

LACK OF STUDENT MOTIVATION WITHIN THE ESL CLASSROOM

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the lack of ESL student motivation within the classroom, teacher perceptions of student motivation, and effective strategies that teachers implement within an ESL classroom. Included within this thesis is a study that compiled data from teachers and middle school ESL students within a small city school district. The study resulted from an interest of the researcher in ESL student motivation and teacher perceptions of student motivation. The study focused on various factors within intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within an individual while extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from outside an individual. The study was carried out by the researcher over a two month period of time. The researcher gave a motivational survey to a target group of eleven students, interviewed the two ESL teachers that worked with these students, and observed several class sessions making anecdotal notes while observing of motivational strategies being used and student responses to these strategies. The research showed that the students displayed higher levels of motivation within student led classrooms with home language materials made available. In addition the research found that students were equally intrinsically and extrinsically led. The teacher interviews gave insight to the teacher personalities and subsequent observations showed how the personality of the teacher led to the success or lack of success of a class session. These findings showed the importance of student motivation leading to academic success. This topic yielded a great deal of interesting data. The research showed that middle school students are equally intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and one type of motivational strategy is not efficient or effective.

Keywords: ELLs, motivation, effective strategies, perceptions, biases

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Introduction

Education of English Language Learners (ELLs) is a topic of common debate and conversation within the United States over the past few years. Teachers as well as administrators have been evaluated more and more on their student test scores of standardized state testing. The adaption of the Common Core has been a struggle for teachers who are already facing difficulties reaching their ELLs. The importance of student led classrooms is becoming a strategy that many teachers use. Identifying student motivation and using student motivation to increase academic achievement seems like a common solution to a growing problem but consequently is not as common within classrooms as one may think. Identifying intrinsic and extrinsic motivational values within students to increase student learning and motivation within the ESL classroom setting was the backbone of this entire research project.

Problem

The problem that this study hoped to address was the increased lack of motivation of English Language Learners (ELL) within the ESL classroom, and how teachers works to increase motivations of ELLs within the ESL classroom. Research showed that from the years 2003-2012 the number of English Language Learners within the public school system increased from 4.1 million to 4.4 million students (United States Department of Education, 2014). These students were placed into various ESL programs within their school district. Government officials observed the test scores on state tests beginning with the issuing of No Child Left Behind in 2001. The standardized test scores of ELLs continue to significantly decrease (Fry, 2014). With the implementation of the Common Core Standards, students are becoming frustrated with the new learning techniques and strategies. In addition, the Common Core Standards do not give many adaptations and resources to assist ESL teachers. ESL teachers are expected to teach the

material to their students and increase ELL student test scores without clear direction on how to do so. With the higher stakes and standards, ELLs are obtaining below average scores in their grade level classrooms (Roekel, 2008). ELLs within the mainstream classroom are being pushed past their capacity and are being held to unrealistic expectations. These students are becoming frustrated and are lacking the motivation to succeed due to the unrealistic expectations without clear strategies for obtaining these goals. According to Oxford and Shearin (1991), motivation is absolutely crucial to second or subsequent language learning. If the motivation is not present then learning will not occur (Oxford & Shearin, 1991). One of increasing topics of discussion is the under preparation of teachers in properly reaching ELLs within their classrooms. Teachers are terrified about having children in their classroom who do not speak English because they are afraid of the unknown. McNeilage (2014) wrote an article voicing concerns of teachers. Within this article the common consensus remains: teachers feel that they are not prepared to handle such large numbers of ELLs streaming into the classroom. This causes the teachers to shut down and in their ignorance of not knowing how to help turn away from the students who need the most help, ELLs (McNeilage, 2014). In several of my field placements, I have seen the frustration of both the teachers and students. Lack of ELL student motivation is a problem for both ESL teachers and their students.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to adequately answer the following research questions: What are the factors that influence ELL student motivation in their learning, what do teachers perceive as the factors that affect ESL student motivation, and what strategies do teachers use to motivate their ESL students? Specifically, the research focuses on the motivation of English Language Learners and how teachers' perceptions of motivation within students are

using the motivations of their students to guide learning within the ESL classroom. With the adapting of the Common Core Curriculum and potentially different standards for assessing teachers and students, student success is of the utmost importance. In addition, the research looked at defining ELL student motivation. It also focuses on teacher perceptions and perspectives of their students within the ESL classroom. The research looks at what strategies ESL teachers are using to increase student motivation within the ESL classroom. Many ESL teachers seek assistance and look for new ideas of how to “reach” their students. The purpose of this paper was to take a look at a target group of ESL students in a specific area. The research was conducted in a high needs school. This school had a historical pattern within the school of very low scoring ELLs. ELLs within this school were not succeeding, and the purpose of this research was to find ways to possibly increase their success within their ESL classrooms. The motivation of the English Language Learners was examined and the teachers were interviewed. The purpose of the teacher interview was to collect data from the teachers on their ideologies and opinions regarding student motivation within the classroom setting. The interview served as a tool to give a bit of background information on the teachers who worked with the ELL population surveyed. In addition, the interview addresses how the teachers motivated their students within the classroom. The classroom was observed while strategies that the teachers were using to attempt to motivate the students were noted. The perceived effectiveness of these strategies was also noted.

Significance

This study is important due to the growing number of English Language Learners within the United States that entered the school system over the last three decades. Students that enter ESL classrooms face the same work and expectations caused so many ELLs to lose their

academic motivation (Miller & Edno, 2004). This study benefits ELLs as well as ESL teachers who were responsible for the English instruction of these students. ELLs are able to self-reflect on what factors motivate them to participate and exert effort within an ESL classroom setting. The ESL teachers are able to focus on their strategies that they use within the classroom as well as the effectiveness of these strategies. ESL teachers that I worked with had the opportunity to reflect on how they ran their classrooms and what strategies they used within their classrooms. They also saw how their students identified their motivations to learn. Ideally, this guided future learning and teaching within these ESL classrooms as well as increased ELL students' participation and success within this school. In addition to teachers and students, administrators may also benefit from the execution of this study. With the new state regulations and Common Core Curriculum that is implemented within the schools, administrators are in charge of their school's ratings. The ratings are determined on student test scores and overall achievement. With a greater knowledge of student motivations and how their teachers work with motivations within the classroom, administrators observe and implement necessary changes within the classroom procedures with the teachers as needed.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide information on the target population of the research study. This literature review identified and defined English Language Learners (ELLs) and worked to provide a clear and concise picture of the challenges they faced. This literature review also worked to identify student motivations and how teachers incorporated strategies to increase student motivation within the ESL classroom.

What is an English Language Learner?

English Language Learners (ELLs) and Emergent Bilinguals (EB) are two terms that are being used when referring to individuals whose first language is one other than English throughout schools as well as in the media. The previous term Limited English Proficient (LEP) is slowly fading out of the politically correct terminology bank. Teachers, administrators, politicians, and individuals within the community use these terms when discussing students in their school or classroom whose first language is one other than English. Hickok (2002) states that “According to the federal government, an LEP/ELL is an individual who is 3 to 21 years of age, enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school, who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English” (p. 1). English Language Learners have various levels of success throughout their academic careers. Menken and Kleyn (2009) found that emergent bilinguals or English Language Learners are often put into one of two categories: long term ESL or short term ESL. Long term ELLs comprise a large majority of the emergent bilingual population. These learners have attended schools within the United States for five years or more (Menken & Kleyn, 2009). These students attend school and are placed in appropriate grade level classrooms although they may be pulled out for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes throughout the day. NYS adapted a piece of legislation titled

Commissioner's Regulation Part 154. Within this legislation special accommodations are listed for those students who are ELLs. ESL classes focus on language proficiency and strictly learning the English language enough to be proficient in the language (OBE-WL, 2015).

Content classes are often blended with ESL classes so that students are learning language as well as content throughout the day. English Language Learners enter the school system with various levels of English acquisition. These students are tested to determine according to the test what proficiency level the students fit into in the English language. Based on this determination students are placed in ESL programs. These programs regulate a certain number of hours depending on the proficiency level of the student. Depending on the level of English acquisition the student has according to the test they have completed will determine the number of hours of ESL instruction the student will receive. NYS highlights the times for students depending on their level of proficiency. Some students are pulled out for the majority of a school day in order to learn content and language in a separate classroom. Other methods have ESL teachers "push" into the classrooms to help with language proficiency while content is being taught to the entire class. Students are taught grade level content and are expected to be learning English in the process of mastering content. The accommodations for students who are ELLs varies from state to state. As immigration from other countries continues to grow, children with rich linguistic backgrounds are entering schools throughout the United States (OBE-WL, 2015).

Biases That Affect Perceptions of English Language Learners

As with anything that is unfamiliar several biases and assumptions concerning English Language Learners have evolved; many of which are false definitions of a true English Language Learner. Research has been conducted and the subsequent findings showed that many individuals feel that all ELLs are foreign based immigrants that all learn English in the same

manner (Gil & Bardack, 2010). These individuals say that children from non-English speaking backgrounds have fully acquired English and are ready to be mainstreamed as soon as they are able to speak it. The authors continued to find that individuals with the above assumptions feel that children in present times are having more difficulties learning English than their ancestors who learned English when arriving in the United States. The assumptions are often summarized by addressing any individual whose first language is not English as an English Language Learner. In reality, research has shown that 57% of ELLs were born within the United States (Gil & Bardack, 2010). In addition, research proves that every child learns a language differently and that there is no one single approach for learning any language including English. Every individual whose home language was not English struggled to learn English at one point in time. Due to high stakes testing and higher standards of learning, these difficulties are merely becoming more prevalent and easy to spot (Gil & Bardack, 2010). Menken and Kleyn (2009) found that ELLs many times slip through the cracks or are seen as “failures” in schools. These students come from all over the world and have different stories for why they are classified as a long term emergent bilingual. Orally, these students may sound like a native English speaker, but many times their literacy skills which research shows develop over a longer period of time are not at a level of proficiency. These students often perform below grade level in their reading and writing abilities. These students have had inconsistent schooling, gaps in their schooling, or have not had the necessary resources needed (Menken & Kleyn, 2009). An article that was released in 2012 stated that short term ELLs are those students who are new to the United States or have attended school within the United States for four years or less. These students are usually limited in their English proficiency in the areas of speaking, reading, and writing. They would score at a beginner level on a proficiency test in English (English Language Learners,

2012). The overlying fact remains that although students come into the United States as English Language Learners there is no reason for them to become a long-term English Language learner.

Challenges within Language Acquisition That English Language Learners Face

English Language Learners and students whose first language is indeed English are often in the same grade level classroom setting. Uro and Barrio (2013) found that although teachers differentiate their lessons in order to reach all of the students; many times ELLs suffer due to English language deficiencies. Over the past few years more and more students are entering the schools with a knowledge of their home language but little to no knowledge of English. These students are being compared academically to their grade level peers. Since these students are at a disadvantage due to lack of language these students will not be as successful on language based tasks. Repeated failure and lack of success eventually dwindles student motivation. Over the past decade, the number of English Language Learners in the United States has grown dramatically. There were about 1.2 million students throughout the United States that are classified over the 2012-2013 school year alone as ELLs (Uro & Barrio, 2013). This significantly alters what a stereotypical classroom looks like by pre modern standards. Roekel (2008) stated that with the implementation of the new NYS Common Core Standards the entirety of the NYS school system has been redone in a way. With new standards dictating student knowledge by grade level, teachers are under enormous pressure to make sure the students are prepared for state wide assessments at the end of the year. English Language Learners who were already behind struggle with the new Common Core concepts. These learners do not have a strong English language baseline to springboard their grade level content knowledge that they are learning off of. This causes these students to struggle even more than they were before which then leads to a feeling of hopelessness and lack of motivation to try to succeed. If the bar

of success is set too high students will feel depressed that they may never reach the bar and will lose motivation to try and do so.

