TEACHING METHODS AS A FACTOR OF STUDENTS' LEARNING MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Motivation is an important factor for successfull learning. It encourages the learner to learn, create and has a proactive attitude towards learning. Many teaching methods, forms, strategies, and contents influence the creation, development, and direction of student motivation.

The study is based on a mixed-type research design focusing on both quantitative and qualitative research approaches according to the main objectives: to investigate the studies conducted on the use of motivational techniques for effective learning and to investigate the most applied teaching methods by primary school teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia. Due to the theoretical analysis of relevant researches active teaching along with its activities, curriculum integration, interactivity, teamwork, research, individualization, according to the needs and goals, proves to be the best model that fulfills the basic principles of the educational process. The research was conducted through systematic observation of 75 lessons of the Macedonian language in a primary school in the Republic of North Macedonia. The following teaching components were recorded in the Protocol for systematic observation: students' preparation for lessons; the degree of students' cognitive and emotional readiness; teaching methods and strategies. The results showed that the direct instruction model (frontal teaching form) was dominant at every phase of the lessons. There are insufficiently applied methods and strategies that enable research, participatory, and experiential learning. Active teaching methods where cooperative learning is expressed are missing or under-represented. This study may help teachers to make an analysis of their didactic-methodological competencies for teaching that will increase students' motivation to learn.

Keywords: teaching methods, students learning motivation, active learning, primary education.

1. Introduction

Modern living, with all its challenges, often requires necessary changes in the field of education. These changes are directly reflected in teaching as the most organized form of education. Facing the necessary changes has led to the need to rethink many aspects of teaching: the choice and structure of curricula and contents, the dominance of individual goals and objectives, the choice, frequency and productivity of individual teaching forms and methods, the limited initiative and freedom of students in teaching, the teacher's work style and the need to build democratic relationships, reduced motivation for learning, disrespect of universal values, the need for constant professional education training of teaching staff.

Learning motivation is one of the basic conditions that must be met in activating students' better learning outcomes; motivation is an important factor in activating the abilities and personality characteristics of students participating in learning (Pintrich, & Schunk, 1996). The term motivation broadly refers to all current factors and processes that lead to the attainment of a particular goal in the circumstances. Motivation is a process that initiates, directs, and sustains a

particular behavior (Stojaković, 2011). In school conditions, motivation refers to the activity of the teacher, which should cause continuous readiness by students to engage in some type of work without delay. Motivation affects not only the reason for students learning, but also the intensity and duration of learning activities, and can be defined as a multidimensional phenomenon manifested through the selection of goals, levels of effort, and persistence. The individual's involvement in the learning process is conditioned by the interaction of motivational and cognitive elements. Motivational elements include self-awareness, learning goals, interest in science, and the importance attached to knowledge, while cognitive elements relate to knowledge, learning, and general thinking strategies (Brophy, 2013). It is common for both types of elements to be influenced by the choice of learning assignments, teaching methods, teacher behavior, and their assessment practices.

Decreased learning motivation of students is a constant problem in education. In most classrooms, teachers are concerned about the lack of motivation among students, and lack of interest and lack of engagement results in inappropriate behavior that has a major impact on student achievement. According to current researchers in this field, the most pressing and important problem for teachers as well as students is not the low achievements, but the engagement of the students. Today, students attend classes with little excitement, dedication, and pride in mastering the content. They are not fully embedded in learning. Thus, we can conclude that school behavior and lack of motivation for the educational process are a consequence of cultural problems and inadequate teaching methodology. In other words, students' lack of motivation to learn can be partly explained by the inappropriate choice of teaching activities that are appropriate to the nature of the subject but also to the individual characteristics of the students and their learning styles. Based on the overview of the available research, it can be concluded that students achieve greater achievements when teaching in ways that are tailored to their preferred learning styles.

One way to contrast learning is on active and passive learning (Ferguson, 2010). While the latter refers to passively receiving information, the former requires the learner to interact with the material, either analyzing, comparing, making inferences, or evaluating critically.

