Motivation in the English classroom-
A study of how English teachers work with motivating their students

Ramona Beckman
**Table of contents**

1. Introduction  
2. Background  
   2.1 Motivation  
   2.2 Motivational factors and motivational problems  
   2.3 Motivational strategies  
3. Method  
4. Result  
   4.1 Interview with Ann  
   4.2 Interview with Beatrice  
   4.3 Interview with Carol  
5. Discussion  
6. Conclusion  
7. Bibliography  

Appendix I: Interview questions
1. Introduction
Few professions are as multifaceted as teaching. Being a teacher does not solely mean teaching someone something. Teachers today also have a nurturing role, they have to be role models and see to it that the student is doing well in school, etc. One of the main duties in education is to motivate the students to learn, even if they might not find the subject very interesting. This is a challenge to the profession and something which might be useful for teachers to reflect upon when facing students. That is why the two following questions will be investigated:

- What does motivation in a school environment actually mean?
- How do practicing teachers work with motivating their students to study English?

Therefore the aim for this essay is to create a deeper understanding about motivation and also to get a more profound understanding of how English teachers work practically with motivation during class. Motivating the students to learn English is not part of the courses the students at university take when becoming teachers, thus it could be beneficial for any future English teacher to know how they can help motivate their future students.

Interviews have been carried out with three practicing English teachers who have been my supervisors during my trainee periods to find out what their attitudes are towards motivation and how they work with motivating their students in class. I have also studied some of the current literature on the subject to find out what motivation actually is. To create a wide base of information upon which I construct my results, I have used both articles and books written on the subject. Dörnyei (1998a, 1998b and 2008) has been involved in all three articles which mainly treat methods to use when trying to motivate students to learn English, but also motivational factors which need to be considered by the teacher in order to facilitate the work. The main sources of information originating from books have been by Gardner and Lambert (1972), Jenner (2004), Meece and Pintrich and Schunk (2008) and lastly by Wentzel and Wigfield (2009). Gardner and Lambert (1972) have a great deal of interesting and useful information concerning the different aspects of motivation such as integrative and instrumental motivation and the different factors which influence a student’s motivation to learn a second language. Jenner (2004), on the other hand, focuses mainly on the role of the teacher, for example what the teacher needs to understand about motivation to be able to help the students. An example of this might be that a long history of failure usually lies behind an unmotivated student. Meece and Pintrich and Schunk (2008); Wentzel and Wigfield’s (2009)
books are very comprehensive descriptions of most aspects concerning motivating students to learn. One important aspect they both discuss is the importance of self-efficacy, which basically means that what students believe they are capable of doing is what they will be able to do. So if a student does not think he/se can learn English, there is a risk he/she will not be able to do so either.

This essay starts with the background which is divided into three parts: Motivation, Motivational factors and motivational problems and lastly Motivational strategies. Subsequently a description of the method I have chosen follows, the reasons why I selected it, a presentation of the interviewees and lastly a description and explanation of the questions I decided to use for the interviews. Thereafter, a discussion of the result follows where I discuss the material from the interviews and compare it with the research from the background. To finish, the conclusions I could draw from this study are presented, which are that there are different kinds of motivation and that motivation is a vital part of the work a teacher does. Furthermore, there are numerous methods to apply to a class, and teachers have to try and develop a feeling for which one to use.
2. Background
Motivation is one of the cornerstones of learning and it is a fundamental part of what a teacher faces every day. The Swedish syllabus for lower and upper secondary school clearly states that it is a teacher’s responsibility to enhance each and every student’s will to learn and to grow. The subject of English plays a big part in school in Sweden since it is one of the three core subjects, which means that a student has to pass this subject to be able to apply to higher studies such as university or college (Lärarförbundet, 1990:11&40). The Swedish curriculum for English in both lower and upper secondary school states that students should have knowledge of English speaking countries’ culture and to be able to compare this to Swedish culture (Skolverket.se, 2000a\(^1\), Skolverket.se, 2000b\(^2\)).

To render the background more lucid, it is divided into three parts: Motivation, Motivational factors and motivational problems, and lastly Motivational strategies. The first part, Motivation, contains definitions and an explanation of what motivation is. This is vital as it is one of the research questions. This term is also essential throughout the essay and it is important that the readers have a clear understanding of it. The second part, Motivational factors and motivational problems, is a description of what contributes to a person’s motivation, and also what might stand in its way. This is important as it is a part of what a teacher needs to know if he/she wants to influence the students’ motivation. Lastly, Motivational strategies describes different methods a teacher can utilize to effect the motivation of the students. The two latter parts of the background allude to answering the second research question.

2.1 Motivation
A good deal of research has been made on the topic of motivation over the years. Two definitions of the concept motivation might be: “Summarizing psychological term for the processes which ignite, maintain and aim behaviour” (Nationalencyklopedin, vol 13:474, 1994, my trans.), or “factors within a human being or other animal that arouse and direct goal-oriented behaviour” (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 8: 364, 1990). To actually learn something, there are several important things which play a part in the process and these

\(^1\) [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/2386/a/16138/func/kursplan/id/3870/titleId/EN1010-%20-%20Engelska)
\(^2\) [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/726/a/13845/func/kursplan/id/3199/titleId/EN1201-%20-%20Engelska%20A)
include: motivation, will and interest (Illeris, 2006:110). However, Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008:237) feel it is of great importance that a distinction is made between motivation and interest.

Interest is related to a specific item or region and is divided into subcategories, for example, *personal interest* and *situational interest*. “…personal interest, which is a relatively-stable personal disposition toward a specific topic or domain, and situational interest, which represents a temporary and situationally specific attention to a topic” (ibid. 237). An example of personal interest might be the interest a Francophile has for the country, culture and language of France which probably will remain for a longer period of time. As for situational interest, an example might be when a person finds him/herself in the company of people who discuss something previously unknown to the person, but it still sparks an interest then and there. This interest, however, might not last very long.

Motivation is the actual state of wanting to do something, to excel in a certain situation and this is also divided into subcategories. Two different kinds of motivation which are vital to know about when it comes to learning a second language (L2) are *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation* (ibid. 236). Intrinsic motivation is also referred to as *integrative motivation* by Gardner and Lambert (1972:3) and can be described as a person doing something because he/she really wants to for his/her own sake. There is a genuine interest behind intrinsic motivation and a wish to learn something from this interest. The second type of motivation is called extrinsic motivation and is also referred to as *instrumental motivation* by Gardner and Lambert (1972:3) and it means that a person performs an action because it is a requirement to be able to reach a certain goal in the end. An example in the context of learning English might be if a student has a desire to become a tour leader in a foreign country. He/she has to be able to speak English quite well in order to manage and to get the position in the first place. This means that learning English is crucial for this person even though the actual learning of the language might not be of great interest for the person (Schunk et al. 2008:236).

