Enhancing Student Motivation from a School's Perspective

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Abstract: Motivation has been proved to have crucial impact on students' learning. Students whom are motivated will learn more and perform better and persist longer than those who are demotivated or amotivated. Motivation provides possibilities for students to develop their potential abilities and facilitate them to get higher achievement. In terms of education, motivation usually relates to social-cognitive theories which focusing on elements such as aims and learners' needs, skills development and self-concept, reason to choose and persist interest in activities etc. (Lazowski and Hulleman, 2016). So it is of great importance to increase motivation in language learners. This essay will demonstrate some methods to maximize students' learning outcomes in terms of offering extra-curricular activities, changing timetabling patterns and changing courses design. To what extent will I take innovation and management theories into account when implementing innovation to the school will be discussed in the end.

Key words: motivation; ELT management; language learning activities

1. Methods of maximize students' motivation in learning

(1) Offering extra-curricular activities

Research shows that students will more likely be recognized and praised when they have high expectations, adult models of relationships and participation in extra-curricular activities (Cutting, 2014). Participating in out-of-school activities such as physically or academically based may lead to the increase of students' motivation. According to Ginosyan, Hranush et al. (2019) students who take part in the extra-curricular activities such as sports or academic clubs get higher marks in academic performance and are more positive in personalities and less addicted to alcohol and drugs than those who not participating in out-of-class activities. To specify this opinion, take outdoor activities as an example, students who join in these activities such as playing basketball will have to communicate with their team mates to ensure cooperation. Such interaction facilitates social-relations between students and social-belongingness inside students themselves. As mentioned in the previous section that the increase of social-belongingness will help students to feel adapt to the surroundings and reduce the anxiety of feeling solitude, from where can students be largely motivated.

Meanwhile, according to Tomasetto (2004), new interest, skills and personal qualities may be developed through taking part in extra-curricular activities which can also maximize students' motivation in learning. For example, being given access to extra-curricular lectures focusing on science, students' may find interest in science and then read scientific articles in specific area for interest which provide them with both knowledge with science as well as scientific language. In this way, students' may be motivated through participating in out-of-class activities according to interest theory. However, negative effects of participating in extra-curricular activities should also be considered. For example, students who play sports as extracurricular activities may feel exhausted and could hardly focus on study in the next class. In order to avoid such negative outcomes, teachers should carefully keep balance between the amount of extracurricular activities and core courses at school. Some training for teachers on how to give appropriate amount and quality out-of-class activities can be introduced during teachers' seminars.

(2) Changes in timetabling patterns

Researchers believe that proper use of timetable makes contribution to students' development in social, emotional and cognitive aspects (Bagger, et al., 2016). Timetable consists of elements such as time, space and personnel which managers should take into consideration. Any change to timetable may have large impact on students.

According to self-determination theory, students are more motivated when they have autonomy on study (Reeve et al., 2004). In terms of timetable, if students have their choices towards the time and space to have classes rather than exposed to fixed time and space, they may feel independent and enjoy having autonomy at timetable. More options can be given to allow students attend class with their interest which may motivate students to some extent. Also, arranging seminars in the timetable which take up for about 2 hours every week may provide students opportunities to exchange ideas with classmates and teachers about the achievement and problems appear in the week. The time for break is also important in timetable. Students may feel fatigue after taking long-hours classes if there exists no break time. If the break time is not enough, students may feel hard to prepare for the next lesson. However, students may less focus on the class if they have a long break time because they cannot transfer the relax model into study model in a short time. Therefore, managers have to make timetable cautiously in order to maximize students' outcomes of study.

(3) Changes in courses

According to self-efficacy theory, students show more willingness when they trust their competence in completing certain task and realize their goals (Rose, 2020). When students find the courses too difficult to finish, the sense of demotivated may increase. So it is important to provide students with suitable courses.

While the decision to take which class in most state schools offering education for intermediate students in China is not made by

students themselves, it is suggested that students have their own right to choose their preferable courses (Anderman and Anderman, 2010). Therefore, except the compulsory courses such as English, Math, Social Studies and Science, other optional courses may be engaging for students who want to develop their own interest. Being provided with the autonomy of choose optional courses may students feel more engaged in the process of learning. What is more, the quality of courses is also needed to improve. Teachers should investigate students' interest in learning and plan lessons accordingly and more communicative language skills should be introduced and developed in the class. Research also shows that with the help of technology such as watching videos and providing online access, students are more motivated than reading rigid paper materials (Henderson, 2011). Therefore, interactive activities through the internet can be adopted to increase the motivation.

