

## A Motivational Self-Inventory for Higher Ed ESL Teachers

This researched-based exercise in self-reflection provides an opportunity to consider what is most meaningful to you in your life as a teacher, to identify what adds and detracts from it, and to reflect on what can be done to make your teaching life better. A teacher's life is a precarious balancing act. It is my hope that this exercise will help with that balance in some small or significant way. A selected bibliography follows.

Michael Berman      Montgomery College, Rockville, MD USA      July 2015

### Part A: Career Goal Self-Inventory

- Rank these motivational factors from 1 (most important) to 7 or 8 (least important). There can be ties. Write "X" if the factor is not important.

#### The Beginning of your Career

I **entered** this profession because of the opportunity to

\_\_\_ teach and connect with students

\_\_\_ conduct research, write and grow intellectually

\_\_\_ impact my community socially and/or politically

\_\_\_ have autonomy in my work

\_\_\_ enjoy a flexible schedule (including summers)

\_\_\_ lecture and present

\_\_\_ earn a sufficient income

\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Now

I **am** in this profession because of the opportunity to

\_\_\_ teach and connect with students

\_\_\_ conduct research, write and grow intellectually

\_\_\_ impact my community socially and/or politically

\_\_\_ have autonomy in my work

\_\_\_ enjoy a flexible schedule (including summers)

\_\_\_ lecture and present

\_\_\_ earn a sufficient income

\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Does your current teaching position (your responsibilities, opportunities, schedule, etc.) reflect your current values above? If no, identify the areas where your values and your realities do not connect.

## Part B: Discrete Motivational Factors

## CHOICE

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you have the autonomy to approach your courses in the way you choose?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
2. Do you have the autonomy to select the materials for your courses?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
3. Do you have the opportunity to teach the courses which most interest you?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
4. Do you have a prominent role in institutional decisions that affect you, your program and your students?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
5. Do you have the opportunity to choose "extracurricular" roles at your institution that interest you (e.g., student advising, committees, leadership positions, etc.)?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

## PREDICTABILITY

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Can you count on the support (when appropriate) and collegiality of your supervisors and colleagues?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
2. Can you count on teaching the courses you expect and on receiving the teaching schedule you have anticipated?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

## PERSONAL COMPETENCE

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you feel you perform your job masterfully or at a high level?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
2. Do you have the time and resources to perform at a level you feel is appropriately high?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
3. Does anything else (inside or outside of your college environment) keep you from teaching at a level that is satisfying to you?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
4. Do you have access to relevant, stimulating professional growth opportunities?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
5. If YES to #4, do you regularly take advantage of some of these opportunities?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

## COLLECTIVE COMPETENCE

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Are you proud to teach at your institution?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
2. Are you proud to teach in your program?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

## VALUE

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you value the work you do at your institution?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
2. Do you think your teaching colleagues at your institution value the work you do?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
3. Do you think administrators at your institution value the work you do?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
4. Do you feel you are appropriately acknowledged for your work?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5

## EMOTION

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you often feel pride, joy and satisfaction (or "flow" as Csikszentmihalyi calls it) in your teaching day?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
2. Do you often feel anger, anxiety or other negative emotions in your teaching day?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
3. If YES to #2, do you understand what causes these negative emotions?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
4. If YES to #2, do you feel you handle these emotions in a healthy and productive manner with your students and/or colleagues?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5
5. Would you characterize yourself as a passionate teacher?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3	NO 4 5

**RELATIONSHIPS**

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you have meaningful, supportive relationships with your colleagues?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5
2. Do you cultivate meaningful connections with your students during the course of the semester?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

**AVOIDANCE**

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Is there an aspect of your teaching life that you wish you could avoid or avoid more often?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5

**MONEY**

Question	Answer	If your answer troubles you, what can you do to improve the situation?		
1. Do you receive fair and adequate compensation from your institution?	YES 1	SOMETIMES 2	3 4	NO 5



**Selected Bibliography**

- Bess, James L. *Motivating Professors to Teach Effectively*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1982. Print.
- Butler, Ruth, and Limor Shibaz. "Striving to Connect and Striving to Learn: Influences of Relational and Mastery Goals for Teaching on Teacher Behaviors and Student Interest and Help Seeking." *International Journal of Educational Research* 65 (2014): 41-53. Web.
- Cialdini, Robert B. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Collins, 2007. Print.
- Cohen, David K. *Teaching and Its Predicaments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011. Print.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*. New York: Basic, 1997. Print.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990. Print.
- Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. New York: Fireside Book, 1990. Print.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán and Ema Ushioda. *Teaching and Researching: Motivation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2010. Print.
- Hildebrandt, Susan, and Minhee Eom. "Foreign Language Teacher Motivations for Professionalization." *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning* 1 (2011):39-53. Web.
- Ma, Wenying. *Factors Affecting the Motivation of TEFL Academics in Higher Education in China*. Diss. Queensland U of Technology, 2012. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Web.
- Mansfield, Caroline F., and Susan Beltman. "Teacher Motivation from a Goal Content Perspective: Beginning Teachers' Goals for Teaching." *International Journal of Educational Research* 65 (2014): 54-64. Web.
- Nukpe, Philip. "Motivation: Theory and Use in Higher Education." *Investigations in University Teaching and Learning* 8 (2012): 11-17. Web.
- Pink, Daniel H. *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*. New York, NY: Riverhead, 2009. Print.
- Praver, Max and William Oga-Baldwin. "What Motivates Language Teachers: Investigating Word Satisfaction and Second Language Pedagogy." *Polyglossia* 14 (February 2008). Web.
- Richardson, Paul W., Stuart A. Karabenick, and Helen M. G. Watt, eds. *Teacher Motivation: Theory and Practice*. N.p.: Routledge, 2014. Print.
- Sapolsky, Robert M. *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases, and Coping*. 3rd ed. New York: S. Martińs Griffin, 2004. Print.
- Schutz, Paul A., and Reinhard Pekrun. *Emotion in Education*. Amsterdam: Academic, 2007. Print.