

A Motivational Strategy: No Carrot No Stick

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Abstract

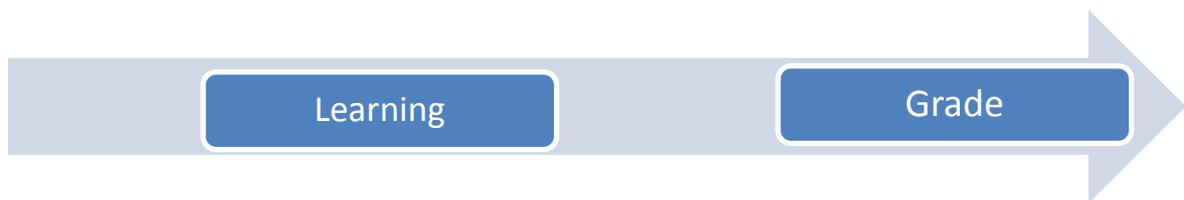
*We have developed and introduced a motivational strategy called GIVE in an action research to encourage students' autonomy at class and after class with intrinsic rewards. It brings benefits **not only** to themselves but also to their classmates. To make students fully understand GIVE's potential values before any use, we have also made simplifications of GIVE that focus on **nature, demand destination and benefit...** By tapping learners' self-motivation, this strategy can better improve students' first-hand experience, practical knowledge, competences and of course score of the subject.*

Keywords: *motivation, strategy, intrinsic rewards, students' autonomy*

1. Introduction

The common motivational methods we often apply is offering rewards or punishments to encourage learner autonomy by which students must try to get something or not to lose anything like scores, a form of *extrinsic achievements*. We loosely call them all *GET motivations* that are just short-term solutions. More harmfully, students become grade-driven and confusedly consider grade the only purpose of the learning process.

Figure 1: GET Motivations



According to Self-Determination, a behavioral theory by Stephen P. Robbins, *people prefer to feel they have control over their actions, so anything that makes a previously enjoyed task feel more like an obligation than a freely chosen activity will undermine motivation.*

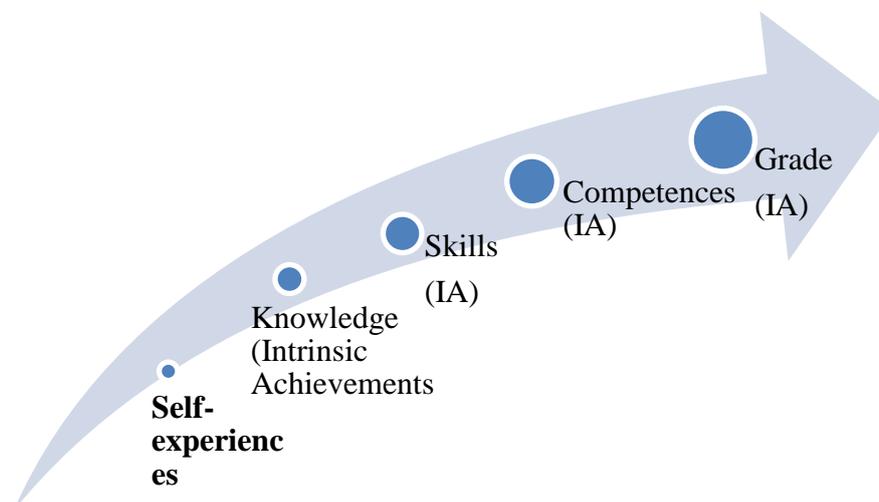
Dornyei (2001) has also stated: *motivation can be a matter explaining why people decide to do something, how they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it.*

John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer is well-known for the philosophy: *Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.*

Inspired by the concepts quoted above, we implement and assess the effectiveness of GIVE in an Action Research.

The message of GIVE is to take challenges, make effort and invest time.

Figure 2: GIVE motivational strategy



2. Content

2.1. Identify the Problem

In the English-presentation-class for C1-students: regular task is converting a paper/magazine article into a script for oral presentation. Students, 3 to 5 of whom group together, are required to speak individually, observe and judge other partners

Assignment

Activity: 3-5 minute presentation on a free or recommended topic

Requirement: speakers perform as "experts" on the issue by sharing useful knowledge with the audience in a confident style.

