Upgrading Students’ Oral Performance via the Utilisation of Positive Self-talk and Personal Goal-setting.
The Case of First Year Students at the Department of English, ENSC

PhD Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate in Didactics and English Language Teaching

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I gratefully and respectfully dedicate this thesis;

First and for most, glory to our martyrs.

To my very precious parents who offered their tireless unconditional love, companionship and unwavering support throughout this long process. To my husband and to our much loved children, the heart of my happiness, Rahma and Yahya who have taken the journey with me; “you should be very proud of yourselves”.

To “the true warriors”, those who attempt each time to beat the enemy within: “negative inner-speech”.

To ant strong; the best teacher I ever seen!

And to the dearest reader

“A public toast to all of you.”
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“What we hear from others about us is considered important, but the most important thing is what we say to ourselves about ourselves that has the most powerful impact on our mood, feelings, behaviours, health, performance, success and happiness...”

Meriem BOULKRAA
ABSTRACT

Positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) are currently considered among the most potent self-management learning strategies, and as major factors within educational psychology that can fully be exploited by university students in order to bolster up their performance (achievements), in general, and their oral performance (speaking skill), in particular. The present study is an attempt towards sensitizing learners about the importance and usefulness of these learning strategies in aiding them produce more natural proficient English conversations, and demonstrating that such types of cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) have generally been found to be effective in enhancing students’ performance in a variety of skills (such as the conversational skill). Specifically, the main aim in writing this thesis is to explore the potential effects of P.S.T and P.G.S on students’ oral performance. Another equally significant aspect of this research is to investigate whether and to what extent these cognitive-motivational strategies are used by students as well as the utility of instructing a selected range of self-management learning strategies in order to improve students’ conversational skills, and thereby facilitating the teaching/learning operation. We hypothesize that if learners are sensitized about the significance and the usefulness of utilizing P.S.T and P.G.S as effective ‘self-management’ learning strategies, they would guide themselves to enhance positively their oral performance. For this purpose, a pre-test; a four-month follow-up study of one group (an intervention on building students awareness for utilizing P.S.T and P.G.S) and a post-test have been established, in addition to a series of questionnaires administered to first year students and to instructors at the English Department of the Teaching Training School, Constantine. Findings suggest that P.S.T and P.G.S truly have a potent cognitive-motivational role (positive significant effect) on students’ conversational skill, a fact which all the instructors in the questionnaire agree upon. Furthermore, as students’ questionnaires have revealed, more than half the students have been found unaware of the potential effects of self-management learning strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S). On the basis of our results, we confirm the importance, the usefulness and the effectiveness of self-talking positively and self-setting goals from the part of students for more fluent natural conversational English. Moreover, research findings revealed interesting implications and suggested recommendations for language learners to use these cognitive-motivational strategies, and for Oral Expression teachers it is worthwhile to assign considerable significance to the instruction of these potential self-management learning strategies.

key words: positive self-talk; personal goal; setting; oral performance
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

S.T. Self-talk
P.S.T. Positive self-talk
N.S.T. Negative self-talk
G.S. Goal-setting
P.G.S. Personal goal-setting
E.F.L. English as a foreign language
E.N.S.C. Ecole Normale Supérieure de Constantine
L.M.D. Licence Master Doctorat
O.E. Oral Expression
Q. Question
VS. Versus
L2 Second Language
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1. Central Problems

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7. Structure of the Study
At any stage in the operation of learning, it would be very beneficial for learners to utilize some self-management learning strategies to pave the ground for them to be outstandingly successful students. Since the cognitive-motivational aspects are of great importance in the learning process. Our motivation to carry out this research work is an attempt to hit two birds with a stone, by choosing to work on ‘positive self-talk’ and ‘personal goal-setting’, as two potent cognitive-motivational strategies. Broadly, self-talk is the running dialogue inside the head or the mind chatter. To be precise, positive self-talk means to talk to oneself in a self-rewarding and motivating manner, i.e. self-talking positively. On the other hand, personal-goal setting means to self-set objectives, aims or end-results, and be committed to attain them.

At the university level, these crucial strategies can fully be exploited by students in order to improve their performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular. For the simplest reason that, the manner in which students mentally talk to themselves, i.e. self-talk either positively or negatively, impacts greatly their performance. In other words, if it is indeed very often that students self-talk positively, they would then focus on the things they do well, stress and identify their strengths, competence and potentialities. The other reason is that, when self-setting [learning] goals from the very beginning of the year this would give students direction and a specific focus, i.e. it gives them something to monitor and measure their performance against and it ensures that they are entirely aware of what, precisely, they want to pursue. As a matter of fact, one significant way to help bring about change in students’ performance (achievement) and success is to focus

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1 Since it is our dependent variable in the current research.
on utilizing some efficient self-management learning strategies that would aid them learn more successfully, like applying cognitive-motivational strategies such as positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S).

1. Central Problems

Due to the widespread issues observed with regard to the insufficient commitment, enthusiasm and effort exertion of students (namely university learners), as well as the increased language learning low performance, achievements and failures, it is noticeable that the majority of learners, even those who possess great potentialities and those with the most remarkable smartness, do not self-set clearly defined goals (learning goals) from the very beginning of the year, and they proceed in the learning enterprise without having specific precise end-results, aims or objectives to ultimately attain. In other words, what truly happens is that the majority of students get used to the bad habit of learning solely when examinations approach to get the average grade in each module (the compensation system) and to move from one year to another without stressing or highlighting the central goal behind getting the diploma, which is to enrich one’s knowledge in a given domain. Precisely, they do not focus their attention in mastering the language, by attempting to learn some practical useful methods on how to make goals and plans, i.e. how to prioritize and how to manage their time appropriately to achieve their previously self-set goals. Rather, they most of the time, rely entirely upon their instructors, i.e. to assign goals for them, neglecting that they have to deploy unmeasured efforts from their part to become independent autonomous learners, and they do not construe that at the university level; students are expected to rely, mostly, on themselves, (because the teacher is considered as a motivator and facilitator), since it is a learner-centered
instruction compared to the high school instruction, which is a teacher-centered instruction.

Moreover, it is important to note that it is so obvious that language learners have to be at first motivated to learn and to set goals, and the fact is that generally speaking, students attribute their demotivation to instructors’ methods of teaching, and they do not conceive that self-setting goals can aid them, not only in directing their learning process but also to intrinsically motivate themselves. In that, goal attainment in itself raises students’ self-motivation to set other (learning) goals which in turn boost their intrinsic motivation to be committed, enthusiastic and energetic to perform better.

Another main cause and a real source of the problem behind students’ lack of commitment, enthusiasm, persistence and unsuccessful performance, is negative self-talk (N.S.T). Inspite of the great abilities learners can possess, this destructive, detrimental self-demeaning self-talk hinders them from reaching their full potential. Because these negative counter-statements reduce and decrease students’ motivation, self-efficacy, perseverance, enthusiasm, effort exertion and creativity. For the simple reason that, students too often start each morning by having negative self-talk (inner-speech), i.e. self-talking negatively, and move along through the day, expecting solely bad things to happen. In other words, how they feel about themselves, at the University, precisely, inside the classroom, with their classmates and with their instructors to whom they have to communicate with, all starts with those first internal messages they have been saying to themselves (negative self-talk) from the early
morning\(^1\); they could take, for instance, the form of a ‘song’ running through their heads throughout the day. As a matter of fact, all these obsessive thoughts (negative inner-speech) increase learners’ anxiety to try out the language, boredom and hesitation to participate in the classroom, and decrease their attentional focus, concentration, energies and interest, which would affect, greatly, their level of achievement, mainly their [oral] performance. Thus it sounds simple, but in fact, the subconscious mind is listening to every word students say to themselves and expect it as the truth and respond accordingly. This means, what learners self-talk in each early morning determines, to a great extent, how the day will be, i.e. how they would perform in that day.

As a matter of fact, students have to self-set some [learning] goals in order to direct and energize their efforts for the points that need improvements. They have also to self-talk positively (encourage positive self-statements or affirmations) for an outstanding oral performance. Therefore, the apparent issue that we are going to explore in the present research is that the majority of students, seldom self-set goals but rather wait for their instructors to assign goals for them and they most of the time underestimate the potentialities they possess, and for that they adopt negative detrimental mind chatter (self-talk negatively). Hence, we would analyze in depth the primary causes\(^2\), behind students’ unsuccessful performance, in general, and their ineffective oral performance, in particular.

\(^1\) That is when they wake up, when they open their eyes, and before leaving home.
\(^2\) The unexploited self-management cognitive-motivational strategies: positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal setting (P.G.S).
2. Significance of the Study

The attainment of our research aims and objectives would provide some insights and pedagogical implications to implement in higher education contexts, language learning settings. Specifically, our research is in the field of educational psychology and didactics, in an area where few studies have dealt thoroughly with self-management learning strategies. To be more precise, we might aid students to see clearly the significance of utilizing cognitive-motivational strategies [positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S)] in the operation of learning. In addition to that, instructors have to teach, push and encourage their students to use them in a constant basis; to help them bolster-up their performance (oral performance), which in turn would facilitate the process of teaching for instructors. As a matter of fact, the observable concrete results which would be gained from the present study, would display what, exactly, is needed for positive change to occur. Hence, our research findings and conclusions would be a starting point for further research, about the utility of such self-management cognitive-motivational strategies. Furthermore, this study is also designed (as it will be stated in some detail in the section below) to further validate the constructs of P.S.T and P.G.S as ways of conceptualizing students’ psychological well-being and provides a preliminary exploration of how one might intervene to raise students’ level of performance. Therefore, the information derived from the study would contribute to an understanding of the role P.S.T and P.G.S in promoting/ enhancing students’ performance (such as the conversational skill; oral performance).
3. Aims of Research

The present study, generally, attempts to sensitize students on the significance and the usefulness of positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) in helping them promote their academic performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular. More precisely, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the potential benefits of utilizing P.S.T and P.G.S as an efficacious and effectual cognitive-motivational strategies for learners. This research has three primary specific aims: (1) Building and raising students’ awareness about the importance of taking into account the cognitive-motivational factors (aspects) in their learning process, i.e. paying more attention to self-management learning strategies. (2) Exploring and determining the extent to which P.S.T and P.G.S improve students’ oral performance. (3) Fostering the practical use of these cognitive-motivational methods by our learners; inside and outside the classroom.

4. Research Questions

The specific research questions underlying this research are:

➢ To what extent do students attempt to utilize self-management learning strategies to aid themselves foster their [oral] performance?

➢ To what extent do they value positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) as potent cognitive-motivational strategies that would help and encourage them perform better?
Are there any considerable efforts exerted on the part of instructors (mainly oral expression teachers), attempting to sensitize their students by raising their awareness about the significant role that these learning strategies could play in improving their [oral] performance?

Are there any real significant associations or connections that exist between students’ self-talk and goal-setting and their academic performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?

What are the overall, cognitive benefits for students of the utilization of the two cognitive-motivational strategies?

5. Research Hypothesis

It is postulated that students would perform more efficiently and would better promote their cognitive functioning if they focus more on the unlimited power of their minds, say, return interest to the self, by activating the hidden potential they possess (their unsuspected capabilities) through the utilization of self-management cognitive-motivational strategies: positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S). Based on these presuppositions, it is hypothesized that: If learners are sensitized about the significance and the usefulness of utilizing positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) as effective ‘self-management’ learning strategies, they would guide themselves to enhance positively their oral performance (speaking skill).
In simpler words, learners’ higher levels of performance could be associated with the utilization of self-management cognitive-motivational strategies. And for that, we hypothesize that self-talk and goal-setting interventions would affect students’ perceptions of their self-regulatory strategies that would in turn impact positively their performance inside the classroom.

6. Methodology

The bulk of our research centers on exploring and inspecting the postulated hypothesis and by the same token to answer the previously stated research questions, in order to fit and attain the primary objective of our research about the potent role of self-management cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) in promoting and enhancing students’ [Oral] performance. We will, then, be using two main tools. On the one hand, two sets of questionnaires will be administered to the subjects (students) and another for colleagues (instructors). On the other hand, a t-test will be used to quantitatively measure and evaluate the participants’ scores obtained from the pre-post-test.

Data will be gathered by means of the first questionnaire entitled self-talk questionnaire (Sel. Tal. Quest) which is intended to elicit from the population of learners (a sample of twenty first year students (N=20) at the Teacher Training School of Constantine (ENSC), from a general population of one hundred English students of the Department of Languages) their beliefs and attitudes toward the significance of positive self-talk (P.S.T) in boosting their oral performance, also to see if they are, to some extent, aware about its potent role and at the same time to
sensitize them about its usefulness for more effective learning. Students’ second questionnaire which is entitled goal-setting questionnaire (Goal Set Quest) tries to probe subjects’ opinions about whether they consider the cognitive-motivational strategy (P.G.S) as an efficient self-management method that would aid them improve their learning achievements (oral performance). The other questionnaire (teachers’ questionnaire), which is of great importance in our research, is intended to probe from the population of teachers (fifteen instructors, who are experienced teachers at the Department of English at ENSC, and the majority of them have taught Oral Expression module and a great majority of them instruct at Frères Mentouri University, Constantine) their viewpoints and beliefs about the importance and the utility of utilizing these self-management learning strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S), that is, to what extent they agree with our presuppositions and beliefs. Therefore, questionnaires results would be of great importance for our research; since they address directly to the three main variables\(^1\) under exploration, by analyzing students’ and teachers’ free responses and to see whether or not their answers are in the direction of our hypothesis.

To consolidate our exploration in the present research, it is important to include a training program with the view of implementing P.S.T and P.G.S learning strategies. At first, a pre-test will be used to test our subjects’ oral performance. Then, the training program (an intervention) will take place in order to implement the two cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T) and (P.G.S) in real classroom settings, an intervention which will last four months to implement the program. Therefore, a

\(^1\) Positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) as the independent variables and students’ oral performance as the dependent variable.
post-test will be undertaken, at the end of the program, by the participants in order to re-assess their oral performance after conducting the training. Overall, the grades or scores gained from the pre-post-test would be compared, analyzed and statistically measured to observe students’ oral performance before and after being trained, say, observing any remarkable difference.

7. Structure of the Study

The present research consists of six main chapters. The first four chapters are consecrated to the literature review about the basic constructs of the study, whereas the last two chapters will be devoted to the analysis and the interpretation of the results of the questionnaires and the experiment (a training program) on the potential effects of P.S.T and P.G.S on learners’ oral performance.

In the first chapter, we will offer a synthesized historical background, i.e. a general review about motivation as an introductory chapter to our forthcoming main chapters, since the motivational factor is of a crucial importance for efficient learning to take place. We will focus, essentially, on self-motivation, for it is the predominant type and because the utilization of the two cognitive-motivational strategies under investigation P.S.T and P.G.S serve to bolster-up learners’ intrinsic motivation, which in turn would foster their [oral] performance.

The second chapter, is mainly consecrated to the explanation of our chief construct “self-talk” (S.T) in some detail, with a major focus on positive self-talk (P.S.T) as an effective cognitive-motivational strategy and its association with language learners successful performance. We will first talk about learning strategies and we will introduce some criteria for an effective learning strategy. Thereafter we
will discuss how learning strategies improve self-regulated learning. Cognition would also be briefly introduced and discussed. We will also specify how self-talk influences emotions and behaviour in general. And we will end up by elucidating how the utilization of positive self-talk (cognitive influences) improves performance.

The third chapter is basically concerned with discussing, in some length, our second main concept “goal-setting”, highlighting precisely self-set goals (personal goal-setting) and demonstrating their utility in promoting students efficient performance. We will try to shed light on SMART goals, self-management including setting priorities, planning and time-management. And we will, tentatively, discuss under what conditions goal-setting can promote learning. Moreover, the motivational effects of goal-setting, and the effects of goals on performance will be elucidated.

The fourth chapter presents an overview about the speaking skill\(^1\) (oral performance) and its significance in learning English as a foreign language will be mentioned. We will also provide a detailed section about communication, including verbal communication skills and non verbal communication skills. We will also discuss and explore how to structure a speech; how to develop an effective opening, main body, and close. The factors associated with speaking such as speech anxiety and how to control nervousness and anxiety will also be dealt with.

The fifth chapter is devoted to research methodology. It then, discusses the adopted data collection tool (the questionnaire) and describes the different steps in its construction. The chapter then explains how the results are exploited and provides a

\(^1\) Since it is the skill, (out of the other remaining skills: listening, reading, writing), under investigation.
detailed presentation and interpretation of the data obtained from the different questionnaires which we proposed to students and teachers.

The sixth chapter is entirely devoted to the description and interpretation of the results of our training program, which is about sensitizing learners about the usefulness and the effectiveness of utilizing self-management cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T) and (P.G.S) to perform better orally. Hence, in this chapter we will, tentatively, attempt to answer the research questions and check the findings of our experiment, to see whether they are in the direction of our hypothesis.

Last but not least, we will provide the reader with some useful conclusions and we will propose some practical recommendations for students to implement, and we will suggest some avenues for further research about self-management learning strategies.
CHAPTER ONE
MOTIVATION AND SELF-MOTIVATION

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1.1. Introduction

There have been countless experiments and studies about human learning processes, which show that motivation is a vital component, a critical prerequisite or a key factor for effective learning. That is, learning is unlikely to take place in the absence of adequate motivation.

In this chapter, we will try, significantly, to display that motivation has been found to, inevitably, affect language learning success, and we will also attempt to show that without sufficient motivation, even students with the most remarkable capabilities cannot fulfill long-term learning goals. High motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one’s language aptitude and learning conditions.

We will also try to discuss the two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsinc. And we will be mainly focusing on the intrinsinc form of motivation, for it is narrowly related to the main concepts (positive self-talk and personal goal-setting) to be elucidated in the present research. This will be discussed in the light of how motivational factors can help students enhance and improve their own learning (like the speaking skill).

Finally, we will try also to demonstrate whether the process of learning requires from the learner to be, merely, extrinsically motivated or whether a motivation of an intrinsic form would be more effective, beneficial and lasting. We will try to shed light on the significance and the necessity of intrinsinc motivation (self-motivation), by demonstrating its effect on students’ attention (focus), cognitive processes, autonomy, creativity, persistence and so. And we will display, mainly to
learners, how to enthuse their internal motives and how to sustain their self-motivation (intrinsic motivation).

1.2. Motivation: an overview

Educational psychologists have long recognized the importance of motivation for supporting students’ learning. More recently, many educators and psychologists emphasized the significance of focusing on methods or strategies that may encourage students’ motivation; mainly self-motivation. The purpose of this literature review is fourfold: (a) to explore the ways in which motivation has been defined by researchers, (b) to investigate how motivation develops, (c) to learn how learners can boost their motivation (intrinsic motivation), by using various strategies, and (d) to show how intrinsic motivation is more significant and a driving force in the operation of learning.

1.3. Definition of motivation

Motivation is certainly complicated if one attempts to define it, as we will see further down.

Motivation is that inner drive that causes individuals (namely the learner) to exert tremendous efforts to perform a task so as to fulfill particular learning goals, with this impulse or drive or strong desire they can go beyond, or overcome obstacles and move towards effective learning. For Floyd (1984) motivation is the combination of effort to learn the language, plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning a language together with favourable attitudes towards learning the language. In language learning, to Gardner (1985: 177) and his associates, motivation consists of
desire to learn the language, motivational intensity, and attitudes towards learning the language”. Pintrich and Schunk (2002) note that the term ‘motivation’ comes from the Latin verb ‘movere’ which means to ‘move’. Pintrich and Schunk (ibid: 104) state that motivation is ‘evoked’ to explain “what gets people going, keeps them going, and helps them finish tasks”.

Similarly, Brophy (2004) states that motives are, generally, construed as ‘hypothetical constructs’ used to explain why people are doing what they are doing. Moreover, Trash and Elliot (2001) view motives as relatively general ‘needs’ or ‘desires’ that energized people to initiate purposeful action sequences. For Williams and Burden (1997: 116) motivation is:

A state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort, in order to attain a previously set goal.

Slavin (2003) specifies that motivation is concerned with the factors (forces) that ‘direct’ and ‘energize’ the behavior. In Feldman’s view (1997, in Slavin, ibid) motivation is one of the most important ‘ingredients’ of effective learning. Additionally, motivation is also one of the most difficult to measure. Students who are eagerly wanting to learn put in the effort needed to learn despite of the complexity of the material and will remember the material learnt for the rest of their lives, for they were learning that task or material with fun and enjoyment.

It is, again, for Slavin (2003: 359) one of the most critical components of learning. In plain language, motivation is what gets students going, keeps them
going, and determines where they are trying to go. And in general, “Motivation is an internal process that activates, guides, and maintains behavior over time”. In the same vein, Child (2004: 345) proposes a working definition of motivation: “internal processes and external incentives which spur us on to satisfy some need”.

To McShane and Von Glinow (2000) motivation refers to forces within a person that affect his or her ‘direction’, ‘intensify’, and ‘persistence’ of voluntary behavior. In simpler words, motivated learners are willing to exert a particular level of effort (intensify), for a certain amount of time (persistence), toward a particular goal (direction). Likewise, Maehr and Meyer (1997) define motivation as theoretical construct used to explain the ‘initiation’ ‘direction’, ‘intensity’, ‘persistence’, and ‘quality’ of behavior, mainly ‘goal-directed’ behavior.

In the same line of thought, Lumsden (1994) analyses students’ involvement towards education, as a consequence of their motivation. And Marshal (1987) views students’ motivation as a force beneficial to the learner. Moreover, Ames (1990) states that motivation to learning is dependant on long-term, quality attachment in learning and a pledge to the process of learning. Bomia et. al., (1997) suggest that student’s motivation involves willingness, need, desire, and obligation to participate and be booming in the learning process. Additionally, Turner (1995: 413) considers motivation to be synonymous with cognitive engagement, which he defines as “voluntary uses of high-level self-regulated learning strategies, such as paying attention, connecting, planning, and monitoring”.

Broussard and Garrison (2004: 106) broadly define motivation as “the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something”. Likewise, Guay et.al., (2010: 712) view
motivation as “the reasons underlying behavior”. Moreover, Gavin (2007: 14) views motivation as “a key factor in successful learning”. Additionally, Jordan et.al., (2008: 154) define motivation also as “an important factor in academic success”.

In the classroom context, the concept of students’ motivation for Brophy (2010) is used to explain the degree to which learners invest focus; ‘attention’ and exert ‘effort’. In the same context, Dembo (2004: 8) views motivation as “the internal processes that give behavior its energy and direction”. Interestingly, these internal processes include ‘goals’, ‘beliefs’, ‘perceptions’, and ‘expectations’. For example, students’ persistence on one task is often related to how competent the student believes she is to complete the task at hand. Also her beliefs about the causes of her successes and failures on present tasks influence her motivation and behavior on future tasks. Within Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1992), for example, students who attribute failure to lack of ability behave differently from students who attribute failure to lack of effort (cf. section 1.6). In the context of metacognition, motivation is defined as “beliefs and attitudes that affect the use and development of cognitive and metacognitive skills” (Schraw et.al., 2006: 112).

Hence, motivation involves a constellation of beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions that are all closely related. As a result, various approaches to motivation can focus on cognitive behaviors (such as monitoring and strategy use), non-cognitive aspects (such as perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes), or both. Conceptually, motivation should not be confused with either volition or optimism. Motivation is related to, but distinct from, emotion. Clearly enough, motivation is the driving force by which humans achieve their ultimate goals and objectives. Thus, it
should come to no surprise that without motives students cannot have the desire to do anything.

1.4. Brief definitions of key terms associated with motivation

Learners experience several types of motivation, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In addition to that, students experience some motivational orientations, such as instrumental and integrative motivation (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995); as well as goal-orientation, expectancy value, and expectancy of success (Wigfield and Eccles, 2002).

❖ **Achievement motivation:** Achievement motivation is the motivation associated with the expectancy of success and the perceived value of task as well as ability beliefs and motivation to perform tasks. As the perceived likelihood of success increases, the perceived task value increase and consequently, learners’ positive motivation increases (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

❖ **Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation:** extrinsic motivation is regulated by external, introjected, identified and intergrated styles, with the locus of causality ranging from external to internal, respectively. Intrinsic motivation is internally motivated and locus of causality is internal (cf. intrinsic motivation in some length in this chapter). The regulation of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is self-determined; with internal regulation being regulated by enjoyment, interest and satisfaction. External regulation is externally regulated by compliance, and external rewards and punishments; introjected regulation is somewhat externally regulated by self-control, ego-involvement, internal reward and punishments, identified regulation is somewhat internally regulated by personal importance and conscious involvement;
and integrated regulation is internally regulated by congruence, awareness and synthesis with the self (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

- **Instrumental motivation:** the instrumental motivation orientation is externally regulated and is linked to extrinsic rewards and/or punishments. A motivated individual may be defined as one who desires to achieve a goal, works hard to achieve that goal and enjoys the activity involved (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995). Additionally, instrumental motivational orientation language use, is associated with opportunities to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities developed in practical situations.

- **Integrative Motivation:** the integrative motivation in language refers to a learner’s desire to integrate or adapt to the culture and language where the language learned is the dominant language. This orientation is more internally regulated; however, it can be somewhat externally regulated given the number of external variables influencing learning (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995).

- **Motivation associations:** the primary source of motivation may be associated with other types of motivation, such as goal orientation, achievement, instrumental motivational orientations, and integrative motivational orientations. These orientations may help develop the primary source of motivation for language learning, related career goals, and language use.

- **Self-regulated learners:** Pintrich (2000) suggests that, self-regulated learners are learners who actively participate in their own learning process by regulating their learning strategies, behavior, and motivation, during the learning process.
**Academic motivation:** Gottfried (1990: 525) defines academic motivation as “the enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity, persistence; task-endogeny; and the learning of challenging difficult and novel tasks”.

### 1.5. Relationship to other concepts

Undeniably, motivation is related to a number of other academic factors, including several so-called 21st century skills identified as significant in preparing learners for the workforce and lifelong learning. For instance, motivation has been linked to critical thinking. Definitions of critical thinking vary widely, but common elements of most definitions include the following component skills:

- Making infrences using inductive or deductive reasoning (Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990; Paul, 1992; Willingham, 2007),
- Judging or evaluating (case, 2005; Ennis, 1985, Facione, 1990; Lipman, 1988; Tindal & Nolet, 1995), and

In addition to skills or abilities, critical thinking also entails dispositions. These dispositions, which can be seen as attitudes or habits of mind, include factors such as open-and fair-mindedness, a propensity to seek reasons, inquisitiveness, a desire to be well-informed, flexibility, and respect for and willingness to entertain diverse viewpoints (Bailin et.al., 1999; Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990; Halpern,
The disposition to think critically has been defined as the “consistent internal motivation to engage problems and make decisions by using critical thinking” (Facione, 2000: 65). Thus, students’ motivation is viewed as a necessary precondition for the exercise of critical thinking skills and abilities. Similarly, Halonen (1995) notes that a person’s propensity or disposition to demonstrate higher-order thinking relates to his or her motivation. Halpern (1998) argues that effort and persistence are two of the principal dispositions that support critical thinking, and Paul (1992) maintains that perseverance is one of the ‘traits of mind’ that render someone a critical thinker. Thus, motivation appears to be a supporting condition for critical thinking in that unmotivated individuals are unlikely to exhibit critical thought.

On the other hand, few motivation researchers have suggested the causal link goes the other way. In particular, motivation research suggests that difficult or challenging tasks, particularly those emphasizing to learners than easy tasks that can be solved through rote application of a predetermined algorithm (Turner, 1995). Pintirich’s framework holds that cognition and motivation affect one another, which means both affect academic achievement and that both, in turn, are affected by the social context of learning (Linnenbrink & Pitrinch, 2002; Pintrich, 2003). Significantly, motivation is also related to metacognition, which is defined most simply as “thinking about thinking”. Other definitions include the following:

- “The knowledge and the control children have over their own thinking and learning activities” (Cross & Paris, 1988: 131). For Hennessey (1999: 3) metacognitive skills involve:
• “Awareness of one's own thinking, awareness of the content of one’s conceptions, an active monitoring of one’s cognitive processes in relationship to further learning, and an application of a set of heuristics as an effective device for helping people organize their methods of attack on problems in general”.

And for Martinez (2006: 696) metacognitive skills include: “the monitoring and control of thought”. In addition to that, metacognition entails two components: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge includes knowledge about oneself as a learner and (as we shall see in some details in the subsequent chapter: self-talk) about the factors that might impact performance (declarative), knowledge about strategies (procedural), and knowledge about when why to use strategies (conditional). Metacognitive regulation is the monitoring of one’s cognition and includes planning activities, monitoring of awareness of comprehension and task performance, and evaluation of the efficacy of monitoring process and strategies. Insights experienced while monitoring and regulating cognition play a role in the development and refinement of metacognitive knowledge. In turn, cognitive knowledge appears to facilitate the ability to regulate cognition. The two are empirically related and may be integrated in the form of metacognitive theories, which are formal or informal frameworks for representing and organising beliefs about knowledge.

In the context of metacognition, motivation is defined as “beliefs and attitudes that affect the use and the development of cognitive and metacognitive skills” (Schraw et.al., 2006: 112). Metacognition entails the management of affective and motivational states, and metacognitive strategies can improve persistence at
challenging tasks (Cross & Paris, 1988; Martinez, 2006). As Turner (1995: 419) observes, “because strategy use is effortful and time-consuming and because it requires active monitoring and evaluation, it is an indicator of students’ cognitive engagement in literacy”. Effortful control, which refers to the ability to monitor and regulate the impact of emotions and motivational states on one’s performance, is one aspect of the executive functioning inherent in metacognition. Research suggests that effortful control among preschool and elementary-age children is associated with better social relationships at school, higher academic engagement, and improved achievement (Eisenberg, 2010).

1.6. A Model of motivation

Arousing the learners’ interest towards the language and the language community, however, is not by itself enough to keep learners motivated for such a lengthy process as the mastery of a foreign language. Williams and Burden (1997: 121) present a non-linear model which separates the motivational process into three stages. As shown in the following figure:

**Reasons for doing something → Deciding to do something → Sustaining the effort or persisting**

**Figure 01: A Three-stage Model of Motivation**

Williams and Burden’s (1997) model reflects a perception of the motivational process as composed of three strategies: reasons for doing something, deciding to do something, and sustaining the effort or persisting. They argue that the first two stages may be seen as more concerned with initiating motivation while the last stage
involves sustaining motivation. It should, however, be noted that they emphasize that these stages are ‘non-linear’, in that, reasons for doing something will affect persistence, the very act of sustaining effort can give rise to further reasons for action (Williams and Burden, 1997). Hence, Williams and Burden (ibid: 122) see that it is more realistic to perceive the relationship as in the following figure:

![An interactive model of motivation](image)

**Figure 02:** An interactive model of motivation

Another classroom-oriented model (table) was developed by Williams et.al., (1997) from a social-constructivist perspective. Motivational factors are divided into internal and external factors. This results in a model very different in conception; one example, is the degree to which an activity is perceived as being interesting. In Williams and Burden’s model, it is treated as an internal factor. Therefore, this model serves as a reminder that motivation is a complex field that benefits from multiple perspectives.
### Table 1: Williams and Burdens’ (1997) framework of L2 motivation (in Dornyei, 2001a: 20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>INTERNAL FACTORS</strong></th>
<th><strong>EXTERNAL FACTORS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic Interest of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Significant Others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• arousal of curiosity</td>
<td>• parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• optimal degree of challenge</td>
<td>• Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• optimal degree of challenge</td>
<td>• Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Value of activity</strong></td>
<td><strong>The nature of interaction with significant others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• personal relevance</td>
<td>• mediated learning experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• anticipated value of outcomes</td>
<td>• the nature and amount of feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• intrinsic value attributed to the activity</td>
<td>• rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• intrinsic value attributed to the activity</td>
<td>• the nature and amount of appropriate praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of agency</strong></td>
<td>• punishments, sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• locus of causality</td>
<td>• the learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• awareness of developing skills mastery in a chosen area</td>
<td>• comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• self-efficacy</td>
<td>• resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-concept</strong></td>
<td>• time of day, week, year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• realistic awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in skills required</td>
<td>• size of class and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• personal definitions and judgements of Success and failure</td>
<td>• class and school ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• self-worth concern</td>
<td>• the broader context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• learned helplessness</td>
<td>• wider family networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>• the local education system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to language learning in general</td>
<td>• conflicting interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to the target language</td>
<td>• cultural norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to the target language community and culture</td>
<td>• societal expectations and attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other affective states</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• confidence</td>
<td><strong>Developmental age and stage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• anxiety, fear</td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 1: Williams and Burdens’ (1997) framework of L2 motivation (in Dornyei, 2001a: 20)
1.7. Sources of motivation

Not surprisingly, some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect their instructors to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them. Unfortunately, there is no single magical formula for motivating students. Many factors affect a given student’s motivation to work and to learn (Bligh, 1971; Sass, 1989), interest in the subject matter, perception of its usefulness, general desire to achieve, self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as patience and persistence. And of course, not all students are motivated by the same values, needs, desires, or wants. Some students will be motivated by the approval of others, some by overcoming challenges.

When talking about primary sources of motivation the term is used to describe the learner’s main motivation or reason for pursuing the language learning goal, related career and associated goals, language use. The primary source of motivation is the reason, impetus, driving force or stimulus that motivates an individual to persist. The primary source of motivation during learning could be internal, external or co-regulated and associated motivational orientations may influence or develop the primary source of motivation. Persistence is associated with internally regulated motivation to achieve long-term goals. And interest is associated with developing long-term career goals.

Motivation to do something can come about in many ways (Stipek, 1988). With this in mind, Slavin (2003) states that motivation can be a ‘personality characteristic’; individuals might have stable, lasting interests in participating in such broad categories of activities as academic; sports, or social activities. Slavin,
(ibid) adds that motivation can come from intrinsic characteristics of a task, (as stated earlier). For instance, by making Algeria history fun, social, active, and engaging and therefore making learners eager to learn it. Motivation can also come from sources extrinsic to the task (or from extrinsic characteristics of a task) as general desire to fulfill or perceptions of the usefulness of the task.

It is worth to note that, broadly speaking, the main sources of motivation among students can be detected from other factors. As for instance, teachers’ methods of teaching; like including some tasks and activities… and so on. EFL teachers’ qualities, parents and family background, English as a school subject itself, the desire to integrate into English-speaking communities and the instrumental or influential importance of English in society. It is significant to know what factors shape students’ motivation. A wealth of studies has been conducted to identify the factors that influence the development of students’ motivation.

Brophy (1986) suggests that motivation to learn can be taken as the ability acquired through general experience, communication of expectations and direct socialization by other sources. Like for instance, parents and teachers. Hence, teachers and parents are the main intermediaries who play potent roles in the development of students’ motivation. Parents being the initial source of motivation; they introduce the world to their children, help them to construe and create the image of the outside world by answering their questions, familiarizing them with different situations, telling different rituals and stories and thus children develop their attitude toward life and learning. Certainly, if children have developed confidence, sense of self-worth and competence they will be ready to take challenges and
successes. On the other hand, if children do not perceive themselves competent, they will develop an internal fear or failure or cost for appreciation or reward. Thus, it is very important how they start their first fight. At times parents are so curious about their children’s education and career that they keep reminding and inculcating in their minds the idea that education is the only solution for future miseries. Even they threaten to punish their children for poor performance. In such circumstances the child believes that education is a compulsion for them and is inevitable to survive. That is to say, in fact parents are considered the primary source of motivation (or unmotivation) for their children from an early age. Schools, universities policies and goals in academic settings are also regarded as factors that influence the development of student motivation, i.e. external rewards can also attract students to achieve certain level of performance.

In academic institutions the role of the instructor is very vital to help students to develop an attitude towards learning. Raffini (1993) ascertains that teachers’ beliefs about their students; the expectations they hold for students either positive or negative, exert a powerful influence on students’ behavior towards learning. Deborah et.al. (1999) also state that large number of students attempt to learn if their teachers expect them to learn. Thus, instructors should view themselves as ‘active socialization agents’ capable of stimulating learners’ motivation to learn (Brophy, 1986). In addition, Stipek (1988) and Proctor (1984) also emphasize the role of teacher efficacy as a powerful input element related to student motivation.

Overall, different individuals (students) are motivated by different things. Some are driven by achievement. Others are motivated by the approval of peers and
colleagues. Others find motivation in the desire to get ahead. Surely enough, it appears that learners are driven by internal or external standards. Internal standards are the ones that the student has set for herself. For example, a student says: “I want to do a great job and feel good about myself”. Whereas, external standards are those that can be found outside the learner. Like saying: “I want to be effective in my studies so as to get great grades/averages”.

1.8. Students’ motivation and academic achievement: (the role of motivation in achievement)

Students’ motivation is an important focus of research in higher education. The research in the area has primarily focused on students’ motivation and academic achievement, particularly, owing to the significance of academic performance in their professional life. Thus, it is worthy that educational thinkers identify the factors that will help in facilitating the learning process. This will assist education community to predict students’ academic performance and identifying students before their grades begin to fall. Importantly, Lumsden (1994) has investigated that passion to learn seems to shrink as individuals grow. Learning at times becomes compulsion than pleasure, that is why large number of students leave education before graduation. Due to unpleasant attitude of students towards education, very few are actually mentally present in the classroom.

It is worth to note that, achievement is one of the basic ingredients necessary for one’s success in learning settings. Robbins et.al., (2004) describe it as one’s motivation to achieve success, enjoyment of surmounting obstacles and completing tasks undertaken, and as a drive to strive for success and excellence. Studies have
shown the predictive power of achievement motivation for academic success at university. A meta-analysis by Robbins et.al. (ibid) shows that achievement motivation is predictive of university students’ academic performance beyond traditional predictors. Within a similar vein, Wolfe and Johnson (1995) elucidate that motivational factors in the operation of learning help, to a great extent, learners to better fulfill their academic learning goals (we will see it in some length in the subsequent chapter: personal goals setting).

It needs to be noted here that empirical work has focused on psychological and contextual factors that predict academic achievement. Consequently, it is worthy repeating that motivation has an important impact on students’ academic achievement. In that, students motivation influences students’ effort exertion at a given task or activity, which is considered challenging to some point, influences their persistence or perseverance while facing difficulties, and therefore helps them attain their learning goals and objectives in the long run. As Gardner (1999: 76) states it: “if one is motivated to learn, one is likely to work hard, to be persistent, to be stimulated rather than discouraged by obstacles, and to continue to learn even when not pressed to do so, for the sheer pleasure of quenching curiosity or stretching one’s faculties in unfamiliar directions”. Thus far, research has shown that motivation is an important factor to consider in examining academic success (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For instance, wealth of studies have shown that intrinsic motivation, in particular, toward education (i.e., doing academic activities out of pleasure) positively influences academic achievement (we will be focusing on intrinsic motivation in the following section).
More recently, the practice to juxtapose extrinsic and intrinsic motives has been questioned. The main line of argumentation has been that striving for good grades does not necessarily undermines the pleasure that learners can get from the learning process itself. Studies have been done to establish whether intrinsic objectives can operate alongside the extrinsic incentives and under which conditions the two can coexist (Covington and Mueller, 2001). As Covington and Mueller (ibid: 162) point out, contrasting between intrinsic and extrinsic principles of human motivation not only contributes “to the impression that intrinsic process operates in the presence of extrinsic payoffs, but it is flawed in its disregarded of an essential reality”. As they succinctly put it, “intrinsic motivation does not operate in a reward vacuum.”

Rewards or reinforcement have long been recognized by psychologists and educators as powerful tools to stimulate certain types of behavior. Deci (1975) and Deci and Ryan (1985) observe that extrinsically motivated individuals are prompted to action in anticipation of certain rewards that originate outside of them. Intrinsically motivated people, on the other hand, are driven by the interest in what they are doing or the need to become more competent. In other words, action itself is its own reinforcement. In the classroom context, being rewarded translates into receiving high grades. Students who are extrinsically motivated strive to excel in their studies in order to receive good grades and this orientation has been viewed as not related to the learning process itself. Intrinsically motivated students are engaged in the learning process for the sheer pleasure of learning new language and discovering new culture. The rewards for such students may include the sense of
pride in the performing of one’s task well and the pleasure of extending one’s knowledge frontiers.

Apparently, this reasoning fortifies the assumption that extrinsic and intrinsic types of reward do not meet to mix. However, as Covington and Mueller (2001: 164) explain, everyday practice negates such assumptions because “a positive, additive relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards is the rule, not exception”. Thus, students may enjoy learning a foreign language for its own sake and dream of a well-paid or intellectually stimulating job where they would be able to put their knowledge into practice. In sum, being intrinsically motivated does not cancel the desirability of extrinsic type of rewards, and extrinsic stimulation does not necessarily signifies the void of intrinsically-driven behavior.

