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## **Novice teachers' developing beliefs on learner motivation: An agentic perspective**

### **Abstract**

This longitudinal multiple case study explores the development of seven Chilean novice teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding learner motivation for studying English as a foreign language. Questionnaire and interview data were collected over two years during the transitional phase between pre-service and in-service teaching. Various forms of individual, relational, and collective agency regarding learner motivation in educational settings could be traced. The results capture the complexity of different interacting factors influencing learner motivation, including teacher cognitions, school environments, and learner contributions in building motivation. Possibilities and limitations of individual novice teacher agency regarding learner motivation are discussed, and a proposal is made to work out collaborative schemes in which motivation is supported at a whole-school community level.

**Key words:** learner motivation; teachers' beliefs; teacher agency; novice teachers; English language teaching

## **Introduction**

Novice teacher development has been an important research topic for several decades, the initial career phase being crucial in terms of professional identity construction (Pillen et al., 2013). A number of studies have shown it to be the most sensitive moment for teacher retention (Hong, 2012; Zamora Poblete et al., 2018), due to a variety of factors, the cumulative effect of which has been described as ‘tensions’ (Pillen et al., 2013), ‘reality shock’ (Veenman, 1984), or the discovery of obstacles to enacting ideal personal visions of teaching (Parsons et al., 2017).

Some topics that have been studied in relation to beginning teachers are induction and support, from various perspectives (e.g. Flores, 2017, 2019; Kearney, 2015); mental health and stress, often together with attrition (e.g. Harmsen et al., 2018); thinking and cognition, especially in comparison with more experienced teachers (e.g. Gatbonton, 2008); teacher efficacy, agency and resilience (e.g. Sela & Harel, 2019); and the appropriation of specific tools and practices across different contexts of professional development, often characterized as a dichotomous relationship between university-based pre-service teacher education and school-based beginning teacher induction (e.g. Nolen et al., 2011).

One of the greatest challenges for novice teachers is dealing with poor student motivation, especially in secondary school contexts (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Veenman, 1984). Some researchers have studied the *novice teachers–learner motivation* nexus using the concept of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs (e.g. Avalos & Bascopé, 2014; Hong, 2012; Ozder, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). It emphasizes –among other things- the importance of achieving learner engagement as a central condition for teachers in order to

develop a sense of efficacy and therefore to stay motivated themselves and remain in the profession. These studies usually treat learner motivation as one issue among several, such as classroom management. Some studies focusing on teachers' use of motivational strategies over-emphasize the idea that learner motivation is dependent on teachers' individual pedagogical knowledge and skills, disregarding the highly contextual and relational nature of learners' motivational states (Lamb, 2017). Therefore, studies providing deeper insights into the development of novice teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding learner motivation in complex teaching contexts are needed in this area of research.

By following a group of Chilean novice teachers over two years, this study aims to explore the role novice teachers assign to their own agency in learner motivation, i.e. their capacity to maintain or change learner motivation through their own actions, by answering these research questions:

- 1) How do Chilean novice teachers of English explain the presence or absence of learner motivation? What motivational influences do they perceive in their specific teaching contexts?
- 2) How does their understanding of learner motivation evolve over the first two years in service, and in doing so, how do they conceptualize the teacher's role in influencing learner motivation?
- 3) How can their conceptualization of the teacher's role regarding learner motivation be described in agentic terms?

This article thus seeks to make a contribution to teacher development by discussing the possibilities and limits of individual novice teacher agency regarding learner motivation, and proposing ecological approaches to support learner motivation beyond the individual classroom, so as to make support for novice teachers more robust.

### **Theoretical framework**

In educational contexts, the motivation to learn has been conceptualized as a complex construct. Many theories, including social cognitive (Bandura, 2001) and socio-cultural approaches (Nolen & Ward, 2008), have made attempts to explain its presence or absence, highlighting and classifying internal (psychological), external (environmental) and relational (interactional) influencing factors. These theories provide support for advice given to educational actors, especially to teachers, to *act* upon learners' motivation and *create* motivational conditions in their teaching-learning environments (e.g. Dörnyei, 2001; Wentzel & Brophy, 2014). Thus, much educational discourse has constructed teachers as prime motivational agents; teachers' motivational behaviours can therefore be considered an important element of teacher professional agency.

Teacher agency has received much attention in a relatively new and multifaceted area of educational research (e.g. Biesta et al., 2015; Edwards, 2005, 2011, 2015; Molla & Nolan, 2020; Priestley et al., 2015). Some of this research draws on relational sociologists Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) work, who define agency as 'the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing

historical situations' (p. 970). Teachers can therefore, through their actions, reflections and creativity, intentionally transform the realities in which they work, in interaction with the structures that are given by the social context (e.g. the curriculum, habitual procedures in a given school system) and other educational stakeholders.

