

WHAT KEEPS TEACHING GOING? MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES

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Target audience

- Pre-service teachers
 - Primary teachers
 - Secondary teachers_
- In-service teachers
 - Primary teachers
 - Secondary teachers

Itinerary

- Exploring motivation and attitudes towards languages and cultures

Abstract:

These didactic materials are aimed at discussing teachers' and students' motivation, and their attitudes towards languages, their speakers and their cultures. The set contains 3 worksheets. The first worksheet begins with a short paragraph about how teachers may motivate students, followed by a discussion of that text and on how to motivate students. The second text raises the issue of teachers' motivation and there is a group discussion on what can motivate teachers to continue in their profession. Finally a mind map linking motivation with other factors summarises the concept of motivation. The second worksheet focuses on teachers' affective factors and their influence on students' education and their future professions and lives. The third worksheet is devoted to teachers' motivation and attitudes towards languages, their speakers and their cultures. A final discussion section assesses the usefulness of the materials.

Rationale

The material focuses on teachers' and students' motivation and attitudes, with the aim of setting supportive and cooperative atmosphere for further studies on those topics. The purpose of the worksheets is to raise awareness of the teacher's role to facilitate students' positive attitudes

towards languages, their speakers and their cultures, as well as to develop students' motivation to learn languages. Pair and group work are mainly used to encourage cooperation, openness and understanding among the participants. In the last worksheet the participants are encouraged to discuss the activities and worksheets and think about how these are applicable in their own classroom environment.

Personal and social dimensions

- Observing how educators can influence the attitudes of learners towards languages, those who speak them and their culture, as well as their motivation and curiosity with regard to languages.

Professional dimensions

- Reflecting on the roles and functions of the language teacher as educator.

Worksheet 1

Timing: 60'

Material required: sheets of paper.

Thinking about motivation



Read the following paragraph

There are over twenty internationally recognised theories of motivation and more than 100 definitions of this term. In general, instructors and trainers can find very few guidelines that suggest how to cohesively and consistently apply the most useful and practical elements from this extensive array of motivational information. Teachers search for that one pedagogy that may motivate all students, but unfortunately and realistically, motivating students will never be a singular or simplistic process.



Discuss the previous paragraph with a colleague and tell him/her how easy or difficult you find it to be to motivate your students. Then ask what strategies s/he uses to motivate his/her own students.

Write the strategies that both of you use to motivate your students in a chart like this:

Strategies we use to motivate our students



Read the following paragraph about teachers' motivation

Teachers' motivation comes from the task itself – satisfaction in a job well done, students' engagement in the task. Teachers' motivation may be also linked to the status of the profession. Besides, school-wide recognition for improvement in student learning has also been identified



Exchange information about the factors you wrote with members in your group.
Can you find some commonalities?

Is there any relation between those factors and the motivational strategies you and your colleague stated that you used to motivate your students? If the answer is YES, which ones?

Can you connect any of those factors to what you said that motivated you and the participants in your group to stay in your profession? If the answer is YES, which ones?

Worksheet 2

To what extent can teachers influence students' lives?

Timing: 60'

Materials: transparencies for OHP or computer and projector



Read the following story taken from this web site:

<http://www.onlineconsulting.com/stories4.htm>

Years ago a John Hopkin's professor gave a group of graduate students this assignment: Go to the slums. Take 200 boys, between the ages of 12 and 16, and investigate their background and environment. Then predict their chances for the future.

The students, after consulting social statistics, talking to the boys, and compiling much data, concluded that 90 percent of the boys would spend some time in jail.

Twenty-five years later another group of graduate students was given the job of testing the prediction. They went back to the same area. Some of the boys - by then men - were still there, a few had died, some had moved away, but they got in touch with 180 of the original 200. They found that only four of the group had ever been sent to jail.

Why was it that these men, who had lived in a breeding place of crime, had such a surprisingly good record? The researchers were continually told: "Well, there was a teacher..."

They pressed further, and found that in 75 percent of the cases it was the same woman. The researchers went to this teacher, now living in a home for retired teachers. How had she exerted this remarkable influence over that group of children? Could she give them any reason why these boys should have remembered her?

"No," she said, "no I really couldn't." And then, thinking back over the years, she said musingly, more to herself than to her questioners: "I loved those boys...."



Do you remember any primary or secondary school teacher that marked your future career or even your life? Discuss it with your colleague and think about how teachers' affective factors may influence students' attitudes towards learning.



Extract some features from those teachers that helped you in your professional development or in your life and write them on a piece of paper.



The whole group makes a list of features from those teachers that helped the members of the group in their professional development or in their lives, which might be taken into consideration in language teaching. (Somebody writes them down on a transparency or a computer and projects them onto the screen.)

Worksheet 3

Timing: 90'

Materials: coloured pieces of paper

To what extent can teachers influence students' motivation and attitudes towards languages?



Write in a coloured piece of paper three landmarks in your life that greatly influenced your motivation to learn languages and your attitudes towards languages, their speakers and their cultures. Justify your answers.



Share your life landmarks with a colleague and explain why those landmarks influenced you so much.

Have you got similar landmarks to the ones of your colleague?.

After the discussion stick your pieces of paper on the board so that people can read them at their leisure.



Read the following paragraph:

Who were your favourite teachers at school or college? If you spend a few minutes thinking about the question above, probably a couple of teachers will spring to mind. Now, ask yourself, did those teachers have anything in common? Was there a common thread that they all shared? When I ask myself this question, the common quality I can recognise is enthusiasm. My favourite teachers were enthusiastic about their subjects and their jobs. They were highly motivated and their motivation definitely seemed to rub off on the students.

At the other end of the scale I had several teachers who obviously cared little for the subject they were teaching. If they were enthusiastic at the beginning of their careers by the time I got into their classrooms this enthusiasm had died and I could tell. I think that most students would agree that the attitude of the teacher plays a vital part in the learning process.



In groups of 4 or 5 discuss how teachers can help to develop students' positive attitudes towards languages, their speakers and their cultures and discuss also how teachers can make students feel interested in languages and motivated for learning.

After the discussion or while you are discussing, fill a chart similar to the one below. Share your results with the class. Then, stick the charts on the board.

Developing Students' Attitudes	Developing Students' Motivation



Assessment

After the activities are done, some time is left for discussion. The discussion could be carried out in different ways and the topics for discussion could be the following:

1. How did you like the activities? Why?
2. Did you learn some strategies that might help to raise teachers' and students' motivation? Do you think that you may put them into practice? If the answer is yes, how and when?
3. Did these activities help you to relate motivation and attitudes to teachers' and students' plurilingual and pluricultural awareness? In what way?
4. Can these activities be useful for your training events?

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