



Factors in teachers' demotivation: an empirical study

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Título

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ABSTRACT

It is very common to hear from EFL teachers in Brazilian public schools that their teaching conditions are precarious. They complain about low wages, schools with poor infrastructure, and other factors which they claim prevent them from performing high quality teaching practice. This study looks into the issues they raise in order to find out which ones they consider to be the most discouraging. Using a qualitative approach, the responses of ten teachers are initially analyzed, collected by means of an online questionnaire, and the factors that are pointed out as the most demotivating are brought up. These are categorized and in a second phase of the project another questionnaire is posted online, receiving twenty-two responses, which are analyzed. The most relevant factors are described. It is assumed that once these factors are known, strategies may be developed to act upon them and thus contribute to better teaching conditions.

Key words: Teacher's demotivation; EFL; public schools; demotivating factors; interaction

FATORES NA DESMOTIVAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES: UM ESTUDO EMPÍRICO

RESUMO

É muito comum ouvir de professores de língua inglesa de escolas públicas brasileiras que suas condições de ensino são precárias. Eles reclamam dos baixos salários, da infraestrutura precária das escolas, entre outros fatores que, alegam, os impedem de realizar práticas de ensino de alta qualidade. Este estudo analisa os problemas que professores de inglês levantam para descobrir quais eles consideram os mais desencorajadores. Por meio de uma abordagem qualitativa, são analisadas inicialmente as respostas de dez professores, coletadas por meio de um questionário on-line, e os fatores que são realmente mais desmotivadores são trazidas à tona. Esses são categorizados e em uma segunda fase do projeto outro questionário é postado online, recebendo-se vinte e duas respostas, que são analisadas. Os fatores mais relevantes são apontados. Entende-se que, uma vez que fatores sejam conhecidos, estratégias possam ser desenvolvidas para agir sobre eles e, assim, contribuir para melhores condições de ensino.

Palavras-chave: Desmotivação do Professor; ensino de inglês; escola pública; fatores desmotivadores; interação

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To my family, without whom I would not have been able to finish this work.

To my father, whose presence made me feel certain that I was not alone in this journey and will never be in life.

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1. Introduction

It is widely known that many conditions have discouraged teachers, among them precarious teaching settings, low wages, poor infrastructure, lack of continued training, little or no support from the school and families, students without motivation, and so on. However, we ask which among these aspects teachers find to be the most discouraging. We assume that if we understand what teachers find to be the most daunting problems, we may be on the road to improve this situation. In this sense, this study analyses what EFL teachers indicate as the factors which they believe are most demotivating.

I have been working in education for over twelve years and have taught English for at least ten years. I have graduated in Pedagogy at Fluminense Federal University and chose this area because I always liked teaching. I come from a family of teachers and probably this fact has influenced my choice. After some time, as I began teaching English to children, I felt the need of a postgraduate degree in the field. I wanted to find out more about this field.

The more I got involved with teaching the more I realized that current methodologies are basically student-centered. The teacher is not at the center of motivation-related concerns. Therefore, I decided to focus my research on the factors that may support English teachers' motivation and also analyze the ones which are the most disengaging.

A survey carried out by the International Community for Cooperation in Education (Revista Brasil / Rádio Nacional de Brasília Source: Rádios EBC) found that 74% of teachers are disappointed with the profession. Indeed, much has been said about teachers' lack of motivation but there have been few studies about what causes it and how to solve it.

I live in a country where there is very little investment in education and there are constant financial cuts. Teaching in public and private schools in Brazil is not an easy task. One of the main problems is low pay. Another very relevant issue is the incidence of physical and verbal violence against the teacher. Violence in the classroom demotivates teachers even further.

According to Esteve (1999: p. 144), "Teacher malaise is a social disease produced by the lack of support of society for teachers, both in terms of teaching

objectives and material rewards and in the recognition of the status attributed to them". Stress has become increasingly common among Brazilian teachers, which is manifested in various ways: illnesses, discomfort (see ESTEVE 1999, p.144).), and, mostly, lack of motivation, which is the main theme of this study.

