

Motivational Strategies for Teaching Nursing English to the Lower Level Students

Kaori TSUCHIMOCHI

1. Background

The need for English by nurses has been increasing in accordance with the dominant position of English in the medical field and the growth of foreign patients. For this reason, it is important for nursing students to learn English for their occupational purposes. As a strong factor for teaching ESP learners, raising their instrumental motivations has been widely suggested. As Dornyei (2001) claims the importance of energizing students' intrinsic motivation in EGP teaching, however, it is also necessary in ESP teaching not only to develop learners' instrumental motivation but also maintain their intrinsic motivation by stimulating their interests and enjoyment of language learning. Intrinsic motivation energizes students' natural curiosity and interest and is potentially a central motivator of the education process (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also emphasize the importance of motivating learners in ESP courses both instrumentally and intrinsically. Accordingly, we ESP teachers need to provide any techniques or support which can activate learners' instrumental and intrinsic motivation particularly when teaching lower level ESP students who easily lose desire to study English due to their poor English ability.

Knowing what elements seem to motivate students can be discerned through needs analysis. In general, ESP teaching conducts needs analysis to identify target situation needs (i.e. what the learner needs to do in the target situation) and the linguistic features of the target situations. Probably, the most widely known work on needs analysis is John Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). He presents a detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs in ESP. ESP courses based on target situation needs analysis can make learners aware of the special purpose of the class and motivate them instrumentally. However, ESP teachers have to conduct needs analysis to know not only target situation needs but also learning needs. This includes learners' educational background, knowledge, skills, needs for

learning, and interests in language learning to motivate them intrinsically. Hutchinson and Waters (1987), who focus on the learner-centered approach, also stress that both target situation needs analysis (concerning language use) and learning needs analysis (concerning how people learn) must be taken into account to maintain learners' motivation in ESP teaching. In addition, they argued that the target situation can determine the destination (i.e. goals of the course), but this is not a reliable indicator in the ESP learning situation. Thus, what seems important for ESP teachers is that how we can utilize both target situation analysis and learning needs analysis in the classroom to motivate students so that they can be successfully travelling (= learning) to the final destination (= goal).

2. Purpose of the Study

Despite many theories, there is little empirical research about motivating students based on needs analysis, particularly in ESP courses. For example, Takakubo (2002) investigates students nurses' attitudes and motivations towards learning English based on the results of learners' needs analysis by questionnaires. However, no specific methods or strategies of motivating students based on the results of her research are demonstrated. Miyama (1996) studies teaching methods of practical EST (English for Science and Technology) including materials, syllabus design and classroom activities based on needs analysis of target situations and linguistic features. Clearly a need exists for much more empirical research in various ESP learning situations on what practical motivational strategies may help teachers gain a better understanding of what motivates their students in the ESP course.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to provide a detailed description of motivational strategies based on needs analysis for teaching lower level nursing students. This includes discussion on how these approaches affect the students by referring to the results of questionnaires done by them. First, detailed analysis of learning needs about the target students (i.e. nursing students) will be presented. Second, what information of target situation analysis was used at the first class to arouse students' awareness of the necessity of nursing English and the purpose of learning English in the course. Next, what elements or techniques mainly based on the results of learning needs analysis were introduced into the classroom to maintain students' motivation will be reported. Finally, whether these motivational strategies used in the course worked effectively will be discussed based on the results of questionnaires

by students.

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview of the Course

The subject name of the course was “English” given for first-year students at Kagoshima-City Nursing Schools (three-year night course). The subjects of the study were 39 first-year female students studying in 2002. This evening course was given once a week (90 minutes) from April to November in 2002. All students had certificates of assistant nurses and 95% of them were working as assistant nurses in the daytime.

3.2. Analysis of learning needs

Before starting the course, the author analyzed three questions chosen from the framework proposed by Hutchinson et al.(1987) to know students’ learning needs. Three questions were as follows:

- A. Why are the learners taking the course?
- B. How do the learners learn?
- C. Who are the learners?

The author conducted two types of questionnaires written in Japanese before the class to get specific information about the students (Table 1 & 2). Table 1 indicates results of a questionnaire on the students’ perceived L2 competence and attitude towards English.

