Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Kirovohrad Volodymyr Vynnychenko State Pedagogical University
TESOL-Ukraine
Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine

19th TESOL-Ukraine International Conference:

THE GLOBAL ENGLISH TEACHER:
IMPROVING WHAT WORKS AND FIXING WHAT DOESN'T

April 25-26, 2014

Book of Papers

Kirovohrad
2014
HOW TO HELP STUDENTS TO BE MOTIVATED LEARNERS?

Nadezhda Bevz, Diana Strelchenko (Kharkiv, Ukraine)

It's true that today teachers have much work to do with their students' motivational level. A student may arrive in class with a certain degree of motivation. But the teacher's behavior and teaching style, the structure of the course, the nature of the assignments and informal interactions with students all have a large effect on student motivation. We may have heard the utterance, "my students are so unmotivated!" and the good news is that there's a lot that we can do to change that. Here are some practical tasks to help you to raise your students' motivational level:

Make it real
In order to foster intrinsic motivation, try to create learning activities that are based on topics that are relevant to your students' lives. Strategies include using local examples, teaching with events in the news, using pop culture technology (iPods, cell phones, YouTube videos) to teach, or connecting the subject with your students' culture, outside interests or social lives

Provide choices
Students can have increased motivation when they feel some sense of autonomy in the learning process, and that motivation declines when students have no voice in the class structure. Giving your students options can be as simple as letting them pick their lab partners or select from alternate assignments, or as complex as "contract teaching" wherein students can determine their own grading scale, due dates and assignments.

Balance the challenge
Students perform best when the level of difficulty is slightly above their current ability level. If the task is too easy, it promotes boredom and may communicate a message of low expectations or a sense that the teacher believes the student is not capable of better work. A task that is too difficult may be seen as unattainable, may undermine self-efficacy, and may create anxiety. Scaffolded is one instructional technique where the challenge level is gradually raised as students are capable of more complex tasks

Use peer models
Students can learn by watching a peer succeed at a task. In this context, a peer means someone who the student identifies with, not necessarily any other student. Peers may be drawn from groups as defined by gender, ethnicity, social circles, interests, achievement level, clothing, or age.

Establish a sense of belonging
People have a fundamental need to feel connected or related to other people. In an academic environment, research shows that students who feel they 'belong' have a higher degree of intrinsic motivation and academic confidence. According to students, their sense of belonging is fostered by an instructor that demonstrates warmth and openness, encourages student participation, is enthusiastic, friendly and helpful, and is organized and prepared for class.

Adopt a supportive style
A supportive teaching style that allows for student autonomy can foster increased student interest, enjoyment, engagement and performance. Supportive teacher behaviors include listening, giving hints and encouragement, being responsive to student questions and showing empathy for students.

In conclusion, educational psychology has identified two basic classifications of motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation arises from a desire to learn a topic due to its inherent interests, for self-fulfillment, enjoyment and to achieve a mastery of the subject. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is motivation to perform and succeed for the sake of accomplishing a specific result or outcome. Students who are very grade-oriented are extrinsically motivated, whereas students who seek to truly embrace their work and take a genuine interest in it are intrinsically motivated.

AMERICAN REALEMS – A KEY TO NATURAL CULTURE

Lilia Bilas (Kyiv, Ukraine)

The processes of globalization in the XXI century are enhancing intercultural links between nations, mutual exchange of their views, attitudes and values which helps to raise people's awareness of various cultural and ethnic identities.

For the Ukrainian youth knowledge of both the English language, and culture of the English-speaking world as a powerful "network civilization" (J. Bennett) and influential global scientific and cultural force, opens the perspectives in their professional activity and interpersonal communication with native speakers avoiding cultural barriers, misunderstanding and bias.

In this respect such discipline as American Studies plays an important educational role. In particular, Simon Bronner, a well-known American folklorist, ethnologist and educator emphasizes that "...American studies identifies and interprets themes, patterns, trends, behaviors, traditions, and ideas that characterize the United States as a nation, an
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