

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF ENTHUSIASM AND MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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RESUMEN

En el ámbito educativo actual, la figura del docente está siendo cada vez más desestimada por parte de los mismos estudiantes, lo cual ha ido generando una serie de factores que hacen que ellos ya no se sientan motivados por aprender o encuentren diversas excusas para no querer apropiarse de sus conocimientos. A través de éste artículo, se pretende concientizar, animar y ayudar al maestro a apropiarse de su rol y ejercerlo de tal forma que pueda ser un canal que estimule el aprendizaje en sus estudiantes sin que ellos se sientan presionados ni obligados. Los tres componentes mencionados en el artículo y que ayudarán a abordar este tema son: creatividad, innovación y estimulación intelectual. Si bien en el proceso de formación, éstos deben ser desarrollados de forma conectada, muchos los ven como factores aislados entre sí o no interconectados. La correlación que estos tres elementos poseen es primordial en el manejo y organización al interior de las aulas, ya que tiene como fin interesar a los aprendices a ser más conscientes y a involucrarse más en su propio aprendizaje, sintiéndose responsables de cumplir las metas u objetivos propuestos y estimulando sus capacidades en el logro de los mismos. Por otro lado, reconocer la importancia del rol del docente, su pasión por enseñar y formar, son puntos claves para la creación de ambientes motivacionales y entusiastas, ya que esto conlleva a que los estudiantes asimilen y se interesen por aprender de manera más natural y fresca sin dejar de lado la exigencia y excelencia en cada uno de los procesos.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Motivación – Creatividad – Innovación – Estimulación – Enseñanza

ABSTRACT

In the current educational field, the figure of the teacher is being increasingly scorned by students, this has been generating a series of factors in which students do not feel motivated for learning or make them find diverse excuses for not appropriating their own knowledge. This article aims to encourage and help the teacher to adapt his/her role and exercise it in such a way it could be a channel that stimulates learning in students without make them feel pressed or obligated. Three components are mentioned in the article and will help to approach this topic: creativity, innovation and intellectual stimulation. Although

in the process of forming, these components must be developed in a connected way, many see them as isolated factors or not interconnected. The correlation that these three elements have is important in the management and organization inside the classrooms, because it has the purpose of calling students' attention, making them more involved and aware of their own learning process, making them feel responsible of fulfilling the proposed aims, stimulating their capacities in the achievement of the goals. On the other hand, to recognize the importance of the teacher's role, his/her passion for teaching and to form, are key points for creating motivational and enthusiastic environments, this leads students to assimilate and to be interested for learning in a more natural and fresh way without leaving apart the exigency and excellence in their processes.

KEY WORDS

Motivation – Creativity – Innovation – Stimulation – Teaching

INTRODUCTION

For many reasons, the enthusiasm and motivation are being denominated as important components in the learning process. The teacher is able to change the mood and interaction in the students by just having a good or bad attitude. In many classrooms, students are only attending but they are not learning successfully. They are the nucleus of the class and teachers have to be focused on them all the time, reviewing if they are comfortable with the activities developed around them or if they are having troubles in their own learning process.

Some influential factors to get success in students' learning is to keep in mind passion, care of them and a great communication during the process. In consequence, it can generate a huge difference in the atmosphere and students will notice it and respond according to it. The goal is to catch the students' attention and involve them into an innovative and creative context, having the possibility to develop an intellectual stimulation that will lead students to a higher state of learning and will make them good leaders. According to Northouse (2001), "This is leadership that stimulates followers to be creative

and innovative, and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization".

Moreover, teachers need to remember that students learn in different ways, for that reason, they have to identify as soon as possible their students' learning styles and plan a class with appropriate activities which involve them. This is a significant learning process, although it is notable that it represents a harder job for the teacher. When a teacher uses the three components mentioned in this article, he/she might notice the difference in his/her students' attitude towards the class and will cause an effective learning in them.

METHODOLOGY

In this paper some bibliographical review was done in order to make explicit the theoretical and conceptual foundation. After the subject matter was chosen, the information about it was collected, reviewed, analyzed, selected and extracted from various sources in order to reach knowledge and an understanding of it. The researchers relied on documentary review techniques, as these allow to obtain the necessary information about the aspects that were incorporated in the paper.

