A Means for Motivating Students to Read in an Educational Field

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Abstract. *The purpose of this article is to highlight the different types of motivation and show how to use instructional strategies that support motivation in the classroom to create a dynamic environment that encourages learning.*

Key words: *dynamic environment, motivational support, learning strategy.*

When students read in an L2, the experience can easily become overwhelming when students lack vocabulary, grammar, and content knowledge. These frustrating reading experiences can result in decreased motivation to read in the L2 - a truly unfortunate consequence considering the importance of reading for most of our students. Nurturing students' motivation to read, therefore, should be an essential part of L2 reading instruction. The complexity of motivation as a behavioral construct has compelled researchers to identify different types of motivations and examine how they influence student learning. For example,

Selfetermination Theory (SDT) - proposed by Deci, Ryan, and their colleagues; [2]

- considers what types of motivation may initiate and sustain interest in learning. Two basic forms of motivation are extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is typically driven by factors outside of the learner; extrinsically motivated students read to receive good grades, please the teacher, and outperform their classmates, but not because they find reading interesting or enjoyable. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is free from the influence of external factors such as reward or punishment.[8]

Intrinsically motivated students read because they find it interesting or enjoyable; therefore, motivation comes from inside and is self-determined. SDT suggests that the more self-determined students' motivations are, the more likely they are to develop and sustain their learning ability

1. Competence. Competence refers to students' feelings that they are capable of completing L2 reading activities (i.e., "I can do it!"). Competence can be affected by the levels of difficulty of texts and tasks, as well as by teacher feedback. To increase and maintain students' feelings of competence, reading activities must be optimally challenging - not too easy, nor too hard. Also, teacher feedback should help students build confidence in their abilities rather than attribute their success to luck.

2. Autonomy. The need for autonomy is satisfied when students feel that they are in control of their own behaviors (i.e., "I decided to do this!"). Autonomy can be influenced by factors such as making choices, receiving rewards, and, again, feedback.

3. Relatedness. The third CAR component, relatedness, refers to students' feelings of being connected with their classmates and teachers (i.e., "I am not alone!"). Students thrive in educational environments in which they feel safe, supported, and cared for. Relatedness is particularly important for students to develop more self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation because these types of

motivation often involve students' acceptance of communal values. Introduce reading assignments in small, simple steps. Breaking down a 408 reading assignment into manageable steps is one way to help students experience success. For example, we can incorporate a pre-reading stage into our lessons where students activate their back - ground knowledge about the topic, preview the passage, and predict the content of the reading.

➢ Provide visual support to complement texts and aid comprehension, including illustrations, charts, tables, and graphic organizers. Using graphic organizers, for instance, has proven effective for helping students understand text structures.[5]

➢ Distribute reading guides to enhance comprehension and interest. Include text summaries (identifying such things as theme, plot, characters), comprehension questions, and prompts for post reading activities.

➢ Provide definitions of key vocabulary to reduce the difficulty of the reading. We might also want to teach students how to use dictionaries effectively and efficiently. This can yield a positive long-term effect because students equipped with dictionary-use skills are more likely to sustain their feelings of competence across multiple reading tasks in the future.

➢ Allow students enough time to finish reading. From a motivational perspective, giving students enough time to finish their reading is highly important. If students constantly run out of time when completing assigned readings, they could easily lose confidence in their reading abilities.

➢ Give students meaningful opportunities to reread texts. When students have opportunities to reread, they feel that their reading skills have improved. We can design meaningful exercises by asking students to reread texts for different purposes, from different perspectives, or with a different pedagogical focus, such as reading to acquire vocabulary, identify the main idea, or analyze the text's structure.

➢ Have students choose a topic for additional reading within a thematic unit.

➢ Begin giving choices with small, concrete, and nonthreatening tasks in set - tings where students are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with making choices of their own.

➢ Arrange programmed Sustained Silent Reading activities where students choose the topic, genre, and level of difficulty of the reading material and simply read for pleasure.

➢ Avoid giving controlling feedback. Teachers' comments and their communication styles can weaken students' sense of autonomy if perceived as con - trolling.

➢ Avoid overemphasizing the importance of rewards. Teachers are not the only source of potential external control over student behaviors.

➢ Incorporate activities that nurture cooperative interactions among students. Group work such as a jigsaw reading can be quite effective for this purpose because it engages students in meaningful interactions with each other.

Involve students in discussions about main ideas, themes, and strategies for understanding texts to make them feel part of the classroom community. In addition, we can set up pre- and post reading activities that allow students to work in small groups of perhaps three to five students.

➢ Have more-advanced readers help less advanced readers to create feelings of support and collaboration.

➢ Encourage students to share their work with each other (e.g., answers to comprehension questions, completed graphic organizers, and response papers). This may seem simple, but it could very well promote students' sense of belonging.

➢ Discourage excessive competition in reading. Competition among students has the potential to prevent them from establishing cooperative relationships with each other.

With each and every year, EFL students experience a greater need for improved English reading abilities. To respond to these needs, we teachers need to reconsider our reading pedagogy and move

beyond traditional approaches that focus on vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. Strengthening and maintaining student motivation are crucial to reading instruction because reading in an L2 requires a lot time, effort, and perseverance. As teachers, we need to be aware of the links between motivational approaches and reading development; we need to nurture student motivational orientations that are most likely to yield positive results.

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