

# Affect in language learning: motivation assignment

[Education](#)



However simple and easy the word “ motivation” might appear, it is, in fact, difficult to define. It seems to have been impossible for theorists to reach consensus on a single definition. According to the Webster’s: to motivate means to provide with a need or desire that causes a person to act.

According to Gardner (1985) motivation is concerned with the question, “ Why does an organism behave as it does? ” Many researchers consider motivation as one of the main elements that determine success in developing a second or foreign language since it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in second language learning. Oxford, 1994) What can we infer from all these definitions? What are the keywords that “ motivation” triggers in our minds? Motivation Goal, Energy, Effort, Active involvement, Desire, Persistence “ Patience, persistence, and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success”. ( Napoleon Hill ) MOTIVATION FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING “ To a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn” (Stipek, 1988) Motivation in language learning plays a vital role.

It is the motivation that produces effective second-language communicators by planting in them the seeds of self-confidence. It also successfully creates learners who continuously engage themselves in learning even after they complete a targeted goal. There are several factors that affect students’ motivation to learn a second language: Internal Factors Gender: Girls are known to acquire languages faster than boys.

Hence, their motivation would be higher Goals: Why the learner is studying the language Need: How much the learner needs to study this language Interest : How interested the learner is in learning this language Attitude:

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How the learner views this language and its speakers Expectancy: How much the learner expects to succeed Competence: How capable of success they think they are Native Language Proficiency: The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it'll be for that student to learn a foreign language. External Factors Teachers : Encouragement, Feedback, Rewards, Scaffolding, Teaching Strategies&Techniques, Expectations Course Content& Classroom Atmosphere: Relevance, Attractiveness, Challenge, Relaxed&positive atmosphere Social Identity ( peer groups ) : Teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer groups. In second language learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers. Peer pressure often reduces the desire of the student to work toward native pronunciation, because the sounds of the target language may be regarded as strange.

Role Models : Students need to have positive and realistic role models who demonstrate the value of being proficient in more than one language. Home Support : If parents value both the native language and English, communicate with their children in whichever language is most comfortable, and show support for and interest in their children's progress, the children will definitely be more motivated to learn the second language. GENERAL STRATEGIES OF MOTIVATING STUDENTS Some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect their instructors to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them.

Unfortunately, there is no single magical Formula for motivating students. Many factors affect a student's motivation to work and to learn. And, of course, not all students are motivated by the same values, needs, desires, or <https://assignbuster.com/affect-in-language-learning-motivation-assignment/>

wants. Some of your students will be motivated by the approval of others, some by overcoming challenges. To encourage students to become self-motivated independent learners instructors can do the following: 10 Simple Rules For Teachers: Rule 1: Treat students with respect Rule 2 : Create an atmosphere that is open and positive Rule 3 : Help students feel that they are valued members of a learning community Rule 4 : Make the language classes interesting

Rule 5 : Increase the learner's linguistic self confidence Rule 6 : Help students create a link when teaching something new Rule 7 : Familiarize learners with the target language culture Rule 8 : Give frequent, early, positive, feedback that supports students' beliefs that they can do well Rule 9 : Emphasize the most critical concepts continuously Rule 10 : Provide students with a " visual aid" when possible to explain abstract concepts. A significant proportion of today's students are visual learners.

#### INCORPORATING INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIORS THAT MOTIVATE STUDENTS

Hold high but realistic expectations for your students. Research has shown that a teacher's expectations have a powerful effect on a student's performance. If you act as though you expect your students to be motivated, hardworking, and interested in the course, they are more likely to be so. Set realistic expectations for students when you make assignments, give presentations, conduct discussions, and grade examinations. Realistic" in this context means that your standards are high enough to motivate students to do their best work but not so high that students will inevitably be frustrated in trying to meet those expectations. To develop the drive to achieve, students need to believe that achievement is possible -which means

that you need to provide early opportunities for success. (Sources: American Psychological Association, 1992; Bligh, 1971; Forsyth and McMillan, 1991 -1 Lowman, 1984) Help students set achievable goals for themselves. Failure to attain unrealistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students. Encourage students to focus on their continued improvement, not just on their grade on any one test or assignment.

Help students evaluate their progress by encouraging them to critique their own work, analyze their strengths, and work on their weaknesses. For example, consider asking students to submit self-evaluation forms with one or two assignments. (Sources: Cashin, 1979; Forsyth and McMillan, 1991) Tell students what they need to do to succeed in your course. Don't let your students struggle to figure out what is expected of them. Reassure students that they can do well in your course, and tell them exactly what they must do to succeed. Say something to the effect that " If you can handle the examples on these problem sheets, you can pass the exam. People who have trouble with these examples can ask me for extra help. Or instead of saying, " You're way behind," tell the student, " Here is one way you could go about learning the material. How can I help you? " (Sources: Cashin, 1979; Tiberius, 1990) Strengthen students' self-motivation. Avoid messages that reinforce your power as an instructor or that emphasize extrinsic rewards. Instead of saying, " I require," " you must," or " you should," stress " I think you will find. . . " or " I will be interested in your reaction. " (Source: Lowman, 1990) Avoid creating intense competition among students. Competition produces anxiety, which can interfere with learning. Reduce students' tendencies to compare themselves to one another.

