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Michael Tolman Smith

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The Dissertation Committee for Michael Tolman Smith
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Exploring English as a Second Language Teachers' Beliefs about Motivation

Committee:

Elaine K. Horwitz, Supervisor

Diane L. Schallert

Gary R. McKenzie

Marilla Svinicki

Erika Patall

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by

Michael Tolman Smith, B.A., M.A. certificate, M.A.

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Dedication

To my children - Ammon, Aaron, Jacob, MaryKate, and Thomas.
and most especially to my wife, Shawna:

Five bundles of joy –

Six, eight, ten, fifteen, seventeen

Part you and part me

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Exploring English as a Second Language Teachers' Beliefs about Motivation

Michael Tolman Smith, Ph. D.

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Supervisor: Elaine K. Horwitz

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' beliefs about motivation are important but underexplored. Because research on human beliefs indicates that existing beliefs are the filters for new information, a better understanding of teacher beliefs about motivation is necessary in order to provide training on effective motivation strategies for ESL teachers.

In order to investigate the beliefs and perspectives of ESL teachers on motivation, 11 teachers at a university intensive English program, from a pool of 32, volunteered to participate in a self-reporting, open-ended interview to share their thoughts and beliefs about motivation. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, divided into comments, and grouped into categories. The transcripts and their coding were checked and approved by each of the participating teachers in the study. The teacher comments were organized around 9 categories of beliefs about motivation.

Results of the data analysis indicated that ESL teachers have both specific and varied beliefs about the nature of motivation, and those beliefs correlate consistently with their classroom strategies for motivating students. As a result, teacher training that focuses on motivation strategies without understanding teachers underlying beliefs about the nature of motivation may not be successful. The findings also indicated that the 9 common strategies for motivation (shared by 6 or more teachers) were generally represented in practical guides for motivation which were based on both language learning and general constructs. In addition, as a group, these teachers demonstrated a breadth and depth of beliefs about motivation that could be used as a resource for filling any gaps in individual teacher's knowledge or beliefs about motivation. Furthermore, these teachers identified group dynamics, student-teacher and student-student interactions, as the most important single factor effecting student motivation. Therefore, any theory of language learning motivation must be able to account for or explain classroom social variables and their effects on motivation. Finally, the ESL teachers' recollections of the origins of their beliefs focused on early life, language student, and language teaching experiences, which hints that any effective teacher training on motivation should be experiential in nature, whether through language learning, classroom observation, or practice teaching.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Rationale.....	1
The Scope of this Study: Motivation.....	3
This Study’s Approach.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	10
Teacher Beliefs	10
Beliefs about Language Learning and Motivation.....	12
Motivation	13
General Theories/Constructs.....	13
Language Learning Theories/Constructs.....	23
Teacher Beliefs about Language Learning and Motivation.....	30
Chapter 3: Methods.....	33
Researcher Biography.....	33
Context.....	37
Participants.....	38
Pool.....	38
Selection	40
Methodological Approach.....	41
Data.....	43

Collection.....	43
Accuracy	44
Analysis.....	44
Presentation and Discussion	51
Chapter 4: Results/Discussion.....	53
Nine Motivation Belief Categories.....	53
Category 1: Personal definitions of motivation.....	55
Category 2: The motivated teacher.....	59
Category 3: The motivated student	62
Category 4: The motivated class	67
Category 5: Teacher impact on/responsibility for motivation.....	73
Category 6: Lesson planning and motivation.....	76
Category 7: Factors that negatively impact motivation.....	81
Category 8: Strategies for motivating students.....	88
Connections.....	88
Teaching Techniques.....	93
Category 9: Origins of beliefs about motivation	103
Four Teacher Portraits	109
Chapter 5: Discussion/Conclusions.....	126
Findings.....	127
Definitions of motivation	129
Beliefs about motivation/strategies for motivating students.....	132

Origins of teacher beliefs	139
Theoretical Implications	140
Teacher Training Implications	143
Limitations	149
Future Research.....	152
Bibliography.....	154
Vita	166

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Studies that highlight social or contextual variables in motivation....	23
Table 3.1 - Participant summary	40
Table 3.2 - Excerpt with comments identified.....	46
Table 3.3 - Transcript with comments marked by category - one comment with two categories.....	48
Table 3.4 - Example of a Comment added to another category.....	50
Table 4.1 - Category 1 - Personal definitions of motivation	59
Table 4.2 - Category 2 - The motivated teacher	62
Table 4.3 - Category 3 - The motivated student.....	67
Table 4.4 - Category 4 - The motivated class.....	72
Table 4.5 - Category 5 - Teacher impact on/responsibility for motivation	76
Table 4.6 - Category 6 - Lesson planning and motivation	81
Table 4.7 - Category 7 - Factors that negatively impact motivation	87
Table 4.8 - Category 8 - Strategies for motivating students	98
Table 4.9 - Category 9 - Origins of beliefs about motivation.....	109

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Purpose of the study

While language learning research has established the importance of motivation to successful language learning (Oxford , 1999; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Gardner, (1985), and most language teaching methodologies recognize the importance of the teacher in encouraging learner motivation (Spolsky, 2000; Dornyei, 2001), language teacher beliefs and perceptions of motivation have been underexplored. It is essential to understand teachers' approaches to motivation in order to better comprehend the practices that language teachers employ to motivate their students and the ultimate success of those practices. The present study examines the self-reported beliefs and perspectives of English as a second language (ESL) instructors about **what** motivation is, **how** they as language teachers approach motivation in their lesson planning and teaching, and **where** their beliefs related to motivation originated.

Rationale

At the end of this first decade of the new millennium, the demand for foreign/second language classroom instruction continues to grow. Two studies documenting the popularity of language learning in the UK and the United States reported an 8% increase in the number of students studying a foreign language in high school (Curtis 2005; SFVB 2006). In addition, the annual *Open Doors* report of

international students in the US reveals that international student enrollment at US universities is at an all-time high of over 670,000, with enrollment in intensive English programs up 7% over the last 5 years (*Open Doors* 2009). The increase in the popularity of English abroad is enormous as well. One study estimates that “the massive increase in the number of people learning **English** is likely to reach a peak of around 2 billion in the next 10–15 years, with a significant increase coming from Chinese students, estimated now at around 250 million English learners, increasing at about 20 million per year” (Graddol 2006). The increase in the popularity of foreign language study, including English as a second language, has left many language schools and academic departments with the challenge of training an increasing number of foreign/second language teachers.

Compounding the challenge of having more teachers to train is the growing volume of research on effective teaching, especially language teaching. For many language teacher trainers it is all that they can do to keep up with the new research themselves, let alone convey to potential language teachers the new methods, approaches, techniques, and special qualities necessary to teach another language successfully. At the same time, language teacher trainers must recognize that neither new nor veteran teachers are blank slates or empty vessels. Potential and current language teachers already possess knowledge and beliefs about many issues related to language teaching and learning before they ever enroll in their first teaching methods course or participate in professional development activities.

Language teachers' existing beliefs must be acknowledged by teacher trainers especially because general research on human beliefs has revealed that beliefs are well established early on, become filters for new information, and are very difficult to change (Klein 2004). In addition, several studies have concluded that most teacher behaviors find their origins in their personal beliefs (Pajares 1992; Calderhead 1996; Fang 1996). In other words, by the time new teachers, let alone practicing professionals, receive formal training for teaching a language, they have already established beliefs that are probably difficult to change and that may act as filters for new information. Furthermore, if language teachers' existing beliefs remain unchanged, those original beliefs, rather than any new training they receive, may become the basis for what they choose to do in their language classrooms.

The scope of this study - Motivation

Exploring all teacher beliefs about teaching a language is of course beyond the scope of a single study. As a result, the present study will examine language teachers' beliefs related to one particularly important aspect of teaching: Motivation. Several studies have noted that many teachers, including those in foreign language classes, have indicated that one of their most important roles is that of motivating students. At the same time, teachers have identified motivating students as one of the areas most in need of improvement in their own teaching. In fact, the many teachers have recommended that training on motivating students should receive the highest priority from in-service and pre-service programs

(Cardelle-Elawar & Nevin, 2003; Tumposky, 2003; Williams & Stockdale, 2004). The importance of motivation in language learning should come as no surprise. In his immensely popular book, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, Brown (2007) advises language teachers of the following about motivation: “Undoubtedly the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of any complex task, motivation is a star player in the cast of characters assigned to second language learning scenarios around the world”. He goes on to remind language teachers of the importance of understanding “**what** motivation is” and **how** to “create, foster, and maintain motivation” (p.168; bold added).

Research on motivation in general and specifically in language learning has revealed much about the **what** and **how** to which Brown refers. The details of that research will be presented in Chapter 2, but a brief history is provided here. From the perspective of general psychology, the early behaviourist theories of motivation, which focused on habit formation as a response to stimuli, especially the anticipation of a reward, were incorporated and expanded in Maslow’s (1970) “Hierarchy of Needs.” Maslow proposed that humans possessed 5 basic needs that provided the motivation for behavior. As lower needs were met, individuals could progress to the fulfillment of higher needs, ending with what he called self-actualization. Later research on motivation in psychology emerged from what is commonly referred to as the *cognitive approach*. Rather than concentrate on needs and behaviors, this approach to motivation focused on the processes that take place in the mind of the learner. The cognitive orientation led to a variety of models and

constructs within motivation that have helped clarify the understanding of what motivation is and how it works. Some of the main motivation theories and motivational constructs that emerged from the cognitive perspective include Achievement motivation (Atkinson & Raynor 1974), Expectancy-value theories (summarized by Brophy 1999; Eccles & Wigfield 1995), Self-determination (Deci & Ryan 1985; Vallerand 1997), Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1988), Goal-setting (Locke & Latham 1990), Goal-orientation (Ames 1992), Attribution theory (Weiner 1992), Self-efficacy (Bandura 1997), Social motivation (Weiner 1994; Wentzel 1999), and Self-worth theory (Covington 1998). Again, each of these theories makes its' own case for motivation as a result of what happens as learners assess a learning situation in their minds and then make decisions. An added aspect to research on motivation in psychology has emerged from a *socio-constructivist* view of learning. This view includes what occurs in an individual's mind, taken from cognitive approaches to motivation, but it emphasizes the influence of the social and cultural context on the mind's processes in an individual or group.

Within the specific field of language learning, there also exists a robust body of research on the construct of motivation, which does not entirely parallel the work on motivation in general psychology. The exploration of the role of motivation in language learning is generally attributed to the pioneering work of Gardner and Lambert (1972). Their original work grew out of a social-psychological approach to learning, which recognized that the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals are influenced by other people. This approach has many similarities to socio-

constructivism, but emerged much earlier. Gardner and Lambert recognized that in addition to language aptitude, a person's success in learning a specific second language was impacted by factors related to a learner's attitudes towards the people or community who spoke that language. Their most well known groups of attitudes formed around what they called *instrumental* and *integrative orientations*. The *instrumental* orientation focused on practical or pragmatic reasons for learning a language, such as getting a job or going to school. Learners with an *integrative* orientation, on the other hand, wanted to learn a language so that they could get to know and associate with the culture and people who spoke that language. Initially, Gardner and Lambert proposed that an integrative orientation was more beneficial than an instrumental one in language learning, but subsequent research revealed that both orientations could be helpful or disadvantageous depending on *motivational intensity*, a component of the model that emerged later (Gardner, 1985). Most of the early research on language learning motivation grew out of this socio-educational model of learning. In fact, as early as 1988, Au identified more than 40 studies that had utilized the Gardner and Lambert model to explore the construct of motivation in language learning

Despite the importance and popularity of the socio-educational model, language education researchers recognized its limitations. In a 1991 article in *Language Learning*, Crookes & Schmidt called for a new look at the construct of motivation that would advance language-learning motivation research beyond Gardner and Lambert. Specifically, he asked for models that would have more practical

applications in the language classroom and that would incorporate more of the findings on motivation from the perspective of cognitive psychology. After the article appeared, other frameworks of motivation specific to language learning emerged to meet Schmidt's challenge (e.g. Dornyei, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997). Among those who responded to Schmidt was Gardner himself. With Tremblay, Gardner (1995) added the cognitive motivational constructs of *Value*, *Self Efficacy*, and *Goals* to his original model. In reality, since the late 1990's, many practical approaches to language learning motivation, which have also integrated other constructs of motivation from cognitive psychology, have provided a wealth of models and techniques for language teacher trainers to pass on to language teachers for use in the classroom.

However, as mentioned earlier, the volume of research and classroom applications can be paralyzing for teachers and their trainers. One of the most influential researchers in language learning motivation in recent years is Zoltan Dornyei. An example of his early attempts to enumerate motivational strategies for language teachers was his 1994 article *Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom*. He later said of the more than 100 suggestions he provided, "This is, admittedly, rather overwhelming and difficult for the average classroom practitioner to manage" (p. 208). Dornyei's (1996) solution was the *Ten commandments for motivating language learners*. His reduced advice was based on the results of the most common responses to a survey on motivation given informally to a group of international teachers in a training course. In 1998 he

published a revised version of his strategies, *Ten commandments for motivating language learners: an empirical study*, with Cizér. These commandments were based on a more formal survey administered to 200 English teachers in Hungary. The two “ten commandment” studies were pre-cursors to *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom* (Dornyei, 2007), in which Dornyei provides language teachers with not ten, but a list of 138 specific motivational teaching techniques organized under 35 different motivational categories. Overwhelming indeed.

This study’s approach

Rather than attempt to reveal new motivational teaching techniques, the present study hopes to explore teachers’ beliefs about motivation. An exploration of individual teacher beliefs about motivation may reveal the connections teachers make between their teaching practices and motivation that have not been previously identified. In addition, a thorough understanding of what a representative group of language teachers believe about motivation could guide a teacher trainer in tailoring specific instruction on motivation in the language classroom. The purpose of the present study is to add a detailed, qualitative exploration of teacher beliefs on motivation to the language learning motivation literature. The following general questions guided the development of this study:

- 1) How do ESL teachers define motivation? What are their beliefs about the nature of motivation?

- 2) What do ESL teachers believe about motivation in ESL classroom settings? What do they say that they do to motivate their students?
- 3) How do ESL teachers report that they acquired their beliefs about motivation in general and more specifically, motivating in the ESL classroom?
- 4) How do ESL teachers' beliefs about motivation compare to each other?

Before describing the methods used to answer these questions in this study, in the next chapter I will review relevant studies in order to reveal the kinds of beliefs teacher might possess related to motivation. In addition, I will offer a summary of research related to teacher beliefs in order to better understand the nature of human beliefs and belief systems.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Because this study hopes to explore and describe language teachers' beliefs about motivation, both the literature on teacher beliefs and motivation for language learning must be explored in the review. The purpose of the initial review of the literature on beliefs is to identify general themes and principles related to the nature of human beliefs, and a secondary review focuses more specifically on beliefs in the context of language learning. Following the presentation of the literature on beliefs, a review of the literature on motivation that may be relevant to the present study is provided. One of the primary purposes of the review of literature on motivation is to present a variety of the major conceptualizations of motivation and theories of motivation that one might encounter in the beliefs of a group of language teachers. In order to frame the current study within the pertinent literature, the major findings and constructs in motivation will be reviewed in two parts: general constructs of motivation, mostly from within the framework of psychology, and language learning perspectives on motivation. Finally, I will review several recent studies on language learning motivation and teacher beliefs that helped inform the design of the current study.

Teacher beliefs

Given that teachers play an important role in the classroom, and that they formulate personal beliefs about that role, it would make sense to explore those

beliefs. Just as the study of motivation is not new, the study of teacher beliefs is well established. There are several decades of research on teachers' thought processes and beliefs related to teaching and learning. In the 1990s, three extensive reviews of the literature on teacher beliefs were conducted by Pajares (1992), Calderhead (1996), and Fang (1996). From those reviews, seven main findings can be summarized:

1. teacher beliefs form early, are well established on entering college, and tend to self-perpetuate;
2. an individual's belief system houses all the beliefs acquired through enculturation;
3. knowledge and beliefs are "inextricable intertwined" (Pajares, 1992 p. 325) but beliefs are filters through which new information is interpreted;
4. belief structures must be understood in terms of connections to all beliefs in the system;
5. individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behavior;
6. beliefs must be inferred from belief statements, intentions to behave, or actual behavior; and
7. belief change – if it happens – occurs slowly and rarely during adulthood.

These conclusions hold serious implications for language teaching and teacher education, and they offer concrete guidelines for research on teacher beliefs. If there is a strong connection between belief systems and behavior, as suggested by the literature, then it would be important to explore teacher beliefs in order to

understand both the “what” and the “why” of specific classroom practices. Furthermore, if beliefs are difficult to change, are well established early on, and become the “filters” for new information, they must be understood in order to have any hope of training new teachers or conducting professional development for seasoned veterans. Given the importance and implications of these findings, one would guess that beliefs have already been a topic of research in language learning as well. Indeed, this is the case.

Teacher Beliefs and Language Learning

Arguably, the most used instrument to explore beliefs in language learning, amongst learners and teachers, is the BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory). This instrument was originally created by Horwitz and now has three versions. The main three versions are for ESL students (1984, 1987), for foreign language teachers (1985), and for foreign language students (1988, 1990). Many studies have used these measures to explore beliefs about language learning, and use of these instruments continues to be a standard for language learning belief studies today. In its early form, the BALLI did not include any “themes” related to motivation. Later, however, “Motivation and expectations” were added. Although many of the statements in the BALLI actually touch on aspects of motivation theories (expectancy, value, strategies), specific beliefs about motivation are not directly treated.

There are other studies that address the general topic of student beliefs and language learning which do not implement versions of the BALLI to collect their data. Three such studies, which are related specifically to language learning and teacher beliefs, are Robinson (1981); Byram, Esarte-Sarries & Taylor (1991); and Ryan (1994). These were conducted in Australia, England, and Mexico respectively. The design of these studies was similar to many of the BALLI studies where the teachers were asked to respond to a survey on a range pre-determined belief statements, and their responses were tabulated, correlated, and reported. The majority of the beliefs explored in these studies were related to culture and language learning. Neither teachers' or students' beliefs about motivation in language learning settings were not treated.

General Theories of Motivation

In order to understand language teacher beliefs about motivation, a review of literature on general theories as well as those specific to language learning is necessary. General theories of motivation include the constructs of motivation that emerged from early learning theories, psychologists, and educational psychologists. This review follows the evolution of how motivation has been viewed over the decades beginning with drive and behaviorist approaches and continuing with cognitive and socio-cognitive approaches. The purpose of this review is to identify the kinds of knowledge about motivation that might emerge in the reported beliefs of a group of language teachers.

In the first half of the 1900s, drive theories attempted to explain a wide variety of behavior, including learning. These theories viewed motivation from the standpoint that individuals have innate physiological needs, and when these needs were not met, tensions emerged. The way to reduce the tension was to fulfill the need and return to a state of relaxation or homeostasis. These theories expanded to include psychological needs as well. Psychological tension became known as “cognitive dissonance” (Festinger, 1957). The physiological and psychological tensions were some of the first descriptions of the construct of motivation and led to later behaviorist explanations for motivation. Although drive theories do not describe many of the variables in learning recognized today, the principles on which they are based still seem to have some explanatory power in language learning and might reasonably be found in language teacher beliefs about motivation. For example, if learning a certain foreign language is key to economic success, which will provide food, shelter, and clothing for an individual, then there is a connection between learning a language and fulfilling basic physiological needs. In addition, if an individual has frequent contact with individuals who speak a language that is different from their own, it limits their ability to communicate, be understood, and interact socially. Such limitations could in turn cause psychological tension that could provide motivation to learn another language. In other words, drive theories, though incomplete, could easily have implications for language learning and might be found in language teacher beliefs about motivation.

Behaviorist Theories

Behaviorism claims, amongst other things, that “behavior can be described and explained without making reference to mental events or to internal psychological processes. The sources of behavior are external (in the environment), not internal (in the mind) (Sellers, 1963; p. 22). Early research by Hull (1943), shows how drive theorists began to move towards behaviors as a key to psychology and motivation. Although there are many who conducted research based on the principles of behaviorism, Pavlov and Skinner are the two names most commonly recognized. Pavlov’s (1927) research with dogs revealed the phenomenon of “classical conditioning” which involved an *unconditioned stimulus*, which produces an innate automatic response, and a *conditioned stimulus*, which was initially unrelated to the unconditioned stimulus and which did not produce any kind of reflexive behavior. Pavlov found that if he paired the unconditioned and conditioned stimulus enough times that the conditioned stimulus could soon produce the same response as the unconditioned stimulus.

Skinner’s (1957) behaviorism is relevant to the present study because his is often associated with verbal behaviors, the title of his well-known 1957 publication. According to Skinner, verbal behavior is the result of three variables: a stimulus, a response, and a reinforcement. Positive reinforcement to responses would produce the same response to stimuli over time; whereas negative reinforcement would result in avoidance of the response. This simple hypothesis has implications for many areas of learning, but especially so for language teaching and beliefs about

motivation. For example, according to this theory, if language students say something correctly and receive a reward (candy, grade, praise, etc.), they are more likely to produce same correct utterance again in the future. On the other hand, if they produce an incorrect utterance and do not receive a reward or, better yet, are punished (red marks on essay, low grade, embarrassed in front of class), they should be less likely to produce the same mistake again. Stimulus and reinforcement are two terms that became common in early motivation constructs. As a result, it is reasonable to expect some of these principles to surface amongst teacher beliefs on language learning motivation.

During this time period, A. H. Maslow, who was influenced by both drive theories and behaviorist psychology, formulated his now famous hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943; 1954). The basic premise of his hierarchy was that all needs are not created equal; some needs seemed to consistently take precedence over other needs. On the bottom of his hierarchy pyramid are the *deficit needs* (psychological, safety, belonging, and esteem), and these needs culminate with *being needs* (self-actualization). From this perspective, there are many implications for motivation in language learning. Language learning could contribute to fulfillment of all of the needs in the hierarchy. On the other hand, if deficit needs are not met, they might impede language learning. It will be important to see if Maslow's hierarchy is found in the motivation beliefs of a group of language teachers.

Cognitive Theories

Drive and behaviorist theories eventually gave way to cognitive psychology, and the cognitive orientation led to an explosion of research on motivation. Cognitive psychology has roots that go back as far as Jean Piaget, but it was Ulric Neisser (1967) who is credited with the term “cognitive psychology.” Basically, cognitive psychology investigates internal mental processes, as opposed to observed behaviors. The cognitive approach doesn’t ignore behavior; it just focuses much more on the processes of the mind that produce the behavior, and since much of motivation seems to reside in the mind of the individual, this approach created a lot of explanatory power for motivation.

One of the early cognitive motivation theories was the Achievement Motivation Theory proposed by Atkinson (1974). He originally proposed that motivation was determined by *expectancy for success* and *incentive values*. He later added *need for achievement* as a contributor. These three variables interact in the mind of individuals to help determine whether or not they would engage in and be successful at a learning task. If learners feel a strong need for achievement, expected that they could achieve what they set out to do, and had enough incentives to achieve, then their motivation would be high. If learners feared failure, were not confident in their ability for success, and/or had few incentives for achievement, then their motivation would be low. Atkinson’s achievement motivation became part of a much larger body of research of Expectancy-Value models of motivation.