One concern for researchers has been to explain how agency is either enhanced or limited under given circumstances. It is often understood that agency can be enacted when the structural context 'externally' provides possibilities (or spaces for manoeuvre) for transformative action, and when teachers 'internally' *believe* that agency is necessary, indicated or possible (e.g. [Author 1]; Priestley et al., 2012). Bandura's social cognitive theory (2001) has pointed out the importance of self-efficacy beliefs, these being central for motivating and self-regulating agency: 'Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs in their capability to exercise some measure of control over their own functioning and over environmental events' (p. 10). Importantly, this agency is not only exercised on an individual level: collective efficacy beliefs—'people acting conjointly on a shared belief' (p. 14)—are just as significant when it comes to motivating whole groups to take collective action. However, future-oriented self-efficacy is just one way in which beliefs can impact on teacher agency: past and present experiences also shape teachers' beliefs, for example beliefs about their roles as teachers, about teenagers or about the purposes of education in general (cf. Biesta et al., 2015; Ryan, 1993). These may have their origins in their 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975) as learners at school, or may stem from culturally dominating discourses about education, both of which teachers can agentially reflect on or actively buy into.

Another pivotal point in the agency debate is the discussion of its relational nature. In the context of education, Edwards (2005) has brought forward the term *relational agency* to denote ‘a capacity to align one’s thought and actions with those of others in order to interpret problems of practice and to respond to those interpretations’ (p. 169). It refers to teachers’ collaborative relationships with other educational professionals, what she calls the ‘resourceful use of the expertise of others’ (p. 178). In teacher education settings, the potential benefits of these relationships have apparently not received sufficient attention; indeed, the active search for support from others in order to respond optimally to students’ learning needs or complex classroom situations might actually be interpreted as a sign of weakness. However, relational agency describes just this type of collaboration, which also includes the offer of support to other professionals, as an ‘enhanced version of professionalism’ (p. 179). Burkitt (2016) has brought yet another angle into the discussion on relational agency. Rather than focusing on external structures that might support or undermine agency, he focuses on relational networks and interdependencies. He prefers the term *interactant* to *agent*, explaining that ‘as interactants no person is ever completely an agent or a patient in any one moment of interaction: instead we are always both agent and patient, acting upon others and being acted upon by others to varying degrees’ (p. 26). Neither does he talk about *beliefs* as factors influencing agency; rather, he describes the internal dimension of agency as a ‘dialogical inner conversation with both personal and impersonal others’, turning interactants into ‘polyphonic selves that form within and interact within the webs of complex, fluid, dialogical social relations’ (ibid.). When this ‘inner conversation’ is externalized, such as in interview studies, the ‘grammar of agency’ (Martin, 2016) can be unravelled in the analysis of interview transcripts. For example, the teachers’ perceptions of being agents or patients in their interdependent, ecological relationships with students,

colleagues, or superiors, are reflected in their use of active and passive verb constructions, or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, in the singular or the plural (Ahearn, 2001). Likewise, attention to the vocabularies used in teacher talk may help to understand the collective cultures in which teachers operate (Biesta et al., 2017).

## **Methodology**

The goal of this longitudinal multiple case study was to explore the development of beginning teachers' beliefs and strategies regarding learner motivation. It was conducted with a group of seventeen recently graduated teachers of English as a Foreign Language. They all completed their undergraduate degree—a combined English language-and-literature and education programme, including three teaching practica—at the same university in central Chile between 2016 and 2017. For this paper, the data of seven of these participants were considered. These were selected according to the following criteria: after their final practicum, they all embarked on careers as school teachers; they participated in all data collection instances; and their cases represented a variety of teaching contexts, including public (pub), semi-private (s-pr), and private (pr); mixed and same-sex (bo/gr); rural (ru), sub-urban (s-ur) and urban (ur); smaller (S) and larger (L) schools; and vocational (voc), secondary (sec), and primary (pry) schools. In some of these schools, English (as a school subject) enjoyed greater status (E!), mainly due to families' higher socioeconomic background. This variety could help us gain a broad perspective of Chilean educational reality, supposing that dissimilar school types would imply certain variations regarding opportunities and constraints in teachers' exercise of agency.

[Insert table 1 around here]

Data collection began when we sent a questionnaire (Appendix A) to all students of three consecutive cohorts two months before the end of their final teaching practicum, such that participation was staggered at the beginning. The purposes of the questionnaire were to gather initial data, to invite students to the follow-up longitudinal study, and to provide a reflective tool that would be re-visited during later data collection stages. After this, consenting participants were interviewed at least three times at six-month intervals, first just after finishing the final practicum, then after the first six months of in-service teaching, and finally at the end of their first year as newly qualified teachers (Appendix B). We continued to invite all participants to the interview rounds until the final cohort had completed their trajectory, meaning that a few teachers were interviewed one or two more times than the rest. In addition to these individual interviews focusing on the development of their beliefs on learner motivation, all the participants were also interviewed in focus groups to explore and exchange on contextual factors of the teachers' professional insertion. These data were not included in the analysis for this paper but were carefully cross-checked to ensure consistency and exclude any possible contradictions.

From the outset, the role of teacher agency in learner motivation was an important focus of the study, so the items in the questionnaire aimed to cover both factors inside and outside the influence of teacher action, as well as to consider both potential motivating and de-motivating influences (cf. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Williams & Burden, 1997). We were careful to select items relevant for the Chilean context, and the questionnaire and the interview protocols were validated by other Chilean teacher educators, including experienced researchers.



