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## Book Review

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RENANDYA, Willy A.

*Motivation in the Language Classroom*

(Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press, 2014), 44 pp. ISBN 978-1942223375 (Pbk). 12.95 \$ US.

**Reviewed by:** Stephen J. Hall, Sunway University, Malaysia.

Motivation is an important, yet often challenging, factor in effective language teaching and learning. The defining and processes of fostering motivation are presented in a jargon free approach in this concise teacher-friendly guide. The tone for this slim volume is set by the preface to this part of TESOL's English Language Teacher Development Series, edited by Thomas Farrell. As stated, this guide and others in the user-friendly series are designed for pre-service or in-service teacher education. The titles employ Reflective Breaks which aim to stimulate thinking. In *Motivation in the Language Classroom* these stimulus tasks include *wh* questions, open questions, listing tasks, a short quiz and more direct reflection tasks. Some of the Reflective Breaks provide frameworks which could be adapted from the teacher focus to learner use in classrooms.

When defining motivation, the author weighs his view and the judiciously chosen research towards that of many researchers who see motivation as a dynamic, rather than fixed construct. He describes the common complaint which many of us have observed with some teacher fronted approaches, which may be based on the view that students' motivation is a fixed determiner of learning. While students' inner motivation is important and is described simply in the early parts of the book, the basic premise is clearly that motivation is a fluid, dynamic situation (Dornyei, 2001). There would be little point in producing a guide such as this without acknowledging the important role of a reflective approach to the teachers' role in the midst of the fluidity of classroom dynamics.

A neat mnemonic system is employed in a reduction of the complexity of the inner workings of motivation and related behaviours to a formula of 5 Ts (Renandya, 2013). By using this framework, the target readership of teachers is put front and centre with Teacher, Teaching Methodology, Text, Task and Test. The assertion that 'good teaching can often lead to high student motivation' (p. 9), underpins Chapters 3 and 4 on the Teacher and Teaching Methodology. The principles are simply stated and an analysis of the references shows that contemporary research has been accounted for. Teacher educators using this part of the book may need to build further on the broad reflective questions on teacher qualities while the appropriate references woven into the text could lead the reader to other aspects, should she or he wish to explore more.

The development of intrinsic motivation is an area which challenges many, yet the author has bridged aspects of the difficult to pin down approaches to techniques in a useful reflective quiz on pages 15–16. Teaching Methodology in Chapter 4 has good guidance for novice teachers, while the section on keeping students' motivation high could have benefited from further examples at the technique level.

Text difficulty is an important part of motivation and rather than plunge into the esoteric aspects of discourse analysis and genre, the reader is presented with a digestible approach to the interplay of language and content. The author's interest in extensive reading and materials which are not the usual safe and sound soporific texts, so beloved of government textbook panels, is evident in the descriptions of affective factors. A brief table of common techniques for adapting material concludes the Text section. The Tasks section again suggests the importance of challenge in language learning, as well as healthy competition and a sense of curiosity. The latter aspect of not answering all of the learners' questions and providing the unusual, odd or bizarre may be a motivational area which is in need of further description and research elsewhere, as this aspect of content choice and task design may increase intrinsic motivation, especially amongst young adults.

Tests are a part of language learning and teaching everywhere while high stakes gate-keeping tests motivate many learners as transnational education grows in importance (Solorzano, 2008). However, the brief chapter on Tests focuses on alternative assessment after arguing that examinations can be demotivating, rather than addressing the harnessing of existing dominant testing processes which may be extrinsically motivating. The overview of alternative assessment is followed by a conclusion which describes practical suggestions which would benefit both novice and experienced teachers. The reflective basis of these suggestions is grounded in research and they are a very practical conclusion to a useful guide to motivation in language classrooms.

## References

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