

Conference Abstract

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 23-26 June, 2005:
Reflective Practice – The key to innovation in international education**

Motivation factors of English as an additional language (EAL) learners in a tertiary foundation studies programme

Mark Hornby, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT)
hornbym@cpit.ac.nz

This paper reports on a research project to investigate motivation factors of learners in EAL foundation classes at Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT). The goal was to identify ways in which the foundation programme and its teaching staff can raise the motivation levels of learners and thereby maximise academic success.

The starting points were the identification of assumptions of academic staff about motivation of learners in their classes and a comparison between the self-identified motivation factors of foundation learners (those not yet successful) with those of learners who are about to complete mainstream programmes and graduate (those who have achieved success). This information was related to the literature around motivation as summarised by Williams and Burden (1997) to develop a questionnaire to assess learner attitudes to a range of motivational factors. The questionnaire was answered by the two groups of learners. Drawing on work by Van Lier (1996) and Norton (1995, 1997, 2000), issues relating to social and educational contexts, together with other points arising from questionnaire results, were identified for further investigation through interviews and class observation.

The combined results of four procedures (focus groups, questionnaire, interviews and class observations) gave a clear, grounded picture of motivation factors of learners in foundation programmes. Arising from this, strategies for maximising success and motivation at the levels of individual, teacher, institution and the wider community were identified and a list of possible development strategies for the programme was given.