2. Innovation and management theories in school changes

(1) Innovation theories in school changes

Innovation, as demonstrated by Waters (2014), consists of three road phases which are 'initiation' (the decision of making innovation), 'implementation' (the process of putting innovation into practice) and 'institutionalization' (systematic guarantee to work to achieve innovation). In the initiation stage, in order to adopt innovation effectively, managers have to consider the innovation context to decide the implementation of innovation. Overall, two concerns are important in this stage which are the understanding of the characteristics of the context and the ways to increase the likelihood of put these innovation into practice. To be more specific, Rogers (2003) suggests that the more benefit the innovation may provide to the end-users the greater the likelihood executor will adopt the innovation. Furthermore, he indicates that one of the main characteristics of innovation is the degree of changes in the process of implementing the innovation which is named 're-invention'. When it comes to school innovation, managers have to consider whether students, teachers and staff and school could successfully accept the changes considering the flexibility of innovation.

Research shows that no matter how well the context has been analyzed and how well-organized and structured is the innovation plan, failure of adopting innovation may still occur due to the underdeveloped innovation implementation strategy (Trowler, 2003; Fullan, 2007; Wedell, 2009). In other words, the strategy of innovation implementation may affect the result of the operation of innovation. Waters (2014) suggest that there are three main strategies in innovation implementation which are 'power coercive' strategy (use authority to guarantee the practice of change), 'rational-empirical' strategy (explain the reasons for innovation) and 'normative-re-educative' strategy (cooperate to solve problems in the implementation of innovation). The first two can be viewed as top-down strategies whereas the normative-re-educative is a bottom-up strategy. In the process of innovation, the top-down strategies are important. For example, some staff in the school may be reluctant to make changes because of the time it may take to accommodate changes. Managers have to make regulations in order to support the implementation of changes. Meanwhile, when students are confused about the courses change, teachers have the responsibilities to explain the reasons for the changes and tell students the potential benefits of this transform. However, the top-down strategies may be insufficient and indirect which have to be combined with bottom-up strategies to facilitate the implementation of innovation. The power of adopters should also be taken into account that the interaction in the problem-solving may result in the success or failure of innovation. Therefore, activities such as workshop can be introduced to train teachers to be qualified and regular meetings are also inevitable to enhance the process of innovation.

In order to realize the adoption of innovation, initiation and implementation have to be followed by an institutionalization stage to achieve sustainability (Waters, 2014). How to make the implementation of innovation more systematic? Three potential need to be considered: the 'antecedents' of the innovation (experience from previous innovation), the 'process' component (main factors which may facilitate or hinder the implementation of innovation) and the 'consequences' component (analyze the potential outcomes of innovation). To organize the innovation in a more structured way, negotiation is required for decision makers. They have to consider every possible aspect in the innovation to make sure the implementation is gradually and successfully.

(2) Management theories in school changes

According to Haque (2015) the innovation context comprises a complexity of layers which may affect the innovation adopting in education. Generally speaking, the participants in the process of innovation are adopters (government), implementers (teachers), clients (students), suppliers (resources producer) and entrepreneurs (people who manage the implementation of innovation). These roles have to interact smoothly and effectively in order to achieve the greater outcomes of the innovation. The communication system has to be provided for the interaction. For example, schools may set an online suggestion box to receive voices to realize better management. Students may provide administrators some factors which may increase their interest in learning and managers can therefore put useful suggestions into practice.

Numerous of management theories are related to motivation. For instance, in terms of students, courses need to provide them with the competence of finish specific task or realize their values in learning which according to self-affirmation theory (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel & Master, 2006) may motivate students to a large degree. In terms of teachers, both their problems at work and personal difficulties need to be listened to in order to create a reliable and supportive working environment.

Conclusion

Motivation which has large impact on students learning effectiveness and outcomes is of great importance in education. Through

combining with literature reviews, several methods which may help to maximize students' motivation in language learning are introduced in this paper. Changes in extra-curricular activities, timetable patterns and courses can be made to facilitate students in order to maximize learning outcomes. Managers have to make changes cautiously to operate the school so that students could achieve desired outcomes. Meanwhile, innovation theories and management theories should be taken into consideration when making changes. Therefore, as managers, we have to consider all potential ways to improve the development of school.

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