Teaching lessons completely in English is less than beneficial for those students whose English proficiency is lower than their grade level peers. As a result of this form of instruction, much of the language and content may not be acquired. Students who do not understand the language behind the instruction have no motivation or ability to accurately take in and implement the information. Efficient teachers constantly alter their lessons and modify their classroom structures in order to accommodate growing numbers of ELLs. Appropriate lessons are becoming more and more differentiated and in some regards unconventional, and student learning is based on the teacher's ability to incorporate all types of learners, including ELLs within every lesson (Arnon, 2007). This is an attempt to increase student language and academic motivation.

English minority students are often placed in mainstream English classes before they are fully proficient in English. This causes a detrimental effect on student learning for these students. Harklau (1994) wrote an article talking about the effects of mainstreaming ELLs before they are ready and what happens after they are mainstreamed. Students who are not English proficient are put into English only classrooms before they are even close to being proficient. ESL teachers and content area teachers are working to integrate their curriculum to benefit emergent bilinguals. Harklau gave an example of four students whose first language was Chinese who were observed for six months. These students transitioned from ESL classes into mainstream classes. The ESL program had been isolated from the mainstream program and there were no adjustments made in the mainstream class for emergent bilinguals. This caused

the students to flounder although they had reached proficient levels in their ESL classrooms. Floundering students will not be as motivated to continue to try if there is no chance of success.

English as the dominant language. Taking a look around the United States in relation to other countries shows evidence of an English dominant society. Although the United States does not formally have a national language, if individuals are not proficient in English, they are setting themselves up for failure. Our government and economy makes English a priority and everyone who is to be successful in their professional and academic lives needs to be fully proficient in English. If there are people who are not fully proficient in English, there is a possibility that they may fall through the cracks in the fast paced society of the United States. Without the importance of a home language ELLs tend to feel inferior and lack the motivation to learn a language when they are not valued as individuals.

Motivational Theories

Throughout research there are three other types of motivation aside from intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that have been defined. Lim (2012) in the research told of two other types of motivation: instrumental motivation, and integrative motivation. Motivational orientation is the overall definition that holds the categories of instrumental and integrative motivation. It is categorized as the primary element behind motivation. This is then broken into the two subgroups of motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is an individual's motivation to complete an activity or reach a goal based on a means to the end mentality. These individuals complete a task in order to somehow reach a higher goal such as a job promotion or higher grades throughout school. Integrative motivation is the motivation an individual possesses that fuels their attitude toward an activity or goal. These individuals have a positive attitude toward the task at hand and seem to want to be a part of something greater. For

example emergent bilinguals who are interactively motivated value the English language culture and want to be a part of it, thus taking an interest in learning English (Lim, 2012).

According to the socio-cultural theory Vygotsky explained the zone of proximal development. A student within the zone of proximal development is able to self-regulate their learning and lean on other individuals as a support system when needed. Self-regulation can be defined as a type of motivation. How a student self-regulates or fails to self-regulate their learning and work quality impacts how they perform in a class. This is true for ELLs. Paul Pintrich and Elisabeth DeGroot (1990) composed a study of 173 seventh grade students. Intrinsic motivation was a slight factor but the researchers found that self-regulation had a huge impact on student motivation within the classroom (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). In order for self-regulation to be an effective motivational strategy several factors need to be present. In order for students to be motivated and have the ability to self-regulate their learning they need to be able to maintain cognitive engagement to a task, block out distractors, and have the ability to learn, comprehend and remember the material being taught (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). ESL students within an ESL classroom environment will be motivated if they can develop and maintain self-regulation strategies.

The self-determination theory that was explained above deals with an individual's motivation for success based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Self-Efficacy which is a subheading of sorts and a crucial part within the self-determination theory is commonly known as the confidence in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or product (Macdonald, 2004). In other words it is an example of intrinsic motivation. Students who have strong sense of self-efficacy are generally more motivated within a classroom to succeed. English Language Learners generally do not have the confidence to take risks within a classroom when they first are learning

English. ESL teachers who promote self-efficacy within the classroom are teaching students to become more confident and in turn more motivated in their learning. ESL students who are given choices, given encouragement, and are given frequent feedback which is positive and negative will develop higher levels of self-efficacy (Macdonald, 2004). ESL students need short term goals that are established for them that are reachable within a specific time frame. Cooperative learning strategies play a part in developing an ESL student's self-efficacy.

Over the last two decades students seem to be less and less motivated in their educational settings. Students are not completing assignments and are lacking the motivation to be successful within the ESL classroom. Belmont & Skinner (1993) stated that motivated students are easy to recognize but are becoming more difficult to find. Their research shows that from preschool through high school children's intrinsic motivation slowly declines (Belmont & Skinner, 1993). The two authors decided to take a look at and delve into the classroom to find out why students were slowly losing their motivation as they entered higher grade levels. It was found that classroom practices guide student motivation. Teachers set up their rooms differently. The way a teacher designs his/her room can lead to an increase or decrease in student motivation respectfully (Belmont & Skinner, 1993). Belmont and Skinner (1993) also found that teacher involvement, structure, and autonomy were compared to student motivation in the classroom. The study found that teacher interactions with the students determined student motivation within the classroom. If the students felt that their needs were being met by the teacher, their motivation in the class was substantially higher (Belmont & Skinner, 1993).

Intrinsically based. Over the longevity of time, many theorists have designed individual theories that relate to motivation. These theories have been looked at over time and used in the classroom to guide learning. The expectancy-value theory is the first example of a motivational

theory. This theory was originated by Martin Fishbein in the 1970s and was developed and expanded upon by Eccles beginning in the 1980s (Chauncey, n.d.). Wigfield & Eccles (2000) wrote a journal article talking about this motivational theory. The authors reminded the readers that the expectancy-value theory relates to theorists who believe that an individual's choice, perseverance and presentation relating to an activity or behavior will be explained by the individual's belief on how well they will complete the activity and how important the activity is to the candidate completing the activity (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). If a student feels that he/she has an opportunity to perform well on a task and sees the task as highly important for future learning the student will be more motivated to not only complete the task, but will put forth a larger amount of effort while doing it.

Extrinsically based. Student motivation within a classroom setting is a popular topic of study. Within an ESL classroom setting many times there are students from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Wang (2008) wrote an article on the basis of several different theories defining motivation in relation to motivation within an academic setting. The author found that students of different cultures are motivated a little differently. In every situation, however, the students found three factors of motivation: autonomy, competence, and need to experience a particular outcome. Every student wanted to have a choice in the task that was being asked of by the teacher. For each task the students' perceived competence level affected their motivation to complete the task. In this particular study the participants were asked on their feelings about learning English. This specific population was found to be highly motivated to learn English. This was the case because all of the students had an opportunity to travel to the United States if their English level was at a proficient level. These students had a goal in mind and were thus motivated to achieve their goal (Wang, 2008).

Another theory that applies to motivation and second language acquisition especially is the socio-cultural theory. According to Vygotsky (1978) this theory guides teachers to educate their students based on social interactions within the classroom. The theory argues that students are more motivated to participate if they are working with their peers. A study was conducted on an individual learning a second language who seems to not be doing as well as she was hoping. The study argues that the learner is experiencing dynamic and mediating motivational changes. The individual's motivation is changing as the second language acquisition process is changing (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011). Many times as students go through the stages of language acquisition and second language learning their motivations will change slightly. What was once a goal or important now seems insignificant that the learner is at a higher learning point. The goals must be modified and new motivations set due to student needs.

Another extrinsically based theory is Gardner's socio-educational theory of motivation. Gardner did a great deal of work trying to define and analyze student motivation. Gardner came up with his socio-educational model in the 1970s. In this model Gardner decided that motivation relates to the cultural setting and context of an individual. In addition, the setting, aptitude, effort, and desire need to be considered when defining motivation of an individual (Gardner, 1972). Every individual is different, which means their motivations will also be unique to their personality. Since every individual is motivated in a slightly different fashion lessons made by teachers need to be differentiated with various strategies to motivate different learners.

Self-determination theory is another explanation of a style of motivation. Individuals are motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically. The self-determination theory deals with these two types of motivation. Otoshi and Heffernan (2011) wrote an article based on a study containing elements of this theory. The authors began his study by focusing on several sub categories of

intrinsic motivation which is defined as motivation from within an individual. The authors then went on to define four noticeable types of motivation: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and amotivation. External regulation is defined as an external motivation that comes from the perceived need to accomplish a task, for example getting a good grade on an assignment. Introjected regulation is also defined as an extrinsic motivation. In this case individuals are trying to better themselves in relation to their self-image or self-confidence. Identified regulation is when an individual responds to a pressure inflicted on them to perform well on a task. Amotivation is when an individual does not value an activity and therefore lacks the motivation to complete the task at hand. The authors composed a study based on these theories and definitions with a population of Japanese students. The students were university level students who were either English or Business majors. The purpose of the study was to look at and rate motivation for learning within the English and Business majors at the university. The results showed that intrinsically motivated students from both groups were equally motivated to learn English. This showed that intrinsically motivated individuals saw the importance of learning English and acted on their motivation in order to do so (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2011). Students who are intrinsically motivated will learn a language because they see the importance of it. Extrinsically motivated individuals need to be shown the importance of a task such as learning English. Once the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation has been determined it can be sub grouped into external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and amotivation.

English Language learners often enter an ESL classroom with the pretense that they will receive intensive English instruction, which will thus lead to full English acquisition; all within the ESL classroom. Many times these students are taught English grammar and language acquisition without ever relating the material to life aspects. Marić (2014) composed a study in

which social factors related to motivation in regard to learning was looked at. A group of students were studied by completing questionnaires about their motivational factors and their motivation for learning. The results of the study showed that students need to be interested in the content being taught, and need to be able to see the application to real life situations. If the material being learned could somehow be applied to a life aspect the students were motivated. If the students felt that the material would not benefit them or could not see the life application of the material the motivation to learn was substantially lower (Marić, 2014).

Bringing it all together. All of the theories listed above culminate into deciding factors of motivation depending on the unique individual. Beginning with the socio-cultural theory, humans need interactions with other humans. Vygotsky (1978) himself stated that the zone of proximal development is the area in which a human being is cognitively ready to explore information. This zone requires assistance and interaction from peers and teachers. Teachers reach their students within their zone of proximal development in order to maximize learning and in turn increase motivation. The more interactions a student receives from their teacher and peers the greater the motivation behind the student's persistence academically (Vygotsky, 1978). Self-determination theory focusses on the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation. Individuals have a certain element of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation which drives their potential success. When looking at an individual from a teacher's perspective, learning how the student is motivated (i.e. intrinsic or extrinsic) will ideally guide how instruction is formatted for that student to optimize student success and motivation. This research will look at how the target population is motivated and how they respond in a classroom setting to different motivational cues. The socio-educational theory of motivation as stated above relates to the cultural aspect of motivation. How are students motivated within a classroom based on cultural experiences and

norms within a learning environment? The expectancy-value theory relates to an individual's perceived expected outcome on a specific task. An individual's motivation relies on how this person perceives their end result.

Elements and Factors that Affect Student Motivation

Parental involvement. Parental Involvement has always been a large debate within schools especially pertaining to ELLs. YI-CHIEN LEE (2008) composed a study on third grade children and parental involvement within the classroom. The author found that the parents exerted a large support system to their children due to the importance placed on learning. The parents were aware of the importance of education and thus demonstrated this importance with heavy involvement in their children's education (Lee, 2008). Even with the importance stressed to parents on their involvement within their child's education many factors arise that can inhibit this involvement. Avaria-Verdadeiro (2008) composed a study into factors affecting parental involvement. The results of this study indicated that parents felt that their limitations in their children's education comes from lack of transportation, lack of child care for their other children, work conflicts, language barriers, and lack of understanding of the educational system. These parents stated that due to their lack of understanding of language and U.S. culture they are inferior to the teachers. For this reason parents stated that it is the job of the teachers when it comes to educating children and parents are not responsible for the educational aspect of this (Avaria-Verdadeiro, 2008). In 2001 a study was compiled that focused on literacy experiences a target group of children experienced at home. The results showed that children who are not completing literacy activities with their families struggle more within the classroom. Children who are read to and whose parents form that home-school bond are at a greater academic advantage than those children who lack this parental involvement (Holt, 2001). Parental

involvement is key to children's academic success and many times through various factors within ESL classrooms it is not always achieved.

