

## Strategies for raising student motivation as a part of class management and monitoring

by *T.M. Nedorezova*

Students at many universities often fail to reach their full potential as English language learners due to low motivation, which is a key factor in successful language learning. But even the most motivated students can lose energy during their English language studies due to certain reasons. Some of the factors that affect their motivation relate to the following:

- the country's education system in general is not perfect;
- attitudes of language learning in particular are often not mature;
- teachers' approach to the educational process does not always meet the requirements of higher education.

As professionals, teachers must constantly be searching for effective teaching strategies, as well as for ways to sustain the interest and engagement of students in classes. In order to manage and monitor a class the following should be observed:

- first, the teacher should be able to easily identify every student in the group and this especially difficult if one is teaching several classes at the same time;
- second, the teacher needs to have a way to monitor an individual student's progress;
- third, the teacher must be able to have easy access to data about the student's language strengths and weaknesses;
- fourth, the teacher should be able to respond to the students as individuals, with interests outside the classroom;
- fifth, the teacher should be able to raise a student motivation.

We should recognise that many of today's students come to our schools with specific goals. The students, taking business English course, want to improve their opportunities for employment international companies. In spite of the factors that tend to reduce language learning motivation, teachers can use a number of strategies to increase their students' self-confidence and interest in English, especially teaching English for Special Purposes (ESP), namely business English.

Now let us view some of the ways of raising student motivation.

**Firstly**, before choosing any specific course of action teachers should take the time to get to know their students individually at the start of each term. The teacher should know each learner's foreign language skills, special preferences and talents, as well as interests.

**Secondly**, helping students to connect language learning to their personal goals is a great way for teachers to begin addressing the motivation issue in their classrooms. One option is to fill out individual plans for success (see Figure 1).

These forms are based on motivational strategies recommended by

Janet S. Niederhauser, an Assistant Professor of English at Honan University, South Korea. During student-teacher discussions of the plans teachers can help students view language learning within the context of their individual goals and help

them work out strategies they can use to overcome their language learning difficulties. The importance of setting specific goals as opposed to the general goal of «doing one's best» has been stressed by many teachers.

**Thirdly**, it's necessary to emphasise the importance of selecting classroom activities that students see as leading toward their personal learning goals.

At the beginning of each term teachers should take the time to explain their language-teaching techniques and methods as well as approach to students. Teachers usually view pair and group activities as effective ways to reduce performance anxiety and increase learner's confidence and presentation skills.

Teachers should introduce all new activities carefully and explain how they can help students improve their English skills. Motivation levels drop and anxiety levels go up when students are unsure about how or why they should perform certain language tasks. Making positive statements about upcoming activities is an excellent way to increase motivation. By encouraging students, saying, «I think you'll enjoy our next activity» the teacher expresses enthusiasm that is really contagious.

New activities can be introduced without a great loss of class time, provided students are taught some common English classroom expressions at the beginning of the term. Sometimes (especially in the groups of the beginners) it's helpful to write directions on the blackboard or to provide students with written lists of frequently used expressions. Visual backup is necessary as a step towards eliminating difficulty in absorbing the material by the students. Using a visual backup system for oral directions and other class work activities may help set the stage for more positive learning experiences.

**Fourthly**, teaching students learning strategies is another way to influence motivation level. That will help them save their time and energy and distribute them properly. Teaching students strategies and techniques to learn vocabulary, prepare for tests or reduce anxiety will increase their achievements. Strategy training is most effective when it is treated as a regular part of the students' classroom experience.

**Fifthly**, of course creating activities that contribute to real communication (role-plays, simulations) by all means will support motivation. When modelling professional activity aspects the teacher trains learners different professional skills and habits. Learners see the practical implementation of their knowledge and language skills. Such kind of activity is intrinsically satisfying, containing an internal incentive.

**Sixthly**, using authentic materials (videofilms, newspaper articles, recordings for listening comprehension, etc) is a necessary instrument to raise student motivation. This provides practical application of their language skills.

**Seventhly**, learning must be fun to certain degree. It's a great teacher's success if the students are able to study English and at the same time to have a good time. In this case we face built-in motivation, when the process of learning is motivating itself. And, it goes without saying that another way to increase motivation among students is to send them positive messages about their progress in language learning.

**Eighthly**, bringing cultural content into the language classroom is one of the best ways of increasing motivation. Nowadays when globalisation is an objective process lots of students greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn more about life in other countries and to exchange ideas with teachers who are sensitive to both cultures.

Teachers can insert cultural content into any course by selecting appropriate texts and activities. Setting aside ten minutes at the end of each lesson allows students to ask a teacher or each other (provided they have been given a certain task to prepare the material for discussion) about cultural, political, scientific events of English-speaking countries.

So efforts to increase the linguistic competence of students may depend on creation of classroom atmosphere that foster not only communication but also a deeper appreciation for English-speaking cultures, that is a powerful influence on a student motivation. The higher educational establishments that develop content-based curricula for their English programmes are in the best position both to motivate their students and to help them acquire the linguistic, cultural and professional skills they need in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion it's important to mention that motivation is the stimulus that directs the behaviour of learners to achieve their personal goals through language learning under the supervision of the teacher, who manages and monitors learners' activity.

Name _____	
<b>My Plan for Success</b>	
Where I want to be and what to be doing when I am 30:	
My special skills, talents, and interests that can help me reach my goal:	Things that may prevent me from reaching my goal:
Steps I can take this semester that will help me reach my goal:	Steps I can take that will help me reach my goal:
How learning English can help me reach my goal:	
The most important thing my teacher can do to help me learn English:	

FIGURE 1

### Literature

1. J. M. Voyshin, 1999, *In the World of Business*, Minsk: «Ecoperspectiva»;
2. Peter Duppenhalter, 2000, *Managing and Monitoring Large Classes*, Washington, DC: English Teaching Forum;
3. Janet S. Niederhauser, 1997, *Motivating Learners*, Washington, DC: English Teaching Forum.