A number of researchers have explored motivation through the expectancy-value framework (see Pintrich and Schunk, 1996; Wigfield, 1994). Three major constructs of motivation that define aspects of expectancy are attributions, self-efficacy, and self-worth theory. *Attribution theory* is mostly credited to work by Weiner (1984 & 1986). According to attribution theory, a learner is constantly assessing the reasons for past successes and failures with ability and effort as two of the most salient attributions. According to attribution theory, learners' expectancy in a given situation will be influenced by how they assess past successes or failures. The second theory related to expectancy is called *self-efficacy*. Bandura (1993) proposed that self-efficacy is a belief by individuals that they are capable of achieving a goal and, to a certain extent, that they have control over their own circumstances. People with high self-efficacy tend to approach learning situations with confidence. A key cognitive factor of self-efficacy is that expectancy can be the result of one's perception, rather than actual competence or abilities, and that perception can be based on many factors. The third theory from this perspective is *self-worth theory*, which is associated with the work of Covington (1992). In this approach to expectancy, learners are constantly working to maintain their self-worth by avoiding failure or other embarrassing situations. As a result, Covington found that learners tend to implement a variety of esteem-saving behaviors, including not putting forth their best effort, so that they can blame poor performance on something other than their own innate abilities. These three theories show how complex expectancy can be in the mind of a learner. It is probable that some

comments about expectancy will be revealed in the beliefs of a group of language teachers.

On the value side of expectancy-value theories is a great volume of research, with the most well-known research highlighting the dichotomy of *Intrinsic* and *Extrinsic* motivation. There are hundreds of studies dedicated to uncovering the merits of each of these value categories (Vallerand, 1997). Early research hypothesized that an intrinsic value, which originated in the individual, was superior to an extrinsic one. However, later research revealed that both can produce strong motivation, and that a better understanding of the construct of value was important to motivation research (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Brophy, 1999). Two important theories related to value that are representative of the kind of research that has explored the construct of value were proposed by Vallerand (1997) and Deci and Ryan (1985). Vallerand proposed that there were at least three divisions within intrinsic motivation (motivation to learn, towards achievement, and to experience stimulation) and that what added value depended on which of the three orientations an individual learner possessed. Deci and Ryan felt that value existed on a continuum between *self-determined* (intrinsic) and *controlled* (extrinsic). This approach is known as *self-determination* and they reported three variables – *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness* – as value variables. As an example of how they subdivide value even further, Deci and Ryan proposed that within extrinsic value, there were four subdivisions: *External*, *Introjected*, *Identified*, and *Integrated* regulation. External extrinsic value was seen as the most distant from the individual

and integrated the nearest. Deci and Ryan proposed that this continuum of extrinsic motives could explain how some extrinsic value was very helpful and some was less helpful.

Other cognitive motivation research focuses on goals. Two theories related to goals and motivation, Locke and Latham's (1990) *goal-setting theory* and *goal orientation theory* (Ames, 1992), were not developed as part of the expectancy-value models, but they seem to be highly compatible with the expectancy-value approach. The general idea is that people don't do something unless they have a purpose, and goals provide that purpose. Based on the results of Lock and Latham's research (1990) three qualities of a motivational goal were identified. The first is that the goal be specific; the second is that it be somewhat difficult but within reach; the third is that there be goal commitment. Goals that meet these three criteria would seem to increase expectation for success and value. In contrast, goal orientation theory focuses on *mastery vs. performance* orientations of goals. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) have shown that both orientations can be effective, but they also recognize that each carries underlying assumptions that should inform the types of activities that will be motivating for the learners. If the learners or their goals have a performance orientation, then grades and competition may be motivating to them. On the other hand, a mastery orientation might require a process or content learning focus to produce motivation.

The cognitive approach to motivation has left a long legacy of research on the construct of motivation in general, and, as I will show later in this chapter, on

language learning motivation constructs as well. It would be safe to say that aspects of cognitive motivation theories should be present in language teacher beliefs about motivation. Any teaching practice that an individual language instructor connects to raising expectancy for success, adding value, exposing need, or setting goals may have its foundation or be related to the cognitive models of motivation found in psychology.

Socio-Cognitive Theories

Recent models of motivation in psychology build on the cognitive aspects of previous models but recognize an important social and contextual component. Williams and Burden (1997) explain that this new approach to learning belongs to the “cognitive framework,” but that “an individual’s motivation is also subject to social and contextual influences. These will include the whole culture and context and the social situation, as well as significant other people and the individual’s interactions with these people” (120). Because the new social models build on cognitive research, many of the new models simply add a social component to existing models. For example, expectancy and value, rather than existing in the mind and perceptions of an individual, become dynamic variables imbedded in the context of the learning situation and the culture of the learner as well. I will discuss the work of Weiner (1994) in order to represent some of the general principles of the social approach to motivation, and then I will review a few studies that represent the breadth of research on social variables in motivation.

As mentioned previously, Weiner concluded that learners make attributions about their successes and failures, which can impact their expectancy for success. He later found that those attributions were often based on social variables rather than a predictable set of mental processes. Furthermore, Weiner (1994) found that certain goals possess a built in social component. Urban and Maehr (1995) offer the following as examples of these types of goals:

- social welfare goals, such as becoming a productive member of society;
- social solidarity goals, such as trying to bring some degree of honor to one's family;
- social approval goals, such as doing well in school to obtain the approval of peers or teachers. (p. 32)

Weiner's research on the social aspects of motivation led others to re-explore other cognitive theories through the lens of social and contextual variables. **Table 2.1** highlights some of the research on social variables.

One would expect language teachers to have beliefs about motivation related to social and contextual variables. This would be especially true for ESL teachers who deal with students from a variety of cultures and who are teaching interactive groups in a classroom setting.

Table 2.1 – Studies that highlight social or contextual variables in motivation

<u>Social or contextual variables</u>	<u>Studies</u>	<u>Selected Findings</u>
Cultural aspects of motivation	Pintrich & Maehr (1995); Phalet & Lens (1995); Chen and Stevenson (1995)	Individualism vs. collectivism in cultures can determine goal approaches in motivation; value place on education and cultural beliefs about learning impact motivation.
Parental influence	Gottfried et al (1994); Eccles et al (1988)	Parental variables influence their children’s motivation – support, confidence in child’s ability, and modeling of appropriate motivation
Teacher influence	Numerous studies summarized in Dornyei (2001)	Personal characteristics, teacher immediacy, strategy training, classroom management
Group motivation	Swezey et al (1994); McCaslin & Good (1996)	Group efficacy, group goals, and interpersonal processes – like peer pressure – impact motivation

Motivation in Language Learning

Early motivation constructs specific to language learning evolved separately from more general theories of motivation found in psychology and learning theories. Unlike motivation research in psychology, which has recently arrived at models of motivation with a social component, motivation research in the second language learning began in Canada from a socio-psychological approach. The context for this research was French Canada where native French and English speakers interact daily. Part of that context involved children learning either French or English at school. It was within this context that Robert Gardner, with Lambert and others, began to do research on language learning motivation. According to Dornyei (2001),

“Gardner and Lambert (1972) saw second languages as mediating factors between different ethnolinguistic communities in multicultural settings and, accordingly, considered the motivation to learn the language of the other community to be a primary force responsible for enhancing or hindering intercultural communication and affiliation” (48)

By 1985, Gardner’s motivation theory was fully developed. Two of the key constructs associated with this theory and related specifically to motivation were the *instrumental* and *integrative* orientations to language learning. The integrative orientation assumed that a learner had positive feelings towards the members of the second language community that used that language. A learner would find social interaction with this group desirable and might want to become like members of that group. The instrumental orientation applied to a learner who was learning the language for practical purposes like furthering a career or entering a university. Gardner hypothesized that an integrative orientation would lead to greater motivation and success in language learning. He later developed a tool, called the *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB), to assess a learner’s motivation, including the degree of their instrumental/integrative orientation. Many studies have been conducted using the AMTB in a variety of settings and as mentioned in Chapter 1, Au (1988) identified more than 40 published studies that used the Gardner model. One study, conducted by Graham (1984) proposed that there was a third orientation that was even stronger than *integrative: assimilative*. For Graham, the assimilative

orientation described learners who wished to become indistinguishable from speaker of a target language. Speaking of the desire to prove one orientation more desirable than another, Brown (2007) notes that many studies have been conducted to investigate which orientation is optimal for language learning, but researchers have encountered mixed results. For example, Gardner & MacIntyre (1991) found that in some contexts an instrumental orientation was best, and in others Gardner, Day & McIntyre (1992) found that integrative was better. Later, Gardner et al (2004) and Lamb (2004) could not find a statistical difference in the impact of instrumental or integrative orientations on language learning. As Brown (2007) observes,

Such variable findings in empirical investigations do not necessarily invalidate the integrative-instrumental construct. They point out once again that there is no single means of learning a second language: some learners in some contexts are more successful in learning a language if they are integratively oriented, and others in different contexts benefit from an instrumental orientation. These findings also suggest that the two orientations are not necessarily mutually exclusive (171).

By 1991, Crookes and Schmidt decided that it was time to move beyond the Gardner model of motivation in language learning. After a review of research on motivation and language learning, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) asserted that previous language learning motivation studies, most based on the Gardner and Lambert design, lacked

a “more satisfactory connection to language learning processes and language pedagogy (502).” However, any language teacher even with only minimal training would probably have heard of Gardner and might have beliefs about motivation and language learning that originated in Gardner’s research.

In response to Crookes and Schmidt, a special edition of *The Modern Language Journal* (1994), devoted entirely to motivation and language learning, was published. Oxford and Shearin (1994) proposed several specific ways to “expand the theoretical framework” of language research on language learning motivation beyond the standard instrumental and integrative dichotomy. In addition, Dornyei (1994) explored the connections of motivation to language learning and pedagogy “intended to be part of a discussion that will hopefully result in a more clearly defined and elaborate model of language learning.” (p283). Gardner and Tremblay responded directly to Crookes and Schmidt and others with their own article On Motivation, Research Agendas, and Theoretical Frameworks. They defended their approach and proposed future research that would connect their studies to language learning processes and pedagogy. Although a change may have begun a little earlier, the 1994 edition of *the Modern Language Journal* marked a shift in language learning motivation research.

As part of this shift in focus to language learning processes and pedagogy, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) proposed that language-learning motivation not be explored in isolation of motivation in other learning settings. Most language learning research prior to Crookes and Schmidt (1991) tended to utilize very

different models to describe motivation than research examining motivation in other learning contexts. This may have been because in language learning motivation studies, similar to other research on language learning, characterized language learning as being very unique compared to other kinds of learning. However, Bandura (1993; 1995), Dweck (1989), Heyman & Dweck (1992), Weiner (1990; 1995), Deci et al (1991), and Lepper et al (1996) had already begun to explore the connections between motivation, learning, and pedagogy that Crookes and Schmidt had proposed were lacking in language learning models of motivation. As a result, studies that built on existing research on motivation in cognitive psychology began to emerge in the language-learning domain. The cumulative effect was a growing body of research on motivation with implications for language teaching and learning based on cognitive and socio-cognitive psychology.

Four groups of studies on language learning and motivation that incorporated aspects of motivation from cognitive psychology are most relevant to the current study. These studies have helped language educators apply principles of motivation from psychology to language learning settings, and they may be reflected in language teacher beliefs about motivation. The first group of studies were conducted by Clément and his colleagues. As early as 1977, Clément had identified a construct he called *linguistic self-confidence*. This construct is fairly similar to self-efficacy, and Clément and others demonstrated through motivation research in language learning settings that self-confidence was based on social variables rather than the more cognitively focused self-efficacy (Clément, 1980 & 1986; Clement et

al., 1994; Noels and Clément, 1996; Noels et al, 1996). The social variables included quality and quantity of interaction between the language-learning and target language communities as a determining factor on future communication and identification with the other group. This construct has been extended to include groups learning a foreign language far away from a community that speaks that language, but who have a lot of contact with the language and culture through the media.

In 1989, Peter Skehan proposed in his article *Individual differences in language learning*, that attribution theory might be able to explain many of those individual differences. Following up on Skehan's ideas, Ushioda (1996, 1998) concluded that language learners made similar attributions as other learners, that is, they attributed success to ability and failure to lack of effort or other variables in the environment that were beyond their control. A third area of research in language learning motivation has explored self-determination in language learning contexts. Brown (1990, 1994) has offered many strategies for supporting the intrinsic motivation that leads to self-determination. In addition, Ushioda (1996) and others have conducted research on the learner autonomy aspect of self-determination in language learning. They found that autonomy was equally important in language classrooms as it was in other learning environments (Dickinson, 1995). Part of what these studies have done is to validate for language teachers and researchers that much of the research from cognitive psychology is very applicable to language learning motivation as well.

One variable fairly specific to language learning that has built on cognitive psychology, but has also added new findings on motivation, addresses the temporal dimension of motivation. In other words, there is a recognition that over time motivation does not exist at the same intensity in an individual. This is very important to recognize in language learning because the amount of time to master an additional language usually lasts many years and maybe even a lifetime. As a result, the temporal dimension of motivation is of great interest to language researchers. Williams and Burden (1997) have proposed that there are several phases to motivation and each phase may require different strategies in order to maintain motivation. Their first two stages of motivation (reasons for doing something and deciding to do something) focus on initiating motivation, and the final stage (sustaining the effort, or persisting) focuses on continuing or preserving the motivation over time. Williams and Burden argue that different strategies are necessary to get someone to start doing something as opposed to keeping them motivated once they have already started a course of action (121). It will be interesting to see if language teachers recognize this temporal dimension to motivation as they describe their beliefs and perspectives on language learning and motivation in their classrooms.

There are obviously other models, theories, constructs, and studies on motivation in both psychology and language learning that could be reviewed. However, the purpose of this review was to provide an overview of the main findings that might be present in language teacher beliefs. Most of the studies reviewed in this study

were later confirmed to be consistently referenced in many books that include a comprehensive survey of motivation in psychology, educational psychology, and language learning (Oxford, 1999; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009; Dornyei, 2001; Brown, 2007; Williams & Burden, 1997; Alderman, 2008; Svinicki, 2004).

Teacher beliefs, language learning, and motivation

The main language learning studies that have explored language teacher beliefs directly and exclusively have been conducted by Dornyei, and with Csizer (1998), he organized an important study that would be one of the first to assess teacher beliefs about motivation and motivating students. For their data collection, they asked 200 foreign language teachers in Hungary to look at a list of 51 motivational techniques and indicate which ones they used in their own classrooms. Based on the teachers' most frequent responses, the Dornyei and Csizer published their practical guide, *Ten commandments for motivating language learners: results of an empirical study* (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). This guide provided the ten most used strategies offered by the 200 teachers in the study. The ten commandments are as follows:

- 1) Set a personal example with your own behavior.
 - 2) Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere.
 - 3) Present the tasks properly.
 - 4) Develop a good relationship with the learners.
 - 5) Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
 - 6) Make the language classes interesting.
 - 7) Promote learner autonomy.
 - 8) Personalize the learning process.
 - 9) Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
 - 10) Familiarize learners with the target language culture.
- (p. 215)

Dornyei (2001) replicated his research with a larger group of teachers, which led to his book *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. This publication included a list of over 135 practical techniques based on language teacher beliefs and motivation research.

As important as Dornyei's work has been in the area of motivation in language learning, and to a certain extent language teacher beliefs about motivation, there are at least three limitations to his approach to teacher beliefs. These limitations may make the results of his research pre-mature and may actually provide an incomplete picture of the teacher perspective on motivation. The first weakness in his approach is that his survey of beliefs limits the possible responses that a teacher can provide. There is no way to reveal any of the teacher's own motivational techniques that are not on the list. Second, by providing the list of possible motivational techniques, Dornyei has already made the connection for the teacher between those specific techniques and the construct of motivation, which the teachers may not have done on their own. Finally, the list is limited to motivational techniques, but teachers may have many other beliefs about motivation that are not related to techniques. In summary, before studies on teacher beliefs about motivation with a broad, statistical approach can be effectively conducted, a more detailed, qualitative exploration of teacher beliefs on motivation is necessary.

Interestingly enough, Dornyei offered the best advice on how to approach the present study. At the most recent annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Dornyei (2010) gave a presentation titled, *Researching complex*

dynamic systems: Focus on L2 motivation. In his remarks, he highlighted, amongst other general research strategies, the need for research on language learning motivation that emphasized a more qualitative approach. His reasons for this approach were to have studies that utilized more “emergent” research designs, relied on greater detail, and focused on individuals or small groups in a similar context. Following Dornyei’s advice, the present study hopes to add a detailed, qualitative exploration of language teacher beliefs about motivation to the literature on the construct of motivation. Chapter 3 will describe the methods chosen for the present study.

CHAPTER 3: Methods

This study explores ESL teachers' beliefs about motivation in the ESL classroom context. The questions that guided the study were as follows:

- 1) How do ESL teachers define motivation? What are their beliefs about the nature of motivation?
- 2) What do ESL teachers believe about motivation in ESL classroom settings? What do they say that they do to motivate their students?
- 3) How do ESL teachers report that they acquired their beliefs about motivation in general and more specifically, motivating in the classroom?
- 4) How do ESL teachers' beliefs about motivation compare to each other?

Before describing the approach and methods applied to answer these questions, I feel it would help to know more about my background experiences related to motivation and language learning. These experiences helped form my interest in the present topic, and are, of course, relevant as I interpret the data.

Researcher Biography

My personal interests related to language learning and motivation emerged from a lifetime of experiences that began in Hawaii. As a young *haole* (white foreigner) who was trying to fit in amongst my local peers, I was keenly aware that I did not speak like them. I recognized their variety of English, Hawaiian Creole English (commonly known in Hawaii as *Pidgin*), as my key to social acceptance, and I

eventually learned to function in that dialect. However, speaking *Pidgin* at home put me in danger of getting a lecture from my mother about the merits of “standard” English. In both elementary and high school, I observed immigrants from the various Pacific islands and Pacific Rim learning English as a second language. I spent time in my friends homes and listened to them speak Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Tahitian, Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, and Thai with their parents. I wondered why some of my friends and their families were more successful than others at acquiring the English they seemed to need to be successful in school and at work. For two years in high school, I studied Spanish, thousands of miles removed from any country or even a community where Spanish was spoken. Spanish seemed very distant from my own experience and I was not very successful. I gained empathy for anyone who had to learn a second language.

In July 1988, my motivation to learn Spanish changed in an instant when I received my “call” to serve as a missionary in the Yucatan in Mexico. I had a sudden desire to function in Spanish and talk to people who spoke that language. After 9 weeks of 10-hours a day of Spanish training, I found myself in the small town of Chemax in the middle of the Yucatan Peninsula with a missionary partner from Mexico City who spoke no English. Much to my dismay, I found out that only about 2/3 of the people in the town spoke Spanish; the rest spoke Yucatec Mayan, so I began learning some Mayan as well. Over the two years of my missionary service, I became quite fluent in Spanish and learned survival Yucatec Mayan, and I noticed how much more of the culture and people I understood as a result of learning those

languages. I thought back to my friends in Hawaii and wondered if they had similar feelings as they learned English.

When I returned to Hawaii from Mexico, I found that the university where I was studying offered an undergraduate degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and I decided to make that my major. During the 3 years I was taking courses in linguistics, second language acquisition, phonology of modern English, TESOL methods, and many other important classes related to my major, I was also teaching Spanish at the local elementary school. I remember asking myself everyday, "How am I going to motivate these kids to want to learn and use Spanish?" I tried a variety of things, but games and candy always seemed to work best. During the last year of my undergraduate experience, I decided to study Mandarin Chinese. I was placed in a class with 10 native speakers of Cantonese who were taking the class as an easy way to fulfill the foreign language requirement for graduation. I finished the year with little confidence in my ability to learn another language. It was a humbling experience.

I continued my education in Utah and received a Masters certificate in TESOL and a Masters degree in linguistics. I wrote my thesis on the patterns of language attrition amongst returned missionaries who had learned Spanish. During my time in Utah, I studied Portuguese and regained my confidence as a language learner. It was very clear to me how my knowledge and experiences in Spanish helped me be successful in learning Portuguese. I also taught ESL part-time to young adults at an Intensive English program (IEP) during the day and at a senior citizens center, to

recent immigrant senior citizens, at night. Teaching these two groups at the same time made me recognize some of the very different reasons people study another language. The young adults in the IEP were trying learn the English necessary to enter a university; the senior citizens, who only spoke Spanish, just wanted to be able to read children's books in English to their grandchildren, who only spoke English.

At that time I decided to further my education and experience in a new location, Texas. I was excited because I knew that I would be able to use Spanish more often. I arrived and secured a job teaching English as a second language in a University-based Intensive English program, where I would eventually become director. The doctoral program where I was accepted was very inter-disciplinary, which allowed me to take many of my graduate courses in other departments. Three of those graduate courses set me on the path to the present study. The first was the *Psychology of Learning*, which was required as part of my doctoral program. The second was *Learning Theory: Instructional Implications*, and the third was *Motivation and Emotion*, both of which I chose as electives for my program. Each class provided me new insights into the complexities of learning and the construct of motivation from a variety of perspectives: in theory, for research, and in practice.

It was during this time that I became the Director of the IEP where I had been teaching for 4 years. One of my new responsibilities was training new language teachers, and I integrated much of what I had learned about motivation into that training. Over time, I noticed that some teachers responded well to the training on

motivation and others did not. In addition, I would occasionally hear teachers make interesting connections between motivation and teaching that I had not thought of previously. Because of this I decided that I wanted to take a more formal look at language teachers' perspectives on motivation, which led me to the present study.

Context

Naturally, the setting I chose for exploring and answering the research questions of this study was the university-based Intensive English Program (IEP) that I direct. The IEP serves 3 main groups of international students whose native language is not English: 1) current graduate students, 2) potential graduate students, and 3) other non-native speakers of English. The services offered for current graduate students, the first group, include English screening and courses for international teaching assistants and other international graduate students. The second group, potential graduate students, enrolls in 20-hours a week of academic English instruction in one of three levels: low-intermediate, high-intermediate, and low-advanced. In addition, they enroll in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and GRE (Graduate Record Examination) or GMAT (Graduate Management Aptitude Test) preparation courses. The third group, non-native speakers of English with goals other than graduate school, is enrolled in a non-academic English language program for intensive (20 hours per week) or part-time (5-15 hours per week) ESL instruction. These courses are offered in 7 levels: beginning, high-beginning, low-intermediate,

intermediate, high-intermediate, low-advanced, and advanced. Instructors in this program were the participants in the study.

