

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN MOTIVATING LEARNERS TO READ

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ANNOTATION

The article is devoted to the issue of motivating learners to read in the English language. It also suggests some of the ways of raising the interest of learners to learn the English language.

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One of the most crucial aspects in developing students' language skills is clearly motivation in the classroom. The majority of our students lack motivation to learn English, which is the primary reason. In addition, despite the fact that the majority of them have a hazy sense of whether or not "English will be useful for my future," they do not have a clear understanding of what that means, nor is it a very strong motivator because it is too hazy and far off.

The first step in tackling the problem of motivation is that the teachers need to understand and appreciate the role and importance of motivation in any learning. In the context of second language learning, M. William observes: "In second language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the critical force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres. It is a complex phenomenon and includes many components: the individual's drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation and new experience, and so on. These factors play a role in every kind of learning situation"¹.

"Student motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors that can start, sustain, intensify, or discourage behaviour"². The teacher has to activate these motivational components in the students but that is the precise problem. How can it be done in every class every day? Classroom management skills are very important for language teachers to motivate learners. They are reflected in the following ways:

1) In the classroom, pair and group work are thought to be effective methods for encouraging students to read. Using "pair work" or "group work" appropriately is one effective method for motivating students to participate in the lesson if the teacher is resourceful and skilled enough. Language is best scholarly through the nearby joint effort and correspondence among understudies. All or both of the students benefit from this kind of collaboration. In fact, students can collaborate on a variety of tasks, including writing dialogues, conducting interviews, drawing pictures and commenting on them, playing roles, and so on.

Researches on second language acquisition have shown that learners have differences in mastering skills. While one student 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 rules or usages of language from

¹ Williams, M. 1999. *'Motivation in language learning'*, English Teaching Professional 13: 6-8

² Greenwood, J. 1997. *'Promises, promises class contract'*, Activity Box, CUP

their peers and comrades than from their teacher. 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.

2) The student seating arrangements. The dynamics of the lesson will frequently be determined by the seating arrangement of the students in the classroom. Indeed, a minor adjustment to the seating arrangement can significantly improve group cohesion and student satisfaction. If, for instance, the desks are fixed to the ground or the school has strict rules about not moving the furniture, you may not have complete control over the seating arrangement. The number of students will also be a problem.

Average size classes are anything from 6 to 25. Teachers have different preferences for seating arrangements – groups seated round small tables is 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 the horseshoe shape, which has all of the advantages of groups, and none of the disadvantages. A horseshoe may be desks in a 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 the 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 maximise eye contact. Both teacher to student and student to student. In full class phases of the lesson, if the 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 sitting alone or outside the groups. Besides, try to leave a fair empty, but not so much a space because large distances between the students will tend to lead to a “muted” atmosphere, low pace, and less active student participation in the lesson.

c) Think in advance about how you will organise 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.

3) 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 of making 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 that 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 idea expressed. Concerning the ways of how to correct errors, there are several techniques which the teacher, who is seen as the monitor, should choose from them

according to the type of the error and task where the incorrect form of language occurs. Among these ways of correction we can state: self correction, peer correction and teacher correction³.

4) Playing role. This is another way to respond to the fundamental idea of variety in teaching by varying the pace of the lesson. The role-playing activity should be used by teachers to help students who are less motivated participate in the lesson and to motivate more motivated students. In addition, certain tasks in the student's book are followed by a role-playing activity, which requires students to participate. We can give the following as examples of this: the hide-and-guess game, the dramatization of a customer and shop assistant interview, the conversation between a doctor and patient, etc.

5) 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 vocabularies 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 students' 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, etc. 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 how the song makes them feel and then draw a picture of their feelings while listening to the song. Teachers respond to this presentation and ask questions. Then, feedback is provided from the group.

6) Using audio visual material: cassette player, video, computer... Since our schools are equipped with various audio visual materials such as cassette recorders, videos, computers, projectors and many others, teachers should use these materials when teaching. Indeed, they should include the appropriate material to use while planning their lessons. For instance, we should include a cassette player in a lesson based on listening, while we need to include a computer in any 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 classroom correction or to read.

7) Using the 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 the L1 in language teaching is that students will become dependent on it, and not even try to understand meaning from 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

³ Rixon, S. 1995. 'What is "Too Difficult" for young learners of English to understand?', The Journal, Vol.2, N° 1, TESOL France in association with the British Council

students' mother tongue went out of favour. Initially it was part of a reaction against the Grammar-Translation method, which had dominated late 19th and early 20th century teaching, and which saw language learning as a means towards intellectual development rather than as being for utilitarian, communicative purposes.

But, there are a few cases when we can resort to the student's mother tongue such as 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, 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.

In conclusion, motivating the learners of EFL and ESL seems very easy for a skillful teacher, but it requires from us deep knowledge of the methods and ways of teaching languages. With the use of above mentioned ways any teacher can take advantage of the learners' interest and push them to study the languages.

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