After transcription, qualitative content analysis was applied to the interview data in their original language (Spanish). This was done in three rounds of collaborative coding until the final categorisation of data was reached. During this process, the three researchers regularly discussed and compared the data in order to reach ‘dialogical intersubjectivity’ (Saldaña, 2013, p. 35).

After this, discourse analysis was used to trace grammatical agency (Ahearn, 2001) in the interview data. To explain the different grammatical features we analysed, we use the categories provided by Konopasky & Sheridan’s (2016) ‘diagnostic toolkit’: First, we paid attention to features representing *intentional causation*, which can give insight about whether the speaker considers him- or herself as the initiator of an action. Intentional causation is usually reflected in the relationships between subjects and objects of action verbs. A first person singular subject of an active sentence (*‘I created activities’*) reflects the speaker’s sense of agency. In contrast, passive sentences or sentences in which the speaker’s perspective moves into an object position in the sentence (*‘the task is given to the teacher’*) indicate that the speaker perceives another person or entity to be the originator of an action. Whereas the singular form represents individual agency, the first person plural (*‘we’*) may represent collective or relational agency. A second aspect to trace in the data were devices used by the speakers to represent themselves as more or less autonomous in their decisions, that is, their *degree of autonomy*. These devices include modal verbs of obligation (*‘we had to work with the book’*) or the use of impersonal constructions instead of an ‘I’ noun, such as the ‘generic you’ (*‘of course you might want to’*). These mitigating devices may indicate that the speaker is deflecting responsibility to other agents (cf. Barahona, 2020). Finally, the *manner of autonomy* –centrally, the speakers’ prediction or evaluation of results brought

about by their own actions– can be traced in interview data by looking at verb negations and verb tenses ('I *didn't know* how to deal with something' or 'one can *keep looking for strategies*'), which was especially useful for tracing a developmental perspective in our longitudinal data.

After the analysis, selected interview quotes were translated by the research team to be included in this paper and revised by a native speaker of English who is also highly proficient in Spanish. For most of the grammatical features outlined above, it was relatively unproblematic to find English equivalents, such as modal verbs, or the 'generic you' or 'one' ('uno') as an impersonal third-person pronoun, which exist in both languages. However, in Spanish the explicit use of personal pronouns is usually an emphatic marker of agency, as the subjects of the sentences are encoded in the verb endings and therefore redundant in unmarked speech ('no quiero' vs. '*yo* no quiero'). In those cases, we underlined the pronoun in English ('I don't want to).

## **Findings**

From the data gathered across the three phases, we identified three broad categories: *teachers as motivational agents*, *learners as motivational interactants*, and *external structures*. Tables 2-4 illustrate the temporal development of each of these categories and codes in the participants' discourse, in response to research questions 1 and 2. The number of participants to whom a given code was applied is shown in parentheses, and asterisks refer to newly emerging ideas across longitudinal data collection instances.

In the analysis, it became clear that across time, the participants' beliefs regarding motivational factors when teaching English became gradually more complex and detailed –

an expected finding. However, what caught our attention was that factors outside the teachers' immediate agency, such as the learners' age and family backgrounds, seemed to become increasingly important as the teachers were constructing the learners as motivational interactants. The notion of relational agency emerged primarily in the teacher-learner relationship, so we found Burkitt's conceptualisation more appropriate for the analysis of our data than Edwards'. Interaction with other stakeholders—teacher colleagues and school management—seemed to be mainly perceived as negative influences on motivation, including the teacher's own motivation as a necessary pre-condition for learner motivation. Rather than helping in the process, these were seen as needing to be warded off through individual teacher agency. Finally, accounts of collective teacher agency to deal with learner motivation were very rare.

[Insert table 2 around here]

The category *teachers as motivational agents* (table 2) is defined as factors our participants identified as lying within or initiated by teachers, and that can influence learner motivation positively, or, in their absence, negatively. Our findings from the first interview round—just after the final practicum—show that the participants took up a strong message during pre-service teacher education: that the teachers' attitude and strategies, such as preparing engaging activities, were crucial for learner motivation. In most interviews, the questions 'Where do you think learner motivation comes from? Who or what is the most important motivational influence?' led very quickly to specific descriptions of teachers' attitudes, competences, and strategies.

Regarding their sources of knowledge, the self-initiated search for strategies was a common theme. The quoted self-talk in the following excerpt reinforces the notion of isolated teachers relying on themselves to solve their classroom problems:

And in any case, one learns from theory, like one has to be perseverant [...] So, if I saw myself sometimes like overwhelmed, like I didn't know how to deal with something, it was like "come on, get focused and find out what can help you" and I think that having all the resources we have, having internet, knowing a lot of things that one can find, asking the students themselves what they might like, trying new stuff [...] Not to give up and keep looking for strategies. (Andrea\_Int.1)

Mentions of negative role models—mainly ineffective teachers from their years as school students, during their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975)—and the need to distance themselves from them, were more frequent than mentions of positive role models. The following quote demonstrates the agentic aspect of this emotional distance in the repeated, emphatic use of the personal pronouns 'I' vs. 'they'; in the translation, we underlined the 'I's that were present as 'yo' in the Spanish original:

I don't want to be like those teachers, I want to avoid that type of teaching or the methodologies they used because I experienced that as a student when I was in the classroom and I thought to myself why am I here, I'm not motivated, I'm not interested, so I don't want to create that feeling in my students. (Anoly\_Int.1)

In the second interview round, as teachers gained more independent experience (approximately six months of in-service teaching), evolving teacher-student relationships became a more salient topic. One participant phrased an idea that recalled Kounin's (1977)

concept of ‘withitness’, a necessary spontaneous socio-emotional responsiveness in the classroom, as she questions the whether ‘fun activities’ are really key for motivation.

