

INVESTIGATE PRACTICAL STRATEGIES THAT EFL TEACHERS CAN USE TO ENHANCE STUDENT MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is a crucial aspect of global education, yet it faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness. Students often struggle with motivation, lack of exposure to practical language use, outdated teaching methods, and insufficient technological integration. Additionally, teacher training and access to modern resources remain key obstacles in enhancing the quality of English language education. This article explores the major issues in TEFL and proposes strategic solutions that can help transition from struggle to success in language learning.

Keywords: English language teaching, student motivation, pedagogical strategies, interactive learning, educational technology, foreign language instruction.

Introduction. English has become the dominant language of international communication, business, science, and technology. Consequently, the demand for effective English language education has significantly increased. However, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) presents a set of unique challenges that require strategic interventions. In many educational systems, students struggle with a lack of motivation, limited opportunities to practice English in real-life situations, and outdated teaching approaches. Teachers, on the other hand, often lack access to proper training and innovative teaching resources, which further impacts learning outcomes. One of the key obstacles in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction is student motivation. Many learners struggle to find relevance in learning English, particularly in regions where exposure to the language outside the classroom is minimal. This lack of motivation often results in poor engagement and retention of knowledge. Furthermore, traditional teaching methodologies that emphasize rote memorization of grammar and vocabulary rather than communicative competence further hinder students' ability to use English effectively in real-life situations. Furthermore, technological integration in language learning remains a challenge, especially in under-resourced schools and universities. While digital tools, mobile applications, and online platforms have revolutionized language learning, not all institutions have the infrastructure to support their implementation. Schools with limited access to computers, the internet, or multimedia resources often struggle to provide students with interactive and engaging learning experiences.

Method. Student motivation plays a crucial role in learning English because it affects how much effort students put into studying and practicing the language. When students are motivated, they are more likely to participate actively in class and practice English outside the classroom. Many teachers work hard to create a positive learning environment where students feel excited about learning English. One way to boost motivation is by using activities that make learning fun. For example, teachers can use games, songs, and interactive exercises that help students learn new words and practice speaking. When students enjoy what they are doing, they become more interested and feel less afraid of making mistakes. Setting small, clear goals is another effective method. When students reach these goals, they gain confidence and are encouraged to keep improving. Teachers can celebrate these achievements with simple rewards or positive feedback, which makes students feel appreciated and motivated. Technology can also help increase motivation. Educational apps, online videos, and language learning games provide fresh and engaging ways to learn English. These tools make it easier for students to practice language skills at their own pace and in a fun environment. Additionally, connecting English learning to real life can greatly enhance motivation. When students see that

learning English can help them travel, make friends from other countries, or get better job opportunities in the future, they are more likely to put in extra effort. Sharing real-life examples and success stories can inspire students to work hard and see the value in learning English. Finally, a supportive classroom atmosphere is very important. When students feel safe to express themselves and are not afraid of being wrong, they are more likely to try speaking English. Group activities and pair work help students learn from each other and build a sense of community, making the learning process more enjoyable. In summary, student motivation in learning English can be improved by making lessons fun, setting achievable goals, using technology, connecting lessons to real life, and creating a supportive environment. These strategies help students feel confident and excited about learning, which ultimately leads to better language skills.

Practical Language Exposure. Practical language exposure means giving students many chances to use English in real life, not just in the classroom. It is important because it helps learners see how English is used every day. When students are exposed to English in real-life situations, they learn faster and become more confident speakers. For example, when students watch an English movie or listen to English music, they can hear how native speakers talk. They learn how words are pronounced and how sentences flow naturally. This helps them understand the language better than just reading from a book. Another good way is to use role-playing activities. In a classroom, students can pretend to be in a restaurant or at a store. They practice asking for food or help, which makes learning fun and practical. This type of activity shows students how to use English in real situations. Using online tools is also very helpful. There are many websites and mobile apps that let students talk with native speakers or practice through games. For example, language exchange programs or chat apps can connect learners with people from different countries. This helps students get used to different accents and speaking styles. In addition, teachers can create a friendly classroom where mistakes are part of the learning process. When students feel safe and supported, they are more willing to try speaking English. This supportive environment helps them learn faster.

