



## Motivating Students to Learn

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**Abstract:** In this article we aim to have some ideas and suggestions on inspiring and motivating EFL learners. Motivation has been called as the ignored heart of language teaching. It affects effort which affects results and totally students' abilities. By getting their motivation, you can help students become more proficient in English and increase their ability to learn.

**Keywords:** intimidating, emotional, project-based, relevant, integration.

**Introduction.** Inspiring your classroom doesn't have to be intimidating. It's easy to lose sight of the importance of motivation. With a few small steps, you can make increase engagement and curiosity. Here are some strategies for motivating ESL students. Firstly teachers can trigger their interests. Make English learning personal. By connecting language to something personal in your students' lives, they'll tap into something emotional that will help with engagement. Rost offers a couple of ways to trigger students' interests. One way is to integrate current topics, music, movies, and fads to create a relevant class culture. Another option is to investigate the theme of self-expression. By using personalized tasks, idea journals, and speaking circles, learners will be motivated by the fact that the class focuses on their personal lives. You can also consider project-based learning.

Secondly, Integrate Fun Activities and Technology. Games and fun activities offer several benefits to students. Games promote learner centeredness, create the space for genuine communication within a meaningful context, and are often team-oriented." She went on to say, "They have been found to stimulate motivation, reduce anxiety, and allow for the integration of all language skills."

Gaming is particularly noteworthy. As a result, ESL learners can engage in rich, diverse, and meaningful language experiences. Make Class Communicative. One way to encourage your students' intrinsic motivation is to make class communicative. Part of the joy of language is using it to communicate. Language learners get a rush when they can successfully translate their thoughts into words and get their points across. Aside from the fun of communicating, it's also what most students want to get out of learning English. In other words, that's where their intrinsic motivation lies—they're already eager to be able to communicate in English for their own reasons.



**Materials and discussion.** The more we encourage our students to communicate in class, the more motivated they'll be. They'll see that they're accomplishing their goals even as they're learning, and the success and achievement will make them readier to learn.

How can you make your class more communicative?

- Group activities are a great way to make class communicative. Get students using the language that they already know to work together to accomplish something.
- Use seating to your advantage and ditch the traditional rows and columns. Arrange student desks to make larger tables to encourage communication among them.
- If you haven't tried it yet, give the discovery grammar method a shot. Give students a grammar worksheet with the answers already in the blanks *before* you teach the grammatical concept. Then challenge groups of two or three students to examine the answers and see if they can figure out the rule on their own. That way they'll be communicating as they figure things out on their own.
- A flipped classroom is another great way to give communication center stage in your classroom. A flipped classroom turns tradition on its head by assigning instructional material to be completed at home and then uses classtime for extension, practice and deepening activities, in other words putting language to use through communication.
- When all else fails, keep your class communicative by minimizing teacher talk time (TTT). The less you talk, the more your students will be talking, and that means they'll be putting their language knowledge to work.
- Make English Practical. People don't like doing things that are pointless. They want to know that there's a purpose behind what they do even if the activity is as simple as digging a hole. You can stress purpose in your activities when you keep them practical.

One way to keep things practical in class is to use realia whenever possible. Realia is just another way to say materials that are created with native speakers in mind. Bringing realia into your classroom will make your students more prepared for what they'll find outside your classroom walls.

Project-based learning is a great way to keep things focused on reality, since it starts with a true-to-life problem and asks students to solve it. In project-based learning, students work through a series of steps to come to a solution to that problem. This series of steps may include: listing the information necessary for coming to a solution, breaking down the different steps they'll have to take to solve the problem, gathering the necessary information, coming to a conclusion and presenting their solution.

The process is more important than the final product, since that's where students are really putting their language knowledge to use. Focusing on the process also helps to motivate students the right way because you're not focusing on the extrinsic motivation of a grade at the end of the project. Rather, you're stressing successful communication throughout the process.

Role playing is another way to stay focused on the practical. Giving students real-life situations they're likely to encounter in the outside world will give them a chance to practice for the future in a safe environment.

Make Class Fun. Making class fun is a surefire way to up intrinsic motivation levels. When students are having a good time, they'll be more engaged in learning. Their motivation will come from them rather than from you. You just have to find the best ways to help your students have a good time while they learn. Here are some strategies you can try:



Use social media in class. You can have great conversations with friends and strangers alike when you put yourself out there on social media. By including it in your class, you're not only making language use practical, you're also bringing something students do for fun into their learning. Invite pop culture into class. People love movies, magazines and contemporary music.

Use a movie as the basis for event sequencing, writing a summary or a cloze listening activity. Pay attention to the music your students like, the types of movies they watch and what they enjoy on TV. Then include these resources whenever possible to guarantee that they're motivated and engaged with the activity.

Gamify your lessons! I'll be honest. I love using games with my students. They're highly effective ways to teach vocabulary and use grammatical structures. Some of my favorites are Scrabble, Scattergories and Charades. And you don't have to feel tied to the traditional rules, either. There are plenty of ways to change up traditional games to make them even more fun for your ESL students in class.

Forge Relationships. Generally speaking, people don't care what you know until they know that you care. That's why forging relationships with your students is so important. Particularly if you're teaching international students, you may be the only English speaker they see or speak with on a regular basis. Supporting your students is something you need to do before you can motivate them.

**Results.** You can let your students know that you care about them and where they come from by encouraging expressions of culture in class. Be on the lookout for any opportunities to have students share their values, beliefs and traditions. Also, take some time every day to relate to your students on a personal level. Ask them how their weekends went. Encourage them if they seem down. Let them know that you're there for them in any way.

Though it may seem like you're "wasting" valuable classtime with chit-chat, the bonds you form during those minutes are the foundations of successful relationships with your students.

Give Feedback. Always consider feedback carefully. The right quantity and quality of feedback is important for forging the right relationships with your students. If you spend too much time correcting every error they make, you'll end up estranging your students. They may respect your knowledge, but they won't feel connected to you personally.

**Conclusion.** It's also great to celebrate achievements on a regular basis. This doesn't mean rewarding every action your students perform. That type of extrinsic motivation will only serve to demotivate them, or it will feel disingenuous. No, I mean taking time out to talk about the things your students have accomplished and giving them the space to brag on themselves a little. Go around in a circle and have everyone share something they believe they did well that day, that week or that semester. Have their peers give them a round of applause, compliments or "snaps" to celebrate! Motivating students is a part of every teacher's job.

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