Another problem is lack of autonomy as teachers have to meet demands from the Government. According to FRIGOTTO, 1995, p. 145

the great mentors of this rejuvenated placement are the World Bank. BID, UNESCO, OIT and the regional and national bodies linked to them. Along this path, we can see that both economic integration and the appreciation of general basic education to form are subordinated to the logic of the market, capital and, therefore, differentiation, segmentation and exclusion. In this sense, the dilemmas of the bourgeoisie in the face of education and qualification remain, even if it effectively changes its historical content and the contradictions take on more crucial forms.

It is the system that determines the percentage of students who must pass or fail to meet requirement of international economic organizations such as IBRD (in Portuguese, BIRD) (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and UNESCO.

A survey of the socio-emotional aspects of Brazilian teachers carried out by the International Community for Cooperation in Education (MindGroup¹) revealed that 68% of the teachers interviewed had some difficulty in bonding with their students. The study pointed out that about 74% of public school professionals showed signs of demotivation and anxiety, which directly affects self-confidence.

It must be pointed out here that demotivated teacher are a huge problem. Teachers may influence the individual's entire life for the good or for the bad. So, it is more than necessary to rethink the causes of teacher's demotivation so that this problem can be solved.

¹ MindGroup - The International Community for Cooperation in Education (MindGroup) is composed of educational institutions, governmental and non-governmental leaders interested in promoting the production of knowledge and exchange of experiences through symposia, technical meetings, studies, research and various publications in the educational field. Everyone in this community shares the view that it is necessary to cooperate if education is to train citizens with the skills and competences that we need so much.

2. Literature Review

Much has been written about reaching success in teaching and learning. A motivated teacher is the guiding thread to a successful educational project. He is responsible for a pleasant and challenging environment that may guarantee his student's interests and motivations. As a result, he feels more motivated to continue teaching. However, it must be stressed that students' realities, desires and needs are not the same. Their different upbringing and experiences pose a real challenge to the teacher when classes must be prepared to meet individual needs.

After examining the sense of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and pedagogical success of three EFL high school teachers, Biresaw (2017) found out that these factors could be positively and significantly interrelated. Also, the researcher found that sub-categories of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy such as empathy, handling relationships, self-awareness, classroom management, and students' engagement were variables that added to the prediction of pedagogical success.

According Arnold (2011), when the educator is successful in creating an empathetic and respectful connection with his student, the learning process happens in a much more natural way. It is from a good coexistence that trust, respect and harmony between individuals are established. Arnold (2011) adds that if the teacher wants to communicate to the students his respect for and interest in what he teaches and to encourage them to share this interest, the teacher will find an invaluable ally in the students.

One of the challenges of education today is placing more emphasis on the affective aspects as well as on the cognitive. In this line, Arnold and Brown (1991, 1) argue that aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude condition behavior. However, when one turns to the language classroom, one should consider Stick's often cited comment that "Success [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (Stevick 1980, 4).

According to Arnold 2011, 1-2), classrooms situations are influenced by the relationship between learning and affect but with language learning this is especially crucial since our self-image is more vulnerable when we do not have mastery of our

vehicle for expression – language. She points out that “if teachers do not take the affective side of language learning into account, conflicts on the level of identity may well develop and make the cognitive aspect of the learning process more difficult. Affect and cognition are both part of the learner’s whole-person development.”

Literature on teaching indicates that it demands knowledge, personal and emotional investments and proper training. It is a time-consuming and extremely exhausting job. As discussed in the introduction, teachers have to deal with unmotivated, disrespectful students and families who do not compromise, not to mention the precarious conditions of everyday life, as well as low wages. This is why we should look into what exactly demotivates teachers so that the problems can be mitigated. In the next section, I will present the methodology used in this study.

3. Methodology

Online forums are an important tool for interaction and sharing of ideas and content among English teachers. This social media offers a practical way to encourage discussions. It is a space that can be used to exchange experiences, upload and download files, debates, doubts, opinions and other actions. Another extremely positive point of the forum is that it allows the teacher to post a message publicly and it can be answered by all components at another time, that is, it is not necessary for the interaction to occur in real time, so it is easy to collect data and follow the publications in their time. In addition to all these issues mentioned, the forum is extremely intuitive, easy to understand and handle.