Though the active/passive dichotomy can be paralleled with learner-centered and teacher-centered education, the former may be a consequence of learner-centered vs. teacher-centered education. Learner-centered education, as opposed to teacher-centered education, has previously characterized as a perspective on learning where the main focus is on the learner and learning process not on the teacher, where students take responsibility, and finally where formative assessment is implemented for learning and not as means for teaching for tests (Mostrom & Blumberg, 2012).

Applying motivation in teaching should be a constant practice in the work of the teacher. To be able to apply it, the teacher first needs to recognize motivation as a psychological process. It should identify and apply all its characteristics and use all possible ways of realization in the specific educational situation. The teacher should motivate students throughout all phases of the lesson. To create a learning environment in which students' needs are addressed, teachers should understand their students' interests and concerns, shortly to understand their motivation. If considering preferences felt by learners is crucial for effective learning, negotiation is needed between teachers and students. The information has to be exchanged about the role of teachers and learners so that compromises are reached between what learners want and what the teacher can provide. There are several teaching methods, forms, means, and contents that influence the creation, development, and direction of student motivation. What will be specifically applied depends on several factors: age of the student, purpose set, type of teaching material, and degree

of student development. The main objective of the teacher is to plan and systematically create a climate in the classroom, which will inspire the student and encourage them to acquire new knowledge, skills, and habits. Motivation is a moving force that enables the integration of the benefits of teaching work into the existing cognitive structure that enables the achievement of educational goals in an appropriate way. Hence, we can look at motivation as a process and as a result.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) based on a principle from a learner-centered perspective. Education has traditionally rested on learning methods that render passive students. Societal changes require self-regulatory skills and an active motivational set. Can active learner-centered education be explained from the SDT point of view?

2. Using the Self Determination Theory in the classroom

A recent theory of motivation based on the idea of needs is self-determination theory, proposed by the psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2000), among others. The theory proposes that understanding motivation requires three basic human needs:

- Autonomy - the need to feel free of external constraints on behavior
- Competence - the need to feel capable or skilled
- Relatedness - the need to feel connected or involved with others.

SDT´s organismic perspective assumes that students are active and intrinsically curious and explorative individuals. Students that are intrinsically motivated for learning in a course or subject are guided by their intrinsic motivations.

The key idea of self-determination theory is that when persons (such as students) feel that these basic needs are reasonably well met, they tend to perceive their actions and choices to be intrinsically motivated or "self-determined". In that case, they can turn their attention to a variety of activities that they find attractive or important, but that does not relate directly to their basic needs. For example, some students might read books that the teacher suggested, and others might listen attentively when the teacher explains key concepts from the unit that should be learning. If one or more basic needs are not met well, however, people will tend to feel coerced by outside pressures or external incentives. They may become preoccupied, in fact, with satisfying whatever need has not been met and thus exclude or avoid activities that might otherwise be interesting, educational, or important. If the persons are students, their learning will suffer.

What are some teaching strategies for supporting students' needs? Educational researchers have studied this question from a variety of directions, and their resulting recommendations converge and overlap in many ways. For convenience, the recommendations can be grouped according to the basic need that they address, beginning with the need for autonomy. A major part of supporting autonomy is to give students choices wherever possible (Ryan & Lynch, 2003). The choices that encourage the greatest feelings of self-control are ones that are about relatively major issues or that have relatively significant consequences for students, such as whom to choose as partners for a major group project. It is important, furthermore, to offer choices to all students, including students needing explicit directions to work successfully; avoid reserving choices for only the best students, or giving up offering choices altogether to students who fall behind or who need extra help. All students will feel more self-determined and therefore more motivated if they have choices of some sort. Teachers can also support students' autonomy more directly by minimizing external rewards (like grades) and comparisons among students' performance, and by orienting and responding themselves to students' expressed goals and interests.

