

# Motivation of ESL Teachers

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This paper aims at focusing on the importance of the factors that affect the motivation of ESL teachers. It defines the concept of motivation. Main motivators for teachers are presented. It also takes into account the sources of motivation which are necessary in teaching process.

## Introduction

Handling the challenging situation in the class and outside the class makes teachers exhausted, which hinders the success of teachers. Being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated increases job satisfactio. So, motivation has an important role in the job of teaching.

## Definition of Motivation

Motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001:51). As stated by Brown (1994:152), motivation is a term that is used to define the success or the failure of any complex task. Steers and Porter (1991:6) deal with three matters while discussing motivation:

- what energizes human behavior,
- what directs or channels such behavior and
- how this behavior is maintained or sustained.

Motivation is thought to be responsible for "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it" (Dörnyei, 2001a:8).

Ryan and Deci (2000a:54) state that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something". Unlike unmotivated people who have lost impetus and inspiration to act, motivated people are energized and activated to the end of a task. "Interest, curiosity, or a desire to achieve" (Williams and Burden, 1997:111) are the key factors that compose motivated people. However, they believe that arousing interest is not enough to be motivated. This interest should be sustained. In addition to this, time and energy should be invested and the effect which is required needs to be sustained so as to reach the aim. According to Steers and Porter (1991:6), motivation can be characterized as follows:

- needs or expectations,
- behavior,
- goals, and
- some form of feedback.

## Teacher Motivation

Richard Ingersoll, a University of Georgia sociologist, defines teaching as "an occupation with a very high turnover rate and the graying workforce is only a piece of the puzzle" (Lawrence, 1999:13).

Johnson (1986:55) states that there are three theories of motivation and productivity that teacher motivation is based on.

- Expectancy theory: It is probable for a person to struggle for work if there is an expected reward such a bonus or a promotion that is worth working.
- Equity theory: Unfair treatment for their efforts and achievements makes individuals displeased.
- Job enrichment theory. The more varied and challenging their work is, the more productive employees become.

While merit pay and career ladders are dealt with in the first two theories, the third one studies distinguished staffing and "reform-oriented staff development" (NAEN, 1999).

There is a tight relation between performance-based pay and a career ladder to be climbed to take higher pay and higher status. Also, merit pay is known as "a compensation system" where employees are paid in terms of their performance. However, in educational practice, merit pay indicates a bonus plan that "supplements that standard pay scale and rewards teachers for special services, a multitrack pay scale that provides rapid salary advancement for outstanding teachers, or a bonus plan for accomplishment such as participating in extracurricular activities, or conducting in-service training" (Johnson, 1986:61).

According to Hawley (1985:58), in order to increase teacher competence career ladder plans should be done. There are some principles to be designed for career ladder plans. These are:

- For high performance, economic rewards are important.
- In order to keep higher levels of pay and status, teachers carry on showing high performance.
- There should not be any competitive rewards which can discourage peer interaction and social approval, important to effective teaching.
- Fair and predictable assessment measures should be used.

"The need to avoid pain and the need for psychological growth" are two basic elements found in job enrichment theory (Silver, 1982:551). It is said that motivation factors should be intrinsic which present tasks that are more enjoyable, interesting and psychologically rewarding. Achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, advancement and possibility of growth take place in that group. On the other hand, other factors are extrinsic in terms of the context or setting where the work is performed. Organizational policy and administration, technical supervision, salary, working conditions, status, job security, effects on personal life, and interpersonal relations with superiors, peers and subordinates are in that group.

According to Dörnyei (2001a:157), there are four motivational aspects in terms of teacher motivation.

## **Intrinsic Component**

There is a high correlation between intrinsic motivation and teaching. Internal desire to educate people, to give knowledge and value is always in teaching as a vocational goal. Fulfillment of teaching is provided with intrinsic rewards. "Performing a behavior for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity" is the definition of intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b:47). With the help of this definition, intrinsic reward is divided into most satisfying views of teaching as a profession: a) the educational process itself, and, b) the subject matter. The first one is about the teacher's performance affected by working with students and perceiving the changes in the students' performance and behavior. The second one is related to studying a valued field and new information in it so it leads to increase one's own level of professional skills and knowledge. Such intrinsic rewards make teachers forgo high salaries and social recognition.