Motivation. Motivation is a key factor in developing a successful classroom that is conducive to student learning. If a student is not motivated in some way, that student will not see the purpose of exerting an overwhelming effort in the classroom. There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation presents itself when students have an interest in a topic or are studying a topic due to inherent interests. Extrinsic motivation is the motivation that students present when they want a specific outcome or have a specific goal (National Association of Geoscience Teachers, 2011).

Intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation as stated previously is the participation in activities or tasks due to curiosity or the need to become more informed or knowledgeable about a topic. Poonam (1997) stated that in an academic setting, intrinsic motivation is measured by the learner's ability to stick with and complete assigned tasks along with the amount of time that it took the student to complete that task. A student who selects an activity due to an interest in the topic is intrinsically motivated. Students who are intrinsically motivated have an innate curiosity to learn more (Poonam, 1997). Students who are intrinsically motivated are the students within a classroom setting that, regardless of the complexity of a specific task, will work on the task until it is completed. A student who is performing poorly in school who is intrinsically motivated will be performing poorly due to his/her expectations of oneself. If a student expects that they will perform poorly on a task or is intimidated by a task their intrinsic motivation to complete the task will decrease. Inversely, if a student feels confident on a task, although it may be challenging, the student has a higher intrinsic motivation to complete the task

due to higher self-confidence. Instructional practices of teachers will determine the level of student intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation has been previously defined in this literature review as the motivation that occurs when an individual is working to achieve a specific goal. This goal can be in many forms. Whether it is a passing grade on a test, a better job, a better report card, or fear of failure students who are extrinsically motivated are working to meet a specific goal. This is similar to the intrinsic motivation of performing poorly on a task. The difference between these two types of motivation is the fear of failure relates to a task that is being assessed with prompt feedback from another party. Performing poorly on a task relates to the feeling an individual has after receiving a grade or feedback on a task. Fear of failure relates to the potential public condemnation or lack of approval in front of a group of individuals from another source. Sometimes the reward is in a tangible form such as candy or a higher salary. Other times, the reward may be as simple as verbal praise from a teacher (Poonam, 1997). A student who is extrinsically motivated needs goals to work towards. ESL students who are extrinsically motivated need the ESL teachers to lay out specific goals for them to achieve. These are the students that need praise when they complete an activity. The reward does not always need to be tangible. Sometimes just verbal praise and reassurance are all extrinsically motivated ESL students need to continue to be motivated within the classroom.

Socioeconomic status. Individuals strive to be successful in all that they undertake. Students strive to be academically successful throughout their studious years. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2004) many English Language Learners come from backgrounds of lower income. Within lower income families the educational resources that these students are exposed to is limited as compared to a middle class white child whose first

language is English. Since ELLs are not exposed to the same repertoire of educational resources they tend to develop their English vocabulary more slowly than that of a native English speaker. This will put these children behind in an educational setting. These children are playing “catch up” before they even begin school (American Federation of Teachers, 2004). Yoon (2008) conducted research on a group of Chinese students within a classroom setting. The results of this research stated that ELLs generally feel more comfortable in classrooms with students who are at the same language proficiency they are. It can be inferred that while students are learning grade level content as well as language skills, emergent bilinguals will be more comfortable with their peers who are also emergent bilinguals. All students make mistakes but children sometimes are cruel and tend to make fun of ELLs for language based or content based mistakes. Research is showing that in an ESL classroom students will be more motivated to take risks with their English language acquisition and proficiency skills and will thrive in ESL classrooms (Yoon, 2008). Yoon (2008) also found that ESL students tend to position themselves as outsiders in an English only or English dominant classroom. These students feel that they are inadequate or inferior within this classroom context. In an ESL classroom, all emergent bilinguals are together in a central learning environment without any English as a first or home language students. They are able to learn at their own pace and will not be judged because of their language deficiencies (Yoon, 2008).

Motivational Strategies

Conducive learning environment. Best practices among teachers are a concept that is taught in many universities among students studying to become future teachers. One of the common strategies concerns the teacher’s ability to provide a classroom setting that is conducive to student learning. The ability of a teacher to provide an environment in the classroom that is

conducive to learning can have direct impact on the motivation of English Language Learners. Creating this type of learning environment will involve maintaining an accepting attitude toward students and their cultural backgrounds, forging positive relationships with families, and taking responsibility for the success of ELLs in the classroom. Theroux (1994) maintained that children should be permitted to fail without penalty. ESL students need to deal with failure in order to develop motivation for future learning. The learning from mistakes will only be effective if the environment is one that is conducive to learning (Theroux, 1994).

McGraw (2012) found that the attitudes of teachers impact the growth or demise of emergent bilinguals. The way a teacher handles a situation, especially a learning situation, will impact the student's willingness and ability to learn. A teacher who sets up a conducive environment from learning and maintains a positive attitude and outlook will motivate their students more effectively and successfully than teachers who do not (McGraw, 2012). Within creating a conducive environment comes the factor of making clear expectations in order for the classroom to run effectively. In their article, Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher (2013) argued that teachers need to increase student motivation in class. The more those students participate, the less likely they are to act out. Teachers who make clear expectations and stick with these expectations throughout an academic school year will in turn have increased motivation from their students. Dewing (2012) composed a thesis project on a situation that she observed in a classroom. A teacher just received a new student who spoke no English. The teacher felt so overwhelmed with everything that her administration was imposing on her, and now to add a new student she felt that she could not do it. She stuck the child in a corner of the room and gave him numerous coloring projects. As a result both the child and teacher became frustrated. This was not beneficial for the child or the teacher (Dewing, 2012). In this example, the teacher was

not using productive strategies to motivate the child within the classroom. The child was not being motivated to complete course work or to learn the English language. In fact, the child was learning that he was a burden to the teacher and was not only not motivated but was intellectually degraded. This was not a conducive environment for the child.

Planning and implementing differentiated lessons. Teachers have very influential jobs as the role of educators and promoters of academic motivation and success to each of their students. Teachers spend enormous amounts of time lesson planning and planning to implement their best work at all times (Theroux, 1994). Part of this planning process is the timing of execution of the lesson. Transitions, pacing, and making connections to students' lives are the three factors that, although seemingly trivial, will assist teachers in more productive and successful lessons. Higher productivity in lessons will increase student motivation. This relationship occurs because students who know what to expect and see how the lesson is relative to their lives and learning will pay more attention to the lesson being taught. Robertson (2009) also gave resources for teachers to increase the effectiveness of their planning within the classroom. Robertson suggested using the home language not only furthers and strengthens student learning but also builds student self-confidence within the classroom. If a student feels valued they in turn become more motivated to succeed. Using home language in the classroom sends the message to students that their culture and personality is both accepted and valued within the ESL classroom (Robertson, 2009).

Teachers all over the country are faced with the overwhelming job of creating a classroom environment that is conducive for learning for all students, including their ELLs. Robertson (2009) wrote an article summarizing what effective teachers do in their classrooms to further learning and benefit all students. Teachers who create a language-rich environment for

their students will in turn have higher producing and thus higher motivated students. ELLs will benefit from as much exposure to print and oral language as possible. Teachers need to be aware of the student's home language. The home language needs to be valued and accepted in order to have a successful working relationship. The home language will also explain why a student is making certain language errors while speaking and writing in English. Teachers can simplify their language without "dumbing it down" for students as well as provide opportunities for students to work in pairs and small groups (Robertson, 2009, p.1).

Scaffolding. Scaffolding a lesson for students can increase student motivation by tremendous amounts. According to Firestone (2015) scaffolding is the supportive role that a teacher undertakes to ensure success within a lesson. Theroux (1994) adds that constantly evaluating student work throughout the lesson and applying the lesson to the students' life scaffolds the lesson and makes the lesson real for the students. They see then that they can succeed independently now that they have the steps in place to do so and will be motivated to take risks within the classroom (Firestone, 2015, Theroux, 1994). Teachers have the responsibility and obligation during their lesson planning to differentiate their lesson plans and make sure their lessons are reaching their audience. Teachers need to be able to take grade level material, and present it in such a way that their emergent bilinguals can understand within the ESL classroom.

Student centered learning. Teachers who have been fully trained on the best practices for educating children are knowledgeable about the importance of providing meaningful choices for the students and allow the students to somewhat be in charge of their own learning. According to authors Arnon and Reichel (2007) peer tutoring and having role models to look up to will increase student motivation both within and outside the classroom. In every situation,

there is an upstanding individual that everyone wants to aspire to be like. This individual will motivate other students to perform and act like said role model. Ideal teachers establish a sense of belonging and a safe classroom (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). When students feel safe, they will succeed within a classroom because their more basic needs are being met. Every student is a unique human being but will be motivated in similar ways as their peers. This type of strategy can lead to an increase in self-confidence which ESL students need to develop while they are developing their self-efficacy and self-regulation skills to use within the ESL classroom.

Research shows the importance of student centered classrooms. Teachers who make their classrooms student-centered reportedly contribute to higher levels of motivation as well as classroom management (Froyd & Simpson, 2010). Froyd and Simpson (2010) stated that student-centered classrooms help with increasing student motivation within the classroom (p. 4). These researchers emphasized that this approach is enjoyable for students as well as teachers. It takes the stress off of teachers while giving the students the feeling of empowerment because they are in charge of their learning and decisions.

Teachers sometimes need to be reminded of the vast importance of motivating their students. Beecher and Sweeny (2008) implemented a study in an elementary school that took over eight years from start to finish. The target population was a group of students that were in fourth grade. These fourth grade students were observed over a period of time. The authors drew information off of staff meeting agendas, materials given to the faculty, information from professional development sessions, and curriculum. Data was also gathered from student test scores on the fourth grade mastery tests. The authors found that positive reinforcement seemed to positively affect student achievement. In addition teachers who motivated their students found that students actively responded to the motivation which increased their test scores. This data

was then used to plan and implement future lessons that would highlight student strengths and work to improve student weaknesses.

Student autonomy. The concept of autonomy in relation to motivation has been shown to be synonymous. Autonomy directly relates to self-determination theory regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that was stated above. Teachers who promote autonomy in the classroom will in turn have motivated students. In an article by Ushioda (2011) learners with a sense of autonomy are those who are held responsible for their work, and taking control of their work. These students are directly linked to being more motivated within the classroom (Ushioda, 2011). Learners who are in charge of their learning tend to be more motivated to learn. Once an individual, regardless of their age, is put in charge of a task it is their responsibility to complete it. If the task is not done nobody is to blame, except the person responsible for the task completion.

Building relationships. Arguably the most important teacher strategy that is often overlooked is the importance of building positive relationships between the ESL teacher and the ELLs (Yunus, Osman, & Ishak, 2011). Each school is a little different, each teacher is a little different, and every student is different. Teacher practices and student motivations may be different but building a positive relationship between teachers and students will drastically improve ESL student motivation. Positive teacher-student relationships are becoming scarce and students are losing motivation due to the lack of connection between teacher and student. Referring back to Gardner's theory on motivation based on his socio-educational model a study was composed by three researchers. In this study Yunus et al. (2011) looked at the teachers who are the primary motivators within the classroom. ELLs were interviewed on how motivated they felt in their ESL classrooms and what factors would affect their motivation within the ESL

education. The results showed that teachers are responsible for creating positive motivational conditions within their classroom. The way to do this is by establishing a rapport with every ESL student in the class. Students who reported having positive and strong relationships with their teachers were also more motivated within their ESL classroom. ESL students that were interviewed said that they are more motivated to work for a teacher who they have a good rapport with. Positive interactions and relationships increase their motivation. Students were more motivated which led to higher levels of participation and success within the ESL classroom (Yunus et al, 2011).

