



Practical Applicability of Directed Motivational Currents (DMC) as Means of Inspiring ESL Teachers

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1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the main resource that contributes to high achievement in any educational institute. High achievement can be attained by making classrooms into more creative, enthusiastic learning environments if teachers use their knowledge and skills to formulate a clear vision of an outcome and an effective pathway to achieve that vision. In order to succeed in this endeavour, teachers should maintain strong, pragmatic motivation. Researchers have posited many theories regarding the sustaining of motivation and encourage educationists to apply these theories to their practice. The recent "Directed Motivational Current" (DMC) theory (2016) is a motivation construct proposed by Dornyei to strengthen the long-term sustainability of motivated behaviour in an individual. This model proposes a practical motivational surge through the creation of a vision and future goals. A DMC is well above an individual's normal motivation because it has a strong sensory element or vision which works with the final goal as well as with each sub-goal along the DMC pathway. One framework proposed by Dornyei, within DMC, to engage individuals or a group on a long-term motivational surge is 'All-eyes-on-the final-product'. The objective of this study is to test the applicability of the 'All-eyes-on-the final-product' framework with a group of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in Sri Lanka.

2 METHODOLOGY

A five week focused intervention was carried out with four ESL teachers from a government mixed school in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. The teachers had to plan, organize and conduct an English day for primary school learners who had never seen or participated in such an event. The intervention was designed using the DMC markers of the 'All-eyes-on-the final-product' framework. Thus, the intervention used the stages of the motivational process identified in the framework. One teacher was advised to lead the group towards the final goal by following the sub-goals planned out. Qualitative data was obtained from the informant teachers, parents of students, the School Principal and other influential persons who attended the English Day celebrations. The researcher also made notes on the behaviour of the teacher-informants with regard to the intervention through the five weeks.

2.1 Participants

Four female ESL teachers who are responsible for teaching English to about 500 primary students participated. Their students learn English primarily at school and do not use the language at home or outside. The parents of most students have not completed their education and do not use English. All four teacher-informants had completed their professional teacher education course at a National College of



Education. Their teaching experience varied from 6 – 18 years and have been working in primary classrooms with minimal facilities.

2.2 Instruments and Procedures

The reflections of the teacher-informants were obtained through interviews using semi-structured questionnaires at different stages of the intervention. The questions were designed according to the ‘All-eyes-on-the-final-product’ framework. In order to strengthen the current study the questions were matched with another motivational framework - the six phase

‘Visionary Training Approach’ designed by Dornyei and Kubaniyova (2014). The ‘Visionary Training Approach’ seeks to increase the capacity of the vision that provides the motivation to achieve a specific goal (see Table 1). The views of the Parents, the School Principal and other influential persons were obtained through one-to-one discussions after the English Day celebrations. The researcher made notes on the observed behaviour of all four teacher-informants with regard to the intervention through the five weeks. The recordings of interviews and discussions were transcribed and analysed. The findings were triangulated.

Table 1: DMC markers and comparative phases of Visionary training approach of questions used in the semi-structured interview

Questions	Main points of the ‘All-eyes-on-the-final-product’ framework	DMC Marker	Phases of “Visionary training approach”
1. What takes most of your time these days?	A tangible outcome and real audience	Investing significant levels of time and effort	1. Creating the vision
2. What was decided to do in the group meeting?		Goal being constantly on the minds (of teachers)	
3. What was your plan for the week?	Clear sub-goals	Goal being constantly on the minds (of teachers)	2. Strengthen the vision
4. What did you do to achieve your target for the week?	Reality and authenticity	Investing significant levels of time and effort	
5. Did the school authority help you with the project?	Reality and authenticity	Teachers experience it as something special	
6. What are the language skills students have learnt?	L2 content	Surpassing expectations	3. Challenge-skill balance
7. Do you see your students develop their L2 skills through your activities?	L2 content	Surpassing expectations	
8. Did you see students’ motivation through your work?	Clear sub-goals	Surpassing expectations	4. Transform vision into action
9. Do you feel “achieved” during the week?	Clear sub-goals	Surpassing expectations	5. Keeping the vision alive
10. What was your responsibility to achieve the final goal?	Project roles and norms	They (teachers) experience it as something special	6. Counter balancing the vision
11. How do you feel about your responsibility regarding English Day?	Project roles and norms		
12. Do you feel you did your responsibility well?	Project roles and norms		



2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The responses and observances with regard to the key stages of the ‘All-eyes-on-the final-product’ will be discussed. The findings reveal interesting facts about teacher motivation as well as the DMC of a group.

2.1 Data Analysis

Responses to the first question (Table 2) clearly show that all the teacher-informants were initially focusing on non-

intervention related work. They were hesitant to discuss about a group project. At the first meeting, the creating of a clear common vision about the group project was observed. Teacher 4 was absent for the meeting. Their response showed that during the last week, the three teachers who were present, had given priority to the group project while teacher 4 was still focusing on another project. The three teacher-informants have acquired a DMC marker by investing significant time and effort on the project. They were ready with a real audience to show the performances.

Table 2: Answers in brief to question no. 1 of semi-structured interview in Week 1 and 5

Week	What takes most of your time these days?				Observations by researcher
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (leader)	Teacher 4	
1	Correcting books and teaching	Housework. I always come late to school.	My own studies	Practicing songs for grade 6 students	Teachers were reluctant to do a group work.
5	English Day practices and rehearsals	English Day practices specially the oil lamp	English Day work	<u>Secondary</u> section English day	Teachers talked a lot about the common goal.