Clearly enough, the present research recognizes the utility of dividing motivation into two elements since it does help to investigate this construct and explain students’ commitment and attitude toward learning. However, to come up with a motivational design that works, it would be appropriate to investigate one’s audience first and ascertain what motivates the learner. Such a research could help to understand the prevailing types of motivation (extrinsic or intrinsic, or a blend of both) within a particular group of learners. It will also help to establish when motivation is not an issue because if learners are already motivated enough “it is neither necessary nor desirable to add motivational strategies to the instruction” (Driscoll, 2000: 333). Thus, it is significant to know one’s audience and its motivational inclinations in order to structure the teaching process and tailor the syllabus according to the learners’ needs.
Viewing the relationship between student motivation and student academic achievement, from a social psychological perspective, seems to be noteworthy. Considering one finding about student motivation achievement. Sternberg and Williams (1998) state that among high-school seniors (in the years 1990 to 1992), twenty two percent of students coming from two-parent homes achieved an A grade-point average; whereas only sixteen percent of students coming from families headed by a ‘single mother’ did so. That is, there is an increase in the number of students who earn an A average when we compare two-parent homes ‘to single-parent homes’ i.e., there is an increase in students academic achievement.

Globally, learners’ motivation to plan for their future has declined since 1980. This decline has been associated with a ‘widening gap’ in which students from ‘single-parent’ families are becoming even less motivated to plan for their future. Whereas, the more education a students’ mother has, the more likely student is to believe in the value of planning for the future (White & Wethington, 1996). Moreover, Battle (2002) finds that student educational achievement could, greatly, be influenced by family configuration. In other words, whether students lived with a single parent or both parents. Similarly, in a series of analyses, Jeynes (1999; 2000) elucidates that the effects of family structure on learners’ motivation and academic achievement vary considerably among the most common family structures. To give an easy to comprehend example, for children living with a ‘cohabiting’ (unmarried couple or a remarried widower), motivation and achievement are negatively affected.

In trying to specify more this potent perspective, we consider another finding that shows the relationship between parental/family involvement and patterns of
student motivation and achievement. Ginsburg and Bronstein (1993; see also, Bronstein et al., 2005) look at family factors related to students’ intrinsic/extrinsic motivational orientation and academic performance. For the reason that, learners with an extrinsic motivational style who earned lower grades were likely to have parents who policed their work. These students were also likely to have parents who maintained either too much or too little control over their children. That is, these parents were often not involved meaningfully in students’ school performances and tended to use extrinsic rewards to motivate their children. However, students with an intrinsic motivational style were likely to have received parental encouragement in response to their grades. Additionally, intrinsically motivated students were likely to have higher academic performance and to have parents who exerted less control and supported reasonable independence in their children.

On this basic, it will be very significant to state again that there are numerous, complex, interacting factors that influence students’ motivation and achievement. As noted earlier, students’ motivation is the element that heads students’ attitude towards the learning process and it plays a potent role in boosting students’ academic performance/achievement.

1.8.1. How can achievement motivation be enhanced?

Achievement motivation (the tendency to strive for success) has been considered as one of the most significant types of motivation for educational psychology (McClelland & Atkinson, 1948, in Slavin, 2003). Within a similar vein, French (1956) points out that given a choice of work partners for a complex task, achievement-motivated students tend to choose a partner who is good at the task/
activity, whereas, affiliation-motivated learners (who express the need for love and acceptance) are more likely to choose a friendly partner. Even after they experience failure, achievement motivated students will persist longer at a task than will students who are less high in achievement motivation and will attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than to external factors, such as task difficulty or luck. Weiner (1992) states that achievement-motivated learners have the desire to succeed and expect success, even when they experience failure they ‘redouble’ their efforts until they do succeed.

No surprisingly, learners who are high in achievement motivation tend to succeed at school tasks (Stipek, 1998, in Slavin, 2003). However, Turner and Johnson, (2003), state clearly that it is unclear which causes which, that is to say, does high-achievement motivation lead to success in school/university, or does success in school (due to ability or other factors) lead to high-achievement motivation? In addition to that, Turner and Johnson, (ibid) say that, initially, achievement motivation is strongly affected by family experiences, but after children have been in school for few years, success and motivation ‘cause each other’.

Success breeds the desire for more success, which in turn breeds success (Wigfield, Eccles & Rodriguez, 1998, as cited in Slavin, 2003). Moreover, Slavin (2006: 326) notes that “students who do not experience success in achievement settings will tend to lose the motivation to succeed in such settings, and will turn their interest elsewhere”.

Additionally, there are many researchers who argue that motivation is a sine qua non ingredient not only in outstanding achievements, but also in extraordinary
achievements. It is worth mentioning some concrete examples of well-known geniuses that display the existing link between motivation and achievement. Their work suggests that creative genius itself grows out of the ability to sustain intense commitment for very long periods in the face of obstacles (Runco, et.al., 1998; see also Hayes, 1989; Nickerson, 1999; Weisberg, 1986, 1999). They tell us, much to our surprise, that many ‘well-known geniuses’ were pretty much ordinary children who then became ‘obsessed with’ something and, because of that ‘obsession, ended up making ‘enormous’ contributions’. Simonton (1999) states clearly, that this is true in science. For instance, Darwin’s father was deeply disappointed in how ordinary his son seemed as a child. Likewise, Howe (1999) emphasizes that this is true in philosophy. For example, John Stuart Mills’ father was tickled to show that a child with ‘mediocre’ intelligence could be trained to be a ‘world-famous’ philosopher. Howe (1999) states that Tolstoy and William James were also seen as unexceptional children.

In this context, even Mozart, whom we think of as composing in infancy, did not produce really original noteworthy works until after more than ten years of nonstop composing. His early compositions were merely repetitions of other people’s compositions (Bloom, 1985). Aronson (2002), views that the same principle applies in athletics as well. Aronson (ibid) states that it is quite known the story of how Michael Jordon was cut from his high school basketball team, which only increased his ‘commitment’ and relentless practice until he became one of the ‘greatest athletes of all time’. Yet, Aronson (ibid) argues that much of society is stubbornly wedded to the idea that accomplishment, mainly outstanding accomplishment, is about endowment. He states again that we do ignore the fact that Mozart, Darwin,
Michael Jordan, and Tiger Woods...etc, practised feverishly and single-mindedly for years and instead believing that they were simply born with one-in-a million ability. As for Thomas Edison’s modest claim “genius is 99% perspiration and only 1% inspiration” (in Aronson, 2002:39).

To come to an end, it is worth repeating that the previous mentioned examples of the world-famous geniuses, display clearly the role of motivation in producing the most outstanding achievements, without forgetting the years of commitment and training that led to these extraordinary fulfillments.

1.9. Motivation and self-regulation

It has been said by Pintrich (2003) that motivation is intimately linked to self-regulation. Pintrich (ibid) stresses that people are motivated to achieve a goal, engage in self-regulatory activities they believe will help them. For instance, they organize and rehearse material, monitor learning process, and adjust strategies. In addition, Schunk and Ertmer (2000) state that, in turn, self-regulation promotes learning, and the perception of greater competence sustains motivation and self-regulation to attain novel goals.

Within a similar vein, Zimmerman and Schunk (2004) point out that the link between motivation and self-regulation is seen clearly in theoretical models. For example, Pintrich’s model (in Pintrich, 2000 b) is heavily motivation dependent, as motivation underlies learners’ setting and pursuit of goals (discussed later in some length in chapter three) and also is a focus of their self-regulation as they engage in tasks. Likewise, in Zimmerman’s model (Zimmerman, 2000), motivation enters at all phases: for thought (i.e. self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interest, value, and goal
orientations). Performance control (i.e. attention focusing and self-monitoring), and self-reflection (self-evaluation and causal attributions).

Additional evidence of this link is seen in research by Wolters (1998, 1999; Wolters, Yu & Pintrich, 1996, as cited in Schunk, 2009). Interestingly, in these studies, researchers determined how various strategies designed to maintain optimal task motivation. For example, expending or exerting effort, persisting, and making the task interesting and self-rewarding. Related to self-regulatory strategy using during learning, for instance, rehearsal, elaboration, planning, monitoring, and organization. The results, therefore, showed that motivation regulation activities predicted self-regulation. Thus, adopting a learning-goal orientation was associated with higher self-efficacy, task value, and achievement.

1.10. Types of motivation

To be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act can thus be characterized as ‘unmotivated’, whereas someone who is energized or active toward an end is considered ‘motivated’. Most theories of motivation reflect these concerns by viewing motivation as a ‘unitary phenomenon’, one that varies from very little motivation to act a great deal of it (Ryan et.al, 1990). Interestingly, individuals have not only different amounts, but also different kinds of motivation. That is, they vary not only in the level of motivation (i.e. how much motivation), but also in the orientation of that motivation (i.e. which type of motivation). Orientation of motivation concerns the underlying attitudes and goals that give rise to action; that is, it concerns the why actions (Ryan et.al., 1990).
Motivation could be prompted by either external or internal stimuli. The former is called Extrinsic Motivation, which is the motivation inspired by external rewards or tangible result (Walker, 2004); while the latter is the intrinsic motivation, which is the motivation that comes from within, where the enjoyment or success in the task itself is the actual reward; without the promise of a tangible reward (Walker, 2004).

In the following figure Ryan and Deci (2002: 61) provide a consistent summary about human motivation; explaining in some details types of motivation:
Figure 03: A Taxonomy of Human Motivation
Ryan and Deci (2002) have studied different taxonomies of human motivation. Figure (03) illustrates taxonomy of types of motivation, arranged from left to right in terms of the extent to which the motivation for one’s behavior emanates from one’s self. At the far left to act. When amotivated, a person’s behavior lacks intentionality and sense of personal causation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). The authors also state that amotivation results from not valuing an activity, not feeling competent to do it, or not believing it will yield a desired outcome. Just to the right of amotivation, is a category that represents the least autonomous forms of extrinsic motivation, called external regulation. Such behaviors are performed to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency. Individuals typically experience externally regulated behavior as controlled or alienated, and their actions have an external perceived locus of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2002). A second type of extrinsic motivation in the figure is introjected regulation. It describes a type of internal regulation that is still quite controlling because people perform such actions with the feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

A more autonomous or self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is regulation through identification. Here, the person has identified with the personal importance of a behavior and has thus accepted a regulation as his or her own. Finally, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is integrated with one’s other values and needs. The more one internalizes the reasons for an action and assimilates them to the self, the more one’s extrinsically motivated actions become self-determined activity. Integrated forms of motivation share many qualities with intrinsic motivation, being both autonomous and unconflicted. However, they are
still extrinsic because behavior motivated by integrated regulation is done for its presumed instrumental value with respect to some outcome that is separate from the behavior, even though it is volitional and valued by the self (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

At the far right hand end of the figure is the intrinsic motivation. This placement emphasizes that intrinsic motivation is a prototype of self-determined activity. Yet, as implied above, this does not mean that as extrinsic regulations become more internalized they are transformed into intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). It is notable that the model presented is not suggested as a developmental continuum of different types of extrinsic motivations. More likely, it is suggested that one can initially adopt a new behavioral regulation at any point along this continuum, depending upon prior experiences and situational factors (Ryan & Deci, 2002). As an example, a person might originally get exposed to an activity because of an external regulation (e.g., a reward), and such exposure might allow the person to experience the activity’s intrinsically interesting properties, resulting in an orientation shift (Ryan & Deci, 2002).

1.10.1. Extrinsic motivation

Researchers often contrast intrinsic motivation, which is the motivation governed by reinforcement contingencies (Deci et. al., 1999). Broadly speaking, extrinsic motivation, or motivation that comes from outside the individual. Extrinsic motivating factors may, for instance, include gaining the approval of others, meeting publicly stated goals, and performing behaviors valued by the group.

Accordingly, Jordan et.al. (2008: 157) view extrinsic motivators as “factors external to the individuals that motivate them to respond”. To give an easy example,
typical extrinsic motivators in education include punishments, such as low grades or rejection, and rewards such as high grades, acceptance and praise. In that, extrinsic motivation works particularly well for young students.

In trying to specify more the notion of extrinsic motivation, it is considered, significantly, as the push students get from pursuing external rewards or incentives (Pintrich, 2000, 2003; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). The basic definition of extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to ‘separable outcome’. Extrinsic motivation is a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done, in order to attain some separable outcomes. Extrinsic motivation, thus contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity itself, rather than its instrumental value (Ryan et.al, 1990). Extrinsic motivation as in a simple example can be described in a situation where a student who does her homework only because she fears parental sanctions for not doing the work in order to attain the separable outcome to avoiding sanctions (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Brown (2002: 164) also talks about extrinsic behavior. For Brown “extrinsically motivated behaviors are carried out in anticipation of reward from outside and beyond the self”. He also considers prizes, grades, and even certain types of positive feedback as typical extrinsic rewards from the part of the teacher. Moreover, Deci and Ryan (1985: 39) state clearly that, extrinsic motivation refers to “actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment”. Extrinsic motivation, is for Ur (1996: 277) “that which derives from the influence of some kind of external incentive, as distinct from the wish to learn for its own sake or interest in tasks”.

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Additionally, students’ intrinsic motivation generally diminishes over time (Gottfried & Fleming, 2001; Sethi, Drake, Dialdin, & Lepper, 1995). For this reason, schools/universities apply a variety of ‘extrinsic incentives’, rewards for learning that are not inherent in the material being learned (Brophy, 1998). As an instance, extrinsic rewards might range from praise to grades to recognition to prizes or other rewards.

Moreover, Slavin (2003) clarifies that not every subject can be made fascinating to all learners at all times. Most learners need to be motivated extrinsically, by using some kind of ‘recognition’ or ‘reward’ if they are to exert maximum effort to master difficult subjects or concepts that might seem unimportant for them. For this reason, he argues that for any motivation to be increased it is preferable for language teachers to provide praise, feedback, grades, certificates and other rewards whenever it is necessary. In this respect, Ryan and Deci (2000) state clearly that teachers should not refrain from using extrinsic rewards when they are needed. And that the use of rewards more often increases intrinsic motivation, especially, when rewards are contingent on the quality of performance, rather than on mere participation in an activity.

Hence, it is worth stating that although extrinsic rewards are very useful. They should be seen as a short-term strategy; a step towards self-motivation. Rewards are normally only successful in the short term and can help learners who need a boost, particularly if they are finding a task challenging. Hence, learners have to focus, mainly, on what has come to be termed ‘intrinsic motivation’ or self-motivation, which is regarded as the most powerful type of motivation, and the more lasting; in
which the emphasis is placed upon student’s inner power that would lead them to extraordinary academic outcomes.

Therefore, the following type of motivation, intrinsic motivation, is the point we want, tentatively, to highlight throughout the present research, in order to display its significance in the process of learning.

1.10.2. **Intrinsic motivation: (motivation from the inside out)**

The concept of intrinsic motivation began as part of the attempt to balance the notion that people are driven by felt needs, with the notion that we often engage in activities because we want to, not because we feel a need to (Collier, 1994).

1.10.2.1. **Intrinsic motivation defined**

To begin with, intrinsic motivation is derived from humans’ innate needs for competence and self-determination (Noels et al., 2000). Likewise, Pintrich and Schunk (2009: 273) define intrinsic motivation as “an innate need and differentiates with development through internalization of values and self-regulatory influences”. Intrinsic motivation is defined by Aronson (2002: 64) as “a manifestation of people’s proactive nature”. People have a general propensity to explore, to learn, to exercise capacities, to take on optimal challenges”. Aronson (2002) states that these are not behaviors that must be entrained or programmed but instead represent inherent tendencies. He adds that they are an innate part of who we are, and people are inclined to do them unless something interferes. Aronson (ibid: 64) redefines intrinsic motivation as “a type of self-motivation in which people do activities that
interest them, provide spontaneous pleasure or enjoyment, and do not require any reward beyond this inherent satisfaction”.

Moreover, Aronson (2002) presents a simple example, just to illustrate what is meant by intrinsic motivation. As an instance, children love to play and through playing, they learn. It is not necessary to offer them candy or gold stars to get them to play and explore. That is, what they do, they do it naturally. Quite simply, children are intrinsically motivated for the type of behaviors that foster learning and development. Moreover, Aronson (ibid: 64), highlights that, although intrinsic motivation is ‘pervasively evident’ in young children, it is also so “a powerful source of learning throughout the life span”.

Essentially, Sternberg et al. (1998: 351) clarify that “intrinsic motivation is the push students give to themselves”. Additionally, Sternberg et al. (1998: 351) point out that intrinsic motivation means “an individual has developed an internal desire to do something”. Interestingly, intrinsic motivation is defined by Deci and Ryan (1985: 39) as “motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do”.

Broadly speaking, intrinsic motivation is the motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure. As Deci et al. (1999: 658) observe that, “intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action (…)”. Likewise, Slavin (2006: 334) views the intrinsic incentive as “aspect of an activity that people enjoy and therefore find motivating”.
Contemporary intrinsic motivation theorists define intrinsic motivation in terms of the presence of subjective perceptions of self-determination rather than the absence of extrinsic incentives or pressures (Condry & Stokker, 1992). For Slavin (2003), pleasure is often considered as the most potent reinforcer that sustains the engagement in any behavior. For instance, people engage in some activities like, reading, writing for no reason, rather for the ‘fun’ of doing it. And reinforcers of this type are called ‘intrinsic reinforcers’ and people can be described as being intrinsically motivated to engage in a given activities. Moreover, Slavin (ibid: 349) postulates that “teachers should attempt to make everything they teach intrinsically interesting as possible”.

For Pintrich and Schunk (2002: 272) intrinsic motivation is the “motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake”. In addition, Pintrich and Schunk (ibid: 272) point out that “intrinsic motivation is contextual; it refers to how people view activities and can vary over time and with changes in circumstances”. According to Ryan et.al., (1990) intrinsic motivation can be called as “free choice” type of measure. Since no external incentives or control is applied. Moreover, Brophy (2010: 154) points out that “intrinsically motivated actions are performed out of interest and require no external prods, promises, or threats”. Brophy (ibid) adds that, they are experienced as wholly self-determined, emanating from our sense of self.

In this respect, Slavin (2006) states that, at times a course of study is so fascinating and useful to learners, so that they are willing to do the work required to learn the material with ‘no incentive’ other than the interest level of the material itself. Then, Slavin (2006) provides an easy example ; that many students would
gladly take a given courses, such as, automechanics or photography and work hard in them, even if the courses offered no ‘credit’ or ‘grades’. For these learners the favorite subject itself has enough ‘intrinsic incentive’; value to motivate them to learn.

In addition, Brophy (2004: 184) states that most intrinsic motivation theorists do not directly address distinctions between its affective fun aspects and its cognitive learning aspects. Instead, she claims that they focus on the issue of control, emphasizing that “actions must be experienced as self-determined if intrinsic motivation is to develop (…)”. Moreover, Guay et. al., (2008) review that, most intrinsic motivation theorists still argue that intrinsic motivational approaches to teaching are preferable to extrinsic approaches. A wealth of studies indicating that self-determined learning tends to be of higher quality than extrinsically motivated learning. (Sweet et.al., 1998).

Significantly, Sternberg et.al., (1998) view that intrinsic motivation can empower people to accomplish remarkable tasks. As an instance, consider the remarkable memory expert Rajan (in Sternberg et.al., 1998), who memorized the value of ‘pi to’ the ten-thousandth decimal place. Rajan worked to develop his memory ability without any external reinforcement; he received no external rewards. His self-professed desire was to be ‘the most outstanding memorist in the world’. Regardless of whether Rajan strikes us as a success story, he is certainly an example of exceptional motivation. Sternberg et.al., (ibid: 353) stress that ”this type of ‘internal push’ is very important in becoming successful. The world contains many
successful individuals who developed a strong internal push early in life and pursued their goals relentlessly.”

Sternberg et.al., (1998) provide a concrete example about the power of intrinsic motivation. For instance, many people are unable to lose weight alone, find themselves getting slimmer by the week when they join such weight-loss programs. Unfortunately, when they stop attending regular meetings, they tend gradually to regain the weight. In general, those who manage to keep weight off over time, however, tend to rely on intrinsic motivation. This phenomenon illustrates the significant difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Significantly, a dieter with intrinsic motivation, for instance, gets the push to exercise and control food intake from within. Intrinsic motivation in this case, is to meet the challenge of getting and staying in shape. Lepper (1988) views intrinsic motivation for own sake for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permit, or the feeling of accomplishment it evokes. A student is intrinsically motivated when students keenly engage themselves in learning out of oddity, interest, or enjoyment, or in order to achieve their own scholarly and personal goals. Thus, students with intrinsic motivation are more enthusiastic, self-driven, challenging and feel pleasure in their studies. Intrinsically motivated students tend to utilize strategies that require more effort and allow them to process information more intensely.

In this respect, Condry and Chambers (1978) found that when students were confronted with multivarious intellectual tasks, those with an intrinsic direction used more logical information-gathering and decision-making strategies that did students who were extrinsically motivated. Students with an intrinsic orientation also tend to
prefer tasks that are fairly challenging. Similarly, Dev (1997) views that a student who is intrinsically motivated will not need any type of reward or incentive to instigate or complete a task. This type of student is more likely to complete the chosen task and eager by the challenging nature of an activity. Three-part taxonomy of intrinsic motivation (IM) is developed by Vallerand (1997: 73):

The first type of intrinsic motivation in the taxonomy, IM-Knowledge, relates to the sensations stimulated by discovering new knowledge. The second type of intrinsic motivation, IM-Accomplishment, refers to feelings associated with task completion or goal attainment. Lastly, the third category of intrinsic motivation, IM-Stimulation, is the motivation for doing an activity for the feeling and sensations associated with performing pleasurable tasks. Individuals will experience pleasurable sensations when they are performing tasks which are initiated by the individual and challenging enough.

Therefore, Brown (2002) stresses the significance of intrinsic motivation or self-motivation. Furthermore, Brown (ibid: 19) states clearly that, “self-motivation is ‘internal’. Internal motivation means that you are doing something because you have made your own choice to do it; you do not need a reward from someone else to do well. Your success is your reward; just knowing that you have learned something pleases you”. Brown (ibid: 19) adds that a wealth of research has found that “when people are motivated by their own wants and needs they are almost always successful”.

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Likewise, Pintrich et al. (2002: 272) highlight that there is evidence that, “intrinsic motivation can promote learning and achievement better than can extrinsic motivation”.

Brown (2002:19) put forth examples of internal motivation to illustrate more what has been said earlier about the intrinsic form of motivation:

- You decide to clean up your room because you want it to be neat.
- You do your homework assignment because you are interested in the topic.
- You finish your company’s project because you can learn from it.
- You do not smoke cigarettes because they are unhealthy for you.
- You buy a new car because you really need one and can pay for it.
- You learn English so that you can understand people in many countries.

According to Sullo (2007: 7), internal control psychology is based upon the belief that, “people are internally not externally motivated”. In addition, Sullo (ibid: 7) states that the outside world, including all rewards and punishment, “only provides us with information. It does not make us do anything”. Not surprisingly, Sullo (ibid) states clearly that, when students develop a mind-set of irresponsibility should not surprise us, in that, Sullo (ibid: 8) sees that they are subjected to rewards over an extended period, and they see themselves as “out of control”. That is, their successes and failures are attributable to forces ‘outside’ of themselves. For this reason, they become irresponsible, i.e. they do not accept personal responsibility and do not “recognize that our lives are largely a product of the choices we make”. He adds that, yet ironically, the system of rewarding students for academic achievements devalues the very thing we say we want ‘learning’.
1.10.2.2. Early views of intrinsic motivation: (theoretical perspective)

Early work on intrinsic motivation explained it in terms of a developmental phenomenon. Although theories differ in many points, they agree that intrinsic motivation involves the desire to engage in an activity for no obvious reward except task engagement itself (Deci, 1975). We discuss these perspectives, and then we turn our attention to how to enhance and enthuse intrinsic motivation.

1.10.2.2.1. Effectance motivation

Interestingly, in a seminal paper, White (1959, as cited in Schunk, 2009: 318) defines effectance motivation as:

(…) ability, capability, capacity, efficiency, proficiency and skill. (…) the behavior (…) is directed, selective, and persistent, and it is continued not because it serves primary drives… but because it satisfies an intrinsic need to deal with the environment.

Significantly, White (1959, in 2009, ibid) argues that individuals have a natural desire to feel outstanding members in their societies and have a need to communicate efficiently with the surroundings. White (ibid) states that the purpose or objective of ‘effectance motivation’ is a senstation of ‘personal mastery and efficacy’. He clarifies this by saying that this drive or impulse does exist in early life, as it is observable in babies when they grab objects or things which attract their attention. Similar, for children when they get older, they attempt to analyse things and exert effort, for simply trying to have a ‘control’ over their surroundings. Toddlers too,
may engage in the same action repeatedly, White (ibid) gives the example of turning a light switch on and off. He states clearly, that parents may not construe such deeds or actions, but in fact, they serve a potent ‘developmental function’.

White (1959) elucidates that the effectance motive does not involve ‘well-learned behaviors’, but it exerts itself merely when such ‘homeostatic motives’ are satisfied, as the need for food, air, and water. And he adds that, the effectance motive or impulse has an ‘evolutionary value’, in that it aids organisms deal outstandingly with environmental forces. Importantly, with development, effectance motivation becomes ‘specialized’. That is, once students enter school, they may orient effectance motivation toward ‘mastery of certain school tasks or subjects, like mastery in ‘art and music’. Whereas, in adults the effectance motivation is more directed to job skills.

1.10.2.2. Mastery motivation

Pintrich and Schunk (2002) clarify that effectance motivation focus primarily on individuals’ goals and tempting to master ‘envioronmental challenges’. In mastery motivation, the views of Harter and her colleagues will be discussed. Pintrich and Schunk (ibid: 259) state that Harter’s theory addresses the ‘development of intrinsic motivation’ and its relationship to other variables. Harter’s model of effectance (mastery) motivation (is shown in the following figure), provides “some suggestions for how to create mastery motivation in classrooms”. At the same time, Harter (1981, as cited in Schunk, 2009) depends on ‘socializing agents such as model and rewards’ as primary influences on students’ internalization of ‘mastery goals’ and development of ‘self-reward system’. Moreover, Pintrich and Schunk (2002), point
out that beside these key influences, motivational research displays that there are other ways to boost mastery behavior, as goal-setting or setting learning goals (a point to which we return later in our discussion of personal goal-setting in subsequent chapters), also providing ‘attributional feedback’ relating learning achievements fulfillments to ‘effort’ and ‘strategy use’, and instructing ‘self-regulation’ tasks (Ames, 1992 a; Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992, in Schunk, 2002). Harter (1981, in Schunk, ibid) also developed a measure of intrinsic and extrinsic classroom motivational orientation, which evaluates such dimensions such as; ‘curiosity’, ‘challenge’, and ‘mastery’. The latter Scale is based on the assumption that intrinsic motivation involves the following five aspects (Harter & Connell, 1984, as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002: 250):

1. Preference for challenge rather than for easy work.
2. Incentive to work to satisfy one’s own interest and curiosity rather than working to please the teacher and obtain good grades.
3. Independent mastery attempts rather than dependence on the teacher.
4. Independent judgement rather than reliance on the teachers’ judgement.
5. Internal criteria for success and failure rather than external criteria.
Figure 04: Harter’s Model of Effectance (Mastery) Motivation. (Harter, 1981 in Schunk, 2009: 509)
1.10.2.2.3. Perceived control

Pintrich and Schunk (2002: 253) explain that, “the concept of ‘perceived control’ over a task or activity engagement and outcomes is essential to many views of intrinsic motivation”. Pintrich and Schunk (ibid) point out that, there are two main perspectives that should be discussed on control: locus of control and personal causation.

1.10.2.2.3.1. Locus of control

Locus of control has been considered by Rotter (1966 in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) as a ‘generalized belief’ about the impact of behaviors on results or outcomes (mainly ‘success’, ‘failure’). Rotter (ibid) says that individuals with an ‘external’ locus of control tend to assume that their actions have little influence on their outcomes, and therefore only a little they can do to make a slight change over them. But those with an internal locus of control believe that fulfillements or achievements depend largely on their actions or behaviors, that is, they have an entire control over them. As Pintrich and Schunk (2002: 253) state: “locus of control is postulated to affect learning, motivation, and behaviors”.

It has been argued by Pintrich and Schunk (2002) that, learners who believe that they are the first responsible for their success or failures have to be very motivated to engage in academic tasks, exert effort, and persevere (or persist) on difficult tasks than learners who do believe strongly that their behaviors (actions) have little impact on outcomes. In turn, Phares (1976, in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) states that the hypothesized positive link between internal locus of control and
motivation and achievement in school, has been supported by research. That is, these motivational influences should enhance the learning process.

1.10.2.3.2. Personal causation

The significant role of personal causation in intrinsic motivation was highlighted by De Charms (1968, 1984, as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). “Personal causation is an individuals’ initiation of behavior intended to alter the environment” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002: 254). Likewise, De Charms (1968, in Pintrich & Schunk, ibid), postulate that individuals ‘strive’ to be ‘causal agents’ and that a primary motivation is to make some changes in the surroundings. Pintrinch and Schunk (ibid), then, state that like Rotter (1996) differentiates internal from external locus of control, De Charms (1968: 274, as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, ibid: 254) distinguishes origins and pawns in terms of personal causation:

(... an origin is a person who perceives his behavior as determined by his own choosing; a pawn is a person who perceives his behavior as determined by external forces beyond his control. We hypothesize...that feeling like an origin has strong effects on behavior as compared to feeling like a pawn...a person feels more like an origin under some circumstances and more like a pawn under others.

Moreover, Pintrich and Schnuk, (2002) argue that origins, have ‘strong feelings’ of personal causation and they tend to attribute changes that would occur in their surroundings directly to their behaviors and actions. And that they are responsible for their behaviors. Pintrich and Schunk, (ibid: 254) in attempting to clarify more the matter say that origins engage in materials they ‘value’ and they
believe that results will be ‘consistent’ with their expectations. Add to that, they state that origins “set realistic goals for themselves, know their strengths and weaknesses, determine actions that they can take to accomplish their goals, and assess their goal progress” (discussed in some length in chapter three). In contrast, Pintrich and Schunk, (ibid) state that ‘pawns’ do believe that ‘causes’ of behavior are seen that they are beyond their control. That is, under the control of others or external forces. In addition to that, pawns typically have feelings of ‘powerlessness and ineffectiveness and in turn having low motivation that leads to avoidance of tasks, and the lack of personal engagement.

It has been said, respectively, by Pintrich and Schunk (2002: 254) that “the perception of personal causation motivates behavior and a low perception of personal causation inhibits behavior”. That is to say, origin feelings reflect ‘intrinsically’ motivated behavior, whereas, pawn perceptions place the locus of causality outside of oneself.

1.10.2.2.4. Self-determination theory

Pintrich and Schunk (2002) discuss the perspective, which has been advanced by Deci, Ryan, Connell, Skinner, and their colleagues, about self-determination (autonomy) view of intrinsic motivation. This perspective postulates that humans have a need, impulse to be ‘autonomous’ and involve themselves in tasks or activities, simply because they want to. This view has been considered one of the most comprehensive and empirically supported views of motivation (available today). In some ways, Deci and his colleagues (Deci, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; in Pintrich and Schunk (2002) differentiate ‘self-determination’ from ‘will’.

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Deci, (1980: 26, as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, ibid: 26) define will as “the capacity of human organism to choose how to satisfy its needs”. And define self-determination as “the process of utilizing ones will”. Pintrich and Schunk (ibid) state that will and self-determination go hand in hand, i.e. are linked. In addition to that, they state that individuals would not be feeling content or will if all of their needs were met or satisfied automatically without their personal choice and their decision of how to attain those choices. At some very basic level, Ryan and Deci (2002) propose that the need for autonomy refers to the need to feel a sense of ‘control’, ‘agency’, or autonomy to interact effectively in the surrounding, or from an attributional point of view, a ‘perceived internal locus of control’. That is, people have a primary psychological need to have feelings of autonomy and control. Moreover, Pintrich and Schunk (ibid: 258) add that the need of autonomy “represents ‘desire’ or needs for feeling a sense of internal control and freedom for choices and actions”.

As noted by Deci (1980: 27, in Pintrich et.al. ibid: 259) intrinsic motivation is “the human need to be competent and self-determined in relation to the environment”. Accordingly, Pintrich and Schunk (ibid) made a precise classification and said that the need for intrinsic motivation ‘energizes’ individual’s wills, and the will uses the energy of self-motivation to satisfy needs, and therefore the intrinsic motivation is satisfied when people ‘act willfully’.

Additionally, Schunk (2009) provides an easy example, for instance, students may want to avoid some academic activities, but they work on them to obtain rewards and avoid teacher punishment. As a result, as skills develop and students
believe they are becoming more competent, they perceive a sense of control and self-determination over learning. Moreover, the tasks become more intrinsically motivating, and positive social reinforcers assist the process. Thus, informational rewards lead to feelings of self-efficacy and a sense of self-determination, both of which enhance intrinsic motivation.

1.10.2.3. Enhancing, enthusing and sustaining intrinsic motivation

Pintrich et.al. (2002) highlight that in order to optimize intrinsic motivation, attention must be given to the four main sources: challenge, curiosity, control, and fantasy.

1.10.2.3.1. Challenge

Not surprisingly, Deci, 1975; Harter, 1978; White, 1959, (as cited in Pintrich, et.al, 2002) state that tasks or academic activities could be intrinsically motivating for learners when they challenge their skills. Add to that, activities that are challenging must be intermediate in level of difficulty, i.e. not too easy and not very difficult. The level of difficulty has to be adapted or adjusted upwards, as learners skills develop, in order to sustain the intermediate level. Pintrich et.al. (ibid) explain that students become more competent or outstanding learners, when they achieve or attain ‘challenging goals’, which increase their ‘self-efficacy’ and their ‘perceived control’ over outcomes. In turn, student are considered capable to set novel, challenging goals (as we will see later in goal-setting chapter), which sustain also their self-motivation, i.e. intrinsic motivation.
1.10.2.3.2. Curiosity

Essentially, Lowenstein (1994, in Pintrich et.al., 2002: 269) proposes that curiosity “is a feeling of cognitive deprivation that occurs when one becomes aware of a gap in information”. In addition to that, it is necessary, however, for learners to have first a ‘pre-exiting’ knowledge base’ so as students will be more aware of ‘a gap’. Learners also have to believe that the gap is ‘manageable’, that is, they can attain the gap. For that, curious students who believe that the gap is manageable attainable have a high self-efficacy and should feel very motivated to attain the gap and learn or acquire more new information. Thus, curiosity is optimized by tasks that present learners with information which appear surprising or ‘discrepant’ from their prior or present knowledge or beliefs (Pintrich et.al. ibid).

1.10.2.3.3. Control

According to De Charms, 1968; Deci, 1980, (in Pintrich et.al., 2002) students intrinsic motivation can be enhanced if tasks provide learners with a ‘sense of control’ over their academic achievements or outcomes. Moreover, Schunk, (1995, as cited also in Pintrich et.al., ibid) states that students personal control and choices in tasks and activities may foster their sense of self-efficacy to perform well, and which in turn may boost their intrinsic motivation.

1.10.2.3.4. Fantasy

Accordingly, Lepper and Hodell, (1989, in Pintrich et.al. 2002) point out that tasks and activities that engage students in ‘fantasy’ through games and simulations may promote their intrinsic motivation. Pintrinch and Schunk (ibid) propose that
games like elements have an additional meaning to what might otherwise be a dull; boring activity or task, and which in turn can create a ‘vicarious’ pleasure not found in ordinarily activities. Pintrich et.al. (ibid) state again that there is evidence that learning can be enhanced through ‘fantasy’ compared with instruction presented without fantasy elements, for the simplest reason that, learners do prefer the fantasy to the traditional context.

In this context, Lepper and Malone (1987, in Pintrich et.al 2002) discuss the mechanisms that create greater interest in learning tasks, which in turn may lead to effective learning. These mechanisms include promoting students’ attentional focus on relevant features of the learning context and mainly enhancing the exertion of ‘cognitive effort’ in the learning activities. Lepper and Malone (1987, in Pintrich et.al., ibid) postulate here that, by their very nature, many fantasy elements ought to focus learners’ attention and increase their mental effort. It has been said, however, that it is ‘imperative’ that motivational ‘embellishments’ or fantasy elements be relevant to the activity and not overly distracting. (Lepper & Hodell, 1989, in Pintrich et.al., ibid). In the following table Pintrich and Schunk (2002: 268) present forth sources of motivation:
One of the things about intrinsic motivation that makes it so important for our investigation is that, indeed much of what students learn stems from spontaneous interests, curiosity, enjoyment, freedom, and natural desire. Similarly, Aronson (2002: 64) points out that, when intrinsically motivated people are engrossed in an activity, “they are not easily distracted. The initiative is theirs, and often they persist for long periods”. Within a similar vein, Sternberg et.al. (1998: 351) state clearly that: “if students do not develop motivation from within, they will never experience or develop the joy of learning”.

Likewise, Sullo (2007: 7) confirms that, not surprisingly, “we are motivated from the inside out, (…) and that external forces have an impact on us, but they do not shape us”. Sullo (ibid: 7) adds that “a system of education based on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Present learners with tasks of intermediate difficulty that they feel efficacious about accomplishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Present students with surprising or information that will motivate them to close a gap in their knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Provide learners with choices and a sense of control over their learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Involve learners in fantasy and make-believe through simulations and games</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 02: Sources of intrinsic motivation

1.10.2.3. Rewards and intrinsic motivation

One of the things about intrinsic motivation that makes it so important for our investigation is that, indeed much of what students learn stems from spontaneous interests, curiosity, enjoyment, freedom, and natural desire. Similarly, Aronson (2002: 64) points out that, when intrinsically motivated people are engrossed in an activity, “they are not easily distracted. The initiative is theirs, and often they persist for long periods”. Within a similar vein, Sternberg et.al. (1998: 351) state clearly that: “if students do not develop motivation from within, they will never experience or develop the joy of learning”.

Likewise, Sullo (2007: 7) confirms that, not surprisingly, “we are motivated from the inside out, (…) and that external forces have an impact on us, but they do not shape us”. Sullo (ibid: 7) adds that “a system of education based on
rewards and punishment is fundamentally anti-educational”. In short, Sullo (ibid: 7) put it forth: “I accept responsibility for my success and my failure. Freedom, choice and responsibility are the essence of humanity and I remember them fully”.

In this respect Pintrinch et.al. (2002) elucidate that, intrinsic motivation can grow and develop, but it can also diminish. Furthermore, Pintrich et.al., (ibid) point out that offering people rewards for doing things they enjoy may undermine their intrinsic motivation and lead to less interest in tasks. This means, rewarding people extensively, and constantly for doing things they enjoy decreases their interest.

1.10.2.5. Combining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

However, it has been said essentially that the intrinsic form of motivation is the dominant one, in that it is more lasting in the long run. And it shows tremendous learning progress and achievement in academic settings, particularly. It is essential to remember that the two forms of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) are not mutually exclusive. That is, they can occur simultaneously as well as individually. Covington et.al. (2001) and Lepper et.al. (2005) state clearly that, it is possible and even desirable to encourage students using both motivators.

Sternberg et.al., (1998: 351) provide an easy to comprehend example, for instance, one student may have a high need for teacher praise and a high desire to learn for its own sake, and thus be high both in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Another student might be low in both needs, or high in one and low in the other. It is not surprising then that expert teachers account for these differences when they help students build every type of motivation. Yet, place special emphasis on fostering
intrinsic motivation because this type of motivation is increasingly becoming more and more important in learners’ academic progress.

Likewise, Covington, (2000) postulates that, research on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation has evaluated which form of motivation is the best in the long run for encouraging students’ learning. The intrinsic form has been found to be the most encouraging one.

In sum, Spence et.al., (1983) studied the motivation and achievement of thousands of university students, scientists, pilots, business people, and athletes. They, interestingly, conclude that intrinsic motivation produces high achievement, and that extrinsic motivation often does not.

1.10.2.5. Cognitive theories and intrinsic motivation

A glance at the cognitive theories of learning and motivation, would be interestingly revealing for us. The reason is easy to comprehend; learners’ successes or failures are to, a great extent, affected by cognition. That is, what is going on inside students’ mind, affect greatly their motivation, and which in turn affects the whole learning process.

In this respect, Sternberg et.al. (1998: 360) specify that, cognitive theories of learning stress “what goes on inside students’ head”. Sternberg et.al. (ibid) add that this perspective is very different from the emphasis on the external environment that is so important in behavioral views. Interestingly, like cognitive views of learning, cognitive views of motivation focus on what students think, how they think, and ‘how their thoughts create or reduce motivation to act’ (Schunk & Zimmerman,
2007); this is precisely, the point we want, tentatively, to highlight throughout the present research. Sternberg et al. (1998) stress that cognitive theories of motivation, therefore, emphasize the ‘importance of intrinsic motivation’ (as opposed to extrinsic motivation). Sternberg et al. (ibid) illustrate this point, by providing the example of Jim Jonson who took a cognitive perspective on motivation when he explained to his students the many benefits that reading would confer in their lives. Additionally, a wealth of studies conducted by researchers with a cognitive emphasis have examined students’ planning ability and how to improve it; the role of students’ expectations of themselves, the importance of goals; and how to craft effective goals (cf. chapter three); and ways in which students explain their success and failures.