According to Dörnyei and Ottó (1998:47-61), the process of becoming motivated to study a second language is divided into three parts; *preactional phase, actional phase* and *postactional phase*. Within these three phases there are several different sub-phases of which most have to be passed in order for the person to reach the next phase of the process. The first phase, the preactional phase, is when the student gets the idea of what he/she wants to
accomplish, then reflecting about what he/she needs to do in order to get to the final goal. The person, in this case a student who aspires to learn a second language, first has to set a goal for him/herself. It might be a short term or a long term goal. Then the student has to make the goal more tangible by devising a plan on how to get to the goal and then finally starting the actual practical procedure towards the goal.

The second phase, the actional phase has, as its main focus, the execution of the plan formed in the previous phase and to reflect about how the plan is progressing. This means that the student first has to implement the steps already devised in the previous phase. Secondly, the student goes through an evaluating process where the student asks him/herself if the plans are going the way he/she thought from the beginning. In this part of the process it is very important for the teacher to give the student good feedback, since it is a crucial phase for the student to actually go through with the plan and not see the goal as unattainable and drop it.

The third and final phase, the postactional phase, will commence when either the goal is reached or when the student has, for whatever reasons, dropped the goal. The two things that will occur in this phase are that either the student will look back on reaching the goal as a whole and then evaluate the accomplishment if successful; or he/she will see how the acquired knowledge, even though it was not entirely accomplished, can be utilized in the future if unsuccessful. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998:50-51), emphasize the important role the teacher holds in the student’s actional phase. Setting goals and making plans of how to attain the goals, the student for the most part does alone, but the actional phase to some extent relies on the teacher when it comes to learning a language. Many students find sitting in classrooms and learning to be quite tedious and therefore it is up to the teacher to make the time spent inside the classroom as interesting and as much fun as possible, for example, by the use of material which the students feel is relevant to their lives. What is relevant or not is something that will change with time, so it is important for the teacher to take the time and ask him/herself what this particular group finds relevant.

2.2 Motivational factors and motivational problems
Motivation to learn something is not a set state of mind. Lundahl (2009:162) argues that it is important for a teacher to realise that being motivated to study is a way of thinking that is
forever changing. Various different factors can either help or obstruct the motivation for a student.

Important factors which play a role for students when it comes to being motivated to learn a second language might be friends, family, culture, teacher and society. Both Gardner and Lambert (1972:143), Schunk et al. (2008: 275-288) and Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:281-283) state that especially the parents have a crucial role in their children’s lives concerning promoting motivation. For example, a child who originates from a family where school and academic achievement have never had a prominent place, is more likely to think that studying is boring and unimportant. Also there is the issue for the parents to support their children in numerous ways besides having a positive view of school and of academic work. Helping out with homework after school and generally getting involved in their children’s lives is a way of aiding them to stay motivated to studying. Friends can also be either a bad or a good influence on a child depending on if they have the attitude that studying is unimportant. For children in school the kind of friends they associate with might have a great influence on a person should these friends be highly motivated to study. But if the case is the opposite, the friends might have the power to persuade a child that studying is insignificant and tedious when there might be many other things to do which are much more fun. Negativity from pessimistic people has a tendency to spread.

Society in this case might for instance mean that if a child grows up in a community where the majority of the population works in an industrial environment, the student might be more prone to see that same workplace as his/her future work place and then see studying further as a waste of time. Jenner (2004:25) argues that it is vital for the teacher to contextualise his/her students. By this he means that a teacher has to be able to see all the factors which might influence a student in order to know how to properly motivate him/her. Moreover, Jenner (ibid. 18) clearly states that it is up to the teacher to lay the groundwork for motivating the students. He believes that it is how the teacher treats the student from the very first beginning which will decide to a large extent how motivated the student will be to learn in the future in his/her class. Furthermore, Jenner (ibid.15) does not believe that motivation is a quality, but how a person is received and what kind of experiences he/she has with the teacher. An example might be if a student previously has had teachers who have not helped the student sufficiently so that he/she might have given up hope of ever passing school. But should a teacher then treat the student in a way which would make him/her feel that someone
expects something from him/her again, this might change the motivation to learn. If a student
starts a course with poor self esteem, it is important that the teacher spots this and
understands that this does not necessarily have to do with lack of motivation. It is also vital
that the teacher is able to recognize that a student with low self esteem might not have much
optimism for success in the future. Also it is important to remember that for a student, it is
always easier to be lazy than to actually try and do something only to fail. It is a kind of
defence mechanism. If a student has a history of failure and of never having been able to
reach goals, it is only natural that the student will lower his/her level of ambition after every
failure only to reach the absolute bottom of feeling no motivation to perform anything. For
many people, failure means lack of motivation to continue whereas success incites
confidence to continue (ibid. 43-45). In many ways, the teacher holds the key to the
motivation of a student. Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:301-307) believe that developing a
close relationship with the students and showing them that the teacher expects them to
succeed in their studies is helpful in keeping the students motivated to go on learning.
Moreover, the teacher’s enthusiasm to both help the students out with advice on how to
manage their work or to support them emotionally during specifically stressful times, is
greatly beneficial when it comes to inspiring motivation. Additionally, Jenner (2004:85)
emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s own motivation to actually be there and teach the
subject. By this he is referring to the teacher being enthusiastic and enjoying the work he/she
does in class. If the teacher seems uninspired and bored, this has a great chance to transmit to
the students as well as enthusiasm and passion. An additional factor brought up by Jenner
(ibid. 77) is class size. If the class contains many students, the teacher will not have enough
time to actually pay attention to everyone and this might lead to the teacher spending the
majority of his/her time on the stronger students, leaving the weaker ones behind. This can
then lead to a loss of motivation for the students left behind which might be devastating and
difficult for the teacher to rectify.

In today’s globalized society the demands on what people can and must accomplish on the
labour market have increased greatly and this is also something Illeris (2006:117) brings up
as a problem when it comes to motivating students in school. The demand for, for example,
lifelong learning, self evolving and trying to make yourself attractive in work situations are
factors which might put a great deal of stress on younger students. Jobs are more difficult to
come by because of the increased competition on the labour market and this might result in
many students feeling overwhelmed with all that is expected of them and then make them lose their motivation to continue learning.

An important factor when it comes to learning an L2 is the attitude which people might have towards the country or culture of the language in question (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:3). In this case the English language, which might become a problem for some students to learn should they have a negative attitude towards for example the U.S. Many people might feel an aversion towards the U.S. and its culture because of its prominence and great influence in many parts of the world and this might also lead to an unwillingness to study and learn the language.