Due to the ease and coverage that this platform offers, I decided to use it for my research. I posted on Facebook the main question, "what factors motivate you to teach EFL classes and what facts let you down about teaching?" in different forums which are used exclusively by English teachers. The research main question was then subdivided into the following:

- 1) What factors motivate you to teach EFL classes and what facts let you down about teaching?
- 2) Rate the elements below in levels of importance 1-5 (considering 1 the most important to 5 the less important, in your opinion). How would you order them?
- 3) Which factors reported below do you consider most relevant as demotivating factors for the students? Order from 1 to 8, considering the level of importance from highest to lowest.

The forums used for data collection were the following:

a) Private English Teachers - Reloaded (5.548 members). This group is aimed at language teachers who want to share knowledge and tips on teaching in one to one settings. The spirit of this group is to provide a collaborative, inspiring and trusted space for teachers to exchange ideas. Any teacher is welcome to share articles, lesson plans, links and blog posts for teachers

b) BrELT - Professional Development for Teachers of English (19.294 members) is a global English Language Teaching community for Brazilians teachers

that vary from trainers, coordinators, content developers to researchers from both state and private sectors.

c) Teachers of English (204.468 members). This group is aimed at sharing best practices in English fighting against the old – style – teaching. This page was created so that teachers could share different experience, tips, new ideas on English teaching as well as discussing anything relevant on English education. Also to help spread current teaching methods and ideas so that the students learn the language for real life use and enjoy the lessons at the same time.

As a first step for this research, I posted the following question on the forums for data collection:

“Hello dear colleagues,

I am doing research to find out more about the TEACHERS. I have been teaching English for 10 years now and what I can tell is that most of the articles I have read so far are mostly learner's centered and that's why I would like to understand what motivates (and not motivate) teachers.

I would really appreciate it if you could write it in the comments "what factors motivate you to teach EFL classes and what facts let you down about teaching?"

Many thanks”

After collecting the responses of teachers and selecting among the answers the most cited factors that are related to the demotivation of teachers, I prepared the second part of the survey, which consisted of asking teachers in these same forums to order the five factors they believe to be the most demotivating.

In the first forum (Private English Teachers - Reloaded) after launching the first question I got only three likes and three answers directly in the box of comments. The post did not reach many participants, much to my disappointment since the group has a total of 5,548 members. I anticipated that many teachers would answer the survey, which did not happen. The post was available for a little over three weeks, which did not change the number of responses obtained.

In the second group the result was, coincidentally, the same; I got three likes and three comments. I continued with the perception that the teachers were not very interested in answering my question and this factor made me feel very anxious, as I

needed this data. I decided to leave the publication on this forum a little longer, because I thought more answers would come, but after one month and two weeks I collected only three answers.

In the third forum, with the largest number of participants (approximately 204,000 participants), I got only nine likes and a total of six comments. This was the forum where teachers best developed their ideas related to the question and also discussed their answers. It was very interesting to observe this interaction between teachers. As I did in the other groups, I extended the time of publication to make sure that no further answers would come in and they definitely did not. From this experience I was able to realize that empirical research work is very difficult, because we depend on the collection of data. As reported above, the teachers did not seem very excited to give any kind of response.

As I needed a minimum of 20 answers, I obtained the 10 answers needed from English teachers to whom I sent messages directly through Facebook. By combining the answers I got from the forums and these 10, I was able to read the number of motivate and demotivate the teacher in order to set up the second part of the research, which consisted of a total of 22 responses. As some answers were very similar, for example, “interested students / motivated students, decent paycheck / monetary recognition” I tried to organize and categorize them more objectively within the demotivating elements mentioned by the teachers.

The demotivating elements most mentioned by teachers were:

Demotivated students (4 votes)

Not having monetary recognition (5 votes)

Lack of respect from school (5 votes)

Disrespectful students (4 votes)

Not interesting material to work with (4 votes)

Other demotivating factors were cited but with less relevance, such as: the government, lack of continuing education for teachers and bad work environment.

I then grouped the most cited items into five categories and obtained the following:

1. Demotivated students
2. Lack of social recognition
3. Low wages
4. Lack of support (from school and family)
5. Lack of resources (technology, teaching material)

The second part of the research consisted of emphasizing the demotivating elements most cited by teachers in Question 1 of the research. After categorizing the five most demotivating factors cited by the teachers in the forums and by the teachers of the direct messages, I went back to the same forums and the same teachers who answered individually by message on Facebook and published the new research question again:

“Hello, dear colleagues

Could you please rate the elements below (which are from the initial part of my research:” factors that let teachers down regarding teaching EFL students”), in levels of importance 1-5 (considering 1 the most important to 5 the least important, in your opinion), how would you order them?