Because I am the researcher and also the supervisor of both the potential and actual participants in the study, special measures were taken to assure the anonymity of those who would and those who would not choose to participate. Protecting the identity of the teachers would make sure that 1) there was no potential for future negative bias from the supervisor towards the teachers who did not participate, 2) there was no potential for future positive bias towards those teachers who did participate, and 3) for those who did choose to participate, there was no potential for using anything that came up in their interviews against them in their annual performance evaluations. The procedures used to protect the participants' confidentiality are explained in the subsections on participant choice, data collection, and data accuracy.

Participant Pool

At the time of data collection, there were 32 full-time ESL instructors employed at the IEP who were potential participants. In order to teach in the IEP, instructors must meet the following minimum qualifications: They must hold a Masters degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) or a related field (applied linguistics, foreign language education, etc), have at least 3 years of ESL teaching experience, preferably at the post-secondary level with at least 3 months of that experience abroad, and demonstrate an intermediate speaking proficiency in at

least one language other than English. Beyond these minimum qualifications, the instructors were quite diverse. Nine of the 32 have Ph.D. degrees. In addition, 13 have more than 10 years of teaching experience. Five instructors boast more than 25 years of teaching experience. The instructors are expected to teach any language skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar) at any level (beginning through advanced) to any of the three main student groups served by the IEP. Their teaching assignments in a given semester often cross several skills, levels, and student types.

As part of their employment at this IEP, each instructor is required to participate in a certain amount of professional development and teacher in-service activities each semester. Some of their professional development activities are comprised of training at faculty meetings or departmental workshops. However, the majority of their professional development activities are chosen by the individual instructors based on their own perceived needs and interests. Participation in the present study constituted professional development for the instructors who participated. This was not unusual since many other graduate-student researchers have collected their data in the classrooms of these ESL instructors in the past. Similarly, all instructors have been given professional development credit for participating in previous studies.

Participant selection

The 32 ESL instructors were informed that one of the ways they could fulfill their professional development requirements for a particular semester was by participating in an interview that would explore their beliefs about motivation. The researcher instructed them that they should indicate their willingness to participate to an interviewer, one of their former colleagues, so that their identities could remain protected from the researcher. Eleven of the 32 teachers agreed to participate. An alias was created for each teacher to help maintain their anonymity. Basic information on each teacher was collected in order to provide a little depth to the participant profiles; however, the details (exact degree, year, names of countries taught in, exact languages spoken, etc.) were kept to a minimum to protect their identities. **Figure 3.1** summarizes the information about the 11 participants.

Table 3.1: Participant Summary

Participant	Alias	Gender	Native English Speaker	Most recent Degree	Decade degree received	# of years teaching experience	# of teaching jobs	Foreign country taught in	Intermediate proficiency foreign language
Teacher 1	Amy	F	Y	MA	1970s	25+	10+	3+	1
Teacher 2	Beth	F	Y	MA	1970s	25+	10+	1	1
Teacher 3	Carl	M	Y	PhD	2000s	5-14	1-4	1	1
Teacher 4	Debbie	F	Y	PhD	1980s	15-24	1-4	1	1
Teacher 5	Eric	M	Y	PhD	2000s	5-14	5-9	3+	2
Teacher 6	Frida	F	N	PhD	2000s	15-24	5-9	2	2
Teacher 7	Gina	F	Y	MA	1990s	5-14	1-4	1	1
Teacher 8	Helen	F	Y	MA	1970s	25+	10+	2	1
Teacher 9	Irene	F	N	MA	1990s	5-14	5-9	3+	2
Teacher10	Jacob	M	Y	MA	1990s	15-24	10+	2	1
Teacher11	Karen	F	Y	MA	1990s	5-14	5-9	2	1

Each teacher met individually with the interviewer, filled out a participant waiver form indicating their interest and commitment to participate, and made an appointment with the interviewer to participate in the interview to discuss their

beliefs about motivation. As participants, they were promised the opportunity to speak anonymously about their perspectives on motivation and motivating in the classroom. They were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time. They were also promised that they would receive a transcription of their interview and a copy of the research project when it was finished.

Methodological Approach

Before describing the process of data collection and analysis, I would like to frame the approach taken in this study within the literature on research methods. The general approach to this study is qualitative, which carries certain assumptions. According to Creswell (2003), these assumptions have specific implications for practice, including the following:

- 1) The researcher uses quotes and themes in the words of the participants and provides evidence as seen by the participants in the study.
- 2) The researcher acknowledges that the research is “value-laden” and that personal biases are present.
- 3) The researcher writes in a more informal style using the personal voice as well as qualitative terms and limited definitions.
- 4) The researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses emerging design. (17)

There are many qualitative methods that have emerged from the qualitative philosophy, and some of the more popular methods are narrative research,

phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study research. Because many scholars choose to approach their research from within a single methodology, Creswell (2007) points out that many authors, including himself, present the approaches “as ‘pure’ approaches to research design, when, in fact, authors may integrate them within a single study.” (10)

The methodology used in the present study integrates aspects of several qualitative methods. The essence of the study is exploratory and descriptive. What are being explored and described are the perspectives and beliefs of ESL teachers related to motivation and motivating students. Exploration is typical of phenomenological research, which seeks to “reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of a universal essence” (van Manen, 1990, p.177). The data collection method in the present study, in-depth interviews, is common to all five of the previously mentioned qualitative methods. The coding of the data most resembles the patterns found in grounded theory. By this I mean that during the initial data analysis there is a period of “open coding” where the researcher forms categories about the issue being addressed by segmenting the information. Later analysis includes “axial coding” where the data is assembled in new ways after the open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The final analysis of the data follows the typical pattern implemented in research involving multiple case studies where after a “within-case analysis” of themes, there is a thematic analysis across the cases, “cross-case analysis,” followed by assertions or interpretation of themes (Yin, 2003).

Data collection

In order to better address the original four research questions for this study, more focused questions were developed for the interviews that would elicit teacher perspectives and beliefs about motivation. The researcher conducted two pilot interviews, with ESL instructors who taught at another IEP, in order to develop the interview questions. Their interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Based on those interviews, the following specific questions were developed to guide the later interviews:

What is motivation to you?
How important is student motivation in the classroom? Why? Why not?
Can you effect student motivation? Or do they just "have it?" Explain.
How can you effect student motivation?
How do you motivate students? Can you give me specific examples?
Did you ever have a highly motivated class? What were they like?
Did you ever have an unmotivated class? What were they like? What did you do?
What specific things do you do to motivate students in your classes?
How does motivation factor into your lesson planning?
How did you formulate your beliefs about motivation and motivating students?
Where did your beliefs come from?

These questions were then piloted by the interviewer on two other teachers, who also were not part of the participant sample, to verify that the interviewer was comfortable with the process and could effectively use the questions to elicit teacher perspectives and beliefs on motivation.

Data accuracy

After the interviews were conducted and recorded, the recordings were transcribed by the interviewer. Each transcription was labeled to maintain anonymity (Teacher 1, Teacher 2, etc). Those transcriptions were then given to the participating teachers by the interviewer in order to verify their accuracy. A month later, the teachers were contacted by the interviewer and were asked to participate in a second interview. During the second interview they were given the opportunity to clarify any of their thoughts from the first interview and add to or subtract from anything they had said. The second interviews were very brief. The interviewer simply asked if the teachers had any thoughts related to motivation that they wanted to add to what they had said in the first interview. The interviewer also asked the instructors if there was anything in the transcriptions that they wanted to amend. A few teachers added some thoughts on motivation that had come to them since the first interview. Any clarifications, additions, or subtractions were subsequently incorporated into the interview transcriptions by the interviewer. These transcriptions were then given to the researcher, and they became the data source for the present study.

Data analysis

Comments

The interviews varied in length from 1390 words (7 – double-spaced pages) to 9174 words (42 – double-spaced pages), The total number of words for all 11

interviews was 61,512 (280 – double-spaced pages). In order to make the data analysis process more manageable, given the volume of data, the transcripts were divided into “comments.” For the purposes of this study, a comment was simply defined as a string of a teacher’s speech bounded by a question or response from the interviewer on either side. The number of comments per interview ranged from 26-69. The 280 pages of transcribed interviews will not be provided in their entirety in this document. However, **Figure 3.2** shows an excerpt from an interview transcript in order to give an example of what was defined as a comment.

Descriptive categories

After the transcripts were divided into comments, I read each transcript thoroughly. As the transcripts were read, I recorded “descriptive categories” that emerged from each of the comments. The categories were not difficult to identify because the comments were either a response to a direct question, which dictated the topic, or a clarification of an earlier comment. Identifying the central idea(s) of each comment was very straight- forward. In fact, the categories that I used to organize the data were less an attempt to create novel categories than they were a simple way to organize the teachers’ perspectives and beliefs. That being said, the categories do offer several areas of teacher beliefs not typically explored in research on motivation.

Table 3.2: Excerpt with comments identified

The questions of the interviewer are light grey. Everything between them in black is considered a comment. This excerpt has 4 comments:

Well let me ask you a different question. To what extent do you think the relationships between classmates is important in establishing motivation?

If there is a leader in the class that everybody is willing to follow, that's great. That helps a lot always. If that leader happens to do things, for instance, pull them together outside of class. That's excellent. But that doesn't have to happen to still have a good class. So the only thing that I would say that I really really pay attention to if that is not happening... I just don't let problems continue. So if there are people who can't work together, or who won't work together, that's just fine; we'll just go around that. You guys will never have to work together.

So that class dynamic, is that something that you really pay attention to in class?

Yeah, I've had students tell me specifically. And the teachers share that among them. If one of us has noticed, then we tell the other ones. That kind of thing is very helpful. Where they sit is a big tip, of course, because they know who they can't get along with and they sit opposite them, you know. But still, if we are doing something where you change from group to group, like a chat circle, then I tell them that they just have to do this and it is short. Get over it.

Do you say that or do you just convey that?

I just say, "it would be okay. It's really short. You can do this." You know I don't say get over it because they probably wouldn't understand. But that's what I'm thinking. But they know. They are adults, and they can accept that. And it is short.

And earlier you mentioned your passion for what you were doing - the subject, and you think that makes a big difference in motivating students?

Oh yeah. Absolutely. I think anybody who is at all motivational is because they are passionate about whatever it is that they are talking about. I mean, if you are bored with it you are boring. I just love this.

I identified 7 categories after the first reading: 1) personal definitions of motivation, 2) motivation techniques, 3) the motivated learner, 4) origins of beliefs about motivation, 5) the motivated teacher, 6) lesson planning and motivation, and 7) teacher impact on student motivation. These categories were easy to identify based on the questions asked by the interviewer and/or the over-all content of the responses. I then read the transcribed interviews a second time and classified each comment from 1-7 for at least one of the categories. If an entire comment or part of a comment didn't fit into an existing descriptive category, I created a new category. At the end of the second reading, there were 10 descriptive categories. The three additional categories were 8) factors that negatively impact motivation, 9) the motivated class, and 10) the responsibility for motivation. Initially, Category 8 seemed unnecessary because when the teachers discussed factors that negatively impact motivation, they often did so in the context of strategies to counteract those negative factors, which put the comment in category 2 – motivation techniques. However, many times the teachers discussed factors with a negative impact on motivation without offering any practical strategy to balance it. As a result, Category 8 was added. Category 9 was the result of comments that described the qualities of motivated groups of students that moved beyond individuals. Finally Category 10 emerged from several teachers' comments about their potential role as motivators. **Figure 3.3** shows an excerpt from one of the transcripts with the comments marked by category.

Figure 3.3: Transcript with comments marked by category – one comment with two categories

We are talking about motivation, so what is motivation to you? How would you explain it or define it?

1 { It's something that gets you going. It makes you do something.
Okay. Can you think of an example in life in general first?
A life example. Well. I joined this yoga class, so I would have motivation to do it. Otherwise I wouldn't, so the structure gives me motivation.

And when you think about motivation specifically in teaching, what do you think about in terms of students and motivation? What comes to your mind?

3 Well, some people come well packaged with a lot of internal drive and seem very self-motivated. And some don't seem to know how to get themselves involved and going, so that's I feel is my role, or one of my roles, as a teacher is either to harness what is already there, or to help build it if it seems lacking. 5

Okay. So if you are in a class, how can you tell if it's lacking?

3 { Well, there are many things that show that. Some of it can be non-verbal behavior. Some of it can be homework routine; assignments that are given. Some of it can be the quickness with which people will pick up a task and begin to accomplish it. I mean there's a lot of different things. I don't think there's one thing.

Okay, sounds like a combination of things. So, but examples are if they are doing or not doing their homework, the way in which they are doing it...

3 { They're sitting up and paying attention with eyes bright, or they're not. Or they engaged and asking questions or they're not. Some of those things are external. And some things are just people turning in their homework on time without having much affect. But you can still see from the quality of work that they must be pretty motivated.

5 { And you said that one of your roles as a teacher is to foster that motivation?
Yes.

And how do you do that?

8 { Weeeelllllll. There's a million ways; there's not one way. One of the things I do is I try to know everybody, and to call them by name and get them to call me by name and develop some level of personal involvement with them and with each other. I think that a

I subsequently conducted a third reading and re-classified the comments based on the 10 categories. Often, the content of an individual comment would cover more than one descriptive category. In those cases, I coded the comments with multiple categories (also see **Figure 3.3**). Once I had classified all of the comments according to the 10 descriptive categories, I asked two colleagues to read the transcripts to determine if the descriptive categories were reasonable and accurate descriptions of the content of the comments. Based on their feedback, two categories (7 and 10) were collapsed into one, and the names of two other categories were changed (“motivation techniques” became “strategies for motivating students;” the combination of 7 and 10 became “teacher impact on/responsibility for motivation”) resulting in a total of 9 categories. The final 9 categories are as follows:

- 1) Personal definitions of motivation
- 2) The motivated teacher
- 3) The motivated student
- 4) The motivated class
- 5) Teacher impact on/responsibility for motivation
- 6) Lesson planning and motivation
- 7) Factors that negatively impact motivation
- 8) Strategies for motivating students
- 9) Origins of beliefs about motivation

The interviewer provided all of the participants a copy of the coded transcript of their interview and asked them to read it and conduct a member check for data

accuracy. They each had two weeks to review their interview transcript with the coding. At the end of the two weeks, the interviewer met with each participant to obtain their feedback on the classification into the 9 categories. There were no new categories proposed by the participants, and only eleven of the 500+ comments were re-coded, based on participant feedback, such that the 11 comments were either re-assigned or added to a different category. For example, the following comment, in **Figure 3.4**, was originally assigned only to Category 8 – Strategies for motivating students, but based on teacher feedback, it was later added to Category 2 – The motivated teacher - as well.

Table 3.4: Example of a comment added to another category

So that discussion is about taking their larger goal and showing how what you are doing today is related and going to help them get to that big goal?.

8a
b { It is not only what we're doing today, but this stream of ... this activity stream. It's developing streams of activities, so that everything, the things you do, kind of fits into a place. You don't want to do this constantly, that takes too much time, so that's where routines are helpful. So, the routine of working with the textbook, why do we do this?, what is it for?, revisiting that issue and welcoming people who say, "why are we doing this?" "Wow, I'm glad you asked. Let's all talk about that for a minute," In order to get yourself resituated and regain your motivation because you can get lost I think. I can get lost as a teacher, "what am I doing?" "what is it I'm teaching?" 2

In the end, all of the comments were assigned to at least one of the nine descriptive categories.

Within the descriptive categories

Once all of the comments had been assigned to the nine descriptive categories, I created nine documents (one for each of the nine categories). I then cut and pasted all of the comments coded for each category into the corresponding document. Comments that were coded for more than one category were pasted into multiple documents. In the end there were nine individual documents representing all of the comments for each of the nine categories. At this point, I examined and categorized each comment within the descriptive categories. I turned each comment into a belief statement and compared it to the comments from other participants in the descriptive category that seemed similar to it. The result of this process was that each belief statement in a given descriptive category had a number from 1-11 (number of teachers) next to it depending on the number of participants that shared a similar belief. I created a table for the beliefs in each category and indicated the number of participants who shared each belief. For the purposes of comparing beliefs across the participants in this study, I categorized the beliefs that were shared by 6 or more participants as “common” beliefs, by 3-5 participants as “less common,” and by 2 participants or less as “infrequent.”

Data presentation and discussion

Because the focus of this study is the exploration of ESL teacher beliefs, the beliefs themselves are the focus of this study. In chapter 4, as I alluded to earlier, I will provide both a “cross-case” and “within case” analysis of the teacher beliefs related

to motivation, sprinkled with commentary on themes. For the cross-case analysis, each category and its' sub-beliefs will be presented with frequent examples from the teacher interviews. At the end of each category, I will provide limited commentary on themes of particular interest. For the within case analysis, I will provide detailed portraits of 4 teachers in order to examine how the beliefs manifest themselves within individual teachers. In chapter 5, I will discuss some of the most common beliefs and the possible implications of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: Results/Discussion

The results of this study are presented and discussed in this section. The section begins with a presentation of the teacher beliefs about motivation, which I organized around the nine categories identified from the eleven interviews. Within those nine categories I have identified and grouped the teachers' perspectives and beliefs related to motivation. In addition to providing a general discussion of the categories, themes, and beliefs, I have also provided more detailed descriptions of how those beliefs were manifest in four of the teachers who were interviewed.

Nine Motivation Belief Categories

In chapter 3, I described the methods implemented to identify the ESL teachers' nine main categories of beliefs about motivation. As a reminder, the nine categories are as follows:

- 1) Personal definitions of motivation
- 2) The motivated teacher
- 3) The motivated student
- 4) The motivated class
- 5) Teacher impact on/responsibility for motivation
- 6) Lesson planning and motivation
- 7) Factors that negatively impact motivation
- 8) Strategies for motivating students
- 9) Origins of beliefs about motivation

For each of the categories, the emergent beliefs and themes are identified, and frequent examples from the interviews are provided. The purpose of these examples is to provide support for the categories and themes and to give the reader

a better sense of the richness of the data, without having to read the full transcripts of all the interviews. Each belief within a category is classified according to the number of teachers, 1-11 (with aliases), who have comments relating to that belief. Beliefs based on 6-11 teachers' comments are referred to as "common" beliefs for this group of teachers. Those based on 3-5 teachers' comments are "less common" beliefs, and beliefs mentioned by 1-2 teachers are considered "infrequent" beliefs. At the end of each category, a summary chart is provided which lists the individual beliefs and the teachers (numbers) who made comments supporting those beliefs.

During the course of this study, and most especially during the data analysis, it became clear that the term "belief" might not be the best descriptor for all of the thoughts the teachers expressed about motivation. For most of the categories, such as *personal definitions of motivation* or *teacher impact/responsibility for motivation*, the teachers' comments sounded like typical belief statements. However, in **Category 8**, *strategies for motivating students*, "self-reports" may be a better label for what the teachers provided. Likewise, for **Category 9**, *origins of beliefs about motivation*, "recollections" might be a more apt term for the information reported. I will use the word beliefs throughout, but I recognize that many of the statements are not strictly beliefs. For the sake of consistency, I have presented the themes in the summary charts, at the end of each section, in the form of belief statements.

Category 1: Personal definitions of motivation

In the course of the interviews, all of the teachers provided comments about their personal definitions/theories of motivation. Most of these comments were the result of a direct question (e.g. what is motivation for you?), but others emerged spontaneously in the course of the interviews. Four of the eleven teachers made statements that focused on motivation as the immediate power behind an action. They used words like “drive” or “force” to describe motivation. For example **Beth** proposed, “Motivation is an engine. I think it’s the drive that let’s you do it everyday.” Similarly, **Jacob** stated, “Motivation is the force that encourages you to do something or not to do it.” On the other hand, three of the eleven teachers defined motivation in terms of the more remote “reason” someone engaged in an action. For **Carl**, motivation in his classroom was “the reasons that somebody has for trying to learn the language or improve their language.” Although “drive” & “force” and “reason” seem very similar, one of the teachers provided an example that helped distinguish between the “drive” beliefs and the “reason” beliefs amongst these teachers. **Amy** explained, “I joined this yoga class so I would have motivation to do it; otherwise, I wouldn’t.” For **Amy**, joining the class created the “drive” (motivation) necessary to do yoga. On the other hand, for someone like **Frida** who said, “Motivation is when you have a reason to do something,” the desire to do yoga would be the “motivation” (reason) that one would join a yoga class. In other words, for the “drive” teachers, taking the yoga class is the motivation. For the “reason”

teachers, taking the yoga class is the action taken as the result of a personal desire to do yoga.

At first I thought that the teachers might be describing the classic dichotomy of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motives. The teachers with the “reason” beliefs could be talking about intrinsic motives, and the teachers with the “drive” & “force” beliefs could be referring to extrinsic motives. However, the teachers did not limit their definitions of “reason” or “drive” and “force” in terms of the origin of the motives. Two of the teachers with “reason” beliefs described them as either intrinsic or extrinsic. All of the teachers with “reason” beliefs seemed to focus more on the idea that the “reason” motives are what the students brought with them, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, or what may have started them on a course of action. On the other hand, those teachers with the “force” or “drive” beliefs focused on the motivation that emerged after the students had decided on a course of action. For them, motivation was most important for maintaining engagement in a course of action.

Three other teachers defined motivation in terms of both “drive” and “reason.” For them the student brought with them the “reason” or “why” and the teacher provided the “drive.” According to **Irene**, “... if it [motivation] is me trying to motivate students, I would say that it is getting them to do something that they may not see value in or they may not feel like doing in that moment. So creating a drive that is not there. And I guess if it is a student and their motivation, then I guess it is why they are here, why they are studying English.” **Gina** expressed similar thoughts

when she said, "...in a way it is making sure that the people who come into your class get what they came for. And I think it has to come from them, but you have to turn them on to be willing to do what they can to get there. It's like a two way thing." **Gina** seemed to be saying that the students come with a specific "reason" for being there, but the teacher had to "drive" them to what they already wanted.

Eric verbalized his beliefs about motivation using a variety of terms reminiscent of several motivation theories. He expressed his definition as follows: "I think it [motivation] is a feeling that you have some sort of goal and you have the ability to reach it. You have a desire, a desire to reach some sort of goal. And then there is engagement towards a goal." This teacher's belief included at least four parts: goal, ability, desire, and engagement. His mention of goal points to Lock and Latham's goal-setting theory. Student ability to reach a goal echoes Bandura's self-efficacy. Desire is often mentioned as one of the primary influences on goal-setting, and it also seems to fit nicely into constructs like need and value (extrinsic and intrinsic), which are common in Expectancy/Value models of motivation. Finally, engagement is mentioned in several models of motivation, including research conducted by Csikszentmihalyi, as both a sign and a cause of motivation.

One final belief, expressed by **Debbie**, was a simple four-word answer. Motivation is "the sources of desire." Without further explanation, she seemed to be saying that motivation is what leads to desire. This sounds very much like the "reason" mentioned by other teachers. However, when asked to expand on this, she explained that all of the senses (sight, sound, touch, etc.) were what motivate people

to do things. Given this explanation, it appears that for her motivation was more innate or biological.