A conclusive factor when promoting motivational behaviour in students is self-efficacy. Both Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:35-44) and Schunk et al. (2008:139) emphasize its importance in the classroom. Schunk et al. (2008:139) define self-efficacy as: “People’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances”. Self-efficacy has to do with a person’s self-confidence. What one believes him/herself capable of executing is what he/she will be able to execute. Many students suffer from low self-confidence for various reasons and in many ways it is the self-confidence which is the key element to motivating a student. Therefore it is vital for the teacher to work with boosting the self-efficacy of the students.

2.3 Motivational strategies
There are different motivational strategies a teacher might utilize when teaching an L2. Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (2008:57) define the term motivational strategies as: “…instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation…” Naturally there are strategies for the students to use as well as for the teachers, but since this essay mainly focuses on the role of the teacher, only this type of motivational strategies will be brought up. Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (ibid. 58) propose the following system containing four dimensions when it comes to how to work with motivational strategies as a teacher:

- “Creating basic motivational conditions”. By this, Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (ibid) mean that there are a few basic conditions which are necessary for both the students and for the
teacher in order to be comfortable in a classroom. For instance the relationship between the students and the teacher needs to be good. If it is not, neither the teacher, nor the students will feel secure with each other and this will severely obstruct the will to learn and the will to teach. This is also connected with what kind of atmosphere is created inside the classroom. For example, an easy going atmosphere where everyone feels welcome and secure will produce a better situation for wanting to learn.

- “Generating initial motivation”. By this, Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (ibid) are referring to different kinds of strategies a teacher can utilize in order to make the students as interested as possible in learning English. An example might be to explain how the students will be able to use their knowledge in the future and to try and create real, concrete situations for them to really emphasize the use. Another example might be for the teacher to put a great deal of thought into how he/she introduces new topics the class will be working with. It is important to try and introduce new things with a positive attitude and also to think about what it is within a certain topic that would appeal to a certain group. For instance, if the majority of the group is female, choosing a film about love might work better than if the majority of the group is male.

- “Maintaining and protecting motivation”. By this, Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (ibid) mean that it is important that the teacher continues to motivate his/her students throughout the course by for example using stimulating, enjoyable, and relevant tasks. If the students feel like they are doing well, it is more likely that they will want to keep studying.

- “Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation” By this, Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (ibid) mean that the teacher has to explain to the students exactly what they have accomplished during their course and how successful they have been. It is vital for the students to think back on where they were before, at the start of the course so they can see the progress they have made. By providing the students with their positive results and with positive feed-back, this will help amplify their fulfilment.

Additional motivational strategies brought up by Tornberg (2005:17) were for the teacher to explain assignments and what is to be done during class in a very clear and explicit manner. Many students tend to lose interest in the content of the lessons because they have not quite followed the instructions the teacher has provided them with. To facilitate motivation during
class, it is crucial that the teacher is as clear as can possibly be when explaining new things for the students. Moreover, it is a good strategy for the teacher to carefully organize the material and the structure of the lessons before commencing on something new. A well thought out structure will make it easier for the students to follow the lessons and will then aid the motivation to continue learning as much as possible.

According to Jenner (2004:45) and to Schunk et al. (2008:146) it is the teacher’s job to help the student to set goals which can be reached. By breaking down a long-term goal into several smaller ones, it will be easier for the students to see their own progress, how they are closing in on the final goal, and to render the work they have to do more concrete. Furthermore, the goals which are set for the students have to be explicit, easy to comprehend and just challenging enough. Should a goal seem too difficult to reach for a student, chances are that he/she will give up in trying to attain it and the whole strategy of setting goals in the classroom will be wasted. On the other hand it is also crucial that the goal does not seem too simple because this might bore the students.

Additional strategies which can be utilized by teachers to motivate the students to study English, is to use relevant and interesting material. Tornberg (2005:17) argues that if the students are presented with material to learn which they deem unnecessary for them to know and to use in the future, this will probably be counterproductive when it comes to inspiring motivation. The students will most likely lose interest and this might result in a negative atmosphere in the classroom. Schunk et al. (2008:150) emphasize the importance of being able to explain to the students how the knowledge a teacher wants them to learn will be useful in the future.

A crucial strategy to employ as a teacher is the Pygmalion effect. Both Jenner (2004:20) and Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:350) emphasize its importance in the classroom. The Pygmalion effect means that if a teacher has positive expectations of a student, it is more likely that the student will live up to these than if the teacher has negative expectations. In the latter case of negative expectations, there is a risk that the student will think that he/she is so unskilful at speaking English anyway; even the teacher thinks so, so there is no reason to continue studying. However, should the student feel that the teacher expects he/she will do well, the chances are greater that this will inspire the motivation to actually do so.
Lastly, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215) performed an extensive survey where they investigated how 200 Hungarian teachers of English worked with motivating their students during class. They came up with 10 of the most used strategies and these can be seen as a concise overview of what has previously been presented:

1. “Set a personal example with your own behaviour”. If the teacher acts as he/she would want the students to act, the chances are greater that they actually will so by showing that the subject is fun, interesting and important this attitude might be transmitted to the students.

2. “Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom”. If the atmosphere is pleasant, the students are more likely to have the courage to express themselves in a second language, something which can often feel intimidating for many.

3. “Present the tasks properly” If the tasks are presented properly the students are less likely to find content and assignments to be confusing and thereby lose motivation to work because they do not understand what to do.

4. “Develop a good relationship with the learners”. If the teacher has a good relationship with the students, they are more likely to feel comfortable and secure during class. This will then increase the chances of the students feeling motivated to learn the subject.

5. “Increase the learners’ linguistic self-confidence”. If the students’ self-confidence is increased, they are more likely to feel it is worth their while to study and learn. Without self-confidence, the students tend to think that it does not matter whether they study or not, they will not succeed in the end anyway.

6. “Make the language classes interesting”. If the content of the English classes are perceived as interesting by the students, they are more likely to want to learn it.

7. “Promote learner autonomy”. If the students learn how to work by themselves during class and to succeed after having taken charge of an assignment themselves, this might make them see that they accomplished this by themselves and thereby motivate them to continue learning.

8. “Personalize the learning process”. If the learning process is personalized, which in this case refers to the using of relevant material and the integration of the students’ own personalities in the content of the subject, the students are more likely to embrace what is to be learned.
9. “Increase the learners’ goal-orientedness”.
If the teacher helps the students to set goals for themselves of what they want to accomplish and learn, it becomes easier for the students to concretize how they need to go about it in order to reach the goal. This way, a goal does not resemble an insurmountable obstacle which might interfere with the students’ motivation to learn an L2.

