Motivational strategies in the English classroom:
The case of Arab learners in Israel

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ABSTRACT

Decline in students’ motivation to learn languages is still a vexing issue for many teachers and educators. Among a myriad of factors that affect students’ motivation and willingness to invest in their studies, teachers’ actions and practices stand out as playing a very dominant role. This has been reflected in the rising number of studies that examine teachers’ motivational strategies, though there is much that is still to be explored, and the contexts in which these strategies are studied need to be expanded. This study aims to determine the specific teacher strategies which are most likely to positively affect the motivation of Arab learners of English from the perspective of learners. Some 400 teenage learners of English responded to an open-ended question in which they were asked to freely report the teaching strategies employed by their teachers that they deemed motivating. The results of the study suggest that the majority of students prefer strategies that promote communicative uses of the language to ones that focus on grammar or that emphasize learning through texts. Many students also reported that they had more interest in studying English when their teachers integrated technological tools. It is therefore recommended that teachers give more weight to these motivating strategies by incorporating more communicative use of English and more technology into their lessons.

Keywords: language learning; language learning motivation, teacher practices; teaching strategies; TESOL