I think that many students, like they do things for the teacher, like they see the teacher is motivated--I am not even talking about pulling a fun party out of my hat, which I have tried--but also see that the teacher is well-prepared or that he’s [sic] there, that he’s present or that his students are important for him. The moment that the teacher stops being mentally or emotionally there, nobody will get very far. (Andrea\_Int.2)

Similarly, other teachers mentioned the importance of balancing life and work in order to be ‘relaxed’ and ‘themselves’ in the classroom, which they found more effective for maintaining a positive relationship with their students than perfectly planned lessons – which, if they failed, could lead to frustrated, angry teachers losing touch with their learners’ needs.

The third interview rounds—after a year or more of teaching experience—gave a general impression of increased teacher confidence, including a greater ability to gauge learners’ needs and therefore establish more realistic objectives for them, and the development of more trusting relationships with colleagues.

[Insert table 3 around here]

***Learners as motivational interactants*** (table 3): In this category, we grouped together factors that in the participants’ discourse were constructed (at least partially) as being within the realm of the learners’ responsibility, and which exert an influence on personal or classroom motivation, in interaction with teacher agency and external structures. So, although the teacher’s disposition as a deciding factor was highlighted across the different cases, critical

voices appeared from the very first interview round, refusing to buy into an educational discourse that tends to pose teachers as lone influencers of learner motivation. Here, the teachers move into an ‘object’ or ‘patient’ position in the sentences, turning into the ‘receivers’ of the action of criticizing:

I think it is a process that has like the two agents. [...] It’s a shared process, it’s unfair that all the blame falls on the teacher. The students also have a super important role... It’s like fifty-fifty. (Anoly\_Int.1)

I’m uneasy with the idea that the task of motivating the students is often given to the teacher and of course you might want to, you can, but also there’s a disposition from the students at the same time, so even if maybe you want or you are willing to motivate it also depends a lot on the students, and I feel that we teachers get criticized a lot for that. (Ximena\_Int.1)

What is interesting in these quotes is that the only other agents apart from the teachers are the learners themselves, as if motivational processes only depended on those immediately present in the classroom.

One of the most critical areas that emerged in these reflections, over time, was the experience of a student attitude that might be called learned helplessness (Wentzel & Brophy, 2014). The narrative of one of the participants, who otherwise seemed to have a very developed sense of agency regarding her use of motivational strategies, oscillated between self-quoting motivational classroom talks, impatience and desperation. According to her, this is the most de-motivating factor in the classroom:

More than the teacher or the classmates, I wrote ‘Feeling unable or simply believe that they can’t do something without even trying’ because that’s the student’s self-imposed mental barrier. That’s what kills it all, I think. ... And how did I notice? ... Observing the students because they verbalize it. They don’t even try to do the exercises, they haven’t even started the activity and ‘No, I can’t do this’ and they verbalize it. It’s not just that they think it, they are convinced, they carry their label. ‘No, the thing is that I’m bad at English.’ ‘Well, who told you that? Do you have evidence? What do you base that on?’ That’s just mental stuff. (Nicole\_Int.5)

Her efforts to change students’ low confidence seemed to be energized by her conviction, a personal theory that she developed over time, across her widely differing teaching contexts: that a foreign language can only be learned if students invest personal time and agency into autonomous study.

For the students to be more motivated and committed, you have to promote the use of English outside the classroom, so my idea is that they watch TV series, movies, talk with the parents so they won’t punish their kids without their series, it’s because the kid is studying English, so they are not just ‘having fun’. What the students do in the classroom is actually very little, ... it depends on them how far they’ll get. It’s related to working their self-confidence that they have about themselves as English learners because in their minds -and I’ve experienced this a lot- they weren’t even trying and they said ‘I can’t’, and from an early age so limited, so I think that tackling obviously the purpose, always, but also it’s about how I see myself as an English learner or the perception I have about my capacities because from there... because I can put on a big show, make them laugh and all that, but if the person is not willing and thinks

they're not capable of being autonomous and doesn't take the initiative of looking out for ways to learn, we are screwed because what I do in the classroom is not enough.

(Nicole\_Int.3)

Another, more positive important finding of this longitudinal study is that with increasing time, the participants found the growing teacher-student relationships to be a mutually motivational factor, with established routines giving an organic structure to effective learning communities.

Altogether, we found that in this category contextual differences played the greatest role, as learners' family backgrounds, for example, might support or thwart students' positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. This seems to have consequences for the perceived energy that teachers need to invest to help students recognize the relevance of learning English for their personal lives.

