

LEARNERS' VIEWS ON THE MOST AND LEAST EFFECTIVE MOTIVATIONAL APPROACHES IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) INSTRUCTION*Urazbaeva Dilbar**Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Ajiniyaz*

Abstract: This paper explores students' perceptions of the most and least motivating teaching strategies in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes. Drawing on learner-centered principles, it identifies task-based learning, use of authentic materials, and technology-enhanced instruction as highly motivating strategies. In contrast, traditional, lecture-based approaches and irrelevant materials are viewed as demotivating. The paper emphasizes the importance of aligning instruction with students' professional goals, providing meaningful feedback, and fostering interactive classroom environments. Understanding learners' views enables educators to tailor ESP instruction more effectively, enhance motivation, and support learners' academic and career success in specialized fields.

Keywords: ESP, motivation, teaching strategies, learner perception, language education.

Understanding students' perceptions of the most and least motivating teaching strategies in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes is essential for designing effective language instruction tailored to learners' academic, professional, or occupational needs. ESP learners typically have specific goals, such as mastering English for engineering, medicine, law, or business, which makes their motivation context-dependent and often driven by extrinsic factors like job requirements, academic performance, or career advancement. In this setting, traditional general English teaching strategies may fall short of addressing learner expectations, making it critical to examine which instructional methods foster engagement and which hinder it. Teaching strategies that align with students' interests, provide relevance to their fields, and offer opportunities for active participation are generally viewed as the most motivating. Conversely, approaches that are overly theoretical, generic, or detached from real-life applications tend to be regarded as demotivating and ineffective in the context of ESP.

One of the most motivating teaching strategies reported by learners in ESP classrooms is task-based learning that mirrors real-world professional situations. Students studying English for business, for example, respond positively to role-plays that simulate meetings, presentations, or negotiations, as these tasks allow them to practice the vocabulary and communication styles specific to their future workplace. These activities not only make learning more relevant but also boost confidence by giving students a clear sense of progress and applicability. Similarly, students in medical or engineering ESP classes find case-based learning and project presentations particularly helpful. These strategies encourage them to use technical terminology in context, interact with peers, and receive feedback, all of which enhance motivation through practical application. Furthermore, the integration of authentic materials such as articles from industry journals, workplace documents, emails, and technical reports helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and the real professional environment. When students perceive that what they are learning directly contributes to their

career goals, their motivation increases significantly, as they feel empowered to function more competently in their chosen fields.

Another highly motivating approach in ESP classes is the incorporation of technology and multimedia resources. Today's learners, especially those in technical or scientific fields, are often digital natives who appreciate the use of educational platforms, simulations, and multimedia content in their learning process. Language learning apps, online discussion forums, YouTube tutorials related to their disciplines, and interactive quizzes all contribute to keeping students engaged. For example, a software engineering student might enjoy using a collaborative platform to write and peer-review documentation in English, while a medical student might benefit from watching and summarizing medical procedure videos in English. These modern methods make the classroom experience more dynamic, interactive, and responsive to the evolving needs of learners. Additionally, the flexibility offered by blended learning or flipped classroom models is seen as highly motivating. Students are able to access content outside the classroom and use in-class time for practice and discussion, which encourages autonomous learning and time management—skills that are particularly important in professional contexts.

On the other hand, one of the least motivating strategies identified by learners in ESP classes is the overuse of lecture-based instruction with limited student interaction. In cases where teachers rely too heavily on traditional grammar explanation and vocabulary memorization without contextualizing it within the learners' field, students often lose interest and question the value of the lessons. This issue is especially acute in ESP settings where learners expect their English instruction to support their field-specific communication needs. Teaching strategies that ignore students' professional goals and focus too much on general language rules can feel disconnected, leading to reduced motivation. Another demotivating practice is assigning irrelevant or outdated texts that do not reflect the current language or practices in a particular discipline. For instance, using generic business dialogues from outdated textbooks in a class of international marketing students fails to capture their interest, as it does not reflect the real language or scenarios they expect to encounter in the workplace. Such strategies result in a lack of engagement and may even cause frustration, especially when students feel their time and effort are not being used effectively.

A further demotivating factor in ESP classes is the lack of personalization and student autonomy in learning. When teachers do not consider learners' preferences, learning styles, or specific needs, students may feel ignored or undervalued. Assigning the same tasks to a heterogeneous class without tailoring them to different professions can demotivate learners who do not see the relevance of the material. For example, a class consisting of both nursing and engineering students might require differentiated tasks that reflect each group's professional context. Similarly, when teachers dominate class time and do not encourage student interaction, learners may become passive recipients rather than active participants. This passivity reduces motivation and hinders the development of communicative competence. Many students prefer classes where they can express their ideas, ask questions, and work collaboratively, especially in ESP environments where teamwork and communication are crucial. Therefore, a student-centered approach that empowers learners to take an active role in their education is essential for maintaining high levels of motivation.

Feedback and assessment methods also play a major role in shaping learners' motivation in ESP contexts. Students find formative, constructive feedback that focuses on their specific areas of improvement more motivating than generalized, summative evaluations that merely assign a grade. When feedback is immediate, detailed, and linked to real-world performance standards, it provides students with clear goals and strategies for improvement. Moreover, self-assessment and peer assessment activities can be highly effective, as they encourage reflection and deeper engagement with the content. On the contrary, when assessments are perceived as unfair, overly difficult, or irrelevant to the course goals, they can become a source of stress and disengagement. For instance, asking students to memorize lists of unrelated terms for a test, instead of evaluating their ability to use those terms in context, diminishes the practical value of the learning experience. To foster motivation, assessments should mirror the kinds of tasks students will perform in their fields, such as writing reports, giving presentations, or conducting professional correspondence.

Teacher behavior and classroom climate also significantly influence learners' perceptions of motivation. Teachers who show enthusiasm, respect, and empathy are often more successful in motivating their students. In ESP classrooms, where learners may already be professionals or have clearly defined goals, it is especially important for instructors to act as facilitators and collaborators rather than authoritative figures. When students feel their teacher understands and supports their professional aspirations, they are more likely to participate actively and invest effort in the learning process. In contrast, a lack of teacher engagement, rigid classroom rules, or dismissive attitudes can create a demotivating environment. Similarly, peer dynamics within the classroom affect motivation. A supportive, cooperative class atmosphere encourages learners to take risks, share ideas, and help one another. Group projects, discussions, and peer review activities can strengthen social bonds and make learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

In conclusion, learners' perceptions provide valuable insights into which teaching strategies in ESP classes are most effective at promoting motivation and which fall short. Strategies that are interactive, relevant to students' professional fields, and provide opportunities for authentic communication tend to be the most motivating. Conversely, methods that are overly rigid, irrelevant, or teacher-centered often result in disengagement. Motivation in ESP learning is strongly tied to the perceived usefulness of the content, the classroom atmosphere, the teacher's role, and the opportunity for active participation. By prioritizing learner-centered, field-specific, and flexible teaching strategies, educators can create a more stimulating and effective ESP learning environment that meets the real-world needs of students.

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