Factors that let teachers down regarding teaching EFL students (most voted)

Demotivated students

Lack of social recognition

Low wages

Lack of support (from school and family)

Lack of resources (technology, teaching material)

Thanks in advance “

Initially, the question in Part 2 of my survey was posted on the forums, exactly as I did with the first part where I asked teachers to cite the most demotivating and motivating factors in teaching English with EFL students. I posted the same question on

all three communities: BrELT forums - Professional Development for Teachers of English, Private English Teachers - Reloaded and Teachers of English.

In the first forum, there were no likes in the post, but I got 12 comments and one drew my attention. What surprised me positively in this publication was the comment from a teacher who advised me on how to make this type of question more attractive so that the teachers would feel like answering and so told me to use the survey monkey platform and just publish the link that this research platform creates after organizing the question we want. The comment was:

"Do a survey monkey or a Google form. It's not practical asking for people to cut and paste 5 sentences in order, taking their time and yours to do it and organize it afterwards. Also, both tools will help you to do graphs later."

I read more what this tool was about and was surprised by its practicality. The platform is defined on the internet as "The world's leading platform for online research". It is a practical tool for doing quantitative and qualitative research based on data collection. Ideal for making forms for TCCs, dissertations or theses. On the platform website we find all the possibilities of the research tool, such as: easily create surveys, quizzes, and polls for any audience. Gather feedback via we blink, email, mobile chat or social media, automatically analyze results and get powerful analysis features, export results or integrate data with favorite apps and use insights to make better, data-driven decisions.

And so it was done. I collected the answers from the first forum, put the question on the survey monkey and published the question again on all forums, now with the survey monkey link, asking teachers to answer my survey, with the following message:

"Hello again!

To make my research easier to you...

If you can, please answer it. It's really really fast.

<https://pt.surveymonkey.com/r/2NTQYBX>

Thanks a lot."

As my publication on the Teachers of English forum was bringing an interesting interaction between the teachers, many were not responding to what I was actually

asking for but were paying close attention to my post, I decided beyond publishing the question in the forum with the link I also commented on my own publication, now with the survey monkey link and obtained very positive feedback from the teachers. This publication had 40 comments and most of them were “done”, the teachers saying that they had seen my link and answered my survey through the platform.

I could realize that the teachers no longer commented in the publications and few enjoyed the post, but the answers started to come in with greater ease. For every teacher who responded to the survey via the published link, I received an e-mail letting me know that one more answer had been computed. This platform was much more practical and easier for the teacher to answer and for the researcher to obtain data. The publications were active for three weeks and I got a surprising total of 64 responses, that is, many more than when posting directly on Facebook forums. So, I concluded Part 2 of the research with enough data to be used.

Part 3 of this research which is a specification of the student's question why he is not interested was created after reading some articles related to “elements that are associated with engagement in the classroom”. The categories were selected in order to broaden the view of the work context.

Thus, the questions were developed through readings by several authors. Some of the elements used were based on authors such as Vera Savic (2019, p. 2-3), Arnold Jane (2011, p. 2-5), Atalay Biresaw, (2017, p. 2-6) and Akbari et al. (2017, p. 6-8). In this way it was possible to delimit some categories such as:

Other categories referred to the teacher (adapted from Akbari et al, 2017, p. 6-8).

- a) Distant interaction
- b) Personal meaningless activities
- c) Ineffective teaching strategies

More categories referred to context (adapted from Arnold 2011, p. 1-5).

- a) School environment
- b) Reduced autonomy

The teachers were then asked to order these categories from the most relevant to the least relevant (see Annex). Based on Akbari (2017), Biresaw (2017), Arnold (2011)

and Savic (2019), I selected eight items for a new questionnaire that was also made through survey monkey, as follows:

1. Low self esteem
2. Distant interaction
3. School Environment
4. Lack of knowledge
5. Personal Meaningless activities
6. Lack of interest
7. Reduced autonomy
8. Ineffective teaching strategies

The items low self-esteem, distant interaction, lack of knowledge and lack of interest referred to the student. Distant interaction, personal meaningless activities, ineffective teaching strategies referred to the teacher, and school environment and reduced autonomy referred to the classroom context /school.