[Insert table 4 around here]

Finally, *external structures* (table 4) were defined as motivational influences originating in the larger societal or administrative structures of education, relatively outside the teachers' and learners' immediate range of action. In the analysis, we could see that external structures were mainly presented as negative influences, with very few exceptions. From the first interview round, the teachers identified some demotivating factors related to the school system, such as long school days over-emphasizing academic learning while neglecting activities that could offer students an overall positive experience:



The kids spend how much, 8 hours at school, they have thousands of subjects and activities, and I believe that if we ask the students if they want to be there, maybe most of them will say ‘I don’t like to go to school, I don’t want to be here, why am I here?’ (Anoly\_Int.1)

Another factor is the assessment system, which teachers identified as interacting negatively with learners’ self-esteem:

I believe that what demotivates students the most is to see that they’re getting bad results. In general, they don’t see it as ‘I’m learning’, but they assess themselves as grades, they *are* grades. (Nicole\_Int.3)

Increasingly, teachers mentioned the pressure to cover content (for example, by having to strictly follow a textbook), leading to teacher-centred methodologies, as a problem that interfered with learner motivation.

There was a time that with my other colleague we [were] ... like putting more emphasis on other activities, like [the students] are reluctant to work with the book, but after that we ran out of time, and we had to work with the book. And I realized the difference in the students, like ‘okay kids’, I did the intro, ‘let’s open the book on page something’, ‘ah’ [imitating students’ sound of unwillingness]. Instead, when I was mixing, for example okay, one activity from the book and then all activities I created, I noticed like the difference from the student that says ‘Okay, let’s work’.  
(Anoly\_Int.3)

Similarly, the excessive workload for teachers in administrative aspects of their jobs affected their own motivation, with a knock-on effect on the students. There was only one instance in which collective agency was reported to be taken by an English department: a group of teachers decided to change an inherited system in which students were separated into different levels, implementing mixed-ability teaching instead, hoping to raise lower-level students' academic self-perception and thus, motivation.

### **Discussion and implications**

So, how can the participating teachers' conceptualization of the teacher's role regarding learner motivation be described in agentic terms?

An unsurprising finding is how consistently all seven participants emphasized the teacher's responsibility in creating motivational atmospheres in their classrooms so that students could learn with joy and confidence. Although contextual factors that may interfere with learners' self-esteem and motivation, such as (lacking) family support, the school's assessment system, and unsuitable materials for teaching English are often mentioned in the interviews, the novice teachers display a clear sense of responsibility regarding their role in this process. However, the critical undertones in the interviews shed light on two problematic aspects: first, the teachers explicitly wished to share agency with the students and called on them to take responsibility for their own motivational processes; second, their narratives created images of teacher isolation in school environments that instead of facilitating learner motivation, pose important obstacles. In spite of some context variations, the different cases show that all teachers share similar challenges in terms of administrative workload, assessment systems, and the pressure to work under teacher-centred methodologies.

When analysing these data under the lens of teacher agency, the teachers' cognitions seem to prioritize solutions within their individual agency. Their conceptualisation of relational agency places almost exclusive emphasis on the interdependency between teacher and learner agency to turn classrooms into motivating learning environments. However, when identifying sources of learners' frustration and lacking motivation, most of their reflections seem to lack concrete, directed suggestions to build classroom processes in which learners may feel effectively enabled to take on greater agency. Relational agency in Edwards's (2005) sense, i.e. the capacity to recognize and access the resources of other professionals to tackle the issue of learner motivation, seems to be restricted to some novice teachers—on their own initiative—building very small support networks with other novice teachers. In the analyzed interviews, there is no mention of school administrators fostering relational support systems or 'relational expertise' (Edwards, 2011) among teachers. Likewise, collectively agentic strategies (groups of teachers, or school management and teachers working together) to address motivational issues through ecological, systematic approaches seem to be only minimally present in the teachers' experiences and minds – a finding that is supported by the analysis of the group interviews in this study (to be published in a separate paper).

While the results of this qualitative study cannot be generalized to graduates from other teacher education programmes in Chile, or to novice teachers in other contexts, the teachers' beliefs on learner motivation and their role in it seem to be symptomatic of the neoliberal education reforms that have affected teachers' lives in various places in the world, and can therefore be compared to similar studies from elsewhere (e.g. Golden, 2018). While a sense of agency in most of the participants' discourses regarding their responsibility and capacity to influence learner motivation can be seen as a professional strength, and possibly a positive

outcome of their teacher education programme, their discourses also reflect the characteristics and ailments of a neoliberal culture in education that is characterized by individual teacher accountability, a lack of planned time for collaboration among teachers, and standardized assessment of learning, with potentially negative consequences on learners' academic self-esteem and their engagement with school in general (cf. Dunn, 2018; Golden, 2018; González, 2015). All these may also have negative effects on the teachers' long-term well-being and health, leading to professional desertion (Schaefer et al., 2012).

Based on the findings of this study, how can pre-service teacher education and induction programmes provide alternative routes to novice teachers' learning to conceptualize and support learner motivation?