In a synthetic remark, Sternberg et al. (1998) view that part of what makes us human is our capacity for goal-directed, adaptive behavior. Moreover, cognitive theorists explain motivation by pointing to human needs to understand, strive, excel, succeed, advance, and continue to challenge ourselves. For instance, some learners sit for hours and work on a tough problem or task without even noticing the passage of time. Sternberg et al. (ibid) put forth some key questions that emphasize the significance of the cognitive perspective in learning efficacy: Why do some people have such strong motivation? Why do some people enjoy themselves when they are working hard in a given difficult task? Why do some people push forward when it would be easier just to relax and enjoy life? In sum, cognitive theorists examine these kinds of questions by exploring how students’ thoughts influence their behavior. In the subsequent chapter, we will attempt to explore and examine, in details, this potent relationship that exists between cognition, motivation and effective learning. That is, the impact of student’s inner-speech (self-talk) on his/her motivation (mainly
intrinsic motivation), and in turn in his/her learning, precisely effective learning. And, therefore, answering the previous questions significantly.

In summation, Alexander and Murphy, (1998); Schiefele, (1996) claim that the importance of intrinsic motivation for learning is underscored by research, showing that interest in learning relates positively to cognitive processing and achievement.

1.11. Conclusion

We have mapped out throughout the first chapter the scene for subsequent chapters. By defining and providing a detailed overview of motivation. And we have displayed a model of motivation, attempting to clarify the nature of it and we have outlined the role of motivation in learning.

We tried in the present chapter, to display the existing link between students’ motivation and academic success or achievement. We tried in our discussion to display the salient form of motivation (intrinsic motivation) and we attempted to clarify that it is essential for students to get rid of relying on external motivators (the extrinsic form of motivation). And start developing a self-motivating mind set to successfully help oneself to take full advantage from the power of internal or self-motivation. By trying to use some cognitive-motivational strategies that would help them, greatly; as positive self-talk (inner-speech) and personal goal-setting, which in turn would help them enhance and maintain their intrinsic motivation, help them also, go beyond learning obstacles and pitfalls, for an effective learning. (These two cognitive-motivational strategies would be discussed in some detail, in the subsequent chapters: positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S).
CHAPTER TWO

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

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2.1. Introduction

Due to the widespread issues observed with regard to the insufficient commitment, enthusiasm, and desire of learners, namely university students, as well as the increased language learning failures, self-talk as a cognitive-motivational strategy has been found central to cognitive behavioral interventions, and has recently received significant attention in the field of educational psychology.

For that, this chapter is mainly devoted to elucidate the significance of learning strategies in the process of learning, and the appropriate use of these cognitive strategies, as self-talk, has been shown to foster learners’ performance on a variety of tasks by increasing their self-confidence, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, attentional focus, concentration, goal persistence and attainment.

In this chapter, we will attempt to display that self-talk (inner-speech) is one of the most pervasive of the cognitive strategies, and as an important facet of students, and also as a psychological and cognitive product of humans that correlates with human performance, mainly students’ successful performance. We would like, then, to stress its enormous impact on their emotions, behaviour in general and performance.

We will try first to discuss briefly what is meant by cognition, cognitive styles and cognitive restructuring. We will then highlight the type of self-talk that is considered as a cognitive- motivational strategy (positive self-talk), focusing mainly on how and why it is crucial to transform the negative, dysfunctional, and irrational self-talk that would hinder students to performance successfully, to more positive, constructive, rational inner-speech. By illustrating the two kinds with concrete examples, we will also attempt to provide some guidelines and practical techniques.
that would help learners change their negative self-statements, and encourage the positive self-talk to take place instead. By emphasizing the fact that when positive self-messages are firmly placed within students’ minds, nothing can stop them, limit them or hold them back. They can face anything, attain anything, accomplish anything they set their minds to, and they can surpass all limitations people and society place on them, any obstacle or pitfall.

At last, we will demonstrate a concrete example of how positive self-talk influences students’ performance, by elucidating the impact that inner-speech can have on students’ speaking skill, in that it would help learners, greatly, in getting rid of stress, anxiety, fear of failure and lack of self-confidence.

2.2. Learning strategies

Before introducing our chief component in the current chapter (self-talk), we will clarify first the notion of ‘learning strategies’, in that self-talk is regarded as one of the potent cognitive strategies used in education. Hence, this initial review will provide a preliminary view of the relationship between self-talk (as a tool for learning) and successful performance.

Let us first put forth what is meant by learning strategies. According to Anderson (1997: 01) learning strategies are the “cognitive tools used to systematically manage the thought process associated with knowledge and skill acquisition”. Anderson (ibid) adds that learning strategies should be seen as the ‘intellectual resources’ that enable learners “to plan, organize, monitor, guide, and reflect on learning”. Additionally, Schunk (2009: 218) points out that “learning strategies are cognitive plans oriented toward successful task performance”.

Weinstein and Mayer (1986, in Schunk, ibid: 218) state that “strategies include activities such as ‘selecting and organizing information’, ‘rehearsing’ material to be learned, relating new material to previously memorized information, and ‘enhancing meaningfulness of material’. Learning strategies also include techniques that create and sustain a ‘positive learning climate’ ”. Schunk (2009) provides an example, to illustrate what has been said above. For example, like ways to overcome test anxiety, enhance self-efficacy, appropriate the value of learning, and develop positive outcome expectations and attitudes (like positive self-talk as a cognitive-motivational strategy).

In view of this, Anderson (1997) reports that learning strategy use is based on ‘cognitive theories of learning’ that view learning as the process by which information is interpreted, related to the learners’ existing knowledge and skills, and organized for later retrieval. In addition to that, Anderson (ibid) states clearly that cognitive learning theories assume that even when instruction is done very well; it is the students who must acquire the knowledge, insights, and skills.

2.2.1. Criteria for an effective learning strategy

In trying to specify more the notion of learning strategy, Anderson (1997: 01) has compiled a list of what an effective learning strategy should enable the learner to do:

1. Make instruction personally relevant.
2. Describe and discuss, in meaningful ways, the attributes of a quality performance.
3. Supervise and self-direct his or her own practice and progress.
4. Recognize personal preferences, limitations, and needs as a learner.
5. Adopt a more planned approach to knowledge and skill acquisition.
6. Accept new and varied learning challenges with greater confidence, diligence, and persistence.

7. Attend more closely and carefully to the means, for example, processes and tools associated with learning and making progress versus the final results.

We can now return to the steps that have been presented by Snowman, (1986 as cited in Schunk, 2009: 219), in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Learner Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Identify learning goals, important task aspects, relevant personal characteristics, and potentially useful learning techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Construct plan: given this task to be done according to these criteria and given these personal characteristics I should use these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>Employ tactics to enhance learning and memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Assess goal progress to determine how well tactics are working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify</td>
<td>Continue strategy use if assessment is positive, modify the plan if progress seems inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive knowledge</td>
<td>Guide operation of steps.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 03: Steps in Constructing and Implementing a Learning Strategy

2.2.2. Learning strategies improve self-regulated learning

Apparently, it is not a student’s remarkable capacity or potential that creates efficient learning. What matters, really, is whether learners are adopting some learning strategies as self-management techniques in order to foster their potentialities for more successful performance. Hence, it is inevitable that students
use some learning strategies, as for instance, cognitive-motivational strategies like, self-talk, goal-setting, for more effective learning.

For that, Sinclair and Sinclair (1994) highlight that learning strategies promote self-regulated learning and will likely lead students to more efficient learning and successful performance. Precisely, Anderson (1994) notes that learning strategies contribute to the individuals’ capability to construe incoming information, boost concentration, gain insights into that way so that learning occurs, and promote self-regulated performance. He, then, addes also that the strategies students undertake or use to receive, interpret, and organize information play an instrumental role in focusing and guiding the thought processes and the actions that occur during the construction of movement patterns.

Importantly, Anderson (1994) postulates that teaching learning strategies to learners’ aids them create links between existing knowledge and new content. At times learning strategies are used to literally translate information into a form that is more appealing and comprehensible to the student, while other strategies facilitate recall, draw attention to the qualitative aspects of performance, block out interferences, structure and sequence practices into learnable chunks, promote self-awareness, and build confidence.

Significantly, Anderson (1997) asserts also that besides enhancing skill improvement, learning strategies also can be used to instruct learners more about the learning process and good habits associated with self-regulated learning. That is, planning in relation to goals, tracking physical and emotional responses in relation to practice, selecting appropriate strategies and reflecting on performance in relation to
standards and expectations. In short, Anderson (ibid: 1) states clearly that “learning strategies can prepare students to act with intention, focus, and diligence”.

2.3. Cognition

Let us cover a quick note about the concept of cognition, in that learning strategies are considered as cognitive tools or plans that learners can use in their learning. The crucial component “self-talk” in the current chapter is regarded also as a potent ‘cognitive’ strategy or a pedagogical tool that students can adopt to promote their competence and performance.

2.3.1. Cognition defined

Cognition is by definition “the mental activity which describes the acquisition, storage, transformation, and use of knowledge” (Matlin, 2003: 02). That is, the process by which knowledge and understanding is developed in the mind. A related term, ‘Cognitive psychology’, has been dealt with, in some detail, by Matlin (ibid: 02), and which has two meanings: (1) at times it is a synonym for the word cognition, and so it refers to the variety of mental activities (listed above). (2) Sometimes it refers to a particular theoretical approach to psychology. Specifically, the cognitive approach which is a theoretical orientation that emphasizes people’s knowledge and their mental processes. Additionally, Matlin (ibid) postulates that the cognitive approach has widespread influence or impact on other areas of psychology. As a matter of fact, the cognitive approach has thoroughly influenced ‘psychology of education’.

2.3.2. Cognitive styles: (learner characteristics)

Schunk (2009) considers that learners’ characteristics affect greatly the learning process. Many researchers interested in learner characteristics have explored
students’ cognitive styles. For Schunk (ibid: 305) cognitive tyles (also known as learning styles or intellectual styles) are stable individual variations in perceiving, organizing, processing, and remembering information.

Messick (1994, in Schunk, 2009: 305) also defines them as “modes of perceiving, remembering, thinking, problem solving, and decision making, reflective of information processing regularities that develop in congenial ways around underlying personality trends”. Messick also adds that styles are inferred from consistent individual differences in ‘organizing’ and ‘processing information’ on different tasks. To the extent that styles, impact ‘cognition’, ‘affects’, and ‘behavior’, they also aid link ‘cognitive’, ‘affective’, and ‘social functioning’. Furthermore, Zhang and Sternberg (2005, in Schunk, 2009: 305) state that ‘styles’ are individuals’ preferred ways to process information and handle tasks; they do not have the same meaning as abilities. In that, “abilities refer to capacities to execute skills”, whereas “styles are habitual ways of processing and using information”. Messick (1994), in turn, says that stylistic differences are associated with differences in learning and receptivity to various forms of instruction.

Again, Schunk (ibid: 306) postulates that ‘styles’ provide significant information about cognitive development. He clarifies also that styles can be related to larger behavioral patterns and to brain development and functions. And he, finally, states that “educators investigate styles to devise complementary learning environments and to teach students more adaptive styles to enhance learning and motivation”. Moreover, Neck and Manz (1992: 687) provide a model of thought self-leadership view of behavior.
2.3.3. Cognitive restructuring

Shannon (1996) makes it clear that cognitive restructuring emphasizes changing the way that we think by altering our internal cognitive framework. It is a process that helps identify the cognitions leading to our emotional reactions and subsequent behavior. It also helps identify the dysfunctional cognitions leading to excessive emotion and stress. Additionally, Shannon (ibid: 207) emphasizes that “cognitive restructuring” is a relatively new psychological technique and it provides a functional model of our internal processes. “It can be used to promote our sense of internal control and power.”

Hence, when we can identify, refute, and change dysfunctional cognitions i.e. destructive thoughts, we gain internal control and a sense of internal power as we can use our cognitions to reduce our dysfunctional behavior and improve our competence. Like for instance, in learning settings, in particular, when students tend to exert some effort to control and alter some dysfunctional cognitions, they are more likely to foster their academic competence and performance in a variety of tasks and activities, in that, they are more able to get rid of stress, anxiety and tension while studying. As a result, they can meet their learning goals and objectives.
Furthermore, Shannon reports that the process of cognitive restructuring helps us realize that failure, rejection, catastrophes, and so on need not destroy us as it is the way we think about these events that influences our behavior, not the events themselves.

The reason is easy to comprehend, “if we develop an effective internal thinking process, our behavior will become more productive and we will have more positive outcomes in our lives” (Shannon, 1996: 208). To give an easy example, the exercises and techniques that have been reviewed represent various approaches to learning about self-control-learning that students can adopt or use in order to control their emotions and cognitions that can have an impact on the tension and anxiety they experience during the learning process, and overall, that can have a direct influence on their internal selves (as will be discuss in some detail further down in this chapter; self-talk and performance). In a similar manner, Shannon says that such techniques teach us about internal control, that we have the capacity to influence, and at times, control our internal states, which enhances our sense of ‘internal power’.

Undeniably, Shannon (1996) is arguing in favour of the significance of being aware about the potent impact of dysfunctional thoughts on emotions and behavior. Because he notes that cognitive restructuring focus on the intervening thoughts that occur, which is actually the internal event that leads to the emotion and then to our behavior. He, then, adds that feelings and behavior do not just happen. They are the result of thoughts which quickly flash through our mind as a result of a precipitating event. These thoughts can be helpful when they lead to coping behavior and positive outcomes, or they can be harmful when they cause a negative outcome, such as an
incapacitating increase in tension, anxiety, stress, or other forms of maladaptive emotions.

Noteworthy, the psychologist Albert Ellis (in Shannon, ibid: 205) elucidates a number of thinking patterns that he calls ‘irrational’, as these are dysfunctional thoughts about life events which lead to negative outcomes. He adds that these irrational ideas have a significant impact on our behavior. More precisely, they are considered the past of our belief systems and, as a result, they affect our view of the world. And these cognitions are often referred to as “self-talk”, as the cognitions are “the messages we give to ourselves that cause us to structure our perception of events in a certain way.”

Conclusively, Shannon (1996) explains that the emphasis of cognitive restructuring is to become aware of and, if necessary change our dysfunctional; irrational, self-talk so that we can gain control of our lives (discussed in depth further down; changing negative self-talk). Indisputably, “the self-talk (inner-speech) that develops over the years can be thought of as cognitive habits-beliefs that repeatedly affect our emotions (and behavior) and of which we are not aware” (Shannon, ibid: 205).

2.4. Self-talk: (as a cognitive strategy)

There appears to be a limited amount of attention given to the study of self-talk. Many authors use other terms interchangeably when referring to self-talk. It has been described in many ways, including the terms, internal dialogue, inner voices, the whispering self, private speech, inner-talk, inner-speech, silent mind-chatter and the interapersonal communication. For instance, the term internal dialogue as described by Meichenbaum (1997:12) is referred to as: “attributions, appraisals,
interpretations, self-reinforcements, beliefs, defense mechanisms, and many other constructs”.

2.4.1. Self-talk defined

There have been numerous definitions of self-talk offered throughout the applicable literature. Broadly speaking, we can state that self-talk refers to the ongoing internal conversation with ourselves, which influences how we feel and behave. That is, one’s constant internal conversation or the running dialogue inside our heads.

Dembo (2000: 117) states that whether we realize it or not, we spend all day long, most of the day, engaging in self-talk, ‘your internal thought language’. He states: “yes, you do talk to your self!” Dembo (ibid) adds that these internal thoughts are “the words you use to describe and interpret the world”. Dembo (ibid: 83) elucidates again that, “self-talk is the running dialogue inside our heads”. Similarly, Roberts et.al. (1987: 2) push for specificity by defining intrapersonal communication as “all of the physiological and psychological processing of messages that happens within individuals at conscious and non-conscious levels as they attempt to understand themselves and their environment”. Moreover, vocate (1994: 3) points out that self-talk is regarded as “a type of talk that is commonly referred to as intrapersonal communication”.

Interestingly, Vygotsky (1986: 248 in vocate, 1994: 14) defines self-talk (inner-speech) as “both speech and thought”. For example, in thought and language he calls it a “distinct plane of verbal thought”; but he also states that “inner speech is speech for oneself, external speech is for others” In another section, Vygotsky (ibid: 249) speaks of inner-speech as “thinking in pure meanings”; in yet another, Vygotsky
(ibid: 252) states that inner-speech is “mediated ‘internally’ by word meanings”. Vygotsky utilizes the term inner-speech to refer to both a dialogue with the self and the process of a thought being realized in words. More precisely, Vocate (1994: 7) defines self-talk as “a dialogue with the self existing in two forms: (a) the silent, internal dialogue process of inner speech, and (b) the audible, external dialogue addressed to self, although others may hear it. In addition, Vocate (ibid: 7) adds that in self-talk, “the self is both the source and the object of interaction”.

In addition to the distinctive attributes of self-talk, Vocate (1994: 7) gives it this definition:”(a) self-awareness or what is termed reflective consciousness; (b) its dialogical nature: addressing the self as the object of one’s talk whether vocalized or silent; (c) a stimulus, either sign or symbol, originating from the self; and (d) an interpretive, symbolic response or feedback from the self”. Moreover, Vocate (ibid) states that self-talk may be ‘intentional’ or ‘unintentional’, ‘silent’ or ‘vocalized’. Vocate (ibid) also points out that self-talk is essentially a speech act for the self. The act may be deliberate or scripted, automated, and the result may be a cognitive understanding or an overt change in behavior. For Shannon (1996: 205) self-talk is “the accumulation of all of our life experiences, especially the learning experiences of your youth. Our experiences provide us with messages about ourselves (…)”.

Hackfort and Schwenkmenzger (1993: 335) state that self-talk refers to “statements people make to themselves, either internally or aloud, and has been as an ‘internal dialogue’ in which the individuals interpret feelings and perceptions, regulate and change evaluations and cognitions and give themselves instructions and reinforcement”. Moreover, Hackfort and Schwenkmenzer (ibid) redefine self-talk as the interpretive dialogue with the self. In simpler words, we can recapitulate the
previous definitions; by saying that self-talk is the act or practice of talking to oneself, either aloud or silently.

Accordingly, Morin (1993) views self-talk as a cognitive tool used for self-reflective activity. Furthermore, self-talk has been defined by Theodorakis et.al., (2000: 254) as “what people say to themselves either out loud or as a small voice inside their head”. This definition is succinct and highlights two important characteristics of self-talk. First, self-talk can either be mentally or out loud. Second, self-talk is comprised of statements said to one self, and not addressed to others. However, Hardy (2006) also finds the previous definition a little simplistic, failing to identify the uses of self-talk. Instead, he offers a definition of self-talk that is of greater utility. Hardy (2006: 84) defines self-talk as:“(a) verbalizations or statements addressed to the self; (b) multi-dimensional in nature; (c) having interpretive elements associated with the content of statements employed; (d) is somewhat dynamic; and (e) serving at least two functions; instructional and motivational(…).”

Specifically, in learning settings, self-talk has been defined by Anderson (1997: 2) as:

What learners say to themselves to think more precisely about their performances and to direct their actions in response to those reflections? It is a tool for learning because it encourages the learners to focus on the process of skill acquisition (…).
2.4.2 Terms associated with the concept of self-talk

For clarity and specificity, one should state forward the terms that are considered confusing more frequently and not easily distinguished, so a consideration of either is mandated to clarify an understanding of each of them.

2.4.2.1. Interpersonal communication

Vocate (1994) postulates that, interpersonal communication is best understood as one level of human communication in which the communication involves solely a single communicator. That is, the communicator is at the same time the speaker and the listener.

In reviewing the various published definitions of intrapersonal communication, Roberts et. al., 1987 (in Vocate 1994: 5) push for specificity by defining it as “all of the physiological and psychological processing of messages that happens within individuals at conscious and nonconscious levels as they attempt to understand themselves and their environment”. Furthermore, Korba, 1989 (in de Guerrero, 2005: 21) specifies that, we are all “intralocutors”. In other words, a single human communicator is both the source and the object of the interaction. Thus, De Guerrero (2005) declares that intrapersonal communication does not necessarily have to be covert, silent or internal. For instance, the subsequent concept of private speech also qualifies as intrapersonal communication, for the simplest reason that even it can be heard by other people i.e. overt, it is considered as one aspect of the intrapersonal communication, because the speech is addressed to the self.

Accordingly, Vocate (1994) explains the roles of self-talk and inner-speech (discussed below) in intrapersonal communication. At first, self-talk is a
phenomenon of intrapersonal communication that can be covert or overt, i.e. internal or external, whereas, inner-speech is the internal intrapersonal process.

2.4.2.2. Private speech

For De Guerrero (2005) most of the literature on private speech associates the term with audible self-talk. He also adds that the term private speech is related to egocentric speech, Piaget and Vygotsky are involved to refer to the type of ‘loud self-talk’ that children before school age use to engage in constantly. It should be pointed out that the term private speech, in reviewing this literature, has been preferred over egocentric speech.

Private Speech has also been held synonymous to intrapersonal communication. In that, the term intrapersonal communication will be used to include the audible, overt speech, the private speech. Thus, both of them are regarded as forms of self-addressed speech, i.e. intrapersonal communication is a broader term, in which the speaker and the addressee are the same (De Guerrero, ibid: 20).

2.4.2.3 Inner Speech: covert self-dialogue

It does not seem to be an easy concept to reduce to few words. At first, Vygotsky (1934/1986: 255, in Vocate, 1994: 14) utilizes the term inner-speech to refer to both a dialogue with the self and the process of thought being realized in words. He also states that “inner speech is a speech for oneself. External speech is for others”. In another section, Vygotsky spoke of inner speech “Thinking in pure meanings”. In yet another, he states that inner speech is mediated ‘internally’ by word meanings. Again, Vygotsky (1986: 235, in de Guerrero, ibid: 15) himself referred to inner speech in a multiplicity of ways: as “an entirely separate speech
function”, a “mental draft”, “inner dialogue”, “practically wordless communications”, “speech almost without words”, “a distinct plane of verbal thought”, “thought connected with words”.

But more than that, De Guerre (ibid:15) portrays Sokolov’s (1972: 1) definition of inner speech as “soundless, mental speech, arising at the instant we think about something, plan or solve problems in our mind, recall books, read or conversations heard, read and write silently”. He also calls it “concealed verbalization” and “the speech mechanism of thinking.” De Gerrero (ibid: 15) adds that Korba (1989: 219) refers to it as “covert, intrapersonal language behavior”. Whereas, Morin (1993: 223) equats it with “self-talk” or “internal dialogue”. In other instances, Smith, Reisberg and Wilson (1992, as cited in De Gerrero, ibid: 15) inner speech has been interpreted as a “voice in the head” and as a rehearsal mechanism supporting interaction between the “inner ear”, i.e. auditory imagery and the “inner voice”, i.e. subvocalization. In addition to that, Zakin (2007: 1) states clearly that “inner speech is a kind of self-talk”. In other words, we can say that inner-speech is simply considered as the silent, covert, internal type or form of self-talk. Bakhtin, (1986 as cited in Zakin, ibid: 2) states clearly that inner speech is “a dialogue with oneself”.

Eventhough inner speech has been characterized in many ways, De Gerrero, (ibid: 14) concludes about all what has been said earlier about inner speech, by stating that from ancient to recent times the notion of inner speech is considered as “a silent manifestation of speech directed to the self”, and Frawley (1997: 95 in De Gerrero, ibid: 14) as well portrays it as “silent speech for oneself”. Significantly, De Gerrero (2005: 14) provides three elements that are essential in the characterization
of inner-speech: “first, it is spoken language, that is, it is language in action rather than language as an abstraction; second, it is ‘silent’, that is, it cannot be heard by people who are in the presence of the person experiencing it; and third, it has an orientation to be the self, that is, it serves private rather than public purposes”.

Ultimately, we can summarize further down the three levels of human communication, attempting to clarify more and to illustrate more the concept of intrapersonal communication and its associated terms, discussed earlier.

2.4.3. Development of self-talk (inner speech)

In Vocate’s (1994) view ‘intrapersonal’s self-talk’, or ‘dialogue with the self’, however, cannot occur until such time as inner speech exists and a “self” has been constituted. This view implies that human speech and ‘symbolic interaction’ play vital roles in this development. Essentially, Vygotsky and Luria (1930, as cited in Vocate, ibid) delineate and explain in detail a developmental progression of speech that moves from ‘external speech’ to ‘egocentric speech’ to ‘inner speech’. That is, self-talk.

Significantly, Vygotsky (1978, in Zakin, 2007) considers ‘Egocentric speech’ as an early form of self-talk used by very young children, and it is audible. And Vygotsky (ibid) maintains also that externally vocalized ‘egocentric speech’ gradually transformed into ‘abbreviated’ and ‘partially’ audible internalized speech and finally, to complete ‘internalized inner-speech’ or abstract thought, a ‘hallmark’ of adolescent and adult cognitive development. In other words, at some point in their development, children omit or drop ‘audible’ vocalization from their private speech, hence beginning the transition into ‘inner-speech’, ‘inner talking’ or ‘self-talk’. However, older children and adults primarily use inner-speech or inner-talking (as
opposed to egocentric speech), which can take a partially ‘audible’ form, in order to develop their individual capabilities in the face of increasingly complex tasks, for instance.

Within this context, Vocate (1994) provides us with an explanation of how the ‘self’ is created via speech and social interaction. She points out that the child first internalizes the perspectives or attitudes common to the community and takes those views of its own, in that it is not yet aware of itself, and consequently is unable to develop any ‘unique’, ‘individual’ outlook. In a sense, the spoken language of the child acts as a stimilus to him or her and evokes a response from others. Both responses are then incorporated as new facets of the “Me”. Thus, the self is constructed from the results of interactions simultaneously occurring with the self and with others. In sum, Fisher (1978 as cited in Vocate, ibid: 9) states that “the self becomes for itself, an object to which it responds and upon which it reflects and thereby achieves self-consciousness”. That is, “the self reflects upon the self”, as Vocate (ibid: 9) respectively claims.

2.4.4. Purposes of self-talk

We present now some purposes of self-talk.

2.4.4.1. Creation of meaning purpose

Accordingly, Vocate (1994) postulates that the purpose, however, of the process of self-talk is not just the creation of an entity called ‘the self’, but also its purpose the creation of meaning for the self. Furthermore, from Mead’s (1934, in Vocate, ibid) view, “it is the behavioral response that gives the communicative act its meaning”. The response may be merely a tendency ‘to act’, like for instance, when thinking of sitting in a chair rather than the over act of actually sitting down.
Moreover, Mead (ibid) states that prior to any response, however, the creation of meaning requires a ‘state of reflective consciousness’ that occurs only when the ‘self’ is an ‘object to itself’. That is, the ‘I’ and the ‘Me’. Self-awareness, therefore, results from internalizing the language of one’s social community. This internalization of language also entails the internalization of word meanings as they are then understood or construed. The subsequent ‘inner speech’ coding process, engendered by the ‘internalization of language’, involves shaping thought into words, thereby imbuing it with meaning. Add to that, it has been said that once ‘inner speech’ exists, “the self-talk made possible by it becomes the chief vehicle by which new meaning is created by the self”. This is because the interpretive response of self-talk requires intentional intervention in the inner speech coding process, thereby creating a new synthesis of subjective and objective meaning,(as Luria, 1987 states in Vocate, ibid : 10).

Furthermore, consciousness is regarded as a functional process derived from the interaction of the organism and its environment, from Mead’s (1982, in Vocate, 1994: 11) perspective. Similarly, he states that, self-consciousness occurs only when an individual interacts with him or herself. In that, such self-talk is critical not only for the ‘establishment’ or ‘reflective consciousness’, but also for an awareness of meaning. Mead (ibid) maintains that we have ‘no consciousness of meaning’ except when we can indicate ‘symbols’ to ourselves. Consequently, neither subjective nor objective meaning exists for us until symbols become ‘functional’ for us via ‘inner speech’ and ‘self-talk’.

Additionally, Vocate (1994) points out that one should think of self-talk not merely as ‘responding or providing feedback to oneself’, but also, originally,
as ‘dialectic’ between individual and society. That is to say, it also becomes dialectic between personal experience and the culture, or the experience of society. Vocate (1994: 11) states clearly that:

The process of self-talk on the intrapersonal level may occur simultaneously with the levels of interpersonal or public communication, but it provides the richest input for human consciousness when intrapersonal is the exclusive level of communication taking place (...).

2.4.4.2. Cognitive adaptation purpose

For Vocate (1994) Mead’s perspective identifies the primary social purpose of self-talk; that is, ‘adaptation’ of the self. Vocate (ibid) displays her viewpoint about using Mead’s schema, wherein the ‘I’ makes choices, and the interpretive, critical process that follows from the “Me” allows us ‘to adapt’ ourselves ‘mentally’, ‘physically’, or both, mainly before we think or act further. Vocate (ibid: 12), thus, expresses it clearly that self-talk constitutes a ‘cognitive version’ of Piaget’s process of ‘adaptation’, which means an interaction whereby “the organism uses its environment to enhance and benefit itself”.

In trying to specify more the notion of cognitive adaptation, Dance and Larson (1976 in vocate, 1994: 12) maintain that “adaptation” identifies the overall interactive process, which is basically comprised of two subroutines, viewed as: “(a), “assimilation”, which refers to ‘adjustments’ in the environment, and (b) “accommodation”, which represents all the ‘adjustments’ done by the organism”. Then, they add that the degree of adjustment in each subroutine may vary, but the interaction itself mandates at least some change by both organism and environment.
For language learning, cognitive adaptation is a process familiar to teachers at any level. Vocate (1994) sees that, concepts and principles often have to be ‘restructured’ in order to facilitate internalization by the learner. And this is done by simplifying relationships and using language that the student can construe, say, understandable items or words. On the one hand, basically, constituting Piaget’s subroutine of ‘assimilation’. On the other hand, the learner too must adjust, i.e. subroutine of accomodation, by for instance remaining open-minded, say, stay well focussed, and make an effort attempting to comprehend the material. Essentially, we can consider the interaction of student and concept as an example of ‘accomodation’, which is the ‘adjustment’ of the student him or herself.

In the light of all this, we can say that self-talk could be regarded as a domain essential to the adjustment of the self that acts in any communicative settings. And also, as a phenomenon crucial to any comprehension or understanding of human communicative behavior.

Besides, Vocate (1994) states that purposes differ from functions, in this discussion, in that they are ‘intentional’, ‘goal-directed’ behaviors, whereas functions are ‘intrinsic’, ‘involuntary consequences’.

2.4.5. Functions of self-talk

Now we move on to elucidate the functions of self-talk.

2.4.5.1. Speech communication functions

Dance and Larson (1976, in Vocate, 1994: 13) point out that self-talk on the intrapersonal level communication shares three functions with the other levels of speech communication: (a) the linking of the individual and his/ her environment, (b)
the development of higher mental processes, and (c) the regulation of the behavior of self and others.

As Dance and Larson (1976, as cited in Vocate, ibid) indicates, these may vary in degree from person to person, but they are ‘functional’ or ‘inevitable’ consequences of the existence of spoken language in the individual. However, Dance and Larson (ibid) explain, it is in self-talk that “qualitative variation is most crucial for individual success in the social, mental, or behavioral realms” (in Vocate, 1994: 13). Consequently, Vocate (ibid) stresses that the social environment is always present and has a role in any act of self-talk, as does the sensory experience of the individual. Thus, the dialectic between the individual and the society intrinsic to self-talk means that self-talk is ‘inherently’ a linkage between the individual and his or her environment.

Dance and Larson (1976, in Vocate, ibid), again, point out that attempts to regulate behavior go through developmental stages: (a) regulation of self by others, (b) regulation of self by self, and (c) regulation of others by self. Dance (ibid) explains, then, that the first stage reflects the signal influence of the spoken word whereby the more sound of the word interrupts and thereby regulates behavior. Once inner speech exists and the norms of significant others and the community at large are internalized into the self, then the second stage of self-regulation becomes possible via self-talk. And, as the individual becomes more sophisticated, she or he is able to at least attempt to control the behaviors of others, but again it is the functioning of self-talk that makes any intentional or scripted attempt possible. That is, it depends on the individual, whether she is trying to regulate her behavior or to regulate the behavior or others. As Vygotsky (1986, in Vocate; ibid: 13) states that
“inner speech, which is essentially dialogue with oneself, facilitates the self-regulation of behavior”. And according to him self-regulation refers to “the control of processes that enable us to think as well as to monitor the thinking process itself”.

Essentially, Hart (1980, in Vocate, ibid: 13) provides an example of the functioning of self-talk in intrapersonal communication. Hart (ibid) looks at communication as being a combination of three basic styles: (a) noble selves who see themselves as processing the truth and communicating with others merely to inform them; (b) rhetorical reflectors who spend their interaction time trying to reflect back to their partner the personality and opinions that will be pleasing to the partner, and (c) rhetorical sensitives who take into consideration the context in which the interaction is taking place as well as the background, values, and attitudes of themselves and their partner to the interaction. Hart (ibid) explains here that, obviously, the noble self, because she or he makes no effort to adapt or adjust to the other person, has no need to engage in self-talk to accomplish such an adjustment.

On the other hand, both the rhetorical reflector and the rhetorical sensitive must utilize self-talk in order to adjust to the partner and to enact the dominant/preferred communication style.

2.4.5.2. Instructional and motivational functions

Instructional self-talk has been defined by Tod et.al. (2009: 196) as “the verbalizations or thoughts that are meant to help a person’s desired behavior by maintaining focus on ‘technique and strategy execution’”.

Motivational self-talk, according to Tod et.al. (2009: 196), refers to the verbalizations or thoughts that are meant to help a person’s desired behavior by “increasing confidence, effort, and energy in a positive direction”.
We want, tentatively, to clarify and illustrate the previous definitions, concerning the concept of self-talk: inner-speech by providing the following examples:

For instance, you find yourself in a traffic jam while rushing to work one morning. Your inner-speech could be so pessimistic to the point, you might think, “my whole day is ruined. If I do not get to work on time, I will never hear the end of it. My boss will think that I am not good and will surely pass me up for that promotion, I have been working all years for”. You will then start your day in a bad mood and feel unmotivated, thinking that there is no point in working hard since you already ruined your chances for a promotion. Instead, you could have a more positive self-talk and think; for example, “I will probably be no more than ten minutes late. I guess I will just have to take a quick lunch instead of going out to eat. If I can turn in report before the end of the day and make sure that it is error-free, I might still have a chance to get that promotion”.

Basically, Dembo (2000: 83) in the same vein, postulates that some of our inner speech; self-talk serves as a ‘motivator’ to try novel activities or tasks and ‘persist in learning’. And, Dembo (ibid) provides an easy to comprehend example. When a student for instance self-talk and say “I can do as well as anyone in this class or if I keep studying this material, I know that I will learn it”.

In summation, self-talk; inner-speech can motivate individuals (namely learners) to begin, maintain, or terminate a task or an activity, say, to be committed and more persistent. And, therefore, self-talk remains a powerful cognitive-motivational tools.
2.4.6. How does self-talk operate (work)?

Significantly, Dembo (2004: 123) states that many people blame others for their negative emotional reactions; like for instance: “He made me mad” or “My friend’s response to my question made me depressed”. Dembo (ibid: 123) explains that “people or events do not directly influence our emotional reactions. Instead, our self-talk related to events is the primary cause of our attitudes and emotions”.

Again, Dembo (2004) provides an extreme example of one psychologist (Ellis, 1962, in Dembo, ibid: 123) about his belief of how the process operates: An event or experience occurs (A). We then process the information and think about it (B). Finally, we react with our emotions and tend to take some action regarding the initial event or experience (C).

A. An event occurs
B. Thoughts about the event (self-talk)
   B1. Self-talk: “I cannot learn this stuff!”
      “What is the use of studying?”
   B2. Self-talk: “I have the ability to get these questions correct if I put forth extra effort”.
      “I am going to study differently next time”.
C. Emotion caused primarily by the thoughts and self-talk
   C1. Emotion: sadness and anger.
      Thoughts and self-talk
   C2. Emotion: confidence.

Dembo (2004) in explaining the example notes the different reactions: B1 and B2 to the event (A) and the resulting emotional responses. The first response (B1) is an example of harmful self-talk leading to negative emotional responses and often inappropriate behavior in future test preparation situations. The second response
(B2) is an example for positive self-talk leading to a positive emotional response and possible changes in future test preparation situations. In addition to that, Dembo (2004) asserts that most of us rather use negative than positive inner-speech (self-talk) in dealing with events and situations or in tackling any issues or problems in our lives. Add to that, Dembo (ibid) notes that negative inner-speech does play a role in ‘emotion’, ‘attitudes’, and ‘behavior’. However, people who are using positive self-talk, in almost a constant basis are capable to experience success in many different areas. For instance, as when difficult or challenging events occur, individuals remind themselves that they have the skill, the capacity, or motivation to overcome any adversity. Moreover, Dembo (ibid: 124) put forth the following example of how self-talk affects students’ emotional responses and behavior.

**Student Reflections**

When the notion of self-talk was first introduced in class, it sounded funny. After all, what normal person walks around talking to himself or herself? A week ago I started to analyze my own self-talk. I never realized how much I talk to myself! I talk to myself about my weight, my appearance, my academic progress, and life goals. When I am studying I wonder how I am doing in the subject or how well I will perform on the exam.

I find my examples of both positive and negative self-talk in my daily life. Recently, I was doing a scene in an acting class and I caught my self talking to myself, saying how bad I was doing. I was complaining to myself because I was not in the mood to do the scene. I stopped myself and just told myself to talk later and not now. My self-talk was not helping me get the job done.

Anxiety plays a different role in my life that I think it does for most other students. I do not experience much test anxiety, but I do experience task anxiety. When I am given an assignment for a class I spend more time worrying about how and when I am going to get the assignment done than I do actually working on the task.

I understand that instructors expect more out of students when they are given take-home assignments. These assignments make me nervous, because I do not know whether I can live up to the instructors’ expectations.

I am trying to deal with any anxiety by finding out the instructors’ criteria for grading the assignment. In this way, I feel more in control of my destiny.
Likewise, Gesell (2007: 20) notes that one way to look at self-talk is "as the expression of what we believe is true about a situation". Gesell (ibid: 20) provides the example of two people; one afraid of flying, the other not afraid. Both are in an airplane that is encountering moderate turbulence. The fearful ones self-talk is, "this is very unsafe. We could crash. I am terrified". The other passenger, whose self-talk may be something like, "I think I need to go to the bathroom and will do so when the ride smoothes out", is calmly reading the paper. Hence, Gesell (ibid) concludes by saying that, two people, experiencing the same stimuli, are having completely different responses because their beliefs about the circumstances (self-talk) they are experiencing are totally different.

2.4.7. Types of self-talk

Understandably, we all have a voice in our heads that talks to us. That is, we are constantly talking to ourselves. And this self-talk includes the internal dialogues or silent conversations that go on within our minds most of the time. Just like a conversation between two people, self-talk is our on-going inner dialogue in which we are both speaker and listener.

Additionally, Weinrebe (1993: 87) postulates that, for any encounter we have, our self-talk determines:

- Our attitude about the situation
- What we see, hear, and attend to.
- How we interpret what we talk in.
- What we think the outcomes should be.
- How we act.
- How we appraise the consequences or our actions.
Weinrebe (1993) points out that this internal dialogue can be self-defeating, destructive, and negative, or optimistic, constructive and positive. Furthermore, Cauchon (1994) expresses clearly that self-talk can be either positive or negative, depending on our level of ‘self-esteem’. He states that individuals or folks who suffer from low self-esteem spend more time planning and going over what was already said, and are more concerned with other people’s opinion (Gesell, 2007). For those with higher self-esteem, self-talk is more positive and congratulatory. They are not preoccupied with thinking about what they should have said.

Let us have a quick look at some examples about internal messages which have been provided by Su (2005: 88) such as self-affirmation (“I can run five miles without stopping”), self-blaming (“Why can’t you run faster, slowpoke?”), self-coaching (“Hang in there, you can do it”), and giving up (“I can’t do this”).

2.4.7.1. Negative self-talk

According to Hardy (2006: 87) negative self-statements “can be in the form of criticism or self-demeaning to the individual”. Actually, we talk to ourselves all the time. According to the psychologist Helmstetter (in Gesell, 2007: 20), this self-talk both “reflects and creates our emotional states so that when the self-talk is negative we become more stressed, less confident, and more concerned with what other people think”. In the same vein, Beth (2012: 10) expresses that “negative” self-talk is “toxic to a persons’ self-esteem, sense of efficiency and, ultimately, their self-confidence”. Beth (ibid) also says, individuals who experience negative self-messages, think and feel something negative, and begin to believe that everything surrounding them is merely negative. Beth (ibid: 10) points out that “all of this internal poison (negative self-talk) feeds a generalized sense of helplessness, which
saps our motivation and energy to be proactive and try new things, and undermines our ability to be creative”.

Moreover, Beth (2012) adds that many writers, who engage in negative self-talk, instead of channeling energy into creating, find themselves frozen from fear or, worse, like actively avoiding their work. This, in turn, can lead to a dangerous cycle of feeling negative, acting as if the conclusion will be negative, and then feeling even worse because of the assumed conclusion. Beth (ibid: 10) provides the following examples about negative self-talk experienced by some writers:

- “No one wants to read your writing”.
- “Your manuscript will never make it past the slush pile”.
- “Do not even bother going to that conference; no one wants to hear your ideas”.

