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Թեմա՝ “Teacher’s role on student’s motivation”

Առարկա՝ Անգլերեն

Ուսուցիչ՝ Դիանա Մալխասյան

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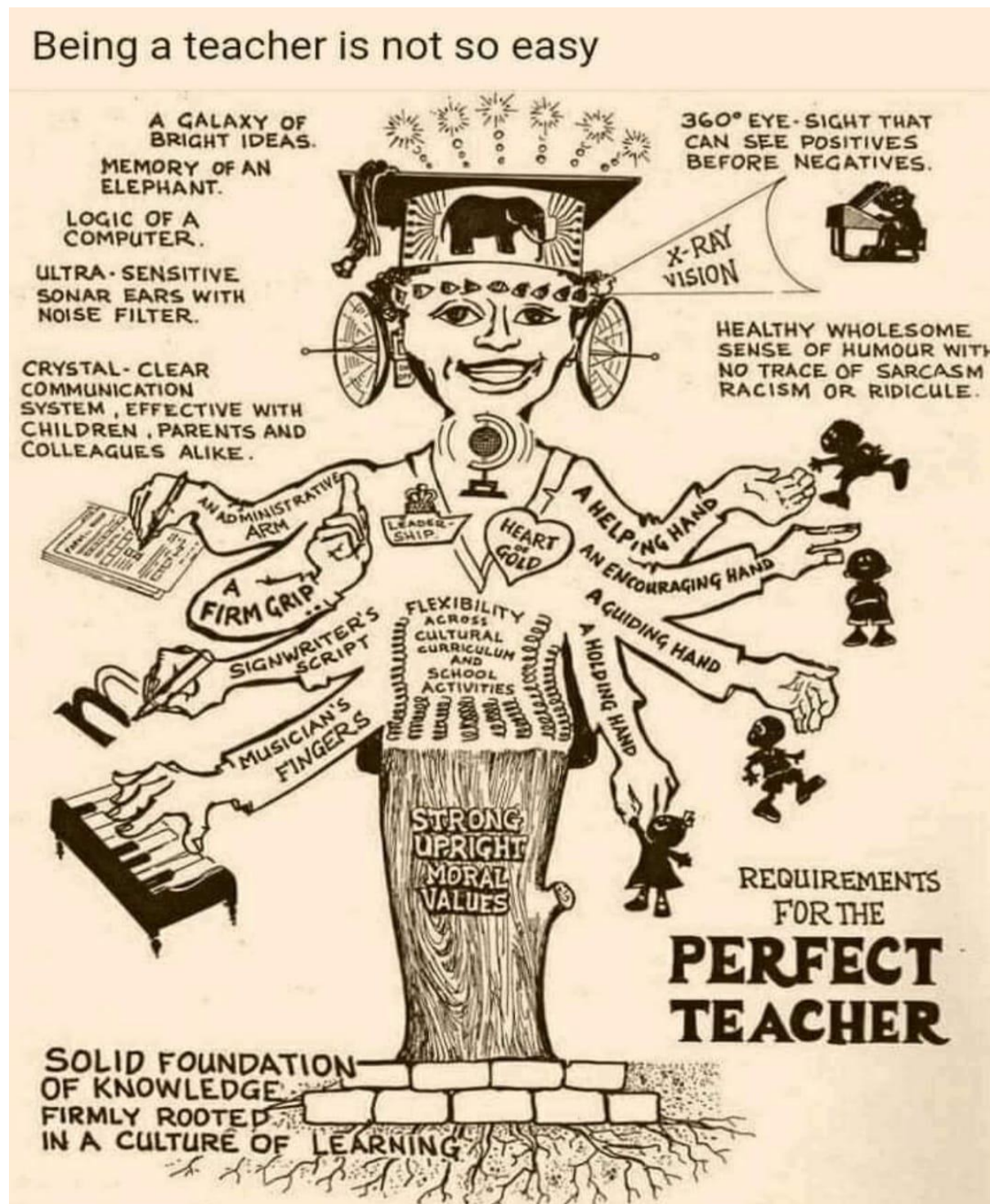
Introduction:

The aim of this research paper is to identify the ***Teacher's Role in Students' Motivation***. In most educational settings in Armenia, learners are trained to adopt dependent behavior. The Armenian educational system is mostly defined as a traditional one with the focus on the teacher. The term "traditional" refers to the teacher-centered classroom. In traditional teacher-centered classrooms the teacher has the role of a controller, who is always in charge of everything in the classroom. The teacher controls what the students do, what they should say and what language forms they should use. Armenian classrooms are mostly teacher-centered, with only teacher-student communication and very limited amount of student talk. Cooperative learning, negotiation of meaning and class interaction are rarely used in Armenian classes (Gasparyan, 2005).