A first step should be, when working with motivation at the level of beliefs in teacher education curricula, an explicit reflective approach to the topic of agency, foregrounding relational and contextual aspects of learner motivation, while locating an individual teacher's strategic action as an important but not solitary factor in the creation of motivational conditions in schools. Recent research on conceptual change in teacher education, such as the study on pre-service teachers' beliefs about self-regulated learning by Vosniadou et al. (2020) could inform such innovations in pre-service teacher education. Second, this first step needs to be tightly interwoven with the practice of pedagogies that place emphasis on the conscious provision of space for the development of learner agency (Mercer, 2012), so that students can actually take on their responsibility in co-sustaining their own motivation for learning. This complex process involves valuing learners' identities; involving them at a high level of intellectual challenge; and building on metacognitive self-knowledge, strategic learning, and autonomous self-evaluation practices (Everhard, 2015). A third approach—

more complex but which would probably have the most far-reaching consequences—would be the development of ‘networked learning systems’ (Chapman, 2020): by bringing university-based initial teacher education and experienced school teachers together with a focus on collaborative inquiry, all teachers could experience instances of collective and relational agency. In this context, veteran, novice, and pre-service teachers could join forces to explore contextually relevant innovations in which learner motivation is tackled in collective teacher agency. This could also be a great opportunity for the creation of innovative induction programmes for novice teachers that break down the barriers of ‘negative influences’ on learner motivation. Taking a holistic, integrated approach to teacher development, where all teachers can continue learning together (Schaefer et al., 2012), induction programmes, rather than viewing novice teachers as deficient, could benefit from beginning teachers’ sense of agency, fresh reflections on past experiences, as well as innovative knowledge acquired in initial teacher education:

The opportunity for beginning teachers to learn within a professional learning community that cultivates their preparation through collaboration with experienced members of the community, and inversely allows them to contribute back to the community, are fundamental ingredients for a successful induction program (Kearney, 2015, p. 9).

Examples of successful projects for collectively building optimally engaging learning environments can be found in Shernoff and Csikszentmihalyi (2009): across various contexts, schools have managed to foster learner engagement by creating more spaces for student autonomy and voice (Flutter, 2007), alternative, qualitative means of learning assessment and enrichment activities that can help learners to develop multiple talents (not

only in the academic field), fostering ‘flow’ as an optimal motivational state in their learners. Students can thus be enabled to responsibly enact learner agency across isolated classrooms, countering the anonymity, apathy and ‘learned powerlessness’ that characterizes many school systems across the world. Experiences of self-determination, healthy relationships and a sense of growing competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000) involving all members of a school community could even have the potential to disrupt and overcome the educational and motivational differences stemming from social injustice and disadvantaged family backgrounds (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015). In countries like Chile, where the educational system is characterized by high socio-economic segregation, interventions on school life that consider these socio-emotional aspects are therefore particularly important to keep in mind (cf. Delgado-Floody et al., 2020). If researchers, novice and experienced teachers and learners can come together in collective agency to co-construct motivational learning environments, we will be one step closer to healthier, more sustainable education systems, where learners and (novice) teachers can thrive alike.

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## **Appendix**

A. *Questionnaire (extract)* – to be responded in a Likert scale with five levels from “not important at all” to “very important”

8. How important do you think the following factors are for POSITIVELY influencing learner motivation in secondary school contexts:

1. Family members who speak English
2. Opportunities for traveling
3. An engaging, enthusiastic teacher personality
4. Learning success in terms of real progress
5. Positive group dynamics
6. Access to English-speaking media outside the classroom
7. Access to English-speaking media inside the classroom
8. A student-activating teaching methodology
9. Positive attitudes towards English-speaking countries and their people
10. A clear vision of future opportunities based on English language skills
11. Meaningful learning tasks
12. A great textbook / well-chosen materials
13. Learners' self-confidence

9. How important do you think are the following factors for NEGATIVELY influencing learner motivation in secondary school contexts:

1. Lacking family support
2. Lacking opportunities to use English in real life
3. A distant teacher personality

4. Repetitive learning activities and content over several years, with no visible progress
5. Peer pressure towards minimal effort
6. A grammar-based teaching methodology
7. Low grades
8. Negative attitudes towards English-speaking countries and their people
9. Lack of awareness of future job opportunities
10. Irrelevant learning activities or materials
11. A teacher-centred methodology in which students generally remain passive
12. Lacking confidence / anxiety

***B. Interview protocols (extracts)***

First interview (immediately after the final practicum)

- a. In the questionnaire, you rated learner motivation as a (great / very great) challenge for you as a beginning teacher. When did you come to realize this? What have you done regarding this?
- b. As a teacher, how do you “detect” learner motivation?
- c. Where do you think learner motivation comes from?
- d. In general terms, what do you think has a positive / negative effect on motivation?

Second interview (after 6 months qualified teaching)

- a. Since the last interview, have you had any new experiences regarding learner motivation?
- b. Revision of questionnaire responses to questions 8 and 9 and interview responses to questions b/c: Have they changed or remained the same? Which ones? Why?
- c. Are there any new motivational strategies that you learned about in your (new) school context?

Third interview (after 12 months qualified teaching)

- a. What would you say is the most important thing that an “average” student can turn into a motivated student, who wants to continue learning, who commits to their own learning process? How and when did you come to realize this?
- b. What would you say is what most de-motivates a student? How and when did you come to realize this?
- c. How do you feel in relation to your development as a teacher to find effective motivational strategies? What is it you would like to continue developing or learning to keep improving?