After choosing and organizing these elements, a new questionnaire made on the survey monkey platform was published on the same Facebook forums, where I asked teachers to order the items they believed were responsible for the students' demotivation, as follows:

1. Which factors reported below do you consider most relevant as demotivating factors for the students? Order from 1 to 8, considering the level of importance from highest to lowest.

Low self esteem

Distant interaction

School environment

Lack of knowledge

Personal meaningless activities

Lack of interest

Reduced autonomy

Ineffective teaching strategies

After two weeks of launching the questionnaire on the Facebook forums, I got a total of 22 responses. I still reapplied the questionnaire a few more times in the hope of having a few more answers, but for a week no further answer came in.

4. Results

The first survey question, carried out on the online Survey Monkey platform, aimed to understand the factors that caused the greatest demotivation in teachers. Table 1 below shows the percentage results:

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	PONTUAÇÃO
Low wages	25,81% 16	27,42% 17	12,90% 8	14,52% 9	19,35% 12	62	3,26
Demotivated Students	30,16% 19	14,29% 9	20,63% 13	20,63% 13	14,29% 9	63	3,25
Lack of social recognition	20,31% 13	21,88% 14	23,44% 15	20,31% 13	14,06% 9	64	3,14
Lack of support (School Support, family support...)	14,06% 9	25,00% 16	26,56% 17	20,31% 13	14,06% 9	64	3,05
Lack of resources (technology, teaching material...)	10,94% 7	12,50% 8	17,19% 11	23,44% 15	35,94% 23	64	2,39

Rate the elements below in levels of importance 1-5 (considering 1 the most important to 5 the less important, in your opinion). How would you order them?

Answered: 64 Skipped: 0

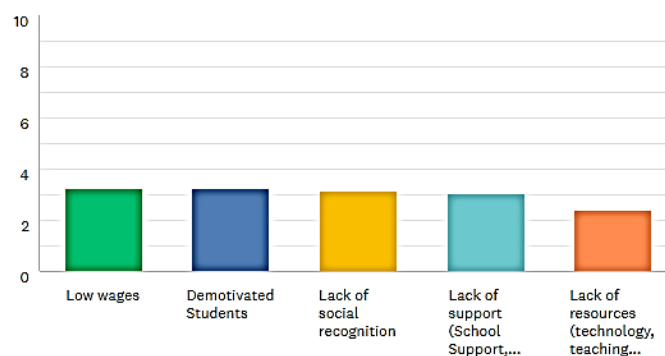


TABLE 2 - Factors that let teachers down regarding teaching EFL students

The tables above indicates that the most relevant demotivating factor for teachers is the item "low wages", followed by "demotivated students". In third, fourth and fifth places, respectively, the factors are: "lack of social recognition", "lack of support / school support / support for families and "lack of resources / technology / teaching material".

The analysis of the data makes us realize that the second factor of demotivation of teachers - "demotivated students" - has a result almost equivalent to "low wages". Thus, we observe that the great impact of students' lack of interest and dedication can be a destabilizing reason for the teaching career.

As we can observe from Table 1, the percentages of each group are related in a similar way and have very close results. Understanding these similarities provides a better understanding of the teaching professional's performance. The demotivation of the education professional is reflected in this result when we observe that not only the issue of low wages becomes the most demotivating factor, and that the fact that the student is not dedicated is an important factor for the teacher to be happy in class.

As can be seen, the results vary from group to group, demonstrating a diverse data collection. Thus, considering the different categories of subjects addressed, it was possible to verify that the factor "Low wages", presented in two groups more than 20% as the main demotivating element. Regarding the "demotivated students" factor, it was found that one group presented more than 30% of the category as the main reason for discontent and two other groups in the same category, presented 20% as being the second biggest cause of discomfort in the profession .

Therefore, the ranking of factors that cause demotivation in the teaching profession demonstrates that the devaluation of the teaching professional may not directly affect this professional, but this affects teachers indirectly through low salaries and lack of recognition on the part of students, schools or families.