Bligh (1971) reports that students are more attentive, display better comprehension, produce more work, and are more favorable to the teaching method when they work cooperatively in groups rather than compete as individuals. Refrain from public criticisms of students' performance and from comments or activities that pit students against each other. (Sources: Eble, 1988; Forsyth and McMillan, 1991) Be enthusiastic about your subject. An instructor's enthusiasm is a crucial factor in student motivation. If you become bored or apathetic, students will too. Typically, an instructor's enthusiasm comes from confidence, excitement about the content, and genuine pleasure in teaching.

If you find yourself uninterested in the material, think back to what attracted you to the field and bring those aspects of the subject matter to life for your students. Or challenge yourself to devise the most exciting way to present the material, however dull the material itself may seem to you.

**STRUCTURING THE COURSE TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS** Work from students' strengths and interests. Find out why students are enrolled in your course, how they feel about the subject matter, and what their expectations are. Then try to devise examples, case studies, or assignments that relate the course content to students' interests and experiences. For instance, a chemistry professor might devote some lecture time to examining the contributions of chemistry to resolving environmental problems.

Explain how the content and objectives of your course will help students achieve their educational, professional, or personal goals. (Sources: Brock, 1976; Cashin, 1979; Lucas, 1990) When possible, let students have some say in choosing what will be studied. Give students options on term papers or <https://assignbuster.com/affect-in-language-learning-motivation-assignment/>

other assignments (but not on tests). Let students decide between two locations for the field trip, or have them select which topics to explore in greater depth. If possible, include optional or alternative units in the course. (Sources: Ames and Ames, 1990; Cashin, 1979; Forsyth and McMillan, 1991; Lowman, 1984) Increase the difficulty of the material as the semester progresses. Give students opportunities to succeed at the beginning of the semester.

Once students feel they can succeed, you can gradually increase the difficulty level. If assignments and exams include easier and harder questions, every student will have a chance to experience success as well as challenge. (Source: Cashin, 1979) Vary your teaching methods. Variety reawakens students' involvement in the course and their motivation. Break the routine by incorporating a variety of teaching activities and methods in your course: role playing, debates, brainstorming, discussion, demonstrations, case studies, audiovisual presentations, guest speakers, or small group work. (Source: Forsyth and McMillan, 1991) **MOTIVATING STUDENTS BY RESPONDING TO THEIR WORK** Give students feedback as quickly as possible.

Return tests and papers promptly, and reward success publicly and immediately. Give students some indication of how well they have done and how to improve. Rewards can be as simple as saying a student's response was good, with an indication of why it was good, or mentioning the names of contributors: "Cherry's point about pollution really synthesized the ideas we had been discussing." (Source: Cashin, 1979) Reward success. Both positive and negative comments influence motivation, but research consistently

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indicates that students are more affected by positive feedback and success.

Praise builds students' self-confidence, competence, and self-esteem.

Recognize sincere efforts even if the product is less than stellar.

If a student's performance is weak, let the student know that you believe he

or she can improve and succeed over time. (Sources: Cashin, 1979; Lucas,

1990) Introduce students to the good work done by their peers. Share the

ideas, knowledge, and accomplishments of individual students with the class

as a whole:

- Pass out a list of research topics chosen by students so they

- will know whether others are writing papers of interest to them.
- Make

- available copies of the best papers and essay exams.
- Provide class time for

- students to read papers or assignments submitted by classmates.
- Have

- students write a brief critique of a classmate's paper. Schedule a brief talk

- by a student who has experience or who is doing a research paper on a topic

- relevant to your lecture. Be specific when giving negative feedback.

Negative feedback is very powerful and can lead to a negative class

atmosphere. Whenever you identify a student's weakness, make it clear that

your comments relate to a particular task or performance, not to the student

as a person. Try to cushion negative comments with a compliment about

aspects of the task in which the student succeeded. (Source: Cashin, 1979)

Avoid demeaning comments. Many students in your class may be anxious

about their performance and abilities. Be sensitive to how you phrase your

comments and avoid offhand remarks that might prick their feelings of

inadequacy.

Avoid giving in to students' pleas for "the answer" to homework problems.

When you simply give struggling students the solution, you rob them of the

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chance to think for themselves. Use a more productive approach (adapted from Fiore, 1985):

- Ask the students for one possible approach to the problem.
- Gently brush aside students' anxiety about not getting the answer by refocusing their attention on the problem at hand.
- Ask the students to build on what they do know about the problem.
- Resist answering the question " is this right? "

Suggest to the students a way to check the answer for themselves.

- Praise the students for small, independent steps.

If you follow these steps, your students will learn that it is all right not to have an instant answer. They will also learn to develop greater patience and to work at their own pace. And by working through the problem, students will experience a sense of achievement and confidence that will increase their motivation to learn.

**CONCLUSION** Motivation is vital in language learning. It makes language learners positive about their own learning. Moreover, experience of success and satisfaction has a strong connection with motivation. It also creates the drive in them to acquire the targetted language, enjoy the learning process, and experience real communication.