10. “Familiarize learners with the target language culture”.
If the students know about the English countries and their cultures, the students’ attitudes towards the language might improve and thereby rendering the language more interesting and motivating to learn.
3. Method

In order to get real examples of how practicing English teachers actually work with motivating their students, I decided to perform a series of interviews with English teachers whom I have previously worked with during my practice periods.

The interviews were qualitative since figures and quantities were not the information I was looking for, but rather knowledge, individual opinions and strategies. To extract as much as possible from the interviews I decided to make them semi-structured, this to enable the interviewees to answer freely and not to limit them in their answering. This meant that I could also get answers I did not foresee before and also I would have the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and not be restricted to a set questionnaire (Patel and Davidson, 2003: 77-82). I created the interview questions beforehand whilst thinking about the aims of this essay. Then I decided to send the questions to the interviewees before the actual interview since I wanted the teachers to have had the time to think about the answers and not feel pressured during the interview. I followed Patel and Davidson’s (2003:69-71) lead on anonymity, which is to always inform the interviewees that the material will be confidential and not used in any other context besides this essay in the future. I also explained to the interviewees that the interview would be recorded and that these recordings would be destroyed after the essay was finished. The reason I wanted to record the interviews was because I did not want to miss any vital information during the course of the interview and I wanted to have the possibility to go over the interviews several times afterwards should I find it necessary. Before starting the interviews, the interviewees were once again informed about the anonymity and the fact that the interview would be recorded.

As previously mentioned, this essay was based on a qualitative study where three practicing teachers were interviewed. This method was used because the aim was to extract opinions and ways of thinking. A questionnaire could have constructed instead with a number of questions, but it was deemed there was a bigger possibility of failure since the informant could misunderstand the questions. By using interview as a method the interviewer would be able to direct the conversation and in this case that means to ask follow-up questions if needed and possibly explain some questions should the teachers have problems understanding what the interviewer meant. However, this method also has some negative aspects; it took quite some time working out the questions and then working with the whole material after the interviews.
were performed. I do nevertheless believe that this was the best method to use because of the kind of information that was needed.

The result derives from three teachers only, therefore it is not possible to generalize from it. The thoughts and opinions are completely personal. There are various factors which might have influenced the result, for instance the fact that only female teachers were interviewed. If I had interviewed some male teachers as well, the outcome might have been different. Another factor is my own lack of practice when it comes to interviewing. I tried to let the teachers answer as freely as I possibly could, but I might have directed the interviews unconsciously. Lastly, I found one of the teachers very difficult to interview, since the answers she provided me with were a bit evasive. Moreover, I also got the impression that she did not have a very clear opinion in some of the matters that were discussed. The interviews were performed with three different teachers whom I have chosen to call Ann, Beatrice and Carol. The first teacher, Ann, works in a lower secondary school as a French and English teacher. She has more than 25 years of experience. The second teacher, Beatrice, is also a lower secondary teacher in the subjects Spanish and English; she only has a few years of experience as she only recently graduated. The third teacher, Carol, is a French and English teacher in upper secondary school. She has about 20 years of experience from both lower and upper secondary school. The interviews were performed in Swedish with the exception of Beatrice who originates from Canada and she preferred to speak in English. The reason why the interviews were conducted in Swedish was that the interviewees felt most comfortable this way, and I wanted them to focus on the questions rather than how to express something in English.

The questions I decided to utilize were written in Swedish since I decided to forward them beforehand to the teachers and I believed they would be more comfortable to perform the interviews in Swedish. The questions were all chosen for different reasons (see appendix I), which will follow here:

1. *What does motivation mean to you? Describe.*

I posed this question first since I wanted to know what the teachers thought motivation was. If they had a very different opinion on what motivation was compared to my background, this would have been notable. Since motivation is such a big part of teaching, it is vital for teachers to have a clear understanding of the concept.
2. What do you think is motivating for the students?
This question I chose as more of an open question where the teachers could answer generally what they thought was motivating for the students.

3. Is praise or punishment the best method to use?
This question was chosen because I wanted to know if the teachers believed praise or punishment was most effective.

4. How do you think concerning motivating the students? Is it part of your planning? Do you actively think about how to motivate your students?
The fourth question was an important one since this was a way for the teachers to explain how much thought they actually put in to motivating their students in the English classroom.

5. How important is motivation?
Question number five was a follow-up question to the previous one where my aim was to deduct just how important the teachers felt motivation is when it comes to learning English.

6. Are there any aids when it comes to motivating students?
Question number six was chosen because I needed to know if there were any aids available for teachers to use when motivating students to learn English.

7. Who do you think bears the main responsibility for the student’s motivation? (The student, the teacher, the parents or society).
The seventh question was chosen since I wanted to understand what point of views the teachers had concerning whose responsibility it is to motivate a student.

8. Is it possible to individualize motivation in a class? How?
Since classes can be quite large in Sweden and the students in the same class might be on very different levels, individualizing the lessons can cause difficulties for teachers and this is why question number eight was chosen.

9. What can be done with students who lack motivation?
Question number nine was a vital one to ask since one of the main aims with this essay was to find out what teachers actually do to motivate their students and I am certain that there are many students in schools who have no interest at all in learning English.

10. How much contact do you have with parents about how to help motivate their children from home?
Lastly, question number ten was selected to establish how much parental contact the teachers have when it comes to motivational issues for the students in school.
In retrospect, I would have liked to add some questions to the interviews. When assembling my result I found some things that would have been interesting to my study. For example, what kind of material the teachers deemed interesting and relevant for their students. Also, it would have been interesting to know which obstacles there are when it comes to motivating a student to learn English.
4. Results
Here, a summary follows of the three interviews performed with three different English teachers.

4.1 Interview with Ann from lower secondary school
Ann sees motivation to be a mixture of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. She defined motivation as a driving force to perform well. Ann believes that learning English is motivating in itself since it is a core subject, which means that a student has to pass it to be able to apply for both upper secondary school and for higher studies. Seeing as English is considered to be a subject of high status, it is motivating for students to know. Also, she says that it is a motivating feeling knowing that you are good at something.

When it comes to the question if praise or punishment is more effective when working with motivating the students to learn English, Ann said she is a firm believer of a mixture of the two. It is rare that she threatens a student with a fail, but it does occur. However, she does find it to be more useful to praise the students when they do well or to reward them by promising something fun to do if they work hard. She stated that she tries to integrate motivating factors in her planning the whole time. Ann believes it is vital that the students have something fun to look forward to even though she is of the opinion that it should not be necessary for them to want to learn English. She stated that she has often tried to motivate her students with for instance, a trip to England, but she does not believe it to be necessary. School should be seen as a job for the students. It might not be like a regular job since it is in fact mandatory for them to be there and they do not get paid, but she thinks the students should think about learning for the long run. The knowledge of English they acquire will remain with them for the rest of their lives and help them in their future careers. Ann argued that the students have to accept the situation they are in. During certain periods there is a great deal of hard work involved and during other periods, the students can relax a bit more. This is just part of life.