A second strategy for using self-determination theory is to support students' needs for competence. The most obvious way to make students feel competent is by selecting activities that are challenging but nonetheless achievable with reasonable effort and assistance (Elliott, McGregor, & Thrash, 2004). Another generally effective way to support competence is to respond and give them feedback as immediately as possible.

A third strategy for using self-determination theory is to support students' relational needs. The main way of support students' need to relate to others is to arrange activities in which students work together in ways that are mutually supportive, that recognize students' diversity and minimize competition among individuals.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Objectives and Questions

Starting from the fact that teaching methods have a significant influence on the degree of students motivation for learning, the main objectives of the study are:
1. To investigate the studies conducted on the use of motivational techniques for effective learning.
2. To investigate the most applied teaching methods by primary school teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Research questions:
1. What are the findings of researches conducted on the use of motivational techniques for effective learning?
2. What are the most applied teaching methods by primary school teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia?

Methods, techniques, and instruments of the research

The research is characterized by qualitative and quantitative characteristics and according to the research objectives, the following techniques have been applied:
1. A theoretical analysis of various articles, research reports, and books was carried out to find out the answer to the first research question. The concepts of motivation are the types, theories, and various techniques of motivation used for effective learning.
3. Systematic observation of 75 lessons of the Macedonian language in primary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The application of these techniques was carried out with the Protocol for systematic observation. One of the fundamental purposes of classroom observation research was to describe the current status of instructional practices and identifying teaching methods. The following didactic components were recorded with the Protocol for systematic observation: student's preparation for lessons; the degree of students' cognitive and emotional readiness; teaching methods and strategies.

Data processing

The research has qualitative and quantitative paradigm and descriptive design, using the EXCEL and STATISTICS computer programs. The data were grouped according to the number of matching in certain categories and then placed in tables. The data were calculated with frequencies for which a percentage was calculated.

4. Results and discussion

Research Question no.1: What are the findings of researches conducted on the use of motivational techniques for effective learning?

A review of 83 studies involving teachers from nine countries showed that teachers were most concerned with the motivation of students to learn. These results are not surprising given that motivation is known to be crucial for learning. Motivation to learn is associated with school success, but also with positive attitudes towards school, better discipline and greater satisfaction for both students and teachers (Vizek-Vidović, Rijavec, Vlahović-Štetić, & Miljković, 2003).

Today's students are the most common disinterested in teaching content and activities, and those who are unsuccessful at schools complain of teachers' lack of enthusiasm for pedagogical leadership and educational development (Džinović, 2010). Younger generations are increasingly in doubt as to how well schools are responding to their needs, while the elderly are still seen as a necessary institution that prepares young people for work and other social roles [8]. Addressing the school failure of students presupposes a subjective position of students in the educational process. This position is aided by pedagogical activities in which students are given tasks that lead to self-discovery, the acquisition of new experience, freedom, responsibility, though, and fantasy (Đurišić Bojanović, 2001). Pedagogical interventions that address the problem of school failure are similar to the characteristics of teaching that would support creativity. This teaching requires the teacher to provide interesting tasks that activate the student's thinking, respect the student's capacities and preferences, hold the student's attention, and provoke emotional involvement (Николић & Јовановић, 2013). Also, the correct use of praise and reward in teaching is of great pedagogical importance (Максић & Павловић, 2013). The changes proposed in the professional development of educators are aimed at forming competencies that will contribute to meaningful and productive activation of students in the teaching and learning process (Lalić-Vučetić, 2007)

From the perspective of teaching activities, active learning can be defined as any teacher activity that encourages student thinking and requires meaningful activities. Active learning involves a range of activities such as experiential learning, cooperative learning, problem-solving, case studies, discussions, simulations, role-playing, computer-based learning, etc. The choice of activities depends on the teaching content being taught and the level of education of the student (*Marinković*, 2010).