Table 1 Learners’ attitude to English and English learning

Item	Strongly agree / Agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree
1) I liked English class in the past.	37.2 %	34.9 %	27.9 %
2) I mainly studied grammar in the past.	90.7 %	9.3 %	0
3) I do not like studying grammar.	76.7 %	18.6 %	4.6 %
4) I think I have acquired junior-high level (basic) grammar	34.9 %	37.2 %	27.9 %
5) I am interested in English.	81.4 %	18.6 %	0
6) I am interested in learning English conversation.	76.7 %	23.3 %	0
7) I like listening to English music.	79.1 %	18.6 %	2.3 %
8) I think I would take this class even if it were elective.	16.3 %	44.2 %	39.5 %

Above three questions were analyzed more specifically mainly based on the results of questionnaires answered by the target students.

A. Why are the learners taking the course?

- compulsory or optional / what is their attitude towards the ESP course?

This first-year course was compulsory. The percentage of students who answered that they would take this course even if it were an elective class was only 16.3% (Item 8 in Table 1). Students did not seem to have strong desire to take this English course at first.

B. How do the learners learn?

- What are their learning backgrounds? / What methodology will appeal to them? / What sort of techniques are likely to bore/alienate them?

Most of the students seemed dissatisfied with past classes focusing on learning grammar (Item 1, 2, and 3 in Table 1). These results suggested that it was necessary to avoid heavily teaching grammatical matters so as not to diminish students' motivation.

C. Who are the learners?

- a. What is their socio-cultural background? / b. What subject knowledge do they have? / c. What do they know already about English? / d. What is their attitude to English? e. What are their interests?

As question C contains beneficial information about learners, detailed analysis of each sub-question were done. In terms of question a, all target students had certificates of assistant nurses. With regard to question b, all students had some medical knowledge through studying in the nursing school, practice or working experience. As for question c, more than half of the students show lack of basic English ability (Item 4 in Table 1). In terms of question d, most of the students seemed to have a positive attitude to English (Item 5 in Table 1). Regarding question e, students' interests in English and English learning were examined in the form of questionnaires to the students. Table 2 shows results of a questionnaire on students' interest in the course.

Table 2 Needs analysis of students' interests in the class

Q. I want to...	Strongly agree / Agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree
1) learn medical terms	97.7 %	2.3 %	0
2) acquire basic expressions to communicate with foreign patients	95.3 %	2.3 %	2.3 %
3) learn basic grammar for English conversation	69.8 %	25.6 %	4.7 %
4) practice speaking in the form of pair work	58.1 %	32.6 %	9.3 %
5) listen to English songs	86.0 %	11.6 %	2.3 %

While approximately 77% of the students showed interest in learning English conversation (Item 6 in Table 1), most students also showed strong interest in acquiring basic expressions to communicate with foreign patients (Item 2 in Table 2). Moreover, the majority of students had strong interest in learning medical terms. In addition, approximately 80% of the students reported that they liked listening to English songs (Item 7 in Table 1) and high percentage of them show interest in listening to English songs in the class (Item 5 in Table 2).

These results of analyzing students' learning needs were considered in creating motivational techniques such as teaching methods, teaching materials, and classroom activities.

3.3. Motivational techniques used in the classroom

3.3.1. Strategies for arousing learners' instrumental motivation at the initial stage of the course

Most students seemed to have a rather negative attitude toward English language learning at the beginning of the course, due to their past unexciting experiences of studying grammar and their insufficient English ability (Item 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Table 1) in contrast with a high expectations of learning nursing English (Item 1 and 2 in Table 2). Under these circumstances, the author thought that it was important to make students understand that the purpose of the course was not to study general English (i.e. to remember grammatical items or rules, or to read passages) but to learn nursing English which were necessary or helpful for their work.

Thus, the author attempted to arouse learners' instrumental motivation in the first class by demonstrating concretely why and what English abilities or skills are required for nurses and next clearly showing the specific learning goal of the course. Oxford and Shearin (1994) emphasize that goal setting can have exceptional importance in stimulating L2 learning motivation. The author also considered that it is effective in teaching lower level ESP courses to heighten students' motivation by

showing the goal of the course specifically and making them aware that English learning in the course can be helpful for their occupation or a career enhancer for them.

As a useful framework for analyzing English needs for nurses, two questions were chosen among the target situation analysis framework suggested by Hutchinson et al.(1986):

- a. Why is the language needed?
- b. How will the language be used?

First, the target students were asked to discuss the above two questions (a and b) in small groups, and then the reason of why English is increasingly needed by nurses briefly explained by the author:

One reason is the dominant use of English in medical fields. For example, English is the medium for writing medical records and medical examination lists. Another reason is that communication in English is increasing with the growth in the number of foreign patients.

Next, two kinds of target situation analysis were used in the classroom to help the students recognize, more specifically, needs of English for nurses.