Table 3: Answers in brief to question 3 of semi-structured interview in Weeks 1, 3, 4 and 5

Week	What was <i>your</i> plan for the week?				Observations by researcher
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (leader)	Teacher 4	
1	Covering the syllabus and selecting students for songs.	I was asked to get the date fixed and prepare a budget.	<i>I wanted to do a better English Day.</i>	Planning secondary section English Day.	Teacher 2 and 4 was not ready for the group project yet.
3	<i>Determined to overcome challenges of the project.</i>	Try to get husband’s help to record a song.	To focus more on correcting pronunciation	To have more items for grade 6 students.	Teacher 4 was not focussing on the project.
4	To give more practice to students and motivate them.	<i>Determined to do a better English day</i>	To prepare speeches and finalize items.	Take grade 6 students to the stage for rehearsals.	Teacher 2 showed the interest of the group work
5	To do the project well. Worried about Teacher 2’s work.	Planned to complete what I volunteered.	To cover absent teachers’ work.	I planned to help primary section with stage décor.	Insufficient, unenthusiastic support from teacher 4.

During the 3rd week, teacher 1 was determined to do a good English day. During the interview, her statements showed that her sudden intense motivation emerged as a result of negative comments and challenges given by teachers outside the group in the primary section. It was observable that her DMC like experience began with a negative influence.

Teacher 2 showed her intense motivational surge during the 4th week. According to her, it was also due to continuous negative comments and challenges given by other teachers in the section who could not accept the positive change of students regarding L2.

The behaviour of the leader (teacher 3), indicated DMC like motivational surge from week 1. Her DMC experience began with an intrapersonal reason: finding a passion.

However, teacher 4 does not appear to have a DMC like experience regarding the primary section project. There could be several reasons: she was absent for the first meeting and was involved in another project. Yet, by the end of week 5, all four teachers were focusing on the group project.

Teacher 1 was worried about teacher 2's delay in completing her responsibilities while teacher 3 made up her mind to do the work of teacher 2 if the project was going to fail due to the movements of teacher 2.

The authenticity of the project was constantly in the minds of three teacher-informants showing they were caught up by DMC like motivation. They strengthened their final goal through various short-term goals such as performing complete rehearsals.

Answering to question number 7, teacher-informants 1, 2 and 3 stated they were not happy about the L2 development of students during the first week (see Table 4). But they have noted a sufficient development during the 5th week. Satisfaction of surpassing the expectations of teacher-informants could be observed during the 5th week. However, the vision and focus of teacher 4 was not compatible with other teachers.

Even though teacher-informants 1, 2 and 3 stated they felt 'achieved' something during 1st and 5th weeks, their expressions and behaviour indicate a qualitative difference in the degree of achievement by the 5th week. (See Table 5). They seemed happy and confident about keeping their vision alive through various sub-goals such as rehearsals on the stage, preparing students to make announcements, performances, and so on.

Answers to question 10 show that teachers 2 and 4 did not have a clear vision of the project at the beginning unlike teacher 1 and 3 (Table 6). However during the process, the highly motivated teachers volunteered and undertook many tasks. They understood the project roles and norms as well as how to counter balance the final goal.

The comments and feedback received from the School Principal and influential persons and parents of students give an indication of what the teachers had accomplished through the group-project. The praise received from those who witnessed the successful English day celebration, indicates that the intervention had achieved its objectives vis-à-vis the teacher motivation and L2 development of students. This confirms the influence of group DMC in motivating teachers.

Table 4: Answers in brief to question number 7 of semi-structured interview in Week 1 and 5.

Week	Do you see your students develop their language skills through your activities?				Observations by researcher
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (leader)	Teacher 4	
1	Not happy	Not enough	Not much	Of course.	Teachers 1, 2 and 3 are motivated to do the project.
5	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. A lot.	Yes.	

Table 5: Answers in brief to question no. 9 of semi-structured interview in Week 1 and 5.

Week	Do you feel you 'achieved' at the end of the week?			
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (leader)	Teacher 4
1	Yes. I covered the syllabus.	Not much.	Yes, with difficulty	Yes, I feel so.
5	Yes, We did it!!! Finally I felt relaxed.	Yes, I feel confident and achieved.	Yes, a lot of hard work but I am happy.	Of course I did.

Table 6: Answers in brief to question no. 10 of semi-structured interview in Week 1 and 5.

Week	What was your responsibility to achieve the final goal of the group?			
	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (leader)	Teacher 4
1	Selection of students.	I was asked to do certain duties.	Using audio equipment for practices.	I was asked to help in teaching lessons.
5	So many. I volunteered some work.	A lot as the Head. Yet, I volunteered some more.	I volunteered to focus on overall programme and guide the group.	Not given any. I volunteered to make paper flowers

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that DMC can be applied practically to inspire a group towards a specified goal using 'All-eyes-on-the final-product' framework. The data also showed that the quality and dynamism of the leadership given is necessary for achieving success. Thus it would appear that 'All-eyes-on-the final-product' framework can be used to inspire and sustain ESL teacher motivation in the context of Sri Lanka.

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