Considering the "Low Wages" factor, 25.81% of people put this factor in first place, 27.42% in second place, 12.90% in third place, 14.52% in fourth place and 19.35% in fifth place as the item that causes more demotivation to the teacher. In relation to "Demotivated students", 30.16% of people put this factor in first place, 14.29% in second place, 20.63% in third place, 20.63% in fourth place and 14.29% in fifth place as the item that causes more demotivation to the teacher.

Considering the factor "lack of social recognition", 20.31 of people put this factor in first place, 21.88% in second place, 23.44% in third place, 20.31% in fourth place and 14.06% in fifth place as the item that causes the most demotivation to the teacher. As to "Lack of support (school, family)", 14.06% of people put this factor in first place, 25% in second place, 26.56% in third place, 20.31% in fourth place and 14.06% in fifth place as the item that causes the most demotivation to the teacher.

In relation to “Lack of resources, technology, teaching material...” 10.94% of people put this factor in first place, 12.50% in second place, 17.19% in third place, 23.44 in fourth place and 35.94% in fifth place as the item that causes the most demotivation to the teacher.

The results collected for the second research question, whose objective was to obtain more information about the students' demotivation factors, showed that the most relevant factor that causes the student's demotivation is "Distant Interaction" (teacher x student distance) ", as we can observe in Table 3 below:

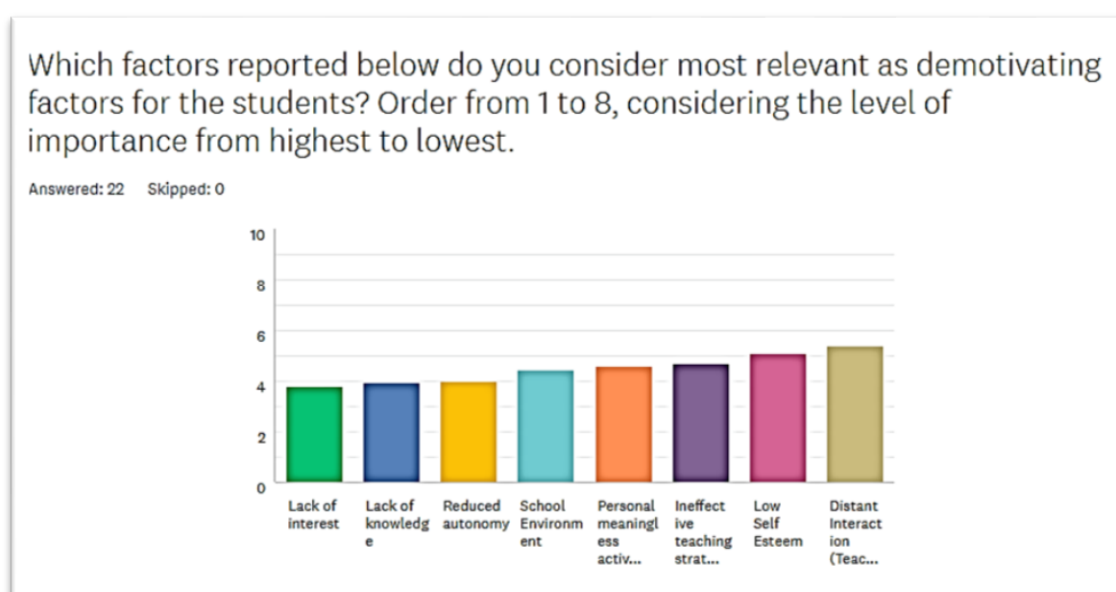


Table 3 - What factors demotivate students the most?

One of the most relevant factors, according to the research, was interpersonal interactions, and with regard to the education professional, they encompass not only professional life, but personal life. The history of education and educators shows that throughout our lives we seek inspiration in the way we will relate to students. In this way, the development of a closer relationship with the students requires a job of getting to know your student in addition to professional issues. Understanding that the emotional also reflects within the classroom helps to improve the educator and the student.