The procedure conducted for the present paper was as follows:

Collection of material: it was based on the literature review about the subject matter with the purpose of placing it in an existing knowledge system. Initially it started with an exploratory reading that then led the researchers to a selective reading, which finally helped them to delimitate the topic. For a holistic foundation of the topic, different sources were taken into account such as books, papers, web pages and thesis.

Reading and storage of the information: it was done through the selective reading of the relevant material. All the information referred to the subject was highlighted or underlined and then classified by thematic units which later were contrasted to establish relations.

Categorization of the information: It consisted of giving a name (category) to each thematic unit.

That implied to classify and identify the content or central idea of each thematic unit and give it a name. Later, all the categories were grouped or associated according to their nature and content.

Development of the contextual scheme: It allowed the researchers to plan the way they wanted to present the ideas. It consisted of making a list of categories and subcategories with the purpose of organizing in a logic and coherent way all the information to be incorporated and presented in the paper.

Writing: It consisted of assembling all the information to communicate in a clear, organized and accurate way the ideas that make up the theoretical-conceptual foundation of the paper. Some drafts were made and revised many times until the final version was done.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The enthusiasm and motivation are found in the way a teacher teaches, it will change the students' perspective about the subject as well. As Harden, R. & Laidlaw, J. (2017) say: "Good teachers need to demonstrate a passion for their teaching if they are to motivate their students to learn. The passionate teacher conveys an enthusiasm for the subject and for their teaching." In other words, the teacher has the key and the power to change a bad environment into a good one and the ability to motivate and influence learners, transforming their opinions or thoughts. The highest goal for a teacher is to make the class remarkable and unforgettable over the time.

Day, C. (2004) argues: "Teacher with a passion for teaching are those who are committed, enthusiastic, intellectually and emotionally energetic in their work with children, young people and adults alike. Passionate teachers are aware of the challenge of the broader social contexts in which they teach, have a clear sense of identity and believe that they can make a difference to the learning and achievement of all their pupils". This makes a memorable teacher who is implicated in the whole process of education, thus, they are immerse in an adventure of creating new methodologies or contents for catching their students' attention and also they share their experiences and new knowledge with their co-

workers and help them to advance and improve. The teacher should not be a closed person, he/she should be enthusiastic and a fan of what he/she does.

A classroom is a huge space to experiment, create, develop and innovate with different resources making students part of it absolutely. The class is not just about teachers but students too, so involve them in their own process will be a marvelous episode in their lives because they are learning thanks to their own ideas, concepts and creativity. It is fundamental to remember the quote that Christopher Day mentions: "The best teachers at all levels are those who have strong intellectual and emotional identities and commitments both to their subject(s) and to their students"

English classes usually turn around the same mechanic; grammar explanations, drillings, writing or listening activities and so on, and learners already know that this is how "an English class works". However, the educators should change that paradigm and make a brand new English environment, more alternative and significant. When teachers have the vocation for teaching there is a huge connection with their whole life (head and heart) and it is not a simple job to make money.

In consequence, Fried, R. (1995) expresses the following: "When students can appreciate their teacher as someone who is passionately committed to a field of study and to upholding high standards within it, it is much easier for them to take their work seriously. Getting them to learn then becomes a matter of inspiration by example rather than by enforcement and obedience". It is up to teachers to show love and passion for what they do and this will inspire others to get the same attitude towards the subject or content. Currently, learners have qualified educators and they do not usually present well some topics nor express a contagious assertiveness to stimulate their students in their learning. In view of all these, a teacher requires several elements in his/her pedagogical and didactic practices, it is necessary to enlarge some important terms such as: creativity, innovation and intellectual stimulation. As a result, they will make an atmosphere of enthusiasm and motivation in the class when learners may feel that mistakes are acceptable and taking risks are opportunities to grow together without fears.

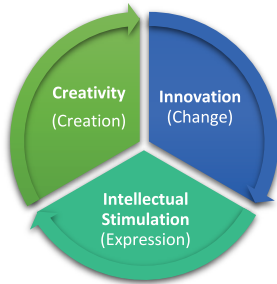


Figure 1. Sequence of process to create motivation in the classroom

It is important to clarify that the concepts creativity and innovation are totally different, although they work together. As William Coyne has expressed talking about creativity, which is thinking about new and suitable ideas, while innovation is the successful application of ideas within an organization, in other words, creativity is the concept and innovation is the process. These concepts will be enlarged and explained ahead.