Again, Beth (2012) explains his illustrations by saying that if a friend said such things, no doubt would wonder if we really had an enemy on our hands, but what if these insults (very negative self-statements) come from our own minds. In addition to that, Su (2005) adds that people who have a negative commentary (self-critical) running through their heads proved, not surprisingly, to be more anxious and afraid of failing. That is, those who have constant negative, irrational and untrue self-messages experience more anxiety and intense emotional disturbance.

Generally, we have all experienced, to some point, negative self-talk. And to some extent we have noticed that it has a potent impact in our lives, in general, and in our performance, in particular. It is a matter of fact, that it impaires our performance at any task we undertake. That is to say, negative self-statements, negative thoughts are the first signs of failure. Of course, there is no guarantee that they will lead to, or cause, failure but since research (in the field of cognitive
psychology) had also established that nothing makes us weak, less confident, more anxious, and afraid of failure and setbacks more than negative self-talk!

We would like, therefore, to provide some examples of negative internal messages (self-talk) to illustrate and clarify more the concept. As an instance, when someone says to herself things like:

"The coach keeps criticizing the way I am playing. He is so unfair!"

"I would like to apply for a part-time job, but no one would want to hire me."

"If I do not go to college, I will never get a good job."

"I would like to be a doctor, but I do not think I could go through all those years of school".

"I just cannot do this".

"No matter how I try I cannot do it".

"No body appreciates my effort and time to do that".

"I will never get into a good university".

"I am not smart enough to have good grades and average".

"It is better to stop, you are bothering yourself".

"I am not as good-looking as the other kids at school".

"If I try out for the basketball team, I probably will not make it".

"I am not good at French".

"I cannot succeed at anything".

"I am obese".

"I wonder if I am doing this right!"

"Watch what you are doing!"

"You are always late!"
Hence, we can state here, from these typical negative self-talk examples that, at times, self-talk occurs in the first person “I”, other times, in the second person “You”.

The surprising thing researchers found is that, most of our self-talk sounds pretty negative. It has been found also that it sounds critical, harsh, or limiting, which in turn, makes us feel defeated, powerless or bad? That is, when our self-talk sounds irrational, unrealistic, and negative. It is considered our own worst enemy.

According to McGonigle (1988: 725) “it is not what happens to a man but how he takes it”. In other words, it is not the situation that makes us mad or emotional; the way we think about an event (our self-talk) can create our emotion, either pleasant or unpleasant. For the simplest reason that, everything we think and say to ourselves affects our personal vibration, and the way we feel. And our vibration in turn, affects our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health. In addition to that, our subconscious mind accepts all our self-talk (including negative, irrational, and unrealistic self-statements) as the truth, even if it is not. And then goes about creating the circumstances to match, i.e. eventhough we may not be consciously focusing on our self-talk, our subconscious mind is listening to everything we say to ourselves, including the constant mind chatter. And because we tend to accumulate many negative beliefs, fears and worries during our lives, our subconscious mind is, totally, filled with a lots of negative self messages that does not serve us well. In that, it is from these fears and negative beliefs that our self-talk; inner speech is created.

Basically, the majority of most people’s mind chatter is negative rather positive. Thus, it is noteworthy to analyse it and discuss it in more detail, by presenting further down its forms and types.
2.4.7.1 Five kinds of negative self-talk

Accordingly, Gesell (2007) elucidates that negative self-talk appears in many forms. The following descriptions reflect the kind of conversations that twirl around inside our heads at times or most of the time. And sometimes the categories, and the emotions overlap, even though they are very distinct.

2.4.7.1.1. Awfulistic self-talk: “awfulizing”

Gesell (2007: 20) points out that “awfulizing makes problems or annoyances into something much worse. It is a way of magnifying problems that tends to hide the positive or the neutral aspects of our experience”. To be precise, believing a situation is awful will make it feel that way. Gesell (ibid) states that the words “awful”, “horrible”, and “terrible” generally imply 100% negative experiences. Most can be just as easily categorized as “inconvenient”, “difficult”, “tough”, or a “hassle”.

To give an easy example, if your head questions you about the way you should handle a situation, you may say to yourself, “she does not think I am a good person”, or “she is trying to get rid of me”. As another instance, if a coworker does not speak to you, awfulistic self-talk impels you to think, “he is angry with me” or “he does not want to work with me”. Or for instance, a husband hears that his spouse is going away on business for few days, he may say, “being alone is just awful”.

2.4.7.1.2. Catastrophic self-talk: “catastrophizing”

Catastrophizing is a way of viewing everything as catastrophic. Gesell (2007:20) states that “you are catastrophizing when you think that the worst possible outcome will happen when anticipating danger to fight or flee with no present actual threat. How draining!” (Gesell, ibid: 20).
2.4.7.1.3. Overgeneralizing self-talk

Again, Gesell (2007: 21) considers overgeneralizing as “taking one event or example and expanding it way beyond the evidence to all or most similar things”. Gessel (ibid: 21) provides some phrases as examples which represent overgeneralizing S.T. phrases such as “they all do that”, “It always happens like that to me”, and “I cannot catch a break”. He, then, presented the markers of overgeneralized thinking; words such as “always”, “never”, “must” and “every time”. As stereotypes are by products of over-generalization.

Likewise, McGonigle (1988: 725) illustrates the point more, by giving some examples about overgeneralizing self-talk. For instance, if one tells herself, “I must always know the answer to [any] question or people will think I am stupid”. In truth, rarely does the worst outcome happen. As Mark Twain (as cited in Gesell, ibid: 20) said “I have been afraid of many things in my life, most never happened”. Gesell (ibid) again, provides an extreme example of being awakened by a phone call in the middle of the night. What does your self-talk scream at you? Usually it is something like: “There has been an accident”. In reality, the most common cause of a phone ringing in the middle of the night is.... that is right.... a wrong number! Yet, few people wake up shouting, “wrong number!!!!”

Moreover, Gesell (2007: 20) states clearly that “catastrophizing makes things more stressful”. In that, unwittingly, our thoughts help mobilize our bodies and emotions as if a genuine (rather than imagined) catastrophe was actually happening. For example like saying: “I will never be able to do everything I have to do today”. McGonigle (1988) says also that by viewing things in this way people put unrealistic pressure on themselves.
2.4.7.1.4. Polarized thinking (self-talk)

Importantly, Gesell (2007: 21) points out that this is another name for “all-or-nothing thinking”. “Polarized thinking results from the tendency to go to extremes”. Which means, things are classified as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, ‘black’ or ‘white’, ‘friend’ or ‘foe’. Gesell (ibid) states that one have to challenge this thinking; negative self-talk, by recognizing that, in fact, few things that are truly so extreme.

2.4.7.1.5. Should-have self-talk (shoulding)

For McGonigle (1988: 725) ‘should have self-talk’ “is a way of making yourself feel guilty”. Like for instance, when someone says: ‘today is Friday and I should have called on Wednesday’. Because she cannot change the fact she is only driving herself crazy with such self-talk.

In addition to that, Gesell (2007) states that when we compare ourselves to perfectionist images in our minds, we are probably trying to motivate ourselves with “shoulds”. But too often we tend to judge our own or another’s behavior by saying what “should have been done”. “Should-have” self-talk is never about the present. It is either a projection into the future or a judgment of the past. “Should have done”, in fact, does not solve the problem, but rather creating another problem of putting pressure on oneself, without being able to make a change in something already happened. Gesell (ibid: 21) put it forth that “is like closing the barn door after the horse has run away”.

2.4.7.1.2. Examples of negative self-talk (N.S.T)

The examples of N.S.T shown below, are developed by Dembo (2004) to aid individuals to know more about the different forms of negative self-talk that, generally, hinder them (namely learners) from reaching their potentials and achieving
their goals. Dembo (ibid), significantly, postulates that individuals express different types of negative self-talk (N.S.T). And the following are four common kinds of self-talk that tend to be found in people who are prone to anxiety: the worrier, the critic, the victim, and the perfectionist.

The “worrier” creates anxiety by causing you to anticipate the worst-case scenario; “the critic is the part of you that constantly judges and evaluates your behavior”; the “victim makes you feel helpless and hopeless”; and the ‘perfectionist resembles the critic, but its concern is not to put you down, but to push you to do better’. (Dembo, 2004: 125). Unfortunately, the perfectionist generates anxiety by telling you that your efforts are not good enough (Bourne, 1995, ascited in Dembo, ibid: 125). Dembo (ibid) adds that people may display more than one type of self-talk in any situation, say, the overlap.

The following table summarises information on each of the four types of self-talk provided by Dembo (2004: 125).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Favorite Expression</th>
<th>Examples of Self-talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Worrier</td>
<td>Imagines the worst situation</td>
<td>“what if…”</td>
<td>“… I get called on I cannot answer the question”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Critic</td>
<td>Judges or evaluates your behaviors;</td>
<td>“that was stupid!”</td>
<td>“My term paper needed more library research and another draft”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>points out your flaws and limitations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Victim</td>
<td>Feels, helpless or hopeless</td>
<td>“I cannot”. “I will never be able to”.</td>
<td>“I am just too tired to do anything today”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Perfectionist</td>
<td>Tells you that your efforts are not good enough</td>
<td>“I should”. “I have to” “I must”. “I could have”</td>
<td>“If I take some time off from studying. I keep thinking: ‘you should be studying’”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 04: Negative Self-talk
2.4.7.2. Positive self-talk

In essence, positive self-talk can, gradually, improve confidence, enhance effort, and increase intensity by creating a positive mood. Intuitively, it makes sense that our self-talk can affect our performance. But, unfortunately, a great deal of self-talk tends to be negative and limiting, as opposed to positive, arousing, and self-fulfilling internal dialogue.

Hardy (2006: 87) defines positive self-talk as “positive self-statements that can be encouraging and praising to the individual”. In other words, positive self-talk is the running dialogue inside our heads, which is, to a great extent, motivating, constructive, and self-rewarding. i.e. rewards and pushes us for trying and helps us, for instance, learn new skills faster.

Most importantly, individuals who are positive thinkers (use positive self-talk in almost a constant basis) have an advantage over people who think negatively. In that, they get things done. Likewise, Lockman (1995: 20) asserts that positive self-talk can help individuals to focus on their goals. Add to that, positive self-talk leads to “increased self-confidence, strong self-belief, and the ability to perform well in tough situations”. Lockman (ibid: 20) provides the following example that shows the power of positive self-talk. For instance, Bob and Jim have six 100s left in a challenging set of 10×100 freestyle. Each is holding steady but their muscles are beginning to tighten and burn. Bob feels like the set is getting the best of him. He said to himself: “I have almost ten minutes left of this set! I am never going to make it. My stroke is failing, I am getting Zero push off, and I cannot breathe”. Whereas, Jim tells himself this set is a great challenge. “In less than ten minutes, I will be done! I will feel great having accomplished my goal of making the interval for all
ten. Go for it!” He, then, concentrates on his stroke, turns, push offs, and breathing pattern. He even talks positively to swimmers around trying to make this set.

Overall, Lockman (1995) expresses clearly that Jim had a better chance of making the set. Simply, because he was sending himself positive self-messages (inner-speech) before, during, and even after the performance. Hence, from this simple concret example, we can infer that, indeed, positive self-talk is a potent cognitive-motivational strategy which helps individuals to tackle and tough challenges and situations by talking one’s self up. In other words, positive internal dialogue (inner-speech) is immensely on important part of our success; in many settings, such as in learning settings.

It is inevitable that, at times, we do speak to ourselves negatively, i.e. it is normal that one, from time to time, find him/herself saying things negative. In that, it is impossible to expect anyone having, merely, a positive inner-speech on a constant basis. That is, the occasional negative self-talk is nothing to be concerned or worried about; accept when the negative S.T exceeds the positive S.T.

The real key here is not in trying to have solely, positive self-messages, which are, naturally, impossible to happen. But one must be careful how she talks to herself. For the simplest reason that, the subconscious mind accepts every single word we tell to ourselves and responds accordingly. Thus, the subconscious mind does not know the difference. That is, our subconscious mind believes the information it stores is true, whether it is true or not.

The example of being called for instance ‘silly’ or whatever, like ‘smart’, it makes an original recording on one’s subconscious mind. Every time one replays the experience of being called stupid or silly, as far as the subconscious mind is
concerned, it is happening all over again because the subconscious does not recognize the difference between a real or imagined experience. And each time one replays the same thought, it gets recorded as reality all over again and reinforces the dominant belief-like in these cases, "I am silly" or "I am smart". As these thoughts accumulate, they bring about patterns of belief. As we allow these thoughts to build up in our minds, we then act out those beliefs; thus we live a self-fulfilling prophecy. Therefore, we can say that, in fact, what we say to ourselves would happen in reality. Because our subconscious mind is listening to every single word we say to ourselves, and then respond according to the messages we send to ourselves. Thus, what we say, for sure, will happen.

Let us, therefore, have a look at some positive self-messages (positive inner-speech) like, for instance:

"I can succeed at anything I set my mind to"

"I am good at everything..."

"I will be able to do that..."

"I can do this... for sure"

"I have practised very well, thus, I will perform well orally"

"I have studied hard for this exam, so I am pretty sure to do well"

"Oh, sure I can....!"

"I have survived this and worse before"

"I can/ will do my best"

"Good job...well done".

"You are so clever"

"They will all love my work"
“I am a good mother; I am so tender with my children”

“I am a good example of honesty!”

In addition to all what has been said earlier, it needs to be noted here that positive self-talk has been considered by McSchane et. al. (2000: 66) as “one of the key ingredients in students’ performance, productivity and creativity”. That is to say, a sine qua non condition for students’ academic success. More specifically, McSchane et.al. (ibid: 66) assert that positive inner-speech (self-talk) refers to “the inner forces within a person that affects greatly his/her direction, intensity, persistence, desire, motivation, and energy within the process of learning”.

Moreover, McSchane et.al., (2000) postulate that even when students have clear goals (objectives), the right skills and the sufficient abilities, they will not get the expected performances without having positive inner speech to achieve those goals (cf. goal-setting chapter, elucidated in some length).

Strictly speaking, McSchane et.al. (2000) express that learners who have positive inner-speech; who tend to speak positively to themselves, are more challenging and they are never reluctant to take risks while studying. Also are willing to exert tremendous efforts, and they are always prepared and ready to go beyond any pitfalls or obstacles that they are going to face.

Likewise, Brophy (2004: 134) points out that, primarily, “Students will need to use (positive) self-talk, as an efficient cognitive strategy, which will help them handle tasks successfully”. Brophy (ibid) adds that, it is mainly significant for discouraged learners who have not yet developed self-management and problem-solving strategies in their own, for an effective learning.
In a view of this, Belker et.al. (2012) states that, it is estimated that we send ourselves more than a thousand messages a day. And if we want to build up our self-image, we have to make sure that these messages are positive ones. In that, the more we do this the more our brain builds a positive sense of self. Belker et.al, (ibid: 164) express that positive self-talk is “like having an MP3 player in your mind that sends you only positive messages”. As an example, Belker et.al, (ibid: 164) provide some examples of positive self-talk:

“I am improving my management skills each day”

“I can handle this”

“I made a mistake but I will do better next time”.

2.4.7.2.1. Three kinds of positive self-talk

Globally, we can all relearn how to talk to ourselves positively, rationally, and realistically. For that, McGonigle (1988) states clearly that ‘optimistic’, ‘nowistic’, and ‘realistic self-talk’ can make you feel positive about situations, happy, and in control.

2.4.7.2.1.1. Optimistic self-talk (S.T)

According to McGonigle (1988: 726) optimistic S.T is “putting our thoughts in the most positive way”. As an instance, if someone’s spouse is going on a short business trip he may say, “while she is away, I will accomplish something” or “it will be great to spend sometime with my friends, or so”. Another example provided by McGonile, (ibid: 726), if for instance someone’s boss asks her about the way she would handle a situation, she may say to herself, “she is asking me so that she can evaluate my work better or she can help me enhance my professional growth”.

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2.4.7.2.1.2. Realistic self-talk (S.T)

Accordingly, McGonigle (1988: 726) sees realistic S.T as “a way to view things objectively”. Like for instance, if a colleague does not speak to you, you do not imagine the worst. Instead you reflect, “Nancy did not speak to me today. I wonder if something is troubling her; I will speak with her at break”. It is a way of not being hard on yourself. Yet, another example, “if I do not know the answer, I will look it up or find someone to ask”.

2.4.7.2.1.3. Nowistic self-talk (S.T)

Again, according to McGonigle (1988: 726) nowistic S.T is a way to remain in the present, to do what is possible in the here and now. Do not dwell on what could have or should have been done (or said). Moreover, McGoingle (ibid) expresses that self-talk is automatic and reflexive in nature. But we can learn to change how we talk to ourselves and, therefore, how we react to events. Change, however, requires effort. McGonigle sees that one way, i.e. exercise, is to jot down our feelings about a common situation that produces unpleasant emotions.

In trying to specify more the notion of positive self-talk, Makin et.al. (2004: 86) put forth, that positive self-talk involves the following steps:

- **Monitor thoughts:** As with any behavioural change project, the first step is to identify the thoughts concerned, and how often they occur.

- **Pin-point negative talk:** Some self-talk will be positive, some negative. The negatives need to be identified and their contents analysed.

- **Stop negative thoughts:** Following behavioural principles, behavior to be discouraged should be punished as soon as it occurs. There are a number of techniques for doing this but one of the most effective is most probably ‘thought
stopping’. As soon as the negative thought is detected, you should say, out loud (or under your breath if out loud would be embarrassing) ‘stop’ this has the effect of interrupting the thoughts. At first you may find yourself doing this fairly frequently and loudly. After a time, however, you will find the thoughts occurring less frequently, and you may not even have to verbalize the ‘stop’.

➢ Accentuate the positive: Not only must the negative be consistency punished, but the positive thoughts should be reinforced. You may try to use tangible reinforcers. It is more likely, however, that your reward will be self-administered praise.

Additionally, Makin et.al, (2004) postulate that positive self-talk is, in itself, a tool. We have to undertake, which would change our behaviors, if improvements are to be achieved. Here are some examples of positive self-talk, given by Quick and Quick (1984:87), shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Typical mental monologue</th>
<th>Positive self-talk alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with a superior at work</td>
<td>‘I hate that person’</td>
<td>‘I do not feel comfortable with him’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He makes me feel stupid’</td>
<td>‘I let myself get on edge when he’s around’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘We will never get along’</td>
<td>‘It will take some effort to get along with him.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Oh boy, what a day this will be’</td>
<td>‘This looks like a busy day’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving to work on a day which you know will be full of appointments and potentially stressful meetings</td>
<td>‘It is going to be hell’</td>
<td>‘The day should be very productive’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I will never get it all done’</td>
<td>‘I will get a lot accomplished today’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘It will be exhausting’</td>
<td>‘I will earn a good night’s rest today’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 05: Positive self-talk
To sum up, it is worth stating that positive self-talk is a key strategy; tool we carry with us that is available at a moment’s notice. As Weinrebe (1993: 95) states it clearly that “when you have yourself on your side, you are never alone and you always have an encouraging supporter to call on”.

2.4.8. Awareness and motivation to change negative self-talk (N.S.T)

If we hear a voice within us saying, “no matter how you try; you cannot do it”, then try by all means and do it and that inner voice (negative self-talk) will be silenced. This means that, we can change the ‘station’ in our heads and tune to positive ones instead; replacing the negative self-talk with positive statements.

In this context, Bigelow (2011: 124) asserts that “people have ‘healing powers’ within themselves that can be unleashed to overcome any physical or emotional challenge”. That is, the trick is to discern the healthy voice (positive self-talk) from the negative messages that prevent positive growth.

Interestingly, Kirk (2002) attracts more attention to the idea that, there are many books on mastering the art of conversation with others. But what should we read to have meaningful tasks; appropriate fruitful self-messages or conversations, with the man or woman in the mirror? Moreover, Kirk (ibid: 214) states clearly that “proper self-talk can provide a way to override our past negative programming by erasing or replacing it with conscious, positive new directions”.

Additionally, Kirk (2000) points out that the “No!” we have been told more than one hundred millions of times during our first eighteen years of life alone has helped to create an invisible wall between ourselves and our unlimited potential. Hence, it is quite important what we say to ourselves and how we say it (self-talk). Kirk (ibid) adds that with a little discipline and patience, we will be better equipped with the
words that will help us climb out of the pit of negative self-talk, i.e. from ‘negative acceptance’ to the ‘better you’. Thus, one has to learn how to override the self-destructive feelings (negative inner-speech) many of us succumb to on a regular basis. Further, one should take some responsibility for oneself and build a healthy inner-speech; positive self conversations or positive self-talk.

In regard to critical inner voice; negative self-talk, Douglas (2002: 80) states that: “critical inner voice (...) could be described as that little devil that sits on one’s shoulder to balance out the little angel on the other side”. Add to that, Douglas (ibid) asserts that, this voice begins when as young children we internalize parental messages, particularly negative ones, creating a psychological base which many of us do not progress beyond to find more realistic and rational self-view.

In a view of this, Beth (2012) claims that fortunately, we can transform negative self-messages to positive ones. That is, the good news is that we can intervene and break the cycle at any point. Moreover, Beth (ibid: 10) elucidates that, “by choosing to act as if we are as confident as we would like to be, we reinforce a more positive self-image and stack the deck for positive self-talk. If we believe we are capable, we will act on that belief in a way that promotes positive outcomes”.

Beth (ibid) also recommends recognizing or discerning negative self-talk, and the emotions behind it, as the first step toward breaking the ‘vicious circle’. As for instance, asking oneself why you feel this way, and what evidence backs up your own statements. Also challenge the logic involved in drawing conclusions from flimsy evidence. Then, reframing the negative ‘generalizations’ into statements that are ‘specific’ and ‘concrete’, and asking yourself what you could change or do different next time. Beth (ibid: 10) emphasised that:
We have the choice to believe in the good or the bad about ourselves (...) it is never too late to change the direction of your thinking and start the journey to a more optimistic, happier version of you.

2.4.9. How can I change my self-talk?

In this context, Bourne 1995, (in Dembo, 2004: 126) points out that, it is quite important to construe and change our unproductive self-talk. After identifying and comprehending the nature of our negative self-talk, we can substitute it with positive, supportive statements (self-talk). In addition to that, Bourne (ibid) notes that this requires jotting down and importantly rehearsing positive statements that directly refute our negative inner-speech (self-talk).

Additionally, Bourne (ibid, as cited in Dembo, ibid: 126) provides some examples of positive ‘counter statements’ that can be used with each of the four types of negative self-talk (as we have mentioned them in detail previously in this section). She recommends avoiding negative statements. For example, “I am not going to panic when I start the test”, and focusing on positive statements (self-talk). Like, for instance, “I am prepared for this test”. She also suggests keeping counter statements in the present tense and in the first person. As an instance, “I can...” “I will now...” “I am learning to ...”.
Significantly, Dembo (2004: 126) also provides some concrete examples about how to change the types of negative self-talk for more positive counter statements.

- **The Worrier**
  Instead of “what if.....” say, “so what, I can handle this,” “I can be anxious and still do this”, “I will get used to this with practice”.

- **The Critic**
  Instead of self-criticism, say, “I am okay the way I am”, “I accept and believe in myself”.

- **The Victim**
  Instead of feeling hopeless, say, “I can continue to make progress one step at a time”. “I acknowledge the progress I have made and will continue to improve”.

- **The Perfectionist**
  Instead of demanding perfection, say, “it is okay to make mistakes. Setbacks are part of the process and an important learning experience”.

In this respect, Dembo (ibid) states that the subsequent procedure shown in the following table was developed by Butler (1981) to aid individuals construe or comprehend and change any self-talk that is preventing or hindering them from pursuing or reaching their goals and objectives.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listen to your own self-talk</td>
<td>What am I telling myself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can’t alter inner speech unless you understand what you are telling yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Decide if your inner dialogue is helpful or harmful</td>
<td>Is it helping?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine how your inner speech affects your emotions, motivation, and behavior.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your self-talk is helping maintain it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your self-talk is harmful change it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify the type of self-talk in which you are engaged.</td>
<td>What type of self-talk is maintaining my negative self-talk?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is from the worrier, the critic, the victim, or the perfectionist?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Replace your harmful self-talk with positive self-talk.</td>
<td>What permission and self-affirmation will I give my-self?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Yourself permission to try another strategy to deal with the event or situation. Identify your positive characteristics. (e.g., desire, concentration, ability) that will help deal with the event. Try writing a counter-argument to your negative self-talk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Develop a guide: decide what action to take consonant with your new supportive position. If you decide that your self-talk is harmful, you want to change your behavior as well as your attitude or emotional response. Specify this new behavior</td>
<td>What action will I take based on my new positive position?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 06: Procedures for improving self-talk

2.4.9.1. An example of self-talk analysis

Interestingly, Dembo (2004: 126) provides a concrete example to specify more the notion of self-talk and how to analyse it:

Sharon is graduating from high school and would like to major in biology in college because she plans to attend medical school. She, then, decides instead to major in business, in that, her friends have told her about the many years of difficult study necessary to achieve her original goal. Moreover, she doubts her ability and motivation to perform well in science. During the first semester at college, she
becomes upset because she is not studying what she really wants and desires, she decides, then, to explore her own self-talk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What am I telling myself?</td>
<td>I am saying to myself, “I really would like to go to medical school”. \</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then, I think, “Oh, come on, Sharon, you are being silly. Medical school is hard and you will never be able to do the work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it helping?</td>
<td>No. It is keeping me from doing what I really want to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of self-talk is maintaining my negative self-talk?</td>
<td>The Critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What permission and self-affirmation will I give myself?</td>
<td>I will tell myself that I need to stop listening to others and begin thinking for myself. After all, I did very well in high school and I am very motivated to succeed in college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 07: Example of Self-talk

2.4.9.2. Two behavioral approaches to transform/neutralize the power of negative self-talk

Gesell (2007: 21) provides two methods to conquer negative self-talk.

Method one

1. Pause and take a deep breath.

2. Ask yourself the following questions:

   - What is myself-talk right now, word for word?
   - How am I upsetting myself?
How can I reevaluate this situation so I will respond with reasonable and objective feelings and actions?

3. State the reinterpreted, positive self-talk to yourself.

**Method two**

1. Become aware of the nature of your negative self-talk. (Example: I am really not as good as my boss thinks I am").
2. Challenge it. (Example: "Why do I say that I am not as good? I am not perfect, and still my evaluations are good and they are realistic.")
3. Change it. (Example: "I am pleased to be recognized as valuable to this team, and there are things that I want to improve on").

Within a similar vein, Su (2005) suggests that if someone has the tendency to criticize oneself, one has to learn to focus on what she is doing right instead of worrying about where she is falling short. For that, Su (ibid: 88) proposes the following steps, in order to get rid of negative self-statements (and preferably, to give few weeks to become comfortable with each step before moving on to the next).

**Step 1:** Keep your internal commentary neutral.

**Step 2:** Now try some friendly encouragements, such as, "I am doing really well".

**Step 3:** Finally, show yourself with praise. Tell yourself, "I am doing quite well than I ever have before".

Additionally, Montgomery (1987: 859) asserts that "the most effective means to change the way you feel is to change the way you think". That is, the type of our self-talk determines, to a great extent, how we feel (mainly about ourselves). Moreover, Montgomery (ibid) states clearly that, one strategy that can be used to deal with negative self-talk, which is changing our "shoulds" to "wants". And first we
have to pay attention to the way we talk to ourselves. The critical, self-effacing
messages that we give to ourselves may have been taught to us by, for instance,
parents or others important to us, i.e. significant others.

Montgomery (1987: 859) notes that, defining a ‘conflict’ in terms of ‘shoulds’,
i.e. a type of negative self-talk, leads to guilt and self-blame, but in terms of “want”,
the conflict becomes a choice. Like when we say, for instance, “I should have done
better than that”, instead we may say “I wanted to do better than that, any way, next
time I will”. Hence, Montgomery (ibid: 860) put it clearly that “once we control the
way we think and, subsequently, feel about ourselves, no person or situation will be
able to exert emotional control over us”.

Similarly, Brian (2008) demonstrates that it is inevitable that we will be faced
with challenges, temporary setbacks and defeats. But the setbacks are regarded as
learning opportunities. That is, they help develop qualities of our character. As we
draw upon our resources to respond effectively to each challenge, we grow and
become stronger and better persons. In addition, Brian (ibid) says that success comes
from the way we deal with life. Although there is a natural tendency in all of us to
react emotionally when our expectations are frustrated or when something we wanted
and hoped for fails to materialize, in this case, an optimistic person moves beyond
this disappointment. That is, she responds quickly to the adverse event or situation
and interprets it as being, for instance, temporary, specific and external to herself.
Brian (ibid) adds that the optimistic takes full control of his/her inner dialogue and
counters the negative emotions (feelings) by immediately reframing the vent (i.e.
negative self-messages towards it) so that it appears positive in some way.
Most important, Brian (ibid) expresses that it all comes down to the way we see adversity. More precisely, during ‘problem solving’ and ‘decision making’, we need to respond by changing our internal dialogue from negative to positive. For example, instead of using the word ‘problem’, use the word ‘situation’. In that, ‘a problem’ is something that we deal with and ‘situation’ usually has an escape. But the event remains the same. Thus, it is the way we interpret the event to ourselves that makes it sound and appear completely different.

It should be emphasized here that one has to be more aware and capable for interpreting events more realistically and less emotionally by exerting a far greater sense of control over his/her inner-speech, in order to get rid of being tense, upset or distracted. As Brian (2008: 48) states:

The hallmark of the fully mature, fully functioning, self-actualizing personality is the ability to be objective and unemotional when caught up in the inevitable storms of daily life. (...) when you practice positive self-talk, and keep your words. And your mental pictures consistent with your goals and dreams, there is nothing that can stop you from being the successful person you are meant to be.

In this respect, Neck et.al. (1992) state clearly that individuals can identify and confront their dysfunctional beliefs and self-talk (negative inner-speech) and replace them with more rational beliefs and self-talk. Neck et.al, (ibid: 693) provide an example of a manager who completely ‘freezes’ up during an important presentation to his board of directors and; in that encounter, forgets many of the facts necessary to
support his proposal. And when he goes back to his office thinks to himself (self-talking) “I am a zero; I will never be able to make an effective presentation”.

Clearly enough, Neck et.al, (ibid) in attempting to explain the previously stated example, note that this type of thinking is an example of dysfunctional self-talk based on a distorted belief called “all or nothing thinking” (which is one type of negative self-talk, stated previously in this chapter). This refers to an individual’s tendency to evaluate his/her personal qualities in extreme, black or white categories. Furthermore, Burns (1980, in Neck, ibid: 693) suggests that such beliefs and self-talk can be altered by identifying the dysfunction and then altering the thoughts that occur to be more rational in nature. Thus, the manager (in the previous example) could challenge his thoughts of himself (inner-speech) as a complete failure, and revise his beliefs regarding himself using constructive self-talk such as “I have made successful presentations before; I will learn from this mistake. It is not the end of the world; I will do better next time.”

2.4.9.3. Transforming negative inner-speech

According to White (2008), to fully utilize our inner dialogue we have to replace our negative self-talk with positive and empowering affirmations. White (ibid) expresses that an approach is to think that our minds as our “mental apartment”. In that, the place we live with our thoughts. Which means that this ‘mental apartment’ is furnished with everything we think about ourselves and the surrounding world. Supposedly, we think of our thoughts as the ‘furniture’, which generally is “hand-me-down” having come from other people. When we imagine that most of this furniture i.e. our negative thinking; is weary with age. And in these furnishings, a strong piece; which is a positive self-message (thought), might seem
out of place, for the simplest reason that it would be overshadowed in the clutter. Thus, we cannot discard all the old furniture; negative self-talk, without replacing them with positive ones; otherwise, we will bring back the old because we need some “mental furniture”. Hence, this substitution of furniture means consciously taking responsibility for ourselves.

For White (2008: 516) positive self-talk is “the navigation system that you can use to chart your new destination and determine your course, direction, altitude, and speed”. Importantly, White (ibid) points out that in order to change our self talk ‘furniture’, we must first listen to what we are saying to ourselves. Precisely, in order to break the cycle of negative thoughts and feelings, we need to identify the specific thoughts that cause us to engage in negative self-talk. These thoughts could be something hurtful to you, has been said to you by someone else, perhaps so long ago that you do not even remember it, and you internalized that message, such as “How could you be so silly?” or “Can you believe what they are asking you to do now”.

White, (2008), thus, argues that being acutely aware of this inner dialogue and those earlier insults or criticisms is a step toward erasing negative self-talk and changing our ‘mental apartment furniture.’

2.4.9.3.1. Replacing negative self-talk with positive self-talk (inner-speech)

Again, White (2008) postulates that first of all one has to put her new self-talk in the present tense as if the change had already taken place. In that, the subconscious mind does not know what is real/true from the unreal/untrue. At times, it will believe the new messages and act accordingly. Hence, White (ibid) states that we must ‘point’ an entirely new picture for our subconscious mind in order to derive the full benefit of our novel self-talk. He adds that we must be ‘specific’ and ‘thorough’ as
our minds will attempt to follow the exact wording of the directions we give to them. White (ibid: 516) provides the following examples:

“I am a good listener”. “I am attentive, interested, and aware of everything that is going on around me”. “I have the courage to state my opinions.” “I take responsibility for myself and everything I say and do”. “Today I worked hard and though not everything worked out the way I had hoped, I feel good about myself, and tomorrow will be even better”.

Furthermore, White (2008: 516) states that we have to reframe our reactions to obstacles, pitfalls and setbacks. More precisely, no matter what seemingly bad thing happens, chances are that someday we will look back and say it was the best thing that could have happened. In that, letting adversity become a teacher and door opener for us. White (ibid) said when something bad happens, ask yourself: “what is great about this?” or “how can I use this?”. For, we have to remember, always, that it is not what happens to us but how we react, toward the event that determines its effect, upon us.

Moreover, White (2008) talks about replacing disempowering questions with empowering questions. White (ibid: 516) states it clearly: “If you want to change the quality of your life, change the quality of your (inner) questions”. For instance, do not ask, “why do things like this always happen to me?” or “what did I do to deserve this?” Instead, ask, “what is actually happening?” “what is not happening?” “what can I do about this?”. Again, White (ibid: 516) says that we need “to challenge, confort, and question before those hartful words start to sink in. And we have to use logic to generate alternatives to the gloom and doom of our inner critic (negative inner speech)".
Another useful approach that has been stated by White (2008: 516) is to replace negative self-talk with positive thoughts. “One way to ensure that the dominant thought is positive is to program yourself with positive thoughts. And always focus on what you are accomplishing versus what you are not”. Like for instance, “I made a perfect good try”. “I did my best”. “I am making progress”. “I am a good (person)”.

2.4.9.3.2. Challenging negative labels

Significantly, White (2008) asserts that everyone needs to challenge her ‘self-sabotaging’ self-talk labels. White (ibid) notes that anytime we notice a negative label, immediately challenge the label for validity. It might be helpful to convert the label into a description such as, “I will always be learning”. White, (ibid: 516) clarifies that “always talk to yourself tenderly. The labels you use create a self-fulfilling prophecy, so choose them wisely”.

2.4.9.3.3. Reviewing and reinforcing your new self-talk

Interestingly, White (2008) argues about reviewing our novel self-talk. Precisely, when continuously reviewing our new self-talk, we have to make sure it is stated in the present tense, is specific, is easy to use, is practical, and is honest. Moreover, White (ibid) proposes using a microphone for our computers, and we record our notes and listen to them daily or when we find ourselves using negative self-talk.

Moreover, White (2008) states clearly that there is nobody who can motivate us except us, in that, the things we say to ourselves either motivate us or do not. For instance, when we are having a good day, we can make some notes about the things
we like about ourselves, about our future goals and dreams, and the things we know we must do in order to become our best selves, as well as what it will take to achieve those goals and dreams.

As an example, White (2008) notes that in order to reinforce positive self-talk, individuals can make their own positive tape, podcast, or CD. Using also a microphone for their computers, recording their notes and listen to them daily or when they find themselves using negative self-talk.

2.4.10. How does self-talk influence my emotions and behavior?

It needs to be noted here that self-statements (inner-speech) effect greatly students’ academic emotions; emotional states, which in turn influence performance. In a view of this, Dembo (2004) asserts that academic emotions impact learning and achievement. He states that learners’ academic emotions are closely linked to their learning, ‘self-control’, and ‘scholastic achievements’. Yet Dembo, (ibid: 112) says that positive emotions foster your control over your learning, whereas negative emotions lead to more passive behavior. Positive emotions predict high achievement”.

There is an increasing evidence that self-talk corresponds to emotional states which in turn affect performance. Consequently, one could state clearly that a student maybe able to enhance her performance by maintaining positive self-talk and controlling her emotional state.
As Ellis, (1975 in Neck et. al., 1992: 693) states:

(…) the psychotherapist’s main goal should include demonstrating to patients that their self-verbalizations not only have been but usually still are the source of their emotional disturbances. Patients should be shown that their internalized sentences are quite illogical and unrealistic in certain respects and that they have the ability to change their emotions by telling themselves (…) more rational and less self-defeating sentences.

Within a similar vein, Marvin (2005) postulates that cognition prompts emotion. That is, first comes the cognition, the emotion follows. To be precise, positive self-talk promotes positive emotions. For instance, someone compliments us and we feel good; someone criticizes us and we feel bad. Again, Marvin (ibid) stresses that the importance of comprehending how positive emotions are critical to learning is reinforced everytime.

In a similar manner, White (2008: 516) points out that “our feelings are an indication of our self-talk”. In that, if we are feeling unenergetic, down, or like we cannot face the world. In this case, switching to more positive self-talk would change our feelings to become positive. Like for instance; “It is going to be a great day”, “I am up to the challenges that the day holds”. White, then, (ibid: 516) specifies that positive expectations tend to become reality, so use your feelings as a barometer of your inner dialogue and change it when necessary.

In an attempt to highlight more the significant, potent and interesting concepts of positive self-talk and positive emotions, White (ibid: 516) provides some examples of appropriate self-talk for freedom from worry including:
"My mind dwells only on those thoughts that create harmony, balance, and well being within me and in the world around me."

“I choose to look at the world around me in the bright, healthy light of optimism and self-assurance.”

“If I cannot affect it or direct it I accept it.”

Additionally, Schwebel et.al, (1996: 144) states that research shows that these thoughts, called “self-talk”, affect our feelings and our behavior. They, then, provide an example of an instructor’s self-talk and how it influences greatly her feelings which in turn influences her behavior and performance in the classroom. For instance, she might experience self-talk that says, “I am the teacher. I should know more than the kids”. If she does not catch herself when she has this thought, she will feel bad when asked a question she cannot answer, and do not know why she feels that way. She feels bad, in that, outside of her full awareness, she compared herself to an arbitrary standard (the teacher should know the answer to everything students ask). In this case the instructor could, regularly, monitor her self-talk, and would catch herself more often and then ask herself what is it about a student knowing more will embarrass her? If so, she could then ask herself what circumstances would allow that to happen. Then she will remind herself that she will be in control of the class so that she can direct the flow of events in a way that avoid such embarrassment. Overall, Schwebel et.al. (ibid: 144) express that “(...) It is useful to monitor your self-talk (...) you can reject unhelpful self-talk encourage yourself to make more positive self-talk.”
2.4.10.1. Managing yourself: (cognitive influence on behavior)

Accordingly, Makin et.al, (2004) point out that more recently, research focal point has been directed precisely to social cognitive theory (SCT) which reflects the important influences that cognition (i.e thought processes) plays in influencing individuals’ behavior. In particular, what we think, especially about ourselves, will influence how we feel, and how we feel will have an important impact on our motivation, which in turn, will have a direct influence on our performance.

Additionally, Makin et.al, (2004: 76) assert that self-talk is regarded as “the most powerful method by which we regulate, or are regulated by. Much of our behavior is influenced by internal communications.”

Figure 06: Comprehensive thought self-leadership Model

(Adopted from Neck and Manz, 1992: 687)
Again, Makin et.al., (ibid) note that the way in which self-talk influences performance is through influencing ‘thought patterns’. To be precise, self-talk according to Neck and Manz (1992), has its effect by influencing our ‘emotional state’ which then influences thought patterns. These then influence performance. (As shown in the above figure)

Interestingly, Makin et.al., (ibid) also state that there is another mechanism by which self-talk influences behavior via its impact upon ‘perceived self-efficacy’. As Bandura (1986 b) points out that self-efficacy is a process of ‘self-persuasion’, such self-persuasion often takes the form of an internal dialogue. In that, there is evidence to suggest that positive self-talk can have an important and beneficial effect on performance. As for instance, in clinical settings, many prominent psychologists advocate its use in treating emotional disorders.