As noted earlier, self-esteem issues were highlighted during the survey. This is an important element to be worked with the students to strengthen their own being and also to corroborate for a better cognitive performance.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL	PONTUAÇÃO
Distant Interaction (Teacher x Student distance)	27,27% 6	9,09% 2	22,73% 5	13,64% 3	4,55% 1	4,55% 1	4,55% 1	13,64% 3	22	5,41
Low Self Esteem	9,09% 2	36,36% 8	9,09% 2	13,64% 3	0,00% 0	9,09% 2	9,09% 2	13,64% 3	22	5,09
Ineffective teaching strategies	27,27% 6	13,64% 3	4,55% 1	0,00% 0	13,64% 3	13,64% 3	4,55% 1	22,73% 5	22	4,68
Personal meaningless activities	13,64% 3	18,18% 4	4,55% 1	4,55% 1	22,73% 5	13,64% 3	18,18% 4	4,55% 1	22	4,59
School Environment	13,64% 3	4,55% 1	13,64% 3	13,64% 3	18,18% 4	18,18% 4	9,09% 2	9,09% 2	22	4,45
Reduced autonomy	4,55% 1	4,55% 1	18,18% 4	13,64% 3	13,64% 3	13,64% 3	27,27% 6	4,55% 1	22	4,00
Lack of knowledge	0,00% 0	9,52% 2	14,29% 3	23,81% 5	14,29% 3	9,52% 2	9,52% 2	19,05% 4	21	3,95
Lack of interest	4,76% 1	4,76% 1	9,52% 2	19,05% 4	14,29% 3	19,05% 4	14,29% 3	14,29% 3	21	3,81

Table 4 – Percentages

As we can see from Table 4, in “Distant Interaction (teacher x student distance)” 27.27% of respondents put this factor in first place, 9.09% in second place, 22.73% in third place, 13.64% in fourth place, 4.55% in fifth place, 4.55% in sixth, 4.55% in seventh place and 13.64% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student. As for “Low Self Esteem” factor, 9.09% of respondents put this factor in first place, 36.36% in second place, 9.09% in third place, 13.64% in fourth place, 0.0% in fifth place, 9.09% in sixth, 9.09% in seventh place and 13.64% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student.

Considering the “Ineffective teaching strategies” factor, 27.27% of respondents put this factor in first place, 13.64% in second place, 4.55% in third place, 0.0% in fourth place, 13.64% in fifth place, 13.64% in sixth, 4.55% in seventh place and 22.73% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student. In relation to “Personal meaningless activities”, 13.64% of respondents put this factor in first place, 18.18% in second place, 4.55% in third place, 4.55% in fourth place, 22.73% in fifth place, 13.64% in sixth, 18.18% in seventh place and 4.55% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student.

As far as “School environment” is concerned, 13.64% of respondents put this factor in first place, 4.55% in second place, 13.64% in third place, 13.64% in fourth place, 18.18% in fifth place, 18.18% in sixth, 9.09% in seventh place and 9.09% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student.

Considering the “Reduced Autonomy”, 4.55% of respondents put this factor in first place, 4.55% in second place, 18.18% in third place, 13.64% in fourth place, 13.64% in fifth place, 13.64% in sixth, 27.27% in seventh place and 4.55% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student. In relation to “Lack

of knowledge”, 0.0% of respondents put this factor in first place, 9.52% in second place, 14.29% in third place, 23.81% in fourth place, 14.29% in fifth place, 9.52% in sixth, 9.52% in seventh place and 19.05% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student. As to “Lack of Interest”, 4.76% of respondents put this factor in first place, 4.76% in second place, 9.52% in third place, 19.05% in fourth place, 14.29% in fifth place, 19.05% in sixth, 14.29% in seventh place and 14.29% in eighth place as the item that causes the most demotivation of the student.

This result corroborates the initial research investigations, where the importance of a close relationship between teacher and student is needed to impact the student's motivation.

5. Discussion

As noted by Arnold (2011), when the teacher is successful in creating an environment of empathy, collaboration and respect with his student, the learning process takes place in a much more natural and dynamic way, a positive situation that comes from a relationship of coexistence that is based on harmony and respect between individuals. The author also mentions that one of the biggest challenges in education today is to place more emphasis on affective aspects and not only on cognitive ones. The results of this study indicate how the close relationship between teacher and student creates a movement of exchange, both for the teacher - who feels more motivated in his classes, and also for the student - who wants to be present and participate.