Ann tries to use material during class, such as movies and topics for discussion, that she believes the students will find interesting and relevant. She believes this is a way of making the English lessons more motivating for the students. In addition, she often tries to use computers for various reasons since she is of the belief that doing an exercise on a computer instead of a piece of paper feels more fun for the students. She utilizes both grammatical and vocabulary programmes where the students have to practise the use of subject verb agreement
or finding synonyms. She also tries to integrate music and games during the lessons. Especially the computer she sees as a great asset when it comes to motivating the students in the English classroom.

Concerning who has the most responsibility when it comes to motivating the students, she said that she sees this as an equilateral triangle consisting of three factors; student, teacher and parents. If one of these three factors is missing or is working against the motivation of the student, the triangle will collapse. By this she means that if the student does not care about learning English, it does not matter if both the teacher and the parents are supportive, ultimately, the student will probably fail. The same thing will probably happen if the parents are not motivating and supporting the student at home. This is likely to counteract any effort the student and teacher make together.

Ann believes that as a teacher it takes a great deal of creativity to figure out different ways of promoting motivation. She also thinks that those who lack motivation completely might need several pep-talks. She thinks that as a teacher one could try and trick a student into thinking that English actually is fun even though he/she might not think it to begin with. She does this for instance by setting short-term goals and by using a great deal of humour. Ann believes it is a great art to be able to motivate a person who does not care.

When asked the question if she can individualise the motivation in a group, Ann replied that it is possible but one needs to have an individual communication with each and every student. She provided the example yet again to let the students, who she knows prefer to work with computers, do so just because she knows that is a way to let them develop their language in their own way. Ann pointed out that everyone has different ambitions in a group and some students might be very ambitious whereas others might not be.

Lastly, Ann responded to the question about how much she tries to involve the parents in motivational issues. Ann stated that basically the only time she talks to the parents is during the parent-teacher conference, which takes place once per semester. Generally she says to the parents that it is important that they are supportive if she sees this as necessary from how the student is doing at school. However, for the students who perform well at school this is not required.
4.2 Interview with Beatrice from lower secondary school

Beatrice believes that motivation is a drive that comes from within a student. This drive is very important to have if the students want to do well in life. She stated that she is of the opinion that she as a teacher cannot motivate her students, she can only inspire them.

She sees having fun while learning as motivating for the students when it comes to studying English. Beatrice thinks what is important for this generation, is to have fun. Also she said that it is motivating for the students to be able to see a concrete end to work they have put in. She does not believe that students in lower secondary school with ages ranging from 13-15 are able to see how the English they learn now will be of use to them in five or ten years. That is why it is important to make the knowledge count in the now. An example she provided is with the help of competitions. Competing with their friends motivates many students to learn more. Additional motivational factors for the students are good grades and getting parental praise.

When it comes to using praise or punishment as a teacher, Beatrice thinks that praise is the best thing to utilize. She does not think that the students respond very well to punishment. They seem not to care or to think that things will work out in the end anyway. A way Beatrice works with praise or reward in the English classroom is to say that if the students pass this and this assignment by this time, they will get the reward to watch a film the week after. She argued that the students respond very well to this kind of motivational work. They usually help each other out and work together as a team. Beatrice finished by saying: “As long as they have one focus, and that is to have fun next week”.

When asked the question how she actively implements motivation in her English classes she responded that the first thing she does is to show the students that she has a plan. She plans ahead for up to two months. She tries to vary what she does with the students in order to keep them interested. She also explained that it is very important that the students feel like they have some influence on what they are learning, therefore she always asks them what they want to learn and try to incorporate their wishes into her plans as she believes that is motivating for the students.
Concerning different aids to help motivate the students to learn English, Beatrice explained that she frequently uses the computer for various tasks. She provided the example of different games where the students can practice anything from vocabulary to grammar. Furthermore, she said the students feel more motivated to work in groups and with presentations when they can use for example Power Point to show the rest of the class. She said that she has been working with the students on different kinds of realia projects where they have been working in groups and presenting their projects to each other using Power Point. Lastly Beatrice gave the example of using a programme called Movie Maker, which she used with the students so they could record their own news broadcasts. She added that she thinks it is the teachers’ responsibility to know these computer programs and to be able to teach the students about them in order to promote motivation to learn.

Beatrice is of the opinion that the student is the one mainly responsible for his/her own motivation. Also she added that being motivated is like seeing things from a certain perspective and by this she means that if a student, think that he/she cannot do a specific task, he/she will not be able to do it either. Thus she tries to make the students see things from a different perspective when they tell her that there is something they cannot do. She usually tries to say things like: “You need more training, you need more practice, you need to review more, but to learn a language and say I can’t, is wrong”. Beatrice stated that she is able to help the students and their parents out by giving them practical detailed advice on how to go about, step by step, but then it is up to them to actually do the work.

When it comes to individualising motivation in a group, Beatrice said that this is possible, but that it depends on the class size. If she has a class with 15 students, it is not a problem for her since she will have the time to give all the students attention. However, often the classes contain up to 30 students and this makes it very difficult for her to see everyone. An example of how she tries to individualise the work with motivation in a group is to divide the students up into smaller groups. Then she gives the role of group leader to a student who is not very motivated, but she always makes sure there are ambitious students in the same group, therefore she knows the work will get done. Afterwards she congratulates the leader in accomplishing the task. This then serves as a kind of proof that the unmotivated student also could succeed. Beatrice also added that it is important to realise that in some groups there will be peer pressure when it comes to motivation. If the majority of the class has a negative attitude it will probably spread through the whole class.
If a student lacks motivation to learn English Beatrice tries to prove to him/her that they can in fact do it. She thinks that the lack of motivation is closely connected with what they think or do not think they can accomplish. What she does in this case is to detach that student from the others. Then she tries to repeat over and over again what he/she is capable of. She always attempts to tell him/her not to compare him/herself to the other students, because it is a fact that some students only have to spend five minutes learning ten new words when a student who finds English difficult might need an hour to learn the same ten words. Beatrice stated that she always seeks to make the student understand that he/she should compare him/herself to themselves, to where they started out from the beginning, to see how far they have come and how much they have in fact learned. It is important that the unmotivated students find out different ways of learning things, ways that might suit them better. She added that sometimes there is only so much she can do as a teacher since some students have very little support from home. If the parents run the students down at home, it probably will not matter how much Beatrice works with motivating the students in class because they are likely to listen more to the parents. This brings us to the final question, which is how much contact Beatrice has with the parents to get them more involved in motivational issues. Beatrice replied that she does not have much contact with the parents. Mostly this is due to lack of time. She said that she would really like to talk to the parents, but there just is not enough time. The only thing she does is to write little notes to the mentor of a student who then passes it along to the parents when it is time for parent-teacher conference. Finally, she added that when she feels a student has been doing better, she keeps him/her after class to tell them this in person, something she says is very appreciated by the students. The same goes for if she notices a negative change in a student. She keeps him/her behind after class to ask whether it is because of something she has or has not done. Maybe the student thinks Beatrice has been working too fast and there is something she has to change about the way she teaches.

