1^{st} and the 2^{nd} weeks of their courses:

- 1- Do you like listening to music while studying English? If yes, what kind of music do you listen?
- **2-** Do you like drawing pictures?
- **3-** Do you like taking photos?
- **4-** Do you like acting and dancing?
- **5-** Do you like using the internet?
- 6- Do you like using your mobile phone for learning English?
- **7-** Do you like cooking?
- **8-** Do you like travelling?
- 9- Are you an optimist or a pessimist person? Why?
- 10- Do you live alone or with your family?

According to the answers of the questions I asked, different classroom activities and methods were used to motivate my students in my class hours.

Sample Classroom Activities

1. Using Quotes:

This activity was applied for 5 minutes as a warm-up or as an ice-breaking activity, but it can also be used in a speaking class for an hour. Students were asked to bring quotes which could give positive energy to their partners.

- **2.** Using the pictures and the photos from the internet This activity was used to teach some tenses and some words and phrases.
- **3-** Using music and some songs in the classroom According to my students' music tastes, I used some songs while they were writing their compositions or paragraphs in the class hours. They also listened to these songs

4- Using Word Charts:

Students described their words and drew the pictures of the words they were given.

5- Using Students' Photos:

Students brought the photos they had taken and showed them to their partners or to their classmates and talked about them.

6- Using magazines:

Students were asked to look at some magazines and they were asked to talk with each other about the photos or the topics on these magazines for 5 or 6 minutes.

7- Using puzzles:

Students were asked to find the words on their puzzles in 4 or 5 minutes. They repeated some words they learnt.

8- Using dialogues:

Students were asked to read some dialogues with their partners and after that activity, they were asked to prepare dialogues with their partners.

9- Giving homework:

Students were asked to make sentences with the new words they learnt. They read their sentences in their class hours.

10- Walking and Asking:

Students were given some questions and they were asked to stand up. They were asked to ask their questions to everyone in their classroom.

11- Using Mobile Technology

Students were asked to use their mobile telephones to lokup the meanings and definitions of the new words they learned on the online dictionaries. Besides, I suggested some popular songs and online applications to play word games.

12- Giving worksheets on vocabulary games and tenses

Students were given many worksheets on the new words and tenses they learnt.

Sample Classroom Activity 1

Students were given the following quotes and they were asked to talk with their friends about these quotes in 4 or 5 minutes:

Karma (In: Aristotle, A. (Edt.) 2012:9-10)

- "I have found that if you love life; life will love you back."- Arthur Rubinstein
- "Our life is what our thoughts make it."- Marcus Aurelius

Human Nature: (In: Aristotle, A. (Edt.) 2012:70-71)

- "We either make ourselves happy or miserable. The amount of work is the same"-Carlos Castaneda
- "Happiness does not depend on outward things, but on the way we see them."-Count Leo Tolstoy

Trying and Succeeding (In: Aristotle, A (Edt.) 2012:106)

"Try not to be a man of success but rather to be a man of value."- Albert Einstein

Be Inspired and Motivated (In :Aristotle, A (Edt.) 2012: 123)

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." C. S. Lewis

Students were asked to talk with each other about the following photos:



Photo 1. A group of young children



Photo 2. People are celebrating a national day.



Photo 3. Women in traditional dress dance at a festival night.

Students were also asked to bring pictures and photos to their speaking classes.

Sample Classroom Activity 3

Mixed Letters (UCLES 2013:43)

Procedure: http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/vocabulary-games-and-activities.pdf A really fun way to review vocabulary at the end of the lesson or the week is to mix up the letters of each word. Write a word or words on the board. The students then race to identify the vocabulary.

museum	ѕтиети	reception	creptieon
book	okob	cancel	nccela
sightseeing	seigehtinsg	sunbathe	batuhnes
tour	urto	Culture	ltcuure
coach	ccaho	Guide	idgue
trip	prit	accommodation	omciaonmtcoda
tourist	outtris	Hire	reih
brochure	ocbhrure	check in	cihnekc
luggage	gggaelu	terminal	ertmalni

Objectives

- 1- To give students the chance to practice English as much as possible.
- 2- To increase fluency and accuracy in teaching English as a second language
- **3-** To increase communicative competence
- 4- To encourage students to read new passages in English
- 5- To encourage students to learn English by themselves in their free times
- 6- To create enjoyable and cheerful class hours

FINDINGS

Data Analysis

According to answers of the questions which were asked to do enjoyable classroom activities, the following results were found:

200 students indicated that they liked using pictures and photos while learning English. **Students' Reactions:** Students liked talking about different kinds of pictures and photos while learning English. They also liked drawing pictures while learning tenses and the new words in their coursebooks. They smiled and laughed after these classroom activities.

