STRIVING TO TEACH VERSUS MODERN REALIA

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ABSTRACT

*There have always been challenges confronting both teachers and students in the process of sharing knowledge and skills. The **purpose** of the article is to analyze the situation that has become even more demanding due to the changes connected with the implementation of distance learning.*

*Theoretical and methodological base of the research consists of an approach connected with the use of such **methods** as analysis, generalization and interpretation of the psychological theory of motivation and the concept of amotivation and its consequences; observation of the current educational situation with regard to its active participants.*

***Results** focus on modern realia, when the educational conditions have been greatly changed in connection with the pandemic situation, it is possible to notice decrease of motivation among the students. Students tend to miss classes as they believe that teaching can be ineffective, prefer not to answer during the lesson, take time in handing in their homework, fellow students influence their choice of being less diligent. Technical problems or inability to participate in an active way in the process of the lesson can really worsen the situation with the desire to get proper knowledge.*

***Conclusion**. That is why teaching big group of students and individual approach when conducting online lessons can be so challenging to teachers. It can lead to burning out while working and teacher wellbeing is also at risk, its great importance has been once again proven and highlighted.*

KEY WORDS: *Amotivation, Distant Learning, Motivation, University Students, Wellbeing.*

INTRODUCTION

Motivation has been in the center of attention for teachers for many years as it lies in the background of the teaching process. Teaching is a complex and dynamic activity and we can achieve the best results through motivation. A desire to learn is one of the most important elements of teaching and students make a very important step in gaining knowledge with the help of motivation.

Sometimes their desire and interest to learn may disappear that leads to appearing obstacles in the way of the effective learning of foreign languages. Pintrich (2003) in his work asked a very important question," What motivates students to achieve in the world of academia?"

Although motivation has been of so great importance, it is known that a great number of university students tend to lack the desire to advance academically (Snyder, & Hoffman, 2002). That is why it is essential to study thoroughly academic amotivation and why it is so common among the students nowadays.

Amotivation can be defined as a state when people cannot feel the connection between their behavior and its further outcome. (Deci, & Ryan, 1985), 2002). An amotivation state can be related to a state of helplessness while learning. (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

Amotivation is also connected with boredom and poor concentration during the lesson, inadequate psychological adaptation to university, getting more stress while studying (Baker, 2004). By means of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002) the desire to learn among students can be described as behavior through intrinsic (connected with enjoyment and interest), extrinsic motivation (instrumental motives) and amotivation (lack of motivation).

Intrinsic motivation comes with the wish to learn due to a particular interest in personal fulfillment, enjoyment and achieving a thorough knowledge of a subject.

Students possessing intrinsic motivation can eagerly participate in an activity thanks to a personal interest and inner pleasure (Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2005). Extrinsic motivation lies in the desire to perform and achieve a definite result. Students having extrinsic motivation tend to do a task as a means of achieving a goal, not as a goal in itself (Ormrod, 2011).

Thus, intrinsic behavior demonstrates better self-determination as it happens through free will and enjoyment, while extrinsic motivation can be described as fulfilling an activity for a reward. An extrinsically motivated student usually wants to get better marks, money or recognition that particular activities and achievement can bring.

It is important to note that extrinsic motivation is not always a bad thing. University students can very often become motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. (Cameron, & Pierce, 1994; Covington, 2000).

In general, self-determination is connected with different results, such as cognitive flexibility, conceptual understanding, and active information processing (Grolnick, & Ryan, 1987), better academic performance and self-esteem (Deci, & Vallerand, 1991).

Besides, less self-determined forms of extrinsic motivation can appear in connection with negative consequences, such as depression, narcissism, negative effects and physical symptoms. Amotivated students can neither foresee the results of their behavior nor the motives behind it.

They can feel disconnected from their actions and will have to make little or no effort at all.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Students can lack motivation for a variety of reasons. A great number of them can think that they do not possess abilities to perform a task, a belief they will not be able to maintain an effort required by a particular behavior or a belief they are helpless in achieving a necessary result (Pelletier, Dion, Tucson, & Green-Demers, 1999).

The environment plays a vital role in amotivation for four different reasons: (1) ability beliefs, (2) effort beliefs, (3) value placed on the task and (4) characteristics of the task. Ability beliefs lie in a belief or a disbelief of a student that he can successfully perform a task. If a person considers that he will not manage to complete a task efficiently, he is unlikely to achieve success.

In order to understand why some people have so little idea about their abilities, it is necessary to study the theory according to which it is expected to apply appropriate strategies for fulfilling the tasks as a part of self-efficacy expectancy concept. When students assess their academic abilities on a higher level, they are able to perform more ambitious tasks that is known as self-efficacy.