4.3 Interview with Carol from upper secondary school

Carol defines motivation as the will to learn something or as a driving force to perform your best and improve your situation by working. She thinks that learning English in itself should be motivating enough given that most students use their computers often and since both the Internet and most games are in English. Also, many students aspire to go travelling and knowing English is a requirement if one wants to be able to manage in most countries.
When it comes to using praise or punishment in the classroom, Carol believes that a mixture of both is the way to go. She said that if she only uses praise, there is a risk that the student will stop developing his/her language and get a bit lazy. Even if a student is very good at English, there are still things to do to improve. In order to become really good at English, a student has to study things he/she might think are boring, like the irregular verbs for instance. Carol stated that far from everything is fun when it comes to learning a language, it is hard work. This is why she is of the opinion that both praise and punishment is good for everyone. Furthermore, she means that it ought to be very clear for students to know how to progress in the system. What exactly they need to do in order to get the highest grade might also help the students plan their studies and also make them see more concretely what they have to do.

When asked how she actively thinks about how to integrate motivation in the planning of her English classes, she replied that she always tries to vary her lessons with for example group assignments so that the lessons will not feel too heavy for the students. She also attempts to explain to the students that they have to do the tedious things like vocabulary learning or studying grammar because it will pay off in the end.

Carol believes motivation is very important, especially for a student who finds him/herself in between a pass and a fail. Being motivated will probably be the decisive factor if a student is weak and is having trouble reaching the goals set for a passing grade. She believes it takes an enormous driving force and maybe support and it is difficult to encourage someone who always fails. In English it is important to encourage the work the weak students put in, even though they might not be able to reach a passing grade in the end.

Concerning what kind of aids a teacher can use to motivate his/her students, Carol had several different examples. Praising the students when they have done something well is very important. Also, giving them quick feed-back after tests and quizzes, or they will end up forgetting about the test and the result will not matter as much as it could have. Another method she uses is to discuss which the correct answers are on a test so that the students can feel proud when they are able to answer. She added that it is crucial to create a positive climate and to promulgate job satisfaction in the classroom. One way of doing this is to make the students understand that it is okay to give the wrong answer. Teachers should encourage the students to try different things even though they might fail in order to promote this attitude. An additional strategy Carol uses is competitions. She believes competing with your
knowledge is very stimulating for many students. For instance to let them stand out with the vocabulary they have acquired. Many students know many words, which they have acquired outside of school, and it is a good idea to let them show that they know this.

Carol thinks that a great deal of the responsibility of motivating the student lies with the parents. The attitude the parents and siblings have towards going to school will influence the child immensely. Moreover, it might be the kind of community the student lives in. If it is an industrial community where studying might be a bit frowned upon, the student will probably be a bit affected by this. Carol added that this is the kind of situation where it is crucial that the teacher is able to motivate them to learn even though they might have no support from home.

When asked if it is possible to individualise the motivation in a group, Carol replied that it absolutely is. The main problem as she sees it is mostly the students who have good grades. It often occurs that the proficient students do not understand when Carol is commending the weak students. She said that this often makes the proficient students a bit resentful since they know they do much better than the weak students. They do not comprehend that the weaker students need more praise and encouragement in order to succeed. Time and class-size are other factors which play a role when it comes to individualising the motivation to study in a group. With large groups it is difficult to actually make time for everyone.

“I guess I can say that I have never had a student who has totally lacked motivation. But I have had some who have given up and I still do, but I think that deep down everyone wants to get a pass”(my trans.). Carols said that most of the time motivation to study is not the problem, often it is due to a history of failure. If a student has had problems following the English instruction from the very beginning it will feel hopeless for him/her when getting into upper secondary school.
5. Discussion
In the discussion, I connect the information the teachers provided, with the research that was found in the background. I also draw my own conclusions based on the material that was discovered.

All three teachers who were interviewed basically described motivation to be the same thing, as a driving force to enable a person to reach set goals. However, it was interesting to find that only Ann mentioned that there are both intrinsic and extrinsic factors which play a role when it comes to becoming motivated to do something. The two terms intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were brought up on numerous occasions both by Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008:236) and by Gardner and Lambert (1972:3). It is important for all teachers to at least know that there are two different kinds of motivation. If they do not, it will be difficult to know how to influence your students. If a teacher has an understanding beforehand of what drives a student to learn, it will help in the planning of lessons as well as it will help the teacher use different ways of working with specific individuals that you notice need more support. It may also help to understand what is wrong if a student should show a lack of motivation.

When it comes to various motivational factors, the teachers made some good points. Ann stated that she thinks learning English, which is a core subject in Sweden and is considered to be a subject of high status, is motivating enough. It is very good idea but it might not correspond with reality for two reasons. Firstly, I do not consider English to be a subject of high status in today’s society. Most people get by with the English they know even if they have not studied it in school for many years. Secondly, it seems like a unlikely to me that all students in school should want to learn English just because it is English. Furthermore, Lundahl (2009:162) claimed that the factors which motivate a person are not stagnant, they are forever changing. This makes it vital for a teacher to keep up with the changes in society. 15 years ago, most people knew that whatever was learned in school was supposed to be used later on in life. Beatrice made an interesting comment concerning this where she said that she did not believe it was possible to make the students understand that the knowledge they acquire in school will be the basis for the rest of their lives. Illeris (2006:117) brings up different reasons why it can be more complicated to motivate students today. The demands on what one needs to know and what one needs to accomplish in connection with the rising
competition on the labour market might be reasons to why students find it difficult to see the larger perspective of school. Perhaps society simply seems too overwhelming and therefore students choose to focus on what is right around the corner instead of years ahead. Beatrice also made a second interesting point. She said that students today want to have fun while learning. It is not motivating enough to go to an English class and just learn the language; the teachers have to combine learning with various fun activities. When I went to school, fun had nothing to do with learning, because school was seen as a job. It was not the teachers’ job to make the lessons interesting; their task was simply to provide information. Nevertheless, it is good that school can be fun today because it is easier to learn something when having fun while doing it. However, a big negative aspect which can be seen concerning mixing the lessons with fun activities too often for the sake of motivating the students, is that life after school will not follow the same pattern. When students graduate from upper secondary school they either continue studying or they attempt to get a job. The step between both school and studying at university or working is so big I cannot help but to wonder if all these fun activities might not make things more difficult for the students when going on to the next step. Therefore, to sum this up, this study indicates that it is a positive thing to try and make the English lessons interesting for the students, as long as they do not get too accustomed to always doing something fun which might not be as learning effective as, for example, grammar practice.