All of these personal definitions of motivation may have interesting implications for how teachers approach motivation in the classroom. For the “drive” or “force” teachers, they may feel that their role is to constantly prod and push the learners to keep moving. Without the teachers, the students may do nothing. On the other hand, the “reason” teachers may feel that their main job is to connect what they are doing to whatever initial “reason” the students decided to learn a language and come to their class. These teachers’ focus might not be on creating a new motive but harnessing and directing existing motivation. For the teachers who view motivation in terms of both “drive” and “reason” they may implement teaching strategies that support both aspects. In the discussions of **Category 8**, I discuss in-depth the actual strategies these teachers reported for motivating students. Many of the strategies they revealed seemed to be based on “reason” and “drive” beliefs. Also, teacher portraits, provided later on in this chapter, reveal that the teachers tend to be true to their initial belief statements. This first category of beliefs reveals the importance of understanding how teachers view motivation. Diverse beliefs about what motivation is at its most basic level, may lead to differences in classroom practices used to motivate students. These beliefs may also influence the way new training about classroom motivation is received. **Table 4.1** provides a summary of the teachers’ belief statements related to their definitions of motivation.

Table 4.1 – Category 1: personal definitions of motivation

Belief	Teachers with Belief
Motivation is the drive that gets people to act in a given moment and keep acting.	1, 2, 10
Motivation is the initial reason that people engaged in doing something.	3, 6, 11
Motivation is best expressed as a combination of the reason that people are engaged in doing things and the drive that gets people to do something.	7, 8, 9
Motivation is best defined in terms of goals, ability to achieve them, desire, and engagement.	5
Motivation is the source of desire and can be found in the human senses.	4

Category 2: The motivated teacher

Many of the participants expressed beliefs about themselves as teachers and their own motivation, although four of the teachers made no comments related to this category. The most common belief, mentioned in one way or another by 6 of the 7 teachers who did comment, was that if they were motivated as teachers, their students would be more motivated. For example, when referring to motivating students, **Beth** exclaimed, “I get passionate about it. I’m excited about it. They know it.” **Debbie** agreed and added that she had a commitment to language that the students “see and respond to.” **Frida** expressed the same feeling in the following way: “I like grammar and I like talking about it and explaining it. I really like grammar. Sometimes I get passionate, now that I think about it. I think that if they see you really into something, they have a more positive attitude about it.” **Karen**

also claimed that the students could tell when she was motivated. She felt that when the teacher modeled creativity, engagement, and enthusiasm, “you can see that the students might reciprocate as well.” As a final example, **Irene** echoed **Karen’s** hopes when she stated, “I just try and be energetic, enthusiastic, and show them that I love what I do, and I hope that it rubs off on them.” Clearly there is the common belief amongst these teachers that being motivated as teacher is an important factor that can lead to motivated students.

A less common belief about the teacher and motivation, mentioned specifically by 3 of the 7 teachers, focused on the transfer of motivation in the other direction: from students to teacher. According to these teachers, this influence could be positive or negative. **Irene** and **Gina** noted that after they answered a question or helped their students learn something, they felt more motivated to teach. **Irene** said, “Sometimes I walk in tired and they ask me a question, and I feel motivated because I can answer their question; I can help them. This wakes me up.” **Gina** felt that she helped motivate the students to achieve their goals and then “if you’re lucky someday, they remember you and recognize you. That’s my satisfaction in the job and it makes me want to do better.” On the negative side, **Karen** noted that it is hard for the teacher to be motivated while teaching unmotivated students. She said “I think that teachers in our program are more motivated to teach students who are motivated to improve their English to better communicate with people and understand than they would if students say, ‘well, I’m only here to get a TOEFL score of 550’ and that’s that.” Combined with the previously mentioned belief that

the teachers' motivation rubs off on the students, this seems to reflect an interesting group dimension to motivation. An individual's motivation, either teacher or students, impacts the motivation of others.

Another less common belief, which will be discussed further in **Category 9**, is that whatever motivates or has motivated the teacher will be equally motivating to the students. One of the teachers, **Carl**, expressed this belief like this:

Well, you know, when I was in school as a student, I felt like there was the teacher and there was me. It was kind of an "us" and "them" thing: the teachers and us. So I never felt like the need to be super friendly with them. But, so as a teacher, my role in motivation is to be sort of a professional friend kind of. I'm not their mother, their father, their sibling, I'm their instructor. I don't conceive of it as much as sort of a counselor. These are adults and they have choices, and they will be motivated if I keep that student-teacher distance.

So **Carl's** current conception of the teacher-student relationship basically mirrored his own experiences. Three other teachers mentioned indirectly that what motivated them would motivate their students. These teachers mentioned specific classes that they had taken, which were very motivating, and how they had incorporated parts of those classes into their own teaching. A more detailed discussion of teachers incorporating what motivates them into their classes can be found in the section on **Category 9**, origins of beliefs about motivation.

In sum, the fact that these teachers had beliefs related to the teacher's motivation would not surprise Dornyei (2001) who concluded that "teachers are powerful *motivational socialisers*" (p.35). Given this, it is no coincidence that in his 10 commandments for motivating language learners, Dornyei (1998) lists "Set a

personal example with your own behavior” as the first commandment. As a further example, Svinicki’s (2004 p. 167) 1st of “Seven Strategies for Enhancing Student Motivation” is “Be a good role model of appropriate motivation.” As mentioned previously, the teachers’ beliefs about the influence of their own motivation on the students and the motivation of the students on the teachers would seem to suggest that there is group dimension of language learning motivation. Additionally, the connection between teachers’ personal motivating experiences as a learner and what they try to do to motivate their own students, which was mentioned by several of the teachers, is one of the main reasons why I think the present study may be important. This would provide a possible connection between teacher beliefs & experiences and classroom practices. A summary of the beliefs related to the motivated teacher is presented in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2 – Category 2: the motivated teacher

Belief	Teachers with Belief
If the teacher is motivated, the students will be motivated.	2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11
What motivates or has motivated the teacher will motivate their students.	3, 4, 5, 7
If the students are motivated (or demotivated), it can motivate (or demotivate) the teacher.	7, 9, 11

Category 3: The motivated student

Every teacher interviewed had something to say about what they considered to be a motivated student. Their comments made it clear that they frequently

considered the motivation of their students as they taught their classes. Ten of eleven teachers expressed a common belief that **what** students **do**, in terms of classroom tasks, was a way to tell if the students were motivated. The common tasks attributed to motivated students, and the number of teachers who mentioned them, are as follows:

- Come to class – 3
- Do homework – 4
- Participate in class – 5
- Are engaged – 3
- Ask questions – 2
- Take notes – 2
- Take risks – 1
- Do more than they are asked – 3

However, for four of eleven teachers it was not just what the students did, but **how** they did it that showed motivation. They used words like happy, quickness, and excited to describe **how** the motivated student carried out classroom tasks. Another less common belief expressed by three teachers was that what students **say** is an effective measure of motivation. For two of the teachers, complaints and criticism from the students were signs that the students were not motivated. Conversely, **Eric** noted the following: “Some of them [students] will say that they are learning a lot and they get real excited and they want to talk to me about it. Then it’s not a big secret to me that they are motivated.”

In addition to inferring motivation from what students do, how they do it, and what they say, eight of eleven teachers mentioned that they could gauge motivation from physical demeanor. Specifically, they noted that body language indicates

motivation. For example, **Amy** said, “I have a student who is not motivated in my class. I can’t feel them clicking in. Their body language is bad and they are in a slouch.” Several teachers suggested that “leaning forward” was a sign of a motivated student. Others felt that head nodding was a sure sign of motivation. Interestingly enough, the most mentioned physical sign of motivation was the eyes. Five teachers referred to a “light in the eyes” or “eye contact” as signs of a motivated student. **Karen** stated that for the motivated students “There’s the extra light bulb that you can see in their eyes that’s on when they are in the class.”

In addition to in-class cues to student motivation, six of the teachers confessed that they make judgments about student motivation well before a course begins. They claimed to do this based on what they knew about the kind of student who would register for their classes. Here are the comments of several teachers who explain how they determined student motivation before the students arrived:

Amy: I would just repeat that this particular place where we are working at is attracting people who are motivated. It is an expensive program. They’ve invested a lot of money to arrive here and to pay for the course, which already shows they have a lot of motivation for their goals.

Debbie: In lectures and talks to people who come on a voluntary basis without paying, motivation is not an issue. I taught writing to native speakers for many years at another university, a minority university, at the height of the black power movement. The students were not very motivated. The students were not very academically successful. When people don’t want to learn and are facing classes that they don’t want to take, it is very difficult. Writing is difficult enough without having to be required to take it. I’ve been teaching in Mexico – makes me appreciate the motivation of our students here. English is more desired in theory than in practice – their lives are very comfortable without English.

Frida: When I taught for the Turkish Air Force, the cadets were already motivated. They would say, '[Frida] make sure that you are teaching us right because our life depends on it.' When I was teaching little ones, they were not motivated because they were there because their parents wanted them to be there. So, it depends on what kind of students you have.

In summary, more than half of the teachers reported making judgments about student motivation based on a variety of factors before the classes ever began.

Two other less common beliefs about the motivated student also emerged from the interviews. One was the belief that students were always motivated, maybe just not for what was happening in class. Four teachers specifically mentioned that students were always motivated. **Jacob** viewed this idea on a very general level. He said, "It's a universal given. Without motivation, people wouldn't be doing anything. I mean if there were no motivation, you know, I think students wouldn't be here, I wouldn't be here, we wouldn't exist." For **Carl** and **Helen** it was not a question of a student being motivated or not; it was an issue of focus.

Carl: "I think students are always motivated. You look at their actions and infer motivation, but that is tricky because you don't know why they are there. Maybe the class hasn't connected with them, it wasn't what they expected, you know, my teaching style wasn't what they expected. Or, you know, they are here for other means. They are here to have a broader cultural travel experience, and they've got nothing against the course, but it's kind of a means to a different end."

Meanwhile **Helen** added, "I have students motivated to interact with other people and do all of their learning on the streets. They are highly motivated, just not to come to class and learn English."

The second less common belief about the motivated student was that teachers needed to be careful when assessing motivation because individual motivation is dynamic not static. **Karen** illustrated her belief in the dynamic view of student motivation through the following experience:

I know a student now who hit the 4-week slump. His teacher considered him to be very motivated, but he actually cried with his teacher in his office hours about things because he thought his English was really good and he is now learning over time that his English is not as good as he thinks it is. And so he's having a reality check and his motivation is decreasing.

This belief seems to recognize a temporal dimension to student motivation.

At least three of the beliefs from this category are worthy of further commentary. First, a common belief was that these teachers sensed that students' body language and participation in class activities indicated student motivation. Cultural differences in learning could have implications for teachers who draw conclusions about student motivation based on some of the variables mentioned by the group of teachers in this study. Certainly the appropriateness of eye-contact with the teacher, class participation, acting in a way that makes one stand out from his/her peers, or verbalizing pleasure with a course varies from country to country and culture to culture. Second, the less common belief that all students were motivated in some way, just not for what might be happening in class seems to find support in Alderman's (2008) assertion that "When people attempt more goals than they can handle, one or more of the goals may result in failure or one may become dominant." Finally, Williams and Burden's (1997) and Dornyei and Otto's (1998) models of motivation acknowledge what two teachers of the teachers in this study verbalized:

Motivation is not static in an individual; it varies over time. **Table 4.3** provides a summary of the beliefs about the motivated student.

Table 4.3 – Category 3: the motivated student

Belief	Teachers with Belief
You can tell if a student is motivated by the tasks they do in class.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
You can tell if a student is motivated based on physical demeanor/clues .	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 11
You can tell if a student is motivated before he/she comes to class.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
You can tell if a student is motivated by how they participate in learning activities.	1, 2, 7, 9
You can tell if a student is motivated by what they say .	5, 6, 7
Students are always motivated	3, 8, 10
Student motivation is always changing	9, 11

Category 4 – The Motivated Class

Initially, this category and the previous one, the motivated student, were treated as a single grouping of beliefs. However, there were a sufficient number of comments that related only to the class as a whole and/or classroom dynamics, that a separate category was warranted. The first theme that emerged were beliefs about the ideal teaching situation for motivation – required vs. voluntary classes. These beliefs stood out because of the contrasting opinions on this topic. Most of the instructors described having taught in similar classes/teaching situations, yet many held exact opposite beliefs about the inherent motivation of the students in

those same classes. To illustrate this point, I have provided teachers' comments about several of the similar and sometimes identical classes/teaching situations. From these comments, the contrasting teacher beliefs about the general motivation level in those classes are revealed.

Academic Writing/Oral communication (AW/OC)

These courses were required for graduate students who failed an English screening upon arriving at the university where these instructors taught.

Motivated class

Beth: They were glad to be in the class [AW or OC] because they had been in difficult situations in their English for a while, some of them. And so for them, a lot of it was a chance for communication practice, and this motivated them.

Not motivated class

Karen: I think that [lack of motivation] was an issue a lot with the AW classes that we had in the past because those students had no motivation for being there. They were forced to be in classes. Their only motivation was to meet the requirement in order to continue with their regular classes. So that was, I thought, were very hard classes to teach because there was no motivation in them. So you kind of had to provide it to them, or convince them that being in those classes was useful.

Teaching in Mexico

These courses were taught at a bilingual university in Mexico City. Passing the courses was a required part of the undergraduate curriculum. The following are the contrasting comments from three teachers who taught in the same classes at the same program.

Motivated class

Amy: Mexico is the place I taught most recently, and that was a huge class, well huge by our standards, 28 people or something. But everybody had to pass so there was a lot of external pressure. So that class was pretty well motivated.

Not motivated class

Irene: Mexico, that was interesting. Motivation was, you know, that was really hard to motivate them.

Debbie: I've been teaching in Mexico – makes me appreciate the motivation of our students here. English is more desired in theory than in practice – their lives are very comfortable without English.

Survival English for immigrants

Several teachers reported that they had taught survival English for immigrants.

Here are two different opinions on the level of motivation of the students in those classes.

Motivated class

Karen: When I was teaching in Massachusetts, I taught adult education, so those were immigrants from Vietnam, Poland, Brazil, all over the place. And they were motivated. Many of them worked two jobs, had already been in the US 5-15 years and this was the first time that they had the opportunity to take these classes. And they were nine hours a week at night. So after they had already worked their jobs, they came and did the classes. They were very motivated.

Not motivated class

Helen: Well, I guess the easiest to contrast is with students in community education who are here to stay. I find that they should be highly motivated because they have to live in this environment, and yet some of them are and some of them are not. And I think that those who are not are pretty much discouraged because they see it as an impossible task to them. And so they will come and drop out almost immediately. It always concerns me that I haven't been able to find a way to motivate them.

Intensive English Program

Eight of the eleven teachers mentioned how highly motivated the students were in the Intensive English program where they were currently employed. They assumed motivation because the classes were voluntary, cost a lot, and were difficult to apply for (application and immigration documents). However, a couple of teachers (**Carl** and **Karen**) pointed out that they could not make the assumption that the students were there because of a personal choice. They speculated that students might have enrolled because of their parents, school or job requirements, or social pressure. These two teachers also felt that it was wrong to assume that the students were paying for the program out of their own pocket. They suspected that the source of funding could have actually been parents, an employer, the home country government, or a private sponsor. Because of these variations in reasons for choosing to study English and the sources of funding for the program, these two teachers felt that they could not make pre-assumptions about a class. In sum, although many teachers expressed a common belief that they could infer a lot about a class's motivation based on at least 3 factors (voluntary enrollment, cost, relationship to personal goals), two teachers felt that it was not wise to make pre-assumptions.

In summary, unlike the teachers' personal definitions of motivation, the teacher beliefs related to the various classes and teaching situations did seem to divide nicely down extrinsic and intrinsic lines. The teachers who felt that extrinsic motivation was important focused on the "required" aspect of the classes with high

stakes, tests, and grades. For them, these high-pressure classes were very motivating. On the other hand, teachers who believed that intrinsic motivation was more important emphasized that classes with personal choice, relevance, and opportunity were the more motivated groups. There is, of course, some truth in both views.

The less common beliefs about the motivated class clustered around two qualities of a motivated class: unity and buy in. Unity was expressed in terms of everyone in class being on the “same page,” doing the same thing at the same time, and keeping focused. According to the teachers, buy in meant that the students understood what the teachers were doing, how it related to the students’ goals, and that the teacher could “pull it off.” The teachers noted that when unity and buy in were present, their classes were motivated. The absence of these two qualities lessened the motivation of the class as a whole. According to **Carl**, “They [the motivated class] seem to be more willing to buy into the course is what I’m saying.” **Amy** agreed. “Well you have to have buy-in. You can’t do this if everyone in the class rejects, for example, the fact that reading fast is something they need.” Related to unity, several teachers felt this was a key to the motivated class. **Eric** noted that his class had a real “rhythm” because everyone participated, did their homework, and learned the routines in the class. Several teachers noted that often their classes were divided into two groups: those who wanted to learn English and those who wanted to prepare for the TOEFL. They felt that these classes were less motivated because they were not unified. These teachers’ beliefs about the effects of group unity and

buy in seem to support the group aspect of motivation proposed by Swezey et al. (1994): “Action within groups might show motivational characteristics which stem from the group as a social unit rather than from individual members.”

In conclusion, there was a difference of opinion amongst the teachers on what constituted the ideal situation for motivation: required class or optional. These differences seem to be rooted in differing beliefs about the merits of intrinsic or extrinsic motives. There was additional discussion about whether a teacher could or should make pre-assumptions about student motivation for a given class, since the teacher may not really have the full picture. However, some teachers did agree on and were able to identify two characteristics of motivated classes: buy in and unity. A summary of the beliefs related to the motivated class is found in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4 – Category 4: the motivated class

Belief	Teachers with Belief
Students in voluntary classes are typically motivated.	4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11
Students in required classes are typically not motivated.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
Classes with unity are motivated	2, 4, 5
It is difficult to tell if a class as a whole is motivated based on the class being voluntary or required.	8, 11
Students in required classes are typically motivated.	1, 2
Classes with buy in are motivated	1, 3

Category 5 - Teacher impact on student motivation

Only one of the eleven teachers in this study did not directly express belief statements related to the teacher's impact on and responsibility for student motivation. The common belief was that teachers could influence the motivation of their students. The discussion of the teachers' definitions of motivation in **Category 1** hinted that the nature of that influence could be based on teacher beliefs about motivation. Furthermore, the discussion in **Category 8, *strategies for motivating students***, reveals the specific strategies individual teachers believe they can implement to motivate students. In relation to the current category, most of the teachers felt that they could influence student motivation, but there was some disagreement on who had the primary impact on and/or responsibility for motivation in the classroom.

The teachers in the present study were mostly optimistic about their role and responsibility for motivating students. Three teachers felt their role was the most important in student motivation. **Gina** was certain of the teacher's role when she stated that in terms of motivation, "The teacher makes the class, in my opinion. For me a teacher could kill a topic or make a topic, and it wouldn't necessarily be anything that I was interested in initially. But the teacher can make it fascinating and help you understand and feel like you got it. Conversely, a boring teacher can put you to sleep." **Eric** added, "I think that the teacher probably has more control [over motivation] than we may think the teacher does in a lot of ways. It's a lot of responsibility." I think it is important to note that none of the teachers who voiced a

pure “reason” definition of motivation in **Category 1** expressed the belief that their role was the most important in motivating students. This would make sense given that the “reason” teachers felt that students bring most of the motivation with them. It is the teachers’ job to simply connect what they are doing in class to the existing student motives. As a possible result, the teachers with “reason” definitions of motivation showed perfect consistency by not expressing later beliefs about teachers being the key to motivation in the classroom.

Several other teachers expressed beliefs that tempered their effect on student motivation. Among these teachers were a couple of the “reason” teachers. **Karen** put it this way: “I can’t affect their fundamental motivation, as far as what they are doing there, but maybe as far as what they are doing on Tuesday from 1-3 or, you know, some portion of it. And I guess that’s more their motivation to engage or participate at that particular moment.” **Irene** echoed those thoughts when she said, “I really think that motivation is the energy that students bring to the class. You can start off with a lot of energy, but it is eventually going to decrease, decrease, decrease, decrease until they can’t do any more. This is where the teacher comes in. My job is to do everything I can to help them sustain that motivation.” **Helen** cautiously added, “I mean, I think we all work constantly on that thing that is going to motivate them in whatever it is that our curriculum says that we need to cover at this point. But maybe, you know, I probably feel 50-60% successful.”

Three teachers put the responsibility of student motivation on the students, not themselves as teachers. For example, **Amy** and **Carl** didn’t really say that they

couldn't impact student motivation; they just felt that motivation was not necessarily their responsibility. Here are two comments from **Carl** that reveal this sentiment:

Sometimes I'm looking at our curriculum and what it seems to call for, and I'm saying, well, they chose to take the course. So their motivation is kind of already fixed.

I tend to feel that my job is to teach the students that come through my door, so at some level I am interested in their motivation and at some level I don't care. You're in my room and this is what you are going to do. I mean, you can think what you want, but we are going to do these activities. And so I don't really care if you are unmotivated.

Amy expressed similar beliefs in the following statement:

To some extent, the student is buying a course. Here is a product, and we go through some process in our program to say, do you want to buy this general program or do you want to buy this academic program? So if you've bought the academic program, it's hardly worth the point in negotiating whether or not we are going to do an academic program. So, I think wondering what to do to get the students to be motivated is overblown.

Debbie didn't necessarily feel that it wasn't her responsibility to motivate, but that she may not be the primary motivational influence in her classes. She came to this realization over time. She expressed the following: "The longer I teach, the less I feel that I have to do with it. I used to think that I was the agent of this magic, but now I don't." When asked if this meant that she felt that she could no longer effect student motivation, she replied, "I no longer feel that my role is quite as pivotal as before. I have a more measured sense of my role."

In summary, as far as student/classroom motivation, for some teachers the teacher made the class; for others it was a combination of student and teacher. For

one teacher, the students were the primary agent of motivation in the classroom. For two teachers, it didn't matter who could influence motivation, they felt that it was the students' responsibility for motivation in the classroom. This belief, of course, could have implications for future training on motivation. If a teacher does not believe that it is their responsibility to motivate their students, then they may not be receptive to any training on classroom motivation. Overall, the teachers stayed true to their original definitions of motivation as they related to their beliefs about their role in student motivation. A summary of the beliefs related to teacher impact on student motivation is found in **Table 4.5**.

Table 4.5 – Category 5: teacher impact on student motivation

Belief	Teachers with Belief
Student motivation in the classroom is primarily the result and of the motivation students bring to the class.	1, 3, 4
Student motivation in the classroom is primarily the result of what the teacher brings to the class.	2, 7, 5
Student motivation in the classroom is more or less an equal combination of what the students and the teacher bring to the class.	6, 8, 9, 11

Category 6 - Lesson Planning and Motivation

This category emerged from comments by seven of the eleven teachers related to lesson planning and motivation. These comments provided insight into how teachers incorporate motivation beliefs into the lesson planning process. There

were no common beliefs in this category (6+ teachers). Part of is due to the fact that only seven of eleven teachers talked about motivation and its impact on their lesson planning. Lack of common beliefs in this category may also be the result of less formal lesson planning procedures. Most of the teachers in this study were experienced, and as a result, were able to do more informal planning.

