MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES USED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

The main purpose of this descriptive study was to identify and determine the hierarchical order of the motivational strategies used by secondary school novice teachers (N=100) of Lahore city. The teachers completing two years of their teaching experience were selected as sample through convenient sampling. Five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data covering four factors of motivational techniques of ARCS model developed by Keller (1983): Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment). Collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The study found teachers having tendency to apply Confidence and Relevance strategies most often as compared to strategies focusing Attention. The least practiced strategies were focusing the satisfaction. Overall, study found teachers using strategies requiring less planning, energy and resources. The paper included recommendations to provide assistance to the novice teachers through training and provision of A.V aids in order to improve their teaching competence.

Introduction

Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives (James Madison). This powerful quotation represents the basic goal for obtaining knowledge. Designing effective instruction, using sound strategies is essential to provide learners with opportunities to attain knowledge and become powerful governors of their own lives. It is obvious, the learners become powerful governors of their own lives when they are Self-Regulated, and in other words, they are motivated. Motivation is the process that moves people towards the attainment of their goals whether it is just an effort to get food to eat, find a mate or seeking thrills etc (Passer and Smith, 2001). To achieve the lifelong learning goals, teachers use motivational strategies in their instruction. The main purpose of motivational strategies is to develop motivated learners, and improve the teaching learning environment for learning. The role of teacher has changed recently. He/she has to increase student motivation and develop skills to make him a competent learner being able to take ownership of the task at hand and also motivate others in the classroom (Theroux, 2004). Motivation is a construct that changes even during a class period and stems from various sources internal or external (Dimyoi, 2001; Dornyi & Otto, 1998; Ellis, 1994). Considering the importance of motivation, teachers try to create motivation among students through presenting interesting classroom tasks and engaging through authentic A.V aids (Winke, 2005). The term motivation is also compared to the gasoline engine, without fuel, engine cannot be moved, like this, without motivation, teacher cannot force the pupils to get knowledge. Teaching students is in fact preparing them for learning

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(Woolfolk, 1998) which is possible only when students are Self-Regulated. The concept of Self-Regulated learning integrates much of what is known about effective learning and motivation.

The worth of motivation is not because it is a necessary causal factor of learning, but because it mediates learning and is a consequence of learning as well” (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 4). In other words, students who are motivated to learn will have greater success than those who are not. Additionally, students who learn well will be more motivated to do so in the future. According to Limb (2004) who reviewed Zoltan Donyei’s book “Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom”, explained that there is no doubt that motivation is one of the most important factors in determining success or failure in any learning situation. All teachers, especially those who have taught teenagers, will appreciate that motivating students is probably one of the most difficult aspects of the profession. Dornyei (2001) and Ellis (1996) mentioned that motivated students are every teacher’s dream as they are willing to work hard, add their own goals to those of the classroom and focus their attention on the tasks. Fortunately, many of the strategies that “empower” and “engage” students also lead to increased motivation.

Reward and punishments may be a mainstay of the teaching-learning process, but they are not the only tools in teacher’s arsenal (Thanasoulas, 2002). According to Blair, Jones and Simpson (1954), Motivation, contrary to the popular usage of the term, is not a bag of tricks which the teacher uses to produce learning. Rather it is a process which is similar to invasion in that it involves external stimulation, appropriate mechanisms of response and an internal force which energizes the response. Motivation of school learning depends upon such factors as the learner’s purpose or intent to learn, his self-concept and self-confidence, his levels of aspiration, and his knowledge and appraisal of how well he is doing in relation to his goals. Thanasoulas (2002) also mentioned that skill in motivating students to learn is of paramount importance. Until recently, teachers were forced to rely on “bag of tricks” approaches in their attempt to manage their classroom and motivate their learners.

While most teachers agree that having a variety of motivational techniques at hand is a good thing, the challenge is that no one technique works well for every student. As a result, they receive little if any motivational assistance (Theroux, 2004). Although motivation is considered to be the most important factor for the instruction to be successful (Dick and Carey, 1996, p.92). According to Crow and crow (1963), interest for its own sake can retard rather than encourage the mastery of new ideas. Education is a serious business, and a teacher should not try to entertain simply to interest or motivate learners. Motivation is effective only when it gives a mental set toward learning. Otherwise it is a distracting rather than a directing force.