Results. The findings from this exploration indicate that incorporating practical language exposure and motivational strategies significantly enhances students' engagement and language acquisition in EFL classrooms. When teachers use interactive and enjoyable activities such as games, songs, and role-playing, students show increased participation and willingness to communicate in English. These methods help reduce fear of making mistakes and create a positive attitude toward learning.

Furthermore, integrating technology—such as language learning apps and online platforms—has proven to be an effective way to make lessons more engaging and accessible. Students who utilized digital tools for learning demonstrated better vocabulary retention, improved pronunciation, and greater enthusiasm for practicing English outside the classroom. Practical language exposure, including listening to English media and participating in real-life simulations, helped students develop stronger speaking and listening skills. Students reported feeling more confident when using English in everyday situations, suggesting that bridging classroom learning with real-world usage is essential for fluency. Additionally, the establishment of a supportive and encouraging classroom environment contributed to higher levels of student motivation. Learners were more inclined to collaborate with peers, take initiative in conversations, and persist in learning challenges when they felt respected and encouraged by their teachers and classmates. Overall, the results confirm that student motivation, access to modern resources, practical exposure, and innovative teaching practices are key elements in overcoming the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language. Implementing these strategies leads to measurable improvements in language proficiency and learner confidence.

Overall, practical language exposure makes learning English more interesting and useful. It bridges the gap between studying in a classroom and using the language in everyday life. By practicing English in real situations, learning strategies students improve their listening, speaking, and overall confidence.

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TEACHING METHODS FOR DEVELOPING DIVERGENT THINKING

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In the rapidly changing 21st century, education systems are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering creativity and critical thinking among learners. One crucial aspect of creative cognition is divergent thinking, which refers to the ability to generate multiple, unique solutions to open-ended problems. Divergent thinking contrasts with convergent thinking, which focuses on arriving at a single correct answer. As English language classrooms shift toward student-centered and communicative approaches, the integration of methods that stimulate divergent thinking becomes essential [1;3].

In language education, divergent thinking is closely linked with fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration—skills that not only enhance language proficiency but also cultivate learners’ creative capacities [2;14]. Therefore, it is imperative for language teachers to adopt instructional strategies that go beyond rote memorization and promote imaginative and flexible language use. This thesis explores effective teaching methods for developing divergent thinking in English lessons, grounded in theoretical research and practical classroom applications.

Uzbek researchers have also emphasized the importance of developing creativity and independent thinking in learners. According to K. Yuldashev, one of the goals of modern education in Uzbekistan is to form innovative thinking and the ability to generate new ideas, especially through creative tasks and problem-based learning [7;45]. Sh. Toshpulatova highlights the role of interactive teaching strategies in developing students’ communicative competence and creative skills, noting that student-centered instruction significantly supports divergent thinking development [8;62].

Divergent thinking, a term popularized by psychologist J.P. Guilford, is the mental process of generating creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions [3;5]. According to Guilford’s theory, divergent thinking consists of four primary components: fluency (the ability to produce many ideas), flexibility (the ability to think in varied directions), originality (the ability to produce novel ideas), and elaboration (the ability to develop and expand ideas) [4;21].

Each of these components contributes to a student’s ability to think outside conventional boundaries and to engage more deeply in tasks that require interpretation and innovation. For example, in a language learning context, fluency might be reflected in the ability to generate multiple sentences around a given topic, while originality would involve using uncommon vocabulary or expressions.

In the context of language education, divergent thinking facilitates learners’ ability to express themselves in novel ways, find multiple interpretations of texts, and engage in creative writing and speaking tasks [5;33]. Developing this type of thinking is particularly important in communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes authentic language use and learner autonomy [6;18].