

Abstract

This thesis was written with the intention of improving the effectiveness of the learning process for English as a Second Language learners in Thailand. The background of this study is the researcher's experience that students in Thailand are lacking motivation to learn a second language, especially at the primary level. It is logical to say that if students are well motivated, the learning process will be more effective. Student motivation is therefore one of the most crucial aspects in learning effectiveness, and regardless of teachers' teaching and management skills, the teacher's ability to motivate students plays an extremely important role in the students' language learning process. As Dornyei wrote, "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness" (2001: 116). The focus of this research is how to increase primary level students' motivation to learn ESL, in Thailand. The researcher hoped that an approach based on activities could raise the students' motivation level and therefore improve their skills in ESL.

In this research, short-term trials (8 weeks) of two activity-based projects were conducted with third grade students of Sarasas Ektra Bilingual School. Third grade students were chosen as participants because at this age they are not too old to be willing to use English actively, while they are not too young to notice the changes from their normal curriculum to the activity-based projects. The methodology of the study included the observation of student participation in the projects, which was recorded on video, and questionnaires. The results of the questionnaires should compare the difference in the students' reactions between a more traditional teacher fronted instructional style that Thai teachers generally employ to the more active learning style of an approach based on activities.

The goal of the two projects was for the students to be able to experience situations where they could apply the language they learned in their classroom -- whether it was grammar, vocabulary or speaking, listening, reading or writing -- to simulated real life activities where they could use the knowledge in a practical way.

It is this researcher's opinion that the students learned new perspectives, and benefitted from the two activity-based projects, whether they found the activities difficult or not, because they could at least see that what they had learned in their classroom could potentially be used in the real world as well.