Teacher perceptions. Every teacher has the privilege to run their classroom how they see fit. An ideal classroom looks different to teachers. Teachers bring their own culture and beliefs into the classrooms they teach. Just as the students have a variety of life experiences and cultures, teachers also have their very own life experiences and cultures. Every ESL classroom is a blending of ideas, beliefs, and cultures. The assessment measures, rules, expectation, layout, and feel of every ESL classroom will be different. Strategies that some teachers may incorporate into their classrooms may not work for other teachers. There is no specific set of rules and instructional strategies that would be guaranteed to increase ESL student motivation within the classroom. The key is to get to know each student and the dynamic of every classroom. The teacher is said to know the students the best second to their parents. Each teacher may run their room a little different and the research findings of this study may differ a little from the literature found for the basis of this study.

Conclusion

The questions at the beginning of the paper that were answered through the use of vast amounts of literature were: What are the factors that influence student motivation in their

learning, what do teachers perceive as the factors that affect student motivation, and what strategies do teachers use to motivate their students? Literature based research showed that students are motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically. Varying amounts of literature defined intrinsic and extrinsic motivation even deeper by providing sub categories for each general definition. Factors that affect student motivation such as parental involvement, student led classrooms, and effective teacher strategies were all linked to a successful student. Teacher perceptions of student motivation and effective teaching affected student academic performance both directly and indirectly.

Methodology

Research Design

This research was designed to address the problem of the lack of ESL student motivation within the context of the classroom. What motivates English Language Learners? Do middle school English Language Learners within a given population tend to be more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated? What do teachers perceive as motivations for these students and what strategies are teachers incorporating within the ESL classroom based on these perceptions to motivate their ELLs? This research employed a mixed method design. This is the combining of qualitative and quantitative research within a study (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). I did a quantitative study by surveying a target population of students. The qualitative aspect came from the observations in the classroom as well as teacher interviews that were conducted. By mixing both methods of research I was able to increase my depth of understanding of the target population while at the same time it offset the weaknesses that were inherent to using solely one method. Mixed methods research with a heavy emphasis on the qualitative portion of data collection was suited for many educational studies and situations (De Lisle, 2011). The use of numerical data as well as data collection from individuals in a qualitative manner such as an interview brought together many different aspects of research into a more valid and coherent research project. Data that was collected from various perspectives increased the validity of the study and gave more insight into a particular problem that was being researched (Bulsara, 2008).

Setting

The school that opened up its doors for my research was located in a small city within Chautauqua County. The population of the city was 30,767. Within the city population there were a large percentage of mixed Hispanic and Caucasian races. The median income per

household was \$25,837. The area itself was rich with agriculture. Within the school there were 14.9% of the entire school population were English Language Learners. The rest of the student population was made up of 352 students. Within this number there were 226 Caucasian students, 71 Hispanic students, two Native American students, one Asian student, and 13 African American students. There were 39 students who were of two or more ethnic backgrounds. Out of the student population there were 243 boys and 235 girls. All of the students were on a free lunch program due to the high levels of poverty within the surrounding neighborhood and community. The majority of the families in this district was on a welfare program and received a large amount of financial assistance every month. In this district only six percent of the student population received a proficient level of scoring on the NYS ELA and Math state tests. Over 50% of the student population received a score of one on the state assessments mentioned above. This very high needs school was a perfect choice for conducting my research. Since it is a high needs school the target population provided a great deal of information and insight into the research. With students' past performance so low on high stakes academic testing, evaluating student motivation and what strategies teachers used within the classroom to increase student motivation to learn was beneficial and insightful.

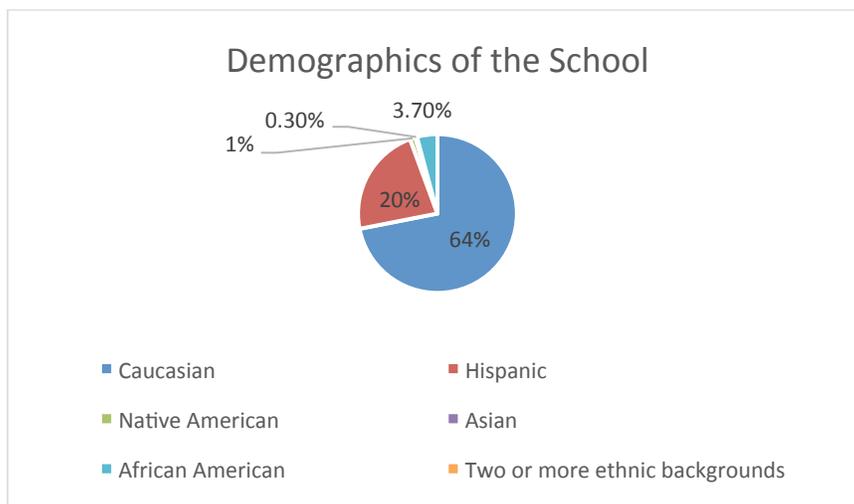


Figure 1. Demographics of the School.

Participants

The target population that was examined was comprised of 131 students and two ESL teachers. One student was of Asian background while the rest of the students were of Hispanic background and were English language learners of various levels. The students ranged from fifth grade to eighth grade. There were 68 girls and 63 boys. All of the ELLs received a score of one on the state assessments last year. Since these test scores have not increased over the last few years the students as well as the school were considered high need and high risk. The two ESL teachers within the Middle School were in charge of the entire ESL population. Teacher A was the fifth/sixth grade ESL teacher while Teacher B was the seventh/eighth grade ESL teacher. Teacher A's classrooms were comprised of students of the same grade level but various proficiencies. For example all of the fifth grade ESL students were in the same class regardless of their English proficiency. Meanwhile, Teacher B's classrooms were grouped by proficiency level. She had a mixture of seventh and eighth grade students within a class but one class was purely beginner, the next class was intermediate, etc.

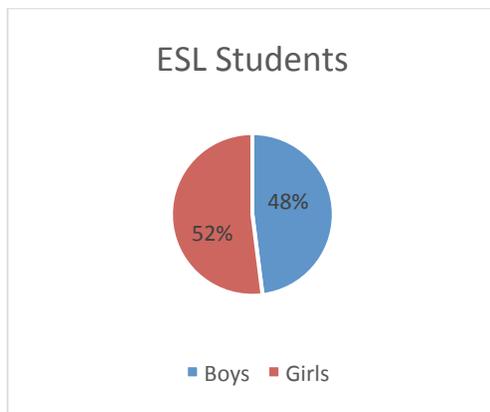


Figure 2. Male and Female ESL Students.

Data Collection

Consent forms. Before beginning the data collection process it was necessary to obtain consent for the research project. The consent forms that I created outlined the research that I would be conducting and the job of each student participant during the research process. This was the first step in the research process. I sent consent forms to the middle school ESL students as well as their parents. All of the consent forms were given and returned by the students first and then the parents. I included consent forms in English as well as Spanish for those individuals whose English was not at a proficiency level to understand a consent form solely in English. Once I received consent forms from both parties, the student was added to a list of participants made by me. The ESL students were not added to the list of participants until both forms were received. At the end of this process a total of eighteen consent forms from parents and students were returned between fifth and eighth grade students.

Motivational survey. A cross-sectional survey was brought in on motivation to the ESL students in my population and the survey was administered to the students by me. Teacher A was in the room while the students took the survey. Every student took the survey but only the students whose consent forms were returned were counted within this research. Teacher B gave the group of students who had returned to slips to me and I took them in a separate classroom where they took the motivational survey. The purpose of the survey was to examine the factors that motivate this target population within the classroom. A cross-sectional survey collected information from a specific sample in a predetermined population. This type of survey collected information from the population at one point in time (Fraenkel et al., 2012). It was administered to eleven students in fifth through eighth grade. This survey was taken from a thesis project done by Regina Shia of Wheeling Jesuit University. I chose questions from the survey that I

found and modified the language to be appropriate and at proficiency level for the target population (Shia, 1986). Students filled out the survey as honestly as possible and returned them to me upon completion for official data recording. This survey was administered within their ESL classroom by me and took 30 minutes for the students to complete. The survey was made up of a Likert scale (1-5) where one was strongly disagree and five was strongly agree. Fraenkel and his colleagues defined a Likert scale as “a self-reporting instrument in which an individual responds to a series of statements by indicating the extent of agreement” where in each possible answer choice is assigned a number i.e. 1-5 with one being disagreement and five being total agreement (Fraenkel et al., 2012). There were written statements and the students responded to the statements by choosing a number from one to five based on how strongly they agreed or disagreed to the statement. Student answers to the statements gave an idea of how they were motivated within a classroom setting. The results of this survey were used for investigation and defined the extent of student motivation within this particular study. The questions of the survey, depending how the students answered them, showed how each student was motivated within a classroom context. Whether it was intrinsic motivation in some aspect or extrinsic motivation there was something that drove students to succeed. Whether it was intrinsic, extrinsic, motivational orientation, instrumental motivation, or integrative motivation all individuals were motivated in one way or another. Finding commonalities and differences between student motivations was the first step in evaluating my research.

Teacher interviews. The two middle school ESL teachers were both interviewed by me. During this time I conducted semi structured interviews. This interview allowed for open ended questions to be asked throughout the course of the interview (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The purpose of the interview was to obtain data on teacher strategies to increase motivation and teacher

perceptions of motivation within the classroom. It took place between the teachers and myself over the course of a 35 minute block per teacher. The interview took place at the school within the teacher's classroom during her planning period. I audio-recorded the teacher responses to the interview as well as took notes for myself based on the responses. The interview started with questions to build a background on the teachers. These questions gave insight into the background of the teacher as well as teaching experience of the teacher. The subsequent questions addressed different theories of motivation in an indirect manner. The questions were open ended and the teachers answered the questions based on how they ran their classroom sessions or on their personal beliefs. The teacher interviews were used for building background on the teachers of the classrooms. The teacher interviews shed light on the philosophies and teaching styles of the teachers. Strategies that the teachers used in their everyday classroom were important to notice and take note of in regard to the success of these strategies in increasing student motivation. Teacher ideas and perceptions of their students and hypotheses on how students would best respond and become motivated to learn tended to drive their instruction. The teacher interviews helped bring to light the perceptions of the teachers and how they responded to their students. In addition it showed their perceptions and ideologies of what their students bring into the classroom.

Classroom observations. The original proposal stated that I set up two blocks a week over the course of three weeks with the teacher that were acceptable for me to informally observe a class session containing the students and teacher. These observations were to take place over the course of a forty minute block of time. In reality, due to time constraints from the teacher the observations occurred only two times per classroom for a total of six observations. The observations were for thirty minute blocks because both teachers had children within the target

population during the same hour block. During these observations, I sat in the back of the room, observed student behavior and what seemed to motivate the students throughout the class. In addition, I watched the teacher and how the teacher worked to motivate the students. During each observation, I made annotated notes and looked for different teaching strategies that were used within the classroom that increased student motivation. The observations and anecdotal notes were used for evaluation of the ESL classroom. These notes were compared to the teacher interview. Many times throughout the course of my observations, how a teacher thought they ran a lesson differed immensely from how the lesson was executed. Teacher A assumed the lessons ran smoothly when to an outsider they looked like chaos. Teacher B was very critical on her lessons while from an outsider perspective merely observing, the lessons seemed to flow and seemed almost flawless. These differences were recorded. In addition, strategies the teachers used within the classroom were noted and included in the findings section of the thesis project.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the students, teachers, and classroom observations, it was important to have a clear plan of how the data was used. After the data was compiled from research, the data was used for analytical purposes. All of the data was used to guide my implications from the study. The complete collection of data addressed the needs and opinions of all parties within the classroom context.

The survey. The first step in analyzing the survey was recording student responses from the survey on an Excel spreadsheet. Students were given a corresponding letter and each of their answers were recorded in the sheet. The students chose a box from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The boxes were translated into numbers from one to five. A one corresponded to a strongly disagree answer while five was a strongly agree answer. Numbers two through four

were disagree, neither agree or disagree, and agree. The following step of research analysis was to transform the information recorded within the Excel spread sheet into a table in regards to the subheading of the questions. On the student survey there were five questions within a given theme of either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The headings above the questions were either subcategories of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The intrinsic sub headings were: self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and self-regulation. The extrinsic headings were: positive reinforcement, fear of failure, and importance of success. Each table corresponded with student responses based on the subheadings that the questions were grouped into. This data was useful in representing similarities and differences of student motivation within a classroom. Student responses based on the questions were observed as an overall category related to the corresponding heading that it represented. Student responses showed how much of each motivational factor contributed to their overall motivation within the ESL classroom. Similarities and differences between the students populations surveyed were taken into account in the findings section of this thesis. The findings of the surveys were then compared to classroom observations.