(1) Use of target situation analysis done by Watanabe

As a first target situation analysis, data shown in the report of Watanabe (1998) was used to make the students realize the importance of English use for nurses. Watanabe's research paper reports the results of a questionnaire completed by 497 working nurses aged from 20's to 40's on the need for English by nurses. The use of this target situation analysis had the purpose of making the students know how strongly nurses feel about the need for English and what English abilities or skills are felt necessary for nurses. According to the report, the percentage of the nurses who "strongly feel" or "feel" the need for English by nurses" was 99%. In particular, experienced nurses recognized the needs for English more often than younger ones. In terms of English abilities or skills, 74% of the nurses responded to "communication abilities with foreign patients," 35% chose "understanding of medical records or examination lists." The author explained to the students that these two are mainly

necessary English abilities for nurses.

(2) Use of a questionnaire by assistant nurses

Next, as a second valuable information on the target situation analysis of nursing English, the results of a questionnaire conducted by the author in the past were used in the first class in order to show more specifically what situations assistant nurses experienced and expected to experience using English. The questionnaire was completed by students in the last class, November 2001. Most of them had been working for at least 8 months as assistant nurses when answering the questionnaire. The author considered it was beneficial to the new students to know in what situations assistant nurses feel the need for English. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions. Multiple-choice questions involving 8 items were about what English abilities the students had experienced and expected to experience through their working practice or experiences as assistant nurses. The open-ended question asked when the students felt a need for English in their experiences as nurses. Data of the questionnaire were shown to the students in the class. The results of multiple-choice questions were as follows:

Table 3. Responses to the questions on students' awareness of needs for English of nurses

Item	Strongly Necessary	Necessary	Not know	May not Necessary
1) to communicate with foreign patients (33.3 %)	47.6 %	42.9 %	7.1 %	2.4 %
2) to understand results of laboratory tests (78.6 %)	52.4 %	47.6 %	0 %	0 %
3) to understand medical terms (names of diseases or medicine, abbreviations, or instructions) in medical records (95.2 %)	69.0 %	31.0 %	0 %	0 %
4) to read manuals or instructions attached to medicine or medical instruments (52.3 %)	35.7 %	45.2 %	14.3 %	4.8 %
5) to read articles or magazines written in English (16.7 %)	16.7 %	38.1 %	33.3 %	11.9 %
6) to understand or make academic oral presentations in English (0 %)	7.1 %	19.0 %	59.5 %	14.3 %
7) to communicate with overseas visitors or trainees (2.4 %)	23.8 %	23.8 %	45.2 %	7.1 %
8) to study or train abroad (2.4%)	31.0 %	28.6 %	33.3 %	7.1 %

Note : () = percentages of students who have experienced each situation.

The results show that the need of English ability by assistant nurses to understand

medical terms and communicate with foreign patients was very high (Item 1 and 3 in Table 3), which accord with the results of Watanabe's report. This data was shown to the students to make them aware the importance of these two English skills for nurses. In particular, the fact that even most of such less experienced assistant nurses have already experienced the situation where nurses need to understand English medical terms could made the students realize the urgent needs of learning them. After demonstrating nurses' need for English as shown in two types of target situation analysis, the author explained to the students that the goal of the course is to master basic expressions and vocabularies for communicating with foreign patients, to include medical terms used in laboratory tests and medical records.

3.3.2. Strategies for maintaining learners' motivation during the course

Some strategies for sustaining students' motivation raised in the first class were introduced into the course-specific aspects such as teaching materials, teaching approaches and classroom activities. The author considered it was important to conduct needs analysis concerning students in order to know what elements should be considered in developing strategies. In particular, learner-specific elements such as learners' perceived L2 competence, attitude to English and English learning, and expectancy for the course were taken into account. The results of learning needs analysis shown in the Table 1 and 2 were taken into account in selecting materials, preparing learning support, and creating classroom activities.

(1) Selection of appropriate materials

Using materials relevant to learning goals in the course was given priority so that learners could be more motivated. *Christine No Yasashi Kango Eikaiwa*, which was used in 2001, was chosen as the main material of teaching the class in 2002. The criteria for choosing this textbook are as follows:

- a. Each unit deals with the medical terms necessary for nurses' occupation.
- b. Each unit deals with the conversational expressions used in the specific situation.
- c. A text deals with simple conversations composed of basic grammar appropriate for the learners' level.
- d. Each unit contains pair-work or role-play for developing speaking ability.
- e. A text deals with various activities such as listening, writing, or matching

where each learner can be involved individually.

- f. A text attaches to a list of words or phrases, which students individually can use for doing exercises such as writing or speaking activities.