Time allowed: 2- 3 days

Preparation

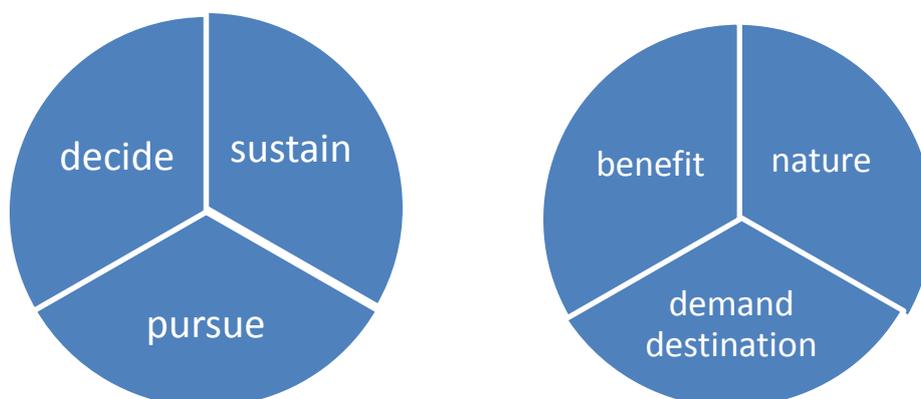
- Find relevant documents
- Selecting and gathering information needed
- Speechwriting
- Practicing strategies of words
- Practicing strategies of voice and body language

Because the task requires a lot of time (5- minute speech needs at least about 200 minutes to prepare), many students do not complete their work or hardly do it quiet well. Therefore, we would like to find an effective and sustainable remedy.

2.2. Implementing GIVE

We have both analyzed GIVE from the angles of benefit, nature as well as demand destination and compared them with 3 corresponding factors in the definition by Dornyei: why people decide to do something, how they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it.

Figure 3: Dornyei's Definition and GIVE



2.2.1. Benefit

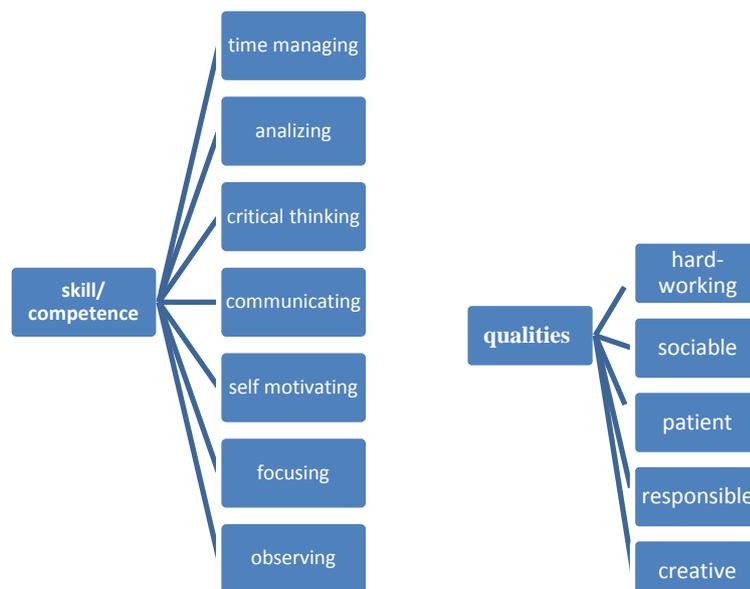
GET brings individual benefit that we named "acceptable selfishness", for grade is unshareable and people work for the sake of himself or themselves as a single team.

GIVE brings double- benefit "Kill two birds with one stone", to himself and his audience. In other words, if the speaker looks for high grade, she should also offer useful speeches to listeners.

If presenter only cares his grades with no thoughts for listeners, what he says and how he says turn difficult to touch their hearts. What an outcome! By contrast, if you work hard for an informative, persuasive and entertaining speech to do them good, you will improve the assignment quality itself and attain high scores.