The interview. The interviews of both teachers were directly transcribed and cited within the findings section of this thesis. The interviews were split apart and the interview questions were categorized into themes found in the literature review as well as common themes that arose during the interview. Teacher responses to these questions were incorporated into the thesis and the teachers' responses were directly cited. These responses were analyzed based on the beliefs and backgrounds of the teachers and how the classrooms are run based on these beliefs and backgrounds. The teachers' personalities were taken into account and directly related to how the classroom was set up and what motivational strategies were used during the observed

periods. Answers that the teachers gave brought to light their ideologies and perceptions which in turn dictated how their ESL classroom was run.

The observations. The anecdotal notes sheets was used to show typical classroom sessions with the sample population of students and the interviewed teachers. Motivational strategies that were identified within the literature review were transcribed onto the anecdotal notes sheet along with a column for other strategies that the teachers may have used. The strategies used by the teachers throughout the lesson were highlighted along with how the students responded to these strategies. The strategies were cross compared to the motivations of the students within the classroom as shown in table form. The success of the strategies or lack thereof were noted and related to student motivations as recorded in the table by the overall student sample.

Validity Considerations

Any time one intervened in a classroom, there was a possibility that some students may not benefit from the intervention as much as others and/or that some students may even do worse when unfamiliar distractions were in their classroom. That being said there was minimal risk within this particular study. I took a number of steps to minimize the likelihood that any negative behaviors or harm came from this study. First, I selected a classroom of students that were open to other adults in the classroom. I chose the age of middle school students because I thought that due to their age and maturity, the validity of assessing motivation was higher than that of an elementary population. In addition, the age and maturity of the children within the target population led to valid test results on a written survey. The children were in middle school and had a grasp on how they were motivated. Second, I obtained written consent from both students and parents before beginning the study. I gave the consent forms to the teacher who

handed them out to the students and the parents. Thirdly, I explained the purpose of the study as well as the process of data collection to the teachers who relayed this information to the students before collecting any data. Fourthly, I compiled surveys that were low stress with questions that were not invasive. I modified these surveys from a student dissertation that focused on student motivations. For validity purposes the classroom teacher was in the classroom while the surveys were administered by me. This was to provide the students with a familiar face while the unfamiliar face conducted research in the form of a survey. I was worried that since I was not a familiar presence in the room the students may experience some anxiety with me administering the survey which may in turn skew the results of the survey. In relation to the teacher interviews I conducted a pilot study before administering the interview to my classroom teachers. I piloted the study on a group of teachers from the SUNY Fredonia University as well as some of my coworkers at a local school. The purpose of this pilot study was to ensure validity of the survey. The questions that were asked to the pilot study led to a set of answers from the teachers. Based on these answers the interview was shown that the questions were clear and easy to answer honestly. Finally, I sat in a discrete location while observing the classroom so as to avoid distracting the students from learning. There are no other potential physical, psychological, social, legal or other types of risk in this study.

Results

The purpose of this section is to provide data based research in order to answer the following research questions: What are the factors that influence ELL student motivation in their learning? What strategies do teachers perceive as the factors that affect ELL student motivation? And what strategies do teachers use to motivate their ELL students? In the following sections I used data that I collected in order to provide data based and valid answers to the above research questions. In order to properly and fully answer these questions my research sample was comprised of eleven middle school (fifth to eighth grade) students and two ESL teachers at the middle school level.

Factors Affecting Student Motivation

Surveys. Student surveys on motivation were collected from eleven student participants. The purpose of this method of data collection was to answer the following research question: What are the factors that influence ELL student motivation in their learning? The student surveys were broken up into several categories within intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Each of the factors were addressed through several statements that the students responded to. The results were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet and the percentages of the students who answered synonymously were recorded in the tables below. Table 1 shows the results of students in relation to the amount of self-efficacy the middle school target population possessed. The statements below aim to determine the amount of confidence each student surveyed holds on their abilities to achieve their goals or a set end product.

Table 1

Student Ability to Complete Tasks and Reach Personal Goals

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I understand the material taught in this class.	0%	0%	18.2%	36.4%	45.4%
2. It is important for me to be a good student.	0%	0%	27.3%	27.3%	45.4%
3. I try my best in this class.	0%	0%	9.1%	54.5%	36.4%
4. If my friends are being disruptive I will do it too.	54.5%	36.4%	0%	9.1%	0%
5. Sometimes I get made fun of for being too "good" in school.	1%	30%	40%	30%	0%

As the table shows just over 81% of the students felt that they understand the material that is taught within their ESL class. Over 75% of the students who were surveyed felt that it was important to participate in the class and make their greatest attempt to try and succeed within their ESL class. Only 9% of the students responded that they are disruptive at some point in the class. In fact, when surveyed, students responded that although their peers may be disruptive only 9.1% of the students would join in the disruptive behavior. Some of the students felt that if they tried too hard they would be made fun of by their peers. It was an even mix between the students that agreed and disagreed with the statement of trying to maintain a balance between popularity and participation. This data shows that within the overall student population there is a significant amount of self-efficacy among the students. The above percentages showed that over

60% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with each positive statement and disagreed with the negative statement. This shows that there is a substantial amount of self-efficacy which is an intrinsic factor within this middle school population.

Table 2 below shows the amount of intrinsic value that each student possessed. The purpose of the statements below was to assess and gather information about the amount of intrinsic motivation within each student. The statements sought to evaluate the students' opinions on self-assessment and student led learning.

Table 2

Amount of Intrinsic Value

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strong agree
6. I like what I am learning in this class.	0%	18.2%	18.2%	45.5%	18.1%
7. I like when I am able to take a look at myself and self-assess myself.	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%
8. I like when I am made to think and the work challenges me.	9.1%	0%	27.3%	45.5%	18.1%
9. I would like to be in charge of my learning.	9.1%	0%	0%	54.5%	36.4%
10. It is important to learn what is being taught in this class.	0%	0%	9.1%	36.4%	54.5%

As shown in the table above over 63% of the students enjoyed the content they were learning within their ESL class. In addition, 90% of the student population responded that they

enjoy when opportunities to self-assess are given. 64% of the population reported that challenging work does not dissuade them from learning. In fact, these students enjoy when the work is slightly more complex and the students are forced to work at their best in order to achieve their academic goals. Over three quarters of the students responded that they would like to be in charge of their learning and they felt what they learned within their ESL class was important and would be beneficial in their future studies. Based on the percentages listed above there is a great amount of intrinsic value within the group of students. Based on the answers given the students reported that although they may not particularly like what is being taught within the class they want to be in charge of their learning and want to be given opportunities to self-assess their personal learning. These students reported that they felt being in charge of their learning would further motivate them to continue putting effort into their class work.

Table 3 below shows the student responses when asked questions dealing with self-regulation. The statements below sought to evaluate the level of content material understanding of each student and the actions performed by the students when there was a lack of understanding of the content taught within the ESL classroom.

Table 3

Amount of Student Self-regulation

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
11. I make sure I really understand the material that I am learning.	0%	0%	18.2%	45.5%	36.3%
12. I often come after school or during study halls to meet with the teacher if I have a question.	0%	36.4%	18.2%	9.1%	36.3%

13. When the work is hard I give up or only try when the work is easy.	9.1%	18.2%	36.4%	27.3%	9%
14. I would like to use my home language to learn instead of just English.	0%	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	45.4%
15. I try and be a good student and behave in class even if my friends are not.	0%	9.1%	9.1%	54.5%	27.3%

Within this section there were slight discrepancies within the student responses. Almost 80% of the students responded that they felt that they made sure they fully comprehended the material they were learning but when asked if they took time to meet with their teachers when confusion arose only about 46% of the students agreed that they made time to meet with the teacher outside of class. About 72% of the students admitted that they would like more opportunities to use their home language within the ESL classroom. As with the question above about 75% of the students agreed that they attempted to be good students even if their friends or peers were not. In addition, 36.3 % of students reported that if the work was difficult they would cease working and give up on the material. Another 27.3% of students reported that this was not the case and that they would continue with the work given even though it was difficult or they did not understand. Overall, given the percentages of this group of questions it can be determined that the amount of self-regulation within the students surveyed was lower than the other factors discussed up until this point. The students have a certain amount of self-regulation when the material being taught is at their level and the learning occurs within the classroom.

When it comes to difficult material and taking initiative to find the teacher outside of class overall student motivation in this section seems to decrease.

Table 4 shows the importance of positive reinforcement within the students surveyed. This is an example of an extrinsic motivational factor. The statements aimed to demonstrate the importance of positive reinforcement within the ESL classroom setting.

Table 4

Importance of Positive Reinforcement

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16. I like when my teacher compliments me.	0%	9.1%	18.2%	36.4%	36.3%
17. I try and do my work just to make my teacher happy.	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%	27.2%
18. If I ask a question and do not understand the answer I pretend that I do in order to not disappoint my teacher.	9.1%	0%	36.4%	54.5%	0%
19. It makes me sad and I do not want to work if I do not get compliments on my work.	9.1%	45.5%	9.1%	36.3%	0%
20. I feel smart when I can correctly answer all of the teacher's questions.	0%	10%	30%	40%	30%

As shown above about 73% of the students admitted to enjoying the moments when they received compliments from their teachers. The students responded that although they appreciate compliments less than 40% of the students are discouraged and refuse to work if compliments are not given. Less than 50% of the students responded that they do not complete their work for the sole purpose of making their teacher happy. Over half the students agreed that when they ask a question and are confused by the response given they will not follow up with another question in order to comprehend the material being taught. 70% of the students agreed that their self-esteem grows when they are able to correctly answer questions that the teacher asked about the material that they were learning. Given the results and the percentages above, it can be stated that although students do not require positive reinforcement within their learning it is a positive factor to increase motivation. Students will continue to work even if they do not receive reinforcement from the teacher but their self-esteem and then their motivation increases when positive reinforcement is used.

Table 5 below shows the amount of fear of failure the students possessed. Students were given statements to evaluate the amount of fear of failure they possessed. Overall the population's fear of failure was lower than expected.

Table 5

Student Fear of Failure

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
21. I get very upset if I get a bad grade in this class.	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	27.3%	27.2%
22. I try my best so that I will get good grades.	0%	0%	9.1%	36.4%	54.6%

23. If I get bad grades in this class I get in trouble with my family.	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	27.3%	27.2%
24. If I get a bad grade it is not a big deal and I do not worry too much about it.	9.1%	27.3%	27.3%	27.2%	9.1%
25. Grades are not that important to me.	54.5%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%

Students responded with a 54.5% agreement overall that grades matter and when a bad grade is received negative feelings surface. 91% of the students responded that they try their best every class so that they will be able to get good grades because they do not like the feeling of receiving bad grades. Just over half of the students agreed that there were negative repercussions at home from receiving unacceptable or failing grades in school. In contrast, when asked if they worry about receiving unacceptable grades, the responses were inconclusive. 36% of the students reported that they worry about the grades they received while another 27% neither agreed nor disagreed. Another 36% reported that they do not worry about the grades they received so the results of this question were split across the board. Based on the percentages above it can be determined that there is a moderate to low amount of the aspect of fear of failure as a motivational aspect within this population. Fear of failure in relation to grades affects the students in one aspect but not to the extent to driving motivation to “try harder next time.”

Table 6 below outlines the students' reaction to the importance of their success. This is another factor of extrinsic motivation. The statements served to show the importance of having success as an attainable goal in regard to each of the participants.

