

The Influence of Innovative Teaching Methods on Student Motivation

István Szóköl¹, Ildikó Pšenáková², Ondrej Kováč³

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Abstract

The paper's purpose is to find the options motivating students in secondary schools to try to achieve more interest in knowledge and know-how. We have already known about some elements of motivation, but which one of them is the most effective? There are existing factors to motivate students, but unfortunately, we cannot manage all of them. We have tried not only to achieve how to motivate more but also have been trying in this article to search for factors which show our success and unsucces our motivation attempts.

The paper also deals with the impact of innovative teaching methods on students' motivational factors.

Keywords: Motivation, Activation, Factors affecting motivation, Teaching methods

1 Introduction

We often come across the term "motivation". The reason for this is the fact that it is necessary to arouse a particular interest in "doing something", "solving tasks, problems, situations", "improving", and "collecting knowledge, skills" in various situations. Without motivation, we do not have the strength to progress, improve and solve certain challenges in our everyday life. Motivation is needed by the teacher, the student, the school management, and also other employees in education.

¹Trnava University in Trnava, Faculty of Education, Priemysel'na 4, Trnava, 918 43, Slovakia.
National Institute for Education, Ševčenkova 11, Bratislava, 850 05, Slovakia.

E-mail: istvan.szokol@truni.sk

²Trnava University in Trnava, Faculty of Education, Priemysel'na 4, Trnava, 918 43, Slovakia.

E-mail: ildiko.psenakova@truni.sk

³ DTI University, Sládkovičova 533/20, 018 41 Dubnica Nad Váhom, Slovakia.

E-mail: kovac@spskn.sk

2 Motivation, Activation

To understand the forms, methods, means and benefits of motivation, we need to look a little more in detail. We need to set the teaching process's goals and determine the sequence's individual steps in the direction of student activation.

“All modern concepts of the teaching process agree that the student must be motivated and active in the teaching process, which is necessary to eliminate the passivity of the students, typical of traditional teaching, in which the student mainly paid attention, listened, and wrote what the teacher told him, he imitated the teacher and worked according to his model. It is necessary that the student seeks and discovers knowledge through an independent, active, conscious, and creative learning-cognitive activity under the teacher’s guidance as well.” (Turek, 2014, p. 164)

2.1 Motivation – the Work of the Teacher

“At present, it is not possible to expect all students to learn by themselves, only to satisfy their own needs. Many teachers do not know how to organise teaching in such a way that it fulfils the psychological needs of students. This is precisely why external motivation, realised through external interventions, also has its role. The most common means of external motivation in students' learning activities are the reward and the punishment.” (Turek, 2014, p. 166)

The teacher is competent in determining the evaluation criteria and, thus, the requirements for mastering theoretical and practical tasks. Rewarding a good, hard-working, and diligent student is relatively easy. Good grades probably inspire all students. Quality preparation for the class and time sacrificed to solve homework will bear fruit.

If we want to progress in student motivation, we need to put some important components in order. They are pupil, teacher, school, and curriculum. The precise connection of these four components creates the necessary background for achieving the goal. When one of these elements does not meet the objective requirements, it is very complicated to achieve motivation and thus the work and knowledge progress of pupils. Allow us to describe these components a bit and our expectations related to them.

Pavlov (2018) writes that in the case of teachers (the subject of the educational process), a person emerges in our imagination as the main organizer and implementer of education and training. The success of the educational process is not accidental, but depends on the teacher, on his approach to work and to students. There are many perspectives on how to define the personality of a teacher and what we would expect from him. He is a source of motivation, because he tries to use various activating methods to arouse students' interest in the subject, arouse curiosity about a specific issue (solving examples), and increase the range of acquired and applicable knowledge, learning and skills (Ugrai, 2020).

A teacher must have a suitable “tool” for all types of students in order to be able to intervene pedagogically in a timely, flexible, and creative way. Somewhere, the intervention consists of searching for new activating methods, while in other places, more emphasis must be placed on the educational side of the teacher's work.

An essential part of the educational process is the student and teacher interaction.