## Tables

*Table 1: Participants' contextual profiles*

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>School type professional practicum</i>	<i>School type first position</i>	<i>School type second position</i>	<i>N° of ind. inter.</i>
<i>Andrea</i>	L/mult-lvl/s-pr/s-urb/E!	(same as practicum)		3
<i>Anoly</i>	L/mult-lvl/s-pr/s-urb/E!	(same as practicum)	L/mult-lvl/s-pr/urb	4
<i>Denisse</i>	S/mult-lvl/s-pr/s-urb	(same as practicum)	S/mult-lvl/pr/ru/E!	4

<i>Isabella</i>	L/primary&lower-sec/s-pr/urb	L/mult-lvl/s-pr/ru		3
<i>Nicole</i>	L/sec/voc/pub/ur	S/mult-lvl/s-pr/gr/ru	L/mult-lvl/s-pr/s-urb/E!	5
<i>Paul</i>	L/sec/voc/pub/ur	L/pr/bo/E!		3
<i>Ximena</i>	S/mult-lvl/s-pr/ur	L/mult-lvl/voc/s-pr/ru		4



Table 2: Teachers as motivational agents

Sub-categories	After final practicum	After 6 months	After 12-18 months
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Perseverance to look for effective motivational strategies (2)</li> <li>-Commitment to students' learning (3)</li> <li>-Intrinsic motivation for teaching (2)</li> <li>-Humour (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-*“Withitness” (1)</li> <li>-Commitment to students' learning (4)</li> <li>-Intrinsic motivation for teaching (1)</li> <li>-*Relax to be able to create closer relationship with students (2)</li> <li>-*Being oneself (2)</li> <li>-*Balancing life and work to maintain teacher motivation (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Withitness” (1)</li> <li>-*Positive, friendly attitude towards students (1)</li> <li>-*Growing confidence in own capacity to choose appropriate strategies in the right moment (3)</li> <li>-*Disposition to continue learning (future dimension) (3)</li> <li>-*Gratitude, positive thinking (1)</li> <li>-Balancing life and work to maintain teacher motivation (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Competences / strategies (including their absence or negation as a de-motivating factor)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preparing fun, varied activities &amp; materials (6)</li> <li>-Designing challenging tasks (1)</li> <li>-Supporting learner autonomy (2)</li> <li>-Reflecting on learner motivation (1)</li> <li>-Giving positive feedback (1)</li> <li>-Solid subject knowledge (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preparing fun, varied activities &amp; materials, *including collaborative work (4)</li> <li>-*Increasing Ss self-esteem (5)</li> <li>-Supporting learner autonomy *(including metacognition and promotion of out-of-class access to English-speaking media) (2)</li> <li>-*Show students value of English (2)</li> <li>-Giving positive feedback (1)</li> <li>-*Self-evaluation regarding motivational strategies (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preparing fun, varied activities &amp; materials, including collaborative work *and technology (6)</li> <li>-Increasing Ss self-esteem *by giving positive feedback and cheering them up (4)</li> <li>-Designing challenging tasks *that provoke curiosity and thought (vs. spoon-feeding) (1)</li> <li>-*Using learner-centred methodology (with textbook to be able to save time on materials search) (2)</li> <li>-*Knowing how to use the materials given by the school properly (1)</li> <li>-*Setting realistic goals according to learner level (3)</li> <li>-Supporting learner autonomy (promotion of out-of-class access to English-speaking media) (1)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Show students *utility of English (2)</li> <li>-*Show students excitement for the content (1)</li> <li>-*Choose activities that are fun for you <i>and</i> the students (1)</li> <li>-Self-evaluation regarding motivational strategies (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Interaction with “impersonal” body of knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Internet search for strategies and activities (3)</li> <li>-“Theories” might be inadequate for context (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Internet search for strategies and activities (1)</li> <li>-*Consulting portfolio from university (1)</li> <li>-*Engagement with self-determination theory guides teacher decision-making. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Internet search for strategies and activities (2)</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher-initiated interaction with colleagues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sharing strategies &amp; experiences (2)</li> <li>-Seeking advice (1)</li> <li>-Distancing oneself from ineffective teachers (including apprenticeship of observation) (6)</li> <li>-Getting inspiration from apprenticeship of observation (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sharing strategies, experiences *and pedagogical knowledge (3)</li> <li>-Seeking advice (3)</li> <li>-*Establishing group identity with other novice teachers (1)</li> <li>-*Collective plan to create mixed-ability groups (instead of established separate sets) (1)</li> <li>-*Evaluation of recommended strategies (2)</li> <li>-Distancing from ineffective teachers (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sharing strategies and experiences with colleagues (3)</li> <li>-*Gradually growing trust in colleagues and receiving advice (2)</li> <li>-*Bonding and giving mutual emotional support with colleagues and students (3)</li> <li>-Distancing from ineffective colleagues (1)</li> <li>-*Reflection on tension between apprenticeship of observation and innovative proposals to support learner agency (1)</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher-initiated interaction with students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Observing learners (2)</li> <li>-Getting to know students (including application of surveys) (3)</li> <li>-Establishing trusting relationships with students (2)</li> <li>-Creating close, caring relationships (1)</li> <li>-Teachers must increase learners’ self-esteem. (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Creating or adapting materials considering students’ interests. (2)</li> <li>-Asking for students’ feedback regarding the activities (1)</li> <li>-Creating close, caring relationships (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-*Thinking about students’ needs and interests (2)</li> <li>-*Choosing materials in which the teacher connects emotionally with Ss (1)</li> <li>-*Collect spontaneous learner comments as information on motivating tasks and activities (1)</li> <li>-*Get students to support teacher in classroom routines (1)</li> <li>-*Smile at them more frequently (1)</li> </ul>