Professional effectiveness comes from being aware of one's strengths and limitations (Kottler and Zehn, 2000:3). Not only being in an autonomous manner, which means that the worker is given control of what, how and when the work is done, but also "competence" replaced by "efficacy" are crucial aspects in intrinsic dimension of teacher motivation. Wheatley (2000:14) states that "teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs about their ability to influence student outcomes". It has also been defined as "teachers' general beliefs about the possibility of producing student learning in the face of multiple obstacles such as an unsupportive home environment" (Dörnyei, 2001a:169).

## **Contextual Factors**

Environment plays a key role in job motivation, in other words, it is not the worker but work itself which has a great influence on persistence and performance.

Extrinsic influences on work motivation are thought to be a real domain. While its presence results in dissatisfaction, its absence does not make any sense in the increase of job satisfaction. These contextual influences are the negative sides of the positive part, intrinsic domain, of work motivation. There are two types of contextual influences on teacher motivation, called macro-contextual and micro-contextual influences. Macro-contextual motives are related to teaching as the job itself should fulfill the chief societal duties such as bringing up and educating the next generation of people. Thus, every level of society as an external influence deals with teaching. However, micro-dimension is featured with the organizational climate of the particular institution where teachers work, the class, and the traits of teaching environment, students.

The following factors affect teacher motivation:

- the school's general climate and the existing school norms;
- the class sizes, the school resources and facilities;
- the standard activity structure within the institution;
- collegial relations;
- the definition of the teacher's role by colleagues and authorities;
- general expectations regarding student potential;
- the school's reward contingencies and feedback system;
- the school's leadership and decision-making structure (Dörnyei, 2001a:161).

## **Temporal Dimension**

Teacher motivation is not only about the motivation to teach but also about the motivation to be a teacher as a lifelong career. A career view emphasizes the temporal dimension of motivation in terms of a vocational situation. The steps on a career path, known as the "contingent path structure" (Dörnyei, 2001a:162) activate long-term success in a challenging manner as intrinsic pleasure of being involved in one's profession and different extrinsic rewards which career advancement causes are important.

Dörnyei (2001a:164) cites Pennington (1995) on possible advancement contingency paths as follows:

- the increased kinds of courses taught
- helping to develop curriculum
- monitoring role with new discipline
- being responsible for developing new courses / programs
- making conference presentations / preparing professional publications
- managing teacher-training workshops

## **Negative Influences**

Dörnyei (2001a:165) defines teaching as a profession whose energy is supplied from intrinsic motives and states that there are some damaging elements which weaken and destroy the intrinsic character of teacher motivation.

"Burnout is a professional hazard" (Kottler and Zehn, 2000:98). Teaching is known as one of the most stressful professions. There are three reasons why teachers burn out. Emotional exhaustion is the first element. It is the result of emotional and physical overextension. Trying to do too many things in a short time, in other words, the amount of work that has to be done within a time limit can cause emotional exhaustion. The next factor is depersonalization, which means being cynical, frustrated and critical when teachers have negative attitudes towards their colleagues. The lack of personal accomplishment is the third one. Feeling discouraged and disillusioned are the signs of burned-out teachers as they are dissatisfied with their own needs for challenges, recognition and appreciation. There is no full satisfaction in their job. Humphreys (1996:8) says that burnout is the reason of personal vulnerability and occupational stress.

Lack of intellectual challenge is another de-motivating factor. Without discovering and acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities, many teachers teach the same subject so they can "lose spark" (Dörnyei, 2001a:169). The prescribed requirements and fixed, imposed course content do not let teachers have leeway to create "variations" and "intellectual detours".

Restricted autonomy is believed to be one of the negative influences on teacher motivation. Nationwide standardized tests, national curricula, and general mistrust reflected by the increasing administration demands are in this group. Growing centralized control will be an obstacle for teacher autonomy.