Five of the teachers did mention that they regularly checked their lesson plans to make sure that what they were planning matched the needs of their students, or that they could at least explain to the students the rationale for what happened in class. For example, **Beth** said, “You know, just with even that I am always trying to sell whatever I am doing. How it’s going to help them and why it is important, and when they are gong to use it.” **Helen** considered similar issues when planning her lessons. She asked herself, “Why are they doing this? What is the purpose of it?” Finally, **Eric** added “I think that one of the first questions that I have to ask myself after seeing what I have to do is how can I make them want to do this? What can I do to make it clear to them that they need it?” Explaining rationale and matching lesson plans to student needs were both mentioned as potentially effective ways to raise the value of the course.

Another consideration that teachers mentioned during the lesson-planning phase was finding ways to make class more fun. **Beth** noted that “anytime I can turn it into a game, it’s great.” Similarly, **Gina** explained that she is always thinking about her classes in one way or another so that “fun” and “creative” ideas can pop into her

head at anytime. **Helen** revealed how she thinks about both rationale and fun as she plans:

Well, you know, I tend to be a linear planner. Well, okay, I need to introduce this, now I need to practice this, now I need to apply this, and you know, and if I can just think of activities that practice whatever I want them to do. Sometimes it seems a little dry if I can't think of a hook, a new context, a new need for them to really enjoy or realize that they need it. Then it can get a little dry.

Making classes fun also seems to connect to the value construct found in several motivation theories. Certainly fun and creativity in lessons have the potential to feed into intrinsic values of *novelty* and *pleasantness*.

In addition to considering student needs/rationale for class activities and planning to make activities more fun, two instructors mentioned that the creation of course goals, as part of lesson planning, was important for motivation. **Amy** said, "and you consciously say, 'what am I going to accomplish in these 3 weeks?' and you make a plan and goals. So, if you don't have anything laid out that you are going to follow, then you too are lost and it is hard to motivate your students to buy in to what you are doing." **Carl** added a simple approach related to lesson planning and goals. According to him, the students had purchased a course with curricular goals. To keep them motivated all he had to do was stick to those goals. He stated, "There's goals for the course. Those guide what I do in class. For each component of the class, I give a goal there, and this keeps me on track, and it keeps them happy."

One additional thought on motivation and lesson planning was shared by **Beth**. She explained that in her lesson planning it was important to set up regular places

where she drew the students' attention to what she was going to do, what she had done, and what they had learned. Here is her explanation:

So you've got 12 chapters in this book and you can't do all 12 and you've identified 8 of them that you think are top notch to do. So, how are you going to do them and how are you going to lay them out. And let them [the students] be with you on that and tell them why you picked them. Let them in on the game plan – so that they can know there is a game plan in place and that they are achieving the plan and hopefully the plan meets their needs and you talk about that and you see how to make it meet their needs.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to the four teachers who did not have any comments related to lesson planning and motivation, two other teachers confessed that they did not think about motivation when planning their lessons. For one of them, consideration for motivation was either an “unconscious” act or something that happened in the classroom. The following question by the interviewer and the teacher's response revealed this belief:

Interviewer: So, when you are planning your classes, I mean at the beginning of the semester and when you are planning each lesson, do you think about motivation?

Amy: I wish I could say I do, (pause) but it's more unconscious and second nature at this point. I've been teaching a long time, so I can walk into a classroom not having planned anything related to motivation, not having planned a thing, not having it on my mind, and have something that occurs in the class., it could be the student affect, it could be a question, it could be my mood, I don't know, and something will happen that let's me know that “we need to stop today. I'm gonna change the plan.” It's almost like... it's time for us to refocus ourselves. And you don't always know when it's going to come up. I don't know how to plan it. I know that one must have those. So every now and then, you have to do it. But I am afraid that I am beyond scheduling such a thing. “

The other teacher who admitted to not considering motivation in lesson planning explained that motivation was implicit in effective teaching methods, so she did not need to consider motivation separately. In other words, her consideration for motivation was implemented by choosing effective teaching methods.

In summary, many of the teachers provided comments that revealed beliefs about lesson planning and motivation. Some of them explained that they consciously considered 1) how what they planned to do in class related to the needs of the students or 2) whether they could explain why they did what they did in class. In addition, some teachers considered ways to make their class and activities more palatable and fun. Setting goals and making those known to the students was also mentioned as a way to address motivation in lesson planning. I think it is important to note that although there were no common beliefs about motivation and lesson planning, the beliefs that were vocalized fit nicely into aspects of many of the more well-known theories of motivation. A perfect example is Svinicki's (2004) "amalgamated theory" of motivation, based on several other motivation models. She proposed that "The strength of the motivation is then a function of the type of goal selected, the value of the goal being pursued in relationship to other goals, and the learners' beliefs in their own ability to achieve the goal." As a group these teachers mentioned beliefs that supported all three of these factors (goals, value, expectancy) as important to lesson planning and motivation. **Table 4.6** contains a summary of the beliefs in this category.

Table 4.6 – Category 6 – Lesson planning and motivation

Belief	Teachers with Belief
As part of my lesson planning, I make sure that what I am planning will meet student needs so that they will be more motivated.	1, 2, 3, 4, 8
As part of my lesson planning, I make sure that I have a clear rationale for what I am doing so that they will be more motivated.	2, 3, 4, 7
As part of my lesson planning, I think of ways to be fun and creative so that the students will be more motivated.	2, 7, 8
Setting goals is an important part of lesson planning to help students be more motivated.	1, 3
I don't think about motivation when I am planning my lessons.	1, 11
Motivation is inherent in good lesson planning/teaching methods.	1
I plan for times to show the students that they have learned in order to improve their motivation.	1
No comments on lesson planning and motivation	5, 6, 9, 10

Category #7 – Factors that negatively impact motivation

There are many classroom variables that do not increase motivation but that also do not necessarily decrease the overall motivation of a student or class; I would call these variables motivation neutral. The beliefs in **Category 7** do not include motivation neutral variables. In this category, I have grouped the teachers' comments related to factors that they believed to negatively impact student motivation (de-motivators). Some of these de-motivators were accompanied by counter-acting teaching strategies, but many were not, which is why I felt that de-

motivators deserved their own category. The teachers felt that some of the de-motivating factors were beyond their control, such as students being tired, sick, or hungry, or students having competing motives. However, for other de-motivating factors, such as poor group dynamics and differences between teacher and student expectations, the teachers felt that they did have some control. Again, the techniques for neutralizing the effects some of these de-motivators will be discussed in **Category 8**. In this section, **Category 7**, the de-motivating factors are simply grouped and discussed.

The most common factor that the teachers mentioned as having a negative impact on motivation was poor class dynamics. The teachers all seemed to agree that language learning, unlike learning in other situations, required human interaction. Some of this was student-to-student and some was between teacher and student. They noted that when this interaction was out of sync for any reason, it had the potential to diminish student motivation in a language class. Speaking of a specific class, **Debbie** explained, “My grammar class is just hanging on. Individual dynamics make it difficult. There is no sense of togetherness and enjoyment.” **Eric** commented on this issue in more general terms: “I think that we all had the experience where we have students that have conflict with one particular student, or there is someone with a strong personality maybe, if I can use that word. So you know there’s a personality conflict and this does seem to affect the class motivation.” **Irene** expanded on the problem of student conflict: “But sometimes in the classroom they don’t like so and so. They don’t like to work with so and so.

They will be so concentrated on the social aspect of it that they are not concentrated on the purpose of it.” She also added an insightful comment about the alienated student.

I’ve only had two classes where there was a student that nobody wanted to work with. That can be de-motivating for the person who nobody wants to work with. Sometimes it’s physical. Sometimes it’s a learning disability. Some people feel frustrated because they have to be paired with that person and they would rather be paired with someone who is higher than them because they can talk more. Whatever the reason, it is de-motivating.

It should be noted that when talking about “the motivated class,” the teachers mentioned that effective class dynamics were key, so it stands to reason that they would identify poor classroom dynamics as a common de-motivator.

In addition to poor class dynamics, the teachers identified two other de-motivators. One centered on real life factors and the other on competing motivators. The teachers defined real life factors as problems such as being hungry, tired, sick, depressed, anxious, or in culture shock. These problems seemed to draw the students’ attention away from the classroom. These factors seem most like the variables in the lower levels of Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy. For **Amy**, this was just something a teacher must account for. She revealed, “I mean you can do certain things to force them to become engaged, but if they are totally distracted or if they are ill, or if something else is going on or troublesome, they may or they may not give you 100%.” **Gina** discussed one student who couldn’t stay awake in class. “I feel like I ought to be able to engage him. And I can’t work with that [him falling asleep] and engage the rest of the class, so we just nudge him and he tries to

participate.” **Irene** adds, “This one student is very motivated to learn English, but at 9 o’clock it’s just not going to happen. You know, forget it.” For **Karen** the difficulty was a matter of sustaining student focus over time and dealing with culture shock. She noted, “I think that the majority of them are motivated, but during the semester it ebbs and flows depending on culture shock and coming close to deadlines.”

Other beliefs about real-life de-motivating factors correlated to the general situation of the class or the students. This related to a variety of factors that the teachers felt were beyond their control but that could negatively impact student motivation. **Carl** remembered one particularly un-motivated class:

I don’t remember what semester it was, but I know it was one of these late afternoon grammar classes and it was out of this building. It was in some room with fixed seats and it was in a big lecture hall. It wasn’t an ideal situation and the books weren’t ideal either, and there could have been a lot of reasons. I did the best I could. And it was grammar. And grammar, for some students they are highly interested in it, but for others they are only there because they need to get their I-20 and they have to take the class, so they do.

Another teacher, **Irene**, expressed similar thoughts in more general terms: “And I feel like you can explain, and rationalize, and be creative, but if the student is just in another place emotionally, mentally, intellectually, physically, I don’t think that you can jump down their throats with motivation.”

In addition to the real-life factors teachers mentioned, competing goals in other areas of life were identified as de-motivators. The teachers gave examples of family duties, work, and other goal areas as competing motivators. Several teachers spoke

about students' family situations as strong competing motives. **Frida** remembered the situation of one of her students:

I am not sure with specific students if it is a matter of motivation to learn English or other factors that prohibited them from being successful. I have one student and she has a nine year old. And she is alone here with the child, and the child goes to school. And so this is a big commitment of her time. She has to make sure that dinner is ready for him, and help him with his homework, and all of those things. And then she has to do her homework. So, she is more motivated to help her son improve his English than, you know, doing her own thing.

Eric provided a more general example: "I have Koreans in my classes who are surrounded by other Koreans all the time, and who don't want to get to know Americans or their culture. I'm not judging one way or another, but it just let's me know where they are and what motivates or doesn't motivate them." Finally, **Jacob** explained that students have "more competing motivating factors than they are probably aware of because a lot of them are subconscious." Thus, for these teachers, competing goal areas were obstacles to motivation in their classes. The difficulty of balancing multiple goals, as supported by Alderman (2008) and Wentzel (2000), is present in these teachers' beliefs.

Another less common belief, expressed by five teachers, centered on the problems caused by differences in teacher and student expectations. These expectations could relate to class activities or the over-all objectives of the course, but the consensus among these five teachers was that differences in expectations diminished student motivation. **Gina** explained in broad terms, "I've come to recognize that I kind of have to incorporate my philosophy and the desire of our

customer population or I lose their interest.” **Eric** provided an example of a specific clash of opinions with one of his students.

She should be able to write two and a half pages in my opinion, double spaced, if she were doing what I feel like she were doing. And we had a discussion about it, and I remember that I said that she needed to do a lot of memorization of sentences structure. And she said, “well that’s not the current belief about writing instruction.” Or something like that. And I told her that she was going to have to trust me or she wouldn’t improve. She didn’t like that so we had a difficult time for the rest of the semester.

Again, these five teachers noted that when teacher and student expectations clashed, it diminished student motivation.

Finally, there were three other infrequent de-motivating factors mentioned by 3 separate teachers. **Jacob** explained that the absence of a “big picture perspective” contributed to a lack of motivation in his classes. **Eric** proposed that when students do not recognize their progress, their motivation decreased over time. Speaking of obstacles to motivation in his textbook, he said, “I don’t think there is any record keeping of cumulative advances. I am thinking specifically of the listening book. It has some kind of general questions after each listening and then some more specific questions, but there is not enough of the questions for them to know if they are making progress in their listening or not.” It appears that both of these problems, lack of big picture perspective and lack of progress markers, could impact the students’ expectancy for success in a language class. The third belief, provided by **Debbie**, was that the absence of choice was a significant de-motivator. She felt that because students have a variety of interests, forcing them to speak or write about topics that the teacher chose would be less motivating. As mentioned previously,

choice is intrinsically motivating and can add value to any class or activity, and

Debbie seems to agree.

In conclusion, the teachers felt that poor class dynamics was the biggest factor that contributed to decreased motivation. Real-life factors, competing goals, and other external conditions were also identified as reasons for a lack of motivation. In addition, some teachers proposed that differing expectations between student and teacher lessened student motivation. Finally, three teachers identified classes lacking perspective, progress markers, and choice as also negatively impacting motivation. **Table 4.7** summarizes the beliefs in this category.

Table 4.7 – Category 7 – Factors that negatively impact motivation

Belief	Teacher with belief
Poor class dynamics have a negative impact on student motivation.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11
Often real-life factors have a negative impact on student motivation.	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Competing goals have a negative impact on student motivation.	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
Conflicting student and teacher expectations have a negative impact on student motivation.	3, 5, 7, 8, 11
Lack of choice is a de-motivator for students.	4
Lack of perspective is a de-motivator for students.	10
Lack of progress markers is a de-motivator for students.	5

Category 8: Strategies for motivating students

The “beliefs” I present in this category were inferred from self-reports of strategies that the teachers implemented to increase motivation in their classrooms. The resulting belief statements in this category resemble what is found in most practical guides to motivation more than the beliefs presented in the other 8 categories. As a result, after grouping and discussing the specific strategies, giving a few examples from the teacher interviews, and providing some general comments of my own, I have added an extra section that compares the strategies that these teachers propose with two published lists of practical strategies of motivation written for teachers.

Almost half of the comments made by the teachers in this study focused on what they did to motivate their students. Their descriptions of classroom strategies provided a window into their beliefs about motivation in the classroom. Because of the large number of specific strategies, I have grouped the strategies into two categories: connections and techniques.

Connections

Many of the teachers’ strategies involved creating connections. This makes sense given that they mentioned that the main de-motivator was a lack of connection between students & students and teacher & students, expressed in terms of poor class dynamics. The teachers in this study mentioned four specific types of connections that were important for motivation in an ESL classroom: student-to-

student, student to teacher, teacher lessons to student goals, teacher-lessons to real-life. **Amy** alluded to the importance of all varieties of connections and their relationship to motivation in the following comment: “Well, you’re building a lifeline, a connection back to a hold. It’s webbing yourself into something. As many connections as you can get to the teacher or the subject or the other people: it’s just being connected. I think that the more connected you are, the more motivated you are.” In this discussion of connections, strategies for improving motivation through better student-to-student interaction are grouped into a single category with examples. For each of the other connections, other sub-categories have been identified.

Only one teacher out of eleven did not mention improving student relationships as a way to improve motivation. For **Amy** this begins from the first day of class.

One of the things I do is I try to develop some level of personal involvement with each other. I think that a class that know each other and talks to each other will collectively have more motivation than a class where everybody comes together but feel isolated. So, I work hard on getting them to learn names and knowing where people are from. A lot of spirit building, team building, group involvement, so that everyone feels known and acknowledged.

For other teachers, connections had more to do with pairing and group interaction.

Debbie was asked if there was anything she did to build cohesion in her classes.

She replied, “Assign them groups, or allow them to choose their own partners, if there is equal participation. I don’t single people out. Contain the talkers and prod the silent ones.”

In addition to improving student-to-student interactions, all but one of the teachers mentioned improving student to teacher connections as a means of motivating their students. They seemed to feel that better teacher-student relationships increased students' trust in the teacher and greater expectancy for success. In fact, there was a subset of teachers who felt that there were certain teacher attributes that helped nurture student confidence in the teacher. They mentioned six specific attributes (with the number of teachers at the end of each):

- Teacher appearance – dress and grooming: 1
- Trust in teacher – making the students feel safe and comfortable: 2
- Teacher preparedness – executing quality lessons without busy work: 2
- Teacher going the extra mile – to show the students that they cared: 1
- Teacher humor – to make the class enjoyable: 1
- Teacher playing specific roles – as coach, psychiatrist, cheerleader: 3

Another teacher-student connection mentioned by two teachers focused on clarifying teacher and student expectations for the course or assignments. They felt that any effort to clarify expectations would increase the students' expectancy for success. **Eric** remembered a class that was constantly complaining about having too much homework. Finally he asked them how much time they were spending on his writing assignments. He found out that they were spending twice the amount of time that he wanted them to. After that he started giving them time expectations for his assignments, and then they were then more motivated to do his assignments.

A final belief about the teacher-student relationship was expressed by three teachers. They felt that students were more motivated when they knew that you liked them. **Amy** proposed that the teacher had to “like them enough that they will

like the work at hand.” When asked what it meant to like her students she responded, “Just the normal things that you do when you like someone. You make small talk with them, you notice their new shoes or their haircut, or you ask them stuff about their weekend. Flatter people.” **Gina** added, “I try to be friendly, and I feel friendly. I like my students and it is just more fun if we are all happy and enjoying each other’s company and willing to get along and contribute.”

Besides student-to-student and teacher-to-student connections, another common belief, expressed through various classroom strategies, was that lesson connections to student goals would foster motivation. The teachers who reported this strategy felt that rather than having to create motivation “from scratch” you could tie into students’ existing motives. For example **Eric** talked about a student who didn’t do much homework. **Eric** knew that the student loved motorcycles, so he started assigning him to write or talk about motorcycles, and the student was more motivated to participate. Several teachers noted that in order to connect what they did to student goals the teacher had to know what the students’ goals were. They described formal and informal ways they obtained student goals. Some of the teachers administered a survey at the beginning of the semester to elicit goals. Others picked up on students’ goals in classroom discussions, and other teachers had individual conferences with students to investigate their goals.

After discovering the students’ goals, some of the teachers recognized that many of the goals were too broad and difficult to achieve. As a result, several of the teachers explained that helping the students break their goals down into smaller,

achievable pieces was a way to help motivate them. On the other hand, some teachers felt that their students would get lost in the day-to-day goals and activities in the classroom. This led to confusion and less motivation. These teachers argued that keeping the students focused on the “big picture” was necessary for good motivation. Finally, two teachers proposed that explaining the rationale for what they were doing in class was enough to allow students to make the connections on their own and maintain their motivation.

The last category of connections the teachers mentioned involved connecting the classroom to “real-life” situations. According to the teachers, these were situations that may or may not have anything to do with the students’ goals. **Beth** would have her students share experiences of when they had tried to communicate in English outside of the classroom but were not successful. Then she would create a lesson around that unsuccessful event. **Jacob** found that simply using the students’ own writing and mistakes, rather than examples from a book, provided a better connection to real-life. He said, “every two or three weeks I bring in six or eight sentences from their journals, that we analyze together and figure out. Their extra engagement is because their actual sentence is on the board. This is more real than fixing problems on page 1, 2, 3 in a book.” Two teachers mentioned a specific strategy that is worth special mention. This strategy involved bringing in former students who had already gone through what the current students were experiencing. **Irene** explained that she would invite to her class former students who had moved on to graduate school or to the workplace. She would have them

give testimonials about what they had learned in their ESL classes and how it had been helpful for them in graduate school or in the workplace. According to the teachers this helped motivate the students in two ways. First it showed the students that they could be successful like the former students, and second, that the class they were taking was useful. In total, seven of the teachers felt that connecting their class to real-life situations was an extremely helpful way to motivate their students.

In summary, many of the teachers' strategies for motivating their students focused on making connections. While some of these connections involved people - student to student and teacher to student - others involved things - student goals to classroom lessons and classroom lessons to real-life. In the end, all four of these connections were common beliefs amongst these teachers. The second broad category of strategies for motivating students is loosely grouped around teaching techniques. These strategies will be presented according to the number of teachers who mentioned them.

Teaching Techniques

The most popular technique these teachers offered for motivating students was to provide variety. Time after time they mentioned that variety was the key to keeping the students from getting bored and a way to keep them motivated. Providing variety involved variations in 1) interaction – individual work, class activities, small groups, or partners 2) language skill – speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, and 3) activity – board work, book work, games, quizzes

discussions, lectures. The teachers felt that when there was variety, the students were engaged and motivated.

Equally motivating, according to these teachers, was providing progress markers and feedback. These teachers felt that if students didn't know how well they were doing, they couldn't be motivated. **Beth** explained that she would videotape the students' first speech in the semester and not show it to them until midterm. Then she would have them compare them to their midterm speeches so that they could see their progress. **Eric** did something similar in his writing classes:

One thing that I do is have samples of their language in like before and after scenarios. And this works especially well for writing, where they count the number of errors. They have an error percentage for each paper and they can map that out. And that is very motivating for them because they can see that they are making progress. And when they actually see that, it's very tangible.

For **Gina** it was as simple as "every person knowing that they are doing something good and that there are some things that they can improve." A total of eight teachers felt that progress markers and feedback were a sure way to increase motivation.

The final common strategy for increasing motivation was to make class fun. The majority of the teachers in this study repeatedly talked about the importance of fun in class. There was no consensus about what "fun" was. For some teachers it involved games, for others humor or movies, for still others movement or mysteries. Whatever the source of the fun, the teachers agreed that motivation increased. In

sum, variety, feedback and progress markers, and fun were the common motivational teaching techniques reported by these teachers.

The next group of motivational teaching techniques, four in total, were less common. The first involved providing students with rewards. These rewards ranged from candy to better grades to early release from class. The four teachers who used rewards to motivate their students felt that even if the results were temporary, they were important. For one teacher, the rewards were often intangible. **Helen** noticed that “most students are driven by good grades and scores, and to achieve the teacher’s approval. And I think that they just want to get something, so we set up tests and quizzes and some sort of showing that they can shine in the classroom.” The teachers that used candy as a reward noted that over time it could be a rather expensive way to motivate.

The second less common teaching strategy was that purposeful routines in a class could go a long way towards motivating students. These teachers felt that if students already knew what they were supposed to do, in terms of the instructions for an activity, they would be more successful at that activity, and as a result have more motivation. **Amy** provided some insightful comments about how routines motivated her students:

How is the routine helpful? Well, it’s easy to get into if you know what it is, and if you do the same thing several times, you typically get better at it. If everything is novel every time you hit it, it’s hard to feel progress or know where you stand or to ever have a comfort level where you can stop worrying about your performance or being uncertain if you know what you are doing and just go ahead and get better, improve. So, I think a routine is helpful for motivation.