Time and effort investment means students go more engaged in their work, feel more and deal better with it. As a result, they practice a lot of skills necessary both for academic and social life. Selecting information or removing irrelevant items from articles helps develop analyzing, critical thinking; Speechwriting and presenting with strategic voice and body language improve communication competences; time management skill gets better when students are made complete the work within controlled time. In addition, some positive personal qualities are formed or improved such as hard working, patient, responsible, creative (to work on Jump Start) ... Finally, students are absolutely benefiting themselves through their own first- hand experience in work.

Figure 4: GIVE's Intrinsic Achievements



Much research has found that people who pursue work goals for intrinsic reasons are more satisfied with their jobs.

Learners have not only grade, a form of extrinsic achievement, but also intrinsic achievements, some of which are shown in figure 4. Thus, the motivational GIVE encourages learners to go beyond their own selfishness and taste the fruit of intrinsic achievements. What's more, they change mind and manner self-consciously and willingly. More importantly, students learn the avoidable interactions with others and learn to benefit themselves and the community.

2.2.2. Nature

Failure after failure. During preparation for public delivery at class, students may fail to collect the valuable pieces of material after skimming tens of articles. Many found that task time- wasting, annoying and depressing because they are not aware such annoyance

and depression can turn them patient, hardworking enough to overcome their trouble until they succeed. Fortunately, GIVE would unload such psychological burden.

On the one hand, GET is *underlying* and *discontinuous*: although GET may also expect learners to achieve both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, its hidden educational purposes cause undermotivation during academic marathon. The only easily-noticeable destination is grade at the end of the prolonged course. Soon before they reach the finish line they fall out of love with the race.

On the other hand, GIVE is *open* and *continuous*. GIVE helps students recognize outcome of every small step they have just made. Positively thinking, failure is success failure when you make the best use of it to avoid, then. Score is an extrinsic success which comes after countless intrinsic successes: experience, knowledge, skills, and competences. This also means though they do not reach the desired grade, students have had chance to raise them up to more than they used to be. Hopefully, in the real life, when no grade-driven mechanism occurs, they are still motivated to work.

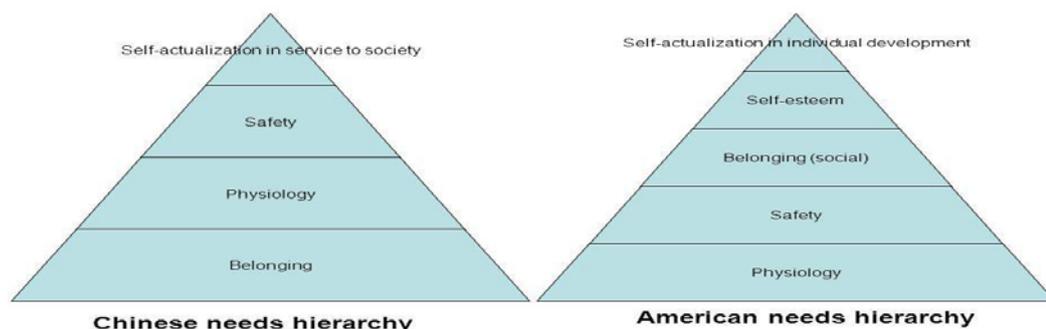
GIVE keeps motivating along the learning pathway, thus can sustain learners' interest and stimulate them ahead on endless path.

Figure 5: GIVE's Continuous



“Education is not preparation for life; Education is life itself.” GIVE tends to let students feel very achievement right in preparation not until after preparation; right at class at until after class; and maybe right at work not until after work.

2.2.3. Need Destination



Source: Psychology, by Jane S. Halonen and John W. Santrock, 2/e, p.455

Figure 6. Hierarchies of Human Needs

1. Biological and Physiological needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep.
2. Safety needs - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.
3. Love and belongingness needs - friendship, intimacy, affection and love, - from work group, family, friends, and romantic relationships.
4. Esteem needs - achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, and respect from others.
5. Self-Actualization needs - realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences, problem solving, acceptance of facts.