Table 6

Student Persistence to Reach a Goal

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
26. I will not stop trying until I reach my goals.	0%	0%	9.1%	36.4%	54.5%
27. It is very important for me to be successful.	0%	0%	0%	45.5%	54.5%
28. I want to be successful in this class so that I am very good in English.	9.1%	0%	18.2%	36.4%	36.3%
29. It is important to learn English and I have a goal of becoming good at English.	0%	0%	9.1%	36.4%	54.5%
30. I would rather be scolded for a mistake than rewarded for good behavior.	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%	36.3%

As shown above over 90% of the students responded that they will work until they achieve their goals that they have set for themselves. 100% of the students surveyed agreed that

it was important to work in order to become successful. Over 90% of the students surveyed realized that it was important to learn English and to have a goal of becoming proficient in English but when asked about being successful in their ESL class in order to learn English the answers were slightly less in agreement. The majority still believed that they needed to be successful in their ESL class in order to become proficient in English but a small percentage either disagreed or responded neutral to this question. The final question's results were all over the board and the students surprisingly had different views on the statement. The majority responded that they would rather be scolded for a mistake than rewarded for their good behavior. There may have been a misinterpretation in the question that skewed the results of this question but the student answers were recorded as indicated on their surveys. The student population overall maintains a high level of importance of overall success. The students responded that they have a deep understanding of the importance of learning and are motivated by the need to succeed.

Teacher Perceptions of Student Motivation

The second section of my research findings proves to answer the following research question: What do teachers perceive as the factors that affect ESL student motivation? Through interviewing the teachers and gathering information on the background of the teachers, certain perceptions were brought to light throughout this process. Table 7 shows the demographics of the teachers that were interviewed.

Teacher interviews. The first few questions in the interviews were establishing backgrounds on the teachers and delving into the personal demographics of the teachers before delving into their classrooms. Teacher A has been a teacher for 21 years. She has worked in this

school district for 17 of those years and for the prior four years was placed within a school district in Buffalo. She was born in Germany where she lived until she was three years old.

Table 7

Demographics of Teachers Interviewed

Demographics	Teacher A	Teacher B
Gender of teacher	Female	Female
Years of teaching experience	21	3
Place of Birth	Germany	Within the district
Place of current residence	Within the district	Within the district
Bachelor's Degree	Elementary Education	Childhood Education
Master's Degree	TESOL	TESOL

She then moved to Kenmore, NY which is where she grew up from that point on. She now currently lives within the town she teaches in. She received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and her master's degree in TESOL. She joined the army after receiving her bachelor's degree and returned to school for her master's degree when she was thirty years old. Teacher B has been a teacher for three years. All of these years were within the same district but at various buildings within the district. She was born, raised, and still resides in the town where she teaches. Her bachelor's degree was in childhood education and special education and her master's degree was in TESOL.

Through my classroom observations I saw how the background of the teachers yielded to their specific teaching styles within the classroom. Teacher A's classroom was set up to run as one similar to military school. The teacher was the figure in charge and the students were the subjects that were to listen and follow her every command. This teacher had trouble controlling the class and a great deal of time was spent yelling at the students and constantly calling them back to attention. Teacher B's classroom ran very smoothly. Through the use of her many cooperative learning strategies and behavior strategies the students knew the teacher's visual

clues. The teacher merely had to stand at the front of the room and raise her hand. The students would automatically stop what they were doing, and give the teacher their full attention so that she could continue with the lesson of the day.

Teacher perception of how a classroom setting affects motivation. Teachers were asked if there was a method to the way they set up their classrooms. From my observations I noticed that the two classrooms were set up very differently. I asked the teachers if they thought about the way they set up their classrooms and if it had anything to do with motivation. Teacher A when interviewed with this question responded “Everything I do is based off of the NYS modules in some way. The modules require a great deal of group work. The modules tend to have the students working in groups of three or four frequently. I have the desks in groups of four for this reason. I also have the room sectioned off for when we do centers. As you can see the reading area is in a corner area and there is a section for computer work and small group work. The room is set up so that students may be in different areas and still able to work productively. This way students can focus on their task and will remain motivated to complete their task in order to move to another section or center in the room.” Teacher B took a slightly different approach in her answer. Teacher B responded “There are binders by the door so that when they enter the room their binders are close so they can be grabbed before they sit down. The desks change sometimes they are in rows sometimes in small groups it depends on behavior of the students or what we are doing for the day. Homework and sign out sheets are by the door so when students enter they can hand in their homework right away. If everything is in one place they can take care of everything at once and they do not have to keep getting up out of their seat. Maybe it is convenience or maybe laziness but students seem to be more motivated to do everything they need to do if it is all in one place.” Based on the responses in the two interviews

with Teachers A and B both teachers understand the importance of a well set up classroom. Both teachers have slightly different opinions within the set-up of their classrooms but overall both teachers understand that the first key to success is a well-organized and flowing classroom. If the classroom is organized students know what to expect and can therefore become motivated to learning based on planning of the teachers.

Parental involvement. Throughout the interviews both teachers brought up the concern of lack of parental involvement within their classrooms. One of the interview questions was asking the teachers how involved their parents were within the classroom. The teachers had very similar responses. Teacher A when interviewed answered “No not really not so much. I attempt to communicate with the parents but it does not work so well. I send letters home, I make phone calls, and I send reminders to the letters home but no response. Some parents feel that the language barrier due to their lack of knowing English is intimidating. We do have translators and some parents bring their own translators but there has been very poor attendance to open house, parent night, parent-teacher conference, and basically every activity at school. It almost seems like some of the parents just do not care.” Teacher B had a similar answer when asked. Teacher B responded “It is difficult to talk to the parents. They either don’t have phones or don’t answer the phone but some are awesome. It depends on the student and the parent. Some are awesome and some are a little more difficult to connect with.”

Throughout my observations it was clear that Teacher B attempted to increase parental involvement as much as possible. She had a parent volunteer that would come in the mornings to help out her classes and to translate from Spanish to English whenever necessary. The parent came in every morning and would help out as much as she could. Teacher A had a teacher in the room who was paid through the district who did very similar tasks of translating and

communicating new ideas in Spanish to the children. Students who have the opportunity to work with this individual are many times more motivated to learn and participate within the classroom. This individual is seen as a mother figure who speaks the students' home language. Using the home language whenever possible directly increases student motivation within the classroom. Teacher B uses the home language throughout the lesson while Teacher A relies on a single individual to translate for the students whenever the students seem to be struggling. This is a third person merely translating and does not qualify as home language use within the classroom. When the teachers were asked about overall student motivation within the classroom came back to the issue of parental involvement. Teacher A answered "Some students are motivated and some are not...I would say it is 50-50. This makes the class difficult if half your class is not motivated to learn it is almost impossible to get anything done. These students make excuses and are very distracted. Sometimes there is no back up at home and those are the parents who do not come to the events at school. The parents who do not come are the parents of the students who have no motivation in the class." Teacher B added "Half and half a lot of it comes from their home life. If the parents aren't motivated the students will not be either but I have some students that come in and are ready to learn and want to learn and they pick up concepts faster. Some of it is attitude based especially having seventh and eighth graders together." The different groupings of students seems to have an impact on their motivation and success according to the teachers.

Strategies that work within the classroom. Both of the teachers were asked during their interview to define the top three strategies that they use, that in their opinion, have the most positive effect on increasing student motivation. Teacher A responded "I would say that cooperative learning strategies such as think-pair-share, mix & mingle, and carousel of quotes

are the three most successful strategies. Think-pair-share works because the students have to think about the question alone, then pair up and share their thoughts, and finally report back to the class what the pair came up with. This technique works well because it promotes independent thinking and cooperative learning by collaborating with peers. Each student determines what they believe to be the correct response to the question asked on their own, they then pair up with another student and discuss their answers together. This way they are able to determine between the two answers which would be the correct answer. This promotes working with others and promotes brainstorming between the two children. As for mix and mingle the students pair off and it is a quick and non-confrontational way to share information. A group of students found a spot to stand around the room. The rest of the students pick a child to pair up with and the pair shares their information. After about a minute or so we rotate so that the children have three or four different pairings and it only takes about five to seven minutes to do. This is a good technique for cooperative learning. The children have to interact with several other children throughout this exercise which builds teamwork and communication skills. The students really like carousel of quotes because they are moving around the room and not stationed in one spot for too long. They get all of the information but it is more spread out over the room.” Teacher B responded “Everything has to be planned and organized and the students need to be interacting one way or another to keep them fully engaged and the lessons have to be high interest to the students because if they aren’t fully engaged then you will lose them within any given lesson.” Much like mix and mingle, carousel quotes allows students to interact with several other students throughout this exercise. This again build teamwork and communication skills while getting English language learners out of their comfort zone. This exercise also helps the students become independent thinkers and share their thoughts and ideas with other students.

Strategies Teachers Use To Motivate Students

The final section of research was put together in order to answer the following research question: What strategies do teachers use to motivate their ESL students? Between using the teacher interviews and classroom observations in relation to my literature review several common themes made themselves apparent.

The use of higher order thinking questions. As stated in my literature review Vygotsky's research lead to his theory of the zone of proximal development. In this theory it states that a learner's mind has a certain capacity that they can learn within. It is the job of the teacher to use this zone and to expand the zone to increase learning through the use of scaffolding. Scaffolding from teachers to students increases comprehension of new material or topics and will then increase student motivation to try and replicate what the teacher would scaffold. One of the ways to reach the zone of proximal development is through asking higher order thinking questions. This is a strategy that many teachers use to increase motivation as well as academic learning within the classroom. In the interviews both teachers were asked if they asked higher order thinking questions and the reasoning behind their answers. When asked about the frequency of asking higher order teaching questions Teacher A responded "Yes but I have to lead up to it or break down the higher order questions. The students need a great deal of scaffolding whether it is through the use of graphic organizers, charts, sentence frames, or visual cues. They are not able to just answer a higher order question without serious modeling and modifications to the questions. If this is done they can get there but just asking them the question does not work." Teacher A is rather vague in giving examples of how scaffolding occurs within the classroom. She stresses the importance of scaffolding but fails to implement it within her own classroom. Teacher B's response was "Yes I use a version of Bloom's taxonomy. It is

called the depth of knowledge that has a lot of open ended question with lower level recall then go up the scale to higher questions. It allows the students to recall knowledge they already have and then it builds upon this knowledge for higher learning and comprehension of material.”

Teacher B has researched and implemented a concrete tool that, through my observations, has been proven effective. She has a base framework to work with and possesses strategies within the framework that have been proven to increase student motivation within her classroom.

Within my observations I observed both teachers using higher order thinking questions throughout their lessons. The students in Teacher A’s room did not grasp a lot of the questions and easily become confused while the students in Teacher B’s room were able to move up the ladder and answer more complicated questions. Teacher B had a system where if the student did not know the answer or answered incorrectly they could call on a friend for help. This seemed to increase the student motivation by increasing participation in all of the students. I believe that both techniques are equally effective depending on the situation and needs of the students.

Cooperative learning. A strategy that is of high popularity and importance over the last few years is that of cooperative learning. As stated in my literature review cooperative learning is research based to increase student participation and motivation to complete tasks with their peers. Cooperative learning is a good technique to get all students in each group to participate and have input. Once the groups are determined each student is designated a role in order to complete the task. This method ensures that every student has a role to play within the group and each role is important in completing the task. This is a very good method to encourage teamwork while also allowing for independent thinking. Once every student completes their task within the group, the group then collaborates to put all of the pieces together for the task to be completed. Both of the teachers were asked if they used cooperative learning techniques and

strategies within their classroom in order to increase student motivation. Teacher A's response was "Yes the modules call for it and demand it frequently so we have to. I see that when the students work in groups and are able to verbalize their learning whether it is through sharing or peer tutoring each other their learning and comprehension of the skills and material being taught increases." Teacher B's answer was "Yes we use it all the time. They are all technically the same proficiency level but even within that there are different levels that the students are at. With that I pair up the more proficient students with those who are less proficient. It helps with explaining concepts and directions and helps to facilitate conversation to promote understanding of content. Language is the first thing that will develop within the students."