On the other hand, when the self-esteem is doubtful, it is obvious to expect failure as an outcome. It can be seen that students, who feel detached from the process of education, have little belief in their academic abilities. They ascribe their low achievement to their poor perceived capabilities (Wigfield, 1988). Low academic self-esteem of the students was determined as one of the main factors of academic motivation (Skinner, 1990).

Effort beliefs are connected with the idea that students do not believe that they can initiate or keep up the effort necessary for performing an obligatory task, in reality they are not sure of their abilities (Skinner et al., 1990).

This is also a belief, described by Pelletier et al. (1999) that students lack a desire and capabilities to invest the required energy or effort for achieving success. They can know about academic requirements quite well.

Despite being very often aware of their potential, they can still possess not enough academic motivation. Both belief in their abilities and their effort are important for successful performance in the field of education. Self-esteem is an essential element as students should believe that they have everything that is necessary for efficient work during the lesson.

There is an opinion that quite a number of students are not capable enough and they think that they will not be able to maintain the effort important for a successful completion of their studies. Eccles, Patrick and colleagues (1993) proved that academic detachment came as a result of the absence of abilities or the desire to make the necessary effort.

Value placed on the task is also of great importance as the consideration of values can help to predict behavior (Landy, & Becker, 1987). It was determined that amotivation is connected with the absence of value (Ryan, & Deci, 2000). When a task is not important for a student and does not come as an integral part of his life, it can often lead to a lack of motivation.

If there is no personal attachment to an activity, a student will not use his behavior to express himself. The activities, which do not correspond to self-expression, are difficult to maintain (Murdock, 1999).

Besides, academic amotivation can be characteristic of an activity that does not come as a means of expressing a personality or values.

Devaluation of a necessity to get education can lead to negative consequences that eventually end up in the motivation deficit. The students, who see their environment as a means of exchanging negative information about the value of education, are more inclined to have motivational problems. It is necessary to study values in order to fully understand academic behavior (Bigelow, & Zhou, 2001).

Characteristics of a task may contain such elements that can lead students to the lack of motivation. If the constituents of an activity neither attract nor stimulate students, they are more likely to disconnect.

When an activity is boring, routine, difficult or irrelevant, it can lead to the appearance of amotivation. If the above described characteristics predominate, the academic task will be likely seen as unappealing and academic disengagement will continue to grow.

The four aspects of amotivation: ability beliefs, effort beliefs, characteristics of the task and value placed on the task are described as four common cores closely connected with each other. Amotivation has been presented by SDT as a feeling of alienation and helplessness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). From a conceptual point of view all the four subtypes of amotivation should be positively combined with undesirable consequences and start negatively with positive. As soon as reciprocal connection is removed, accessible creative associations begin to show.

For instance, a negative belief in one's abilities can lead to poor performance, low academic self-esteem and greater desire to leave university. Poor effort belief is a highly attributed educational achievement. However, less effort might be linked to undesirable academic behavior: little or no time is spent on doing homework, missed classes or being often late. Moreover, behavior problems can appear due to lack of motivation connected with the task characteristics.

It is a common fact that uninteresting homework may create avoidance features. Values add importance to a complicated or demanding activity. Devaluing studies and homework is the third feature that leads to undesirable academic behavior. Students very often feel isolated and disconnected as there might be not enough social support from university, parents or society.

Academic amotivation is a complex phenomenon because its borders go beyond the system of education into a broader social context, in which students are classified economically and socially as being placed in within social strata. In the world of education academic attitudes and performance are influenced by important social agents in the environment and experience of the students, in particular, by teachers, parents or peers.

Self-determination is increased then a lot because people feel free to act out of unrestricted free choice. Teachers, parents and peers usually support students' sense of freedom by optimizing their abilities to be creative and unique. There exist a great number of studies, proving the assumption that students' motivation benefits when teachers encourage their independence (Hamm, & Reeve, 2002).

In the current educational situation, being greatly challenged by the necessity of implementing distance learning, teachers need to make all the effort in order to keep up the motivation of their students,

supporting them in every possible way and seeing online education as an advantage to promote new ways of teaching.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the situation that has become even more demanding due to the changes connected with the implementation of distance learning.

METHODOLOGY

Thus, the given study is devoted to analyzing the lack of motivation. The methods of analysis, generalization and interpretation of the psychological theory of motivation and the concept of a motivation and its consequences were used. In the first place, it was examined the reasons why students may demonstrate disinterest while learning foreign languages.