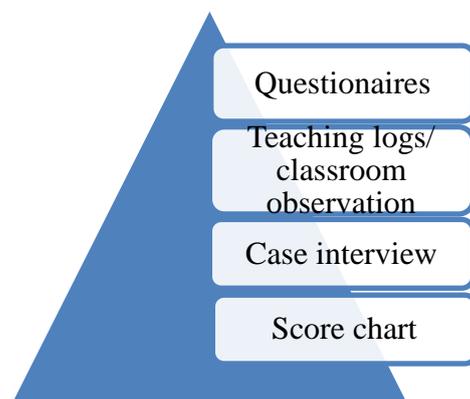
GET and GIVE differ in *need destination* to which the teacher intends to drive her students to. GET can only stimulate them up to level 4 of achievement, respect.... However, GIVE leads them to the tops of both hierarchies where they realize personal potential, seek personal growth and peak experiences. Also, according to Chinese pattern (I prefer) they grow available for social service because GIVE means learners work for benefit of audience, too. Automatically, people tend to meet the needs from lower to higher, but if we take risk to meet the top need, then the other lower can be met.

GIVE employs grade to attract learners to Self-Actualization. Furthermore, learners should not stop experiencing to tap the inner potentials along learning pathway. This was previously claimed in two landmark publications by UNESCO: *Learning to be* (1972) and *Learning- The Treasure Within* (1996).

2.3. Observation and Reflection of GIVE

We have reflected GIVE application based on 4 sources of data.

Figure 7: Data Sources for Reflection



2.3.1. Questionnaires

1. Your score in mini –speech?
2. You agree/ disagree with GIVE
3. You are (not) influenced by GIVE when preparing for another speech.
4. Time spent on preparation: ... hours
5. From your self-learning experience, which items of GIVE you agree/ disagree
6. GIVE helps you build autonomy at class and at home?
7. GIVE helps you accomplish the task with awareness of double- benefit?

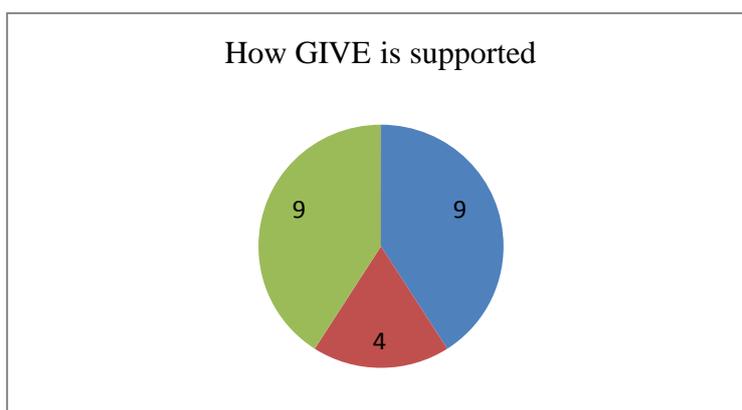
We surveyed on 30 students who had regularly attended the class. The result is as following:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Number of students (total: 22)	8	10	4
Question 1	≥ 9 points	≥ 8 points	Under 8 points
Question 2	A : 8	A: 10	A: 4
Question 3	A : 8	A: 10	A:3/ D: 1
Question 4	9-35 hours	3-30 hours	4- 20 hours
Question 5	5	4	0
Question 6	A: 8	A: 10	A: 3/ D: 1
Question 7	A: 7/ D: 1	A: 10	A: 3/ D: 1

- Most shows active cooperation 21/22 (questions 2, 3)
- The more time spent on presentation, the higher grade attained (question 4)
- 3/22 admit no influence of GIVE (questions 6, 7)
- 9/22 give willing answers (question 5)

The proportions are further illustrated by a pie chart below: great support from nine students, high support from another nine. Only four students admit disagreement or doubt in one or two questions.

Figure 8: Learners' support



2.3.2. Case Interviews

We conducted deep interviews via email with students who had best progress in presenting course.

1. What motivates you to have performed so well? (Grade, self-experience, personal growth, potential, respect...)
2. Has GIVE made any contribution to your success?