2.4.11. Using cognitive influences (self-talk) to improve performance: how the way we talk to ourselves can change the way we work

According to Vocate, (1994) the reflective consciousness enacted in the self-talk process is crucial if we are going to adjust or modify ourselves, whether the goal is a change in attitude or one in behavior. Vocate (ibid) states clearly that “personal growth or change can occur only through self-talk”. In a similar vein, Jason (2012) asserts that cognitive techniques may improve learners’ performance. One such technique is the use of self-talk, that is, motivational or instructional phrases or skill cues to oneself.
Importantly, Theodorakis et.al, (2002) emphasize that appropriate use of self-talk as a cognitive motivational strategy has been shown to improve individuals’ performance on a variety of tasks by increasing ‘confidence’, ‘focus’, and ‘awareness’. They add that much research has been undertaken to construe the fundamentals, characteristics, and applications of self-talk as a cognitive strategy. Moreover, they note that a wealth of studies suggest that specific types of self-talk (i.e. positive self-talk) provide more benefit than others in improving performance.

Furthermore, Schutz and Davis (2000) postulate that self-talk is frequently employed by learners to solve problems. And it is also argued to influence learners’ emotions (academic feelings) including those experienced during academic tasks (Guerin et.al, 2010).

Likewise, Hardy (2006) expresses that research shows that self-talk may increase feelings of self-confidence in the process of goal-attainment. To be precise, Hardy (ibid) suggests that self-talk can influence the improvement of person’s confidence and encourage beliefs in her ability to accomplish a task. Hence, this could lead to positive goal achievement outcomes.

Viewed from such an angle, Farrow et.al, (2003: 48) assert that just as positive self-talk or inner-speech can improve performance, negative self-talk also can hinder performance. Additionally, they note that current research suggest that ”the use of self-talk can be a positive means of enhancing attentional focus, confidence, and can be used also as a performance, enhancer”.

Importantly, Farrow et.al, (ibid: 49) say that ”self-talk does not just affect the pure psychological processes like concentration and confidence; but can also directly affect technical execution of a skill”.

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In a similar manner, Chroni et al. (2007: 27) state clearly that self-talk can serve to focus attention, regulate effort, enhance confidence, control cognitive and emotional reactions or trigger automatic execution.” Then, they also note that the implications of the use of self-talk in athletic populations suggest that there can be carry over effects in other settings, because of the dynamic nature of self-talk and its many functions.

In the light of all this, we can say that in learning settings, students can benefit, greatly, from the appropriate use of positive self-talk as a self-management cognitive motivational strategy, in order to enhance and improve their performance in different tasks and activities. In that, self-talk mainly, positive inner-speech would foster their attentional focus, motivation, persistence, self-confidence in attaining their learning goals. Again, Charoni et al. (ibid) emphasize that previous research on cognitive strategy has indicated that self-talk is one of the most common cognitive strategies that may have the power to enhance performance.

Likewise, Meichenbaum (1977) notes also that cognitive theorists have long emphasized the link between what people say to themselves (i.e. inner-speech) and how they behave. Clearly, Meichenbaum (ibid) shows how self-talk can be used to modify the behavior of students who were anxious or impulsive. Meichenbaum (ibid: 83) successfully trained students to replace or substitute negative self-statement like: “I cannot do this” or “I am not good at it.” With positive self-talk like: “if I concentrate I can solve the problem” or “I just need to relax and carefully read each problem”. Hence, he notes, once again that the training led to improved performance on tasks. At last, he concludes that self-talk has been used also to control anxiety (it will be
discussed in some detail further down in chapter four), mood, and other emotional responses.

In trying to specify more the point, Dembo (2000) views self-talk as an important strategy for self-management. He adds that individuals who exhibit inappropriate self-talk often act inappropriately. Hence, if more appropriate self-talk is introduced, behavior can be changed. More precisely, Dembo (ibid) notes that theory behind self-talk training is that inner-speech impacts cognition (thinking) and emotions, and ultimately guides our behavior.

The emphasis, therefore, is on changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk. As Zastrow (1993) demonstrates that individuals can challenge and change their self-talk by adjusting the way they think about certain events. Similarly, Simon et.al, (2009) find that they thought about certain events and situations by using more positive self-talk. This, in turn, positively altered how they felt and how they responded to obstacles.

Importantly, Dembo (2000: 83) states that “there is evidence that what we say to ourselves is an important factor in determining our attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behavior”.

In this respect, Theodorakis, et.al. (2008) note that models of self-regulation strategies have investigated the strategies that athletes, often, used to regulate cognitions and behavior for enhancing performance. They add that cognitive strategies involve active mental processes designed to change or influence existing thought patterns. Like for instance, the interest of sport psychologists in researching those techniques and designing mental training programs is progressively growing. Hence, results from various studies indicate that successful athletes, in cooperation
with coaches, use cognitive strategies more often than less-successful athletes, and these strategies have generally been found to be effective in enhancing performance.

In this context, Dembo (2000) provides a good example of the impact of self-talk on performance, which has been discussed by Gallwey (1974, as cited in Dembo, ibid: 122) in his book ‘The Inner Game of Tennis’. Dembo cites Gallwey saying that tennis, like other sports, is in fact “composed of two parts, an outer game” and an inner game. The outer game consists of mastering the techniques of how to play the game, for example, how to serve and use one’s backhand. More precisely, the inner game takes place in the mind of the player and is basically the self-talk one uses while he or she is playing. He, then, compared the dialogue of two different tennis players:

I’m hitting my forehand rotten again today....Dammit, why do I keep missing those easy set ups.... I’m not doing anything the coach told me to do in my last lesson. You were great rallying, now you’re playing worse than your grand mother...
The last three of my backhands landed long, by about two feet. My racket seems to be hesitating, instead of following through all the way. May be I should observe the level of my backswing...yes, I thought so, it’s well above my waist....there, that shot got hit with more pace, yet it stayed in.

Consequently, Dembo (ibid) asserts that such self-talk would influence, greatly, each player’s game. He, then, adds that a sports’ commentator once said that there was little difference in the capacity, that is, the outer game, of the top twenty
ranked tennis players in the world. Basically, what sets them apart is their mental approach to the game, in that, their inner game. Dembo (ibid: 123) expresses clearly that there is evidence that the inner game plays an important role in individual success in all endeavours at work, home, and school”.

Again, Dembo (ibid: 123) gives another example about students’ motivation to learn, and asserts that it is strongly influenced by their perceptions and beliefs about academic situations. And these perceptions and beliefs often are identified by analyzing self-talk.

Overall, Neck and Manz (1992: 684) postulate that research from several fields provides support for the link between self-talk and performance. That is, self-talk enhances individuals’ performance across a variety of tasks and activities. They, therefore, provide the following model.

Figure 07: Simplified thought self-leadership model

Neck and Manz (ibid) state that various studies in a number of different fields provide support for the relationship between an individual’s self-talk and performance. Furthermore, they say that these studies together suggest that the utilization of self-talk, either alone or in conjunction with other cognitive strategies (like goal-setting which is discussed in some length in the subsequent chapter), and the frequency of these self-verbalizations; inner-speech, are related to successful performance.
In sum, Hardy (2006) highlights that the conclusions drawn by previous research, further demonstrates that self-talk would be considered as a potent performance enhancement strategy. In short, Sherman (2010) states also that self-talk has been investigated as a means of controlling attentional focus and arousal levels, as an indicator and a mediator of self-confidence, and as a means to enhance skill acquisition. It is regarded also one mechanism by which learners’ process feedback. Consequently, it is a key performance strategy.

2.5. Conclusion

Clearly, learners need to care for themselves. By surveillance of their self-talk, they can improve and consequently enhance their feelings about themselves, and their emotions in learning settings, which in turn, would foster their academic performance and achievement. In that, various bodies of literature including clinical psychology, counseling psychology, sports psychology, communication and education, address the potent impact of self-talk on performance. And research provides consistent support for the relationship between positive inner-speech (self-talk) and successful performance.

For this reason, we tried in the present chapter to display the existing correlation between students’ inner-speech (self-talk) and their academic achievements (performance). That is, when learners are almost or in a constant basis self-talk positively, they can easily adapt themselves in the process of learning and they can boost their potentialities, go beyond obstacles, and also they can attain or pursue their learning goals and objectives as they have planned. Simply, because they are adopting a self-management approach in their learning process.
Hence, we attempted in our discussion to elucidate the salient type of self-talk; which is positive self-talk. And we tried also to clarify more the point for learners that is crucial and essential for them to try hard to combat the enemy within, called negative self-talk, which is considered the primary source of students unsuccessful performances, stress, anxiety, and unproductivity. For that, we tried to show them how to replace it with more constructive helpful self-talk, in order to become creative and outstanding learners.

It can be said at last that this cognitive-motivational strategy (self-talk), in association with other cognitive strategies like personal goal-setting, would aid learners to believe in themselves and in their potential and to become autonomous and self-confident students, that would help them, in turn, to bolster up their academic performance (like in our case of study improving the oral performance).
CHAPTER THREE
PERSONAL GOAL-SETTING

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3.1. Introduction

At any stage in our lives we can self-set goals and exude an enviable confidence to attain them, simply because life is a process of goal-directed action. Goal-setting, then, is probably the most frequently discussed management practice over the past thirty years. In that, the concept of management by objectives (goals) has long been used in many different domains. Precisely much of the early work in this area of motivational research has been done with children rather than with university students. Only recently have the theories been extended to university classrooms. For the simplest reason that, goal-setting can dramatically impact learners’ self-regulated learning and self-motivation. Thus, goal-setting can serve as effective cognitive-motivational strategy which would bolster-up students’ academic performance.

To be more precise, in this chapter we will try to shed some light on the significance of goal-setting as an amazing and powerful tool that can be utilized by students which would assist them by directing their attention to a specific target, mobilizing their effort relative to task demands, and providing a reference point to monitor, measure, and assess their performance as well as a reason to persist in the activity over time, with a strong commitment and dedication to action.

We will attempt also to place a strong emphasis on personal goal-setting (self-set goals), by displaying learners that they would work much harder on self-made goals rather than assigned ones.

3.2. Goals

The fact that humans set goals and make plans to achieve them is one of the most striking characteristics of human behavior. In that, goals are important for the simplest reason that they have their influence on behavior through a process of feedback control. Additionally, we do believe that human behavior is fundamentally goal-directed. As
Martin and Tesser (1996: 12) state: “goals provide the structure that defines people’s lives”.

It means that one of the main reasons why do people self-set goals is to live a life with purpose i.e. with an intended or desired result. As for instance, having a vision of who they want to become. Accordingly, Myles (2014: 116) expresses that “the indispensable first step to getting things you want out of life is this: “decide what you want”. In other words, one has to develop her own vision, i.e. self-setting specific goals. Myles (ibid) in this context say that one has to create an environment where she is working toward goals, she needs to develop her vision, say how she sees herself in the future, both in the short-term and the long-term, in all the different aspects of life: education, family, work, spiritual, romance… and so on. To be precise, Myles (ibid) states that when Helen Keller (the well-known blind person) was asked if there was anything worse than being blind, she answered, “yes, being able to see, and having no vision” (in Myles, 2014: 119).

Additionally, Anderson (1997) highlights that goal selection and refinement should be methodical, deliberate process constructed in response to a careful evaluation of needs. This means that, generally speaking, needs are transformed into goals and plans. In a similar vein, Snyder and Lopez (2002) point out that goals and values are similar concepts, but they are differentiated with respect to the level of generality. Snyder and Lopez (2002: 303) view goals as “the specific form of values; they are values applied to specific circumstances”. In addition, they point out that just as needs are fulfilled by pursuing values; values are achieved by pursuing goals. As for instance, if an individual values education, the way to achieve it is to self-set and pursue specific educational goals, such as applying to university, signing up for courses, doing the assignments, and accumulating the required number of credits to graduate.
Furthermore, Snyder and Lopez (2002) elucidate that individuals pursue multiple values and therefore multiple goals in life. Accordingly, they will pursue not just multiple goals but multiple goals tied to multiple values. As in the previously stated example, students want an education, but at the same time they may want to eat, plan their finances, sleep, have fun with friends, get exercise, and so forth. Overall, Snyder and Lopez (ibid: 311) conclude by saying that: “goals are the means by which values and dreams are translated into reality”.

3.2.1. Goals defined

In few words, if we attempt to state what a goal is; we can simply say that a goal is what an individual is trying to accomplish, or is the end result, which the individual seeks with awareness.

In the same vein, goals are defined by Locke (1968: 159 as cited in Dembo, 2000: 69) as “what the individual is consciously trying to do”. For instance, a goal as used in connection with human learning, may be to complete the writing of an essay or a thesis, to become a scientist or a researcher in the long run, to learn to spell or pronounce a certain word appropriately as a short term-goal, such as learning to spell or pronounce five words or more correctly. Therefore, by learning the exact enunciation and spelling of words the ultimate goal is achieved, thus, the goal cannot be reached without learning.

In this respect, Bass (1990: 30) defines a formal goal as ‘the objective or aim of an individual’s action(s)’. Bass (ibid) adds that such formal goals are often referred to as “performance standards”, “objectives”, or ‘quotas” in the popular management literature. According to Schunk (1991: 98) a goal is represented as “one’s objective and refers to quantity, quality, or rate of performance”.
Put otherwise, goals are defined as “internal representations of desired states” (Austin and Vancouver, 1996: 335). Moreover, Galotti (2002: 11) expresses that you can think of a goal as “a standard, as an ideal outcome that you would like to achieve in some realm of your life”.

As an operational definition, a goal is “anything that an individual desires to experience, get, do or become” (Curran & Reivich, 2011: 01). This definition appears to be precise and concise, i.e. operational, in that it describes clearly the concept. A range of goal definitions can be found in Martin and Tesser (1996: 100). A goal is defined as an image of future level of performance (Gardner, 1985); what an individual is trying to accomplish; the object or aim of an action (Locke, Shaw, Saari and Lathan, 1981, in Alderman 2004) and as the determination to perform certain activities or to attain certain future conditions (Bandura, 1997). Martin and Tesser (1996: 100) specify that these definitions have several factors in common:

- A goal is cognitive; a goal is an image of some ideal occurrence stored in memory for comparison with the actual occurrence.

- A goal represents a future consequence or outcome that influences present behavior.

- A goal is desirable to the individual who seeks to obtain it; some degree of expected satisfaction or pleasure is associated with reaching the goal.

- A goal is a source of motivation; it is an incentive to action.

### 3.2.2. Types of goals

There exist different types of goals, of which learning goals and performance goals.
3.2.2.1. Learning versus performance goals

Let it first be noted that some students are motivationally oriented toward learning goals (also called task or mastery goals); others are oriented toward performance goals (Ames, 1992; Köller and Baumert, 1997; Pintrich, 2000, in Slavin, 2006: 327). In other words, learners who have a great tendency to self-set learning goals, are those who are motivated primarily by a kind of desire for knowledge acquisition, self-improvement and skills mastery, whereas students who have a great tendency to self-set performance goals, are those who are motivated primarily by desire to earn good grades and to gain some recognition from others, say, teachers, parents peers and so on.

Accordingly, Slavin (2006) specifies that learning-oriented students and performance-oriented students do not differ in overall intelligence, but their classroom performance can differ markedly. Furthermore, Slavin (ibid) states that students with learning goals conceive the objective or purpose behind schooling as gaining competence and mastery in the skills being taught, whereas students with performance goals seek to gain recognition from others, i.e. gaining positive judgments of their competence and trying to avoid negative judgments. More precisely, learners who are striving toward learning goals are likely to take difficult courses and undertake challenging tasks and activities (seek challenges); students with performance goals focus their attention primarily on grades, i.e. earning or obtaining good grades, they tend to take easy courses, and they avoid challenging tasks, activities or situations. Additionally, Slavin (ibid) explains that when students face some obstacles while studying, performance-oriented students tend to become discouraged (unmotivated); and their performance is negatively affected. In contrast, when learning-oriented students encounter obstacles they go beyond them, say, keep trying, and they experience
increases and improvements in their self-motivation and performance. Moreover, learning-oriented students are more likely to utilize metacognitive or self-regulated learning strategies. That is to say, they tend to use self-management techniques, such as cognitive-motivational strategies. Performance oriented students who consider their capabilities to be low tend to believe that they have little opportunity of obtaining excellent grades; hence, they are more likely to fall into a pattern of helplessness. In contrary, learning oriented students who perceive their capacity to be low do not feel this way; they are focusing on how much they can learn, regardless of others’ performance; grades. That is, students with learning goals focus their attention mainly on mastering the skills, becoming more knowledgeable persons who master certain skills, but students with performance goals focus primarily on earning good grades and tend also to compare their performance to others’ performance.

Besides, Slavin (2006) points out that there is an increasing evidence that over their years in school, learners tend to shift their focus from learning or mastery goals to performance goals. In addition, Urban and Maehr (1995, in Slavin, ibid: 328) suggest a third goal orientation, social goals. That is to say, some students achieve in order to satisfy their instructors, their parents, or their peers. In particular, there is a great deal of research that indicates “the powerful impact that a student’s peer group can have on a student’s own motivation, and it is certainly the case that some students are motivated to learn in order to gain status in their peer group” (Slavin, 2006: 328).

3.2.3. Smart goals: (S.M.A.R.T steps)

A good key to keep in mind for setting goals is to follow the S.M.A.R.T steps: ‘S’ for Specific; ‘M’ for Measurable; ‘A’ for Attainable; ‘R’ for Realistic and ‘T’ for Timely. As individuals (namely students) set each of their goals, they have to make sure they are SMART goals. That is each goal is actionable. In this context, Myles (2014:
120) states that, she likes to use the SMART acronym for developing goals in that SMART goals “have built in characteristics that will make achieving them possible and rewarding”. More precisely, one could clarify more the point by saying that SMART goals refer to: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented or attainable, Realistic or Relevant, Timely (Smith, 1994, in Dembo, 2000: 73). Hence, each goal should be:

- **Specific**: describes what you want to accomplish with as much detail as possible. If you establish vague goals, you lessen the possibility of attaining them. Describe the context (i.e. course, situation or setting) as well as the specific outcome. Avoid general terms like “good”, “well”, “happy”, “understand”, and “know”. Poor “I want to do well in English”. It would be better: “I want an ‘A’ on my next essay in English”. That is, each goal should be so clear that you cannot mistake what you will accomplish. This way you will have a higher chance of accomplishing it.

- **Measurable**: describes your goal in terms that can be clearly evaluated. If you fail to determine how a goal is measured, you will never know if you attained it. Be sure to include a statement of the minimal level of performance that will be accepted as evidence that you have achieved the goal. For instance, instead of stating “I want to study my biology textbook”. It is better to state: “I want to read chapter seven in my biology textbook and answer all the discussion questions”. This means that, you need to know when you have successfully accomplished your goal.

- **Action-oriented/ Attainable**: identifies a goal that focuses on actions rather than personal qualities. Be sure to identify your goal so that it includes an action to be completed, otherwise you will not know how to accomplish it. Instead of saying: “I want to develop a better attitude about studying “it is better to say: “I want to complete all my assignments before class and answer questions”. That is to say, you have to make
sure that the specific goal and outcomes are both achievable and realistic so that you believe you can do it.

- **Realistic/ Relevant:** identifies a goal you know you are actually capable of attaining. Goals can be challenging but unrealistic. Therefore, you must carefully analyze your goals to determine that you can reasonably expect to reach them. Instead of saying: “I want to read five chapters in my history textbook this evening and answer all the discussion questions”. It is better to say: “I want to read two chapters in my history textbook this evening and answer all the discussion questions”. In other words, the goal needs to be something that matters to you, something that is worthwhile accomplishing.

- **Timely:** identifies a goal that breaks a longer term goal into a shorter term goal(s) and clearly specifies a completion date. For instance, instead of stating: “I want to graduate at the head of my class”. It is better to state: “I want to make the honor roll this semester”. This means, only when you have a deadline or a date for completing the goal, you will be able to create a time line for accomplishing it.

Additionally, Dembo (2000) elucidates that one significant activity in goal-setting is to determine the sufficient time for each long-term goal, and to break it down into smaller steps, or intermediate goals that can help in fulfilling the final goal. One way to accomplish this step is to utilize a “timeline”, i.e. a deadline. For instance, writing down the final goal on the right-hand side and identifying the smaller or sub-goals that help achieving the major goal. Estimating how long it will take to accomplish each intermediate goal. Following now, are some examples of S.M.A.R.T goals; including academic, social, occupational, and personal goals presented by Dembo (ibid: 74). Each of which is specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and timely.
➢ Academic
- “I want to take an advanced mathematics course next semester”.
- “I want to attain a 3.0 GPA this semester”.
- “I want to complete my research papers one week before handing them in, so I have time to edit them”.

➢ Social
- “I want to join a square dancing class this semester”.
- “I want to limit my partying to weekends”.
- “I want to spend at least one hour during the week with my friend”.

➢ Occupational
- “I want to work at least ten hours per week this semester”.
- “I want to obtain an internship this summer”.
- “I want to complete all my general education requirements by sophomore year”.

➢ Personal
- “I want to work out four times a week for forty minutes”.
- “I want to lose five pounds in one month”.
- “I want to save 500$ this semester”.

Likewise, Myles (2014: 121) provides a simple example of a non-SMART family goal transformed into a SMART goal: the goal is spending more quality time with my children. The SMART goal would be: I will spend at least fifteen minutes every night with each child reading together, starting this month. Myles, (ibid) states clearly that SMART goals will help individuals clarify what they need to do by when. They will help them hold themselves, and those around them, accountable for achieving goals. Myles (ibid) adds that having SMART goals also allows individuals to perform interim analysis to evaluate how they are tracking against their goals throughout the year. Furthermore, after developing SMART goals, it is significant for individuals to break them down into actionable steps and adding them to their calendar or task management
system. As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (in Myles, 2014: 121) says “a goal without a plan is just a wish”. This means, what gets planned gets done. For instance, Myles (ibid:122) again points out that in the example given previously, where the goal is to spend fifteen minutes every night reading to each child, some of the specific tasks related to that SMART goal might be:

- Eat dinner earlier so that you have more reading time.
- Leave work by certain time so that you can make it home in time to read to the kids.
- Go to the library once a week to get new books.

Overall, having goals alone is not enough, it is important that the tasks and activities that the individual spend time on each day bring her closer to achieving her goals. As Myles (ibid: 122) clarifies: “you need to decide what is important at a given time to develop your goals, and make them happen (...) having goals just means that you know where you are going”.

In addition to all what has been said about SMART goals, Dembo (2000: 75) pushes for specificity and provides a review of the procedures for writing SMART goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the area in which you wish to write a goal.</td>
<td>&quot;I want to write a goal for my next composition paper&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evaluate your past and present achievement, interest, or performance in the area to consider the extent to which your goal is action-oriented and realistic.</td>
<td>&quot;I have been having some difficulty in the course and would like to demonstrate some improvement in the next paper&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State what you want to accomplish. Begin with the words, &quot;I want to...&quot; and include a specific behavior; describe the goal so that it can be measured and include a specific completion date (Timely).</td>
<td>&quot;I want to obtain a grade of ‘A’ on the composition paper that is due on October 15&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evaluate your goal statement is it a SMART goal (i.e., specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and timely)?</td>
<td>&quot;Because my grades have been low on other composition papers, it may not be realistic for me to move to an ‘A’ on the next paper. I will set my goal for a ‘B’ then move to an ‘A’&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If necessary, make modification in your goal statement.</td>
<td>&quot;I want to obtain a grade of ‘B’ on the composition paper that is due on October 15&quot;.</td>
</tr>
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Table 08: Procedures for Writing SMART Goals
3.2.4. Goal properties: (properties of goals that enhance motivation and learning)

Goals by themselves do not automatically lead to more effective learning and performance. Rather, certain properties of goals affect task performance (in particular). As it is stated clearly, goal properties (they are stated below) enhance self-perception, motivation, and learning (Lock and Latham, 2002; Nussbaum and Kardash, 2005, in Schunk, 2009).

3.2.4.1. Goal specificity

Specificity is a property of goals that affects, greatly, performance. Specific goals have clear standards for achievement. For instance, saying that “my goal is to read and construe the story and have my summary finished for literature class tomorrow”. In contrast, general goals are vague with a nonspecific outcome. As for example; “my goal is to catch up with my assignments”. It has been demonstrated that specific goals result in higher performance and effective learning than either no goals or general goals (Lock and Latham, 1990 b)

Schunk (2009: 99) points out that ‘specific goals boost task performance by better describing the amount of the effort success requires and they promote self-efficacy because evaluating progress toward an explicit goal is straight forward”. That is, specific goals help the student to direct her efforts and energize her steps; these are also attempts toward goal attainment, which in turn would aid her keep her motivation and learning high.

Many studies attest the effectiveness of specific goals in bolstering up performance and achievement, as a research done by Alderman et.al, (1993, in Alderman, 2004: 115) which displays the potent impact of specific goals on university students’ achievements. A descriptive analysis of weekly goals set by students in learning logs over the course of semester found differences in types of goals by student
grades. The group had more than twice as many specific goals as the B and C groups. Examples were (a) specific goals. For example, “I want to make 36 out of 40 on the next test”, and (b) general goals. For example, “I want to make a good grade on the next test”. The reason that specific goals increase task performance is because they provide a guide for the type and amount of effort needed to attain the task (Bandura, 1986, in Alderman, 2004). “A specific goal is more likely to motivate an individual to higher performance than are good intentions” (Aldernan, 2004: 115).

3.2.4.2. Goal difficulty and challenge

As Schunk (2009: 101) states, goal difficulty refers to “the level of task proficiency required as assessed against a standard. The amount of effort people expend to attain a goal depends on the proficiency level required”. Schunk (ibid) clarifies that people tend to exert greater effort to accomplish a goal they perceive as difficult than an easy one. However, the goal must not be so difficult that it seems to be unachievable because most individuals will avoid an impossible task (Alderman, 2004). In a study with school children, Schunk (1983 a, in Alderman, 2004) investigated the effects of goal difficulty on the performance of children who were deficient in arithmetic division skills. One group received difficult goals and another group received easier goals. The children in the more difficult goal group solved more problems and sustained greater task motivation than the less difficult goal group. Additionally, Schunk (2009) explains that difficulty level and performance do not bear an unlimited positive relationship to each other. The secret behind the positive effects of goal difficulty depends to a great extent, on students' adequate capabilities to attaining the goal and to the necessary skills. Moreover, people's self-efficacy is considered quite important in individuals' goal attainment, for it is the belief they have in mind about their actual ability to reach a goal. Schunk (2009: 102) put it clearly that “learners who think they are not competent
enough to reach a goal, low expectations for success, do not commit themselves to attempting to attain the goal, and work half heartedly”.

In this context, Dembo (2000) expresses too that student perceptions of the difficulty of a task influence the amount of effort they believe is necessary to attain the task. If they believe they have the capacity and knowledge, students will work harder to reach difficult goals than when standards are lower. As they work and achieve difficult goals, they develop beliefs in their competence. However, if they do not perceive they have the capability to attain a goal, they are more likely to have low expectations for success and not become involved in the task.

Surprisingly, harder goals lead to a higher level of performance than do easy goals, if the task is voluntary and the individual has the capacity to attain the goal (Locke and Latham, 1990, in Alderman, 2004). In other words, individuals in general find difficult goals more challenging, and that challenge creates a kind of desire, interest or stimuli to the person which results in exerting tremendous efforts in an attempt to attain the previously set goal. O'Neil Jr (1994: 15) explains that “the harder the goal the better the performance. This is because people adjust their effort to the difficulty of the task undertaken”.

3.2.4.3. Proximity: (long-and short-term goals)

Schunk (2009) points out that goals can be identified by the extent to which they extend into the future. That is, short-term goals, i.e. proximal goals or long-term goals, i.e. distal goals. Long-term or distal goals keep individuals directed towards their ultimate target (end goal). Short-term goals, also known as proximal goals, are 'the stepping stones' to the long-term goal (Alderman, 2004). Schunk (2009) explains that proximal, short-term goals are close at hand, are quickly achieved, and result in greater motivation toward goal achievement than do distant goals. Dembo (2000) elucidates
that pursuing proximal goals, short-term goals, conveys reliable information about one's capabilities. When learners perceive they are making progress toward a proximal goal, they are apt to feel more confident and sustain their motivation. For it is harder to assess progress toward distant goals; in long-term goals, students have more difficulty judging their abilities, even if they have outstanding performances. It means that, proximal goals allow students to see the progress they are making, and allow them also to evaluate their capabilities towards attaining the goal, and result in higher self-efficacy.

However, in our viewpoint, we consider both proximal and distal goals, significant for students’ successful performance, i.e. they complement each other or go hand in hand. Bandura (1997) suggests that without proximal goals, individuals fail to take the necessary steps to fulfill the distal goal. Since the content of a goal is something an individual wants to achieve. The issue is not which is the more effective, a long-or a short term goal. Each has a role, and they complement each other in contributing to achievement and self-regulation (Alderman, 2004).

In the same vein, Smith et.al, (2005) support the previous point in saying that, when proximal outcome goals were set in addition to the distal outcome goals, self-efficacy as well as profits would be significantly high. In a follow up study, Seijts and Lathan (2001, in Smith et.al., 2005) examine the effect of setting proximal goals in conjunction with either a distal learning goal or a distal outcome goal on a task. Setting proximal learning goals resulted in the greatest number of strategies generated. The number of task relevant strategies, in turn, correlated positively with performance. The interrelationship of proximal and distal goals is illustrated in a study which compared the effects of proximal and distal goals on children's self-efficacy and mathematics performance (Bandura & Schunk, 1981, in Alderman, 2004: 110). Third graders were assigned to one of three groups:
- **Proximal goal group**: Children were told they could consider setting a goal of completing at least six pages of work each session.

- **Distal goal group**: Children were told they might consider setting the goal of completing the entire forty-two pages by the end of the seventh session.

- **No goal group**: Goals were not mentioned to the children.

  Overall, Alderman (2004) states that the results indicate that children who set attainable subgoals progressed at a more rapid pace, achieved mastery in math, and increased their self-efficacy. The proximal group also displayed more competence and displayed the most intrinsic interest in solving the problems. Moreover, Bandura and Schunk (1981, in Alderman 2004) conclude that self-motivation can best be created and sustained by attainable subgoals that lead to future larger ones. Proximal subgoals provide immediate incentives and guides for performance, whereas distal goals are too far removed in time to effectively mobilize effort or direct what one does in the here and now. Likewise, a contemporary study done by Stock and Cervone (1990, in O'Neil Jr. et.al, 1994: 23) suggest that proximal goals do indeed affect performance in at least four ways:

  - The assignment of a proximal goal increases the strength of the person's self-efficacy for completing a complex task. In that, mentally “breaking down” the task makes it appear manageable which in turn boosts the individual’s perception that she is able of performing effectively.

  - Attaining the proximal goal fosters one's self-efficacy. As people reached the subgoal they became more confident of their capability to fulfill the task.

  - The attainment of the proximal goal also positively affects self-evaluative reactions. Those who achieved the proximal goal were more satisfied with their
progress than were those people who did not attain the subgoal of those people who had not been assigned one to attain.

- Those people with proximal goals persisted on the task significantly longer than did those people who did not have proximal goals. Stock and Cervone (1990) conclude that when individuals are uncertain of their ability to perform a complex challenging endeavor, setting proximal goals can influence positively self-referent thought, motivation, persistence, and performance.

To sum up, Alderman (2004: 112) concludes that “both proximal and distal goals affect motivation and performance”. Overall, Schunk (2009: 100) summarizes and pictures goal properties and their effects on behavior in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Properties</th>
<th>Effects on Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specificity</strong></td>
<td>Goals with specific standards of performance increase motivation and raise self-efficacy because goal progress is easy to gauge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proximity</strong></td>
<td>Proximal goals increase motivation and self-efficacy and are especially important for young children who may not divide a long-term goal into a series of short-term goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulty</strong></td>
<td>Challenging but attainable goals raise motivation and self-efficacy better than easy or hard goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 09: Goal properties and their effects on behavior**

### 3.2.5. Goal commitment

To ensure an effective goal-setting and to ensure that students attain their goals, they must be committed to them. To be precise, learners can have a high degree of enthusiasm, a lot of energy, and tremendous information or knowledge, with a clear and precise goals, but if they do not have the adequate commitment to achieve their goals, they are likely to give up as they face the first pitfall or hardship. For that, wise is to know what to do and skill is to know how to do it and success is to do it.
Viewed from such an angel, Schunk (2009: 99) argues that, inevitably, “goals are not likely to be effective in the absence of commitment”. That is, goals will not affect students’ performance, unless, they make a real commitment attempting to attain their goals. To Bandura (1986) goal commitment is “our determination to pursue a course of action that will lead to the goal we aspire to achieve” (cited in Alderman, 2004: 115). And for O’Neil Jr. et.al, (1994: 16) commitment refers to “the degree to which an individual is attracted to the goal, considers it important, is determined to attain it, and sticks with it in the face of obstacles”. Globally, at any given point in time, then, there are a variety of goals toward which an individual is working. An individual also has some, not total, control over the amount of time, energy, and other resources he or she wants to commit to a particular goal. Furthermore, Donovan and Radosevich (1998, in Galotti, 2002: 18) state that commitment is the term used to describe “how resistant a person is to changing a personal goal once it has been set”. Some goals are so important to individuals that they will not give up on them very easily; other goals seem much less important and easily subject to revision or displacement (Galotti, ibid). Significantly, goals that individuals are committed to probably occupy a more central position in their goal hierarchy (Galotti, ibid). Additionally, action is the ultimate proof of commitment in that individuals can say they are committed and not really mean it. Especially, when goals are difficult and thus require considerable thinking and effort (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

In other words, we can simply say that, one cannot consider any person as committed to a given goal solely, in the case of putting her goal in actionable steps that would progressively approach her to the previously set goal. As stated earlier, a goal is a dream, a wish or a hope put in action. In the same vein, Gollwitzer (1996, cited in Galotti, 2002: 18) uses the term 'wish' versus 'binding' goal to describe the distinction
between “goals to which people are highly committed versus not so highly committed”. Hollenbeck, Williams, and Kleinb (1980, in Galotti, ibid) in studying undergraduate students setting goals about their grade point averages, found that commitment to difficult goals was higher when goals were public rather than private, when goals were self-set rather than assigned, when individuals had a stronger internal locus of control, and when they were high in need for achievement. Moreover, a later meta-analysis of eighty three independent samples also showed that goal commitment is strongly positively related to performance. The effects were especially pronounced for difficult as opposed to easy goals (Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck & Alge, 1999, in Galotti, ibid).

Additionally, Covey and Merrill (1994, cited in Galotti, 2002: 19) illustrate the problems that arise when people are not aware of their own goals. They distinguished between 'urgency', which means “the sense of something needing to be done right away”, and 'importance', which means “the sense of something needing to be done to fulfill an important objective”. Galotti (ibid) states that they argued that far too many of us allocate too much of their time, energy, and emotional reserves to tasks that are urgent but not important. For example, like filing a report by a deadline. And not enough to goals that are important but not urgent. As for instance, developing or maintaining quality relationships in one's family. In fact, for a goal to be important; believed that it is important, it must be tied to an important value (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Generally speaking, it is believed that strength of goal commitment will affect or impact how hard individuals will try to achieve the goal, i.e. how much they are committed to a given goal. In this context, Locke and Latham (1990 b) elucidate that goal commitment is affected by the properties described thus far: 'difficulty' and 'specificity'. For instance, when goals are too difficult, commitment declines, followed by a drop-off in performance. This means, as commitment declines in response to
increasing goal difficulty, performance declines rather than increase. Because solely challenging; not too difficult, goals will lead to high performance only if the person is committed to them. Moreover, Locke and Latham (1990 b: 126) point out that commitment is also affected by goal intensity, goal participation, expectancy and self-efficacy, rewards, and peer influence.

3.2.5.1. Goal intensity

According to Locke and Latham (1990b) commitment is related to goal intensity, this means, the amount of thought of mental effort that goes into formulating a goal and how it will be attained. Furthermore, Rand (1990, cited in O'Neil Jr, 1994: 16) defines intensity as “the scope, clarity, and mental effort involved in mental processes”. This is similar to goal clarification because when individuals clarify a goal, they are involved in a conscious process of collecting information about the goal and task and their capability to achieve it (Schutz, 1989, in Alderman, 2004). In a study of fifth graders, Henderson, (cited in Locke & Latham, 1990b) found that students who formulated a greater number of reading purposes with more detail and elaboration attained their goals to a greater extent than did students with superficial purposes. Although there were no differences in IQ scores of the groups, the learners who set more goals with elaboration were better readers. It stands to reason that “the more thought that is given to developing a goal, the more likely an [individual] will be committed to the goal”. (Alderman, ibid: 116).

3.2.5.2. Goal participation

How important, motivationally, is it for individuals to participate in goal-setting? This is an important question, as Alderman (2004) states, because goals are often assigned by others at home, school, and work. For instance, the state imparts curriculum standards or goals to instructors, who in turn impose them on learners. As an example
also, a sales manager may assign quotas, i.e. goals to individual sales persons. Letting individuals participate in setting goals can lead to greater satisfaction. That is, in work environments, participation in setting goals does not reliably lead to better commitment than being told what to do as long as plausible rationale for the goal is given.

In this respect, Snyder and Lopez (2002) state clearly that the task or goal, in fact, is not always chosen by oneself, there are cases where the person can be assigned a task or a goal by a person in authority like a boss, manager, an instructor or a leader. For example, one can be assigned a work task or goal by a leader and still accept it, in that the company's mission is important and because one wants to do well on the job. In a similar case, there are many ways that a leader can boost commitment among subordinates such as by providing a compelling vision for the companies' future. Similarly, Kleinbeck et.al, (1990) postulate that the power of authority to produce commitment has surprised many people. In that goals that are assigned by authority figures typically become the individual's personal goal. This simply means that authority figures may have a great ability to convince some people to take actions that are far more extreme than simply attempting for a goal.

3.2.5.2.1. Self-set goals

Researchers have found that “allowing students to set their goals enhance self-efficacy and learning, perhaps because self-set goals produce high goal Commitment” (Shunk, 2009: 102). To investigate the effects of assigned and self-set goals, Schunk (1985, cited in Schunk, 2009) conducted a study of sixth-grade students with learning disabilities (L.D); who were learning subtraction. Some set daily performance goals; others had comparable goals assigned, and the third group worked without goals. As a result, students who self-set goals had the highest self-efficacy as well as the highest judgments of confidence for attaining goals. Both goal groups demonstrated higher
levels of self-regulation than the control group without any goals. Related to the preceding are some recent experiments by Erez and her colleagues (1986, cited in Kleinbeck, 1990) which found that participative goal-setting led to higher commitment and performance than assigned goals.

Nevertheless, Locke and Latham (1990 b) state that telling people to achieve a goal can influence self-efficacy, too, in that it suggests they are able of attaining the goal. They, then, conclude that self-set goals are not consistently more effective than assigned goals in fostering performance. Hence, the crucial factor in assigned goals is 'acceptance'. Once individuals become involved in a goal, the goal itself becomes more important than how it was set or whether it was imposed. For the reason that, at work and in schools, goals are often assigned by other people, it is, therefore, significant that the assigned goals be accepted by participants. Thus joint participation in goal-setting by instructors and learners may increase the 'acceptance' of goals.

Put in simple words, if students (namely university students) are to be committed to the attainment of their previously set goals, they have to self-set their goals i.e they have to set their own goals individually, as we believe and think, which will allow them in turn to have a high self-efficacy, persistence, self-confidence, and the motivation to achieve their goals (self-set goals or personal goal-setting is our focal concept in this chapter). In that, it would be much interesting thing for learners to identify their personal goal and try hard toward achieving it, for they would find a kind of interest and enthusiasm to work on that goal, since they have made a personal choice and decision to self-set it. It is, exactly, like when a student is self-motivated to do a given task, rather than being extrinsically motivated to do it. She will, then, have an internal desire and interest to work on it. Whereas, when students are assigned some goals, the level of interest, desire, perseverance and motivation would decrease, to some extent, in that it
was not their own choice to set that goal which would let them feel something is imposed upon them.

However, it is important to note that, some tasks and activities at school; college, must be assigned to students, as subgoals or short-term goals which would push learners to exert the necessary effort and to commit to attain it successfully. Thus, we can say that, it is better for language learners to try to set their own learning goals in addition to the assigned goals, from the part of their instructors.

3.2.5.3. Expectancy and self-efficacy

Accordingly, a third factor affecting commitment is the individual's expectancy of being able to attain the goal or perform at a high level. Precisely, 'expectancy theory', a subjective-expected-utility model, states that “the force exerted towards a given act will be a product of the individual's belief that he or she can perform at certain level”, the instrumentality of that level of reaching various outcomes, and the (value) valence of those outcomes. (Kleinbeck et.al., 1990: 8). Globally, goals that are perceived as difficult are less likely to be accepted than goals that are moderate or easy, although in a laboratory setting a high degree of commitment can be obtained for a short time to goals that are impossible to reach. Furthermore, people usually prefer goals in the moderate range of difficulty, but their choices can be influenced by previously as well as currently assigned goals (Locke, 1982, cited in Kleinbeck, 1990). Likewise, Galotti (2002: 18) notes that “people are more likely to persist at goals for which they expect some success, relative to those that seem like long shots”.