One way of trying to motivate the students to learn English which was brought up by both Ann and Beatrice, is to use material which feels relevant and interesting for the students. This method is emphasized both by Tornberg (2005:17), Schunk et al. (2008:150), Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (2008:58), Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215) and Dörnyei and Ottó (1998:50-51). Most people can probably relate to this method. It is more difficult to learn something you do not find interesting or that you think you will not have any use for in the future. The only problem might be for teachers to stay updated on what is important for students in school since this changes rapidly in today’s society. Beatrice stated that she always tries to involve the students in her planning to see what they want to learn and it seems like an excellent way of working with motivating the students to learn English. There are of course some things that the students need to learn, which might not be interesting for them, for example grammar. This is where a teacher has to be able to tell the students that this is necessary for them to learn English correctly in the long run. As mentioned in the background, Schunk et al. (2008:150) emphasize how important it is for the teacher to explain to the students how they
will be able to utilize the acquired knowledge in the future and this is perhaps even more important when it comes to doing things the students find tedious, such as perhaps grammar or vocabulary learning. One way of motivating the students to put in this hard work is, for example, to give them something to look forward to, a reward at the end of the line.

Both Beatrice and Carol said that they try to vary their lessons as much as possible so that the students should perceive them as interesting and not monotonous. Carol also conveyed that she occasionally adds assignments which she knows they might not learn a great deal from, for example working in groups, just to create variation and to lower the pace for a while. It sounds like a very sensible way of working. There are other ways to slow things down in the classroom other than watching a film which might be considered to be the most popular way of rewarding the students after having accomplished a certain task. I am not really a believer in group assignments either but just for the sake of variety in the classroom it is a good idea. A good way of working with group assignments in English could be to let the students focus on an appointed English speaking country and then to present it to the rest of the class. The curriculum for English in Sweden, issued by Skolverket, states that students should have some knowledge of English speaking countries and their cultures (skolverket.se: a and b 2010). Both (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:3) and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215) support that it is important for the students to learn about the different English speaking cultures in order to create a positive attitude towards the language. I think that as long as the teacher can find interesting angles in every country to make it appealing for the students, it is a very good idea. However, it might not be as necessary in the subject of English as it might be with for instance French. There are so many English speaking countries and most of them are western cultures. Most popular music and films are from for example, America, thus most students probably already have a good attitude towards English. Furthermore, English is such a big part of our everyday lives here in Sweden, especially for frequent Internet users, which younger people are for the most part.

All three teachers stated that encouraging the students is a very important way of trying to motivate them to learn English. I think that encouragement and praise are great means for a teacher to utilize when dealing with an unmotivated student and that lack of motivation often stems from a lack of confidence. Carol claimed that she has never had an unmotivated student, only students who have given up trying, and this, was an insightful thing to say. It makes sense that most people want to pass school. It is just that sometimes after failing
constantly, the student does not see it as worth his/her while to continue, therefore he/she gives up trying. Jenner (2004:43-45) states explicitly that failure often is connected with the lack of will to continue and succeeding is connected with the confidence to continue.

Jenner (2004:85) also emphasizes how vital it is for a teacher to show enthusiasm and passion when teaching. No one wants to be taught by a teacher who looks like he/she does not seem to want to be there. This is also highly emphasized by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215) where they write: “Set a personal example with your own behaviour”. A good teacher should be perceived as passionate and interested in his/her subject as it could make a difference for most students. However, the findings in this study suggest that time is a big problem for teachers in today’s school. One example both Beatrice and Carol brought up was the issue of class size. Beatrice argued that when she has 30 or more students in a class it is impossible for her to pay attention to each and every one of her students, which might ultimately lead to a lack of motivation for some students who feel like they are not being adequately seen and taken care of. This issue is also highly stressed by Jenner (2004:77). Moreover, both Beatrice and Carol expressed several times that they often tell the students who do not believe they are capable of learning English that they most certainly are. Being able to do what you believe yourself capable of doing is referred to by both Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:35-44) and Schunk et al. (2008:139) as self-efficacy. Students who suffer from poor self-confidence will probably not consider themselves capable of performing anything, which is supported by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215); therefore I think the teacher has an immense responsibility in the sense of trying to turn these negative thoughts into positive ones instead. Naturally this is a difficult task. In this situation it could be possible to utilize some of the methods Beatrice provided, like making the unmotivated student leader of a group or explaining that what the student needs is more training and practice should he/she claim not to be capable of learning English. Also It was a good example to separate the student from the rest of the class; to try and make him/her see that he/she should not compare him/herself to the other students but rather only to him/herself. Everyone has different strengths and different ways of learning; every person just has to find out what works for them.

Furthermore, Beatrice claimed she also works with setting short-term goals and making the student look back at what he/she has accomplished, even if it is just a short step on the way. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998:47-61) state that it is very important that the student evaluate what he/she has learned in the postactional phase of having completed a task. When it comes to
working with setting short-term goals as suggested by Beatrice, both Jenner (2004:45), Schunk et al. (2008:146), Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (2008:58) and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215) agree on this method of working with students. Sometimes an assignment can seem like it is insurmountable, but a teacher can really make a difference in the actional phase by breaking it down into smaller assignments or smaller goals on the way to the final goal (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998:47-61). An example might be how a teacher works with preparing the students for the mandatory national test in English. A great deal of focus is on vocabulary, therefore by explaining this at an early stage for the class and also how the teacher proposes to work with new words up until the actual exam can be a way of breaking down one big goal into smaller ones for it not too seem unattainable. Closely connected with trying to make the students believing in themselves is the Pygmalion effect (Jenner 2004:20 and Wentzel and Wigfield 2009:350). It is very important for a teacher to keep the Pygmalion effect in mind when dealing with students, both motivated and unmotivated ones. There are of course students who will not care if their teacher believes them to be capable of passing English in school, but it can never hurt to show a positive attitude and faith in their ability. Beatrice said several times that she tells the students often that they can succeed, it is just a matter of how hard they try and that she believes in them.