“The essence and the basis of interaction depends on a consistent and comprehensive recognition of the student. For instance:

- the student's health status,
- family environment and background,
- the level of psychological and cognitive processes,
- the student's interests,
- the student's position in the class group,
- how the student behaves in other lessons, with other teachers.” (Petlák, 2000, p. 25)

“The creation of a good relationship between the teacher and the students is completely in the hands of the teacher. With his sensitivity to them, his sensitive response to their problems, his interests, etc., he wins them over. Proper interaction is a prerequisite for good learning and student behaviour. The school management should also investigate the level of interactional relations.” (Porubčanová, 2018)

2.2 Motivation Versus Fear

Several things fundamentally affect the healthy motivation of students. A well-known “enemy” of motivation is fear. Acting under fear or motivation is not the same thing.

Several factors can cause fear in pupils:

- inappropriate school climate,
- conflict with the teacher,
- conflict with classmates,
- exclusion of the student from the collective,
- health, mental, and visual handicap,
- fear of punishment without justification,
- bullying,
- fear of the future (exams, dictation, tests),
- tension and dislike related to the school itself (teaching, upbringing, demands, conditions),
- anxiety in front of people.

Therefore, it is essential that we also perceive the above factors when working with students and monitoring their learning abilities. Our attention should also be focused on the person/personality of the pupil and not only on his learning abilities.

2.3 Factors Affecting Motivation

Pupils' motivation is influenced by several external and internal factors, which the teacher should take into consideration. Some can be mitigated and intensified and some cannot. Not every student perceives motivational stimuli similarly (Hrmo & Turek, 2013).

It depends on the pupil's character, internal qualities, logical thinking, ability to accept new information, physical and mental abilities, social background, current mental state, etc. The teacher should choose to activate elements to consider as many factors as possible. Not all factors can be perceived by the teacher, nor is it his duty especially when many students in the class have different physical and mental dispositions (Pavlov, 2018). In that case, it is impossible to please everyone. One should choose such a mixture of motivational/activating means that, from a global point of view, will be the most beneficial for the class, even considering specific individuals.

Factors that can negatively affect the effectiveness of incentives:

- poor mental health,
- weak psychological resistance,
- problems in the family,
- problems in the relationship with the partner,
- bad rhetoric, inappropriate teacher's lecturing style,
- boring way of teaching,
- unsuitable ergonomic conditions in the classroom,
- disturbing environment,
- a very condensed program within the lesson,
- the pupil's exhaustion in the last hours of the day,
- low energy, fatigue.

Factors that can positively affect the effectiveness of motivational elements:

- pleasant school environment,
- work in a team,
- willing teachers,
- balanced curriculum,
- positive characteristics of the teacher,
- an exciting way of teaching,
- sufficient energy of pupils,
- objective assessment,
- appropriate connection between theory and practice,
- suitable didactic technique and tools,
- a balanced number of students in the class/group.

Therefore, the teacher should consider in which class and how he will motivate the student. When a student has psychological or mental problems, feels anxious, cannot concentrate in class, thinking about his problems with his parents..., it is challenging to get that student interested in active cooperation in class. When the teacher does not have a suitable approach, is not sufficiently prepared for the lesson, chooses an inappropriate style of explaining the subject matter, reacts poorly to the students' questions, uses too many technical words, etc., the student hardly becomes active according to the teacher's ideas (Ugrai, 2020). The location of the hour in the daily schedule is also an essential factor. In the 5th, 6th, and seventh lessons, the student no longer has energy, feels tired, does not have such concentration, does not respond so flexibly to questions, is not that creative, and it is much harder to create the motivation itself.

3 Teaching and the Impact on Results

Due to certain factors influencing the students, we know that we must make a great effort to get the necessary result at the end of the lesson. It is not easy, so it is necessary to create an adequate explanation when things do not go as expected (Marks & Lajčín, 2017). That is why we must also consider facts such as extraneous subjects in the timetable, the student's social and family background, or computer technology and networks.

3.1 The Influence of Foreign Teaching Subjects in the Timetable

At the beginning of the lesson, it is vital to prepare the students for the new subject to arouse their interest in the new topic. Arousing sufficient interest can be very difficult for the teacher; honestly, not a single student is interested in the full scope of everything included in the thematic plan (Bendíková, 2020). Each student has topics closer to his heart and topics that do not arouse such great enthusiasm even in them. However, we must arouse such interest in the students in all teaching topics that we can evaluate the entire 45 minutes as beneficial at the end of the lesson. When motivating the pupils, it should not be forgotten that the pupils have already completed other subjects on that day, on which the teachers also demanded concentration and cooperation. So how is it with the students and their motivation? Is a 5-minute break enough for students to reorient themselves from the previous lesson's motivation to the next? Let us imagine that we are watching a good movie on TV, and after that, we switch to a sports channel. Are we also interested enough to watch tennis after an exciting action movie suddenly? Something similar is also the case with pupils. Do we want them to suddenly find themselves in the "realm of secrets" of the business economics subject after an interesting history lesson? Of course, we want to, because our job is to pass on knowledge in the subjects we have in our schedule. So, how can we direct the student's attention to the topic of our lesson? The answer lies in us and our abilities.