Benware and Dec (1984) I found in an experimental study that students who were told to learn the material to teach other students (active learning) did not differ significantly in rote learning compared to students who learned to perform at a high standard (passive learning), however, the active-condition performed better than the passive-condition in conceptual learning and rated higher intrinsic motivation. Prince (2004) performed a study investigating the efficiency of active learning. The results show that the introduction of active learning in class not only leads to retaining and understanding knowledge, but it also increased engagement for learning.

When active learning is viewed through student activities, it refers to the level of engagement of students in a process. Active learning is defined as a process in which students engage inactivity and that forces them to think about the idea and its applicability. Active learning implies a variety of student thinking activities that result from interacting with teachers, other students, or as a result of students' independent efforts. Inactive learning, students are in the spotlight, intensely involved in the educational process, and encouraged to apply knowledge in a variety of situations. Implementing active learning strategies requires engaging students in classroom activities, which results in greater motivation for learning. Students who are strongly motivated to learn to activate cognitive and metacognitive strategies that enable them to apply scientific knowledge to understand the world around them. They understand the value of the assignment and implement strategies that require more concentration, effort, and time-consuming activities. On the other hand, students who are not sufficiently motivated are likely to implement strategies to meet expectations with the least effort required.

Madrid (2002) examined 319 students and 18 teachers from Primary, Secondary, and Upper-Secondary Education to find out how powerful 18 motivational classroom strategies were. Students' global motivation perception was observed and compared with the strategies used in class. The results show that certain strategies are more powerful than others to enhance students' global motivation. The strongest and most powerful motivational strategies, among the controlled variables, according to the students' and teachers' perceptions, are the following: The use of audiovisual resources and new technologies, group work, satisfying the student's needs and interests, student participation in class, good grades and fulfillment of students' success expectations, and praises and rewards. The author concludes that teachers should promote and put into practice those motivational strategies, which increase the student's interest, attention, and satisfaction.

Active teaching along with its activities, curriculum integration, interactivity, teamwork, research, individualization, according to the needs and goals, proves to be the best model that fulfills the basic principles of the educational process. The practice has also shown that familiarizing with the results of success, the possibilities for applying the acquired knowledge, setting deadlines for performing tasks, praising, creating a stimulating atmosphere prove to be effective methods of external stimulation within active teaching. And the ultimate goal is to create intrinsic motivation, the desire, the will that will motivate the student to develop their abilities and dispositions. Due to the above facts, the teacher must implement active teaching that gives the best results in practice when it comes to motivation.

Research Question no.2: What are the most applied teaching methods by primary school teachers in the Republic of North Macedonia?

To successfully accomplish the goals and objectives of the lessons and create a positive cognitive and emotional climate in the classroom, it is necessary to prepare the students for work. The preparation of students for the lesson is the first phase that precedes the main part of the lesson and enables the motivation and introduction of the students in the realization of the set learning goals and objectives. The preparation of students for the lesson should be varied: material-technical, cognitive, and emotional. Students should not be put in situations where they will receive only ready-made knowledge. It is good practice when teachers prepare students for work by giving students certain tasks a few days earlier such as preparing certain materials, reading certain text, watching a movie, searching for data on the Internet that they will use to process the planned lesson.

The first observed didactic component was the methods that teachers use for preparing students for the lesson. Table 1 provides average ratings (from 1 lowest to 5 highest) of methods that teachers use and the degree of cognitive and emotional readiness of students.

Table 1. Methods for preparing students for the lesson and achieving cognitive and emotional readiness

Methods for preparing students	students' cognitive readiness for the lesson (average grade)	students' emotional readiness for the lesson (average grade)
pedagogical anecdotes	4.66	4.45
emphasizes the objectives of the lesson and gives students the opportunity to set goals for themselves	4.18	4.66
didactic games	4.18	4.45
demonstrates objects, models, images	3.77	3.22
repetition of previously learned content	3.22	2.8

Students' highest level of cognitive readiness was achieved when teachers apply pedagogical anecdotes and the average grade is 4.66, followed by emphasizing the objectives of the lesson and allows students to set goals for themselves and didactic games with an average grade 4.18, 3.77 for demonstrating objects, pictures, models, and the lowest degree of cognitive readiness of students 3.22 was achieved by repeating previously learned content.