In Pakistani context, the main assumption of the society is to find teachers mostly relying on Reward/Punishment strategies particularly at elementary level. The phenomenon decreases as the grade increases as students at secondary level are prepared to build confidence towards learning but most of the teachers are hesitant and lack skills in the use of intrinsic motivation. Secondary level is the turning point in the lives of students.
when they develop a positive and confident approach towards studies or try to get escape from the formal system of learning. Keeping in view the sensitiveness of the situation on the part of the student and recent changes in the instructional mechanism, the study is designed to investigate to what extent the currently recruited teachers use effective motivational strategies in the classroom.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of study were as follows:

- To explore which type of motivational strategies are mostly used by novice teachers at secondary level.
- To develop the hierarchical order of motivational strategies using ARCS model based on novice teachers practices in their classroom.

Research questions of the study

Following research questions were posed to answer as a result of the study;

- To what extent novice teachers use attention focusing motivational strategies in their classrooms at secondary level?
- To what extent relevance motivational strategies are being used by novice teachers in their classrooms at secondary level?
- To what extent confidence building strategies are practiced by novice teachers in their classrooms at secondary level?
- To what extent satisfaction related motivational strategies being used by novice teachers in their classrooms?

Methodology

Population

This study was descriptive in nature and was of survey type. Novice teachers of (private & public) secondary schools of Lahore city formed the population of the study.

Sample

Many schools were contacted for allowing data collection but very few of them responded and showed their consent especially private schools. A total of 25 schools were selected on the basis of their willingness and convenience of the researcher. Their distribution is given in the table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public/Government</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coeducational</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Distribution of sample (secondary) schools
A total of 100 teachers (male & female) who completed first two years of their teaching at secondary level in private & public schools were chosen as a sample. From each school 2 to 7 teachers were selected conveniently and requested to fill in the rating scale/questionnaire. The respondents were found being varied in qualification as shown in table 2 whereas the respondents’ age ranged between 20 to 30 years (median = 23 Years).

Table 2. Distribution of the Sample based on their Qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>N=100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.A/B.Sc</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A/M.Sc</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.A +B.Ed</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A +M.Ed</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument of the study

A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data regarding use of motivational techniques of novice teachers. Keeping in view the nature of research, Likert Scale was considered as the appropriate response format for the instrument. The items of the instrument were based on filter & contingency type of item format mainly distributed in four factors i.e. Attention, Confidence, Relevance, and Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment). The items were developed using ARCS model developed by Keller (1983). The scale was divided into 12 factors based on following twelve dimensions:

1. Perceptual Arousal,  2. Inquiry Arousal,  3. Variability (Attention),
7. Learning Opportunities,  8. Success Opportunities,  9. Personal Responsibility (Confidence),

At least three items covered one factor and each item had a series of motivational strategies relating to the factor. On the whole, there were 82 items/strategies that were presented under all these factors. In this scale, teachers were asked to respond to a question/item in form of “Yes” and “No” in case of “Yes”, teacher had to respond to a series of motivational strategies by indicating the following five keys/choices of response Always, Often, Sometimes,
Occasionally, and Never. The content of the instrument was selected on the basis of the literature reviewed in connection with the factors given by Keller in his ARCS model.

Table 3. Factor-wise distribution of rating scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Reliability Cronbach-a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>A total of 26 strategies were included for arousing and sustaining curiosity &amp; interest to determine the hierarchical order of motivational techniques</td>
<td>a. Body language, b. A.V Aids, c. Varied teaching methods, d. Paradoxes, Poses questions,</td>
<td>0.8952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance Strategies</td>
<td>Relevance strategies that link to learners’ needs, interest &amp; motives to instruction for student motivation, comprised of 21 strategies.</td>
<td>a. Link instruction to future goals, b. Present objective of lesson, c. Relate instruction to previous learning,</td>
<td>0.9069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence Strategies</td>
<td>A total of 17 techniques were included to study the use of confidence strategies by novice teachers.</td>
<td>a. Provide criteria for achievement, b. Provide guidance &amp; practice opportunities, d. Provide attribution feedback</td>
<td>0.8466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment) Strategies</td>
<td>Strategies focusing satisfaction included a total of 18 techniques to evaluate its use in the classrooms.</td>
<td>a. Show work sample, b. Use of verbal, praise, Rewards, c. Threats, Physical punishment.</td>
<td>0.7596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: overall reliability of the questionnaire/rating scale was 0.9.

Validity of the Instrument
To ensure the validity of instrument two experts having specialization in the domains of educational psychology, teaching and research were consulted. The revisions suggested by the experts were incorporated in the final questionnaire. The suitability of questionnaire/rating scale for novice teachers was ensured by consulting two teacher-trainers.