190 students indicated that they liked listening to music while learning English. **Students' Reactions:** Students liked listening to music while learning tenses and the adjectives and adverbs. They applauded each other at the end of these listening activities and they smiled at each other.

200 students indicated that they liked using word charts while learning English. **Students' Reactions:** Students enjoyed using word charts while learning the new words in their coursebooks. They started to talk with each other in English and they enjoyed filling in the blanks in their word charts happily.

200 students indicated that studying English with puzzles made them happier **Students' Reactions:** Students repeated the new words, phrases, adjectives and the adverbs with the help of puzzles and they started to smile at each other after doing these classroom activites.

200 students indicated that they liked preparing dialogues and they enjoyed reading and listening to dialogues while learning English

Students' Reactions: Students enjoyed preparing dialogues and reading dialogues with their partners. They smiled and they corrected their partner's pronunciation before reading their dialogues to their friends' in their classrooms.

100 students indicated that they disliked doing homework and they rarely brought the homework studies which were asked to do them in their houses or in their dormitories.

Students' Reactions: Although some students liked doing homework while learning English, 100 students indicated that they disliked doing homework and they hardly brought their homework to their class hours.

200 students indicated that they liked learning English with the help vocabulary games **Students' Reactions:** Students enjoyed learning the new words with the help of the vocabulary games. They applauded each other and smiled at each other happily while attending these vocabulary games.

Students' Attitudes and Perceptions

Classroom applications in this study were conducted in different classes in the English Preparatory Classes Department at Dokuz Eylul University in the city of Izmir in Turkey during the 2014-2015 academic year and during the 2016- 2017 year and during the first semestre of the 2017-2018 academic year. In each of these classes, there were university students from the different departments at Dokuz Eylul University. Students in these classes were bright and kinesthetic learners.

Students were not attending the courses in my classes regulary in the first month of their courses. They criticized the course book activities in their course books as much as possible. Besides, they could hardly bring their coursebooks, pencils and notebooks to their class hours. There were always three or four students sitting in front of the windows of the classrooms and they never listened to their classmates and they never attended the classroom game activities in the first month of their courses. Their chairs and their friends who were sitting next to them were changed by me and their arttitudes changed day by day.

During the first term of the 2017-2018 academic year, students in my own teacing classes loved attending the classroom activities and they found the teaching tasks very useful. They motivated themselves and their friends day by day. Apart from my own teaching classes, I was asked to teach the same course instead of an instructor once a week in the same department for a week, but students in that classroom rejected learning English with the help of these classroom activities and they thought learning English with these classroom activities would not be useful and efficient. What they wanted was just using their own coursebooks and workbooks. They informed this decision to their coordinators. Therefore, my teaching methods and techniques changed according to the students' needs in that classroom.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, all my classes accepted the teaching tasks were very useful and they informed that they enjoyed attending my class hours heartily and happily. But there was a class full of students who attended my class hours unheartedly and they rarely attended my class hours to attend the coursebook activities and the classroom activities which made the other students very happy. In that classroom, one of the students informed me that she was learning a different foreign language while learning English in Izmir and she was preparing herself to attend the proficiency exam for that foreign language. She also informed me that she had some health problems. As soon as she entered the classroom, the other students were leaving the classroom very quickly and they prefered attending my class hours very rarely. At my break time, I asked the other students if there was a problem or not to find some appropriate solutions, they informed that they had no

problems with me and the course activities I had done. Although I suggested the coordinators to take my hours from that class twice, they insisted on me to teach that class once a week.

Students wo know how to appreciate attended the class hours happily and heartily and the end of each academic term, they appreciated their own studies and my efforts and studies in teaching English as a second language to them.

CONCLUSION

The role of the motivation in foreign language education is inevitable. Students who have positive emotions can easily motivate themselves and their friends. Students who achieve to motivate themselves can motivate their teachers or professors happily and heartily. Teachers or professors who are motivated by their students can start to motivate their colleagues and their students happily and easily. Students who need motivation and more care should be motivated by their teachers or professors professionally. Because students who are motivated professionally can achieve better things in their education and private lives.

Classroom activities which havebeen suggested in this study have helpedmy students to mtivate themselves in learning English as a second and as a foreign language. I hope they will also help to motivate my colleagues' students. It is also hoped that colleagues will have more enjoyable class hours after reading this study.

Discussion Questions For Teachers or Professors

- 1- Do students with love of learning attend classroom activities more than the others?
- 2- How can you teach new languages to the students who do not have love of learning?
- **3-** Do you think that the classroom activities in language classes are unneccessary while teaching a new language?
- **4-** What types of conditions are required to enable students to learn a new language effectively?

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APPENDIX 1

USEFUL WEBSITES

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