

satisfaction from all your classes. If the answer is 'No,' have you ever tried to find out why? Why do you enjoy being with some of your classes and not so much with others?

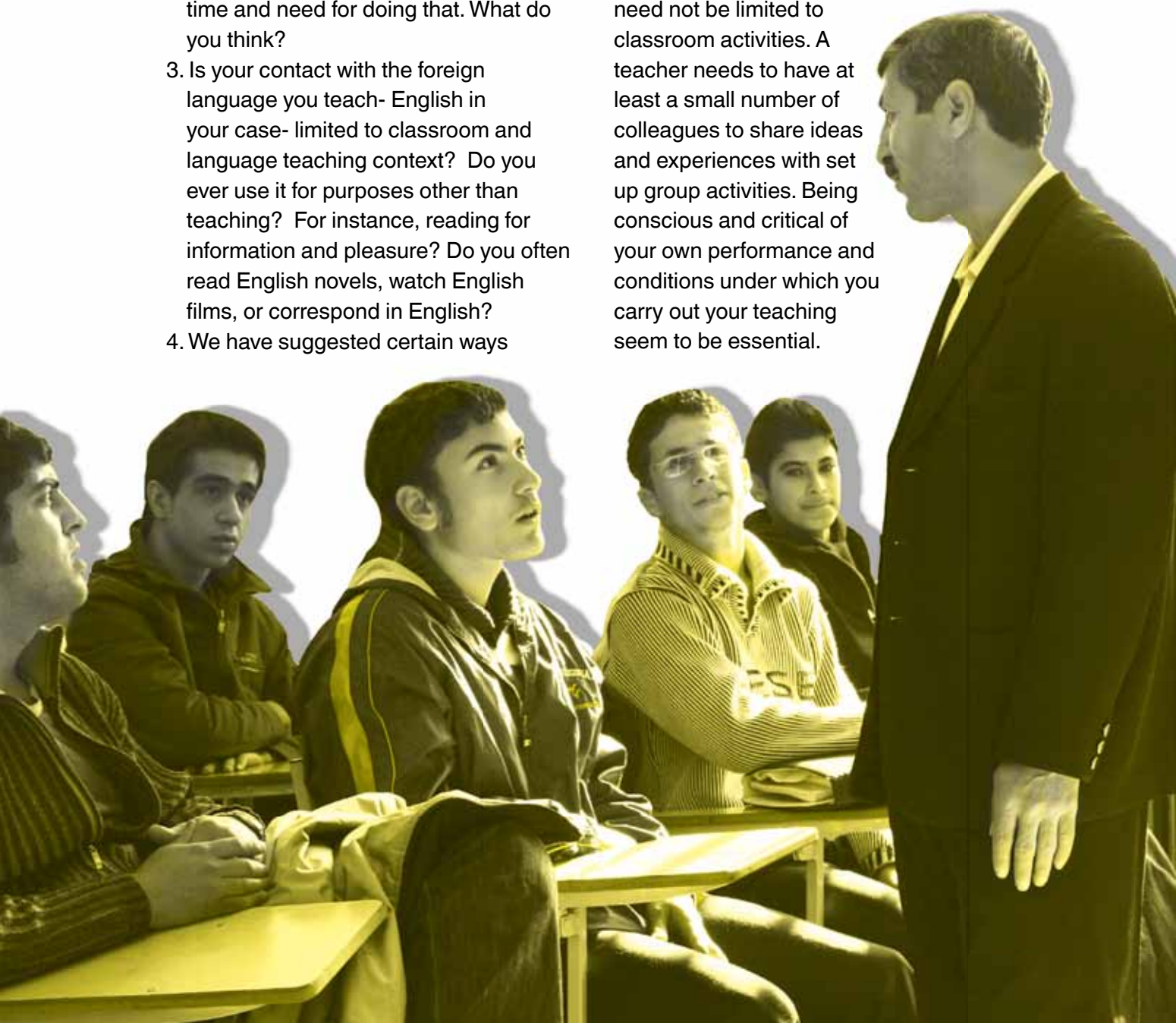
2. Are you always conscious of your teaching content and teaching plan before you walk into your classroom? Does this have any effect on your classroom performance and presentation? Some language teachers because of years of teaching experience find this unnecessary. They believe since language teaching is basically textbook based there is no time and need for doing that. What do you think?
3. Is your contact with the foreign language you teach- English in your case- limited to classroom and language teaching context? Do you ever use it for purposes other than teaching? For instance, reading for information and pleasure? Do you often read English novels, watch English films, or correspond in English?
4. We have suggested certain ways