**Data collection and analysis**

The scale was distributed to all the respondents selected for data collection by the researcher personally. Before administration of the questionnaire among teachers, the nature and purpose of the survey was explained to them. Moreover, they were assured regarding the confidentiality of their responses. Respondents were asked to read the questionnaire carefully and if they find any statement/item or strategy ambiguous or difficult they can ask it freely from the researcher or the research assistants. Teachers were asked to give their response representing the best use of motivational techniques in their classrooms corresponding to the given statements. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive analytic techniques through SPSS. Following criteria was used to analyze and interpret the subjects’ responses;

- Always: 3.56-4.55
- Often: 2.56-3.55
- Sometimes: 1.56-2.55
- Occasionally: 0.56-1.55
- Never: 0-0.55

**Results**

This section presents an analysis of the use of motivational strategies by novice teachers under the four factors or factor-wise.

**Table 4. Hierarchical order of Motivational Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Qs</th>
<th>Mean( X )</th>
<th>S.D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention-Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>9.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence-building Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction(Reward/Punishment)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean score of four factors (table 3) showed that relevance and confidence strategies are the mostly practiced techniques of teachers to motivate their students. Results showed that Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment) strategies were less used by teachers as compared to Confidence, Relevance and Attention focusing strategies. Beginning teachers also found using Attention focusing strategies to motivate the learners. The mean score of Attention focusing strategies is 1.56 and its standard deviation is 0.110 which reflect that beginning teachers occasionally apply/use these strategies e.g. poses questions, eye contact, body language, movement around the room etc to motivate the learners because these are simple, easy to use, need less planning, energy and material.

The general assumption is that to gain attention is easy than to maintain or sustain for long time but the result shows that beginning teachers give less importance to capture attention (\( \bar{X} =1.44 \)) than to increase (\( \bar{X} =1.62 \)) and to maintain (\( \bar{X} =1.63 \)). Beginning teacher capture learners interest/attention by showing humor (\( \bar{X} =0.93 \)), mystery (\( \bar{X} =0.54 \)), puzzle (\( \bar{X} =0.52 \)) surprise behavior(\( \bar{X} =0.67 \)) along with the use of examples(\( \bar{X} =2.16 \)), eye contact (\( \bar{X} =2.57 \)), body language (\( \bar{X} =1.95 \)) and imagination(\( \bar{X} =0.88 \)).The interesting thing is that they use those techniques for attention capturing which require less energy, the reason may be that they have less experience or may be easy going. The another finding is that beginning teachers make efforts to increase learners’ curiosity in teaching learning process (\( \bar{X} =1.62 \)), and according to them, it is possible to maintain learner’s attention in learning activities (\( \bar{X} =1.63 \)) with the help of A.V aids, varied teaching methods, varied pace of delivery, computer technology and through individual participation by giving hands-on experience.

The mean score of Relevance strategies is 1.68 and its standard deviation is 9.44 which reflects that beginning teachers frequently apply these strategies than Attention focusing (\( \bar{X} =1.56 \)) strategies. It is positive point that today beginning teachers link the instruction to learners’ needs, experiences, interest and motives. Because the result shows that beginning teachers consider best to match the instruction to learners’ needs (\( \bar{X} =1.69 \)) by providing opportunities to achieve goals, role models, objectives of lesson and according to them, it is important to tie the learner’s experience (\( \bar{X} =1.69 \)) through familiar examples, analogies, metaphor etc. The most encouraging thing is that beginning teachers know, it is beneficial for learners to assign responsibilities to them with their own choices (\( \bar{X} =1.68 \)) by giving group/leadership/competition or independent opportunities. But at the same time, relevance strategies require much experience, competency of teachers. That’s why; these strategies have normal frequency of use in classroom by beginning teachers.

Confidence building strategies have achieved highest mean score which is 1.69 than the other three factors or strategies that is another amazing finding as it is generally believed that to develop/build confidence among learners, for teachers, is very difficult and challenging. In contrast to the assumption, researchers found that beginning teachers had positive tendency to motivate students for the purpose of increasing their confidence. Therefore, they develop positive expectation (\( \bar{X} =1.66, SD= 0.136 \)) and provide learning
experience which enhance learners’ beliefs in their competence ($\bar{X}=1.68$, $SD=0.159$). It is found in the study that this finding was due to the fact that novice teachers prefer to present lesson along with examples and performance criteria that enable students to be more confident regarding teachers expectations. The important point in confidence building strategies was the timely feedback and acknowledgement of students’ work by their teachers while making them aware that success is based on effort.