Related to, but broader than, the concept of expectancy is the concept of self-efficacy, a key concept in Bandura's social-cognitive theory. Self-efficacy according to Bandura (1997: 15) is “the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce a given attainment”. Moreover, Bandura (ibid: 3) states
clearly that: “if people believe they have no power to produce results they will not attempt to make things happen”. Like expectancy, self-efficacy is related to goal commitment and to the choice of goal difficulty level (Locke et al., 1984 b, cited in Kleinbeck, 1990). Furthermore, Snyder and Lopez (2002: 305) express that “the belief that one can achieve or make progress toward a goal is critical because it is hard to be motivated to try for something that is perceived as unattainable”. They add that, self-efficacy plays a significant role in goal-setting. Individuals with higher self-efficacy set more difficult goals for themselves, are more likely to be committed to difficult goals that are assigned, are more likely to sustain their efforts after negative feedback, and are more likely to discover successful task strategies than individuals with low self-efficacy.

Significantly, one can state that if a student, as an instance, conceive the goal that has set and strongly believe that she can do it, consequently he/she can attain it at last.

3.2.5.4. Rewards: (incentives)

A fourth factor known to affect commitment is the use of rewards or incentives. Alderman (2004) notes that numerous works in motivation theories predict that rewards influence commitment, either directly or by implication including: 'expectancy theory', means that rewards promote high valences, behavior modification, i.e. rewards act as reinforcers, and in social-cognitive theory rewards are considered as information cues. Moreover, goal commitment is high when working to attain goals is perceived as instrumental in gaining other valued outcomes. As for example, winning in a competitive situation. Additionally, in a study 'verbal self-congratulations', say, positive self-talk, were especially powerful in motivating students working towards goals (Masters, Furman & Barden, 1977, in Kleinbeck, 1990).
In other words, positive inner-speech or intrapersonal communication significantly proved to motivate students to bolster up their learning performance, precisely, pushes them to achieve their learning goals. In that, verbal self-congratulations work as internal reward or incentive for learners which encourage them to keep on trying to attain their self-set goals mainly.

3.2.5.5. Peer influence

A fifth factor affecting goal commitment is peer influence, specifically peer pressure and modeling. Locke and Latham (1990, in Alderman, 2004) note that one factor where instructors might be influential in fostering goal acceptance and commitment is peer influence, precisely, strong group pressures are likely to promote commitment to goals. This means, commitment to high goals will occur when the group norms are high (Seashore, 1954, in Kleinbeck, ibid) and when there are peer models performing at a high level (Bandura, 1986, Earley & Kanfer, 1985, Kleinbeck, ibid).

Another peer factor is the degree to which the commitment was made publically (as noted earlier), (Hollenbeck, Williams & Klein, 1989, in Kleinbeck, 1990). As easy to comprehend examples, the group cohesiveness is more often found on athletic teams. Obviously, the coach wants a strong commitment to the team goals. Whereas, in the classroom, group goals may aid the commitment of students working in cooperative learning groups and therefore lead to a higher quality of work (Alderman, 2004). Overall, peers can influence goal commitment by conveying normative information and inspiring competition. Add to that, agreeing publicly to strive for a goal can also foster commitment relative to private agreement.

To conclude, it should be stressed that high commitment, is more likely to lead to goal attainment than low commitment. And the feeling of commitment does not
automatically lead one to act. The ultimate proof of goal commitment is the taking of action (O'Neill Jr. et.al., 1994).

3.2.6. Goal choice

The factors that impact goal choice are similar to influence goal commitment. According to O'Neil Jr. et.al. (1994, citing Locke, Frederick, Lee and Bobko, 1984) the probability of choosing to pursue or achieve a given goal is fostered if the individual believes or perceives that it can be fulfilled. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely than those with low self-efficacy to choose hard goals. We have already discussed the main influence of self-efficacy on the goals that persons will self-set. For that, Makin and Cox (2004: 83) note that “self-efficacy, our belief in our ability to achieve our goals, will obviously have an influence on the goals we set ourselves”. Thus, we can simply state that, self-efficacy has its influence on people's goal choice for future performance, with the development of the necessary plans for their achievement. And goal choice, therefore, plays an important part in self-management.

Choice is also affected by individual's perception that a given goal is significant (important) or desirable. Locke and Latham (1990 b: 17) precise that “the perceived importance or desirability is enhanced when a person is provided with normative information, role models, competition, or pressure”. However, the most direct strategy of effecting choice is simply for a legitimate authority figure to assign the goal. This means, persons in position of authority can, to a great extent, influence other people's goal choice, for they have potent persuasive methods that convince an individual to choose a given goal rather than another.
3.2.7. Goals and grit

The field of positive psychology has begun to study the concept of grit, which is considered a necessary trait for the attainment of long-term goals. Curren et.al, (2011: 01) define grit as “the perseverance and passion for long-term goals”. They add that long-term, challenging goals require the capability to remain single-minded in one's pursuit of the goal, to regulate one's impulses that would divert from the goal, and to stay motivated, mainly self-motivated, over a long period of time. As Duckworth et.al, (2007: 1088) explain that “grit entails working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress. The gritty individual approaches achievement as a marathon; his or her advantage is stamina”.

This simply means that, gritty persons have a great persistence and enormous eagerness for the pursuit of their self-set goals, mainly long-term goals. They, therefore, exert tremendous efforts, sustain interest and make a measurable progress toward their personal goal. Despite all setbacks, and obstacles, they face.

3.2.8. Goals and affect

The basic model for comprehending the relationship between goals and affect comes from Locke's (1976) satisfaction theory, which states that emotional responses are the result of automatic, subconscious value appraisals (Locke & Latham, 1990 b). It means, goals are valued or desired outcomes. Locke et.al. (1970, cited in O'Neil & Drillings, 1994: 21) note that “the greater the degree of success experienced, the greater the degree of satisfaction with performance”. Thus, when an individual works toward an end goal across a number of attempts, satisfaction with performance on any given trial is a joint function of (a) “the degree of discrepancy between goals and performance for that trial”; and (b) “the perceived instrumentality of performance on that trial for
attaining the end goal”. In addition, Locke, 1976 (in Locke & Latham, 1990b: 69) points out that “the more important the goal, the more intense the affect experienced after both success and failure”.

In other words, when individuals perceive their goal to be significant, it is more likely to have a powerful impact on them, either in the case of goal attainment or in the case of not achieving their goal. Hence, the emotional reactions are the end result of persons' success or failure in goal achievement.

Moreover, goals may also promote task interest and decrease boredom, at least on those tasks that are initially boring (Latham & Kinne, 1974; Locke & Bryan, 1967, cited in O'Neil Jr. et.al, 1994). In that, easy goals produce more satisfaction than hard goals. In contrast, higher performance is fulfilled when goals are difficult. This means, the harder the goal the better the performance. This poses a dilemma: how does one balance the two outcomes? There are several possible solutions (O'Neil Jr. et.al, 1994: 22):

- Set moderate goals so that the net total of satisfaction and productivity is maximized.
- Give credit for partial goal attainment, rather than only for goal success.
- Apply the Japanese principle of 'Kaizen' or continuous improvement. Make goals moderately difficult at any given time, but insist on constantly raising the goals by small amounts.
- Use multi-level goal and reward structures, so that increasingly greater rewards are given for attaining increasingly higher goal levels. As yet there has been no research comparing the effectiveness of these four procedures.

Therefore, it came as no surprise that “a goal is at once an object to aim for and a standard by which success is measured” (Snyder and Lopez, 2002: 306). These are not two separate functions but two sides of the same coin. Goal success then, leads to satisfaction, and failure to dissatisfaction. As noted earlier, goal success enhances value
achievement. It seems paradoxical that difficult goals, which motivate the highest performance lead, necessarily, to the least degree of immediate satisfaction with performance, in that they are less frequently attained. However, this makes perfect sense if one construes what it means to set a difficult goal; means not being satisfied with less difficult. For instance, in the real world, of course, many benefits follow from achieving or partly attaining difficult goals, such as pride in self, better jobs, and better salary… and so on (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

Likewise, Smith and Hitt (2005) illuminate that individuals expect more practical and psychological benefits from attempting for high goals. Add to that, the reason why high goals are more effective than low goals is that persons set the bar for their satisfaction higher. Hence, individuals who have high goals must do more to be pleased with their performance or achievement. They, then, give an easy to comprehend example, when undergraduate students, for example, consider attaining high grade goals, they expect to experience more pride in their performance than from low grades and also expect to attain better academic outcomes; as admission to graduate school, better job offers and more career success. Precisely, Smith and Hitt (2005: 140) state clearly that, they finally realized that:

Ambitious people are willing to set the bar high,
both because they feel pride in leaping offer the
bar and because practical life benefits typically
accrue to those who try for more rather than less.

3.2.9. Goal mechanisms

O'Neill Jr and Drillings (1994: 19) elucidate that there are three direct mechanisms by which goals regulate performance. First, goals are directive. That is, they direct attention toward the behavior or actions that will lead to the desired aim. For
example, if a learner sets a goal to read four chapters of a novel by the end of the week, the student has heightened his awareness of this task and will be more likely to devote his energy and time to reading. This indicates that when a student sets a goal; she is more likely to observe the behaviors, or strategies that will help her attain her goal.

A second reason that goals lead to positive outcomes is that they are energizing. Goals regulate effort expenditure in that individuals adjust their effort to the difficulty level of the goal. Furthermore, Locke and Latham (2002) state clearly that, goals promote effort toward performance, and when a person is engaging in 'goal-directed pursuits', she most of the time experiences positive emotion (affect) and the state of flow. They add that research indicates that when a person sets a goal that person displays increased direct physical effort, cognitive effort on repeated tasks, 'self-reported subjective' effort, and 'physiological' indicators of effort.

Third, goals affect persistence. This means, goals impact the perseverance of action in situations where there are no time limits. An aspect of persistence is “tenacity”, which means “the refusal to quit, despite setbacks, until the goal is reached. Tenacity is affected by both commitment and goal difficulty”. In other words, goals enhance the effort and time spent on task. Time allotted for the goal will impact how this effort is spent, whether in short bursts of high intensity effort or in less intense sessions over longer periods of time. Regardless, when specific and attainable goals are set, data indicate that task persistence increases.

Finally, goals lead to action. When goals are set, individuals will try hard to take actionable steps toward the attainment of goals, i.e. they take action. Precisely, when persons set goals they will rely first on the knowledge and/or skills and techniques they already have or know to try and achieve the goal. Locke and Latham (2002) express that in the case of requiring a novel skill, students who have set specific goals are more
likely than those who have not set specific goals to identify and adopt new strategies to aid them attain their already set goals.

Therefore, the brief overview provided earlier of the mechanisms that underlie the positive outcomes associated with goal-setting would display, significantly, students the benefits that could be obtained from goal-setting, which in turn would help them increase their academic performance in a variety of tasks.

3.2.10. Dimensions of goals

Globally, goals differ in a number of ways. They can be long-term or short-term (proximal or distal). Some goals are quite complex, with several parts to them, which may require the establishment of subgoals; other goals may be quite simple. Thus, they can be about different things; personal goals or interpersonal goals an individual wants to establish or improve. Beside the content, difficulty, and specificity, as noted earlier in properties of goals. Galotti (2002: 13) lists a number of ways in which goals differ.

3.2.10.1. Time frame

As goals vary, the time frame of each goal also varies. This means, some goals span a lifetime (“have a rewarding life”), whereas others span merely a day, an hour, or even for ten minutes. Time frame, then, has to do with when the person hopes or wishes to work toward the goal, fulfill the goal or both. For that, Zaleski (1987, in Galotti, 2002: 13) reports that “goals for longer time ranges tend to be ones rated by the goal setter as more important and are ones to which people devote more effort and persistence”.

3.2.10.2. Complexity

Goals also differ in complexity. This means, some goals are broad and complex enough that they allow for subgoals. Like writing a book or a dissertation, reorganizing
a department… and so forth. Some have one or very few parts that need to be coordinated.

3.2.10.3. Controllability

Some goals are ones for which the person has a great deal of control; nearly a total control upon them or it is largely up to them whether or not the goal is attained. Other goals, for instance, being on the basketball team that wins the state finals, are less under the control of any one. Controllability therefore pertains to the degree to which the individual's own efforts ensure the completion of the goal.

3.2.10.4. Degree of realism

Respectively, Galotti (2002) points out that some goals are long shots. This means, fairly unlikely to be attained by most people. An example might be “win the Olympic gold medal in figure skating”. Whereas, other goals are fairly likely to be achieved. As for instance, “accumulate enough credits to graduate” by a high school student. This dimension pertains to the statistical likelihood of achieving a goal.

3.2.10.5. Importance / Centrality

Goals also differ in importance or centrality. As Covey (1989, in Galotti, 2002) expresses that some goals seem to define who a person is. This simply means, these goals are ones often called values or principles. Convey (ibid), then, gives an easy to comprehend example about some popular press books for executives and professionals which urge that they have to set aside time to intentionally and explicitly formulate a mission statement; it means a written philosophy that concisely expresses one's life goals. The mission statement is intended to aid individuals realize, and keep in front of them, their own guiding principles for life, which helps them guide their decision making; their allocation of time and other resources, and even their sense of who they
are. Novacek and Lazarus (1990, cited in Galotti, 2002: 14) state clearly that “when central goals are thwarted, it is thought to produce stronger and more negative reactions than when less important goals are not achieved”.

In addition, Galotti (2002) notes that other goals are simply “chores” or “tasks” that need to be fulfilled so that we can achieve other higher level goals. For example, doing the laundry, paying the bills, making sure the car has enough fuel in it are all examples of the simple activities that are considered as subgoals or simple goals to lead us to achieve other distal goals. Moreover, these things that must be done are not always very stimulating, but their completion enables the individual to pursue other more important or significant goals.

3.2.10.6. Autonomy of the goal

Sheldon and Elliot (1998, cited in Galotti, 2002) argue that not all personal goals individuals self-set are personal, in the sense that they are well integrated with one's own values, principles, and core sense of who one is. To be precise, some personal goals, instead, are set because of external rewards and punishments. As an instance, one completes their tax returns before April 15, primarily because of the penalties that accrue for late payment. Furthermore, even some goals without external payoffs are set, the authors argue because individuals 'fear their own guilt or regret'. Hence, as an example, an overweight person might respond that they have a goal to lose weight, not because that goal is terribly significant to their sense of who they are but rather because they perceive that they have to have that as a goal. We can conclude by saying that the same is true for students, whenever they complete some academic tasks or activities, as subgoals, eventhough they find them uninteresting, this in turn approach them to their core or central goals, like for instance obtaining a very good general average or an A grade.
3.2.11. Goal progress feedback

Fulfilling something could be the end result of setting a specific goal (having a goal in mind), developing an action plan with a sufficient exertion of effort, and a continuous feedback about goal progress.

As Schunk (2009: 102) states clearly that “goal progress feedback provides information about progress toward goals”. Such feedback is, mainly, very useful and valuable in the case when individuals cannot have reliable information or exact data about whether they are making remarkable progress on their own. Add to that, Schunk (ibid) points out that feedback increase persons’ self-efficacy, motivation and achievement, in that it informs them that they are competent and can continue to ameliorate by working diligently. To be precise, higher self-efficacy maintains motivation when individuals perceive that continued effort will allow them to attain their goals. Furthermore, once persons achieve their goals, they are more likely to adopt novel goals (Schunk, 1989, cited in Schunk, 2009).

Within a similar vein, Snyder and Lopez (2002) postulate that in order to keep track of goal progress, individuals need 'performance feedback, i.e. knowledge of results. When feedback displays them to be on schedule for goal success (in the right pace), they tend to maintain the same pace of work and the same strategy. When feedback shows them to be lagging, they tend to promote their effort (increasing their exertion of effort). They also may try new strategies; performance feedback may help reveal (indirectly) if the strategy they are using is effective or ineffective. Additionally, one should note that performance feedback (knowledge of results) in the absence of specific goals does not usually enhance performance. Feedback is just information about performance. In order to assess their performance, individuals need standards against which to judge it; without such standards, they cannot distinguish good from
poor performance and therefore have no motivation to change their level of effort or direction (Snyder and Lopez, 2002). We can say, then, that goals and feedback go hand in hand in increasing goal progress and improving performance. For that, Locke and Latham (1990) note that goals and feedback together are more effective in motivating high performance (performance improvement) than either is alone. Likewise, Kleinbeck et.al, (1990: 9) argue that the joint benefit of goals and feedback may be due to their fulfilling different but crucial functions: “goals direct and energize action whereas feedback allows the tracking of progress in relation to the goal”.

Since the goal identifies what object or outcome one should aim for and is the standard by which one assesses one's performance; feedback provides information as to the degree to which the standard is being met. If performance meets or exceeds the standard, performance is typically either sustained or promoted. If performance falls below the standard, subsequent improvement will occur to the degree that: “(a) the individual expects to be dissatisfied with that level of performance in the future; (b) the individual has high self-efficacy; and (c) the individual sets a goal to improve over his past level of performance” (O'Neill Jr. and Drillings, 1994: 19). It is important to reemphasize that “goals initiate a self-evaluation process that affects motivation by providing a standard to judge progress” (Bandura, 1986, cited in Alderman, 2004: 117). This simply means two comparative processes are needed: goal and feedback or knowledge of results about progress.

Accordingly, Locke and Latham (1990b: 197) describe the relationship between feedback and goals as follows: “goals inform individuals as to what type or level of performance is to be attained so that they can direct and evaluate their actions and efforts accordingly. Feedback allows them to set reasonable goals and to track their performance in relation to their goals, so that adjustments in effort, direction and even
strategy can be made as needed”. Alderman (2004) adds that proximal goals give more opportunity for knowledge of results; feedback, in that people can monitor their performance and make self-corrections as needed. This process is shown in the following figure (in Alderman, 2004: 118).

![Diagram of goal-setting, monitoring, and feedback process]

**Figure 08: The goal-setting, monitoring, and feedback process**

All the points discussed so far indicate that, indeed, goal-setting in the absence of feedback (knowledge of results) is ineffective. For the simplest reason that, feedback is very useful for goal setter, because it allows them to track their goal progress and to make some modifications in effort exertion and time-management whenever it is needed. As an easy example, when individuals working toward a goal are told that they are behind the pace required to attain their goal, they are more likely to adjust their effort (increase it) accordingly.

In short, goal-setting appears to be most effective when combined with feedback. As Klein (1989, cited in Harris, 1993: 447) explains, “results from studies in which goals and feedback were systematically varied suggest that both are necessary to improve performance”. In fact, when goals are provided without feedback, or feedback is given without goals, individuals often will attempt to fill the gap (Harris, 1993). Klein (ibid, in Harris, ibid: 163) highlights that, “specific feedback, like specific goals, will lead to higher levels of performance […].”
3.2.12. The effects of goals on performance: (goals facilitate performance)

The effectiveness of goals on human performance has been the focal point of research of many researchers and psychologists. Data display that having goals enhanced and improved performance in every area of human behavior. (Latham and Yukl, 1975; Locke et al., 1981, in Martin and Tesser, 1996). Martin and Tesser (1996: 100) point out that “goal setting affects the amount, the perseverance, the direction, and the strategy of behavior”. In a study by Locke and Bryan (1969, in Martin and Tesser, 1996), subjects given feedback on five different dimensions of driving performance improved merely on the one dimension on which they were given a goal. In another study Terborg (1976, in Martin and Tesser, ibid) found that subjects with goals spent more time looking at text material to be learned and more often utilized learning strategies than those with no goals. Subjects increased speed; wrote shorter sentences; and changed standards in response to simply being given a goal. Furthermore, subjects work faster; harder, as evidenced by heart rate increase and greater output; and spend more time at the task, when provided with goals, compared to subjects without goals.

Additionally, goals are more likely to bolster up individuals cognitive, (intellectual) processes when performing varied tasks or activities. As Bandura (1986a) states that “goals may serve to enhance cognitive processing of performance related information”. Therefore, goals have been shown to be very useful and helpful for individuals in a different areas and domains, for instance by increasing the amount and the duration of effort expended i.e. effort exertion.

It is also important to discuss the other factor believed to moderate the relationship between goals and performance, which is the successes or failures the task performer has experienced with the task (Locke and Latham, 1999b). This means, the influence of repeated success and failure of personal goal attainment on performance.
Hall and Foster (1977, in Locke and Latham, 1999b) offer insights regarding the effect (impact) of success and failure on responses to task situations. They suggest that persons who achieve their goals may be more dedicated to attaining their goals on subsequent tasks. Whereas, those who fail at achieving their personal goals may feel less confident about their potentialities towards the task and their performance, and may not be as committed to future goals. Therefore, experiencing repeated success may contribute to more challenging personal goals and feelings of higher self-efficacy (as we will see further down), in that the individual has been able to attain her/his desired performance on previous trials or attempts (Spieker and Hinsz, 2004).

Furthermore, one of the most frequently stated conditions necessary for goals to lead to higher performance is commitment to a specific, difficult (challenging) goal. Goal commitment is hypothesized to impact performance indirectly through “the mediation of goal-directed behavior” (Slocum et.al, 2002: 77). They add that one of the most frequently cited conditions necessary for the goal-performance relationship is that people must possess the requisite commitment to attaining the goal. Because no motivational effects will occur from goal-setting, if there is no commitment to the goal. It is worth repeating that goal commitment represents a person's attachment to or determination to achieve a goal, embodying both the strength of one's intention to attain a goal and the 'unwillingness' to abandon or lower a goal over lime (Locke, Latham, and Erez, 1988). In short, Slocum et.al, (2002: 77) express clearly that “goal commitment plays an important role in the goal-setting and performance process”.

3.2.12.1. Goals, self-efficacy, and performance

Significantly, research displays that challenging (difficult) and specific goals in conjunction with high self-efficacy lead to higher levels of performance (Spieker & Hinsz, 2004). This simply means, when individuals set challenging and specific goals
and at the same time they believe that they are capable enough to attain them, because they have a great self-confidence in their potentialities in reaching goals. As Bandura (1986a) labels self-efficacy (task-specific self-confidence), self-efficacy, then, is “a judgment of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations (Bandura, 1982: 122, in O'Neil Jr. and Drillings, 1994: 23). It is based on one's assessment of all personal factors that could influence one's performance such as past performance (past success), ability, adaptability, capability to coordinate skilled sequences of actions, resourcefulness, and internal attributions. (Locke and Latham, 1990b). It has been shown consistently that self-efficacy (task-specific self-confidence) has direct effects on performance (Bandura, 1986). This finding holds for goals as well. Therefore, both goals and self-efficacy have direct independent effects on performance. Self-efficacy also can impact performance indirectly by “affecting goal choice and commitment” (O'Neil Jr & Drillings, 1994: 18). Further, assigning goals influences both personal (self-set) goals and self-efficacy, in that individuals who are assigned challenging goals are more likely to have high self-efficacy than those who are assigned low goals, since the assignment of high goals is in itself an expression of confidence (Salancik, 1977, cited in O'Neil Jr & Drillings, 1994).

Furthermore, self-efficacy, or what Garland (1985, in Martin and Tesser, 1996) referred to as 'performance expectancy', plays a key cognitive role in goal-setting behavior. In addition, Bandura (1977, in Martin and Tesser, 1996) notes that 'perceived self-efficacy' strongly influences the level of future performance and, in turn, is very dependent on past performance. The stronger an individual's perceived self-efficacy, the more effort she will exert, and the longer she will persist at a task, resulting in better performance. Bandura (ibid) adds that self-efficacy judgments also impact decisions involving choice of tasks and goal level. Individuals tend to choose situations and
activities they perceive themselves able of handling and to get rid of those in which they feel unable. In sum, it is noteworthy to state that in language learning settings as such, learners can self-set goals and being efficacious in attaining them would help them greatly to fulfill their (previously set) learning subgoals (tasks) which are considered proximal goals that would lead them, in turn, to reaching their distal learning goals in a variety of tasks. And therefore, by achieving the end goals they would pursue the desired performance. There is a lot of research pointing to the effectiveness of goals in human accomplishment. As Martin and Tesser (1996: 99) report: “The more concrete the goal and the more proximal the subgoals the better the performance”.

3.2.12.1. The High performance cycle

The integrated goal setting model is labeled “the high performance cycle” (Locke and Latham, 1990 b). O’Neil Jr and Drillings (1994) postulate that the model starts with challenge in the form of specific, difficult goals. If there is high commitment to these goals, feedback, high self-efficacy (and potential) and appropriate task strategies, high performance will result. Thus, if high performance leads to desired rewards (including self-rewards) high satisfaction will result.

Research indicates that specific difficult goals lead to better performance than easy vague goals. Accordingly, Kleinbeck et.al, (1990) note that goal-setting research has shown repeatedly that individuals who attempt to achieve specific and challenging (difficult) goals perform better on tasks than individuals who attempt for specific but moderate or easy goals, vague goals such as “do your best”, or no goals at all. It means that, challenging (but attainable) goals are usually implemented in terms of specific levels of performance to be attained. Precisely, specific clearly stated goals lead to higher performance than general or do-your-best goals. The superiority of specific goals in generating output has been shown in numerous experiments (Locke, et.al., 1981, in
Martin & Tesser, 1996). A goal that is both challenging and specific leads to higher performance level that either type of goal alone. Locke and his colleagues (ibid) review one hundred ten studies, among which ninety nine report that specific, hard goals yield better performance than easier goals, no goals, or vague, do-your-best goals.

Likewise, Locke and Latham (2002) specify that the setting of goals influences task performance if certain situational criteria are met. Goals that are 'specific' and 'challenging' contribute to higher levels of task performance if the goal can be attained and if the task performer is committed to achieving the goal. Put in simple word, goal-setting model (high performance cycle) emphasizes goal difficulty (challenging goal) and specificity (specific goal) for promoting and enhancing one's performance, through goal attainment, in turn, lead to high satisfaction (self-rewards).

3.2.13. Setting and revising goals

Galotti (2002) asks an important and intriguing question about; how is it that goals come to be added to or subtracted from an individual's list of goals. And, then, she answers that not all of an individual's goals are ones that he or she has originated. On the job or at school, for instance, a supervisor or an instructor often sets assignments, due dates, specifications, and so on. These goals and ones that the employee or student can embrace enthusiastically or assent to only grudgingly. These externally set goals, thus, might be internalized and redefined by the person, but the point remains that these goals come into being from somewhere other than the individual.

It is worth noting that other goals are ones over which persons appear to have greater control. This means that, at times individuals set personal goals, i.e. self-set goals, that is why they find themselves manipulating them as they want, for they control their effort exertion, persistence, and take action to achieve them. In that, they are not guided by external forces (other individuals, such as instructors, managers,
parents...and so on). These persons (goal setters) have some needs, demands or personal interest that push them to work as hard as possible to attaining the well defined goal, so as to reward or satisfy themselves.

Accordingly, Sheldon and Elliot (1998: 546, in Galotti, 2002: 15) make a distinction between 'autonomous goals' that “are undertaken with a sense of full willingness and choice” versus 'controlled goals', “which are felt to be compelled by internal or external forces or pressures”. Moreover, they describe two kinds of each type of goal. 'Autonomous goals' can be either 'intrinsic', arising from an individual's own interests (desires), or 'identified', arising from a set of personal convictions. The distinction, then, depends in part on whether the task is inherently enjoyable and autonomous, i.e. that the person has the feeling throughout the pursuit of the goal that one is doing it because one wants to. Identified goals, in contrast, are goals an individual attains out of a sense of duty or obligation to individual's values. As an instance, a person might work at a homeless shelter not because she enjoys the environment but because she believes that such an action fulfills a higher purpose or objective (Galotti, ibid). Likewise, controlled goals come in two flavors. The first contains extrinsic goals, ones that are motivated by external payoffs, for example, money, awards, recognition. The second set of goals, which are chosen because the person hopes to get rid of internally imposed guilt or anxiety. For instance, a learner might spend an evening studying to avoid performing poorly on a test, not so much because she wants to perform well but because she does not want to feel guilty for wasting her and her instructor's time, her parents' tuition fees,…and so on (Galotti, 2002).

According to Sheldon and Elliot (1998, in Galotti, 2002) 'autonomous goals' are more likely to receive sustained effort than are controlled goals. Presumably, controlled
goals are not as fully owned by the individual and, as a consequence, are likely to be less protected from competing goals. Individuals appear to have trouble translating controlled goals into specific action. Additionally, Galotti (2002: 16) notes that “goal establishment is probably a cyclical activity”. Once a goal is established, there will often be the need for some means of assessing progress toward the goal. This assessment may require the establishment of yet more goals or subgoals, or a redefinition of the original goals. Moreover, Galotti (ibid) expresses that individuals tend to set different kinds of goals. One cause has to do with stable 'individual differences' in personality. One trait along which individuals have been shown to differ in the degree of their self-efficacy, roughly defined as the degree to which persons believe in their own ability to achieve. To be precise, persons who are higher in self-efficacy have been shown to set goals that are more difficult to meet (Bandura, 1989, in Galotti, ibid). That is, an individual who believes she is capable, enough, of doing well on an academic test and who is willing to study hard for it is a person more likely to be aiming for an "A". Thus, such individuals are very likely to self-set more difficult goals than individuals who are low in self-efficacy (Galotti, 2002).

For example, I can, easily, observe these different types of goals very clearly in my students. Indeed, some really want to perform well. They care about how they are performing and about any minute detail or any measures of their performance. They work and study as hard as possible, and assess their grades very carefully. Whereas, other students act in very different ways. They also care a great deal about what they are doing at the university, but they are much less interested in their grades than they are in what they are learning. They experience risk-taking more often when they are studying and are more willing to sign up for something totally different from any previous
experience. When for instance, they receive a poor grade on a given test or exam, they do not take it as a signal of their fixed smartness but rather as a sign that they will need to work harder or to use another learning strategy. A poor grade to this type of learners is not a failure; rather, it is a temporary setback. Which means, they treat a bad performance as feedback with which to promote in future performances.

3.2.13.1. Setting personal goals: (personal goal-setting)

Wilson and Dobson (2008) identify ten guidelines for effective goal-setting, and state that using these ideas ensures that the person establish goals that can be attained or accomplished. The ten guidelines that really work are as follows (Wilson and Dobson, 2008: 4) and which we can summarize in the following way:

- **Effective goals are written**: most people daydream about what they would like to achieve. But how many of them pick up a pen and write down those things they most want to fulfill? Once a dream is committed to paper, it becomes 'concrete'. The dream is given a sense of reality. Writing down goals is a first step toward attaining them. That is, goal achievers record their goals (write them down) so that they can read them, absorb them and plan for them, then they are on the right track for achieving them.

- **Effective goals are written in specific, measurable terms**: If an individual writes her goal in specific terms, then she probably has expressed it in a measurable way. In that, a goal needs to be measurable so that its progress can be evaluated and so that it would be known when exactly the goal has been achieved. For example, saying: by December, I will have my dissertation completed and ready to be submitted. Thus, this is a concrete definable, measurable goal.

- **Effective goals can be visualized**: One has to picture herself attaining her goal. Picture the result, the moment, and her feelings. Much of persons’ energy for reaching goals comes from a desire to attain them. Usually, the more one desires something, the
harder she will work toward achieving it. For example, a student accomplishes her studies; graduating by visualizing her reward (self-satisfaction) and being congratulated by her parents, teachers, or friends, and enjoying the moment of success. Hence, when a learner or (any person) has a slow day, she just visualizes the result that she wants, and it renews her energy.

- **Effective goals are achievable:** Goals need to challenge one's effort and performance. Which means, goals have to be challenging and achievable, i.e. not too easy and not too difficult (as noted earlier in goal difficulty).

- **Goals have realistic deadlines:** Effective goals are timely. In that, goals need a schedule. One is more likely to take action when she sets a realistic time frame for accomplishing her goal. Scheduling enough time to attain the goal, but not so much time that she loses interest in it.

- **Effective goals are manageable:** At times, a goal can seem overwhelming because of its size. But if it is divided into smaller components, then it becomes easier to manage and is attainable. This means, individuals have to divide the end-goals into subgoals and subgoals into daily tasks in order to facilitate great achievement.

- **Effective goals are analyzed for their potential problems:** As an individual establishes a goal, she has to consider the steps she must take to accomplish it. Analyze the goal for potential issues that might keep her from pursue it. If a goal initially is considered in terms of what could go wrong, then she can take action to resolve or minimize problems before they occur. Thus, critical thinking helps individuals cover all the angles and stay on the path toward attaining their goals.

- **Effective goals require action to eliminate or minimize the consequences of potential problems:** This is the follow through for potential problems identified. At this
point, the goal setter identity the action that is required to either remove the cause of the problem or minimize its consequences.

❖ **Effective goals include regular review of progress:** A periodic review of one's goals will help her ensure that they continue to be 'realistic', 'timely', and 'relevant'. This means, tracking the progress of one's goals by assessing what is done, and what is remaining to be done to attain the goal.

❖ **Effective goals yield rewards that are of value to the goal setter:** Individuals stay motivated to work toward goals when they know and desire the resulting rewards, whatever they might be. As a person establishes each goal, she ought to identify at least one meaningful reward for herself. It may be for a job done well. Her reward can be anything of value to her, something that motivates her effort to attain the goal. In that, without recognizing specific benefits that accrue as a result of her efforts, the probability of reaching that goal decreases.

In sum, Wilson and Dobson (2008: 4) conclude by saying that, “if you follow these guidelines, you will establish your goals in a way that nearly guarantees your effort will be rewarded. Time and again, your reward is successful goal achievement”.

Put in simple words, individuals (goal setters) have to make goals specific, measurable, realistic and observable; they also have to clearly identify time constraints. Use moderately difficult goals, they are superior to either easy or very difficult goals. They have to write goals down and regularly monitor progress. And finally goal setters have to use short-range goals (proximal) to achieve long-range goals (distal goals).

**3.2.14. Potential Obstacles to Reaching Goals: (blocks to goals achievement)**

Let it first be noted that from the forgoing discussion that goal setting, which means fundamentally purposefulness, is necessary for living a successful, happy life (in general) and more successful academic years for students (in particular). As Snyder and
Lopez (2002: 310) state clearly that, most people, at some level, seem to know this. Why, then, are so many people unhappy, dissatisfied, and cannot fulfill their goals? Three reasons, they think and perceive, are primary:

First, the most fundamental reason is irrationalism; this characteristically consists of putting one's wishes and hopes ahead of reality, for example, holding an image of a person that is based on what you want him to be, not on what she is.

The second reason is the unwillingness to put forth (exert) mental (and physical) effort. In that, living successfully requires hard thinking followed by action, but many persons do not want to bother. It is “easier” to live on the range of the moment by the principle of 'least effort'. For instance, this is certainly encouraged by schools, colleges, which teach that students cannot know anything for certain and that how they feel is more important than how they think, and by movies and TV programs that display people “just doing it” based on their impulses at the moment.

The third reason is fear. To be precise, the older one gets, the more she comes to realize how big a role fear plays in many people's lives; as for instance: fear of change, fear of telling the truth, fear of being wrong, fear of being different, fear of thinking for oneself, fear of failure, fear of the subconscious and of knowing one's own motives, fear of disappointment, fear of disapproval, fear of being hurt, fear of being vulnerable, fear of the new, and fear of standing up for one's value. In a few words, Snyder and Lopez (2002: 311) note that “the essence of life is goal-directed action, which entails a process of value choice, value pursuit, and value achievement, when the striving for values stops, life indeed loses all meaning”.

Likewise, Wilson and Dobson (2008) say supposedly a person has defined her goals and specified them; she knows what she wants, and she is on the right track towards fulfilling her goals. Without warning, she suddenly faces an obstacle that
blocks her progress. And then it is hard to remain focused and energetic. If she does nothing about the obstacles that arise, she can sap her energy, her time, and her enthusiasm. Thereafter, Wilson and Dobson (ibid: 12) propose a range of obstacles, as concrete examples, that could block an individual from accomplishing her goals. Moreover, they note that each of the foregoing obstacles is a potential barrier she sets up herself to defeat her effort. But there are strategies for removing them or at least for minimizing their impact:

➢ I Need to Feel Secure

Wilson and Dobson (2008) elucidate that many of us fear that if we try something new, we may lose our sense of security. In that, we enjoy the security of life, as we know it. But the irony is that this security can change at a moment's notice. For example, a major layoff at work, a storm that destroys someone’s community, a personal tragedy; these events, then, can put someone’s security at risk and quickly alter her life. She does not have the power to control all the elements that can potentially affect her. As a result, a more dependable course of action is to build 'an internal security system' within herself. Instead of attempting to grasp at an intangible security that could alter momentarily, develop the coping skills that are so essential for life in a world of probable changes. Effective coping skills usually include the capability to handle stressful events, the capacity to take calculated risks, and the ability to manage problems as they arise. An internal security system, built through effective coping skills, which will help you make reasoned choices. Thus, you will find that the fear of giving up security will diminish as an obstacle to your success. That is, this internal potential barrier that, broadly, individuals set up themselves would hinder their goal attainment.
I May Fail

Wilson and Dobson (2008) note that nobody enjoys the feeling of failure, but often we are overly critical and extra-hard on ourselves. And once we feel that we have failed, we replay the incident in our mind until we view ourselves as 'failures' instead of having one failed goal. They add that if you fail to reach a goal, view the situation objectively. Avoid harboring negative emotions and feelings. Instead, identify what went well and what could have been done better. Identify opportunities that apply what you learned. Moreover, Wilson and Dobson (2008) state that in attempting to get rid of failure, you may miss the 'adventure of personal growth', the fun of meeting a novel challenge, or the excitement of living for those things in which you believe. For instance, Abraham Lincoln and Tomas Edison are examples of men who took risks and “failed” many times to achieve their goals. In that, they used their failures as learning experiences and were not deterred from continuing to set goals. Instead, each man held to a belief in himself as he continued to pursue the goals in which he so strongly believed. Thus means that, goal setters have to combat this negative feeling 'fear of failure' and substitute it by taking risks and by believing in themselves and their potentialities to pursuing their goals.

I Doubt My Skills

Accordingly, Wilson and Dobson (2008) point out that when an individual has a weak commitment to reaching her goals, this lack of commitment may weaken her confidence in her own skills and capabilities. They note also that if a person thinks to herself, i.e. self-talk, “I think, I can do this, but I am really not sure”. This has a tremendous influence or impact on her confidence or self-efficacy. Since the manner in which she mentally talks to herself impacts her performance, (discussed in length earlier in self-talk chapter). It is, thus, important to focus on one's strengths, identify one's
potentialities in a positive way. Focus on the things that one do well. Then decide which skills need work and identify strategies for improving these. And taking positive specific action will aid a person develop confidence in her skills and abilities, i.e. high self-efficacy, as Wilson and Dobson (ibid) suggest.

➢ *Changing the Way I Do Things Is not Easy*

Wilson and Dobson (2008: 18) specify that when someone enjoys change, she probably is in the minority who enjoy change. For the simplest reason that, change is uncomfortable for most of us, even when it is for the better. They maintain that change means “letting go of what is familiar”. When we do that, we face the challenge of coping with new ideas and situations. But as much as one may resist change, it cannot become stopped. Her challenge is to accept that change is inevitable, so that her resources are used in concert with that change. In that, working against change often can be stressful, while working with and through change is a source of energy and greater strength. Moreover, when people strive toward new goals, often they must change in some way. If they view change as a catalyst for attaining those goals, they will be better able to accept change with a more grateful perspective. That is, fear of change may prevent people from setting and working toward new goals, in turn, impede goal progress.

➢ *I Have too Many Things to Do*

At last, Wilson and Dobson (2008: 19) express that frequently, there are too many things to do. Unfortunately, people do not prioritize their goals and tasks or activities even though they have the ability to do so. Hence, they have to review their list of goals; which give them the greatest return on their investments, and which provide them with the greatest enjoyment or sense of accomplishment. Wilson and Dobson (ibid) add that people have to use their responses to prioritize the goals that are the most important to
them. Then plan their hours, their days, and even their months to achieve those goals. Therefore, in working on tasks, they suggest to “ignore the trivial and concentrate on the vital”.

3.2.15. Eleven strategies to optimize reaching your goals

Before reading on, we would like to highlight that even though all the obstacles and difficulties individuals can encounter when attempting to reach or pursue their personal goals, they may find some ways of strategies that would help them attain their goals. For that, Wilson and Dobson (2008) state clearly that, although reaching one’s goals cannot be guaranteed, but raising the probability of attaining them would be possible with the eleven strategies discussed and summarized further down: (Wilson and Dobson: 21).

- **Know the resources required for reaching a goal**

  Wilson and Dobson (2008) note that personal desire for attaining a goal is powerful, but often other resources are needed as well. They, then, ask the following questions: what resources do you need to achieve your goals; time, money, position? Additional education? The help of a particular person? For example, consider the goal of purchasing a computer system for your home office. The resources you might need include: money to purchase the computer, the software, and the printer; additional knowledge for knowing how to use it; and the help of a computer consultant. It means that, goal setters need to have a clear idea about the helpful resources that would aid them attain their goals before they self-set goals.

- **Work with goals that are compatible**

  Wilson and Dobson (ibid) note that when goals conflict with one another they compete for your time, energy, and personal resources, which can leave you feeling drained and stressed. For example, an instructor who wanted to complete her doctorate.
She enrolled at a university and was beginning her studies when she learned that she was pregnant. In analyzing the situation, she discovered that the goals of pursuing an education maintaining a full-time job and starting a family were not compatible at that time. Trying to meet the challenges of these goals would deplete her resources of energy, time, and enthusiasm.