			-*Taking time to create close, caring relationships (1)
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Table 3: Learners as motivational interactants

Sub-categories	After final practicum	After 6 months	After 12-18 months
<b>Attitude</b>	<p>-Learners' attitude should be positive and correspond to the teacher's attitude and responsibility. (3)</p> <p>-Learners should have a clear goal-orientation. (1)</p>	<p>-*Learners' attitude may be outside teachers' reach. (2)</p> <p>-*Learners' comparison of different English teachers influences acceptance of new teacher. (1)</p>	<p>-Learners' attitude be positive and correspond to the teacher's attitude and responsibility. (1)</p> <p>-Learners' comparison of different English teachers influences acceptance of new teacher. (1)</p> <p>-*Mutually affective relationship with students constitutes a motivating factor for the teacher (1)</p> <p>-*Teacher's capacity to motivate students to learn is conditioned by their emotional bonding with the teacher. (1)</p> <p>-*Learners take up effective teacher routine (and remind teacher about it) . (1)</p>
<b>Interest in English</b>	<p>-Learners find personal meaning in learning English (1)</p> <p>-Learners' interest in music, movies, "Anglo" culture can help. (1)</p>	<p>-*Learners recognize importance of English. (3)</p> <p>-*Learners' interest in learning English constitutes a motivating factor for the teacher. (1)</p>	<p>-Learners recognize importance of English. (1)</p>
<b>Socio-economic background</b>		<p>-*English-speaking family members / opportunities for traveling influence learner motivation. (2)</p>	<p>-*Students' motivation may vary depending on where they live/come from and their financial situation (1)</p>
<b>Self Esteem</b>	<p>-Students shut down when they don't understand. (1)</p>	<p>-*Mistakes, not learning, or not understanding leads to motivational losses. (2)</p> <p>-*Self-imposed labels limit students' beliefs in their own learning capacities. (2)</p>	<p>-Mistakes, not learning or not understanding leads to motivational losses. (2)</p> <p>-*Low grades lead to motivational losses. (2)</p> <p>-*The students themselves are their only demotivators because of self-imposed labels. (1)</p>

<b>Group Dynamics</b>	-Relationships among learners can affect classroom motivation. (1)	-Relationships among learners can affect classroom motivation. (4)	-Relationships among learners can affect classroom motivation. (2)
<b>Age</b>		-*Teenagers are generally disaffected from school. (1) -*Teenagers avoid embarrassing situations, affecting their willingness to participate. (1)	-*Motivational differences between age groups require different approaches. (1)

Table 4: External structures

Sub-categories	After final practicum	After 6 months	After 12-18 months
<b>Materials</b>	-Textbooks are a greater support than expected. (1)	-*Textbooks are boring for teachers and learners alike. (1) -*Internationally published textbooks are more engaging than locally produced ones. (1)	-*Textbooks topics are detached from context. (1) -*In combination with lacking time, over-use of textbook is perceived as boring. (1)
<b>Physical space</b>	-Classroom space can affect learner motivation. (1)	-*Layout and colours of classroom and school walls may interfere with learners' motivation (1)	
<b>Assessment system</b>	-Parents exert pressure on students to have good grades. (1) -Grades lead to learners' extrinsic orientation. (2) -Grades are related to a punitive culture that impacts negatively on motivation. (1)	-*Learners' motivation is conditioned by their grades. (1) -*University selection system makes students behave in an individualistic way, leaving behind weaker students. (1)	-Parents exert pressure on students to have good grades. (2) -Learners' motivation is conditioned by their grades. (1)
<b>Administration</b>	-School as obligation interferes with learner motivation. (1) -Long school days lead to learners' motivational losses (1)	-School as obligation interferes with learner motivation. (1) -*Having freedom to act, trust from school management motivates teachers. (1) -*Large classes affect possibilities to implement motivating methodologies. (4) -*Excessive workload in administrative aspects may affect teacher motivation. (4) -*Pressure on teachers to cover content and maintain discipline leads to teacher-centred methodologies (2) -*Setting students in ability levels affects lower-level students' motivation. (1)	-*Having freedom to act, trust from school management motivates teachers. (1) -*Large classes affect possibilities to implement motivating methodologies and deal with diversity. (1) -*Lacking time to prepare and plan lessons and excessive workload in administrative aspects affects teacher motivation. (1) -Pressure on teachers to cover content leads to teacher-centred methodologies (2) -Setting students in ability levels affects lower-level students' motivation. (2)

<b>Culture</b>	-English is judged by its utility on the job market. (2)	-*In our society, most people are extrinsically motivated. (1)	-*Utility of English for careers is the only motivator (1)
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