CREATIVITY

What does creation mean exactly? When talking about creativity, it is always helpful to think first in nothing (no matter, no ideas). All the most spectacular inventions in the world's history have started from anything, but the respective creation occurs from one need. Nobody thought of it before, nor made a calculation and simply something appears; it happens when there is a particular and problematic situation which needs and urgent solution and there is a person to make it real. Guilford (1950) defined creativity in terms of a person "set of own capacities of a maker individual and that only appear in favorable conditions".

This is the way teachers should think deeply. Students have different needs all the time, they come from diverse contexts and their lives are separated worlds from each other. Creativity is influenced by two aspects that can be propitious or unfavorable: the physical space and the social one. So, as teachers, it is necessary to think on them and try to manage the class focused on creating surroundings that let students feel free and comfortable.

The ability of creating dynamic and interesting classes is inside each passionate teacher who wants to embrace students with his/her imaginative mind. Nowadays, educators count on many benefits and

tools to teach and students to learn, but are they (students and teachers) really taking advantage of it? It exists two types of teachers, those who value creativity, propose new contents, express enthusiasm when they receive new ideas and thoughts from their students, and the others are resistant to change, and they are essentially busy transmitting knowledge, giving information and reinforcing traditional personal features.

For developing creativity, it is helpful to consider that it depends on teachers firstly, but then on students, due to the constant relationship they have and the time spent in the classroom. Students will share many emotions, ideas and experiences and it might enrich their creative learning. According to Sanz, A. and Lizarraga, M. (2007) "the ideal is that teachers impart each topic in such a way that students have the opportunity of working as those people do, considered creatives in that field". Students should learn the content of a discipline but even more, how to work with it.

Morris, W. (2006) mentions that "Creative teaching may be defined in two ways: firstly, teaching creatively and secondly, teaching for creativity. (...) Teaching with creativity and teaching for creativity include all the characteristics of good teaching – including high motivation, high expectations, the ability to communicate and listen and the ability to interest, engage and inspire. Creative teachers need expertise in their particular fields but they need more than this. They need techniques that stimulate curiosity and raise self-esteem and confidence". Educators have to know when the encouragement is needed and confidence strengthened so that students may feel the teacher is their fan and is recognizing that they are doing a good job.

It is reasonable to think that teachers must identify the negative factors that hinder the creative learning process and propose new alternatives to overcome those walls which are established by the education system, schools or colleges, some students and some teachers as well. Once, this has been solved, the teacher has the commitment to reinforce the creativity in their learners, no matter the subject, since they will have to face different situations in their lives and it will be necessary to make decisions, make changes or create something new. Also, it might serve for their professional and educational fields.

In the book, *Individual and group creativity in education* (page 31), the writers stand five types of creativity which have to be identified in the students: 1) Expressive, which is spontaneous, 2) productive, in which people have gained mastery when producing things, 3) inventive, where people have certain ability to connect unrelated matters or subjects, 4) innovative, where people have developed understanding about principles or issues and can come up with new ideas or principles and 5) emergent, in which individuals create completely new principles or concepts, in relation with these, teachers should create activities in class to foster them, reminding that learners are different and have different talents and abilities.

INNOVATION

What about innovation? Through years, this concept has been treated in educative spheres as the way of changing common things into special ones, but sometimes, teachers do not want to make any changes in their practices because most of the time, they teach the way they were taught in the past. Innovation presents two steps: firstly, the development of ideas (creativity) and secondly its application or presentation of new services, methods or products. As a result, there is no innovation without creativity.

Looney, J. W. (2009) refines the definition of innovation as “creative destruction”, differentiating between product innovations (goods or services), and innovations in processes (methods, practices, and organization). This term is very particular because it expresses the possibility of re-creating something from something else that needs an urgent change. Innovation will be well managed when students cultivate creative abilities. In addition, Sanz, A. and Lizarraga, M. (2007) assert that creativity does not need continuous external demands, whereas, innovation has to respond to the pressure, necessity and scarcity and act in favor of them. For teaching a foreign language, this term implies a constant process of transformation of the classes, renovating the practices and questioning the parameters established to search and do new things to benefit the students' learning process.