❖ **Be willing to ask for help with your goals**

They suggest that many people are willing to help you if you ask for their assistance. Specify your needs and identify specific ways in which others can help. And they add that one has to remember that part of the way you can repay the help you receive is to be a resource for others.

❖ **Accept the responsibility for doing the work that is necessary to reach your goals**

It is elucidated also that establishing goals is a start. Accepting the responsibility to fulfill them is another challenge. In that, when the going gets tough, many people begin to blame others for their lack of progress. Instead of getting caught in a defensive, blaming trap, they suggest to apply your time and energy to solving problems, making decisions, and working your plan so that your goals are realized.

❖ **Minimize the interruptions that block your progress toward your goals**

They, then, emphasize that many interruptions have the appearance of urgency and importance, but often they are time wasters and trivial matters. When an interruption arises, quickly evaluate it in terms of its importance to your goal. If it is not an enabler to your progress, then it may be a hindrance. Let us take the example of responding to phone calls, messages, emails and… so forth, as real interruptions for a learner doing a research paper with a limited short time.
Be flexible to changes that affect your progress toward a goal

It is argued that although a planned path optimizes progress toward your goals, the unexpected does at times arise and can either impede or facilitate progress. Thus, when an unforeseen change in your plan occurs, assess it for damage control. Brainstorm alternatives to eliminate or minimize the impact of the issue, but also look for opportunities.

Identify the benefits of reaching your goals

They then, suggest to get tuned into WII-FM (what is in it for me?). Knowing and wanting the goal’s benefits is a key factor in motivating you to apply your time, energy, and resources. To be precise, when a person values the benefit that she “will receive, that value increases her motivation to accomplish the goal”.

Develop the persistence to work toward your goals

Then, they emphasize that persistence may be the most important quality for reaching your goals. Because many people are willing to quit when the going gets rough. Therefore, individuals have to be willing to make short-term sacrifices in order to reach something that is meaningful to them, i.e. they have to go beyond obstacles that they encounter when working toward a given goal (being persistent to attain it).

Review your progress toward your goals regularly

Thereafter, they note that reviewing our goals not only identifies the progress we have made, but also provides an opportunity to ensure that we are on track and that we have adequate resources at our disposal. In addition, a review of our goals also fans the fire of motivation by highlighting our accomplishments. Consider, for instance, posting a list of our goals so we can see them on a daily basis. And charting our progress regularly is also motivating.
Balance your efforts among the goals that are important to you.

After, they state that often we find ourselves applying a disproportionate amount of time to certain goals. They, then, provide the example of one successful realtor who sold seven Million dollars worth of real estate in a year realized that while she said that her family was very important to her, in reality she did not share much of her time and energy with them. Instead, most of her resources went to her job. Those long hours might ensure job performance, but goals related to other areas of life (family, friends, community, or spiritual life) may suffer. Thus, one has to identify goals related to different areas of life. And apply adequate amounts of time, energy, and resources to each of those areas that are important to the individual, i.e. making a kind of balance between multiple goals in life.

Reach your goals by concentrating on those things that relate to your goals

Finally, they reemphasize that whatever activities are planned in your day, consider their value to accomplishing your goals. In that, frequently, there are activities that one can eliminate or modify so that one can concentrate on making progress toward her significant goals. Hence, people have to be willing to give priority to those activities that contribute specifically to their goals.

3.2.16. Self-management

There are a couple of compelling reasons why self-management is of great usefulness and effectiveness in personal goal-setting. First, goal setters need to set their priorities individually. Second, they have to make some plans or planning to pursue their goals. Finally, they have to manage their time wisely and individually in order to be on the right track and to make a considerable progress towards their goals. As we will discuss them (setting priorities, planning, and time-management) in some detail further down.
3.2.16.1. Setting priorities

Accordingly, Wilson and Dobson (2008) specify that supposedly a person sets specific goals for her work and she has some ideas to fulfilling them. But how does she decide what to do first? Hence, a measure of her effectiveness is how skillfully she is capable to establish her priorities in order to progress toward her goals. In that, with many responsibilities and tasks or activities demanding her attention, she needs a way to determine which goals receive the investment of her time and her energy. Only with a practical system for setting priorities will she be able to concentrate on the activities that would help her reach her goals. Wilson and Dobson (2008: 58), then, provide an easy to comprehend example about the effectiveness of prioritization. For instance, a health-care executive faced with many interruptions in the day established a quiet time for herself when she would address priorities. She learned to post a “DO NOT DISTURB” note on her office door from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. She then would concentrate on her high-priority tasks, one at a time. The result has been an increasing rate of productivity.

3.2.16.1.1. Setting your priorities

In which basis individuals decide what to do each day, and which activities get their attention first. Broadly speaking, people often set their priorities in a way that feels comfortable to them in a way that addresses their goals most effectively. However, without rational criteria to set priorities, they may not work on their most important goals first. Therefore, people have to do 'first things' by using a rational system. In that, it evaluates facts, is easy to use, can incorporate flexible criteria, and is accurate. By remembering the 80 - 20 rule: of all the things one could be doing to reach her goals, it is likely that about 20 percent of one's current effort yields 80 percent of one's results. Thus, there is a good reason to work smarter (Wilson and Dobson, 2008).
3.2.16.1.2. Setting criteria

Significantly, Wilson and Dobson (2008) state that an effective method for establishing priorities is to use a table (see table 10). The first column identifies one's concerns, which may include her goals, current projects, and activities. Subsequent columns identify criteria to evaluate her concerns. Moreover, criteria often used to rank concerns are 'importance' and 'urgency'. With regard to importance, one has to consider the impact of each concern on her goals.

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<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
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Table 10: Table for Evaluating Concerns (Wilson and Dobson, 2008: 59)

Furthermore, Wilson and Dobson (2008) note that to practice setting priorities, one has to consider the tasks, activities, and even issues that she must deal with in the next week, next day, next hour… and so on. And when establishing her criteria, she may decide to use different ones from importance or urgency. The criteria may change depending on what is most relevant to one's goals. A key factor, thus, in setting priorities successfully is that she is consistent in choosing and applying criteria.

3.2.16.2. Planning (making plans)

When an individual has one or more goals, i.e. multiple goals, she often formulates a plan by which to attain those goals. For instance, university students map out daily or weekly schedules in order to break down their goals into subgoals.
In attempting to specify more on the notion of planning, Scholnick and Friedman (1987: 3, in Galotti, 2002: 19) define planning as “a set of complex conceptual activities that anticipate and regulate behavior”. As they describe it, planning involves constructing a program or 'blueprint' that specifies the relationships between objects and actions to be carried out on those objects on the one hand, and various priorities and events on the other hand. Moreover, they add that planning requires an orientation to future events, a capability to predict the consequences of various actions, and a willingness to prioritize one's goals (as stated earlier). It may also require an ability to foresee likely obstacles or pitfalls and to resist the construction of overly optimistic scenarios. For university students, for instance, to plan means, “spoke in positive terms of anticipating the future, budgeting resources, scheduling and managing time, setting and prioritizing goals, organizing, achieving efficiency and satisfaction” (Simons and Galotti, 1992, cited in, Galotti, 2002: 19).

Galotti (2002) adds that planning involves a number of components. It first requires an object, say, one or more of an individual's goals. When time, money, and other resources are limited, as they often are, planning requires prioritization, this means, the planner needs to decide on which goals to focus attention and energy and which goals to postpone. Furthermore, planning also requires allocation of resources to various goals (multiple goals), say, the planner needs to decide how much time, money, effort, and energy to spend on each of her goals. To be precise, Galloti (ibid) notes that plans often incorporate 'mental simulations' of how to attain a goal, which means, mentally running through various scenarios and possibilities, imagining various consequences. Galloti (ibid), then, explains that this 'mental simulation' can help in the identification of different conflicts. For example, among various goals, between a goal and a value, or among various possible action sequences. It is noteworthy to emphasis
that plans also frequently involve monitoring, assessing and revision, either of the goals themselves; this means some goals are maintained, some are dropped, and others are redefined, to the plans, and new means of reaching a goal may need to be discovered or invented.

Put in simple words, goal attainment depends greatly upon the individual’s plans (planning), in that when the goal is well defined, specific and realistic, in relation to a well constructed planning, including time management (prioritization and scheduling), money, effort, energy and resources needed, almost for sure the person would be able to achieve her potent or significant goals more easily and quickly.

In this context, Wilson and Dobson (2008) express that without a plan, achieving one's goals tends to be a hit-or-miss proposition, and time is easily wasted. Without a plan, persons may find themselves reacting or responding to others' demands rather than focusing on their own goals. Without a plan, individuals will miss the benefits that come from using effective planning skills.

Before considering the benefits of effective planning, let us first note that, in our viewpoint, goal setters have to encourage the use of a systematic planning process when attempting to achieve significant goals. They have also to spend some time managing crises on daily basis; in that some crises could be averted with planning. Without forgetting to assess their plans in terms of what can go wrong.

In the light of what we have said, Wilson and Dobson (2008: 63) emphasize that the benefits of effective planning are many. Precisely, “planning leads to higher productivity”. For the simplest reason that, a plan identifies what needs to be done, by when, and by whom, individuals construe their role in fulfilling a specific goal. Interruptions diminish as individuals plan their hours of serious work that would approach them to goal attainment, by limiting and avoiding others' disturbances. There is also an
improved use of resources by individuals, comprehending what is needed exactly to be done (daily tasks) in a given time, they will apply more energy and more time in getting results. Systematic planning also helps to identify deviations from what should be occurring, so that persons can make corrections, modifications or adjustments before a crisis occurs. As a consequence, planning could be considered as an effective management skill, because lack of planning leads to frequent crisis management. And planning will aid planners plan their tomorrows by identifying the steps necessary for pursuing their significant goals. So, planning saves time in the long run, in that numerous studies emphasized the great value of planning.

3.2.16.2.1. Key Planning Steps

Wilson and Dobson (2008: 66) posit that there are six basic questions that frame the planning process: “Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?” And they reemphasize that answering these six questions is crucial, essential, to effective successful planning. “Who” determines responsibility. That is, it identifies the person responsible for accomplishing each part of the plan (in assigned goals), i.e. self-set goals will lead to self-set plans. “What” establishes the goal and details of the results and standards to be met. More precisely, “the more specific the goal, the more specific the plan can be. And the clarity of the plan helps diminish confusion increase confidence, and contribute to the effective use of resources”. “When” marks the time frame for the plan's beginning and end, as well as providing scheduled progress checks along the way. So, for each step, one has to identify the time allotted for accomplishing that step. “Where” identifies the place for carrying out the steps of the plan. “How” defines the steps to be fulfilled, and within each step, clarifies the procedures to be used. Finally, “why” provides the personal motivation, i.e. self-motivation or intrinsic
motivation of the planner to attain the goal. This means that, the purpose or the end-result behind the plan and, in turn, of the desired or significant goal.

3.2.16.2.2. Ensuring a Fail-safe Plan

Besides, it is important to note that there are a few more ways a person can maximize the benefits of her plan. As Wilson and Dobson (2008) point out that one way is to get rid of making assumptions. This means, goal-setters have to be ‘specific’, i.e. anticipating and answering questions’, and documenting their plan and their progress. Another is to ensure that the goal-setter looks for potential problems in her plan. Because parts of her plan are apt to be vulnerable, and these vulnerabilities could disrupt the success of her plan and jeopardize her capability to pursue the goal. For example, initiating something new creates vulnerability. If someone is doing something for the first time, all the kinks may not have been worked out. Also tight deadlines create a vulnerable situation.

Overall, at the level of physical reality, the end state or goal of an act cannot actually be attained before going through steps leading to that goal. Thus, following the plan precedes the goal at the level of execution. At the level of creative thinking, however, the goal is usually set before the behavioral path is attempted. Indeed, constructing the path implies knowledge of the goal to be reached. It thus appears that efficient planning depends on this important characteristic of cognitive processes. In the same line of thought, Makin and Cox (2004) specify that planning, like choosing, is essentially cognitive. As a consequence, planning and choosing are closely linked and influence each other. For example, our assessments of the success or failure of our plans will influence the goals we set. The planning and choosing stages can be seen as a form of 'cognitive stimulation'. More interesting, Makin and Cox (ibid) push for specificity and express that “planning refers to the individual who finds himself in an actual state
of need and tries to concretize that need in the pursuit of a specific goal by means of concrete action”. In short, time spent planning is almost always a good investment. In that, it saves going down wrong paths. Thus, plans make persons wiser about his or her goals.

3.2.16.3. Time Management

Broadly, people wish that there are more hours in a day. They frequently find themselves attempting to catch up. In that, they feel that time controls them more than they control it. To be precise, many of us complain that there is too little time to fulfill all that we would like to do. However, rather than having too little time, the real issue may be the way we manage time. For that, Smith and Hitt (2005: 102) state clearly that “time management is related to one aspect of planning; planning of time and coping with lack of time”. Wilson and Dobson (2008: 75) mention that there are strategies that can optimize the use of time so that one can spend more time working toward his or her goals. For example, the individual has to ask herself the following question regularly and thoughtfully: “what is the best use of my time right now with regard to my goals”. They add that often we function without considering how our time is spent. Precisely, questioning oneself about the best use of her time “right now” encourages her to stop and think. Because the individual can make a conscious decision about the value of what she is doing. If a person plans her time so that she concentrates on those activities or tasks that relate to her goals, the probability to achieve her goals would be raised.

3.2.16.3.1. Using a time log

How persons manage their time and whether they know really how their time is used, there is not always a great awareness about that. For determining a best use of time, Wilson and Dobson (2008) propose to record one's activities by using a “time log”. Although keeping a running total of how an individual uses the minutes in a day
may not seem appealing initially, but the information she will get about herself is worth the effort. Wilson and Dobson (ibid), then, emphasize that the time log is a simple but very useful and valuable tool for learning more about how to use the hours of the day. In that, when a goal setter comprehends where her time is really going, she can, then, decide how best to invest her hours. Thus, a goal setter can use the time log provided by Wilson and Dobson (ibid: 88) for more effective use of time. Because some people find that their effectiveness is hampered by interruptions; others are hampered but misguided priorities. Thus, some insights come from the use of a time log. For instance, a person may discover blocks of time to which she can apply efforts to pursue her goals.

**Time Log**

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### 3.2.16.3.2. Procrastination

Generally speaking, people find that there are times when they have not worked toward one of their goals. And at times there are some activities that they deliberately avoid. One reason why time slips away is that they tend to procrastinate. In fact, most of
us are guilty of this at one time or another. Unfortunately, overtime we become a dept at welcoming diversions and at avoiding what needs to be done. Procrastination, then, is “the ability to put off until tomorrow what could be accomplished today” (Wilson and Dobson, 2008: 78). Furthermore, Wilson and Dobson (ibid: 78) point out that although it is unlikely that the tasks a person, namely a goal-setter, dislikes will go away, she can change her behavior and meet the “procrastination challenge”. They, as a result, provide strategies that can help minimize the procrastination issue, which could be summarized further down:

- **Identifying your motivation for getting started**

  It means that, one could reward herself for working for three hours, for example, or one could remind herself that the completion of a given project, task or an activity will raise her credibility in the eyes of his instructor or, for instance, some will boost his self-confidence, self-esteem or obtaining some benefit from accomplishing it. So, one has to decide what motivates her and then follow through on it.

- **Ensuring that this task or project is a priority**

  One can use her priority-setting skills to identify the value of working on that task or activity. However, if it is not a priority, one has to eliminate it from her to-do list.

- **Breaking the task or project into its component parts**

  This way it is more manageable. Beginning by working on just one part of the task or activity.

- **Accepting that some projects or tasks require a lot of time**

  Although we often do not have long blocks of uninterrupted time, we can schedule some time and make some progress on the longer task.
• **Using a ten-minute strategy**

One can commit ten minutes of effort to almost any task. And ten minutes of effort to almost any task, and ten minutes is enough to get her started. And if after ten minutes one feels that must stop, then she can stop. But one may find that she wants to keep going after the initial plunge.

• **Rewarding your effort**

The minutes that a person spends procrastinating can be applied to a reward if she just goes ahead and take the plunge. The reward may be small, but it can have a high impact on performance. Remembering one of the principles of human behavior: we continue to do those things that are rewarding, we stop doing those things that are not.

• **Setting deadlines for yourself and meet them**

Framing time would help get rid of procrastination.

• **Avoiding absolutes**

In that, rarely is anything perfect or absolute. Imposing this pressure on oneself impedes progress.

**3.2.16.3.3. Interruptions**

Wilson and Dobson (2008) say that, supposedly, if a person had a dollar for every time she allowed an interruption in her day, wouldn't she be well on her way to financial independence? Thus, one has to realize that many interruptions are a result of decisions that she makes (and a decision to). And to be more precise, one can say that a decision to be interrupted may take time away from working on one or one's goals. Each time one do not say no, she makes a decision to be interrupted. Like for instance, picking up the telephone or mobile, opening the door, responding to messages and mails when one is working on a high priority goal, or do not communicate that she is busy.
Additionally, Wilson and Dobson (2008: 81) note that, there are several strategies for controlling interruptions. First, one has to refer to her time log and identify those interruptions that seem to occur on a regular basis. If an interruption will contribute to meeting one's goal, schedule it to be dealt with at a particular time. One can also group potential interruptions. For instance, instead of handling telephone calls through the day have messages taken and then return calls at a designated time of day. And in order to make one's telephone calls more productive:

- Avoid social conversations.
- State the goal of the call.
- Put a time limit on your calls.
- Provide a time and number for reaching you if the person you are calling is not available.
- Identify phrases you can use to end your calls politely.
- Be assertive. Doing so encourages you to make your own choices and ensures that you communicate them fairly and respectfully.

Last but not least, Wilson and Dobson (2008) reemphasize the value of time and precised that time is precious. Time spent in unproductive or low priority activities is a resource taken away from activities that pursue one's goals. Managing one's time more effectively can help her attain his or her goals more quickly and efficiently. Then, Wilson and Dobson, (ibid: 81) conclude by saying that “there is no magic to learning to manage time. It is a simple matter of identifying how your time is currently used, identifying the habits that need to be changed, and applying the strategies to change those habits. The combination of dedication and perseverance, and the application of time-management strategies, will be your key to successful goal achievement.
3.3. Goal-setting

Goal-setting is apparent in many aspects of human behavior. For instance, we self-set educational goals (learning), career goals, budget goals, fitness goals, relationship goals, even spiritual goals… and so forth. More precisely, much of human activity revolves around the pursuit of goals. For the simple reason that, goals energize our behaviors and guide our choices; in that they occupy our thoughts and dominate our reveries. In addition, failure to attain them causes pain and suffering, for goal setter mainly for significant high goals, whereas their successful attainment may bring about pleasure and satisfaction (Kruglanski, 1996, in Galotti, 2002). Then, he describes the importance of goals as follows: “goals lend meaning and direction to our existence; a purposeless life, devoid of significant goals, is often decried as inferior and empty” (Kruglanski, ibid: 599, in Galotti, ibid: 11). Therefore, our first step in describing the process of goal setting focuses on the fact that a motivational need activates and directs not only an individual’s perceptual and motor systems, but also his entire cognitive potential.

It must be recognized, then, that like most learning strategies, goal-setting has to be utilized greatly by students, since it would help them to well improve their learning performance. As Anderson (1997: 3) points out: “goal-setting should both taught directly to enable learners to independently set and monitor their own improvements and achievement. In this way, individuals can be more self-reliant and resourceful about their progress”.

In this sense, Krista (2012) elucidates that youths, in general, can benefit greatly from setting goals and having a vision for attaining them. Whether it is getting an 'A' on a test or becoming an instructor. As a result, young people build self-esteem and perseverance when they focus on achieving a target they have set for themselves. Then,
he encouraged young people to think about what expectations they have set for themselves. To be precise, when youths find things they are passionate about and good at, then their expectations for themselves become higher as they gain confidence through reaching their goals. Then, Krista (ibid) adds that goal should be based on one's potentialities and interests, and the goal does not have to be “the best at something”. Thus, persons have to begin with small goals first, such as finishing or fulfilling a dissertation or a book as completing two chores a day. When individuals attain small goals, it gives them a natural boost of energy toward achieving their next goal that can be bigger. Moreover, the next step after deciding the goals is to write them on paper and put it in a prominent place to be seen every day (as noted earlier).

However, the hard work begins with taking action beyond just writing them down on paper and putting effort into attaining the goals. Furthermore, there inevitably will be roadblocks and setbacks, so goal-setters have to use those as teaching opportunities to display that one can redirect her focus. And goal-setters have to self-set a novel goal when they figure out that the original, i.e. significant ones, were unattainable and be have sure to celebrate when they overcome obstacles along the way. As Coach Dungy (in Krista, 2012: 7) says: “a setback is OK if you can bounce back from it”.

Before continuing to discuss the important cognitive-motivational strategy of goal-setting, we will attempt presently to shed more light on the concept, by providing some definitions.

3.3.1. Goal-setting defined

Broadly, goals are objectives and goal-setting is establishing those objectives with the intention of attaining them. As Wilson and Dobson (2008: 2) put it: “goal-setting is the process whereby targets and objectives are established”. Goal-setting refers to “the process of establishing a standard for performance”(Dembo, 2000: 69). For Bass and
Sauers (1990: 30) goal-setting refers to a “formal program of setting numerical or quantitative performance goals for individuals”. And for Klausmeier (1961: 328) “goal-setting implies conscious awareness of what is being sought”. Interestingly, Ashdown (2005: 6) covers most of what has been proposed as definitions of the term by specifying and summarizing that goal-setting is “a straight forward process of identifying what it is you wish to achieve, when you want it by and how you can get it”. In addition, Alderman (2004: 105) distinguishes between goal-setting, which refers to “a specific outcome that an individual is striving to achieve”, and goal orientation, that refers “to a type of goal orientation or underlying purpose behind the strived - for goal”.

In learning settings, goal-setting entails “the level of achievement that students establish themselves to accomplish”; whereas, academic expectation is defined as “the level of achievement that students must reach in order to satisfy the standard established by the teacher”. (Madden, 1997: 411). In sum, we can say that goal-setting is the way individuals, namely students, attain their goals.

### 3.3.2. Why is goal-setting important?

It is important to note that goal-setting is a self-management cognitive self-motivational strategy that puts meaning to our entire lives. For that, Dembo (2000: 70) asserts that “goal-setting is a planning process [discussed previously] and is an important aspect of self-management”. Dembo (ibid) adds that this process aids individuals attain their dreams (since a goal is a dream with deadline) and ambitions, and sets up positive expectations for fulfillments. Then, Dembo (ibid) talks about the significance of goal-setting strategies in learning settings and specified that learners who set goals and develop the necessary plans (planning) to attain them take a direct responsibility for their own lives. This means, they do not wait for others, like instructors or parents, to dictate or decide in their place as to what they should be doing.
with their lives. To be precise, “goals help us become aware of our values and help us determine what we are willing to do. As a result, they influence our attitudes, motivation, and learning” (Dembo, 2000: 71). Hence, individuals, namely students, find it very hard to be highly self-motivated persons without self-setting goals, i.e. without setting personal goals. As Dembo (ibid) maintains that many students fail to be in charge for personal goal-setting, for example, they tend to wait for assigned goals, either learning goals from their instructors or social, personal or career goals from their parents, like for instance, some students fail to take responsibility for choosing what to study at the university as a specialty.

Additionally, Dembo (2000) points out that most of us have goals in many domains: academic, social, occupational, and personal. He, then, adds that some goals are ‘short term’ as: earning an “A” on a test, others are ‘long term’ like for instance: raising the general average of this semester; and still others are very ‘long term’ as for example, becoming a doctor or an instructor. Furthermore, he mentions that long-term goals are accompanied by related ‘intermediate goals’. Dembo (ibid), then, gives the example of a freshman student who might set her sights on becoming editor of the college newspaper during her senior year. The goal is four years away and represents a major achievement. Thus, the student would decide what needs to be done to work toward her long-range goal. And if a student is interested in journalism, she may decide to major in this field and begin taking some English and journalism courses. Therefore, by setting intermediate goals that relate to the long-term goal, the student identifies a plan for action or path to follow to achieve her ultimate goal. This path, in turn, provides rewards as the student approaches, moves closer toward, the long-range goal.

Hence, long-term goals are developed by translating principles and beliefs into long-term achievements. And long-term goals, in turn, are achieved through a series of
intermediate goals, i.e. subgoals or short term-goals. Finally, the intermediate goals (short-range goals) are fulfilled or reached through a series of specific, goal-oriented daily tasks, i.e. activities done on a daily basis. In other words, successful goal-setters, in fact, go through different steps when attempting to attain a significant goal. First, they identify their goal; which is specific, realistic well defined goal. After that, they plan their daily tasks or activities, and then they plan their weekly and monthly to-do list (short-term goals or intermediate). Which in turn would move them closer and closer to their end-results or the ultimate goal.

From what has been said earlier concerning the significance of the goal-setting process. Reeve (1996, cited in Dembo, 2000) argues that although goals help motivate individuals’ behavior; they cannot fulfill the whole job for the reason that the quality of performance also is related to non-motivational factors such as ability, training, and resources. In this sense, Dembo (ibid: 71) expresses that life would be easy if the only thing we had to do was setting goals and sitting back and wait for them to be attained, but in fact “setting goals, although important, is only the first step in a process to becoming a more successful individual. For goals to enhance performance, it is essential to make a commitment to attempt to attain them”.

3.3.3 Goal-setting Theory

We will try presently to summarize the goal-setting theory. Locke and Latham (1990b: 128) illustrate that goal-setting theory rests on the premise that “goal-directedness is an essential attribute of human action and that conscious self-regulation of action, though volitional, is the norm”. Furthermore, Kleinbeck et.al, (1990: 6) specify that goal-setting theory “was developed by starting with the situationally specific, conscious motivational factors closest to action, i.e. goals and intentions. It then worked backwards from here to determine what causes goals and what makes them
effective.” In this respect, Snyder and Lopez (2002: 304) point out that because goals are the means of attaining values and thereby fulfilling needs (as noted previously). Thus, “goals determine the direction, intensity, and duration of action. They also affect cognitive processing and the use of task knowledge”.

Likewise, Smith and Hitt (2005: 129) push for specificity by saying that “the core of goal setting theory asserts that performance goals lead to the highest level of performance when they are both clear (specific) and difficult”. In that, specific, hard goals lead to higher performance than easy or vague goals, such as trying to ‘do your best goals’. In a similar manner, Harris (1993) states clearly that, what is implicit in expectancy and equity theories is the concept of goals. More precisely, goal-setting theory argues that the critical antecedent to task-relevant behavior is our intention to attain some goal. Hence, individuals are influenced by their expectations of rewards (i.e. expectancy theory) and comparisons to other individuals (i.e. equity theory) when these factors affect their goals. Then, this is an important distinction because it concludes that the goal causes the motivation, not the reward. To be precise, goals provide order and structure, measure progress, give a sense of achievement, and provide closure. (Quick, 1985: 124, in Harris, 1993: 446).

Almost every research or study indicates that when people, namely learners, have clear well defined, i.e. specific goals, they perform at a higher level than when they do not have goals.

3.3.4 Goal-setting and hope

It is noteworthy to emphasize that the idea of hope is central to goal attainment. In accordance with hope theory, Lopez et.al, (2004) present the significance of hope in goal achievement and provide research based on suggestions for producing higher levels of hope in learners. Hope theory refers to “individuals’ perceptions of their capacities to
clearly conceptualize goals, develop the specific strategies to reach those goals, and initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (Lopez et.al, 2004: 388). To be precise, hope theory posits that ‘hope’ plays a critical role in goal achievement through several mechanisms. ‘Hope finding’ is when a person becomes aware of hope and construes its application potential. ‘Hope boding’ is when social bonds, like the bond between an instructor and a student, facilitate successful change. And ‘hope enhancing’ is the explicit experience of change and the increasing hope that comes when a student sees himself or herself attaining a step along the way to goal fulfillment (Lopez et.al, 2004). Then, they add that a growing body of literature shows the benefits of hopeful thinking in academic performance, physical and psychological well-being, and connections to others.

3.3.4.1 Components of hopeful thinking

Interestingly, Curran and Reivich (2011) note that the first component of hopeful thinking is the development of goals’ (discussed earlier). The capability to set and reach goals is helpful to people throughout their lives and across many domains of life. They, then, maintain that school psychologists are considered a recourse for fostering students’, teachers’, and schools’ overall performance and nurturing the well-being of individuals as well as the school culture; therefore, comprehending goal-setting and hope is critical for school psychologists.

The second component of hopeful thinking is labeled ‘pathways thinking’. Snyder (1994: 112) posits that pathways thinking refer to “an individual’s perceived ability to develop strategies and routes to accomplish a desired goal”. Moreover, persons who are high in hope are more likely to develop multiple strategies to take into account possible obstacles, and develop solutions to ensure that they attain their goals. For that, Snyder et.al, (2002) present the findings of several studies in which individuals who are capable
to identify several pathways toward a goal outperformed those who identify only one or a few pathways. They state that the findings suggest that individuals higher in hope perform better academically. That is, perform better on achievement tests, have higher grade point averages, and have higher graduation rates.

The third component of hopeful thinking is agency thinking. Curran and Reivich (2011) maintain that it is not uncommon to work with students who, despite setting appropriate goals and developing a variety of pathways to accomplish the goal, fail to get started in the goal pursuit. They point out that this difficulty in getting started might indicate that a student needs support in building her ‘agency thinking’. Agency thinking, then, refers to “the belief or “self-talk”, i.e. inner-speech (discussed in some length in self-talk chapter), that facilitate a student's capability to get started and follow the pathways to a goal” (Curran and Reivich, ibid: 1). In that, it is such agency thoughts that provide the motivation necessary for goal attainment. After that, they explain more the point by stating that students high in ‘agency thinking ’ often encourage themselves through statements, say, positive self-talk, such as, “I can do this”, “I really want this and I am not going to let anything stop me”, or “I am going to keep at this until I reach my goal”. In contrast, students low in agency thinking undercut their resilience and success through counterproductive self-talk such as, “there is no way I can do this”, or “I will never make it”.

Surely enough, it appears that agency thoughts are highest when the goal is meaningful to the person, the task complexity thus is at a high enough level to keep interest but not so high that it undermines motivation; and feedback is used in a manner to encourage learning and increased self-efficacy. As a result, school psychologists can help a student develop agency thinking by teaching the learner to monitor her self-talk, to challenge counterproductive thoughts (negative inner-speech) with optimistic
thoughts, and to use positive self-talk as a way, to enhance motivation and resilience when the student notices that she is beginning to feel disengaged from the goal, is procrastinating, or is encountering setbacks. (Curran and Reivich, 2011).

To come to an end, we do believe that individuals higher in hope perform better academically. For instance, students would perform better on achievement tests, have higher grade point averages, and have higher graduation rates. In sum, Curran and Karen (2011: 1) conclude that “goals without pathways and agency will go nowhere, goals and pathways without agency will be difficult to accomplish, and goals and agency with no pathways will fail frequently. In order to successfully develop hope, there must be intentional development for all three components of hope (…)”.

3.3.5. Procedures for goal-setting

Undeniably, changing habits is a little bit hard, and practicing new behaviors requires discipline and support. Here Manzo (2012) offers an updated and science-backed procedures or ways for how to go about setting achievable goals that help individuals stretch themselves professionally, and still afford flexibility and motivation (mainly self-motivation). Noteworthy, recent developments in neuroscience give individuals critical insights into how to set and attain goals using the power of the brain. To be precise, “activating whole-brain thinking, imagination and neuroplasticity; which means the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life, are three key concepts that will contribute greatly to peoples' success in goal-setting” (Manzo, 2012: 8). Additionally, Manzo (ibid) states that we often hear about goal-setting using the acronym, S.M.A.R.T. which stands for specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and timely (discussed in some detail previously). Then, she comments that this is a logical, structured and useful way to set goals. In that, it caters primarily to our “left brain”. To activate the whole brain, our “right brain” also
needs to engage concepts, ‘sensations’, creativity' and 'emotion'. Evidently, once we have a goal, we need to make it come as alive as possible in our brains. More precisely, Manzo (2012: 8) clarifies that the process of neuroplasticity; the ability of our brain to change, is generated not only by doing, but also by imagining. The key to neuroplasticity is attention. If we pay regular attention to our goals, our brains can change in as little as a few weeks; enough to be seen on a brain scan”. In a similar vein, Dembo, (2000: 78) summarizes the procedures for goal-setting and reinforce them with some examples, in order to illustrate more the point. Let us have a look at the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifying and defining the goal</td>
<td>Use SMART goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating and evaluating alternatives</td>
<td>Answer the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;How would other people achieve this goal?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Who can help me achieve this goal?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;How have I achieved similar goals in the past?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Making an implementation plan</td>
<td>Use checklist to identify intermediate goals and related tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Implementing the plan</td>
<td>Identify the tasks that need to be completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evaluating your progress</td>
<td>Answer the following questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;How well did the plan work?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;How many tasks did I complete?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;With which task(s) did I have the most trouble? Why?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What strategies worked well?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What problems came up?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What did I learn about myself?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What didn't I plan for?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Procedures for goal-setting

Conclusively, as discussed earlier setting targets could be considered the first stage of goal-setting which allows individuals to prioritize the things they wish to attain. And once they have clearly defined their goals it is far easier to set about reaching them. Furthermore, once persons have decided on their specific aims (goals) and placed them in order of importance, it is a good idea to start the clock, i.e. look at when they would like to have realized these objectives, by giving themselves a target date of achievement. For the simplest reason that, time frame provides a sense of urgency and
makes their goals more real as they have set themselves a finish line. And if a person wants to pursue something (a goal), the quicker she starts the quicker it arrives. Hence, goal-setters can perceive each goal they self-set as an issue and it is a matter of solving the issue before they can move on. Therefore, individuals have to rationalize things, i.e. plan their goal attainment, and break them down rather than build them up and they will probably find it is not scary or impossible to fulfill as it seems.

3.3.6. Motivational effects of goals-setting: (goal-setting as a motivational tool)

Broadly speaking, goals are regarded as cognitive representations of a future event and, as such, influence motivation through five processes (Locke, Shaw, Saari and Latham, 1981, in Alderman, 2004: 106). More specifically, goals:

- Direct attention and action toward an intended target. This helps individuals focus on the task at hand and marshal their resources toward the accomplishment of the goal.
- Mobilize effort in proportion to the difficulty of the task to be accomplished.
- Promote persistence and effort over time. This provides a person to continue to work hard even if the task is not going well.
- Promote the development of creative plans and strategies to reach them.
- Provide a reference point to assess performance.

Therefore, goals provide standards for knowing how well one is doing, thus activating a self-evaluation process. As Bandura (1997: 128) states: “simply adopting a goal without knowing how one is doing, or knowing how one is doing in the absence of a goal, has no lasting motivational effect”. Additionally, Zimmerman and Risemberg, (1997, in Cheung, 2004: 3) identify six components of academic self-management: “motivation, methods of learning, use of time, physical environment, social environment and performance”. Then, Cheung (2004) emphasizes that through learning these self-management skills, students can exert control over their learning and thus
promote academic achievement. Moreover, in her study, she focuses mainly on examining how students use goal-setting as a motivational tool in the process of self-regulated learning process. In this sense, Ames (1990, in Cheung, ibid: 6) points out that “motivation is considered as a “goal-directed behavior' that involves different ways of thinking and is elicited under various internal and external conditions”. He, then, adds that motivational goals provide the mechanism for filtering perceptions and other cognitive processes.

Interestingly, Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986, in Cheung, 2004) suggest different ways for students to manage their motivation, as setting goals, developing positive beliefs about one's potential to perform academic tasks (self-efficacy), and arranging rewards or punishments for success or failure at an academic tasks. Schunk (1991) further adds that students who feel more confident in their capabilities to achieve their goals and to fulfill some tasks are likely to engage their repertoire of strategies and persist in their use than those having no confidence in their competence.

Moreover, educational research indicates that high achievers report using goal-setting more frequently and more consistently than low achievers (Zimmerman and Martinez-Ponz, 1986, in Cheung, 2004). Furthermore, Schunk (1991) maintains that students are more motivated to fulfill what they have planned for themselves, and they tend to work harder on self made goals than externally imposed goals and that participation in goal-setting can lead to high goal commitment, therefore foster performance. O’Connell (1991, in Cheung, 2004) also advocates that the school should assist students in developing goals for themselves, and that instructors should reinforce these same goals.
As a result we can simply state that, goal-setting process can be considered as one crucial strategy (a motivational tool) that would influence students' self-motivation, self-efficacy and thus their self-regulated learning.

3.3.7. Under what conditions can goal-setting promote learning?

According to Burton (1992, as cited in Anderson, 1997) every goal has two basic components: 'direction' and 'quantity'. “Direction refers to the focus of the goal”; that is, what the individual will pay attention to; elements of a skill's form, strategy use, motivation. Whereas, quantity refers “to the amount of minimal standard of performance the individual is willing to accept as a measure of success”. Burton (1992, in Anderson, ibid: 3), then, stresses that direction and quantity interact to produce three distinct goal orientations:

- Performance-oriented goals are focused on the performance elements needed to learn the skills and to improve. For instance, improving the speaking skill (oral skill) through practice; trying out the language.

- Success-oriented goals are aimed at competitive outcomes and at positive social comparisons. For example, my goal is to get the highest average in my class, thus being the first.

- Failure-oriented goals are revealed when students avoid serious involvement, because they fear that negative social comparison will reveal low ability. For instance, I will make half hearted attempts; therefore, if I am unsuccessful, at least I have an excuse.

Yet, goal orientations significantly influence learners' 'perceptions of capability', 'effort', 'persistence' in the face of failure, 'strategy use', 'self-efficacy', and 'commitment' over time. Unless guided to use goal-setting to monitor and refine skill development, many youngsters may inadvertently sabotage efforts made to introduce them to new
skills and to improve their existing talents (Burton, 1992, in Anderson, 1997). In this sense, Anderson (1997: 3) specifies that goal-setting enhances progress when it is “(a) short-term, (b) realistic, (c) performance-oriented, (d) specific, and (e) progressive”. Precisely, woven into the instructional program, goal-setting teaches students not only the merits of planning to be successful, but also the procedures associated with effective goal-setting and attainment.

Short-term goals are attainable within learners’ next few attempts. Whereas, long-range goals, although significant for giving short-term goals direction, may be too far down the road to sustain students’ interest and training intensity. Significantly, “goals that are achievable within few days or weeks inspire diligence and maintain learners’ focus” (Anderson, 1997: 3).

Realistic goals are within students’ performance limits. In that, goals should be aligned with physical abilities, amount of practice time, and stage of development. It means that, learners have to take into account their potentialities in goal attainment, when attempting to self-set realistic goals (Anderson, 1997).

Performance-oriented goals are focused on the means, i.e. the strategies, that enable students to attain their desired outcomes. Thus, goals have to be stated, say, specific, well defined, so that students can observe and measure or assess their performance against performance standards that represent levels of achievement within their learning limits (Anderson, 1997).

In summary, with assistance, students can plot their progress through achievement stages that ensure the attainment of their desired goals. In that, at times students want to take short cuts. As a result, they omit critical elements in the learning process. Hence, “learners should create ladders, or steps, to achieve their goals and to develop strategies to attain them” (Anderson, 1997: 3). From all what we have discussed so far, in our
sincere point of view, we do believe that, in fact goal-setting plays a tremendous role in the life of successful individuals, in general, and students, in particular. In that, self-setting goals direct students' attention and focus to the ultimate desired outcomes, energize their actions and steps, and boost their persistence to go beyond difficulties, pitfalls, obstacles and setbacks they encounter along the way. Therefore, goal-setting process influences greatly students’ academic performance.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we tried to display the most salient properties and aspects of goal-setting process by focusing most on self-set goals (personal or self-made goals), smart goals and strategies that would optimize goal attainment.

We tried in our discussion to shed more light on prioritization, planning and time-management; since goal-setting process has been considered by researchers and psychologists as a self-management cognitive-motivational strategy. And from a motivational view point, we have described the motivational effects of goals and how can goal-setting foster learning (students' performance).

Last but not least, we wished to show that, broadly, goal-setting is a life skill from which we all benefit. And precisely, we aspired to display to students that learning some effective goal-setting strategies would be critical for their academic success, in a variety of skills, in and outside of the classroom.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE SPEAKING SKILL: ORAL PERFORMANCE

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4.1. Introduction

There is no question that speaking is a skill most people will draw on their lives. After all, be it at school, at work, or in a volunteer group. Getting an early start can turn an oft-dreaded prospect into a positive experience. Also, the spoken language was the first form of communication between human beings. That is why speaking is considered the best of the communication channels. At the university level, the potentiality to speak the English language, as a foreign language, is of great significance when it comes to language efficiency. In a way, students’ capability to reason and express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions is reflected in their oral performance. Hence, speaking is an excellent way to express oneself and therefore it is a very important element in teaching students about the value of communication.