In contrast to the teacher-centered classroom, in the learner-centered classroom the teacher has the role of a facilitator, who makes the process of learning easier for students, helping them find out problematic areas and discuss them. The learner-centered approach to foreign language teaching assumes democratic principles of teacher-student and student-student relationships encouraged by a positive classroom atmosphere. By creating the necessary conditions for students in the classroom, the teacher can make the learning process more interesting and pleasant for the students which can result in higher levels of motivation and achievement. Usually, in this type of classroom the students are guided and motivated by their teacher to find their own ways to success. Voller (1997), describes the teacher-facilitator as the one who provides support for learning. The learner-centered classroom, where the teacher is seen as a helper, facilitator and guide, also promotes autonomous learning. Many educators agree, that the effectiveness of language teaching/ learning is connected with the students' motivation to learn a foreign language and the teacher's ability to motivate students to learn. Promotion of autonomy and motivation for learning by the teacher may result in higher levels of students' motivation and achievement (Darling-Hammod, 2001, cited in Stronge, Tucker and Heindman, 2004). For maintaining and protecting motivation teachers should try to increase the learners' self-confidence by both, reducing classroom anxiety and making the

learning process less stressful and by encouraging or rewarding, which may increase students' self-confidence in their abilities (Dörnyei, 2001).

Being a teacher is not an easy task. Teachers carve individuals. So, this half-fun and half-serious illustration spread some light on what are the qualities of a perfect teacher.



1. *Motivation*

“Once we have learnt to do something, the extent to which we continue to do it is a function of motivation – an internal state that arouses us to action pushes us in particular direction and keeps us engaged in certain action.”

(Ormrod, 1999, p. 407)

Earlier theorists such as behaviorists, tended to regard motivation as a factor related to needs satisfaction (Altman, Valenzi & Hodgetts, 1985; Maslow, 1987; Owens, 1987), while cognitive psychologists regarded motivation as a product of “conscious decision” (Williams, 1997).

Crooks and Schmidt (1991) define motivation as “an engagement in and persistence with the learning task” (p.470). According to them if the student becomes “productively engaged in learning tasks and sustains that engagement, without the needs for continual encouragement or direction” (p.471), then he/she can be regarded as a motivated person.

Different scholars agree that motivation has something to do with drive as motivation is one of the key factors driving language learning success. Many studies have shown that motivation is a predictor of language learning success and as Ryne and Deci (2000, p. 54) state “to be motivated is to be moved to do something”.

There are four types of motivation: *integrative and instrumental, extrinsic and intrinsic*. All these types of motivation are very important in human life.

According to Falk (1987), if a student likes the people who speak the language, admires the culture and has a desire to become familiar with or even integrate into that society in which the language is used, then he/she can be considered *integratively* motivated in learning that target language. In this case, the student should be more successful in learning the target language. This form of motivation is known as *integrative motivation*.

Unlike integrative motivation, *instrumental motivation* is characterized by the desire to obtain something practical from the study of a second language (Hudson, 2000). In instrumental motivation, the purpose of learning is different. A student may learn a language to meet the requirements of university entrance exam, to apply for a job or to achieve higher positions not only in work but also in society.

In the last two decades the results of different researches conducted in the educational sphere showed that integrative motivation is linked to successful second language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972), conducted different researches and found out that integrative motivation was viewed as being of greater importance in language learning, than instrumental motivation, as it is used to sustain long term success in second language learning.

It was previously thought that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations were additive and could be combined to produce the highest level of motivation. However, Deci (1975, p. 23, cited in Brown 2001, p. 76), defines intrinsic motivation in the following way:

“Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself...Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination”.

