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The Impact of Motivation in the High School Spanish Classroom

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF MOTIVATION IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH CLASSROOM

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Research Questions

1. Why do students study Spanish?
2. How does the effectiveness of different lessons differ between students who are studying Spanish to learn the language and students who simply want another "A" for their GPA?
3. How can I best teach lessons that would appeal to and be successful for all students?

Literature

- "Adolescents' academic motivation declines over time" (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 151).
- The correlations between achievement and motivation are much stronger than any of the other factors with achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).
- At times, performance goals are essential to success, and students may do their best with the presence of both performance and mastery goals (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).
- Students possessing an integrative motivation for learning a foreign language were both more likely to take part in collaborative relationships and to succeed in holistically learning the language than were intrinsically motivated students (Bonney, 2007).
- Utilizing humor and sharing personal stories were less important for a teacher attempting to motivate his/ her students than showing that s/e was personally committed to the students' learning process (Noels, 2003).

Methodology

- *Self- study research* looking at the motivations of high school students to learn a foreign language, and using this knowledge to better myself as a teacher
- 63 students at Spanish 4 level; 19 male, 44 female (see class picture)
- Data Sources: writing samples, personal learning questionnaire, assessments, lesson plans

Data

Rank of Importance for Learning Spanish; % out of 54 Students

	1	2	3	4
Colleges want it	53.70	11.11	24.07	11.11
Being more marketable in jobs	12.96	31.48	31.48	24.07
An "A" in my GPA	12.96	37.04	18.52	21.48
The purpose of learning Spanish to communicate	20.37	20.37	25.93	33.33

Rank of Enjoyment of Learning Spanish, 5 being highest; % out of 57 Students

1	2	3	4	5
0	17.54	33.33	29.82	19.30

Agreement That the Information Will be Valuable after High School; % out of 57 Students

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.75	1.75	29.82	42.11	24.56

Conclusion

- While many of the students are extrinsically motivated, they are also, at least in part, intrinsically and integratively motivated.
- Students are motivated by their desire to continue on in their education.
- Many students are instrumentally motivated by rewards and grades.
- Students who completed the assignments in order to learn the material for intrinsic purposes worked harder and did more when completing the assignments, except for the oral recording in which they simply followed the instructions, as compared with the students who completed the assignments simply with the goal of earning an "A".
- As a teacher, I need to plan lessons that appeal to all instrumentally, intrinsically, and integratively motivated students.