through which a teacher can keep her/his motivation active and alive. What do you guess those suggestions are?

5. Is there any sort of teachers gathering, like 'The Association of Language Teachers', Teachers Club in your town? Are there a small number of colleagues with whom you may share your problems and achievements?

It seems we are suggesting that:

The root of the problem lies in the personality of the teacher. We are of the belief that a teacher's contact with the foreign language(s) he teaches need not be limited to classroom activities. A teacher needs to have at least a small number of colleagues to share ideas and experiences with set up group activities. Being conscious and critical of your own performance and conditions under which you carry out your teaching seem to be essential.



Teachers' training and education are insufficient and poor when, for instance, teachers do not have ideas of their own on 'what, how, whom' of their teaching and cannot understand or are not willing to share the ideas of others on such things.

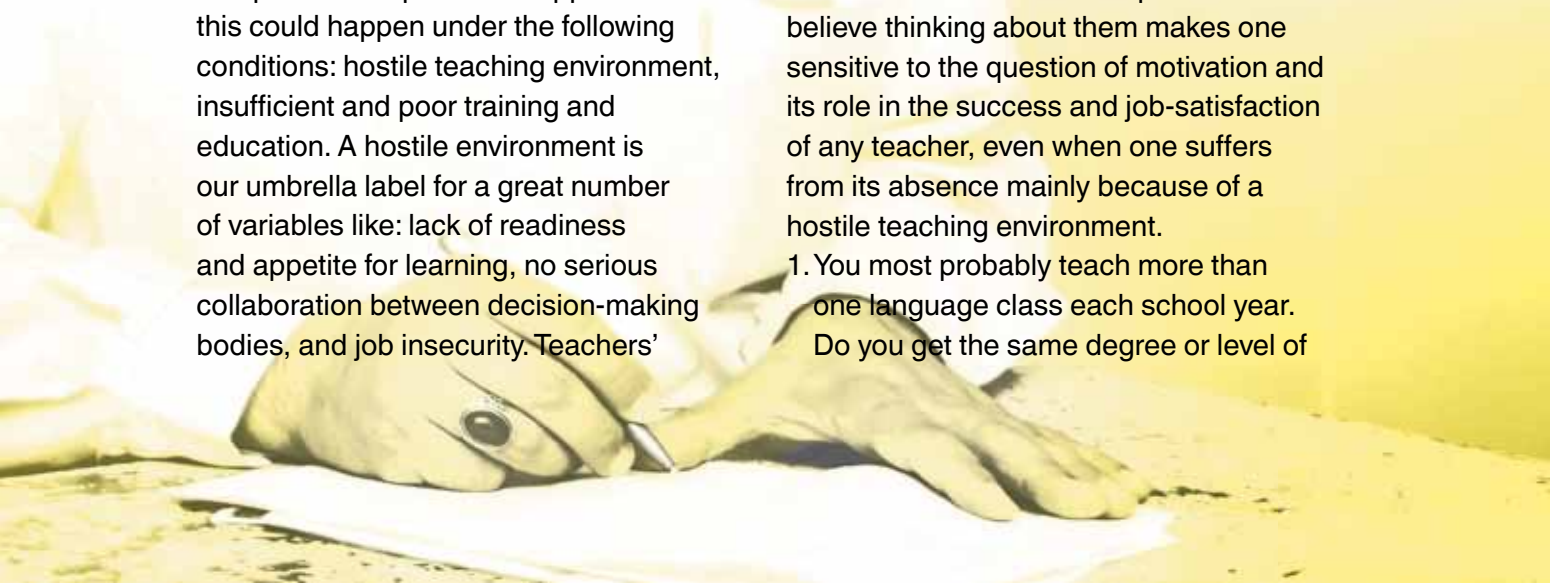
Motivation is seen here as 'being interested, conscious and critical of one's thinking and performance,' or **lack of it**, again seen here as 'being indifferent, imitative, and habitual' is a multi-faceted concept. It has personal/psychological, social, political, and economical phases. We do not claim that motivation can be usefully explained and treated in such a brief space and time available for us in this column. We wish to focus on an individual teacher, make a few general assertions, and finish up with a list of questions and implied answers, and hope that the controversy continues usefully living in the minds of interested readers. Any teacher at any time and stage of teaching may feel that his/her motivation for teaching is thinning out. Both documented research and personal experience support that this could happen under the following conditions: hostile teaching environment, insufficient and poor training and education. A hostile environment is our umbrella label for a great number of variables like: lack of readiness and appetite for learning, no serious collaboration between decision-making bodies, and job insecurity. Teachers'

