

**Action Research Study
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Title of the Study:
Some Strategies for Motivating Students to Learn English
Location or Institution (optional)
Khalid Ben Al Waleed Independent Preparatory School for Boys
Abstract
<p><i>What are some instructional strategies and questioning techniques that I can employ to motivate students to learn English and participate actively in the English classes?</i></p> <p>This was the problem area upon which I based my action research. I collected my data directly from my students, they are about one hundred students; the majority of them showed reluctance towards learning English though they felt my sympathy and my sincere wish to help them. I did the questionnaires twice within an interval of six months. First, I asked the students to answer four questions related to an important skill in English, then; I asked them about the way they look to school, their ambitions, how they think about their future career and how they consider competence in the class. I was disappointed to get so frustrating numbers; but I thought and analysed the results consulting the teachers and the social supervisors in the school. They talked about the environment of the students and that any change would be of great value in comparison with the past. I started working on creating the best atmosphere for motivating my students beginning with the relation between me and the students, me and the parents and how to encourage the students to work harder by their own wills. I felt that something is changing positively in my classes .By the second questionnaires the numbers assured me that the change is real though it wasn't due to my aspiration.</p>
Grade Level: preparatory
Data Collection Methods:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questionnaire• Interview• Observation• Examinations• interview
Subject/Topic: English

MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN ENGLISH

BY

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ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

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Action Research

Motivating Students to Learn English

PROBLEM AREA

What are some instructional strategies and questioning techniques that I can employ to motivate students to learn English and participate actively in the English classes?

Gathered Data

The following data were easy to collect, and available for use:

Interviews: *my students never raise their hands to answer my questions unless I ask them namely to do that. I discussed that with many of them but the answers were a question: why do we have to learn English?*

Individual tests: *many of my students' test sheets are left blank whatever easy the question is. Moreover, most of the students never pay the least effort to read the question in the exam, they need someone to read and explain it for them.*

Report cards: *the students' monthly or semester reports implicate that the students are not caring to get higher scores than the minimum score required to pass. They usually leave whole questions unanswered.*

Samples of student work.

Following up the students' worksheets, quizzes and tests, show that they like to answer recognition questions (choose, fill in...etc) rather than production questions (write, what...etc)

INTERPRET DATA

I teach four classes everyday, they are about one hundred students who came mostly from Bedouin backgrounds and it is difficult for them to be quickly in accord with English. Though the other skills are not less important, but I picked up one of the most important skills in English: Reading, which is the master key for the learning process. Without reading properly, one couldn't know, learn, understand, analyze, write or answer questions. I asked my students to answer these four questions about "reading", after explaining the content of the table. Consider the percentage:

1. Before you read do you think about what it will be about?

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
44%	12%	20%	15%	9%

2. While you read, do you imagine pictures in your head or imagine you are part of the story?

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
40%	14%	23%	18%	5%

3. When you read a word you don't know, do you try to figure out its meaning by looking at the rest of the story?

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
80%	5%	5%	5%	5%

4. After you read, do you think about how well you understood it?

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Almost Always
75%	5%	7%	6%	7%

I also asked my students to answer different other questions related to the way they look towards the school and their future:

1. Why do you come to school?

<i>My father's wish</i>	<i>to learn</i>	<i>I've nothing else to do</i>	<i>to be a good member in society</i>
40%	15%	30%	15%

2. What scores do you look forward to get in the coming exam?

<i>Full mark</i>	<i>50/100</i>	<i>fail</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
7%	75%	8%	10%

3. Do you like to compete with good students?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No answer</i>
18%	82%	10%

4. What are you going to be after leaving school?

<i>doctor</i>	<i>teacher</i>	<i>policeman</i>	<i>employee</i>	<i>others</i>
2%	10%	70%	9%	9%

The acts taken on evidence

By looking at the above tables I noticed that the pupils "almost never" read, never expect what to read and never do the least effort to understand the new vocabulary they read. They have never engaged in the whole activity in a way that enables them to

take part in the class activities. I also find out that the majority of the students were pushed to school due to their parents' wish and a few by their own wish to learn. They are also not ambitious to get higher marks in the exams; they want to pass the exam with even the low "A". They have no sense of competence to match their good peers and finally, most of them like to join the policemen staff just because that keeps them away from universities and learning. Our students are generally not motivated; they do not like reading though they like passing the exam and move up to higher grades. Most of them do not like school; they only follow the rules of the parents at home and the rules of the teachers at school. They have no idea about the step after school. They never felt success at study so the hope for competition is demolished.

EVALUATE RESULTS

Depending on the above analysis of the data we decided to create a more suitable environment for motivation; to find students who are eager to work, willing to persevere despite challenges, better problem solvers, able to retain information longer because of their personal investment in learning, delighted by their accomplishments, performing for the joy of learning, rather than for a reward or grade.

I talked too much about the benefits of education and the importance of learning English the language of science and literature all over the world, how one can be a better member in his society when he is educated and well qualified.

I provided the students with extra reading skills and a sufficient explanation of the Reading tips in addition to that , I encouraged the students to be part of a Literature Circle and to write a

summary of what they read or to discuss with their classmates about a certain topic.