Intrinsically motivated students seem to be engaged in the activities for their own learning and getting more information about the subject and question. Intrinsically motivated students do not look for an extrinsic reward. In his studies Maslow claims that intrinsic motivation is clearly superior to extrinsic. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs people are usually motivated to achieve self-actualization if the basic physical needs are met (Maslow, 1970, cited in Brown, 2001, p. 76).

Extrinsic motivation is different from intrinsic. According to Ormrod (2006, p. 408), “Extrinsic motivation is a motivation promoted by factors external to the individual and unrelated to the task being performed”. Typical extrinsic rewards can be money, grades, prizes and positive feedback, etc. Those students who are extrinsically motivated in learning, try to please authority figures such as parents, teachers and even peers.

According to Ormrod (1999), extrinsic motivation can also promote successful learning. Extrinsically motivated students are likely to exert only the minimum behavioral and cognitive effort that they need to execute a task successfully. Usually, they stop the activity as soon as the reinforcement disappears. Ur (1999) states that “success is not the same as getting the right answers”. Here, the teacher’s most important role is simply to make sure that learners are aware of their own success. One of the ways to do this is to provide feedback to the student. By getting

feedback, the student can have a sense of pride and satisfaction which may lead to a higher sense of motivation to learn more. This type of feedback may be effective for younger, inexperienced learners. The only potential problem of overusing feedback may be student's dependence on it. They can lose their ability to recognize their success on their own. Teachers can avoid this by developing students' own awareness of successful performance. "In general, the more confident they become and the more able to recognize such success on their own, the less they will need explicit support from someone else" (Ur, 1999, p. 278).

As the learner's motivation, to great extent, is determined by the teacher factor, let's discuss the "teacher" factor in a foreign language teaching context.

2. Teacher in a Foreign Language Learning Context

There may be teachers, who by their unnecessary strictness and uncompromising demands can demotivate their students. In this case students may feel that they can never succeed in the given task. At the same time, there may be teachers, who motivate their students by gentle and warm personal support. In this case, a student feels that the teacher cares about his/her success and enjoys teaching. Promotion of enthusiasm and motivation for learning by the teacher results in higher levels of students' motivation and achievement (Darling-Hammon, 2001, cited in Stronge, Tucker and Heindman, 2004).

According to Brophy (2004, p. 2), teacher can help students appreciate their learning opportunities by providing meaningful and effective activities which can increase students' intrinsic motivation and self-actualization. Different researches show (Brown, 2001; Oxford, 1998; Strong, 2004; Tucker, 2004; Heindman, 2004; Brophy, 2004), that teachers have multiple roles in the classroom. They provide support to students in a variety of ways, which result in increasing students' motivation and achievement in learning.

The role of the teacher has been changing and developing constantly depending on the methods, learner's attitudes and behavior, teaching materials and activities. The developmental stages of language teaching methods show the development of the teacher's role as well.

The teacher's role in teaching, as Brown (2001) states, can vary depending on the students' age, proficiency level and the methodology that the teacher uses. In the last few decades the role

of the teacher in the classroom has changed. Controlled, directed and teacher-centered teaching has been changed into facilitative, learner-centered teaching.

In his “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, Freire (1970) criticized the teacher-centered classroom. As Freire states, in teacher-centered classrooms teachers are seen as “narrating subjects” and students as “listening objects”. The main aim of the teacher is to “fill” the students with the information which they are asked to “fill”. The more the teacher succeeds in “filling” the better teacher he/she is and the more the “receptacles can take” the better students they are (p.78). The main role of the teacher is to control the way students perceive the world. Students do not have a chance to think critically, add or moreover, change anything in the world. Freire criticized this traditional approach to teaching, which he called “banking education”, and later proposed another epistemological position in his “The Pedagogy of Freedom” (1998). In his book he referred to educational practices from a “progressive” perspective, which he defined as “a point of view which favors the autonomy and critical thinking of the students”, (1998, p. 21). As Freire states, whenever a teacher enters the classroom, he/she has to be open to new ideas, new questions as “teaching that does not emerge from the experience of learning cannot be learned by anyone” (p.31-49). He regards teachers as learners and learners as teachers which can be considered as a process of epistemological shift and the development of critical thinking.