Other definition that is shown in the book *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation*

is “most of the literature defines innovation as the implementation not just of new ideas, knowledge and practices but also of improved ideas, knowledge and practices”. Students may be part of all this new organization but the teachers need to be enthusiastic and motivate them constantly. Frequently, students feel bored doing the same in class and that is why the environment and activities should be well-thought.

In addition, technology has to be part of each teacher's life, due to the demand and increasing power of the mobile devices, laptops and media that are hoarding every corner of education. As John King (US Secretary of Education) said: One of the most important aspects of technology in education is its ability to level the field of opportunity for students. The doors are being opened to discover an amazing world that can connect everything at the same time.

As for the innovation term, there is an old but helpful technique that was considered by the famous pedagogue John Amos Comenius (1630) who introduced the term “Gamification” of education, which consists of incorporating game elements to motivate learners. This brings up what students want to see in their classes. As it is mentioned above, teachers have many resources and tools to use for presenting new knowledge, improving any students ability, getting better results or rewarding concrete actions in students' behavior. This learning technique has generated excellent results, although it must be well-managed, because it not only consists of playing and spending time in another way, it has to be intentional, with a reason, a planning and steps to follow. Taking this into account will get students involved and stimulate their own formation and self-progress.

INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION

It is referred to a sensitive reaction the body produces, especially impulses that travel towards the brain and are distributed through the whole nervous system, followed by any strong action, movement or thinking. Teachers need to create spaces in which students can be exposed to enrich their cognitive experiences and being stimulated constantly.

Teacher needs to provide support and guidance in his/her learners' process and between them;

according to Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) “teachers who promote intellectual stimulation empower students and promote both cognitive and affective learning”. It is a well-known fact that in the classroom's environment students are the center and the teacher is surrounding them with affection, motivation, support and challenges which are part of their growth.

In addition to that, Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin (2011) say “challenging students in the classroom may be the most influential aspect of intellectual stimulation when it comes to fostering intrinsic motivation, and imply that teachers who push 3 students to know the course material well and who help students to be the best they can be also encourage students to improve their motives for studying”. As facilitators of education, teachers have to implicate students as entities of change and leadership who are able to take risks, solve problems and overtake challenges that life may present.

On the other hand, intellectual stimulation is linked to the activities teachers develop in class according to students' cognitive level. Activities need to be well-designed to accomplish the course objectives and drive students to think deeper in what they have to transform for getting higher results, but this will happen when students feel comfortable and motivated inside the classroom. Sanz, A. and Lizarraga, M. (2007) mention that there is essential to work in groups to stimulate the cognitive process in students: “it seems true that the formulated ideas in a group stimulate the generation of new ones, because it has been observed that with them less time is needed to initiate the phases of activation and production”. When there is a project or a simple situation in the classroom and students are implicated in a brainstorming activity, this creates a heterogenic interaction (each student has a different experience and knowledge) and having that diversity, promotes a combination of perspectives that help students reach their goals and develop a creative potential in them.

A stimulating classroom environment will also inspire teachers to do better practices. If the students are interested in the activities and learning about them, then the teacher will in turn be encouraged to make the lessons more interesting. Thus a stimulating, creative classroom environment is to everyone's benefit. Both

actors will be eager to work together and get good results from their interaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The different aspects treated in the article are the goals of every educator that wants to change and transform the world view about learning and teaching a foreign language. Nowadays, teachers do not promote these skills while teaching, but these skills will be an evident part of the students' learning process. Although, this era is in a constant change and renovation of approaches, methodologies and strategies, motivate and give enthusiasm to students may produce a cognitive transformation that leads them to explore, observe, analyze and create/innovate the paradigms established by the system.

Furthermore, the adventure of being a creative, innovator and stimulator person will be helpful to strength the functions involved in society, also having a flexible mindset will support better educative resources for students who might share those strong abilities with the others so as to build a new culture of learning. This can seem simple, but requires a self-disposition and a wish to explode the potentialities students have to generate new paths in education and new class environments to make students love their own learning. Therefore, the appliance of these components in classrooms, will guarantee the improvement of the students' learning process.

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