# 37 Maintaining learner motivation

## A Warm-up

Think about the following questions for a few moments and then discuss them with your partners.

1 What was the reason for you choosing to do the CELTA course? What is your goal?
2 What things have helped keep you motivated during the course?
3 Have any things demotivated you during the course?
4 Think about the learners you have been teaching. What are some of the reasons that they are learning English?
5 What things do you think have impacted on their motivation, both since they started learning and also since the start of this particular course?
6 Are there any similarities between your experiences and those of your learners?

## B Supporting motivation

Look at the quote below.

> A common experience for many learners and teachers is that motivation, however strong to begin with, will ebb and flow through the learning process, subject to many internal and external influences over a course of study or even within the space of a single lesson.
>
> Ema Ushioda, 2012

What things might cause motivation to 'ebb and flow', both over a period of time and in a single lesson?

2 Work in pairs to complete the text by reading it to each other. Trainee A should complete the version of the text on page 181. Trainee B should complete the version on page 183. Trainee A should start.

3 Look back at the completed text and answer the questions.

a Can you give some examples of teacher behaviours that would indicate that they are motivated?
b How might a teacher build interest in a reading activity before learners see the text?
c How could teachers give some control to learners over their learning, including lesson content and delivery style?
d How might a teacher help learners to feel a sense of progress and mastery of the language?

## C Learning from learners

1 Look at following situations and complete the sentences.

A 'My English is OK for most things, I think. I really want to improve though, but don't really know what to work on.'
*The teacher should help the learner to set …*

B 'I love it when my teacher lets us choose what to do. Last night she gave us three different bits of homework and we did the one we wanted.'
*This is one way to give learners …*



https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

C 'The teachers are really good. They make sure everyone is polite and friendly in the class. When I make mistakes, I know people won't laugh at me. The best thing about the class is meeting up with everyone.'
*This shows how important it is to …*

D 'I used to really enjoy English last year. It was good fun and the teacher was always smiling. The first few minutes of the class was always talking about what show we were streaming, or something like that. But the new teacher doesn't smile at us and never asks about our interests.'
*It is important that a teacher …*

E 'I need English mainly for travel – booking hotels, going to restaurants and things. The class is OK, but it can be a bit boring. It is mainly about grammar and so I don't really feel ready to use English for the things I need.'
*Ideally the teacher needs to make the classes more …*

2 Work in small groups. Consider the learners you have been teaching as part of your course. What things do you think motivate them? Are there any things that demotivate them? Try to be as specific as you can.

## D Putting it into practice

1 Work in small groups. Look at the following short piece of material. How could you make it more interesting?





**1 Look at Jane and Maria. What things can they do?**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jane: swim ✓ | juggle ✓ | speak three languages ✗ | sail a boat ✓ | sing ✗ |
| Maria: swim ✗ | juggle ✓ | speak three languages ✗ | sail a boat ✗ | sing ✓ |

Example: *Jane can swim but Maria can't.*
Write more sentences about Jane and Maria.

**2 Ask and answer. Look at the information about Jane and Maria. Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions about them.**

Can Jane swim?

Yes, she can.

**3 Now you. Write three sentences about what you can do.**



https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.038 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2 Explain how you adapted the material to another group.

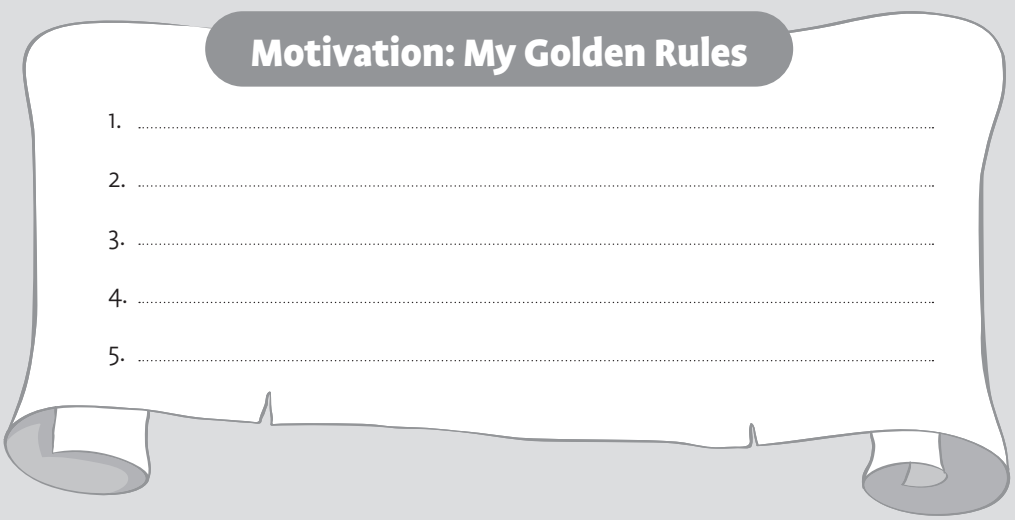
## KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *motivation*
- *goals*
- *relevance*
- *(learner) autonomy*
- *mastery*
- *personalization*

## REFLECTION

1 Write five 'golden rules' for motivating language learners that you will aim to implement in your teaching. They may refer to either the teaching you are currently doing as part of your CELTA course or your teaching after the course.




2. When you are ready, compare your list to a partner.
3. Which of your rules do you think are easiest to implement on an ongoing basis? Do you envisage any being difficult to implement?
4. Set a reminder on your phone to review these principles when you start teaching.

## Reference

Ushioda, E. (2012). Motivation. In A. Burns and J.C. Richards (eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.



https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.038 Published online by Cambridge University Press