We should also consider when Stevick (1980, 4) states that “Success [in language learning] depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyzes and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom”. The study conducted showed that the relationship between educator and student should not be a relationship of imposition, but one of cooperation, respect and growth. The student must be considered an interactive and active subject in his knowledge construction process.

In general, the results that relate to statements of emotional context stood out and were relevant for both teachers and students. When results such as Distant Interaction (distance between teacher and student), on the part of the students, is manifested as the most important action for the demotivation of studying, reaching almost 30% of the responses, thinking about strengthening relationships becomes urgent. The participants in this study also felt the need for a closer relationship when they mentioned that they thought the students needed to pay more attention to the contents of the classes. Thus, it becomes clear that there must be a move towards more intensive interaction between teachers and students so as to avoid demotivation.

The initial hypothesis of this study was that “low wages” would be the most prominent factor in demotivating teachers. This hypothesis was based on the literature reviewed which included the 2018 survey, published by the OCDE, evaluating the educational scenario in 46 countries or regions, and states. This survey indicated that the minimum wage paid to teachers in Brazil was one of the lowest in the world. However, the results of the present study show that, instead, it is “low student motivation” that is

actually more relevant as a demotivating factor than the salary issue. This topic has already been pointed out by Caria and Fernandes, when they state that:

The students' indiscipline disturbs the teachers, affecting them emotionally, even more than the learning problems they usually have to face... Indiscipline is a situation in which teachers often feel disregarded, despised, questioned while people (1997, p.15).

Understanding that this interaction between teachers and students makes a difference, Freire (1996, p. 52) writes:

Affection is not excluded from cognoscibility. What I cannot allow is that the ethical performance of my duty as a teacher in the exercise of my authority be affected by my affectivity. I cannot condition the evaluation of a student's school work on the greater or lesser I care about him. (My translation).

What this discussion indicates is that professional improvement appropriate methodologies can assist the educational performance if – and only if – attention is given to interaction and to the affective aspect involved. On the other hand, the family's participation may also collaborate in the learning process.

6. Conclusion

When we look at the factors related to student demotivation and find the distance in interaction between student and teacher as the main reason for lack of motivation for the student, we can see that the demotivation of teachers and students has the same root: disinterest - for teachers, translated into lack of dedication and engagement by students and, for students, translated into a distant relationship with their teachers. This result shows that the motivation of the classroom must be a collective construction between teacher-student. As mentioned before, what is needed is, above all, an environment of collaboration, respect and harmony.

Teaching is a complex profession which requires a lot of involvement. As it takes place, knowledge and affection are mobilized and exchanges occur between the subjects involved in the interaction (PERRENOUD, 1993). In this sense, the teaching-learning process depends on the interaction between the participants of the event.

The challenge of keeping young students engaged is daunting. Due to the need to hold their attention, teachers must constantly review their practices, update their methods, bring issues from the students' everyday life into the classroom, and maintain the students' curiosity and engagement. This is how a closer and more relevant relationship with the students is established. In turn, students are expected to bring questions to the classroom, show interest, curiosity and raise questions. Also, the student can consult sources other than just the didactic material, and take full part in the process of learning.

Even though there may be differences between those involved in the process, one must focus on the richness of learning, verifying what each student can contribute. In sum, teachers who want to motivate students, in addition to rethinking their educational practices, need to guarantee a close interaction with their student, with the objective of building a pleasant and functional teaching-learning environment. In addition, this professional also needs to be valued by the school environment and society and paid for the services accordingly. The student, also an active subject in this relationship, needs to seek a more active role in the classroom and contribute more efficiently to the learning process.











7. References

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8. Annex

















Factors that let teachers down regarding teaching EFL students

1. Rate the elements below in levels of importance 1-5 (considering 1 the most important to 5 the less important, in your opinion). How would you order them?

		Demotivated Students
		Lack of social recognition
		Low wages
		Lack of support (School Support, family support...)
		Lack of resources (technology, teaching material...)

What factors demotivate students the most?

1. Which factors reported below do you consider most relevant as demotivating factors for the students? Order from 1 to 8, considering the level of importance from highest to lowest.

		Low Self Esteem
		Distant Interaction (Teacher x Student distance)
		School Environment
		Lack of knowledge
		Personal meaningless activities
		Lack of interest
		Reduced autonomy
		Ineffective teaching strategies