In addition to the above main material, *Igaku Eitango Workbook* was used in the course of 2002 as sub-material for the learning of medical terms. As many texts for nursing English mainly deal with much English conversation and not a sufficient numbers of medical terms, it is important for teachers to use sub-materials for students to acquire the appropriate number of medical terms.

(2) Motivational techniques related to classroom activities

Some specific motivational techniques were used during the course to maintain students' interest in learning English and to increase their participation in classroom activities.

A. Technique of using learners' medical knowledge

A problem in the target course was the mismatch between students' knowledge of their specialty and their language level. Compared to the learners' low level of English ability, they had a higher level of medical knowledge with a certificate of assistant nurses. The author considered that teaching must respect both levels of the learners' state, and tried to give the students opportunities where they could contribute to the class by talking about their medical knowledge or working experience in Japanese. For example, two techniques were used to increase students' involvement.

a. Pre-activities

Before learning a new unit of a text, students discuss in a group and present what questions or instructions to patients are supposed in a given situation.

- e. g. receiving a new patient, giving medicine, doing daily rounds

b. Asking students about medical matters

- e. g. diseases, tests, medicines

These methodological techniques of activating learners' medical knowledge or working experience have the advantage of creating learning situations where even lower-level students can actively participate to the class and of avoiding a one-way teacher-

centered approach where only the teacher gives knowledge to the students. Moreover, using their occupational knowledge or experience can protect their self-esteem as assistant nurses, and consequently contribute to increase their self-confidence as learners.

B. Techniques of teaching English conversation

(i) Grammar & vocabulary

The biggest problem in the course was the gap between learners' strong interests in studying English to communicate with foreign patients and their low level of linguistic competence. More than half of them (about 63%) were not confident of having basic grammatical competence (Item 4 in Table 1). On the other hand, according to learners' needs analysis on the target class, 95% of students expected to master English expressions to communicate with foreign patients (Item 2 in Table 2), and approximately 70% of them hoped to learn basic grammar for English conversation (Item 3 in Table 2). As it was not realistic to expect students to reach the level to communicate in English about complicated matters, the author attempted to make the students acquire simple sentences necessary for carrying out daily conversations with patients such as questions, instructions, and explanations. In terms of teaching grammar, the author avoided heavy focus on teaching grammatical items so as not to increase learners' dislike of English. Medical vocabularies, often used in conversations with patients, were taught in the form of collocations such as phrases (verb + noun, or adjective + noun) rather than individual words, so that students could increase vocabularies and other expressions efficiently, as much as possible, in the limited period of the course.

(ii) Practice of conversations

According to the needs analysis, while 95% of the students expected to learn English to communicate with foreign patients (Item 2 in Table 2), 40% of them showed negative attitude to practice speaking exercises such as pair-work (Item 4 in Table 2). This may be because students have had little experience in speaking exercises in the past and felt ashamed of speaking English. The author explained to students that speaking practice such as role-play in the form of pair-work is essential for them to put learned expressions into use. Pair work, such as role-play between a nurse and a patient, was always assigned to the students after learning model dialogues and useful expressions in each unit. The author attempted the following techniques to increase

students' involvement and enjoyment in speaking practice.

1) Setting of meaningful exchanges

Role-play tasks between a nurse and a patient were provided in realistic situation where students could engage in meaningful exchanges, such as asking personal or medical history, giving simple instructions for taking medicine, making appointments for tests, and asking questions at daily rounds.

2) Use of original work-sheet

The author made an original work sheet where Japanese conversation and incomplete English sentences were given. Instructions to the tasks, given in each unit, were not enough for lower level students to carry out role-play conversation between a nurse and a patient. So, learning support such as the work-sheet would help them to engage in tasks autonomously as much as possible.

3) Modifying tasks to yield tangible, finished products

Some role plays in the text were modified to combine with exercises such as filling out cards or lists. These activities can make speaking practice more active, and increase students' enjoyment and involvement.

4) Monitoring by a teacher during pair-work exercises

The author monitored among students during speaking practice so that they could ask for help freely in case of difficulties.

C. Use of English songs for warm-up

According to the needs analysis, 86% of the students expected to listen to English songs (Item 5 in Table 2). The author started the class with an English song. The purpose was twofold: making students familiar with natural sound of English and creating pleasant atmosphere in the class. In the first class, the author explained special features of English songs such as assimilation and reduction, which are also used in spoken English. At the beginning of every class, students were working with a short dictation-type warm-up activity where they filled out incomplete sentences while listening, before singing themselves.