In the third less common technique, three teachers argued that classrooms where the students were given meaningful choices were motivating. They felt that even within a curriculum, students could choose the topics of the required activities or even the order that required topics would be covered in a class. These teachers felt that the more in control the students felt, the greater their motivation. In the final less common strategy, teachers revealed the belief that a positive classroom environment was key to student motivation. This environment included both the physical space and the over-all feeling of the classroom. **Debbie** mentioned that she would make sure that the lights were turned on and the blinds were opened before the students arrived so that they would feel better when they came to class. Other teachers talked about decorating their rooms with pictures and maps as a way to improve the classroom environment. For other teachers, creating a positive environment meant making sure that everyone felt relaxed and comfortable. These teachers made sure that students felt that they could be risk-takers without being picked on by other students or the teachers themselves. In the end, these teachers felt that a positive classroom environment would motivate the students to be there and participate.

There were three strategies that were mentioned by 2 teachers each. The first was interesting because it involved showing the students the relationship between their effort and their progress. Two teachers noted that when their students did poorly in their classes, it was often because they were just studying for the TOEFL

and had not been turning in their homework or trying to use English outside of class. The students would get frustrated when they weren't progressing in their English, so the teachers had to point out that their effort in certain areas, like studying for the TOEFL, might not translate into improvement in other areas, like learning English. This allowed the students to maintain more positive feelings about their ability in English even when they were performing poorly in the class.

Two other teachers contended that students were motivated when they did not have tests. These teachers felt that tests focused too much on one-time performances and not enough on the processes of learning. They felt that when students recognized that grades and praise were based on daily effort and participation rather than on one-time assessment, they were more willing to participate and be motivated on a regular basis. A final strategy suggested by two teachers involved incorporating movement into the classroom as a means of motivating students. They felt this would keep sleepy students awake and engaged in their classes.

There were six additional less common strategies that were mentioned by one teacher each. Five of these strategies were mentioned by the same teacher: **Irene**.

The single teacher strategies are as follows:

- Use competition - this is intrinsically motivating
- Challenge students – if it is too easy they won't engage in the activity
- Review class material – make sure they know where they are and what they have learned
- Hold students accountable – if you don't they won't do the work
- Teach students strategies – this raises their confidence in their abilities

- Frontload assignments – the students are always more motivated early in the semester rather than later in the semester

A summary of all of the strategies reported by the teachers is found in **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8 – Category 8 – Strategies for motivating students

Belief/Strategy	Teachers with belief/strategy
<u>Connections</u>	
I motivate my students by doing specific things to improve student interactions/relationships.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
I motivate my students by doing specific things to improve my interaction with my students.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11
Certain teacher attributes help motivate my students	1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10
Teacher appearance	5
Trust in teacher	4, 5
Teacher preparedness	1, 2
Teacher going the extra mile	10
Teacher humor	1
Teacher roles	2, 9, 10
I motivate my students by clarifying teacher and student expectations.	5, 8
I motivate my students by liking them.	1, 4, 7
I motivate my students by connecting what I teach to their goals.	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
I ask my students what their goals are.	5, 6, 10, 11
I motivate my students by breaking down their goals into smaller pieces.	1, 3, 5, 8, 11
I motivate my students by keeping them focused on the big picture.	1, 4, 5, 7, 9
I motivate my students by explaining the rationale of what I do in class.	2, 3
I motivate my students by connecting what I teach to real-life situations.	1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11
I provide testimonials from former students who have been successful in order to motivate my students.	2, 9

<u>Teaching Techniques</u>	
I motivate my students by providing variety in my class.	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
I motivate my students by providing progress markers and feedback	1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
I motivate my students by making my class fun.	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11
I motivate my students by keeping them focused and busy.	2, 6, 8, 9
I motivate my students by giving rewards.	2, 7, 8, 9
I motivate my students through purposeful routines.	1, 5, 8
I motivate my students by giving them choices.	3, 4, 11
I motivate my students through a positive classroom environment.	4, 5, 9
I motivate my students by helping them see the relationship between effort and progress.	2, 10
I motivate my students by not giving tests.	6, 10
I motivate students by incorporating movement in my class.	6, 9
I motivate my students through competition.	2
I motivate my students by challenging them.	7
I motivate my students by reviewing class material.	9
I motivate my students by holding them accountable.	9
I motivate my students by teaching them strategies for learning.	9
I motivate my students by frontloading assignments in the beginning of the semester.	9
I motivate my students with visually pleasing materials.	9

As mentioned earlier, these teachers' self-reported strategies for increasing motivation are similar to the kinds of suggestions given in various practical guides for motivating students. The teachers in this study provided 7 common strategies

(shared by 6 or more teachers) and 11 less common strategies (shared by 3-5 teachers) for motivating students. I felt that it would be important and interesting to compare what these teachers said to the strategies provided by other researchers who offer practical strategies for motivating students. I will compare these teachers' list of 7 common strategies to two authors' lists: one in second language learning and the other in educational psychology.

In language learning, Zoltan Dornyei offers the greatest volume of practical advice on motivation for teachers in language classrooms. His study, conducted with Csizér, which resulted in the "Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners" (1998), was expanded in his book *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom* (2001). The expansion didn't necessarily change the 10 commandments but divided their application into 3 distinct phases and further subdivided the commandments into 135 specific strategies. For ease of comparison, and because his later strategies were all based on the original 10, I will use the original 10 as the basis for comparison. The original 10 commandments are as follows:

- 1) Set a personal example with your own behavior.
- 2) Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere.
- 3) Present the tasks properly.
- 4) Develop a good relationship with the learners.
- 5) Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
- 6) Make the language classes interesting.
- 7) Promote learner autonomy.
- 8) Personalize the learning process.
- 9) Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
- 10) Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

The 7 common beliefs among the teachers in the present study were as follows:

- 1) I motivate my students by doing specific things to improve student interactions/relationships.
- 2) I motivate my students by doing specific things to improve my interaction/relationship with my students.
- 3) I motivate my students by connecting what I teach to their goals.
- 4) I motivate my students by connecting what I teach to real-life situations.
- 5) I motivate my students by providing variety in my class.
- 6) I motivate my students by providing progress markers and feedback.
- 7) I motivate my students by making class fun.

I can see the beliefs from the current study clearly reflected in commandments 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9. Furthermore, commandments 1 and 5 could be justified as being present with a little massaging. However, commandments 3, 7, and 10 are not clearly identifiable among the common strategies of the teachers in this study.

Furthermore, the teachers in this study had at least one strategy not mentioned specifically by Dornyei: doing specific things to improve student interactions and relationships. This could fit into Dornyei's strategy of creating a pleasant atmosphere, but it was clear from the comments in this study that it goes beyond that. What about a comparison with strategies from a practical guide to motivation in educational psychology?

There are many practical models of motivation in educational psychology, but I am going to use Svinicki's "Seven Strategies for Enhancing Student Motivation" (2004). She recognizes that her strategies are based on cognitive models of motivation, and she does not claim that her list is comprehensive. In fact, she points teachers to other authors' models with their own lists. However, she also notes that

most of the individual lists of terms and strategies seem to point to common constructs of value, efficacy, and goals. As a result, I will use her strategies as a representative list based on cognitive models. Svinicki's seven strategies are as follows:

- 1) Be a good model of appropriate motivation.
- 2) Choose learning tasks with utility, challenge, and interest value.
- 3) Encourage accurate student self-efficacy about the course.
- 4) Base evaluation on progress or absolute level achieved to produce a mastery goal orientation.
- 5) Encourage attributing success to effort and interpreting mistakes as learning opportunities.
- 6) Provide choice and/or control over goals or strategies to the learner.
- 7) Communicate high expectations that are in line with student capabilities.

There are fewer direct connections between Svinicki's list and the common strategies from the teachers in this study. The one strategy from Svinicki that is clearly represented in the common strategies of the present study is number 2. Strategies 3, 4, and 6 can find support with a little adaptation. Strategy 1, similar to Dornyei's 1st commandment is reflected in the teachers' beliefs about the role of the motivated teacher, mentioned in **Category 2**. Svinicki's strategies 5 and 7 do not seem to be represented in the common strategies proposed by the teachers in this study. However, strategies 5 and 7 are represented in the less common and infrequent strategies. The common teacher strategies 1 and 2 in this study do not appear to be directly treated in Svinicki's 7 strategies. This would make sense if

indeed student-to-student interactions and student-to-teacher interactions are more critical in language learning settings than in other learning situations.

What do we learn from the two comparisons? First it seems safe to say that most of the common strategies reported by the teachers in this study can be found in both language learning strategies for motivation and motivation strategies based on cognitive psychology. Some of the connections are clear and others require inference, but they are there nonetheless. Although the teacher's role as a model of appropriate motivation in this study was not mentioned in the specific category on strategies for motivating students, that belief was stated in the teachers' comments about the motivated teacher. Not represented in the teachers' common beliefs were strategies to promote 1) attributions for success, 2) high expectations within the students' abilities, 3) cultural knowledge of the people who speak the language being learned, and 4) choice. However, some aspects of all but #3 of those strategies were represented in the less common and infrequent strategies of these teachers. Strategies to promote acquiring cultural knowledge of the people who speak the language being learned might be more important in a foreign language environment than in the second language environment where the teachers in this study teach, so it is not surprising that it was not a strategy mentioned.

Category 9: Origins of beliefs about motivation

All of the teachers had opinions on the origins of their beliefs and strategies about motivation, although the opinion of three of the teachers was that they could not

remember the origins of their beliefs. The majority of the teachers focused on life and teaching experiences as the sources of their beliefs. Many also described their own experiences as students as playing an important role in their beliefs. Other beliefs centered on observing other teachers or receiving feedback from their peers. Finally, a few teachers mentioned ideas learned through coursework and/or reading as the source of some of their beliefs. Each of these themes is explored in this section.

Upon reflection, seven of the eleven teachers felt that most of what they believed about motivation and motivating students originated in personal life experiences. These experiences ranged from observing their parents, to interacting with friends, to observing animals, to raising children, to practicing their religion. **Beth** explained her personal experiences this way: “But the motivation ideas, I mean, that’s just life, you know. What is it that has inspired me? What have I seen that has inspired other people? What can I relate to?” **Debbie** added that she found her religious beliefs were the greatest influence: “Everything I have been talking about now is shaped by my world view, which has been shaped by what I have been taught as a Benedictine.” As a final example, **Carl** found his beliefs rooted in culture and society: “It could be my background in this culture where there is a strong belief in personal choice. That may have rubbed off on me, you know, the idea that you are an adult and being an adult you have choices.” So, general life experience was mentioned as the possible origin of many of their beliefs.

Teaching experience was also credited as an important source of beliefs about motivation. Many of the teachers felt that through trial and error they learned what did or did not motivate their students. According to **Irene**, learning about motivation was a matter of "...constant learning. Every semester I work on one tiny aspect of my teaching... and once in a while, I go 'finally I have the key to get them to talk.'" For **Frida**, learning about motivation was a life-long process of teaching and gaining experience. She recounted her teaching history in these words:

It's just that I think that when I first started teaching, I was very young first of all, I was 19, so I had just started college. I had never heard of words like motivation and things like that before. At that time, I knew that I had to teach to the test. But when I started teaching more and gaining experience, I started dealing more with motivation, and then I started thinking about it more and more with experience. After 20 years, I have learned a lot.

In addition to developing beliefs through their own teaching experience, several teachers mentioned that their beliefs came from observing other teachers or colleagues. Sometimes these observations were part of their teacher training experience. **Beth** explained how she learned from other teachers when she was first teaching. She said, "I was an intern. And we had master teachers. We met three different teachers in one semester. I was in the classroom watching somebody teach. And we would write down everything they did and ask questions, 'why did you do this then, and why did you do that next?' That's how I learned about motivation." **Helen** observed a colleague in a less formal situation, and she remembered that experience:

One of the things that comes in front of me, a picture that floats across my mind, internal eye, is of a teacher that I taught with at one time, after I was

quite an experienced teacher. And she was a good deal younger than I. And I was fortunate enough to be able to sit through her classes and prepare mine. And I was just blown away by the way the activities that she planned motivated the students to get involved and be interested. I would say that she was a model motivator teacher for me.

Five of the teachers drew on their experiences as students, observing the teachers who taught them, as the source of their beliefs. Most of them remembered the name of the teacher and the specific class. **Gina** stated in simple terms, “ If I am trying to be a good teacher and motivate my students, I pick what worked for me as a student.” **Eric** expanded on this idea. He felt that the majority of his teaching method “stuff” comes from teachers that he had. He talked about one particular teacher and class that shaped his beliefs:

I can think of a teacher that I had that I model my classes after the way that he did it. We did two timed readings a week and we graphed our errors and we had a little graph, and that was very motivating for me. And we also did where we had individual vocabulary. We had 20 words a week and we would quiz ourselves twice a week on those. So that’s where I get a lot of my teaching methods related to motivation, really, not from any of those wonderful classes that I have had here (chuckles). Really, they all come from my experience as an undergraduate from some random Spanish/French teacher that did things that worked for him. Isn’t that funny?

In addition to all types of experience (in life, as a teacher, as an observer, as a student), a few teachers mentioned that some of their beliefs came from coursework or reading. Those who acknowledged coursework as the source of some of their beliefs indicated the two motivation concepts they learned: Gardner and Lambert’s model (instrumental and integrative), and/or Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation. **Frida** recalled that while she was studying for her Ph.D., she “started getting more

and more into the literature, and started dealing more with motivation and external and internal motivation.” **Irene** added, “We did Gardner and Lambert, and just some basic motivation work.” Those teachers who learned about motivation from reading credited books on variety of topics as the origin of their beliefs. **Carl** mentioned Descartes, books on brain development, the Bible, Buddhism, and other general reading “that I guess could be said to be aimed at a sort of an educated audience.” **Eric** was not as specific in his recollection of what he read. He confessed, “From the literature, you know, I haven’t read much about motivation. I’ve read some stuff related, and some of my beliefs have come from that. That is, that people need to feel like they are included in things and they kind of have the same rights and powers as the people in groups or whatever.” So coursework and reading were not common sources for beliefs about motivation, according to these teachers.

Two of the teachers expressed some very similar and specific beliefs about the origin of their motivation beliefs. Both of them mentioned that motivation was not explicitly taught in their teacher-training courses, but they both indicated that motivation was assumed to be a part of good teaching methods. **Amy** explained that her beliefs came from basic teacher education.

Some of the basic things you learn to do. You know, take roll and learn peoples’ names, make a seating chart and know where they are, and make a curricular semester plan, and make daily lesson plan... And know peoples’ names. I mean, from that one thing comes a whole lot. So I don’t think it’s some magic something. I think it [motivation] is an elaboration of very ordinary teaching and lesson planning principles.

Similarly, **Beth** said, “I don’t think anybody ever talked about motivation. The methodology class professor talked about changing pace and keeping them busy and na, na, na. And he was really good. But motivation? I don’t think so. I think it was assumed.” These teachers also felt that the feedback they received when they were observed, as part of their teacher training, helped form their beliefs about motivation. **Amy** recollected the following:

I certainly remember being a French teacher in high school and being observed and about what are the parts of a lesson. I mean just what are the parts of a lesson? You have to have some sort of warm-up attention getting device. I mean, what are you going to do? I mean that little chunk of what you are supposed to do when you start a lesson, right there; that is what it is for. It’s to motivate.

Beth added that after she was observed the observer would talk about “having a good class and making it with lots of participation and lots of activity, you know, move it on and so on. It was all related to motivation, but it was never talked about as motivation.”

If, as the literature suggests, existing beliefs become the filters for new information or knowledge, then it stands to reason that life and student experiences would be prominent, since everything that came after would have been filtered through these experiences. Related to this, I do think that it is interesting to note that a group of highly educated language teachers, several with PhDs, did not identify coursework which specifically treated the motivation as a source of beliefs about motivation, which was, as mentioned in my bio, my own experience. This brings me to a second observation. Many of these teachers mentioned that their

beliefs originated in their personal learning, language learning, and teaching experiences. They stated that they took what worked for them and applied that in their teaching. The implication is that what works for one (them) works for all.

In conclusion, the teachers revealed a variety of origins of their beliefs about motivation. Most of them focused on life, teaching, and student experiences. Observing other teachers and being observed were also mentioned. In addition, a few teachers attributed some of their motivation beliefs to coursework and/or readings. Finally, two teachers felt that their beliefs about motivation originated in basic teacher training techniques. **Table 4.9** presents the beliefs in **Category 9**.

Table 4.9 - Category 9 – Origins of beliefs about motivation

Belief	Teachers with belief
My beliefs about motivation come from personal/life experience.	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10
My beliefs about motivation come from teaching experience.	2, 6, 9, 10, 11
My beliefs about motivation come from my experiences as a student.	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
My beliefs about motivation come from observing other teachers.	2, 8, 9
It's difficult to really remember where my beliefs about motivation come from.	1, 2, 8
My beliefs about motivation come from coursework I have taken.	6, 9, 11
My beliefs about motivation come from books I have read.	3, 5
My beliefs about motivation come from good teaching methods.	1, 2
My beliefs about motivation come from being observed and getting feedback.	1, 2

Four teacher portraits

In **tables 4.1-4.9**, I presented 74 separate belief statements. Those statements represent both a breadth and depth of coverage of the various theoretical approaches to motivation. However, only 17 of the 74 belief statements met the criteria of “common beliefs (being mentioned by 6 or more teachers). The greatest number of the 74 belief statements that correlated to a single individual interview was 37, so the teacher with the greatest number of distinct beliefs about motivation and motivating students in this study only touched on exactly half of the number of beliefs held by the entire group. The average number of beliefs was 26 and the lowest was 18. In other words, as individuals, the coverage of the teachers’ beliefs and perspectives was more narrow and varied. The purpose of this section is to provide portraits of the beliefs and self-reports of four individual teachers in an effort to show how the varied beliefs manifest themselves in a single teacher. These four teachers were chosen from amongst the 11 because they represented the greatest variety of beliefs. The first, **Amy**, represents those teachers who feel that the teacher provides the motivation in a class, while the second, **Carl**, didn’t feel that it was his responsibility to motivate. **Irene’s** perspective provided a combination of students and teacher motives working together in a classroom. Finally, **Eric’s** thought were based on a four-part definition of motivation that included goals, engagement, value, and confidence. The purpose of these portraits is to give a greater voice to these individual teachers as representatives of the group.

Portrait #1 - Amy (Teacher 1)

Amy was the most experienced teacher in the group, and she received her teacher training in the 1970s. In the interview, she had a hard time remembering the origins of her beliefs about motivation and motivating students. She did, however, express the opinion that motivation is inherent in solid teaching methods. This was an important theme for her as during the interview she would describe a teaching technique and then explain why it was motivating. She remembered specific classes from her Masters degree program where the teacher discussed the elements of effective language teaching, which she now correlates to effective motivation techniques. She also recalled being observed by other teachers and receiving feedback about her teaching. Much of that feedback she now associates with motivational techniques she uses in her classes. So she felt that her training in teaching years ago was probably the origin of her beliefs. She also perceived that the teaching techniques and beliefs were so internalized that she did not usually think about motivation during the process of lesson planning. Motivation and motivating students was something that just happened in the course of a lesson. When asked about lesson planning and motivation, she replied, "I don't know how to plan it. I know that one must have motivational strategies. So every now and then you have to do it. But I'm afraid that I am well beyond scheduling such a thing." When pressed to mention some of the effective lesson planning methods that impacted motivation, she offered setting goals, deciding where to insert progress markers, and taking into account student needs.

Amy's definition of motivation focused on "drives" that pushed individuals to reach their goals. She talked about motivation as "something that gets you going. It makes you do something." When asked for an example, she mentioned wanting to do yoga, but having to sign up for a yoga class in order to force herself to do yoga. Not surprisingly, she had a lot to say about how to get students to achieve what they set out to accomplish. She felt that she as a teacher could do a lot to effect student motivation. Providing progress markers, breaking goals down into smaller pieces, giving them choice, adding "purposeful routines," and creating buy-in were strategies she correlated with a motivating lesson. She offered several other concrete teaching techniques for maintaining or increasing motivation, but it was clear from her comments that positive group dynamics, created by solid teaching, was the key motivating force.

The only de-motivator that Amy mentioned was poor class-dynamics, so it came as no surprise that student-student, student-teacher interactions were important for her. **Amy** stated that she began each semester by making sure she that she knew the students and they knew her and their classmates. She explained:

One of the things I do is I try to know everybody, and to call them by name and get them to call me by name and develop some level of personal involvement with them and with each other. I think that a class that knows each other and talks to each other collectively will have more motivation than a class where everyone comes to class but feel isolated. So I work hard on spirit building, team building, group involvement, so that everybody feels known and acknowledged, as if they are belonging.

In order to know if the class dynamics were positive, **Amy** confessed to making frequent judgments about the motivation of her individual students and her classes in general, even before the students arrived to class. She felt that in order to motivate, she had to be observant and react to the motivation needs of the class. She mentioned that physical demeanor such as slouching or having their head down during class were signs of lack of motivation. Whatever the sign of lack of motivation, she had to notice it and re-focus the class. She related that “it could be student affect, it could be a question, it could be my mood; I don’t know, but something will happen that lets me know that we need to stop today and I need to change the plan or I am going to lose them.”

In addition to being aware of and improving student interactions and over-all class dynamics, **Amy** felt a teacher’s influence on motivation was important. She mentioned that when a teacher is consistently prepared, it “inspired confidence that you can teach them (the students).” She advised that humor made her classes more enjoyable, and high expectations help the students take the class more seriously. In the end, however, she focused on how the teacher made the students feel. She wanted the students to know that she liked them. When asked what it meant to like the students she offered the following response:

Just the normal things you do when you like someone. You make small talk with them and you notice their shoes or that they have got a haircut. Or you ask them stuff about their weekend, or you tell them stuff about your weekend. A lot of it is the way you can get people to open up to you is to open up to them a little bit. So tell them something personal. Tell them something from your real life and they will tell you something from theirs. Flatter people. The person that

has a hard time paying attention: flatter them on their memory. I don't know. Find something they are doing right and notice it and make it a recognizable trait.

In sum, **Amy** felt that if you could make the students feel good about themselves in her classes, they would be motivated to be there.

Portrait #2 – Carl (Teacher 3)

Carl's self-reported beliefs about motivation and motivating students were most influenced by one specific belief: He did not feel that it was his responsibility to motivate his students. In fact, he wondered if to motivate them might be morally wrong, an intrusion on their agency. At one point in the interview he offered the following thoughts on why he doesn't like to motivate so much:

Carl: ...it's partly that well I'm only one person, and who am I to impose upon them. I mean seriously, who am I to impose upon them what I think they should do. I mean I am perfectly comfortable with the notion that you choose to come to class or not or do your homework or not. It's not my job to get you to do that. Persuade is okay. Motivate might be okay, but after a certain point, I feel like you have to respect their choice and let them fail if they want to.

