3-17-2015

Motivational Strategies for Second Language Teaching and Learning

Neil J. Anderson
Brigham Young University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jur

Part of the Linguistics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jur/vol2015/iss1/238

This MEG is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Undergraduate Research by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Motivational Strategies for Second Language Teaching and Learning

MARCH 17, 2015 BY ADMIN

Professor Neil J Anderson, Linguistics and English Language

Evaluation of the Academic Objectives

The academic objectives centered around five primary research questions:

1. What is the relationship among (a) teachers’ view of the importance of motivational teaching strategies, (b) the frequency with which they report using motivational teaching strategies, and (c) the actual use of motivational teaching strategies in second language classrooms?
2. How does the teacher’s motivational teaching practice affect learners’ classroom motivation in terms of the levels of their alertness, participation, and volunteering?
3. Can teachers guide learners to take more responsibility for monitoring and maintaining their levels of motivation in second language classrooms?
4. Can learners play a multiplier effect role in motivating their peers in language learning?
5. What is the effect of weaving motivational teaching practices into a language curriculum so that all teachers and all learners are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities for monitoring and maintaining motivation?

Evaluation of the Mentoring Environment

In order to carefully examine the research questions stated above, I organized a Motivation in Language Teaching and Learning Research Group. The Research Group (RG) met bi-weekly during the Winter 2013, Fall 2013, and Winter 2014 semesters. The RG meetings started by members of the group identifying a key research article, reading the article on our own, and then meeting together to discuss it and make direct applications of the article for the MA research getting underway or in progress.

The RG meetings started out with four members consistently meeting and then gradually grew as more students found out about our work. At the end of the Winter 2014 semester, eight students and three faculty members were participating.

The students selected which research articles they were each interested in and then they led the discussions and critical analysis. As I watched them evolve in their roles as colleagues, I realized that these students would be able to discuss the research on motivation in language teaching and learning with any of the major researchers in our profession.

During the Fall 2013 semester, the Department of Linguistics and English Language hosted the Second Language Research Forum. This Forum was hosted by graduate students at BYU for graduate students (and faculty) in other programs from across the nation. Our research group met one of the participants who had published on motivation and language teaching (Papi). Papi is Iranian and a PhD student at the University of Michigan. The students initiated questions for him and engaged him in meaningful discussions. We met Papi again in Portland, Oregon in March 2014 and took him to dinner. I was
impressed with the initiative of the students in the RG to reach out to Papi for discussions when we realized that he would be here in Provo and when we would be seeing him again in Oregon.

The mentoring lesson I have learned as a faculty member is that our students need opportunities to engage in professional dialogues beyond our campus with other professionals. It is within the context of the mentoring environment where students gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to have those professional interactions.

List of Students who Participated and What Academic Deliverables were Produced

(highlighted in bold text below).
The following students participated in the research group meetings. All of these students had MA thesis proposals related to the role of motivation in second language teaching and learning:

- Rebekah Atkin: graduate student in Linguistics. Rebekah recently had her thesis research approved by IRB and the MTC to gather data from missionaries learning Albanian.
- Paul Cave: graduate student scheduled to complete his studies in April 2015. We cocreated an animated video that demonstrates the role of student initiative in motivation and language learning. Paul will use of this video in classes at the English Language Center as part of his thesis research. The animated video was developed at the Center for Teaching and Learning. We worked with Rob Allen at the Center as the lead developer. He mentored student employees who developed the final product. Our collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning was extremely positive. Paul, Shelby Thayne and I presented at the TESOL International Association Pre-Convention Institute (PCI) in March 2013 and in 2014 we presented again with Ethan Lynn joining us. Having a PCI proposal accepted is an honor and rare for graduate students to be included.
- Ana-Lisa Clark: first joined the research group as an undergraduate student. Continued in the second year of the project as a graduate student in the Second Language Teaching (SLaT) program with an emphasis in Japanese. Ana-Lisa recently had her thesis research approved by IRB and the MTC to gather data from missionaries learning Japanese.
- Braxton Excell: undergraduate student who recently graduated. He was employed as a Research Assistant for the Winter 2014 semester and Spring 2014 term. He plans to apply for the TESOL MA program for Fall 2015. Braxton compiled a list of research articles in EndNote of 2813 articles on the role of motivation in language teaching and learning. The EndNote file is shared by all members of the RG.
- Rui Li: graduate student in the TESOL MA program. Rui is in the process of submitting her research proposal to IRB to gather data on motivation and language learning in China.
- Ethan Lynn: undergraduate who co-presented with Paul Cave, Shelby Thayne and I at the TESOL International Association Pre-Convention Institute in March 2014. Ethan was admitted as a graduate student in the Department of Linguistics and English Language for Fall 2014. His thesis proposal relates to the role of teacher motivational strategies when teaching the language skill of reading.
- Shelby Thayne: graduated with her MA in TESOL. Her MA thesis was awarded the Outstanding thesis for 2013. Shelby has recently completed revisions to a manuscript for submission to Applied Linguistics. As indicated above, Shelby Paul Canve and I presented at the TESOL International Association Pre-Convention Institute (PCI) in March 2013 and in 2014 we presented...
again with Ethan Lynn joining us. Having a PCI proposal accepted is an honor and rare for graduate students to be included.