Hargreaves (1998:850) states that the following suggestions are important for positive emotions:

- The centrality of the emotions to the processes and outcomes of teaching, learning and caring in schools must be honored and acknowledged by the discourse of educational reform.
- Government and other reformers should work together for the sake of the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning into learning standards or curriculum targets for students and into professional standards or competencies for teachers and administrators regarding the content of educational reform.
- Checklists, targets, meetings and paperwork should not take too much of the teacher's time.

There are three types of pressure that affect teachers' self-determined motivation (Pelletier and et. al, 2002:193).

- Being responsible for students' behavior and students performing up to standards.
- Being forced to follow colleagues' teaching methods or involvement in school activities.
- Having limited freedom in determining the course's curriculum or following a certain curriculum decided by the school's administration.

## Sources of Motivation

"Locus of control is one major construct of motivation" (Czubaj, 1996:372). Internal and external are the two types of locus of control. While the internal locus of control is defined as "a state of belief that one's behavior determines the events of one's life", external locus of control is regarded as "a state where one feels the events are beyond one's control". These issues are concerned with self-determination theory. Self-determination theory highlights the three psychological needs -- competence, autonomy and relatedness which are universal. Satisfaction of these needs produces positive outcomes (Deci and et al., 2001: 932). Environmental factors that impede and weaken self-motivation, social functioning and personal well-being are studied in self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000b:69).

### Extrinsic Motivation

"Tangible benefits" (Latham, 1998:82) related to job such as salary, fringe benefits and job security are known as extrinsic motivation or called extrinsic rewards. Wage increase or insufficient salary increase are in the salary category. Tenure and company stability are handled in job security. In addition to this, physical conditions, the amount of work and the facilities available for doing the work are regarded as extrinsic rewards (Herzberg and et al., 1993:49).

Latham (1998:83) points out that "sociologically extrinsic" elements play a role in disparity in job satisfaction. The research shows that the public school teachers have a small average class size and a much higher average salary when compared to the Catholic school teachers. However, public school teachers do not feel efficacious and satisfied despite the good condition.

Ryan and Deci (2000b:71) define that extrinsic motivation is concerned with the performance of an activity to succeed in getting separable outcomes, which contrasts sharply with intrinsic motivation.

### Intrinsic Motivation

Ellis (1984:1) defines intrinsic motivation as self-respect of accomplishment and personal growth. That is, the emotional and personal benefits of the job itself are known as intrinsic rewards. Latham (1998:83) emphasizes that intrinsic rewards take an important role in teachers' lives. Seeing the growth and development of students makes a teacher more satisfied, regardless of

extrinsic elements, when compared with a teacher who does not feel anything with the success of his students. The activities that satisfy curiosity or lead to enhance the effectiveness are regarded as intrinsically motivated behaviors (Boggiano and Pittman, 1992:3).

Competence and autonomy are the important issues on intrinsic motivation. Social-contextual events such as feedback, communications, rewards which cause feelings of competence foster intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000b:70). While positive performance feedback increases intrinsic motivation, negative performance feedback decreases it.

Intrinsic motivation is likely to be increased by a sense of relatedness. Raffini (1996:8) defines relatedness as "the degree of emotional security" that teachers feel. A sense of belonging and acceptance is developed by conforming to the social and academic expectations of their colleagues and administrator. A secure relational base is thought to be an important issue for intrinsic motivation. (Ryan and Deci, 2000b:71).

Czubaj (1996:372) states that the teachers with an internal locus of control are under less stress and more successful in teaching. Therefore, the students of these teachers feel less school related stress and take higher scores in their assessments. It is clear that teacher efficacy affects students directly. There is a tight correlation between teacher efficacy and students performance. "Good enough motivator" (Dörnyei, 2001c:135) is such a concept that a desired outcome by students can occur with the help of this certain teacher function.

## Conclusion

Lack of motivation may cause teachers to be less successful in teaching a foreign language. Unreasonable demands of administrators, discouraging team spirit, neglecting rewards, financial problems are the factors related to demotivation. It should not be forgotten that every teacher is not motivated entirely by the same demands and needs. Job satisfaction of each employee is different from the other. Without having intrinsic motivation, lack of success is inevitable. If there are not any factors motivating teachers, the productivity will decrease dramatically. It is obvious that intrinsic rewards outweigh extrinsic ones in educator motivation and job satisfaction.

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