On that note, when it comes to the teacher’s responsibility in promoting motivation in the English classroom, the interviewees had very different notions on just how much of that job was theirs. Ann was of the opinion that the responsibility was divided equally between the teacher, the student and the parents, whereas Beatrice thought motivation was mainly up to the students, the teacher could only inspire, not motivate. Lastly, Carol placed the majority of the responsibility on the parents. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972:143), Schunk, et.al (2008: 275-288) and Wentzel and Wigfield (2009:281-283) all the factors above play a big part in motivating the student. However, when it comes to the responsibility, I am of the opinion that the parents bear the main part of this task. The child is likely to adopt the parents’ attitude versus both school and the subject of English, so if the parents present a positive outlook, the child might end up sharing that very view. After all, it is the parents’ job to foster their children; it is not the school’s task to the same extent. There are obviously many things a teacher can do to facilitate the motivation, but ultimately, the student will have several years worth of acquired attitude towards school and English which it might not be possible for the teacher to alter during the short time they spend together. Having said this, I do not intend to
diminish the part a good teacher can play in the process of learning. A teacher can be a big influence and contribute greatly to a student’s learning.

When it comes to what kind of strategies or aids the teacher can use in the English classroom to promote motivation to learn, the three interviewees provided several suggestions. Computers were mentioned by both Beatrice and Ann as a great asset. Many students respond well to the use of computers and therefore Beatrice stated that it is the teachers’ responsibility to know how to use them and what is available on the market for English learners. This might be one of the biggest challenges for teachers today. Society is changing so fast in terms of technology, it is very difficult for especially older people to keep up with everything that is happening. I think that Beatrice is correct in her statement and that there are numerous great ways of using a computer in the classroom. Moreover, competitions were an additional strategy all the three interviewees utilized in order to motivate the students to learn English. Many people are very competitive and therefore by organising a competition the students have a reason to study then and there. One must, however, be cautious when using competitions in the classroom, as it might become counterproductive for weak students, making them feel as though they have nothing to compete with. Beatrice pointed out that she believes it is more efficient if the students can use the knowledge in the now instead of sometime in the future. I have to agree with her on that note. When I have been working in schools recently, I have gotten the impression that the students do not think much about how they will need the knowledge they learn now in the future. They mainly think of how to pass a test then and there.

A third strategy, which Carol offered, was to be very clear and structured when explaining new tasks for the students. This was also supported by Tornberg (2005:17) and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215). This I have noticed many times while teaching in school, that it does not matter how clear and structured I try to be when explaining what they need to do, there is always someone who will not understand. So this study indicates that it is wise to spend a large amount of time thinking about how to structure new material for the students. Most people might be able to relate to the feeling of a loss of motivation when a task is not understood. Furthermore, Carol brings up the importance of creating a positive atmosphere in the English classroom. By this she means that it is vital that the students feel like it is allowed to make a mistake when speaking English. Many students learn English by trying new things to see if they work and by encouraging this and thereby diminishing the significance of
making a mistake, the atmosphere in the classroom might become more easygoing. This claim is supported both by Dörnyei and Guilloteaux (2008:58) and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998:215). Trying to create a positive climate in the classroom is a logical outcome for any teacher, but there can be difficulties in attaining it. Like Beatrice stated, if the majority of the class has a negative attitude towards studying, it might affect the entire class. This might render it impossible to turn the negativity around and thereby create a positive climate.
6. Conclusion

At the beginning of this study two questions were asked which I have attempted to answer with the help of the material produced in this essay.

The first question was what motivation in a school environment actually means. When thinking about it prior to the study, I could not see a difference between motivation and interest. Also, I was not aware that there are two kinds of motivation; these two kinds are called intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. A student who learns English will probably be affected by either or. This means that the student will either want to learn English because he/she finds it interesting, or he/she will want to learn it because it serves some purpose for a later stage in life. This purpose might be that the student needs the grade to be able to apply for university. Knowing that there are different kinds of motivation is essential for a teacher since it will render the work a great deal easier when trying to stimulate the student into wanting to learn.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that there is a difference between being interested and being motivated. The interest is the feeling someone has towards something, whilst motivation is the drive that actually makes the person attain a certain goal. A teacher can present something to his/her students in order to spark their interest, but this is not always enough. The teacher also has to take the next step and help motivate the students to aid them in reaching their goal, for example, by encouragement.

The second question I have attempted to answer with this study is how practicing teachers work with motivating their students to learn English. First of all, it is crucial to be aware of what motivation is and that it to some extent is the teacher’s task to be able to motivate his/her students. Motivating the students is a big part of teaching. Moreover, there are numerous methods to apply when trying to motivate a student to learn English. The interviewees provided several examples of what can be utilized such as fun and relevant material, applying short-term goals to make the path to learning English more concrete and working on improving the self-confidence of the students. It is however important to remember as a teacher that it is not only your responsibility to motivate. Other factors also play a big part in the motivational process, for example, the parents and the students themselves.
In conclusion, there are many different methods for a teacher to utilize when trying to motivate the students. Different methods work for different classes, and one of the challenges a teacher faces is to pinpoint which method to use. To make it even more difficult, he/she also has to find the one that suits them as a teacher.

Motivating students today is a handful for even the most experienced teacher, but I believe that it is important to remember yourself as a teacher. If a teacher is not motivated to do his/her job, one cannot expect the students to be motivated to do theirs. If you have given up on your task as a teacher, your students will soon follow your example. In other words, do not give up on your students, after all, there are no students who totally lack motivation, they just need someone who shows them how to reach their goals.

Since this essay mainly focuses on the teacher motivating his/her students to learn English, it might be interesting to extend the study to what would motivate students to learn English. This could be done both with the help of a questionnaire, or even with in-depth interviews with a smaller amount of students.
7. Bibliography


http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/2386/a/16138/func/kursplan/id/3870/titleId/EN1010%20-%20Engelska. (accessed 04.05.2010)

The Swedish national agency for education, 2000b. Curriculum for upper secondary school, English A.

Appendix I

Interview questions

2. Vad tror du är motiverande för eleverna?
3. Är beröm eller hot om bestraffning bäst?
5. Hur viktigt är motivation?
6. Finns det några hjälpmedel för att motivera elever?
7. Vem tycker du bär det huvudsakliga ansvaret för elevens motivation? (Elev, lärare, förälder, samhälle)
8. Kan man individualisera motivationen i en klass? Hur?
9. Vad gör man med elever som saknar motivation?
10. Hur pass mycket kontakt har du med föräldrar om att hjälpa till att motivera sina barn hemifrån?