We received 6 emails including 2257 words in Vietnamese (about four A4 -pages). Results are below:

- 5 of 6 appropriated and made GIVE-based progress. “... *Grade accounts for only 30% of my whole achievement, ...I invested countless time skimming up to 50 articles, watching several Ted videos, which provided information and inspired me a lot..., I wanted to bring something new and exciting to audience... I had great lessons from GIVE, many things more important than grade: practical knowledge, skills, and presenting competence that I can use out of class...*”
- One of six kept calm attitude toward GIVE because this method is not new to him as he thought. He is an admirable student with high autonomy and good personal and academic quality. He did admit that something similar to GIVE was in his mind so far. Everything he does focuses only on individual achievement.

“... I look for achievement, the subject is good for me, and I spent much time on the task but my own benefits come first...” However, GIVE reminded him a little of the audience’s benefit. “ ...I had some thoughts for audience: audience decided what I said and how I said, but audience benefit is not motivation.”

Surprisingly, he seemed not to focus on audience’s benefit (*my own benefits, a little..., some thoughts, not motivation ...*). In fact, audience’s benefit made him decide most of his presenting tasks and then his success: *audience decided what I said and how I said*.

2.3.3. Teaching Logs

A male student has scored better with GIVE.

Midterm: He had prepared a speech on topic X. Then he fell ill. After illness, he decided to give up X and chose a new topic of health care. He expected that the latter was practical and useful to audience. Unusually for him, he became outstanding with a heart-touching speech and it was also voted the most favorite.

Final: He spent three weeks thinking about what to say, then so much time and effort on Jump-Start introduction which became one of the most impressive and strategic ones. The Jump start included his personal story illustrated by series of self-drawn pictures, followed by a popular fairy tale, further supported by a video. It was as logical and fascinating as a film.

2.3.4. Grade

- Out of 32 students, 17 achieved grade 8 or more, 5 of which achieved 9 or more.
- Only 4 students were given 6.5. Those had low class attendance, so had little access to GIVE.

Obviously, the data from such four sources above have driven to the fact that the more effect by GIVE, the more learning activities they were available to do, the better service they offered to audience, so the more remarkable progress they made.

3. Conclusion

In longer-term, GIVE can build a habit of overcoming and solving problem, accepting facts (including failure). It is to some extent similar to a massively- welcomed message by President Obama "We understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted -- for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things"

In conclusion, GIVE has proven sustainable and more comprehensive than GET. In reality, GIVE employs GET as a part of it. Many students cannot deny the appeal of grades and want intrinsic achievements measured by grades. Then, when they themselves experience and enjoy the sweet of the intrinsic rewards, learners find a source of self-motivation generated and they can 'harvest whenever cultivate'. This cycle occur again and higher. If learners do get well- oriented first and then motivated by GIVE, they will stay energetic and available to complete assignments.

Figure 9: Cycle of Motivation Generated by GIVE during the Course.

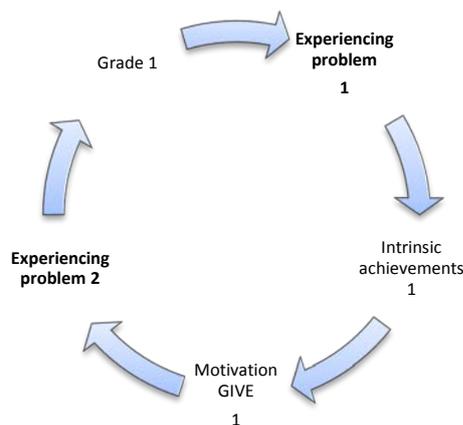
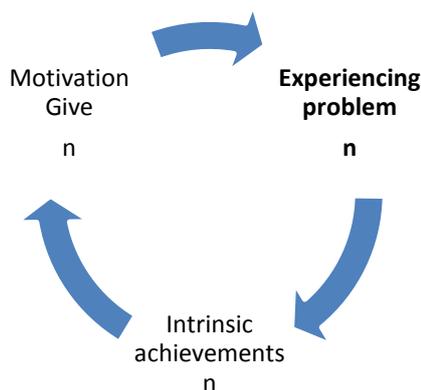


Figure 10: Cycle of Motivation Generated by GIVE after the Course.



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Publications in national journals

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Thi-Hang-Nga Nguyen, *Speak effectively with words (2014)*

Books

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Thi-Hang-Nga Nguyen , *Environment English: Read better (2010)*