Throughout my observations I saw different situations in which cooperative learning took place. It seemed more natural in teacher B's room. She had many opportunities for the students to work in pairs or groups that rotated throughout the room. Teacher A had a couple of examples where students were interacting with each other but when this occurred the students did not seem to stay on task very long before becoming distracted. Teacher A seems to use cooperative learning activities only when necessary and her lessons are so scripted by the modules with no adaptations or modifications. It does not flow smoothly within the classroom because the students merely see it as another section of their lesson that they have to do. Teacher B incorporates cooperative learning into a variety of module based themes and the students within this classroom know how to effectively work within their cooperative learning groups in order to be efficient and increase their learning.

Home language. While collecting data a common theme that presented itself was the use of home language for learning within the classroom. Home language is the use of the student's language that is used primarily in their household in the classroom. This technique

helps motivate the student by using a language that they are comfortable to aide in learning a language they are not familiar with. By using the language the student uses at home it helps to motivate them by making them comfortable and more eager to learn an unfamiliar language.

Both teachers were asked during the interviews how much the student's home language was used within the classroom. Teacher A responded "At the beginning of the year we used a great deal of home language but I try and wean them off their home language as the year goes on. If there is new material that they are learning I will use Ms. Smith (teacher who is in the room whose first language is Spanish) as our translator. She also translates reading and questions sometimes if the students need help with comprehension but at this point in the year I try and use mostly English." Teacher B responded "Yes they have a parent in the room that will translate and the kids will do it for each other if needed. I try and use home language whenever possible to link new ideas to the prior knowledge."

Throughout my observations I saw many cases of the home language being used in Teacher B's classroom. For example during one of my observations the students were close reading a poem. Teacher B took it apart stanza by stanza and talked about the meaning of the poem in English. She then asked the students to translate the poem line by line into Spanish. Those students who were confused at first were motivated once the poem was being translated into Spanish. By translating the poem into Spanish it made the students more comfortable and more willing to learn the poem in English. Teacher A tended to run an English only room as much as possible. The children were reading Bud Not Buddy in class and had access to English and Spanish books but Teacher A only referred to the English book. In addition Teacher B has all of the directions and materials that are used in English as well as Spanish. She has access to iPads for the students that have bilingual applications on them. Teacher A does not have access

to this or does not use these materials and the majority of the teaching and visual signs are all in English. Having materials in both Spanish and English increases student motivation and willingness to learn.

Preparation for lessons. Within the interviews the teachers made a point of mentioning how much time it takes to prepare for their lessons. Their mentality and thought process is that if the teacher cannot hold the students' attention or does not seem motivated to teach, the students will not be motivated to learn. The teachers were asked about how they planned and paced their lessons and how they worked smooth transitions into the lessons to hold students' attention and motivation. Teacher A's response was "I plan every lesson very carefully. It takes me hours to plan a lesson. I let the students do the pacing aspect of the lessons. If the lesson takes longer than anticipated that is fine. Lessons can go longer than projected because the students are still working on their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The content does not all have to be met and it is more important that the students really grasp the skills that we are working on in a particular lesson. I rewrite all the modules into my lesson plans. I extend some of the activities and use the modules as a base mark. Sometimes I leave out the complicated directions and there is a lot of supplementing that occurs. My learning labs that I teach are mostly supplemental to the module that we are working on. I write the agenda on the board and the students receive the lesson guide for the day. I give verbal directions and there is a lot of modeling. At the beginning of the year we practiced everything and I would model literally everything. Before we did centers we practiced going to a center and switching between centers. I introduce the lessons verbally before beginning something new." Teacher B took a slightly different approach. Teacher B's response was "We are given the modules and I look at the end of unit assessments to decide what I will teach and what I will skip because there is so much information it is

overwhelming for me as well as the students. A lot of it is seeing if the students understand the skills and the concepts if they don't we slow down if they get it we move on. We use the modules for ELA and make notations and sticky notes and add things to those. These are lengthy sometimes 12-18 pages long. For social studies and learning lab we use an online plan book that we fill in. These are in printable table form. It has materials, objectives, standards, procedures, and assessments. We have the agenda posted we go over it at the beginning so the kids know what to expect at the beginning of the lesson along with what objectives are planned to accomplish. It is revisited at the end of the lesson to make sure all the objectives were met. It is as simple as raising my hand for quiet and all of the students quiet down and then I give the next direction. It can be somewhat difficult but usually a simple hand in the air is all it takes." Teacher A seems to spend a great deal more time in the planning aspect of each lesson but through the observations it was observed that Teacher B's lessons flowed more smoothly and had more student participation throughout the lessons.

Student centered learning and self-assessment. In my literature review, research showed the importance of student centered learning in regards to increasing student motivation. In the survey the majority of the students responded that their motivation would increase if they were in charge of their learning. In my observations the classroom of Teacher B had a great deal of self-assessment and interest based learning which led to higher levels of student participation and motivation. During the interview I asked both teachers how they allowed the students to self-assess themselves and therefore somewhat be in charge of their learning. Teacher A's response was "Occasionally I let them do some self-assessment. We have fist to five which is a quick check for me as well as the students. After teaching material the students rate their understanding of it by holding up the number of fingers to show how familiar they are (fist being

not at all five being they completely understand). Sometimes I give them an exit ticket with a learning target on it and they rate how well we have reached the learning target in class.

Sometimes they self-grade themselves but for the most part it is direct instruction from me.”

Teacher B’s response was “We do fist to five which is not the best but we do peer evaluations during group projects so they can use a rubric to assess themselves and others. When they do their writing we do one on one editing where they use the same rubric I do and they go through and grade themselves then I give them what grade I would have given them based on their writing. A lot of it is discussion based.” In the student surveys the majority of students responded that they would benefit from more self-assessment and student centered learning would increase their motivation. In Teacher B’s classroom this self-assessment occurs more frequently and it leads to higher motivation within students as seen within my classroom observations.

Reward systems. In my literature review I talked about the importance of rewards for students who are extrinsically motivated. In my interviews and observations I collected some data on student reactions to positive reinforcement and reward systems as opposed to scolding or negative reward systems. A common theme that came up among the teachers was the use of negative consequences for students who are not motivated to complete their work. Within the interviews the teachers were asked what sort of rewards they practice for positive reinforcement if any. Teacher A’s response was “I try to do this as much as possible. The students need both short-term and long-term feedback. Most of the students need immediate attention whether it is reprimanding or rewarding behavior but I would say the sticker charts are more long term. I try and use positive reinforcement if it is possible but sometimes it does not work. I do not like being the “yelling” teacher but sometimes that is the only thing that works. We are using a sticker chart where every time the students earn twenty stickers for good behavior and

participation they receive a prize. They are also working up to a pizza party in June. I have a class wide sticker chart where if the whole class is on task and has a good day they can receive a sticker. That chart needs to be full by June in order for the pizza party to happen.” Teacher B’s response was “Yes it is important to do this in order to focus on the positive behaviors instead of reinforcing the negative behaviors. In relation to positive reinforcement strategies right now within the classroom whenever the students do anything positive they receive a ticket for the daily drawing to win prizes.”

Further along in the interview these questions were followed up with potential consequences if the students choose not to motivate themselves to complete their required work or homework. The teachers were asked if the students have a tendency to be motivated enough to complete work on their own and if not what are the repercussions of this lack of motivation. Teacher A’s response was “No they don’t. Homework just does not happen so I do not waste my time giving it because I know it won’t get done. Sometimes the students have to stay after school or come during homeroom if they have unfinished work. If I do centers before the students can pick a “fun” center they have to finish all of their unfinished work.” Teacher B’s response was “It is half and half. The students that want to learn and are motivated are the ones who bring their work and want to complete their work. Others that aren’t motivated and do not do their work for whatever reason. I have them three days a week for tutoring where I can go and check what they are missing where I can get them caught up. They have working lunch where if they aren’t doing their work they go to lunch and sit in silence and do their work. We have called home and had conferences with parents about their work because if it is starting now it will carry into high school and they will have to repeat the class if they fail.” This contradicts the student responses within the student survey. Students felt that they were motivated to work if the work was given

to them. The teachers have developed strategies in attempts to increase student motivation and increase work completion within the student population.

Building working relationships with the students. During the interview and observations data was collected on how the students responded to their teachers. In the interview the teachers were asked how they built a positive rapport with their students in order to foster motivation and learning. Teacher A reported “I would say I have a good relationship and rapport with my students. The students feel comfortable...sometimes a little too comfortable with me. They think of this room as a safe place to come and they like coming to class for the most part. Whenever they come they feel safe and this motivates them to want to learn and to want to put in an effort and be motivated to learn.” Teacher B on the other hand responded “I think that my working relationship with my students is good, I make a point of seeing them throughout the day and they see me in the building so they know me. I also co teach with social studies so I see some of them in there as well. I feel that they are motivated to work for me and that there is a level of respect between us. They know that I respect them and want them to try so in turn they respect me and are motivated to put in some sort of effort within the class for the most part.” Through the observations this did not always seem to be the case. Teacher A was considered the “yelling teacher” that students did not fully respect. Teacher B was a younger teacher with new ideas to incorporate within the classroom. She made an effort to get to know her students outside the classroom in formal and informal settings.

Discussion

The purpose of this entire research project was to answer the following research questions: What are the factors that influence ELL student motivation in their learning, what do teachers perceive as the factors that affect ELL student motivation, and what strategies do teachers use to motivate their ELL students? Throughout the course of this research and data collection several patterns arose. Some validated the literature in my literature review while other results seemed to directly contradict previous literature.

When taking a look at the overall data of the student survey it is conducive to use the percentages given to better understand the data. For the most part the students responded that they understood the majority of the content that was taught in their class and that they greatly enjoyed being in charge of their learning and having those moments to self-assess. The majority of students responded that their motivation would increase if there was more home language use within the ESL classroom. They also responded that although they know it is important to put forth an effort many of them do not make the time outside of class to do so. The students also responded that although they enjoy receiving complements from the teacher they will not perform differently based on receiving or not receiving a complement from their teacher. This went against the information found in my literature review. Yunus, et al. (2011) stated that positive reinforcements are missed when they are not given. Almost all of the students responded that they understand the importance of obtaining passing grades and how it was important to be successful in their classes. Many responded that when they receive a bad grade they are upset by this and that this motivates them to receive good grades. Many of the students responded that they are motivated by wanting to get good grades and to do well in school. They also responded that they would rather be scolded quickly for a mistake than be given positive

reinforcement for making an acceptable choice. While looking back at the literature review several theorists gave ideas for how students are motivated. Depending on the level of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation the literature states that using actions that reach the motivation types will in turn motivate the students toward success (Poonam, 1997). Keeping the varieties of motivation in mind while we look at the results will determine whether or not the literature held true in this situation. Some of the student responses to the questions were inconsistent as related to previous questions. This could be a lack of understanding of the question and the questions may need to have been reworded.

While reflecting back on the interviews with Teacher A and Teacher B several ideologies and perceptions made themselves apparent by the answers given to the interview questions. Teacher A seemed to have the philosophy that English was the dominant language within her classroom and that the home language of the students was inferior for the purpose of her classroom. Teacher A did not have a great deal of Spanish materials within the classroom and many of the posters on the walls and the directions given orally were all in English. Teacher B seemed to incorporate the home language into her curriculum and teaching to greater intensity than Teacher A. All of the posters and directions given by Teacher B. were in English as well as Spanish. Teacher A tried to create a more dominant-submissive classroom setting while Teacher B wanted her classroom to run as a partnership between teacher and students. In my literature review research clearly states that the more student centered a teacher can make a classroom the more motivated the students will be to learn (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). Teacher B's classroom was more student centered with more ways for self-assessment and it seemed that the students in that classroom were more motivated to learn and participate. The socio-cultural theory stresses the importance of communication between students in order to promote language (Vygotsky,

1978). Cooperative learning techniques are many times based in this theory. Using cooperative learning freely within the classroom instead of being “forced” will increase language development and motivation to learn based on increased ability to use language to communicate ideas. Looking back again into the literature review into the section of teacher strategies that can be used to motivate students serves to remind the reader what “ideal teaching” may look like according to literature (Theroux, 1994). Teacher B uses many of these techniques in her teaching. From creating a conducive learning environment, to how she set up the classroom, to behavior strategies and pacing strategies that were used, the lessons seemed to flow almost flawlessly with high student motivation and participation. Through the observations it was clear that this class flowed more smoothly than that of Teacher A.