I got lots of pupils engaged in activity groups such as Poetry Group so that they can say long poems in front of the audience and to compose poetry in the next step. Others were able to introduce the students' morning assembly in English and to arrange interviews with the principal, teachers or experts.

However, the engagement in "reading" activities leads to "writing" as well, so most of the pupils who used to write a paragraph properly were asked to prepare an essay research, and they did it.

These activities ignited the slow, reluctant, de-motivated pupils' jealousy to work. They began to ask, to write and take a little part in the classroom activities, this was far behind in the near past.

Creating a more suitable atmosphere for students motivation is essential, "Things were better in the past; students used to flee away from the school at 10" One of the MOE previous students says. we have to enable our students get rid of the feeling that they are imprisoned inside the school fence, they should feel that the school is the typical place for practicing one's hobbies, learning, socializing, making good friends and getting the best education. For that, we had to consider and look at five conditions for fostering intrinsic learning in general as well as intrinsic learning English:

a) Belonging. Building an environment where students feel respected and connected to one another and to the teacher. A student feels that he is an indispensable member in his class and his teacher as well as his classmates consider him and evaluate him highly. In fact, I care for and respect all of my students and

they all know this. Every student contributes to the class in a meaningful way. Satire and side comments by other students are not tolerated.

b) Competence. Creating situations where every student feels successful on a daily basis. By every weekend I used to give the students their weekly results by telling them that a few of them stayed in their place and they have to work harder in the coming week, others got improved and they can be recognized pupils by the next week, and the best pupils for that week were..... etc. for building competence Students should not focus only on their own individual progress but they should compete with their classmates. Every student is successful but not without competence. That burden me with responsibility when scoring students' exam papers because some of them are competing and they may discuss me about a mark they lost / gained.

c) Choice. Teaching students that success is within their control through choices they make coupled with providing opportunities for student input and decision-making. When students have opportunities to make choices about their own learning, they become excited and more engaged. Student choice leads to learning that is more relevant to them. They are developing their intrinsic motivation for learning. So we as teacher should solicit student opinion.

d) Relevance. Developing content and curriculum that is authentic and personally relevant to students. Students are given appropriate, ample, and varied opportunities to make their own choices. Students know their input is valued. Instruction is

authentic and relevant to the students' lives. Purpose Instruction stimulates the natural curiosity or interests of the students.

e) Safety. Creating a classroom environment where students feel physically and emotionally safe. In addition to that, we have to assess the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred. If there is improvement, and we are sure that the data will clearly provide the supporting evidence. Every student feels safe enough to make mistakes and take risks. Teasing, bullying, racial slurs, and other disrespectful behavior are not tolerated in the class.

CONCLUSION:

I spent the last six months working on students' motivation and how to facilitate the learning of English and to overcome other difficulties that may arise at the school. I talked to the students, listened carefully for their complaints and suggestions, answered their questions inside and outside the classroom. I also met and talked to parents whose role in motivating their kids is more essential than the teacher's. I discussed some pupils' academic and social problems with the social supervisors at the school. Many things changed positively since then, but we still have more to do because change takes time, and I think nobody has a magic prescription for motivating students who are not intrinsically motivated. Nevertheless, comparing with the last semester results, the final results of our students were more acceptable and more encouraging. The students' views towards school have changed. Students started asking about the best school to go to after preparatory school, or if I can recommend them to learn English in

certain institutes. They can talk loudly about joining the Qatar Academy for Leaders, Cornell or North Atlantic.

When finally I asked the same questions I did six months ago the students' answers were different, more mature and ambitious:

1. Before you read do you think about what it will be about?

<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>
20%	10%	20%	17%	33%

2. While you read, do you imagine pictures in your head or imagine you are part of the story?

<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>
10%	9%	35%	18%	28%

3. When you read a word you don't know, do you try to figure out its meaning by looking at the rest of the story?

<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>
50%	5%	15%	16%	14%

4. After you read, do you think about how well you understood it?

<i>Almost Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Almost Always</i>
45%	5%	18%	19%	13%

When I ask them the same questions about the way they look to school and their future after six months, the percentage was different:

1-Why do you come to school?

<i>My father's wish</i>	<i>To learn</i>	<i>I've nothing else to do</i>	<i>To be a good member in society</i>
15%	45%	10%	30%

2. What scores do you look forward to get in the coming exam?

Full mark	50/100	fail	Don't know
20%	44%	2%	34%

3. Do you like to compete with good students?

Yes	No	No answer
48%	41%	11%

4. What are you going to be after leaving school?

doctor	teacher	policeman	employee	others
5%	20%	45%	14%	16%

Next step:

. In my Action Research, I tried hardly to put my hand on most of the problems and to find solutions through students' environment, I read the standards that may create a good atmosphere for the student to be motivated, I asked the parents whose help was essential in this research. I achieved a little and things changed completely with many cases, but I have to go on doing more with the help of parents and experts. I intend to keep a Research Journal by which I can improve my observation skills and to provide a record of observations, to yield research questions and further information on the research topic. I'll add to my journal at least twice per week, spending approximately one hour per session, and to record classroom observations right after or during class.

Finally, I have to admit that since I started this Action Research, I came across many good additions, and I think it will not be a final copy as far as I'm living.

THE END