According to Gallart (2000), Freire’s human and epistemological positions provided more possibilities and had a great impact on the improvement of education. His work helped not only educators to change their epistemology of teaching but also students to learn to think critically which could help both teachers and students in reaching higher levels of knowledge.

Looking at the history of teaching methods it becomes clear that the teacher’s role was constantly changing. The changes in the epistemology of teaching resulted in the changes of teachers’ roles as well. The two extremes of epistemological changes in teaching are manifested in teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms.

The following two tables summarize the key features of the two types of classrooms: the traditional teacher-centered classroom and the learner-centered classroom. The statements in the tables present an understanding of teachers’ and students’ roles in these two types of classrooms based on what was found in the related literature.

2.1 The Roles of the Teacher and Students in a Traditional Teacher-Centered Classroom

<i>Teacher's role</i>	<i>Student's role</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Focus is on the teacher</i>➤ <i>Managerial, authoritative way of teaching</i>➤ <i>Transfer of information only from the teacher to the student</i>➤ <i>The teacher monitors and corrects every student utterance</i>➤ <i>The teacher answers students' questions</i>➤ <i>The teacher chooses the topic</i>➤ <i>The teacher evaluates students' learning</i>➤ <i>The classroom is quiet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Student unarguably respect their teacher</i>➤ <i>Students speak up only when asked by the teacher</i>➤ <i>Students always accept what the teacher says</i>➤ <i>Students are very passive and work alone</i>➤ <i>Very seldom class discussions</i>➤ <i>Students' individual needs and interests are not considered</i>➤ <i>Personality and learning style differences are ignored</i>



2.2 The Role of the Teacher and Students in a Learner-Centered Classroom

<i>Teacher's Role</i>	<i>Student's Role</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Democratic, guiding style of teaching</i> ➤ <i>Serves as a resource person</i> ➤ <i>Instigates and motivates students to learn</i> ➤ <i>Displays mutual respect for students</i> ➤ <i>Is responsible for creating positive classroom atmosphere</i> ➤ <i>Is sensitive to the individual needs and interests of the students</i> ➤ <i>The teacher is a facilitator</i> ➤ <i>Encourages any kind of meaningful communication interaction</i> ➤ <i>Provides feedback/correction when questions arise</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Student's initiativeness is strongly supported</i> ➤ <i>Have active role in the classroom</i> ➤ <i>Have active participation in classroom discussions</i> ➤ <i>Active student-student interaction</i> ➤ <i>Regular work in pairs and in groups</i> ➤ <i>Talking without constant instructor monitoring</i> ➤ <i>Answering each other's questions, using instructor as an information resource</i> ➤ <i>May have some choice of topics</i> ➤ <i>Students evaluate their own learning</i>



3. Effective Teaching Environment

According to Krashen (1987), teacher's main goal is not only supplying comprehensible input, but also creating situations which reduce learners' anxiety and increase motivation. He believes that "the effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation" (p. 32). Thus, successful and effective language learning to a great extent depends on creating an effective teaching environment that increases students' motivation.

As a result of Gurney's studies (2007, p. 90), the following five key factors were established the interaction of which may result in creating an effective language learning environment, which can lead to effective teaching and high achievement.

1. ***Teacher knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for learning.*** As Gurney states (2007, p. 90), teachers can enjoy the process of teaching by being able to share their knowledge and by being open to changes. In such an environment both students and teachers become learners, who aim to discover the world of the subject and seek to get