During my several classroom observations strategies used by the teachers and students’ reactions to the strategies did not always coincide. A period of six observations took place throughout the classes containing the surveyed group of students. Two of the classes were taught by one teacher who is the fifth/sixth grade teacher while the other class was taught by the seventh/eighth grade teacher. There were three different classes that were observed during the thirty minute blocks. Over the course of the observations it was noted that Teacher A had few numbers of higher order thinking questions and positive reinforcement although in her interview she said she used these frequently. In addition, the students did not seem as motivated or did not have as positive a rapport with Teacher A as she claimed. Teacher B in her interview sounded as though she did not carry out a great many teaching strategies to increase motivation but during the observations several strategies were noted that clearly increased student motivation within the class. Overall the students leaned toward being more intrinsically motivated rather than

extrinsically motivated. This can be related to the literature review in the defining of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Limitations of the Study

The original methodology and plan for implementing research was slightly different than the actual occurrences during the research process. The process of getting research approved was slightly delayed and overlapped with student teaching requirements which delayed the progression of research for a slight time period. After submitting the consent forms to the students and the parents of the target population only about eighteen responses out of the original group of participants were returned. This was after extending the due date of the consent forms several times. There were barely any responses on the original due date so the timeline was forcibly extended due to lack of participation. By the time I was able to enter the school the time frame available was very limited. On the days I visited the school to administer the survey there were several students out of the group of eighteen that were absent for various reasons. Out of the eighteen students I was only able to survey eleven of the students. I was able to do all six of my observations between the three classrooms but I was hoping to have six observations per classroom. Time became of the essence and with state testing and spring breaks it was not feasible to observe the classes as much as originally desired. Since there were three classes to observe although the classes were in one hour blocks the observations were done in thirty minute blocks because two of the classes ran during the same time block.

Implications

This topic yielded a great deal of interesting data. If research in this topic were to continue I would give the advice to add more participants to the study in order to better represent the overall population. I would also do more observations within the classroom to further

observe the behavior and motivations of the students within the study. I may give another motivational survey to compare answers from the previous survey. There were a couple questions that the students answered where the answers were surprising. Another survey would see if these answers changed or remained consistent. Interviewing and evaluating other teachers with the same interview in order to compare answers would be another option.

This study yielded a great deal of information in the field of TESOL. In this particular study the student population of participants agreed that use of the home language would further their motivation in learning English. ESL teachers would benefit from this study because it is my belief that this population is not in the minority within the ELL population. If this study were conducted within a larger ELL population it is my inference that the results would be similar. This study proves the importance of the use of home language and student centered classrooms within ESL classrooms. Despite biases and ideologies of certain individuals, ELLs are motivated to learn English and it has been proven within this study. Learning English is not the issue, finding the tools to motivate students is the issue at hand.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to fully answer through the use of data collection and observational research the following questions: What are the factors that influence ELL student motivation in their learning, what do teachers perceive as the factors that affect ELL student motivation, and what strategies do teachers use to motivate their ELL students? Through the use of student motivational surveys, interviews, and observation sessions the data was collected on the motivation of a middle school population. Literature was reviewed that helped formulate hypotheses of the researcher before completing the research. After the data was collected the researcher analyzed the data and found that some of the results disproved both the literature and the previous hypotheses. After the completion of this research project the research questions have been answered but more have been formulated within the process. Teacher perceptions and strategies were discussed and factors defined by students of their motivations were identified. The issue of increasing student motivation to increase academic achievement still remains.

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*Appendix A***Student Consent Form**

Hello! My name is Marianne Drzymala and I am a second year graduate student at SUNY Fredonia. I need your help! I am doing a research study on student motivation where I will be collecting data from students and teachers. I will be giving a motivation survey to students and conducting interviews with the teachers. I will be observing in the classroom three times a week over the period of three weeks. From beginning to end this study and the participants will be involved for about one or two months. I am collecting research on student motivation and using student motivation to help make learning more fun! If you participate your answers will be used in my research to show how students are motivated in a class and what teachers can do to make students more motivated. You can be as honest as possible and will receive the results of the survey within one week of me getting the results back if you want them. This is completely optional and you do not have to do it if you feel uncomfortable for any reason. If you decide to do the study and change your mind you may withdraw from the research with no penalty. The information will be kept completely confidential and I will make sure that it stays safe and confidential by keeping the results stored in a safe place where only I know they are. The only other place they will be recorded is in my thesis but no names will be used. If you would like to participate in this study please fill out this form and return the form as soon as possible but no later than March 2, 2015. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to email my at drzy7315@fredonia.edu.

I have read the information and know that my participation in this study is up to me. I will not get a grade for this and I can stop at any point if I want. I understand that any information that comes from this study will not be told to anyone. I know that I may ask for more information about this study if I wish to do so whenever I want.

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*Appendix B***Parental Consent Form**

Hello! My name is Marianne Drzymala and I am a second year graduate student at SUNY Fredonia. I need your child's help! I am doing a research study on student motivation where I will be collecting data from students and teachers. I will be giving a motivation survey to students and conducting interviews with the teachers. I will be observing in the classroom three times a week over the period of three weeks. From beginning to end this study and the participants will be involved for about one or two months. I am collecting research on student motivation and using student motivation to help make learning more fun! If your child participates their answers will be used in my research to show how students are motivated in a class and what teachers can do to make students more motivated. They can be as honest as possible and will receive the results of the survey within one week of me getting the results back if you want them. This is completely optional and you do not have to do it if you feel uncomfortable for any reason. If you decide to allow your child to do the study and change your mind you may withdraw your child from the research with no penalty. The information will be kept completely confidential and I will make sure that it stays safe and confidential by keeping the results stored in a safe place where only I know they are. The only other place they will be recorded is in my thesis but no names will be used. If you would like to participate in this study please fill out this form and return the form as soon as possible but no later than March 2, 2015.

If you are willing to let your child participate in the survey please fill out the bottom section and return the form as soon as possible. The child can be eliminated from the study at any point if the parent/guardian feels that the study is detrimental to the child's learning or for any other reason the parent/guardian feels. If you have any questions about my study, the motivation survey, or the observations please do not hesitate to call me or email me. My email address is drzy7315@fredonia.edu and my phone number is (716)359-5873.

STUDENT'S NAME _____ AGE _____ DOB _____

I the undersigned parent or guardian, hereby consent to my child, _____, participating in the following research study. I certify that my child is able to participate in the motivation survey and that the results of the survey be included in Marianne Drzymala's final research project.

I expressly agree that this release, waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be inclusive as permitted by the law of the State of New York and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, the study will cease immediately.

Signature of parent/guardian _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Student Motivation Survey

Before we begin let us take a look at the scale below. This is the scale you will use to fill out the survey according to your feelings on the question. It is important to answer honestly. This is not for a grade and will not be used toward this class in any manner.

Scale

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
				

Now that we have looked at the scale you are ready to complete this survey. Please fill it out as best you can. Below you will see statements. Read each statement and put an X in the box that describes your feeling based on the scale above.

Intrinsic Motivation

Self-efficacy

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I understand the material that is taught in this class.					
2. It is important for me to be a good student.					
3. I try my best in this class.					
4. If my friends are being disruptive I will do it too.					
5. Sometimes I get made fun					

of for being too “good” in school.					
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Intrinsic value

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I like what I am learning in this class.					
7. I like when I am able to take a look at myself and self-assess myself.					
8. I like when I am made to think and the work challenges me.					
9. I would like to be in charge of my learning.					
10. It is important to learn what is being taught in this class.					

Self-Regulation

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
11. I make sure I really understand the material that I am learning.					
12. I often come					

after school or during study halls to meet with the teacher if I have a question.					
13. When the work is hard I give up or only try when the work is easy.					
14. I would like to use my home language to learn instead of just English.					
15. I try and be a good student and behave in class even if my friends are not.					

Extrinsic Motivation

Positive reinforcement

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16. I like when my teacher compliments me.					
17. I try and do my work just to make my teacher happy.					
18. If I ask a question and do not understand the answer I pretend that I					

do in order not to disappoint my teacher.					
19. It makes me sad and I do not want to work if I do not get compliments on my work.					
20. I feel smart when I can correctly answer all of the teacher's questions.					

Fear of failure

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
21. I get very upset if I get a bad grade in this class.					
22. I try my best so that I will get good grades.					
23. If I get bad grades in this class I get in trouble with my family.					
24. If I get a bad grade it is not a big					

deal and I do not worry too much.					
25. Grades are not that important to me.					

Importance of Success

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. I will not stop trying until I reach my goals.					
27. It is very important for me to be successful.					
28. I want to be successful in this class so that I am very good in English.					
29. It is important to learn English and I have a goal of becoming good at English.					
30. I would rather be scolded for a mistake than rewarded for good					

behavior.					
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*Appendix D***Teacher Interview**

Getting to know the teacher questions

1. How many years have you been a teacher?
2. Have you always worked at this school? If not what other schools have you worked in?
3. Where are you from?
4. Where do you live now?
5. What was your degree in?

Questions related to the classroom

1. How do you set up your classroom? Do you have classroom rules and expectations posted?
2. Do you use the home language within the classroom? Why/why not? (If teacher answers yes proceed with the question: What are some ways you use the home language in your classroom to guide your instruction?)
3. Do you do a lot of positive reinforcement with your students? Why/Why not?
4. Do you make a point of rewarding positive behavior? How do you do this?
5. Do you ask a lot of higher order thinking questions? Why/why not?
6. What are some ways you pace your lessons? How do you make sure your lessons stay on track according to your plans?
7. What is your working relationship like with your students?
8. Do you use cooperative learning within the classroom? Why/why not? (If answer is yes proceed with how it is used)
9. Do you think it is important to have a good relationship with the students? Why/Why not?
10. What would you say your three most successful strategies are in executing a successful lesson?
11. How involved are the parents in the classroom? Do you communicate a great deal with the parents? Why/why not?
12. Do the students do a lot of self-assessment? Why/why not?
13. In your opinion would you say that your students are motivated to learn for the most part? Why do you feel this way/What leads you to believe they are not motivated?

14. Do the students complete all of their work on time? What are the consequences if they do not?
15. What do your lesson plans look like?
16. What do transitions look like in your room? How do you deal with transitioning throughout the lesson? What are some strategies you use for a “smooth” transition?

*Appendix F***HSR Approval Letter**

4 February 2015

Marianne Drzymala
c/o Sovicheth Boun, Ph.D..
Language, Learning and Leadership
College of Education
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Marianne Drzymala—Using Student Motivation to Address the Achievement Gap in ESL Classrooms

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled "Using Student Motivation to Address the Achievement Gap in ESL Classrooms " may proceed as described. **Your approval is valid from February 4, 2015 through April 17, 2015.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith M. Horowitz".

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
and Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator

*Appendix G***CITI Certificate****COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Marianne Drzymala (ID: 3688069)
- **Email:** drzy7315@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Unit:** TESOL
- **Phone:** (716)359-5873

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1.
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 11088059
- **Completion Date:** 09/05/2013
- **Expiration Date:** 09/05/2015
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 81

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED
Introduction	08/27/13
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	09/05/13
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	09/05/13
The Federal Regulations - SBE	09/05/13
Assessing Risk - SBE	09/05/13
Informed Consent - SBE	09/05/13
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	09/05/13
Research with Prisoners - SBE	09/05/13
Research with Children - SBE	09/05/13
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE	09/05/13
International Research - SBE	09/05/13
Internet-Based Research - SBE	09/05/13
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives	09/05/13
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	09/05/13
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	09/05/13
SUNY Fredonia State College	09/05/13

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
 Email: citisupport@miami.edu
 Phone: 305-243-7970
 Web: <https://www.citi-program.org>