The definition of motivation that **Carl** offered was simple. It focused on what the student brought with them, the "reason" for pursuing a goal. This definition together with his opinion that it was not his responsibility to motivate students, may have been the reason why he had very little to say about strategies for motivating students.

Carl only offered three strategies for motivating students in his classes. The first was making sure there was some amount of choice for the students in his classes. This followed his idea that he shouldn't impose too much on the students. It was also manifest in another of his ideas, that the students were buying a pre-determined course that they had chosen, so it was his job to honor that choice and teach the course. The second strategy he mentioned was breaking down goals into smaller pieces. He felt that although the students came with a specific reason for taking his course, they often didn't know how to get from "point A to point B." As a result, he did feel that it was his job to help them break down their English learning goals into smaller chunks, and he confessed that this might help their motivation. On a related note, he noticed that once he had broken down their goals into smaller chunks, they sometimes forgot the big picture of what they were doing. This required him to be able to explain the rationale of some of his activities so that they could be reminded of the connection between what they were doing and their overall goals. Honoring choice, breaking down goals in to manageable pieces, and explaining rationale were the only strategies that **Carl** connected to motivating his students.

The three strategies he mentioned were part of his lesson planning at the beginning of the semester. During the lesson planning process he explained that he would remind himself that the students had chosen to take his class because they had certain needs, that he should be able to explain how his class would meet those needs, and that the goals of the course were set by a specific curriculum, which

students chose based on their needs. In other words, motivation for his students existed outside of himself, even in lesson planning. Motivation existed in the needs of the students and their reasons for learning English, which led to them choosing a specific course. The curriculum would be motivating because the objectives were what the students had chosen.

Carl also felt that when students were not motivated it must be due to circumstances beyond his control. In the course of the interview he described several classes that were not motivated. Some of the classes he taught were not motivating for his students because the students hadn't chosen to take the class; it was required. Other classes weren't motivating because of the time of day of the class, or the location, or an ineffective textbook. In the end, it was clear that **Carl** viewed student and classroom motivation as residing far from himself.

When asked to reflect on the origins of his beliefs about motivation, he proposed three possible sources. The first resided in his experiences as a student. He explained, "when I was in school as a student, I felt like there was the teacher and there was me. It was the teacher's job to teach and the student's job to learn." He commented that as a teacher himself, "I'm not their mother, their father, their brother, their sister; I'm their instructor. And people conceive of that role differently. I consider it more as a simple instructor, so maybe that's why I don't try to motivate them more." The second self-reported source of his beliefs was "American" cultural values. This belief is reflected in the following statement: "A possible source could be my background in this culture where there is a strong

belief in personal choice. There's this strong belief in personal initiative and that may have rubbed off on me a bit, you know, the idea that you are an adult and being an adult you have your own choices." Finally, he proposed that some of his beliefs about motivation originated in a variety of books that he had read on a variety of topics from philosophy to religion to mystery novels.

Portrait #3 – Eric (Teacher 5)

Eric's definition of motivation was the most comprehensive and developed of the group. Even though he states in the interview that none of his beliefs about motivation really came from coursework or books, his definition of motivation seems to say otherwise. When asked how he defined motivation he said, "I think it is a feeling that you have some sort of goal and you have the ability to reach it and you want to reach it and then there is engagement towards a goal." In his definition, he mentioned goals, ability to achieve, desire, and engagement as cumulative factors in determining motivation. Given the multiple aspects of his definition, I wasn't surprised to find that he had many specific techniques to offer for increasing student motivation. In fact, he offered the greatest number of strategies of any teacher in **category 8**. **Eric's** strategies for motivating students started with himself as a teacher, continued on to the students and their relationships, and included key motivating teaching techniques. When asked for final thoughts in his interview he did a nice job of summarizing his philosophy about strategies for motivating students:

“I do think that the biggest thing is that they have to really trust the teacher. I mean that is just the foundation. That is just the most basic thing. And then they need to feel comfortable, and I think that comes from trusting the teacher, but also feeling comfortable with other students. So I think those are the basics. And from there I think you can really build activities that motivate, you know by showing progress over time, or relating things to whatever goals they’ve expressed.”

Eric stated early in his interview that motivation in a classroom is primarily the result of what the teacher does or doesn’t do. As an extension of that idea, he mentioned that as a teacher he had many tools for positively influencing student motivation. One of his best tools was himself and how the students perceived him. For example he said, “It was like if I was in charge, and they felt like I knew what I was doing, they were okay.” He also mentioned that his appearance even had an effect on their attitudes toward him their confidence in his ability to teach them. He explained that when he was teaching in another country, the students took him more seriously when he was dressed up, had a nice haircut, and shined his shoes. According to **Eric**, “I had this reputation of having the cleanest shoes of everyone and they liked that.” Creating an environment where the students trusted the teacher was important for **Eric**. When talking about risk-taking he felt that “if they can trust the teacher, if they can feel like it is a safe environment for them to try new things with the language then they are motivated to participate.” He also felt that part of creating this environment was sharing part of himself with the students. According to **Eric**, he would start of his classes like this:

“In the first day of class I hand out a sheet that has a lot of personal information; it’s like a story about my life: where I grew up, what I

did, why I did it. It doesn't present like a perfect picture of my life, just like some things happen by chance, or I tried something and it didn't work. And I have gotten feedback that students really like it because they feel that I am human. I am already tangible. So I think that takes away their anxiety and I think that 's building trust to reduce anxiety."

A final way he felt the teacher could create trust and earn student confidence was by clarifying expectations in the class. When he knew what the students wanted to do and they knew what he wanted them to do, he felt that the class went better.

The second group of strategies **Eric** reported focused on the student interactions. Again, this tied into his belief that the students would be more motivated to participate if they felt comfortable with each other. In fact, the only de-motivator that he mentioned was poor class dynamics. He talked about classes he had where the students were united around a common purpose or around students who were natural leaders. He compared that situation to classes where everyone was "doing their own thing," or where there were one or two students who didn't want to "get into the class and the culture." To improve student interaction he provided activities for the students to get to know each other so that they could better work together. On the other hand, **Eric** reported, "I think all of us have had the experience where we have students that have conflict with one particular student, or there is someone with a strong personality maybe, but so you know there's a personality conflict and it does seem to effect the motivation."

Eric suggested that there were two main ways that he unified a class and managed student dynamics. The first way involved finding out what the students'

goals were, showing the entire class that they had similar goals, and linking his lessons to their goals. Here is his report of the process:

I have them do some kind of activity where they communicate to me what their goals for the class are. Why are they doing this? What do they want out of it? I think that's very important for me to know. Are they going to graduate school or do they want to meet some friends because they spend all day at home. And there can be a whole range of goals, but I can always find common threads to tie together and relate them to my class.

Eric felt that when his lessons were clearly related to the students' goals, the students were more motivated. The second strategy he used to improve unity was to create a "rhythm" through structure and routines. In describing one of his more motivated classes, he noticed that they always knew what to do and when to do it because he structured the class with similar activities at predictable times.

After the teacher gained the students trust, and the students became unified and bought into the class, **Eric** proposed several teaching strategies that he believed to foster motivation. Two of his simple strategies were providing variety and making the class fun. He noted that when the class was enjoyable, the students were more motivated to participate. One of his more complex strategies involved giving constant, detailed feedback to the students about their English, how they were doing as learners, and what they should do next. He described one system for giving feedback in his writing classes:

One thing I do is have samples of their language in like before and after scenarios. And this works especially well for writing, where they count the number of words and the number of errors. They have an error percentage for each paper and they

can map that out. And that is very motivating for them because they can see that they are making progress. They feel like they have control over that.

For **Eric**, a class without constant feedback was not motivating, and he expected the students to give him feedback as well. He felt that in motivated classes, there was a constant dialog between students and teachers about how they were doing and how the class was going.

Eric was the teacher who was most sure of the origins of his beliefs about motivation. He repeated several times that his experiences as a student in language classes were the most prominent source of his motivation ideas:

So a few of my beliefs may have come from the literature, but most of my teaching stuff comes from teachers that I have had.”

And later he added:

When I think of my classes, I think of a teacher that I had that I model my classes after the way that he did it. So that’s where I get most of my teaching methods, not from any wonderful graduate classes. Really, they all come from my experience as an undergraduate from some random Spanish/French teacher that worked for him. Isn’t that funny?

This is very interesting given that **Eric**’s most recent degree is a Ph.D. that he received in the 2000s, and he received his masters in the late 1990s. He certainly received the bulk of his language education training recently enough for contemporary theories of motivation in cognitive psychology and language learning to have been presented. Those theories may have been present in his coursework, but he was convinced that it was his experiences as a student, observing other teachers, that led to the formation of his beliefs about teaching and motivation.

Portrait #4 – Irene (Teacher 9)

Irene offered the second largest number of strategies for motivating students. Her personal definition of motivation fell into the “reason” and “force” or “drive” category. She viewed motivation as two headed: one head was the student and the other was the teacher. She described the two parts in her interview:

If it (motivation) is me trying to motivate students, I would say that it is getting the to do something that they may not see value in or they may not feel like doing in that moment. So creating a drive that is not there. And I guess if it a student and their motivation, the I guess it is why they are there, why they are studying English, why do they do their homework on time. That sort of thing.”

Later, she described student motivation as the engine and teacher motivation as productive focus. In fact, she proposed that student motivation was like a car without a steering wheel; the students were always going somewhere, but they often crashed or ended up at the wrong destination by themselves. For **Irene**, the teacher was the steering wheel; the teacher provided proper direction. **Irene** felt that her beliefs were an accumulation of experiences over a lifetime. These experiences included watching her parents at home, observing other teachers, experimenting in her own classes, and learning from coursework. She felt that each of these experiences combined to form the perspectives she offered related to motivation and motivating students.

Similar to **Amy** and **Eric**, **Irene** was sure that positive student-student and teacher-student relationships were a key to motivation in the language classroom, and she mentioned a few ways that she fostered motivation through strategies that

improved these relationships. For example, when asked why she tried to make her class feel like a team, she answered, “No one wants to feel isolated, left-out, and behind. If their hearts aren’t into it, if they feel that they are being jerked around, they can’t be motivated. So I made a very conscious effort to try and create this ‘we’re here to help each other’ attitude in my classes.” Related to her relationship with the students, she said, “I just try to be energetic, enthusiastic, and show them that I love what I do and I hope that it rubs off on them.” Later comments took her role beyond cheerleading. “I’m a coach: ‘We have something to accomplish; here’s what we are going to do: hut hut hut.’ I mean drill sergeant, coach, you know, but always making sure that they know that I am 100% behind them. I want them to see that I live, breath, eat, and die just to make them succeed.” Clearly, Irene felt that she not only had to take a very active role in the motivation of the students, but they had to know that she was going to take that role and that she would ensure that they would be successful.

Although she felt student and teacher relationships were important, **Irene** also provided the greatest number of unique motivating strategies not related to social relationships. Many of them were strategies not mentioned by any of the other teachers. The first unique motivating technique she mentioned was strategy training for the students. Irene felt that language students often didn’t know how to learn a language so she had to teach them. This idea resonates in her example of the students being the engine and her being the steering wheel. She explained the following:

I can't be with them 24 hours a day. I can only be with them for an hour and a half in class. And during that time I try and give them, you know, not just a communicative experience, or instruction of the parts and how they fit together, but also strategies to "okay guys, when I'm gone, when you are not around me anymore, then there are some strategies that you can use for self study." I think that David Nunan said that you have to teach them how to learn.

Later she added:

I can have students that are really motivated, but they don't have learning strategies. They don't know what time management is. They don't know how to learn vocabulary. They don't know how to increase reading speed. So eventually their motivation decreases. They are like a puppy running around outside and trying to you know... but they are not focused. So I think strategies give motivation productive focus.

Again, she was the only teacher to mention strategy training specifically as a way to increase student motivation.

Irene was also the only teacher to specifically connect four other techniques to increased motivation. The first was "frontloading." She explained that motivation naturally decreases over a long semester, so it was better to give more homework and cover difficult material early on when the students were more motivated. Then when they reached the end of the semester and their motivation began to wane, they could still feel successful because they had less homework and less difficult tasks. The second was making sure to hold students accountable. She insisted that the most de-motivating thing a teacher could do was assign homework and not collect it or check it. Soon students will stop doing it. The third technique was reviewing material. She was of the opinion that reviewing increased student motivation by re-assuring them that they had actually learned something, helping

them prepare to be successful on tests, and showing them that she was a good teacher. Finally, **Irene** used testimonials from previous students to motivate her current students. She would invite them back to talk to her class so that her current students would hear their English and hear them explain how their ESL classes had been important for what they were doing now. Irene felt that this made her class more real and it validated what she was doing to her current students.

Irene had two other beliefs that are worth mentioning. First, she felt that all students were hard wired to want to achieve and seek approval. As a result, she provided her students many opportunities to fill those needs (achievement and approval). She mentioned grades, quizzes, projects, levels, and other class and program parts as ways of allowing students to meet those needs. In addition, Irene was sure that there were some factors that negatively influenced motivation that were beyond her control. After everything she did, the student was still the key variable in the equation. Here are **Irene's** words near the end of the interview:

I do think in the end I have to have a student that wants to learn, even if they don't know that there is work involved. There is the old analogy that you can bring a horse to water but you can't make him drink. And I feel like you can explain and rationalize, but if the student is just in another place emotionally, intellectually, mentally, physically –sometimes they're sick, I don't think that you can jump down their throats about motivation at that point.

These thoughts are perfectly aligned with her original definition of motivation as being two parts: engine and steering. "If the engine isn't running, steering it the car still doesn't get you anywhere."

CHAPTER 5: Discussion/Conclusions

In the first chapter, I highlighted the increasing demand for well-trained second/foreign language teachers, and I noted that the volume of knowledge and skills required to become an effective language teacher is substantial. I further argued that an additional complicating factor for teacher trainers was the existing beliefs, about the nature of teaching and learning, of the teachers to be trained. Research on teacher beliefs has shown that beliefs form early on, are directly connected to behaviors, become the filters for new information, and are difficult to change (Pajares 1992; Calderhead 1996; Fang 1996; Klein 2004). Fostering learner motivation was identified as one of the key components of effective language teaching and as an area where both teachers in training and current teachers feel that they require greater knowledge and skills (Cardelle-Elawar & Nevin, 2003; Tumposky, 2003; Williams & Stockdale, 2004). A review of literature of the research on motivation, both general and language learning specific, revealed some of the possible beliefs teachers might possess related to motivation, but few studies that targeted language teacher beliefs about motivation were identified. As a result, the present study was designed and conducted to shed light on an underexplored area of research: ESL teachers' beliefs and perspectives on motivation. The general questions that guided the research were as follows:

- 1) How do ESL teachers define motivation? What are their beliefs about the nature of motivation?

- 2) What do ESL teachers believe about motivation in ESL classroom settings? What do they say that they do to motivate their students?
- 3) How do ESL teachers report that they acquired their beliefs about motivation in general and, more specifically, motivating in the classroom?
- 4) How do ESL teachers' beliefs about motivation compare to each other?

Based on the beliefs of the teachers in this study, I will summarize some of the more significant findings and compare them to the relevant literature. In addition, I will discuss how those findings point to theoretical and practical implications. Furthermore, I will propose specific suggestions for teacher trainers, based on the results of this study, beyond simply taking the beliefs into account. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of the present study and propose areas for future research.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

The main findings of this study, based on the interviews conducted with the ESL instructors, are as follows:

- The teachers had much to say about the general nature of motivation, and the motivational techniques they reported were, for the most part, consistent with their definitions of motivation.
- For these teachers, I identified 74 beliefs about motivation in 9 categories. As an entire group, the teachers covered a wide range of beliefs and practices; as individuals, less so.
- Most of what the teachers described, in their definitions of motivation and techniques for motivating students, can be inferred from the literature on motivation, but the teachers only occasionally used motivation terminology or constructs to connect what they talked about to motivation.

- Their reported motivation techniques mostly reflect the value side of expectancy-value theories, with an emphasis on techniques that are associated with building on intrinsic value. A case could be made that many of their beliefs support expectancy, but that connection has to be inferred from their comments. Goals in general were mentioned, but not in the detail found in goal and goal-orientation theories of motivation.
- Seven of the teachers' nine common motivational teaching techniques, those mentioned by 6 or more teachers, aligned with 2 other similar lists from educational psychology and language learning.
- As a group, the teachers did not mention promoting learner autonomy (self-determination), encouraging correct attributions, or communicating high expectations as important variables for motivating language learners.
- Some of the beliefs they expressed seemed mildly dated or inconsistent.
- This group of teachers expressed a clear belief that general life experiences, experiences as students themselves, especially in language classes, and early teaching experiences were the main origins of their beliefs about motivation.

The ESL teachers in this study expressed several perspectives on motivation in general and many specific thoughts on techniques and strategies for motivating students in their language classes. It is not surprising that teachers have beliefs about motivation since motivation is a topic of general interest in society beyond the context of psychology, teaching, and learning. However, many of the teacher beliefs also appear to reflect the findings in research on motivation in psychology and language learning. Whether any similarities between the motivation literature and the teacher beliefs are a result of the teachers' familiarity with motivation theory or the result of their arriving at the same conclusions through their own experience, it

is important to discuss the findings of this study in terms of the literature on motivation and make connections where appropriate.

Teacher definitions of motivation

In the teachers' general definitions and perspectives on the nature of motivation, there was no consensus. Some of the teachers viewed motivation as a personal characteristic brought by the learner to the classroom; other teachers felt that motivation was found in the characteristics of the classroom situation, with the instructor as the dominant force or drive; still other teachers felt that motivation was a combination of student and situational characteristics. Another instructor identified four components of motivation: goals, ability to achieve them, desire, and engagement. Finally, another teacher offered a biological definition of motivation based on the senses: sight, touch, smell, etc.

While these instructors provided specific thoughts on the nature of motivation, and those thoughts contain elements of some definitions and comprehensive theories of motivation, their definitions of motivation, in general, do not seem to reflect any one specific definition or theory. A general definition of motivation, found in one form or another in several theories, proposes a two-part description of motivation: Motivation is what *initiates* behavior and then helps *sustain* behavior over time (Alderman, 2008). Ford (1993) added a third general aspect of motivation in his definition: 1) energizing or activating behavior 2) directing behavior 3) regulating persistence of behavior. The teachers in this study who

discussed motivation in terms of reasons for engaging in learning or personal characteristics a learner brought to a learning situation appear to align with the idea of initial motivation; on the other hand, the teachers who focused on the variables in the learning situation align more with the sustaining and directing of motivation. Most similar to the general definition of motivation were the instructors who combined characteristics brought by the students, initial motivation, with characteristics of the learning situation, sustaining and directing motivation. Although these teachers expressed the concept of initiating a behavior and sustaining and directing that behavior, they didn't express motivation specifically in those terms.

One teacher definition of motivation that included goals, ability, desire, and engagement, sounded as though he had combined parts of several motivation theories. His mention of goals points to Lock and Latham's goal-setting theory. Student ability to reach a goal echoes Bandura's *self-efficacy* or the *expectancy* in Expectancy/Value models. Desire is often mentioned as one of the primary influences on goal-setting, and it also seems to fit nicely into constructs like need and value (extrinsic and intrinsic), which are common in Expectancy/Value models of motivation. Finally, engagement is mentioned in several models of motivation, including research on *flow* conducted by Csikszentmihalyi, as both a sign and a cause of motivation. Although this teacher mentioned all of these pieces in his definition, he did not acknowledge any one of these theories in his interview, nor did he provide a unified explanation of how these worked together.

The final definition of motivation provided by one of these teachers focused on the senses (sight, smell, touch, etc.) as the major factors in motivation. This definition seems to have ties to drive theories, which focus on biological deficiencies as the origins of motivation. Schuman's neurobiological model (Schumann, 1998), can also be reflected in this definition. For Schumann, humans are constantly making stimulus appraisals, which provide the motivation necessary for action. Because these appraisals are not automatic responses, but cognitive assessments, his model moves beyond drive and behaviorist theories of motivation. Again, although this teacher's definition of motivation may be explained by some theories, she did not credit any particular theory as the source of her definition.

An important finding in this study, related to the teachers' definitions of motivation, was that the teachers' perspectives on motivation, in terms of techniques and strategies, remained fairly consistent with their overall definitions of motivation. These teachers saw themselves as enacting these beliefs in the classroom, which seems to confirm the connection between belief and behavior suggested by Klein (2004). For example, the teachers who viewed motivation as residing in the students' reasons (individual context) for studying English did their best to relate what they were doing in class to the students' reasons. On the other hand, the teachers who felt they created the motivation or drive (situational context) tended to describe activities and techniques that focused on the teacher's more central role. The instructor who mentioned goals and ability later talked about how he helped the students set goals and gave constant feed back so that they

could regularly assess their ability. Finally the teacher who felt motivation relied on the senses shared activities that motivated through visually pleasing material, field trips, music, singing, and creative arts. A more detailed discussion of the specific strategies and techniques these teachers implemented is in the next section, but the general finding was that the definitions of motivation and the techniques for motivating they provided were consistent with one another.

Beliefs and perspectives on motivational teaching techniques

From the interviews with this group of teachers, I identified 37 different strategies that they offered for improving motivation in their classrooms. Only 8 of those strategies were shared by 6 or more teachers, and the greatest number of strategies mentioned by a single teacher was 18 while the least was 4. Their group knowledge, also referred to as group IQ (Bloom 1995) or collective intelligence (Weiss, A. 2005) is an important finding in this study and may have important implications for teacher trainers. A comparison of these teachers' strategies to the literature on motivation reveals that although they provide a variety of techniques for motivating, most of them find support in a narrow range of theories and constructs of motivation.

The construct of motivation most mentioned directly by this group of teachers was the *value*, and the second most was *intrinsic value*. Some of the common strategies for increasing value they mentioned (by 6 or more teachers) were providing variety, making class fun, connecting class goals to student goals,

connecting class activities to real-life situation, and improving student relationships. In addition, many of the less common or infrequent strategies they mentioned also relate to value. For example, some teachers avoided tests, which may have been associated with the negative impact of an extrinsic motivator. Other teachers felt that liking their students motivated them, which could be expressing the value of affiliation or belonging. Still other teachers offered giving rewards as a way to motivate, which is another way to add value. In total 13 of the 37 motivational techniques (and 6 of 9 common ones) related to the construct of value.

Expectancy was another construct that received some attention from these teachers; however, they never used this specific term to describe how the strategies increased motivation. Nevertheless, increasing expectancy of success can be inferred from many of the teacher strategies. Providing progress markers and feedback were the most common techniques mentioned that relate to expectancy. They felt that their students had a better chance of success if the students understood where they were at and how they were doing in their class. Related to this idea, providing learning objectives and clarifying teacher and student expectations also seem to support expectancy. A different kind of variable, which is related to expectancy, were teacher attributes. Many of the teachers felt that what a teacher did could inspire or destroy the students' confidence in the teacher's ability to teach. If the students lost confidence in the teacher, then they would lose confidence in their ability to learn from that teacher (low expectancy).

