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MOTIVATION MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES IN ESP

Attempts to understand the nature of foreign language learners' motivation have taken varied and changing forms through the years, as evidenced by psychological, educational and psycholinguistic research. Researchers have investigated what motivation is, what role motivation plays in foreign language learning, and more recently, how teachers can stimulate and sustain motivation in foreign language learners.

In an ESP setting the teacher's eternal question, "How can I motivate my students?" entails a series of other questions concerning the particular language learning situation: What sort of goals do students work toward? What is the language environment within which the student is learning? What is the social and cultural environment within which the student is or will be using the language? What is the student's individual learning style? How can the teacher intervene in the learning process to facilitate language acquisition? How may positive attitudes be promoted? How can motivation be maintained throughout the ESP course?

The answers to these questions vary from country to country, and from situation to situation; it is necessary, therefore, to take into account sociological as well as psychological considerations in order to assess the bearing of motivational variables in ESP setting and on ESP students. For example, in Ukraine most ESP students do not have to be awakened to the usefulness of knowing English; they are motivated instrumentally toward the language. However, the rational understanding that English is a means of communication in their job-related activities may not be accompanied by an equally positive emotional attitude toward the language, especially at a freshman level, as the process of study requires a substantial investment of time and students are consequently forced to divert time from areas which they perceive as having more primary importance to their careers.

According to the process-oriented model developed by Dornyei one can define the following key units in the framework of motivational strategies: *creating the basic motivational conditions*, which involves setting the scene for the use of motivational strategies (appropriate teacher behaviour and good teacher-student rapport; a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere; a cohesive learner group characterised by appropriate group norms); *generating student motivation*, which roughly corresponds to the preactional phase in the model; *maintaining and protecting motivation*, which corresponds to the actional phase; *encouraging positive self-evaluation*, which corresponds to the postactional phase.

Dornyei and Csizer [2] compiled a list of the 10 most important teaching practices to include in classroom instruction for motivating language learners, namely, preparing for lessons, creating a positive learning environment, giving clear instructions, developing a good relationships with students, giving positive feedback, selecting interesting tasks, encouraging creating ideas, making the content personally relevant, helping the students set and achieve realistic goals, and familiarizing learners of the language with the cultural background of the target language.

It is obvious that, unless motivation is sustained and protected when action has commenced, the natural tendency to get tired or bored of the task and succumb to any attractive distractions will result in de-motivation.

In an inherently face-threatening context, as the language classroom is likely to be, it is important to find out how to maintain and increase the learners' self-confidence. Dornyei [3] defines the following five approaches that purport to help to this end: teachers can foster the belief that competence is a changeable aspect of development; favourable self-conceptions of the foreign language competence can be promoted by providing regular experiences of success; everyone is more interested in a task if they feel that they make a contribution; a small personal word of encouragement is sufficient; teachers can reduce classroom anxiety by making the learning context less stressful.

Many researchers (Benson, 2000; Wenden, 1991) argue that becoming an autonomous learner can prove beneficial to learning. Benson [1] distinguishes between five types of practice fostering the development of autonomy: *resource-based approaches*, which emphasise independent interaction with learning materials; *technology-based approaches*, which emphasise independent interaction with educational technologies; *learner-based approaches*, which emphasise the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner; *classroom-based approaches*, which emphasise changes in the relationship between learners and teachers; *curriculum-based approaches*, which extend the idea of learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole.

The connection between intrinsic motivation and the development of learner autonomy in language learning has been investigated by Ushioda [4], who remarks that self-motivation is a question of applying positive thought patterns and belief structures so as to optimise and sustain one's involvement in learning. Thus, increasing the learners' self-confidence and creating learner autonomy can be considered as the main motivation maintenance strategies in ESP.

References:

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