- Dan Warner: a part-time undergraduate Linguistics student working full-time at the MTC. Dan has been able to take the principles and ideas from the research group meetings and apply them in teaching missionaries. What is unique about Dan’s participation is that he is not applying the principles to language learning. He is applying the principles with missionaries serving English-speaking missions.

In addition to the eight students listed above, two students (Steven Carter and Christopher Nuttall) were admitted into the TESOL MA program based on discussions that I had with them about the work of the RG. Steve and Chris wrote MA thesis proposals for admission into the program on motivation in language teaching and learning.

Two faculty members joined the RG: Dan Dewey, Linguistics and English Language; and Jennifer Bown, German and Slavic Languages. Dan, Jennifer, and I agreed to serve on the MA thesis committees for most of the graduate students.

**Description of the Results/Findings of the Project**

At this point, we only have one manuscript ready for (re)submission. Shelby Thayne graduate in April 2013 and immediately began working on converting her MA thesis into a manuscript ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The manuscript was submitted to the top-tier journal in our profession, TESOL Quarterly. The submission was declined. Shelby, as the lead author, took the comments from the reviewers and has made significant revisions. The manuscript is now ready to be resubmitted for consideration, this time to another top-tier journal Applied Linguistics.

Here are the four major finds from this research:

- There is a strong positive correlation between teacher motivational practice and the learner motivated behavior.
- The teacher-training component of the research design was unique to this study. To our knowledge, no other research has focused on providing training to language teachers specifically on how to motivated learners.
- Teachers reported benefitting from the training component and recommended that the training continue for the program.
- Teachers will improve their motivational teaching practices if they increase their awareness of their performance in the classroom and their learners’ responses to the learning environment.

**Description of How the Budget was Spent**

The budget was spent in two ways. Primarily, it paid for participation in the 2013 and 2014 conferences of the TESOL International Association. In 2013, Paul Cave and Shelby Thayne and I presented a six-hour Pre-Convention Institute (PCI) workshop in Dallas, Texas. There were 15 people registered for the workshop. We presented a foundation to the research on motivation in language teaching and learning and then demonstrated ways that teachers could positively influence learner motivation. The evaluations of this session were extremely positive and encouraged us to resubmit a proposal for the 2014 conference.

In 2014, Paul Cave, Ethan Lynn, Shelby Thayne, and I presented a PCI in Portland, Oregon. There were 20 teachers who registered for this workshop. We were able to present the animated video at this event.
This workshop provided a venue to help teachers practice the delivery of motivational moments in their teaching. The evaluations were all positive.

We submitted a PCI proposal for the 2015 TESOL convention in Toronto, Canada, but because I am leaving BYU Provo for the BYU Hawaii campus and cannot guarantee funding, Paul and Ethan (currently students) and Shelby (graduated and teaching at Utah State University) do not know if they can get funding to attend so we withdrew our proposal.

The second way that they budget was spent was in hiring a Research Assistant for the Winter semester and Spring term of 2014. Braxton Excell, a Linguistics major and TESOL minor, joined our group and was interested in working as the RA. One of his primary tasks was compiling a list of research articles on motivation in language teaching and learning. He used EndNote to create the database. He identified and entered 2813 references with a pdf of the articles, when available, into EndNote. Although he did not work very many hours, Braxton indicated that he enjoyed the environment of the RG and working closely with us in compiling the research article database. Braxton plans to apply for the TESOL MA program for Fall 2015.

FILED UNDER: COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, MEG LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE, MEG-2014