

Motivational Strategies for Young Learners in Distance Education

Authors : Saziye Darendeli

Abstract : Motivation has a significant impact on a second/foreign language learning process, so it plays a vital role while achieving the learning goal. As it is defined by Simon (1967, p. 29), motivation is “a goal terminating mechanism, permitting goals to be processed serially.”According to Simon, if a learning goal is activated and enough attention is given, the learner starts learning. In connection with this view, the more attention is given on a subject, and the more activation takes place on it, the quicker learning will occur. Moreover, today almost every teacher is familiar with the term “distance education” regardless of their student's age group. As it is stated by Visser (2002), when compared to the traditional classrooms, in distance education, the rate and success of language learning decreases and one of the most essential reasons is that motivating students in distance education contexts, in which interaction is lower, is much more challenging than face-to-face training especially with young learners (Lim & Kim, 2003). Besides, there are limited numbers of studies conducted on motivational strategies for young learners in distance education contexts since we have been experiencing full time the online schooling process recently, yet online teaching seems to be permanent in our lives with the new technological era. Therefore, there appears to be a need for various strategies to motivate young learners in distance education, and the current study aims to find out the strategies that young learners’ teachers use to increase their students’ motivation level in distance education. To achieve this aim, a qualitative research approach and a phenomenological method with an interpretive design will be used. The participants, who are teachers of young learners, will be interviewed using a structured interview format consisting of 7 questions. As the participants are young learners’ teachers who have been experiencing teaching online, exploring the strategies that they use to increase their students’ motivation level will provide some suggestions about the motivational strategies for future online classes. Also, in this paper, I will move beyond the traditional classrooms that have face-to-face lessons and discuss the effective motivational strategies for young learners in distance education.

Keywords : motivation, distance education, young learners, strategies

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