

Promoting Positive Attitude in English Classes through Teacher-Student Relationship

It is widely accepted that an important contributor to success in a foreign language is students' attitude towards it. In English as a Foreign Language or Second Language contexts, when students have a positive and rewarding experience they usually have higher levels of motivation to learn the language and are less likely to suffer from foreign language anxiety. Students' attitude towards a foreign language is very often influenced by the teacher-student relationship and the secondary English teachers of Beanibazar set an example in this regard.

The English in Action project has been working in secondary schools of Beanibazar, Sylhet for about one year to improve the standard of English teaching learning through teachers' professional development. In a tenth cluster meeting one of the teachers was saying, *"I have changed my relationship with my students."* I became curious to know what he meant. He said, *"Earlier I had a very formal and distant relationship with my students now I have established a positive relationship with them in order to help them develop a positive attitude towards learning English."* Other teachers also shared the same experience. I could not stop myself wanting to know how they have done it. According to them, they are always enthusiastic, cheerful and sincere in their classes to motivate their students to learn English. They help them to use English in classroom rather than constantly criticizing or correcting them. To decrease anxiety of foreign language they use verbal (use of students' first names, use of humor) and nonverbal (eye contact, positive gesture) immediacy behaviour with their students. Such behaviour has also a positive impact on motivation of students to learn the target language. Now many students try to communicate in English in classroom with their English teacher. They make mistakes but teachers avoid excessive correction on the spot. When students face difficulty in answering they provide scaffolding using various techniques like giving hints and clues and explaining the stages necessary for task completion. They believe that their students have abilities and they are only to nurture them.



The teachers of Beanibazar are promoting students' positive attitude towards English language and creating a friendly and non-threatening atmosphere using the above techniques. I hope other English teachers whose students lack motivation in learning English would adopt these strategies according to their students' need and specific teaching context.

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