- answers to the questions together. This approach to teaching may create enthusiasm in students and responsibility in teachers towards the process of teaching and learning.
2. ***Classroom activities that encourage learning.*** According to Gurney (2007), appropriately chosen activities support an effective learning environment and motivate students in their learning. Through experience teachers can identify specific exercises and techniques to engage students in active learning. Through thorough planning, reflection and preparation teachers can achieve better results (p. 91-92).
 3. ***Assessment activities that encourage learning through experience.*** "If the students are able to see the value of the learning process, and the assessment as part of it and not the end", then assessment can be used to gain better results through different activities such as self- monitoring or peer-assessment (Gurney, 2007, p. 93). Furthermore, the task of an effective teacher is to teach students to accept assessment as part of their learning process and never as a separate unit.
 4. ***Effective feedback that establishes the learning process in the classroom.*** Hattie (1999, p. 2) highlights feedback as a factor which can raise achievement. He defines feedback as "the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement (cited in Gurney 2007, p. 94)". According to Gurney, the effective classroom is the one where students actively seek feedback and accept it as part of their learning process. Through this it can be inferred that appropriate and meaningful feedback may become a central part of effective teaching and learning. The more feedback the teacher gets from the students the better learning environment he/she can create. The more feedback the students get from the teacher, the better learners they become.
 5. ***Effective interaction between the teacher and students.*** Gurney states that "the teacher who brings a sense of personal involvement to the classroom, who wants to share the knowledge with the members of the class, who shows that he/she is also a part of a learning cycle will be setting up a relationship which will encourage a good learning environment (p. 95). This idea is shared by Walk (2001), who claims that if a teacher is passionate about teaching then he/she can create an effective classroom environment. This factor can be considered as one of the central factors in creating a

positive and friendly relationship between the teacher and the students which may allow them to feel comfortable in the classrooms, and which also may affect the process of effective teaching and learning.

As Stronge (2004) states, an effective teacher is constantly in a learning process, which helps him/her be creative and flexible to different changes. Having a strong psychological influence on students, teachers can influence their achievement too. That is the reason why teachers should have not only strong and effective professional qualities but also positive personal skills.

4. Effective Teacher Professional Skills

As Rubio (2009, p. 37) states, effective teachers are those who are dedicated to their students and to their job, feel responsible for the achievement and success of their students and their own professional development. He also identifies eleven professional skills of effective teachers.

1. Content knowledge of the subject to create confidence in students towards their teacher which may result in effective learning and achievement.

2. Good planning which may facilitate clear explanation and provide a wide range of resources suitable to the students' needs. Good planning also may help teachers in classroom management, organization and achievement.

3. Classroom Management and Organization to create an optimal learning environment and comfort for the students to maintain effective learning and teaching.

4. Classroom behavior which is strongly related to classroom management and organization and which mostly depends on the teacher behavior and perception of his/her students.

5. Individual differences. One of the main tasks of an effective teacher is to identify students' types or the "pulse of the classroom", and modify the teaching methods to maintain students' interest in the subject. Teachers should have a "sixth sense" to be able to identify their students' needs, learning styles and strategies, personality, motivation, weaknesses, abilities, and even background in case they need help.

6. Communication skills. Every teacher should be an effective communicator to provide appropriate information to the students in an understandable and absorbable way, so that students do not have any problems with understanding what they are asked to do.

7. The teacher's confidence. Every teacher should believe in his/her knowledge and abilities as confidence influences the teaching outcome (Bandura, 1997, cited in Rubio, 2009, p. 40). It follows that through confidence and enthusiasm teachers can motivate their students and increase their achievement.

8. Motivation for learning. Effective teachers may serve as motivational figures for their students by encouraging them to be responsible for their own learning.

9. Respect, Fairness and Equity are the essential features of the classroom which may help to establish the right climate for effective teaching and learning (Kyriacou, 1998, cited in Rubio 2009, p. 40).

10. Assessment and evaluation. Effective teachers should inform their students of the goals and objectives of the program and how those goals will be assessed. This will help students be more responsible for their own learning process. As it is stated by different scholars (Cameron 2002, cited in Rubio 2009, p. 41; Gurney, 2007), each student should understand what assessment is. They should not separate assessment from their learning, but see it within learning as a contributory factor of learning which helps them learn more and have higher achievement in the subject.

11. Teacher learning development. According to Rubio (2009, p. 42), one of the main characteristics of effective teachers to remain professional in the field is the ability to self-evaluate, critique and reflect on their work and abilities. Without these characteristics teachers will not be able to look for better ways to improve their teaching.

5. Effective Teacher Personal skills.

Along with professional skills, effective teachers should also use their personal skills, because these two affect students' learning process, motivation and achievement. Rubio (2009, p. 42) suggests 4 personal skills which can be seen as common features of an effective teacher.

1. *Caring to encourage learning.* Eisner (2002) claims that "teaching is a caring exercise" which is an essential part of an effective learning process (cited in Rubio, 2009, p. 42).