4. Results and Discussion

Enhancing learners' motivation is considered to contribute to learners' positive

evaluation of the class. Thus, how motivational strategies and techniques used in the class worked effectively to raise or maintain students' motivation for learning can be deduced from the results of a questionnaire after the class or course evaluation in the last class by students.

As the author stated above, the first class was used to arouse students' awareness of the need of English for nurses and to show the purpose of the course. Questionnaires were done after the first class to examine whether motivational strategies worked effectively. According to the results of the questionnaire, the ratio of students who recognized the need of English for nurses increased from 74% (before having a class) to 95%. These results suggest that the use of target situation analysis in the first class worked effectively to raise students' awareness of the need of English by nurses and increase their motivation to study English for their occupation.

Course evaluation was done by the students at the last class through multiple-choice type questionnaires to know whether motivational strategies or techniques used by the teacher worked effectively to keep students' motivation for learning and consequently to make the students satisfied with the course. The questionnaire asked students' satisfaction with the class such as teaching materials and exercises, impressions of class atmosphere, and attitudes toward English learning.

As to pre-activities of English songs, according to the results of class evaluation, 93% of the students reported that they started a class with a relaxed atmosphere due to short listening activities. We can say that these pre-activities worked effectively for creating a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere which can reduce students' anxiety of learning English.

In terms of speaking exercises, according to the students' evaluation, approximately 83% of them felt that work-sheets provided for speaking exercises were helpful in carrying out role-play. In addition, 79% of the students reported that they positively participated in pair-work. The same percentage of them answered that they enjoyed pair-work. Ninety-one percent of the students felt that they acquired basic useful English expressions used for communicating with foreign patients. These results suggest that the majority of the students were satisfied with speaking exercises and learning basic expressions.

Other results of students' self-evaluation with reference to their satisfaction with the course are shown in the Table 4.

Table 4 Results of course evaluation questionnaire (N=39)

Q. I think that ...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree
1) my interest in English increased	7 (17.9)	27(69.2)	4 (10.3)	1 (2.6)
2) I improved basic grammatical ability	3 (7.7)	30 (76.9)	6 (15.4)	0 (0)
3) I more realized need for English by nurses	11 (28.2)	26 (66.7)	2 (5.1)	0 (0)
4) I learned useful English for nurses	6 (15.4)	27 (69.2)	6 (15.4)	0 (0)
5) I am satisfied with the course as a whole.	9 (23.1)	27 (69.2)	3 (7.7)	0 (0)
6) I want to continue studying English for my work if possible	12 (30.8)	27(69.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Note: () = percentages of respondents

According to the results (Item 1, 2, 4, and 5 in Table 4), a majority of the students felt satisfied with the course content. As to students' attitude to learning English for nurses, 94.9% of the students reported that they realized more clearly the need for English for their work after finishing the course (Item 3 in Table 4), while 95% of the students reported that they felt more need for English for nurses after taking the first class. This means that students' awareness of need for English was maintained through the course. Moreover, 100% of them showed a positive attitude to continuing the study of English for their work (Item 6 in Table 4). Students' strong awareness of the need of English for their work and their enjoyable experience of learning nursing English may have contributed to enhance their positive attitude to keep studying English.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we deduced from the results of the questionnaires that strategies or techniques used in the target course worked effectively in enhancing learners' motivation of learning English through the course. Most students had a rather negative attitude to the study of English due to their past unexciting learning experience and insufficient English ability at the beginning of the course. However, they seemed gradually to enjoy being involved in learning English during the course with the expectation of developing English skills which can be helpful in their occupation.

In ESP teaching, making class content relevant to learners' specific purpose is essential and effective for motivating learners instrumentally. As this study shows, however, in teaching lower level ESP students, strategies or support which can heighten students' instrumental motivation and energize their intrinsic motivation

also should be introduced in the classroom in order to increase enjoyment and involvement in learning English. We confirmed that it is important in the initial stage of the course to raise students' instrumental motivation by clearly showing the importance of English for their occupation and the purpose of the course. In addition, teachers need to maintain learners' motivation both instrumentally and intrinsically during the course particularly by using learner-friendly teaching materials and methods and providing helpful leaning support. Needs analysis such as target situation analysis and learning needs analysis can be of great help for ESP teachers in developing motivational strategies or techniques shown in this study. Finally, I would like to emphasize that more empirical research on developing motivational techniques and their application to the target students should be carried out in various learning situations.

Notes

1. An earlier Japanese version of this paper was presented at the 32nd annual conference of the Kyushu Academic Society of English Language Education at the Miyazaki University in November 2003.

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