Similar results were obtained by analyzing the methods that teachers use and the degree of emotional readiness of students for lessons. The highest level of emotional readiness of students was achieved by emphasizing the objectives of the lesson and allows students to set goals for themselves and the average grade is 4.66, followed by the application of pedagogical anecdotes and didactic games with an average grade 4.45, by demonstrating subjects, pictures, models 3.22, the lowest level of emotional readiness of students was achieved by repeating previously learned content with the average grade 2.62. Table 2 shows the teaching forms and the degree of representation in each of the three phases of the lessons.

Table 2. Teaching forms and their representation in the three phases of the lessons

Teaching forms	Getting started phase (%)	Work phase (%)	Consolidation and practice phase (%)
direct instruction (frontal form)	73.33	45.33	52
group work	21.33	26.66	22.66
work in pairs	1.33	2.66	4
individual teaching	5.33	26.66	21.33

The direct instruction dominates in each of the three phases of the lessons, 73.33% in the first Getting started phase, 45.33% in the Work phase, and 52% in the last Consolidation and practice phase. This style of learning is teacher centered. Students very often receive information from the teacher, often through some form of memorization or rote learning. Second is the group form of work, less represented is the individual teaching form, and least is work in pairs. Table 3 shows the teaching methods and the degree of representation in each of the three phases of the lessons.

Table 3. Teaching methods and the degree of representation in the three phases of the lessons.

Teaching methods	Getting started phase (%)	Work phase (%)	*Consolidation and practice phase (%)*
method of experiment	1.01	0.93	0
method of oral presentation	2.02	31.77	29.41
dramatization and role-playing	7.07	5.6	4.7
didactic games	8.08	2.3	2.35
text method	12.12		2.35
illustrative demonstration method	20.20	21.7	8.23
method of conversation	49.49	17.75	36.47
work with computers and use of *digital* technology	0	5.6	3.52

Method of conversation is dominant with 49.49% of lessons in the started phase in the fact that this method is most often used in combination with other methods. Second is the illustrative - demonstrative method with 20.20% of the observed lessons, followed by the text method with 12.12% representation, most commonly reading some text, story, fairytale. Less used by teachers are didactic games 8.08%; dramatization 7.07%; method of oral presentation 2.02 and method of experiment 1.01%.

Method of an oral presentation is most present in the main part of the classes with 31.77% with the justification that in the main part of the class the teachers are teaching new content and activities, most often using the frontal teaching form as we could see in Table 1. This method is most often combined with the illustrative-demonstration method (27.1). Following is the conversation method with 17.75% representation, dramatization with 5.6%, work with computers, and educational games are equally under-represented with 2.3%, very rarely applied is the method of experiment 0.93%.

The method of conversation dominates in the final part of 36.47% of the classes because the teachers thus "easily" summarize the teaching contents in the main part (Work phase) of the class i.e. they get feedback on how much the students have adopted and remembered from what they had previously taught. Of concern is the fact that most active teaching methods where co-operative and active learning can be expressed and at the same time to encourage greater autonomy of students in the learning process are missing or minimally represented.

Contemporary teaching has features of polymorphism, both in terms of forms and methods, and in the creation of teaching situations in which the student's active position is evident, cooperative learning, the integration of the contents, intensive interactive relationships between subjects in teaching. Active teaching along with its activities, curriculum integration, interactivity, teamwork, research, individualization, according to the needs and goals, proves to be the best model that fulfills the basic principles of the educational process. Active teaching is initiated by the teacher. The practice has also shown that familiarizing with the results of success, the possibilities for applying the acquired knowledge, setting deadlines for performing tasks, praising, creating a stimulating atmosphere prove to be effective methods of external stimulation within active teaching. And the ultimate goal is to create intrinsic motivation, the desire, the will that will motivate the student to develop their abilities and dispositions. Due to the above facts, the teacher

must implement active teaching which in practice gives the best results when it comes to motivation.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