2. *Knowing the students' individuality.* As Sizer (1999) states, students cannot be taught well if teachers do not know them well. Besides being an effective caring teacher, it is important to know the students' individually and give them individual attention. This may help in enhancing the students' learning process.

3. *Teacher-student relationship.* Informal, beyond the classroom interaction between the teacher and the students, may increase students' participation and motivation and create a favorable learning environment which may positively affect students' success and learning. According to Stronge (2004), social interaction between the teacher and students may encourage students' learning and achievement. Furthermore, having teacher-student relationship may create an effective classroom, teaching and learning environment.

4. *Classroom environment* is considered to be one of the most important factors which may affect students' achievement. If the classroom environment is negative it may result in demotivation. As Rubio (2009, p. 43) states, "optimal relationship with the students may create a warm and safe classroom environment where students can achieve their potential goals and objectives".

Motivating students to learn is a difficult task. Having both effective professional and personal skills, every teacher can motivate his/her students to learn. Moreover, each teacher should be familiar with some techniques that can help maintain and protect motivation.

6. *Maintaining and Protecting Motivation*

As Dörnyei (2001, p. 116) states, "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central". Thus, any teacher should be familiar with a set of techniques and strategies for motivating foreign language learners. For generating motivation in learners there are certain conditions which should be created in the classroom. Dörnyei (2001, p. 120) suggests the following conditions:

- ***An appropriate teacher behavior,*** as whatever is done by the teacher may have either motivational or demotivational influence on the students. In other

words, teacher behavior is a "powerful motivational tool". According to Alison (1993), it is more important to create a relationship of mutual trust and respect by means of talking with the students on a personal level which may lead to enthusiasm in learners and which may motivate them too.

- *Pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere* can also affect students' motivation. It is the responsibility of the teacher to organize and manage the classroom as an effective learning environment. It is very important that learning occur within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere (Good & Brophy, 1994, p. 215). Students' motivation can reach its peak in the safe classroom climate in which students can feel free to express their opinions and thoughts.

For maintaining and protecting motivation teachers should try to increase the learners' self- confidence by reducing classroom anxiety and making the learning process less stressful or by encouragements and rewards which may increase students' self-confidence towards their abilities (Dörnyei, 2001).

Another way to protect students' motivation is to create learner autonomy. Many researchers in the educational field (Benson, 2000; Little, 1991) claim that autonomous learners can be provided by benefits in learning as they have the opportunity to analyze and develop an understanding of their own knowledge, their needs, attitude towards language learning and themselves as learners. The recognition of their personal and educational needs can determine the objectives and the goals of their own learning, which may result in high achievement (Benson, 2000).

To increase students' motivation in learning, teachers should understand and accept their students' personality. They should turn the goals set by the outsiders into "group goals" to increase interest in students and motivate them to complete the tasks (Dörnyei, 2005). If students are motivated by the task it will definitely affect their achievement. It can be assumed that the teacher's role is extremely central and important in motivating students and helping them develop a positive attitude towards foreign language learning.

Thus, having both effective professional and personal skills, teachers can create positive and an effective teaching/learning environment for students which can lead to higher motivation and higher achievements.

7. Conclusion and further suggestions

Motivation is considered to be one of the most important factors in teaching and learning contexts. Teacher has a leading role in students' motivation. Without motivation teachers can not succeed in their lessons and as a result there will not be a desired achievement in learning among learners. That is why teachers have central role in developing students' motivation. Teachers must be able to create effective teaching and learning environment for the students. Effective teacher professional and personal skills can help them not only maintain but also protect motivation among learners.

Several years ago, for my MA thesis, I conducted both qualitative and quantitative researches to investigate whether there is a relationship between teacher's role and students' motivation and their achievement in EFL context. The results showed that there was a strong relation between teacher's role and students' motivation. However, I was surprised to find out that with teacher-controller students were less motivated but they had higher achievement in comparison with teacher-facilitator. With teacher-facilitator students were more motivated but they had lower achievement.

For further investigation I would suggest to conduct more researches and reveal more information, data and facts related to this question as it is clear that there is a strong relationship between teacher's role and students' motivation and achievement.

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