Two unique strategies, mentioned by 2 and 3 teachers respectively, were arranging testimonials from former students who have been successful and providing purposeful learning routines. These teachers felt that the testimonials helped the students realize both the value of what they were doing, but more importantly, that they could be successful too. This can also be reflected in Social Cognitive theory where one sees someone else achieve a goal and then works to achieve the same goal and measures his/her progress against what the other person did. For the teachers who implemented learning routines, they explained that the routines allowed the students' to be more successful because classroom experiences were not all novel; routines allowed the students to quickly begin familiar activities and be more successful. Both of these strategies appear to support student expectancy.

Goals were also a theme in some of the teachers' comments on techniques or strategies for motivating their students. As mentioned previously, many teachers felt that connecting their lessons to existing student goals was key to motivation. Two less common strategies were assessing student goals and helping students break their goals down into smaller pieces. Although goals are mentioned as impacting motivation, they are not described within the context of motivation theories like goal and goal orientation theory (Lock & Latham 1990; Ames 1992). Goals for these teachers are general motivators because they give the students an objective to shoot for and they help keep the students focused. None of the teachers talked about goals in terms of *mastery vs. performance* and they certainly did not put

goals at the center of a model of motivation that included other qualities of goals like *difficulty* and *specificity*. Of the five points that Lock (1996) summarizes about motivational goals - difficulty, specificity, both combined, value of the goal, confidence that the goal can be achieved – these teachers only mention the last two factors.

Two constructs of motivation that I thought could be prominent in the beliefs of these teachers were self-determination and attributions. I was surprised to find few to no strategies that reflected these constructs. Some teachers assumed that since the students had chosen to enroll in a particular course or program, that was all the choice or control the students needed to be motivated. Two teachers mentioned that they motivated their students by giving them choices, but the choices they described were limited (topics on papers or in discussions or some input on the schedule of big assignments). These teachers didn't seem to connect the self-determination concept of *perceived control* with motivation. As far as attributions go, only two instructors affirmed that they motivated their students by showing them the relationship between their effort and their progress. Several teachers recognized that some students were not successful or motivated because of factors not related to effort or ability (factors like being tired or hungry, experiencing culture shock, or implementing poor strategies), but they did not mention that they pointed out these factors to their students in order to help them make better attributions.

Elements of Maslow's hierarchy, mentioned in the review of literature as a possible source of teacher beliefs, were found in the interviews of the teachers. Many teachers remarked that students who were tired, hungry, or distracted by family responsibilities were difficult to motivate. Again they did not make the connection to Maslow, but what they seemed to be describing *deficiency needs* which impeded *growth needs*. These observations by teachers also seem to support drive theories since being tired or hungry are biological drives that keep the students from focusing on the task at hand.

In a comparison of the teachers' motivational strategies to a different kind of literature on motivation, In chapter 4 I compared these teachers' 8 common strategies to two published lists of practical strategies, one in language learning and the other in educational psychology, and that comparison revealed that all but two of the teachers' common strategies were represented in the published lists. These teaching strategies included making the classes interesting and useful, focusing on goals, personalizing the instruction, and increasing student self-efficacy. However, there were important omissions from both the teacher list and the published lists.

The most common motivating strategies for these teachers, which were absent from the published lists, centered on effective student to student and student to teacher interactions. The teacher's thoughts on the importance of these interactions seem to support the constructs of expectancy and value. The teachers felt that poor class dynamics were especially destructive to motivation in foreign or second language classes. This might be rooted in a belief that in more traditional

classrooms, where learning content is the focus and the students don't have to interact, a class can still be successful without any student interaction, but not in a modern language classroom. Communicative language learning requires interaction and if students do not interact effectively with each other or the teacher, their language skills do not improve as much, and their motivation decreases. This appears to be an area unique to language learning motivation, and it is certainly worthy of further exploration. According to Williams & Burden (1997), "There is no question that learning a foreign language is different to learning other subjects, mainly because of the social nature of such a venture" (115). These teachers seem to recognize that social nature, and as a result focus on strategies of motivation that are based on social interaction.

Finally, there were two other types of beliefs or strategies reported by these teachers that were dated or even contradictory. One example is based on the common belief that emerged in both teacher comments on the origins of their beliefs and the reasons for implementing certain motivating techniques. The teachers expressed the belief that what was motivating for them, especially as language learners themselves, would be equally motivating for their students. Why might this be problematic? While there are certain aspects of language learning that may be universal (for example improving listening comprehension requires some ability as an auditory learner), the variety of techniques for motivating learners are numerous and may be highly individualized. In other words, what works on one person might not work on everybody. If this is the case, then assuming that what

has worked for the teachers will work for their students may be a belief that leads to less effective motivation strategies in the language classroom. For example, a teacher who was highly motivated in language classes full of innovative activities and creative games, and who assumes these are the best motivational techniques for language teaching and learning, might be surprised if certain students find those sorts of activities unproductive or not serious enough for their specific goals.

An important example of a possibly dated belief from this study deals with the impact of the teachers' cultural beliefs on motivational beliefs. In the present study, the teachers described, based on their experience, the qualities of motivated students. These qualities included being risk-takers, engaging in active participation, asking questions, and making eye contact. It is possible that these qualities are associated with motivation in this particular teaching/learning culture but not in another. An ESL teacher who is working with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds could misinterpret the signs of motivation, or a lack thereof, in their students. The result of this misinterpretation might be to provide motivational techniques where none are necessary or provide none where they are actually needed. In this case, a teacher trainer may need to offer examples from other cultures that might be contrary to what the teachers' assume. For example, it may be an over-generalization, but students from many Asian countries might see being a risk-taker, asking questions during class, or making eye contact with the teacher as negative qualities, certainly not associated with a truly motivated student.

Origins of beliefs

One of the interview questions specifically asked the teachers' to think about where their beliefs about motivation originated. Noticeably absent among this highly educated group of teachers were self-reports that course work or published research were important origins for their beliefs. This group of teachers placed emphasis on life, student, and teaching experiences as the origins of their beliefs. There are several possible explanations for the teachers placing emphasis their non-research based experiences.

I was struck by two thoughts when I first discovered this finding. One explanation could be, as the belief literature suggested, that early experiences in life or as students became the filters for the later knowledge that may have come from coursework or published research (Pajares, 1992). Another possibility I reasoned was that because these teachers have chosen to be language instructors, they remember more clearly or were more influenced by their experiences in language classrooms. However, two other related explanations may be more likely.

It is very possible that these teachers, as educated as they are, may not have received training on motivation and motivation theories. There are several reasons for this. First of all, many of these instructors may have received their degrees before most of the concepts common to cognitive theories of motivation were taught. Second, ESL teachers have a tendency to come from a variety of backgrounds. Some have degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language, but many have degrees in linguistics, applied linguistics, English literature, secondary

education, or international studies. Many receive their University training in one field and then their practical training in ESL on the job. This would explain why they have many gaps in their beliefs when compared to the literature and why they do not acknowledge the origin of their beliefs as being from school.

A final thought on the origin of some of the beliefs in this study is informed by the literature on “folk psychology.” According to Geary (2005) people have a certain set of common sense assumptions and beliefs that they use to make sense of and discuss everyday experiences. These beliefs can evolve into theories about how people think or why they do certain things. Sometimes these theories are based on principles that can be empirically proven and sometimes they prove to be false. The literature on folk psychology suggests that well before someone receives formal training on a subject, they will have probably already formed opinions on that subject or been exposed to common or “folk” theories or opinions on the subject. In this case, folk psychology could be another source of beliefs amongst even very educated teachers.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretical implications of the findings in this study exist in at least 3 areas: confirming other research, revealing new variables which must be accounted for in existing constructs of motivation, and pointing to new areas for theoretical research.

- For these teachers, group dynamics – interaction between students and between students and teacher – was the most important motivation factor. This should be accounted for in language learning models of motivation.

- There were many perspectives and beliefs not related to motivational strategies or techniques that need further consideration.
- These teachers described a complex process of considering motivation based on their own definitions of motivation, their role as teachers, the individual students, the class as a whole, lesson planning, and de-motivators, which all led to implementing specific motivational techniques in the classroom. Further studies should be conducted that continue to explore and define this process and propose a model for teacher decision-making related to motivation.

What were some of the findings in the literature on beliefs, general constructs of motivation, and language learning motivation that were confirmed in the present study? In terms of beliefs, the self-reports of the teachers in this study confirmed a strong connection between beliefs and practice as demonstrated by the teachers' beliefs about motivation and techniques implemented to motivate. In addition, the self-reports of the origins of the teachers' beliefs about motivation support the view that beliefs are formed early on. Most of the teachers in this study pointed to early life, student, and/or teaching experiences as the origins of their beliefs and perspectives on motivation. These teacher's recollections of mostly early experiences could also endorse the finding that once beliefs are formed, they act as the filters for new information.

Another area where the present study corroborated existing motivation research was in practical motivation strategies. These teachers' common beliefs (shared by 6 or more teachers) about effective strategies for motivating students substantiated practical strategies derived from both theoretical and student-based research. For

example, as a group, these teachers beliefs supported 7 of 10 of Dornyei's "Ten commandments for motivating language learners" (1998) and 5 of 7 of Svinicki's "Seven Strategies for Enhancing Student Motivation" (2004).

In addition to confirming past research, the findings of the present study may require current constructs of language learning motivation to expand in at least two areas, and for new constructs to be created in at least one area. The first finding with important implications for language learning motivation theory is this group of teachers' focus on the importance of the variable of social interactions within a classroom on the motivation of the students. Gardner's early research, and many subsequent language-learning studies on motivation, placed social variables in the target language community or group outside the classroom and measured the effects of the language learners' attitudes towards those groups on their own motivation to learn a new language. On the other hand, the teachers in the present study consistently mentioned social interactions and relationships within the classroom, between teacher & student and student & student, as the most important influence on motivation. This study implies that any theory of language learning motivation should account for the social aspects of classroom dynamics.

Other findings from the present study that should be accounted for in current constructs of language learning motivation may require a separate theory or explanatory system. These findings include all of the categories of beliefs that are not specifically teaching techniques (category 8). The interviews in this study revealed beliefs on what constitutes a motivated student, class, and teacher; where

the responsibility for motivation resides; what the most powerful de-motivators are; and how motivation is incorporated into lesson planning. These beliefs provide insights into the multitude of variables that teachers consider before implementing a motivational technique in the classroom. This results of the present study demonstrate that a theory that describes and connects the variables in the decision-making process of teachers who are implementing motivational strategies in the classroom is warranted.

Implications for Teacher Training

Part of the rationale of this study was that existing beliefs about motivation could impact the over-all effectiveness of training on motivation. Based on the findings of this study, I would offer the following implications for teacher training activities:

- Teacher trainers must assess teacher definitions of motivation before they can know how to approach training on motivation because these teachers connect their definitions to their reports of practices and they see themselves enacting these beliefs in the classroom.
- Definitions or beliefs that cannot easily accommodate new motivation techniques and ideas may need to be challenged by a combination of differing perspectives from colleagues, evidence from research, or practical examples.
- Because the group holds beliefs that cover a wide variety of perspectives that are reflected in the literature on motivation, a trainer can use the group beliefs to 1) establish the value of the group as a resource for new ideas and 2) provide credibility for the existing literature on motivation.
- After identifying key motivation strategies that are missing from a group of teachers' self-reports, I propose three approaches to subsequent training:
1) Observe them teach or give them a survey of motivational techniques to

see if they are already implementing many of the new techniques but are not connecting them to motivation, 2) inform them of new techniques that fit into their existing perspectives on motivation but that they are not currently implementing, , and 3) give them practical experiences with the new techniques (see next bullet)

- Based on these teachers reports that the origins of their beliefs about motivation were mainly from general life experiences, and especially experiences as a language student and teacher, training should be tailored to add to those experiences. This could be done through participation in language classes, observations of language classes, or the teaching of mini lessons, all of which focused on the new motivation techniques to be learned

These implications are not the only solutions for training language teachers about motivation; however, they do offer several practical guidelines for training on language learning and motivation. The following sections will give a more detailed description and discussion of the implications for teacher training.

Definitions of motivation

The fact that these teachers possessed definitions of motivation and that there was consistency between these definition and the reported teacher practices has important implications for teacher trainers. For the teachers in the present study, providing them with new motivational techniques, no matter how wonderful they are, that do not fit within the teachers' definitions of motivation may not result in a change in classroom practices. Presenting motivational techniques seems less important than discovering the teachers underlying beliefs about motivation. Those beliefs can be revealed through individual interviews, a group discussion, or the

presentation of the kinds of definitions found in this study, but they must be revealed. Once those underlying beliefs are discovered, then the teacher trainer can modify the training to deal with the specific beliefs.

Changing beliefs is difficult, but sometimes in the face of overwhelming evidence from a variety of sources individuals may feel compelled to change. I would suggest that a combination of evidence from research, differing opinions from colleagues, and/or practical teaching examples that do not fit their current conception of motivation could be enough to instigate a change in belief. In the case of the teachers in the present study, how would a teacher trainer approach the three teachers who felt that motivation resided in external forces provided primarily by the teacher, for example? Training could begin with a focused presentation of research findings on the value produced by internal motives that originate in the students themselves. Other teachers who have been successful at recognizing the success of connecting their class to existing student motives could share how making these connections has been motivating for their students. Finally, other practical examples of motivational techniques that rely on the motivation the students bring with them can be provided by the trainer in support of an expanded view of motivation. These training techniques would provide a more focused and individualized approach to training on motivation.

Beliefs about motivation/strategies for motivating students

One of the important findings of this study was that the teachers as a group offered many strategies for motivating language learners. For teacher trainers it would be important, for at least two reasons, to emphasize these common beliefs of the group before moving on to the differences. First, it would establish the members of the group as valuable sources of knowledge about motivation. Second, connecting their common beliefs to published research could prepare the way for them to be more open to other published constructs of motivation that are not part of the group's common beliefs.

Once the common strategies have been identified and reviewed, the entire list of strategies can become the focus of the training. Because the motivation strategies mentioned by the group as a whole cover some of the important constructs of motivation, the group's list can be used as a framing tool for training about motivation strategies. It could be that a group discussion of the less common and infrequent teacher strategies for motivation, which reveal a depth and breadth of motivational practices not shared by each individual in the group, would be enough to prepare individual teachers to be open to changing or modifying their beliefs and/or practices. In addition, when the new strategies emerge from the group rather than from the trainer, they may be more readily accepted. The realization that one's beliefs are similar to or different from their peers can have a powerful re-thinking and changing effect.

As mentioned earlier, promoting learner autonomy, encouraging correct attributions, and communicating high expectations were absent from the teachers reported beliefs of motivation. These three strategies would probably be some of the most important ones to address with this group of teachers since they are prominent in the motivation literature but are absent from the common strategies these teachers use. There would be no way to know that this group needed instruction on these particular aspects of motivation unless their beliefs had been explored. Given that this group of teachers has omitted or under-valued key aspects of motivation in their self-reports on motivation, how should a teacher trainer approach these important motivation constructs? I offer 2 suggestions for teacher trainers based on the findings of this study.

The first suggestion is to confirm that the teachers are in fact omitting those strategies from their teaching. It is possible that many of the teachers are implementing techniques related to those “missing” strategies, but they simply failed to make the connection between those strategies and motivation in this study. A trainer may only need to point out the connection between those strategies and motivation. If the teachers are truly not implementing those strategies, the second suggestion is to study the teachers’ definitions and beliefs about the nature of motivation and identify which beliefs that were omitted would be easily compatible with their existing beliefs. Based on the consistency between the teacher’s beliefs and the strategies they implement in the classroom, it will be much easier to convince them to incorporate strategies that align with their current conceptions of

motivation than with those strategies that do not. After applying the first two suggestions, a teacher trainer would be left with a few important strategies that were omitted from the teachers' self-reports, that were truly not part of their regular strategies, and that are not easily compatible with the teachers' beliefs about the nature of motivation. In the section on beliefs about the origins of beliefs about motivation, and based on the findings in that section, I will suggest a possible way to deal with those remaining strategies.

Origins of teacher beliefs

The origins of teacher beliefs also provide important implications for teacher training. The group of teachers in this study expressed a clear belief that general life experiences, experiences as students, especially in language classes, and early teaching experiences were the main origins of their beliefs about motivation. In order for this group of teachers to incorporate new beliefs or strategies of motivation they may need to experience the strategies themselves. This experience would be most effective in a language learning or teaching context. A teacher trainer could put the teachers in a situation where 1) they had to experience classroom language learning of a language they did not know, 2) the teacher of the class implemented the new motivation strategies, and 3) the teachers in training were successful. This type of training would be more similar to the situations that the teachers' describe as being the origin of their beliefs than a lecture-style class or reading a book. If participating in a class is too difficult to arrange, the teachers

could observe, in person or on video, classes where the motivation strategies to be learned are demonstrated effectively. A third option would be to have teachers conduct mini lessons that implemented the new motivation strategies. In each of these cases, participating in language classes, observing classes, or teaching mini lesson, some degree of personal experience would be key according to the findings of the present study.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Part of the design of the current study was aimed at exploring a narrow area of motivation that was previously underexplored. The specific area encompassed ESL teacher beliefs and perspectives about motivation in the context of language learning. I decided that it was important to make the data elicitation methods as open as possible so that the teachers could reveal the connections that they made between their thoughts, teaching techniques, and motivation. This open-ended approach, using self-reports, provided important findings; however, self-reports, whether gathered in interviews or surveys, can be unreliable sources of data (Schwarz, 1999).

Self-report interviews were chosen for this study so that the participants would not be biased by pre-determined items on a survey. However, the interview questions and the interviewer herself could have biased the self-reports just as easily as a survey, depending on the type of questions asked or the way that the interviewer led the interviewee. In addition, self-reports of behavior are usually

more theoretical than actual. For example, teachers may report classroom practices in self-reports that an observer might not witness in the teachers' actual classrooms. As a result, this study cannot claim to report what teachers actually implement in their classrooms in terms of motivation; it can only report what the teachers report to have happened in their classes.

Another limitation, related to the previous ones, is that the present study is unnecessarily limited in scope. The research could have remained true to the original purpose, exploring self-reported connections between motivation and teaching practices, and still added multiple data collection methods. These methods could have included classroom observations, focus groups, or more detailed surveys. The data produced by these tools would have allowed the researcher to gather additional information from this particular group of teachers, which could have facilitated further exploration of some of the relationships between beliefs and practices. Additional data using diverse methods could be gathered in the future, but that future data would most likely come from a different group of teachers, or maybe from the same teachers but at a different point in time, far removed from the reported beliefs in this study. Comparing self-report data with more objective data from two different groups of teachers or from same group of teachers' over time are two factors would add complicating variables to the interpretation of the data. It would have been easier and more complete to gather the data in multiple ways, self-report and more objective, within the context of the present study.

During the data analysis, it became clear that all of the teachers provided answers to the “what” as far as their beliefs and perspectives, but many times they were not prompted to explain the “why.” As a result, the researcher was forced, at times, to speculate on the connections the instructors might be making to the relevant constructs of motivation. It would have been relatively easy to ask follow-up questions during the interviews that elicited more fully the “why” of the beliefs or techniques given in relation to their connection to motivation. In other words, the interviewer could have said, “don’t just tell me what you do to motivate students, tell me why you think doing that would be motivating.”

Finally, there were two limitations in this study related to the researcher. Because the analysis of the data involved creating categories and subjectively assigning teacher comments to those categories, the results have the potential to be biased by the experience and background of the researcher. It is possible that another researcher with the same interview transcripts might not organize the data in the same way. In addition, because the researcher was the supervisor of the participants in the study, less information about the teachers was available to him. This limited the study’s ability to explore more of the possible relationships between the data and some of the individual characteristics of the participants (e.g. when they received their teacher training).

Future Research

Of course any suggestions for future research should begin by addressing the limitations of the current study, specifically balancing self-reports with multiple data sources for an expanded perspective of teacher beliefs about motivation, and better follow-up questions on the interview instrument that go beyond the “what” and ask the “why. Moreover, the current study should be replicated to see if similar results would emerge from different groups of language teachers in a variety of learning environments. For example, similar studies could be conducted in the foreign language environment, with primary and secondary school language teachers, amongst teachers who teach language classes to immigrant populations, or with teachers in training. Such studies would allow researchers to see if higher-level organizing principles emerge with different types of teachers. As other teacher beliefs are added to the 74 in this study and are further categorized, future studies could explore correlations between certain teacher beliefs & practices and a variety of other teacher factors including gender, education, teaching context, years of experience, or native culture and language.

Additional applied studies should document the effects on teacher beliefs of teacher preparation programs that implement teacher training on motivation based on the suggestions proposed in this chapter and based on the implications of this study. These future studies would address questions such as “Will language teachers who are exposed to a variety of peer beliefs about motivation and motivating students be more open to changing or incorporating new beliefs and

practices into their teaching?” or “Will participating in a discussion with other teachers about motivation and motivating students make language teachers more likely to change their own beliefs?”

A final area for further research could be the development of a more comprehensive theory of how language teachers approach motivation. These teachers described a process of considering multiple variables before implementing, or not, a particular motivational strategy in their classrooms. Other studies could focus more specifically on these processes and variables and propose an organized system for how they might function. In the end, because teacher beliefs about motivation have been underexplored, there are many opportunities to build on the present study.

I feel that this study revealed the depth and breadth of teacher beliefs most importantly for the creation and implementation of effective teacher training on motivation and to a lesser extent, a better understanding of the construct of motivation in general as well as in language learning contexts. Language teachers will always be an important variable in the success of their students, and their perspectives on motivation are a key to creating more effective language teacher training. I hope that this study will not only generate immediate practical applications, but that more research in the area of teacher beliefs about motivation, especially related to language learning, will have an impact on the understanding of the theoretical construct of motivation as well.

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VITA

Michael Tolman Smith was raised on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii, where he graduated from Kahuku High School in 1987. Subsequently, he entered Brigham Young University (BYU) Hawaii on a full, four-year David O. McKay Scholarship. In 1988, he put his studies on hold to serve a two-year church mission in the Yucatan Peninsula, where he learned Spanish and basic Yucatec Mayan. He reenrolled at BYU-Hawaii in 1990 and three years later was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, with minors in Spanish and English Literature. He moved to Utah to pursue a Masters degree at BYU-Provo. He left with a Masters Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language and a Masters of Arts degree in Linguistics. In Fall of 1995, he enrolled in the Graduate School at the University of Texas at Austin. He became the Director of English as a Second Language Services in the International Office at the University of Texas soon after achieving doctoral candidacy, and he extended his graduate career until the present time.

Permanent Address: 13209 Vizquel Loop, Del Valle, Texas 78617

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