3.2 Social and Family Background

A student can concentrate 100 per cent on a lesson only if various psychological problems do not hinder him. There can be many of them. For example, problems with parents, a partner, and a confident teacher can also be disagreements with a roommate, with the lady in the school buffet, etc. We, the teachers, do not need to know about these problems because it is not our duty to take care of the behind-the-scenes feelings of the students, or is it? How would we be able to determine the boundary between what we want to know about students and what we do not? In this case, there is a difference between a subject teacher and a classroom teacher. After all, the class teacher is also in contact with the parents and can better assess the student's mental and emotional state. The school psychologist also has an important role. Through his activities, he prepares the student so that he can concentrate sufficiently on lessons even in the event of family problems.

3.3 Computer technologies, Facebook, games, internet

The question arises as to how to motivate the student to concentrate on the class of a professional subject while also studying professionally at home during his free time. Yes, even when chatting or using the services of Facebook, TikTok, etc., the student is professionally educated. He absorbs new technical skills, advances in typing and operating the keyboard, learns new technical expressions and looks for different options for the best, most efficient, and most comfortable use of technical means. If we were to compare people in their 60s and 70s with students using the Internet and various computer applications, with few exceptions, the students are miles smarter. Imagine that in the world of computer games, limitless Internet possibilities, new computer applications, chats, online dating options, etc., teachers must make students interested in our lessons, new topics, homework, etc. It is not easy, but an experienced teacher always finds suitable means and methods. Perhaps a teacher with an out-of-date understanding of the progress of computer technology is furious when he sees a student's cell phone in hand, Facebook or the Internet turned on, but how about using this "technical enemy" to our advantage? Why not connect the Internet, Facebook, etc., with the teaching process? When a student is already a "slave" to computer applications, let us, the teachers, try to get something out of it for the benefit of taking on new subjects or assigning tasks.

Problem: The student is still on Facebook.

Solution: I will create a Facebook group for the students, and there I will save the components of the new curriculum that I did not have time to dictate/explain in class, as well as homework.

Problem: The student is constantly surfing the Internet.

Solution: I assign the task of obtaining information, statistical data, economic results, and similar data as part of class work or homework.

Problem: The student prefers computer games.

Solution of a technical nature: The student should get as much information as possible about the creation of certain software, how to create a suitable algorithm for a given computer game, what computer technologies to use when assembling a high-quality computer, on which computer games have a high-quality background, where to get suitable computer components (graphics card, processor...).

Solution of an economic and marketing nature: The student should conduct market research on the prices of computer games, obtain information about the economic background of the computer game provider, who are its business partners, what financial results it achieves, let it compare competing providers, determine their pros and cons. The student has to describe what he would change about those games, how the packaging would look according to his taste, how he would advertise and how he would approach potential customers to buy this game...

The “enemy” in the form of excessive computer orientation of pupils immediately becomes our “friend” and “co-creator” of the content of the lesson.

4 Conclusion

We know how important motivation is in the teaching process, how it can positively influence the student's view of the subject matter, how it can increase his interest in new knowledge and thereby increase his knowledge, skills and, in the future, the ability to achieve success on the labour market. On the other hand, we also know there is no need to exaggerate the motivation because it can lose its charm, and we easily fall into the pit of over-motivation. For each lesson, you must prepare a few activating spells that will work with the greatest certainty. They must be tested because not every student in every class perceives motivational impulses similarly. Each lesson, each topic and each group of students needs an individual approach when examining and choosing appropriate methods and means of motivation. We must consider many things that are an essential basis for student activation. These are human qualities and the school's technical and personnel capabilities. Teachers must also keep up with the developing world and gain new experiences. It is also necessary to discuss with colleagues what experiences, feelings and results we have after applying various motivational methods and aids.

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