The least practiced strategies happened to be Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment) Strategies with the mean value of 1.48, ($SD=0.208$). It was quite amazing as it indicated that novice teachers avoid to apply satisfaction strategies in their classrooms for the purpose of motivation. Though, it is generally preconceived that novice teachers lack the experience of motivating students, thus they tend to apply satisfaction strategies whereas the result were found to be against this assumption as that they reported not to use such strategies in their classrooms e.g. physical punishment ($\bar{X}=0.50$), social boycott ($\bar{X}=0.29$), ignore student ($\bar{X}=0.14$), take away honor ($\bar{X}=0.58$) which put negative impact on learners. It shows the change which is quite pleasing. The study found that teachers provide opportunities for learners to use their newly acquired knowledge/skill ($\bar{X}=1.65$) through assignment of achievable complicated tasks, problems, providing reinforcement to learners’ performance. The study revealed that novice teachers provide ($\bar{X}=1.25$), positive reinforcement e.g. verbal praise ($\bar{X}=1.69$), symbolic ($\bar{X}=1.33$) & unexpected ($\bar{X}=1.26$) rewards, and threat the students ($\bar{X}=0.57$). It was found that according to novice teachers, it was beneficial to assist the students in anchoring a positive feeling about their accomplishments ($\bar{X}=1.55$).

Overall, it is observed that novice teachers mostly use Confidence and Relevance Strategies than Attention focusing strategies and avoid or less apply Satisfaction (Reward/Punishment) Strategies. The hierarchy of motivational strategies according to the ARCS model is as under explained in the bar graph.
Discussion

The study was based on the assumption that teaching experience has significant effect on teachers’ perception of motivational effectiveness in teaching learning situation. Based on this hypothesis, study aimed to explore the use of motivational strategies by novice teachers, whereas teachers having two years’ experience were considered as being novice. The other variables which could effect teachers’ perception of effectiveness of motivational techniques (qualification, teacher training, and administration structure) were also included in the study. The study found that majority of the novice teachers use motivational techniques that require less planning and control technicality of the use such as Confidence-Building and Relevance strategies. Melnick and Meister (2008), compared beginning and experienced teachers’ concerns with respect to managing classroom behavior, dealing with time constraints and work load, parent interactions, and academic preparation.

They found that beginning teachers feel less prepared to work with groups of varying sizes and abilities (Item 17—81% vs. 94%). In addition, student teaching experiences not only appear to be different, but the magnitude of the levels of agreement on both groups (beginning vs. experiences) is relatively low (Items 1 and 8; 76% vs. 72% and 76% vs. 71% respectively). One would hope that student teaching was a meaningful experience for a greater proportion of the undergraduates. Experienced teachers feel better prepared to communicate with parents when conflict arises, send more frequent reports home to parents about their child’s progress, and utilize multiple methods of communication with parents.

According to present study, it was revealed that the techniques/strategies requiring much time, plan, and equipment or training to use are not practiced often as shown in the bar graph. The results are not astonishing as it describes the real situation of schools in Pakistani public schools. It is observed that school administration pay less effort to enhance the teaching learning situation in public school system. Results of the present study are aligned to the study by Bernaus and Gardener (2008) reporting the use of traditional strategies to motivate the students. The authors found that teachers rely on the use of strategies requiring less effort more often as compared to the techniques claimed as innovative. Therefore, use of motivational techniques as an important factor of learning and modifying student behavior are not given proper attention.

Another important finding reported was the less use of extrinsic motivational techniques typically punishment. It showed the changed vision of school teachers to avoid unpleasant consequences in order to motivate the students or modify their behavior. Working in the Pakistani context, Salim and Ghani (2019) discovered similar results. Their study found that teachers teaching the subject of English were fully aware of the usefulness of intrinsic positive motivation. Their study found accounts of teachers as validated by the students acknowledging the positive impact of motivation to get competence in the subject of English. Another study conducted on EFL teachers in
Pakistani schools discovered similar results. Kakar and Pathan (2017), found teachers promoting learners’ autonomy and familiarization of learners to the L2 related values as most practiced techniques used for students’ motivation.

Implications of the study

The results of the study have direct implication for school authorities. Based on the findings of study it is recommended that teacher training workshops should include the practical ways of motivating students in training sessions arranged for novice teachers. They may teach novice teachers effective motivational strategies for handling students’ behavior. Future research may be planned to compare the use of motivational techniques by novice as well as experienced teachers so that to identify the gaps regarding teaching skills of teachers. Based on ARCS model, experimental study may provide insight regarding the effectiveness of motivational strategies in classrooms to make teachers more confident regarding the usefulness of these techniques.

REFERENCES