Then, the ways of improving motivation of the students, unwilling to actively engage in the educational process, have been highlighted. The data were collected by means of lesson observation for teachers and students. Also, important issues of teachers' wellbeing have been analyzed, defined and given thorough consideration.

RESULTS

Motivating university students is quite a difficult task and a rewarding one at the same time when teachers can engage their students in the right way. Students can already think on their own and are ready to achieve great success. They can organize ideas in a more abstract and analytical way. They doubt commonly excepted views, values and beliefs. Their intellectual growth can be constantly seen and differences in teaching styles are becoming more obvious.

Why is motivation still missing in the classroom then and what factors should be taken into account to motivate students to succeed while studying? In the first place, it

is necessary to mention the role of social support as the attitude towards learning and the corresponding behavior are greatly influenced by the key social agents in the student's environment, whether these are teachers, parents, or friends. Their influence can be described with a cognitive evaluation theory (CET; Deci, & Ryan 2002).

The main principal of this theory lies in the thought that the social environment, encouraging autonomy, competence and relatedness, will lead to developing inner motivation (Deci, & Ryan, 1985; Deci, & Ryan, 2002).

Besides, supporting autonomy can be of immediate interest as self-determination grows when a student feels he can perform out of free choice. Autonomy support takes into account the importance of structure and guidance, emphasizing the advantages of giving students freedom, willingness, and responsibility for themselves.

Competence support can also be added as an important source of motivation. The art of efficient information delivery is essential to pedagogy, so a student is sure to get interested in receiving useful information, enabling him to apply the acquired knowledge.

A lot of university students do not have the desire to perform academic tasks. They often feel detached from their activities and it can lead to the absence of motivation to complete their tasks. They can also feel bored in the classroom because they feel out of place. Moreover, as these students may possess not enough academic background knowledge, they tend to stay behind with every coming year.

Currently, the situation with learning can really worsen due to the necessity to get knowledge on a distant basis as some students might claim that such lessons seem

to be ineffective. They tend to find excuses not to answer during lessons, explaining that by having technical difficulties. Being influenced by their fellow students, they sometimes do not participate in online lessons at all.

Due to the economic situation in Ukraine, there is a tendency to having bigger groups of students. Due to this, it is not always technically possible to check on everyone's involvement, thus some students might feel they are left behind. Young people may lack proper equipment or opportunities to participate in online lessons or take part with worse results.

Besides, students belonging to less affluent families or living in remote places with no mobile network can feel neglected because of the cost of digital devices, data plans, or network connectivity. All this leads to the broadening of the digital divide.

Students can also start lacking self-organization as to handing in their homework on time. A tendency to procrastinate and do greater chunks of work later can lead to emotional or physical burnout. The same can also be said about teachers, who are sometimes eager to get too much carried away with their work to achieve better results in every sphere of the educational process and feel extremely tired.

Effective online teaching can often require more time to plan and more effort to involve than teaching similar material in class. Conducting online lessons for a group of students, consisting of a great number of people, calls for strict discipline and much energy.

Teachers influence motivation of their students in a great way. Behavior and teaching style, the structure of a course, nature of the assignment and informal interaction with students influence their motivation to a particular extend.

While having online lessons, it is really important to use individual approach as much as possible, shift students from consumers to producers of content and make sharing as easy as possible.

We need to build activities that encourage students to co-create and peer review, make use of the exercises that can help them to analyze their own ideas and learn from each other. Being at a distance, students are not on their own and have possibilities to have formal and informal contacts.

On a teacher's part it means the necessity to encourage cooperation by means of group assignments or by peer-teaching and peer-assessment. Nowadays cooperation may also help to reach a stable personal balance.

In the situation with learning through digital means, the teacher's role is challenging. Besides teaching online, they also have to support students to complete assessments and tests. Students need to feel that all their concerns have been attended to and the process of learning has not in the least been changed, it is performed on a professional level and they have every opportunity for their motivation to grow.

Being confronted with so many educational challenges, teachers might find themselves on a verge of a burnout. They can experience different situations that add up to stress, lack of time, necessity to see to so many everyday aspects in order to conduct their classes successfully.

Nevertheless, teachers can make a number of small changes, which will lead to other important changes, including creating a more positive environment for university students. That is why it is important to perform tasks and continue with the current term without experiencing burnout.

It is possible to divide the task into smaller, more manageable parts and have regular breaks that can help both teachers and students to work more efficiently, improve productivity and creativity. It is also a good idea to plan periods of rest and relaxation during the day. Returning to a task later, after some break, may very often help us to perform it much faster.