training and education are insufficient and poor when, for instance, teachers do not have ideas of their own on 'what, how, whom' of their teaching and cannot understand or are not willing to share the ideas of others on such things.

On a more practical and pragmatic side, a truism like: 'Language teachers should **know** the language that they teach' means teachers not only need to have knowledge about it, be skilled in using that language, they need to learn to live with it. That is, their contact with that language cannot be confined to the classroom context. Outside the school, they should learn to use it for both pleasure and information. Thus some of the suffering which give many teachers 'yellow eyes' and thins their motivation can be avoided.

Here we list a number of questions. We believe thinking about them makes one sensitive to the question of motivation and its role in the success and job-satisfaction of any teacher, even when one suffers from its absence mainly because of a hostile teaching environment.

1. You most probably teach more than one language class each school year. Do you get the same degree or level of





The Root of the Problem

J.B.Sadeghian Ph.D in Applied Linguistics

Email: jbsadeghian@gmail.com



I attached a list of questions to my previous Note hoping one or two may interest at least a small number of our readers and encourage them to respond. Thus we could go truly interactive in our future Notes. I had purposefully inserted into the list a number of less controversial questions which did not require lengthy response. Questions like: *For what purposes other than classroom language teaching do you use your foreign language? Or, what books or journals do you often read, etc.?* To the date of the present Note, no response has shown itself onto my desk or into my inbox, though I finalize my Notes with an email address.

A few days ago, the Editor called and demanded the manuscript of the next note. I 'apologetically' grumbled: "But I have not received any reaction to my earlier notes." There was no immediate response from the other end. After noticeable number of seconds, however, the answer hesitantly came: "But, well, you know, our teachers are not very much motivated. Most of them shy away from

writing; especially when they have to do it in English. It takes time and they do not have much of it." He said other things which I fail to recall them now. They were all true. I could not agree with him less. I was familiar with the line of argument. I promised I would do some thinking about it. I have kept my promise. What you read in the following paragraphs is the product of that thinking. I have labeled it: **'The Root of the Problem'**.

The visual image of the concept of the 'root' is an interesting one: something which is 'basic, essential, important, and fundamental, but at the same time, branched, varied in length, shape, thickness, etc. And more importantly, it is more often hidden in the soil; no harm done, it is not easily observable, and what you may observe is only the tip of an iceberg. "Our teachers are not motivated enough." The problem does not seem to have only one and an easy answer. Like 'root' image it exhibits a network of branching, lies deep in the soil, and feeds the rest of the plant. **Where does the root of the problem lie?**