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| <b>RESEARCH ARTICLE</b>   | <b>The Importance of Student Motivation</b>   |
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| <b>Abstract</b><br>Motivation is a critical factor in the learning process, influencing not only the decision to begin learning but also the ability to sustain engagement over time. This article explores the different types of motivation—extrinsic and intrinsic—that drive learners, and examines the teacher’s role in fostering and maintaining this motivation within the classroom. It also discusses the importance of learner agency and responsibility, emphasizing the need for students to become active participants in their education. Through practical strategies such as appropriate activity selection, affective support, and the promotion of learner autonomy, educators can help students take greater ownership of their learning journey. The article further highlights the role of tools like dictionaries, homework, and self-access centres in encouraging self-reliance and sustained learning beyond the classroom environment. |   |
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## Introduction

Understanding what drives learners to engage in the educational process is vital for effective teaching. Motivation, whether it stems from a genuine love for a subject, practical necessity, or simple curiosity is the cornerstone of learning. Yet, while initiating motivation may come easily for some, maintaining it over time often presents a challenge. This article examines the nature of motivation, distinguishing between extrinsic influences that come from outside the classroom and intrinsic ones that arise from classroom experiences. It also highlights the crucial

role that teachers play in nurturing and sustaining student motivation by creating engaging, appropriately challenging, and emotionally supportive learning environments. Furthermore, the article delves into the concept of learner agency and responsibility, advocating for a gradual shift towards student autonomy to promote more effective and lifelong learning habits.

## Main body

A variety of factors can create a desire to learn. Perhaps the learners love the subject they have chosen, or maybe they are simply interested in seeing

what it is like. Perhaps, as with young children, they just happen to be curious about everything, including learning. Some students have a practical reason for their study: they want to learn an instrument so they can play in an orchestra, learn English so they can watch American TV or understand manuals written in English, study T'ai Chi so that they can become fitter and more relaxed, or go to cookery classes so that they can prepare better meals. This desire to achieve some goal is the bedrock of motivation and, if it is strong enough, it provokes a decision to act. For an adult this may involve enrolling in an English class. For a teenager it may be choosing one subject over another for special study (Harmer, 2007). This kind of motivation - which comes from outside the classroom and may be influenced by a number of external factors such as the attitude of society, family and peers to the subject in question- is often referred to as extrinsic motivation, the motivation that students bring into the classroom from outside (Kniveton, 2004). Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is the kind of motivation that is generated by what happens inside the classroom; this could be the teacher's methods, the activities that students take part in, or their perception of their success or failure. While it may be relatively easy to be extrinsically motivated (that is to have a desire to do something), sustaining that motivation can be more problematic. As students we can become bored, or we may find the subject more difficult than we thought it was going to be. One of the teacher's main aims should be to help students to sustain their motivation. We can do this in a number of ways. The activities we ask students to take part in will, if they involve the students or excite their curiosity - and provoke their participation - help them to stay interested in the subject. We need, as well, to select an appropriate level of challenge so that things are neither too difficult nor too easy. We need to display appropriate teacher qualities so that students can have confidence in our abilities and professionalism (Nuri, 2004). We need to consider the issue of affect - that is, how the students feel about the Learners learning process. Students need to feel that the teacher really cares about them; if students feel supported and valued, they are far more likely to be motivated to learn. One way of helping students to sustain their motivation is to give them, as far as is feasible, some agency (a term borrowed from the social sciences) which means that students should take some responsibility for themselves, and that they should (like the agent of a passive sentence) be the 'doers' in class. This means that they will have some decision making power, perhaps, over the choice of which activity to do next, or how they want to be corrected, for example. If students feel they have some influence over what is happening, rather than always being told exactly what to do, they are often more motivated to take part in the lesson. But however much we do to foster and sustain student motivation, we can only, in the end, encourage by word and deed, offering our support

and guidance. Real motivation comes from within each individual, from the students themselves (Dörnyei, 2001) Responsibility for learning If giving students agency is seen as a key component in sustaining motivation, then such agency is not just about giving students more decision-making power. It is also about encouraging them to take more responsibility for their own learning. We need to tell them that unless they are prepared to take some of the strain, their learning is likely to be less successful than if they themselves become active learners (rather than passive recipients of teaching). This message may be difficult for some students from certain educational backgrounds and cultures who have been led to believe that it is the teacher's job to provide learning. In such cases, teachers will not be successful if they merely try to impose a pattern of learner autonomy. Instead of imposing autonomy, therefore, we need to gradually extend the students' role in learning. At first we will expect them, for example, to make their own dialogues after they have listened to a model on an audio track (Ismayilli, 2005). Such standard practice (getting students to try out new language) is one small way of encouraging student involvement in learning. We might go on to try to get individual students to investigate a grammar issue or solve a reading puzzle on their own, rather than having things explained to them by the teacher. We might get them to look for the meanings of words and how they are used in their dictionaries rather than telling them what the words mean (Pintrich, 2024). As students get used to working things out for themselves and/or doing work at home, so they can gradually start to become more autonomous. Getting students to do various kinds of homework, such as written exercises, compositions or further study is one of the best ways to encourage student autonomy. What is important is that teachers should choose the right kind of task for the students. It should be within their grasp, and not take up too much of their time - or occupy too little of it by being trivial. Even more importantly than this, teachers should follow up homework when they say they are going to, imposing the same deadlines upon themselves as they do on their students. Other ways of promoting student self-reliance include having them read for pleasure in their own time and find their own resources for language practice (in books or on the Internet, for example). Apart from homework, teachers will help students to become autonomous if they encourage them to use monolingual learners' dictionaries and then help them to understand how and when to use them. At earlier stages of learning, good bilingual dictionaries serve the same function and allow the students a large measure of independence from the teacher. We will help students to be responsible for their learning if we show them where (either in books, in self-access centres or online) they can continue studying outside the classroom. For example, we can point them in the direction of suitable websites (if they have computer access), or

recommend good CD or DVD resources (. If students are lucky, their institution will have a self-access centre with a range of resources comprising books, newspapers, magazines, worksheets, listening material, videos and DVDs, and computers with access to the Internet. Students can decide if and when to visit such centres and what they want to do there. Self-access centres should help students to make appropriate choices by having good cataloguing systems and ensuring that people are on hand to help students find their way around. However, the object of a self-access centre is that students should themselves take responsibility for what they do and make their own decisions about what is most appropriate for them. Of course, many schools do not have self-access centres, and even where they do, many students do not make full use of them. This is because not all students, as we have said, are equally capable of being (or wanting to be) autonomous learners. Despite this fact, we should do our best to encourage them to have agency without forcing it upon them.

## Conclusion

Motivation lies at the heart of successful learning, whether it is driven by external goals or internal satisfaction. While extrinsic motivation may initiate the learning journey, it is often intrinsic motivation fostered by the classroom environment, teaching strategies, and student engagement that sustains it over time. Teachers play a pivotal role not only in creating stimulating and supportive learning experiences but also in guiding students toward greater autonomy and self-responsibility. By involving learners in decision-making, offering appropriately challenging tasks, encouraging reflection, and providing access to learning resources, educators can help students become more self-directed and motivated. However, promoting autonomy should be a gradual process, sensitive to students' backgrounds and readiness. Ultimately, while teachers can inspire and support, true motivation must come from within the learner. Empowering students to take charge of their own learning is not only essential for academic success, but also for fostering lifelong learning habits.

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