To successfully realize the goals and objectives of the class and to create a positive cognitive and emotional climate in the classroom, it is necessary to prepare students for work. Most teachers prepare students by repeating previously learned content on a question-answer basis, a small percentage of teachers used ways and methods that stimulate greater curiosity and interest in students such as creating problem situations, applying pedagogical anecdotes, educational games... The way students prepare for classes directly affects the degree of students' cognitive and emotional readiness to work. The results of the study showed that the highest level of cognitive and emotional readiness of students for a class is achieved when teachers apply pedagogical anecdotes and educational games.

The direct instruction model overwhelmingly dominates in the three-articulation phase of the lessons. The ways of working in the teaching should not be reduced to dry information by the teacher and their adoption by the student. Passive learning disempowers the student and makes the teacher the focus of the learning environment. This is especially important when learning content through which students should perceive the connection between their personal experiences and their social lives. The direct instruction, or the information that the teacher should convey to the students, should serve only as a basis for initiating different thinking and practical activities. Students should be given the opportunity for thoughtful and emotional engagement, which will depend primarily on their motivation and interests.

The representation of teaching methods and forms depends on which articulation part of the lesson they apply to. There are insufficiently applied methods and techniques that enable research, participatory, and experiential learning. Of concern is the fact that most active teaching methods where co-operative and active learning can be expressed and at the same time to encourage greater autonomy of students in the learning process are missing or minimally represented.

A well-prepared classroom environment proves a motivating force, then the student takes an interest in learning. The availability of infrastructure and affection he gets from his teachers, the pooled co-operation and help he gets from his class fellows.

The participation in activities at the school influence and motivate the learning behavior of the student. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide suitable learning situation and environment for effective learning. How teachers can increase intrinsic motivation using active teaching? The first step is to establish a positive relationship between teachers and students, which would result in a positive attitude towards the subject and the subject matter.

Link the material to real-life - students are often bored in class and find most of the material unnecessary because it seems to be unrelated to the outside world. Because of this, what is learned needs to be connected to real-life to make the material more interesting for students and to be able to find connection and logic in all of this. If students find the material meaningful, they are more likely to be motivated and develop an interest in it.

Adapt the material to students' interests - as the material is prescribed by the curriculum, it is often impossible to modify it. It is sometimes difficult to allow students to participate in activities that interest or delight them. Given this, it is necessary to include in the class contents that will interest the students. It is useful for teachers to know what the students like because they can thus

add interesting things to the material to be learned. It is also useful to provide a choice of topics and ways to perform specific tasks.

Enriched the class with new content and diversity - to avoid the monotony of the lesson, it is advisable to enrich the lesson with new content. Sometimes it's good to watch a movie on a particular topic or at least some clip, demonstrate something, computer presentation. Besides, teachers can use different teaching motivational techniques: crossword puzzles, associations, quizzes, mental maps…

Feed Back - if students do well in the class, a teacher should be praised in a very well mannered, this can help him to try hard in the future. The behavior of teachers towards the students should be positive. If students have any type of problem, the teacher should help him. The positive ending of the lesson can motivate the students very well. During the class, the encouragement of the students is very necessary, it can help him to improve confidence in the students. Teachers can satisfy the curiosity of students. Create an environment in the class so that students feel easy, positively, and confidently. Discuss the behavior of the students not the personality of the students.

Activate students - students do not like to be passive listeners and it is important to allow them to participate. Teachers need to devise methods that involve the student's personal engagement. For example, students can create a poster, project, and learn through role-playing or simulation.

Organizing a differentiated approach to teaching. Different tasks by weight levels are set that relate to the same type of activity.

Helping students set their own goals - students will be more motivated if they set a learning goal for themselves, and more effort will be made to achieve it. In doing so - setting short-term, measurable, and specific goals can be very helpful.

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