Teachers can set themselves boundaries, stop their activities at a required hour, try and divert their attention from pressure, thus becoming more energetic and positive by the time they come back to their to-do list.

Despite all the difficulties of these times, the pandemic has given teachers the chance to improve their digital skills, opportunities to think more creatively about their lesson delivery and collaborate with colleagues.

Such a positive outlook can be a collective social good, facilitate openness and, in its turn, better connection among colleagues, emotional recognition and support. It is highly important for a teacher to keep on being happy and healthy in order to provide knowledge on a desired level.

We all can come together and adjust workloads, develop new and improved ways of working and take advantage of modern technologies. Teachers are sure to look at the current situation as a plus point and do their best to implement new ways of delivery knowledge to their students, raising their motivation and giving every opportunity to improve their skills while learning.

DISCUSSION

In the process of delivering knowledge active participation and interaction of both students and teachers is of great importance. Despite the current situation, the educational process has not been interrupted but at the same time has moved onto a new level. With the help of modern technologies, it is possible to conduct lessons in different ways, paying as much attention as possible to the involvement of every student in the classroom activities. As Carr-Chellman and Duchastel (2000) pointed out (p. 233), 'the essence of an online course is the organization of learning activities that enable the student to reach certain learning outcomes.'

At the same time students started lacking enthusiasm in attending lessons, performing tasks, doing their homework. Teachers have to do their best in making sure that the lessons are conducted on a high level and the students are happy to participate and gain knowledge. 'What we should be talking about is effective, efficient and enjoyable learning that is facilitated and/or enhanced by the technologies available to the teacher, the learner and the school' (Kirschner, 2015, p. 313).

The load of work on teachers can be sometimes overwhelming, still, looking back, they can be really proud of their success and opportunity to move on a higher professional level and the ability, despite all the challenges and difficulties, to motivate their students to participate actively in online lessons, discuss the necessary material, timely hand in their homework and have a great desire to improve knowledge, grades, social and interpersonal skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The research has shown that a great deal of motivation comes from good everyday teaching practices. It also goes back to suitability, relationship and steadiness to motivate students. The discussed information should be relevant to the educational situation, thus raise awareness,

importance of attending lessons and achieving results.

Another great technique is positive thinking. Students should take time to think about the great outcome they will get in the future. For instance, when they are stressed about all the homework they have at the moment, they may think about graduation and future jobs they can get, making use of all the knowledge they have received.

One way of positive thinking can be identifying the reasons of stressing out and ways the situation can be solved, when we do this, it calms the stress we feel and gives a greater ability to want to work.

Another good idea is to create lists of what needs to be done and make a plan throughout the week of how much work to do each day. In this way both teachers and students will be able to avoid undesirable situations and make the process of the knowledge exchange a pleasant, important and unforgettable experience.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS
The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

ВЕЛИКЕ БАЖАННЯ НАВЧАТИ, НЕЗВАЖАЮЧИ НА СУЧАСНІ РЕАЛІЇ

*Проблеми, що стоять перед викладачами та студентами в процесі обміну знаннями та вміннями, завжди існували. **Метою** статті є аналіз ситуації, яка стала ще більш вимогливою через зміни, пов'язані із впровадженням дистанційного навчання.*

*Теоретико-методологічну базу дослідження складає підхід, пов'язаний із використанням таких **методів**, як аналіз, узагальнення та інтерпретація психологічної теорії мотивації та поняття мотивації та її наслідків; спостереження за сучасною освітньою ситуацією щодо її активних учасників.*

***Результати** орієнтовані на сучасні реалії, коли умови навчання значно змінилися у зв'язку з пандемічною ситуацією; можна помітити зниження мотивації студентів. Студенти, як правило, пропускають заняття, оскільки вважають, що викладання може бути неефективним, вважають за краще не відповідати під час заняття, не витрачати час на виконання домашнього завдання, інші студенти впливають на їх вибір бути менш старанними. Технічні проблеми або неможливість брати активну участь у процесі заняття дійсно можуть погіршити ситуацію з бажанням отримати належні знання.*

***Висновок**. Навчання великої групи студентів та індивідуальний підхід при проведенні онлайн-занять може бути складним і для викладачів. Це може призвести до вигоряння під час роботи, а психофізичний стан викладачів*

також може бути серйозним випробуванням, його велике значення було ще раз доведено та підкреслено.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: *відсутність мотивації, дистанційне навчання, мотивація, психофізичний стан, студенти університету.*