4.2. Understanding speaking: (characteristics of the speaking skill)

Broadly, speaking is the most difficult language skill to assess reliably, for the reason that, an individual’s speaking capacity is usually judged during a face-to-face interaction, in a real time, between an interlocutor and a candidate. Furthermore, speaking is often considered as a neglected skill in foreign language education and accepted as the most complex and difficult skill to acquire (Ur, 1996). Speaking is complex and difficult to master in that it contains linguistic and non-linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, intonation, articulation, formal and informal expressions, gestures and so on (we will discuss all these elements in depth further down). Considering its features and difficulty to master, motivation as a key factor in language success is helpful to clearly realize teaching and learning speaking in EFL settings.

Significantly, knowing a language is usually perceived as speaking that language in daily life effectively. For Ur (1996: 120) “people who know the language are referred to as ‘speakers’ of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing and
many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak”. Moreover, speaking a foreign language is regarded as the most challenging of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), in that it is a productive skill that involves a complex process of constructing meaning (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). It is also the most complex skill because of the simultaneous monitoring and planning of utterances. This means, the process requires from speakers to make decisions about why, how and when to communicate, depending on the cultural and social context in which the speaking act occurs’ (Burns and Seidlhofer, 2002).

It needs to be noted that speaking is being capable of speech, expressing or exchanging thoughts through language. Accordingly, Ur (1996: 120) elucidates that “of the four skills speaking seems intuitively the most important”. Davies and Pearse (2000) stress the importance of communication, by saying that real success in English teaching and learning is when students can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom. To be more precise, “speaking is a productive aural/oral skill and it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning”(Nunan, 2003: 48, cited in Mart, 2012). On a related context, Alia (2007: 1, cited in Salem et.al, 2014: 1) views that “speaking is a complicated mental process and a productive skill”. Also, Brown (2001: 1, cited in Salem et.al, ibid: 1) highlights that speaking is not a single skill, it is rather an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Additionally, Harmer (2001: 15) notes down that from the communicative point of view speaking has many different aspects including two major categories, accuracy and fluency. In this sense, developing the speaking skill involves the correct use of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation practices through controlled and guided activities, i.e. accuracy, and the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously, i.e. fluency.
We will now look more closely to the exact meaning of ‘fluency’ since it is considered a very significant category. It needs to be noted that, definitions of fluency often include references to flow or smoothness, rate of speech, lack of unnecessary pausing, absence of distressing hesitation, length of utterances, and connectedness (Koponen, 1995, cited in Ahmed and Almin, 2014). In this sense, we can say that in order to judge how fluent the speaker we need to refer to a range of senses. One of the narrowest dimensions include few features, such as speech-pause relationships, frequency, and speech production rate, i.e. when speakers become more fluent their speech rate increases and the speech flow contains fewer pauses and hesitations. On a related context, Luoma (2004) draws attention to the point that fluent speakers also pause at semantically sensible places, which listeners perceive as the speakers’ planning of the content of what they are saying rather than groping for words. More fluent speakers tend also to speak more and their phrases are longer. In addition to time-bound speed and pausing phenomena, fluency is related to the way speakers use words, and in particular “small words”, as for instance words like “really”, “I mean” and “oh” (Hasselgren, 1998 cited in Ahmed and Alamin, 2014). Significantly, she suggests that small words are important; simply because they aid speakers produce relevant turns and construe the relevance of other speakers’ contributions.

It is worth mentioning that the concepts of ‘accuracy’ and ‘fluency’ are connected through the notion of ‘automaticity’. In a way, if speech production is going to be fluent, the process of planning what is going to be said, the essential grammar and vocabulary to be retrieved, and speech delivery, need to be’ automatic’. To be more precise, it is when the speech production becomes more noticeably automatic that we describe a speaker as being ‘fluent’ (Fulcher, 2003).
To recapitulate, we can say that in the accuracy application learners need to be capable to utilize and enunciate words and structures correctly in order to be well understood. Accuracy usage of grammar, vocabulary and the articulation of sounds, therefore, aid in conveying clearly the intended meanings. Concerning fluency, it plays a major part in effective oral performance (production). Fluency, hence, aids in ensuring that listeners keep paying attention and listening to get the desired message without getting distracted and cutoff, by the repeated unnecessary pausing, excessive hesitation, and the slow speech delivery that could occur.

### 4.3. Elements of Speaking

For any speech production to be successful, it is essential for students to utilize certain elements which would help them deliver effective oral performances. In this respect, Harmer (2001: 269) provides some elements among the ones necessary for spoken production:

- **Connected speech**: outstanding learners of English need to be able not only to produce, the individual phonemes of English, as for instance, in saying: ‘I would have gone’, but also to use fluent ‘connected speech’ as in ‘I would have gone’. In that, in connected speech sounds are modified, omitted, added or weakened (weak sounds or week forms). For this reason, instructors have to prepare some classroom activities, which are designed for the sake of bolstering up students connected speech.

- **Expressive devices**: native speakers of English change the pitch and stress of particular parts of utterances, vary volume and speed, and show or express by other physical and non-verbal means how they are feeling or what they intend to say.

- **Lexis and grammar**: spontaneous speeches marked by the use of a number of common lexical phrases, especially in the performance of certain language functions. In
a way, applying a set of phrases for varied functions can aid learners produce different stages of an interaction.

- **Negotiation and language**: Effective speaking benefits from the negotiatory language we utilize to seek clarification and to display the structure of what we are saying.

With respect to the useful elements of successful oral productions, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (cited in Leo, 2001: 01) identifies also five elements in his Rhetoric (fourth century B.C.):

- The speaker,
- The speech (message),
- The audience,
- The occasion, and
- The effect.

Leo (2001) explains that by constructing this list, Aristotle is advising speakers to construct speeches for different audiences on different occasions for different effects. Now we have the picture, let us find a good frame for it. This can best be illustrated by the following example of transplanting the five elements of communication to the environmental health profession. One can posit ‘a speaker’ John Doe (a sanitarian), ‘a speech’ (“the effects of latex gloves on human health”), ‘an audience’ (environmental health professionals), ‘an occasion’ (annual educational conference), and ‘an effect’ (means of transferring the message).

### 4.4. Communicating in speech

Taken broadly, public speaking is not an inborn “gift”, it is merely one kind of communication. Accordingly, Bryant and Wallace (1947: 15) define it as “a practical discourse that aims, through speech sounds and gesture, to add to the information of others or to influence their attitudes and their action”. In other to grasp the significance
of this definition we can say that it is (1) to know what makes a situation communicative, and (2) to see clearly the implications of the definition itself.

4.4.1. The communicative situation

Basically, when one person wants another person to see and construe what she has seen and understood, when she wants another to feel and believe and act as she has felt and thought and acted, there exists, then, a communicative situation. According to Bryant and Wallace (1947: 15) any communicative situation consists of four elements:

1. “The audience those who bring about communication and who in turn are the objects of communication”.

2. “The speaker, the person who tries to affect others”.

3. “The media that make possible the stimulation of others”.

4. “The means, methods, and techniques by which a speaker secures the response of others”.

4.4.1.1. The listener as a starting point

Accordingly, Bryant and Wallace (1947) stress that of the four elements, the most fundamental is the audience. For the reason that, it is the listener who furnishes the occasion for communication. Except, for instance, to relieve one’s feelings, maybe, there is not much point in painting for one’s own delight; composing music for one’s own ears, producing a motion picture or a play for one’s sole self, or writing and talking merely to exercise one’s own linguistic capacities. It is safe to say “no audience, no communication”. In the final analysis, one can say that the listener furnishes the necessary stimulus for any act of communication.

4.4.1.2. The interdependence of the speaker and audience

But although it is the audience who sets up and creates the communicative situation, once again Bryant et.al, (1947) illustrates that it is obvious also that no
communication takes place without someone who responds to the audience. The word ‘audience’, in fact, implies at least two people, and hence the simplest communication as well as the simplest social situation must consist of at least two individuals. Indeed, the simplest communicative situation is what we experience every day: conversation with another. Moreover, Bryant and Wallace (ibid: 16) add that recognition of the two-person character of communication brings us to these facts:

A. The audience is not only the necessary stimulus in any act of communication, it is also capable of response.

B. The speaker not only responds to the audience as stimulus; she also becomes the effective stimulus to which the audience responds. Hence, all communication may be roughly diagrammed, thus:

![Diagram of communication with audience and speaker]

From our point of view, there is, then, in any communicative situation a constant inter-stimulation between audience and speaker, and between speaker and audience. This inter-stimulation a person will appreciate as she gains experience as a speaker, strives to get her hearers to respond and their responses will in turn stimulate her to greater efforts.

4.4.1.3. The speaker as governor of the audience’s response

Once again, Bryant and Wallace (1947) discuss that in every day conversations and discussions in which the speaker and the audience are frequently changing ‘roles’,
the speaker is hardly ever aware of herself as a speaker, she does not realize that she is making a speech. Similarly, the listener does not regard herself as an audience. Now it is not until the communicative situation acquires ‘purpose’ that both parties become more or less aware that they are playing different ‘roles’. The listener then realizes that she has become one pole of a current of ideas; the speaker knows that she has become the other pole.

To be precise, when communication acquires purpose, it is no longer a process in which one’s spontaneous and untrained impulses may have free expression. The process, although initiated by the hearer, is one in which the speaker seeks to govern and control the response of the listener. The speaker creates and discovers, selects and presents stimuli which she hopes will secure the desired response. The response that a speaker desires from her hearers becomes the purpose of her speech. Some language student, for instance believe that ‘purpose’ is essential in any act of true communication and that communication and expression are not mutually exclusive words.

4.4.1.3. The media of communication

Up to this point, Bryant and Wallace (1947: 17) significantly, explain that if someone wishes to communicate to another, what media can she utilize to stir up in others the ideas, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that she herself experiences. First, there are those ‘media’ that distinguish the communicative arts from each other, a communicator may choose paint, and thereby become a painter, she may elect day, stone, or metal, and become a sculptor, she may decide upon musical sounds, and become a musician; she may choose visible words, and become a writer of prose or of poetry; she may choose audible words, and become a speaker; or, finally, she may combine various media, and make communication possible: light waves and sound waves. A word, whether written or spoken, travels to others by physical means, the
printed word finding its mark by light waves that hit another’s eye, the spoken word traveling by sound waves that strike another’s ear. To face this elementary fact may help you realize that words are not “transferred from a communicator to her audience, they are transmitted”.

4.4.1.4. Means and methods of communication

At last, Bryant and Wallace (1947) view that the audience and the speaker, the interaction of the two, and the medium that makes interaction possible, i.e. these give birth to communicative situation. But communication does not take place unless the speaker succeeds in stirring up meanings in the mind of the listener. She intends, too to stir up meanings that are approximately the same as those she has in mind. Thereafter, they precise more the point by asking this question: by what means are meanings evoked? Then, they explain and respond by saying that meaning comes about because words and speech are something more than mere physical events. In that, they are an elaborate system of ‘symbols’ and signs’, and it is the symbol (sign aspect of words) that is our primary means of language communication. Considering, for instance, the word ‘apple’. Physically, it consists of a vowel and two consonant sounds. Meaningfully, through long usage it has become associated with a particular kind of fruit, and it is in this customary and well-respected association that meaning resides. Hence, when we write, ‘apple’ or say apple to someone, the chances are that the word stimulates in her mind the usual association. Accordingly, by means of a language ‘symbol’ that has a common association for both of us, the communication of ideas is accomplished.

To sum up, speakers and writers seek to select and utilize language symbols in such a way as to stir up in their audiences the meanings and associations they desire and
to prevent associations they do not desire. Hence, they employ well-established methods and procedures that aim at both accuracy and speed of communication.

**Implications of the definition**

Now that we presented the elements of any communicative situation doubtless we need to mention some of the implications of the definition of public speaking. According to Bryant and Wallace (1947: 19) first, because public speaking is but one form of communication, it is “purposeful”. Hence, “in learning to become an acceptable speaker, the novice must do deliberately what the skilled speaker does habitually”, precisely, in the light of her hearer’s information and interests, she must select a definite purpose and phrase it clearly. In that, once a speaker’s purpose is determined, she has to select appropriate ideas and methods of presentation that will fulfill her purpose and obtain from the audience the answer she wishes to have. In other words, the process of building and delivering a speech is ‘systematic’, i.e. everything a speaker does is governed by her purpose.

In the second place, public speaking is “practical” according to Bryant and Wallace (1947: 19). They explain the point by providing the example of the fine arts, like painting and music, and that they aim at giving what is called ‘aesthetic pleasure’, and the response of the audience may end with the experience of the moment. Then, they state that speaking, however, aims directly at influencing men’s thought and conduct in their everyday business, professional, political, and social relationships. Public speaking is, therefore, a tool or an instrument in this process, not a performance or an exhibition. The response of the audience, moreover, is not pleasure at hearing a good speech (or displeasure at hearing a bad one!); the response consists in what the audience thinks and does in the minutes, hours, and days after the speech is over. Simply because, a speech leaves its mark on thought and behavior even if as a speech it
may be lost in memory. At times, the response is immediate and can be noticed, as when, for example, someone buys insurance after the salesman has concluded his explanations and arguments. Although, more often it is remote and somewhat intangible, as when we find one day that we have a new attitude towards something and are unaware that past information and argument, forgotten speeches, articles, and discussions about that thing have brought about the change. In brief, one can say that public speaking if it be good is a useful art, and the proper response to a speech is not directed at the speech but is in line with the purpose that the speaker aimed at.

The language of public speaking, in the third place, according to Bryant and Wallace (1947: 20), is “speech and action”. This significant fact needs close attention and respect, for it emphasizes the difference between the printed word and the spoken word. Eventually, both the word as read and the word as heard are alike or similar, in that both convey meaning because they are ‘symbols’. But they are unlike, fundamentally, in that speech sounds have inflections and intonations that the paper word either does not possess at all or suggests weakly and indirectly to the silent reader. Now considering the following combination of symbols provided by Bryant and Wallace (ibid: 20): “He is a gentlemen”.

They discuss and tell that one reads this, doubtless she may take it literally; the symbols have their ordinary, conventional meaning. But the same words when spoken may take on many different meanings. They, then, propose to speak them with the following contexts in mind and listen to the inflections:
Thereafter, they briefly explain in each case the meaning does not reside in the ordinary meaning of the words. It, rather, resides in the context that is revealed by changes of pitch, intensity, rate, and quality of sound (discussed in some length further down). Hence, patterns of sound become symbols. It is for this reason that the speaker who would make the most efficient use of her medium of communication will seek to make her voice as flexible and as responsive to meanings as possible. Furthermore, they add that although action is part of the language of the public speaker and although its visual signs are just as meaningful as words, action is usually not as important in oral discourse as in acting. Nevertheless, action and movement are effective means of communication that speakers, even in everyday converses, constantly employ. The chief function of action, thus, is to round out and to reinforce the message of words, thus aiding to make the meaning of the instant unmistakable.

Accordingly, Bryant and Wallace (1947: 21) note that in public speaking, finally, the relationship between the speaker and her listeners, as in all communication, is “bi-polar”. They emphasize that an audience is a true ‘group’ that has been brought together through a common desire to hear a particular speaker on a particular subject. Specifically, the speaker is essentially a member of the group because of her interest in the subject. Speaker and audience, then, belong to the same group. This group, moreover, has at least two distinct “foci” or “poles”, the speaker being one, the audience
the other. As a result, speaker and audience become differentiated and each is in some degree aware of the other. In addition to that, they stress that this same bi-polar phenomenon within a group is, of course, evident in every communicative situation, even in spontaneous conversations yet in private colloquy we seem as a rule to be less aware of the two poles than we are in the public speaking situation. Indeed, if there be an essential distinction between ordinary conversation and public speaking, it may well lie in the ‘degree’ of awareness that speaker and audience normally have of each other as such.

Furthermore, various conditions appear to emphasize the “bi-polar” aspect of public speaking. The speaker usually occupies a dominant position, by standing up merely, by facing his audience, or by being on a platform. In most conversations, on the other hand, the talker is not thus emphasized. The public speaker, moreover, does all of the talking, whereas in every day talk the listener and the speaker frequently change roles; a speaker one minute is listener the next. The public speaker, also, is usually better informed than the audience; since she has taken her task seriously she has prepared specifically for the occasion. For casual conversations for instance, no one makes special preparation (Bryant and Wallace, 1947). In a way, we can say that, all aspects of the public speaking situation operate to make the occasion more formal than that in private conversation. Basically, both speaker and audience belong to a single group. From our point of view, then, the effectiveness of communication depends to a large degree on whether the speaker and audience feel that they have a common ‘purpose’ in extending information or in strengthening or modifying attitudes, opinions or thoughts and ideas. When both ‘poles’ of a group share such a feeling, public speaking is communicatively at its best.
4.4.2. Speech came first

In this context, Turk (1985: 9) specifies that “it came long before written language, and writing is a transcript of speech, not vice versa”. Yet, Turk (ibid) elucidates that this more primitive form of communication still provides the most direct access to other minds. Then, he briefly explains that the reason why people prefer to listen to a spoken explanation is that it seems to need less effort to comprehend, than the more formal medium of writing. Yet some speakers attempt to make speech as close to writing as possible, and destroy its freshness and immediacy. Moreover, Turk (ibid: 9) notes down that:

Speaking is the direct route from one mind to another, and is the way we usually choose when we want to ask a question, or give an explanation. Research shows that ideas and information are more easily understood and processed through speech than through writing.

In addition to that, Turk (1985) highlights the significance of speech by saying that unless they are pretending to be formal, people usually speak in a style which is more direct, and easier to understand than the style in which they write; speech makes the personal interaction more immediate. One of the reasons is that when speaking interest and enthusiasm in the listeners are generates by non-verbal as well as by verbal, signals. Furthermore, the variety and impact of the message are heightened by the presence of another person. Listeners also feel more secure when they can see the person who is giving them new information. Their judgment of the validity of the message, the competence, and the depth of knowledge of the speaker is easier if non-verbal clues, as well as verbal clues, are available. In the main, there are many reasons why speaking is the best of the communication channels. It is not always utilized, largely because people are afraid of their inexperience and inability to speak well. Yet
practice and study can provide the skill needed to utilize this most direct path into the minds of others. It is, then, worth the effort to become an effective speaker.

4.4.3. Communication

As human beings, we all use language to communicate. We use it copiously and without second thought every day of our lives. In fact, our capacity and confidence in manipulating language is a central part of the personality we present to those around us. We communicate with others to share opinions, ideas, feelings and emotions, learn about the world, teach, participate in crucial decisions at school and in our community, and make friends and some relationships. Broadly speaking, good communication skills aid us succeed either in school, university or at work, improve our relationships with family and friends, and deal with challenges. Speaking skills aid us meet new challenges. In this context, Shuster and Meany (2014) point out that we communicate to share our viewpoints and convey our ideas. Thereafter, they stress that we do this not only with our voice (verbal communication) but also through the use of our body (nonverbal communication). They, then, highlight that, to be effective communicators, speakers need to be expert at both, utilizing vocal delivery, gestures, and stance to present compelling information that keep listeners engaged. In other words, outstanding speakers use effectively verbal and non-verbal communication when they are performing.

4.4.3.1. Key verbal communication skills

According to Shuster and Meany (2014) verbal communication refers to a speaker’s ‘vocal delivery’, how she presents her speech, will impact how her audience hears her message. To be more precise, a speaker cannot persuade other persons of her viewpoint if she cannot be heard or if she does not speak confidently. In that, an
effective speaker wants her message to be heard and her audience to accept her perspective or opinion.

To communicate clearly, a speaker needs to speak clearly and precisely, at the right pace, and at the right volume. Her body language and gestures also should be appropriate and helpful not distracting. The speaker should enunciate words clearly so they are easy to construe. Here are the key elements for communicating clearly during a presentation (Fisher Chan, 1999: 85):

- Speak loudly enough to be heard.
- Speak slowly enough so people can follow what you say but not slowly that they fall asleep.
- Use a conversational tone.
- Use good diction-pronounce the words clearly and distinctly.
- Avoid distracting gestures, purposeless movements, and inappropriate facial expressions.

In the main, Shuster and Meany (2014) highlight that effectively utilizing volume, pace, emphasis, articulation, organization and word choice allow the speaker to stress the key elements of an effective public speaking and establish a convincing narrative that the audience can follow using the following verbal communication techniques will make it easier for an audience to pay attention to her speech and appreciate her research, knowledge, and argumentation, hence enhancing her credibility.

As an instance, we can give the example of actors who cannot be heard, speak too rapidly, or speak in a monotone cannot communicate a playwright’s meaning effectively to an audience. That is why actors spend years learning to utilize their voices effectively. Unless the performer speaks professionally to large groups, she probably does not need, or have time for, vocal training. But she needs to be aware of how well
her voice comes, whether she speaks too quickly or too slowly, and whether her voice is interesting or flat.

4.4.3.1.1. Volume

Accordingly, Shuster and Meany (2014) emphasize that a speaker should deliver a speech at the appropriate volume. It should not be too soft, i.e. the audience has to be able to hear it without straining. It should not be too loud, in that no one enjoys having a speaker yell an opinion at them! To be effective, a speaker has to deliver her speech in a slightly louder voice than she uses in daily normal conversation. Increased volume expresses the speaker’s confidence in her ideas; she appears ready to shout out her ideas to get the audience to follow her lead. She trusts herself to be a vocal advocate of an issue demonstrating that listeners should trust her as well. Like for example the speaking styles used in TV commercials, by politicians and preachers, or on radio and TV talk shows. The speakers utilize volume to project confidence and win the agreement of their audience.

Again, Shuster and Meany (2014) explain that the speaker has to adapt her volume to the room and her message. That is to say, speaking more loudly in a large room than in a small one and in a more crowded room than in one with only a few people. The performer may raise and lower the volume of her delivery to emphasize a significant point or display emotion. She might speak more loudly when she wants to communicate anger or excitement. She might lower her voice to express grief, guilt, or concern. Precisely, if a speaker has been speaking in a conversational tone, raising her voice, then, will get the audience’s attention. And lowering her voice will force listeners to hear more closely. Also, the reason behind altering the volume during a speech is for the sake of variety; in that listeners get bored when hearing a speech delivered at the same volume.
To practice using volume, they propose, for instance, delivering a short section, a segment, of a speech in various sized rooms and have a friend listen from the back. Is the speech loud enough for a classroom or larger area? Is it too loud for a small space? To be more precise, to keep the voice level from dropping during a presentation, a speaker may think about “sending” her words to the persons in the back row. If she is not sure whether listeners can hear her, she can ask, “can everyone hear me?” or “Please let me know if you have trouble hearing”.

4.4.3.1.2. Rate

According to Shuster and Meany (2005: 17) “the rate of delivery is the speed or pace of a speech”. Generally, effective speakers alter their pace, quickening and slowing it to ensure that listeners can comprehend and record key information (Shuster and Meany: 2014). In this respect, Turk (1985) points out that the dimension along which the voice can be varied is ‘speed’. He, then, explains that the pace of the speaking voice, along the whole range from slow and deliberate emphasis to rapid enthusiasm, can be consciously varied. For instance, highly charged points can be made word by word; amusing anecdotes can rush on to their punch-line. It is usually easy to see where slowing down would be appropriate; most speakers talk too fast. The best way, according to Turk (ibid) to change the pace of the presentation is to mark places in her notes where there is a need for special emphasis, or deliberate clarity. When she gets to these points, she forces herself to slow down. And when she relaxes the restriction her voice will rapidly regain its normal speed. Of course, if she normally speaks slowly, she will need to deliberately hurry up from time to time. To be more precise, conscious use of varied pace adds to the attractiveness of the speaking voice; monotonous regularity of speed increases the risks of boredom. Because it is, incidently, very rare for listeners to complain that a talk is going too slowly. Furthermore, not merely is it tedious if the pace
never changes, it also leads to over rapid unloading of information. Varying the pace can reduce the strain on the audience, as well as introducing a refreshing variety.

For most presentations, the presenter has to speak at the rate of or slightly slower than the rate of ordinary conversation, and utilize an ordinary conversational tone. She has to pause often and leave periods of silence after delivering important points; those pauses let the audience take a breath and think about what is being said, and they aid her stay focused. And avoiding speaking in monotone, a flat voice that is devoid of emphasis and emotion (Fisher Chan, 1999). Globally, speakers err on the side of speaking too quickly. For the reason that speakers often speed up their speech when they are nervous, i.e. as if to get it over with or when they think they are running out of time. Presenters also feel so uncomfortable with silence so they tend to fill every empty moment with talk. It is significant, thus, for a speaker not to speak so slowly that she put her audience to sleep. But if she speaks too quickly running words and sentences together with few pauses, her audience will find it hard to follow her points. Accordingly, Fisher Chan (ibid: 86) specifies that as a speaker you have to pay special attention to your rate of speech if you:

- Are talking about difficulty to understand or highly technical concepts.
- Have a regional or foreign accent.
- Are speaking to large group.
- Are making your presentation to non-native English speakers.

Similarly, Shuster and Meany (2005) stress that some people speak too rapidly because they are nervous and want to finish their speech very quickly. Others speak too fast because their anxiety changes the way their body functions. For instance, a rapid heart rate and faster breathing may speed the pace of all actions, including speaking. On the other hand, some speakers deliver their messages too slowly. In the main, many
effective speakers communicate their messages in a deliberate, planned, and careful way. That is, if a speaker presents information that is novel to the audience or difficult to construe, she would speak slowly so that they can pay careful attention. In addition, if she wants to display the significance of an idea or event, she might speak slowly to emphasize a point. But, do not deliver a speech too slowly for the audience and the material involved.

Once again, Shuster and Meany (2005) emphasize that a speaker’s rate of delivery should be slightly faster than her normal conversational rate. It should sound natural and keep their interest and should be fast enough that the audience will remain engaged and will not attempt to fill in words, start day dreaming or get distracted. And, thus, they will comprehend the noteworthiness of the message and not lose track or key opinions or facts. Essentially, the speaker has to vary her pace in order to create listener interest and highlight key sections or arguments of her presentation. For example, if a speaker is presenting new technical, or challenging material, she should speak slowly so that the listeners are able to readily follow her line of reasoning. She also might deliver a section slowly to emphasize a key point. In other words, we can say that, a speaker can alter her rate of delivery by pausing. In that, speakers naturally pause at the conclusion of a sentence, in speech transitions, i.e. moving from one major part of a speech to another, or from one major argument to another, and at other points that emphasize key ideas.

Basically, some pausing is effective. As an instance, a brief pause after a rhetorical question, a question that a person both asks and answers, encourages the audience to think about the question before the speaker begins the answer. A pause just before key information allows listeners to concentrate on the importance of the message. For example, a speaker may pause after a dramatic or starting claim, giving the audience time to absorb the novel information. If her opinions differ from what is
expected, the audience will need time to think about her innovate ideas (Shuster and Meany, 2005). They add that repetition is also an affective form of pausing that calls attention to a noteworthy fact or opinion. That is, repeating the parts of a speech reminds the audience that they should remember the point. In other words, simple repetition and redundancy, i.e. utilizing synonyms and similar expression to reinforce an idea, are forms of speech pause. Instead of an actual break in the speech, repetition and redundancy allows the speaker to continue talking while creating a pause. The listeners do not have to listen to construe novel material. They have time to reflect on and record her argument.

In practice, some pauses can change the pace of a speech and hurt a speaker’s credibility. These are known as “vocalized pauses”; fillers such as “you know” or “umm” that speakers utilize when they do not know what to say next (Shuster and Meany, 2005). They, then, propose that speakers have to avoid these fillers. Simply pausing is much better than utilizing fillers. By slowing the delivery rate a speaker will often eliminate a substantial number of vocalized pauses. As a matter of fact, the speech is not as effective as without pauses.

**4.4.3.1.3. Emphasis**

Shuster and Meany (2005) highlight that when speaking a presenter should not emphasize all words equally. In that, a good speaker focuses the hearer’s attention on the specific words that have drama, substance, power, or imagery. She utilizes the pitch or tone of her voice to stress these key words. In this sense, McCarthy and Hatcher (1996: 139) note that, “pitch is one of the most important ingredients in a speaker’s vocal kitbag”. That is to say, she changes pitch by altering the tension in the vocal cords just as someone does when she tune a violin. They explain that a speaker can move pitch up or down. The stressed syllables of her speech carry the noticeable pitches. The
pitch on a particular syllable then is labeled “an inflection”, upward or downward inflections. Thus, a speaker utilizes the subtle technique of pitch changes to add emphasis and variety. By allowing her pitch to range, and also utilize the device of upward or downward inflections to save her listeners from boring presentations. Using pitch also as a device to focus on the significant meaning of what she is communicating to her audience.

Furthermore, Shuster and Meany (2005) stress that the vocal tone or pitch matches the quality of the voice to the feeling of the speaker. For example, imagining two students examining their grades on a math test. One student tries hard but rarely gets a grade higher than a “c”. The other is the top math student in the school; she always gets an “A”. On this particular test, however, both students receive a “B”. These students might utilize the same words in discussing their grades, but with a remarkably different pitch. The first student would likely deliver the sentence “I got a ‘B’ on the math test” with some surprise and happiness in her voice. She would sound excited and hopeful. The second student’s pitch would indicate that she was not happy and suggest disappointment or worry. Both students utilized the same words, but they did not mean the same thing. Hence, the different tones mark the differences in students’ feelings.

Below are three statements provided by Shuster and Meany (2005: 19). They propose to imagine how one can give each statement more than one meaning through emphasis:

- I went to the principal’s office.
- I think that I will be able to do it.
- This is the last time we will speak about this.

They then, explain that speaking with the same tone (pitch) quality for each syllable might be the way to present a speech in a robot voice, but it is not effective in persuading an audience. Therefore, good speakers alter their tone to emphasize various
feelings attitudes, and meanings. In some cases, a speaker emphasizes particular words not merely to express a feeling but to remind an audience of the essential parts of an idea. If she delivered the following sentence, she might stress the following words: The United States federal government should ensure that each person living in the country can afford quality health care. In this case, she wants her listeners to comprehend these points:

- The government is responsible for providing social services.
- Some social services should be universal, all people should have them.
- All people need health care.

Eventually, “a speaker’s use of emphasis can bring emotion and attention to the important parts of an oral presentation” (Shuster and Meany, 2005: 20). In simpler words, speakers have to emphasize particular words to remind the audience of essential key ideas or facts. Following all the details of a speech with equal attention is challenging for the audience, thus effective speakers highlight the segments that must be remembered. They utilize dramatic language, powerful imagery, and altered tone of voice to make some parts of their speech stand out from others.

4.4.3.1.4. Articulation

Shuster and Meany (2005) specify that listeners pay close attention to what a speaker is saying and how she says it when speaking in public. Precisely, if she mispronounces a word, the audience probably will notice it. In this case, they might suspect that she does not know the subject, quite well or has not practiced her speech adequately. Mispronunciation, therefore, can hurt a speaker’s credibility.

The word ‘pronunciation’, according to Bryant and Wallace (1947: 339) has two meanings. Taken broadly, it refers to “the action of the speech agents in producing speech sounds. It refers to the physical adjustments which modify the breath and sound
stream into the sounds of speech”. In this broad sense, enunciation includes ‘articulation’, a term referring to “the positions of the tongue, teeth, lips, and soft palate in forming speech, especially consonant sounds, and to the distinctness and precision of utterance.” In its narrower sense, “pronunciation refers to the correctness of speech, i.e. whether the stress and accent of words in acceptable, e.g. re‘search or research’, whether sounds have been improperly omitted, e.g. ‘gemmen’ for ‘gentlemen’, or substituted e.g. ‘baff’ for ‘bath’, or improperly added e.g. ‘athaletic’ for ‘athletic’. And according to Shuster and Meany (2005: 21) articulation refers to “the accurate pronunciation of words. An effective public speaker articulates a speech, saying each word the way a dictionary tells you to pronounce it”. By focusing on articulation, a speaker will pronounce words correctly and establish trust with the audience. Accordingly, Shuster and Meany (ibid: 20) note down that the English language is difficult, i.e. spelling is not always a reliable guide to pronunciation:

- Some letters have more than one pronunciation. Compare the pronunciation: of “gh” in the words “ghost”, “rough”, “through”, and “night”.
- Some letters are not pronounced. Examine the “h” in “hour”, the “k” in “knife”, and the “l” in “talk”.
- Different letters are used to produce the same sound. Consider the “c” and the “s” in “censor” or “cereals”.

Hence, spelling is tricky and can confuse pronunciation. So, the speaker must develop her vocabulary and practice her speeches to deal with the challenges of proper pronunciation.

In addition, Shuster and Meany (2005) elucidate that the most common pronunciation errors occur when speakers utilize unfamiliar words. They, then, suggest that if a speaker is delivering a speech on a novel subject, she has to learn the correct
pronunciation of new words before using them. Simply because there is no excuse for mispronunciation! The easiest way to learn correct pronunciation, then, is to use a dictionary. Repeating the word until she can say it easily. And if she cannot find the correct pronunciation, substitute by another word. Hence, using pronunciation exercises to reduce common errors and maintain her credibility. Moreover, they mention that a speaker may also mispronounce words because the people around her pronounce them incorrectly, and she does not know that their enunciation is wrong. A speaker can ask her teachers or experienced speakers to listen to her practice speeches for pronunciation errors.

On some occasions, additionally, careless pronunciation leads to an error. This problem is as common as not knowing the correct pronunciation. Speakers, thus, have to practice pronouncing sounds and words vividly to get rid of errors (Shuster and Meany, 2005). Often, people become careless in casual or conversational speech, forgetting to open their mouths and move their lips and tongues as they should. Because this slurred or sloppy speech reduces the effectiveness of a presentation and makes it very difficult to comprehend. Furthermore, Shuster and Meany (ibid: 22) explain that one type of pronunciation error stems from dropping the ends of words. For example, “stopped” becomes “stop” or “escaping” becomes “escape”. At other times, casual speakers substitute softer sounds for sharper ones because a softer sound requires less mouth muscle movement. In these cases, a word like “later” sounds more like “ladder”, because it takes less energy to make a “d” sound than it does a “t” sound. To speak well, from our point of view, a speaker must open her mouth, avoid mumbling, and move her tongue and her lips fully. This, then, requires practice.

In the main, the techniques to improve enunciation require a speaker to articulate unusual or difficult words and phrases. They force her to concentrate on each sound,
aiding her to eliminate casual speaking errors. For instance, practicing difficult individual sounds, tongue twisters, and unfamiliar quotations or speeches to develop her pronunciation. She also can utilize these exercises to practice volume, rate of delivery, emphasis, and other speaking skills (Shuster and Meany, 2005). In addition to that, they highlight that using proper enunciation does not mean that a speaker must speak without an accent. After all, everyone has an accent, even if it is from a particular region of a country. They exemplify that although native English speakers from Boston and Atlanta utilize the same language they have distinct regional accents. People from Atlanta can easily identify a visitor from Boston, based solely on the accent. To sum up, Shuster and Meany (ibid: 23) redefine enunciation by saying that: “pronunciation is a general guide to the correct way to say a word, and speakers can pronounce correctly even with their natural accents”.

4.4.3.1.5. Organization

In this context, Shuster and Meany (2005) recommend that in order to deliver a successful speech, the speaker must do far more that enunciate words properly, she must express her ideas vividly. The speech, thus, should be simple, direct, and clear. It should follow a simple structure and have a logical sequence of ideas to make the speech easy to follow. Thereafter, they explain that well-organized speakers often utilize a simple ‘narrative structure’ (they label it ‘the Narrative Arc of Speech’) which most people are familiar with and that has the order in which a story is told. That is to say, this structure has three parts: an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion.

• Introduction

Shuster and Meany (2005) report that an introduction must attract the attention of the listeners and draw them into the speech. Eventually, this can be done with a dramatic anecdote, for instance, a surprising fact, or humor. The introduction should
also establish the noteworthiness of the speech; ‘why should anyone listen?’ It should have both a qualitative and quantitative dimension, explaining why a speaker’s subject matters to the audience (qualitative dimension) and how the issues she will discuss affect a number of people (quantitative dimension). Additionally, an introduction should preview or highlight the major elements of a speech. For example, a speaker may introduce herself near the beginning of a speech, but she should present her attention getter and explain the significance of the issue before she does so. In a way, the speaker has to begin her speech with a brief introduction, letting the audience know: “Who? What? And why?” (Shuster and Meany, 2005: 25).

- **Who are you?**

  The performer has to identify herself to the audience. For instance, thinking of public speaking as meeting someone for the first time. That is, when we meet a person, we greet them by telling them our name; who we are. The same is true for public speaking. The introduction, therefore, is an opportunity for us to greet the audience.

- **What are you speaking about?**

  Audiences expect the speaker to tell them the topic and the theme of her speech (presentation). The introduction is regarded as preview of her speech. Specifically, it alerts the audience to what they should listen for and learn from her presentation.

- **Why should they listen to you?**

  Broadly speaking, the audience wants to know what novel information the speaker has to offer. The introduction should include an attention getter such as, some information or dramatic utilization of speaking skills that let the audience know why they should listen. For example, a speaker might open her speech with energy, intensity, and a sense of drama, or she might use humor to entertain the audience. Moreover,
clever ideas or surprising facts will convince them that the performer has information from which they can benefit.

**Main Body**

The body of a speech should contain two or three major arguments designed to convince the audience, in general, about the subject or the issue at hand (Shuster and Meany, 2005). In this sense, the speaker should not attempt to present all potential arguments, she will not have time to address each adequately. Instead she has to limit her presentation to the more significant ones and present these in a logical order. They, then, add that the speaker can organize her ideas chronologically, by cause and effect (how did that action lead to that result?) or by problem and solution (what is the ongoing problem? What can we do to solve it?). In effect, the logical sequencing of ideas makes a speech (oral performance) easy to follow. That is, each major point should be well-reasoned and supported with appropriate evidence. The evidence, then, might be in the form of expert testimony, statistical information, contemporary and historical examples, personal experience, or other facts that support reasoning. Overall, the main body of a speech is the heart of any presentation.

**Conclusion**

To be effective and successful, a good speech must have “a compelling and powerful conclusion”. (Shuster and Meany, 2005: 26). To be precise, it should remind the audience of the main points and include a short sentence that summarizes the purpose of the presentation. For instance, a conclusion, made in ten to fifteen seconds, should echo in the room, or inside the hearers’ minds, after a speaker has taken her seat.

**4.4.3.1.6. Word choice**

In this respect, Shuster and Meany (2005: 26) emphasize that “an effective public speaker carefully selects the appropriate words to convey her message most accurately
and persuasively”. That is, some words and phrases are more likely to persuade in that they create vivid and powerful images. They emphasize action, leadership, and forward thinking. They are, for instance routinely utilized in political and commercial advertising. In other words, if a speaker wants to persuade or make meaningful distinctions in what she says, she needs to utilize vivid, powerful images to describe her ideas, i.e. her words matter so much. Because listeners are affected by her choice of language, say, strong wording will always make a speaker’s arguments more credible. Generally, audiences would appreciate and remember a speaker’s message if it is strongly worded, i.e. effective words and phrases can strengthen her speech. Furthermore, Shuster and Meany (ibid) point out that good speakers get rid of words and phrases that create fear or concern, or are too simplistic (weak), imprecise (vague). Also, they avoid prejudice and stereotype in their language. Such us, racist and sexist speech, unnecessarily violent or hostile images, and the utilization of offensive language that result in destroying her credibility, as a speaker, and her audience would miss or ignore her effective points.

4.4.3.2. Nonverbal communication skills: (communicating without words)

We have been dealing up to this point largely with words, their organization, enunciation, and timing. But there is another system of signs which we utilize to communicate the so called ‘non-verbal’ signs. Essentially, these are all the hints, indications, and suggestions we communicate not by what we say, but by what we do. Many of these signals are very subtle: a half smile, a slight cough, or a sudden looking away are enough to tell hearers a great deal about what a speaker is thinking. In other words, a performer communicates a great deal of information through her body language; her posture, facial expressions, and physical movements.
In this respect, Turk (1985) distinguishes between the meaning that a speaker gives in words, and the meanings she gives off in non-verbal signals. When giving a verbal presentation, for instance, speakers communicate not solely with words, but also with a whole range of gestures, movements and expressions. To be more precise, it is these non-verbal messages, in addition to the verbal ones, which distinguish speaking from writing or telephoning. Eventually, the physical presence of their body and the signals which it gives off make them speak with their vocal organs, but they converse with their whole body. It is, as Robinson says, “as if the speaker is operating something akin to a symphony Orchestra” (Turk, ibid: 145)

In the same line of thought, Price (2012) puts forward that when a speaker presents, she sends two types of messages to her hearers: verbal and nonverbal. “While she maybe communicating verbally through the words she speaks, a more memorable message is conveyed nonverbally by her body language and voice tone”. Almost always, she will influence her audience more by how she says something (body language and voice tone) than by what she says (words alone).

In this context, Shuster and Meany (2014) highlight that nonverbal communication is a significant part of a persuasive delivery. Often speakers utilize nonverbal communication called “body language”, daily. Like for example, nods, smiles, shrugs, frowns, gestures, and other body movements send powerful signals from the speaker to the listeners. They, then, explain that nonverbal communication can refer to the position of a person’s facial expressions, eye contact, posture, use of gestures, body movement, and dress. As a matter of fact, nonverbal techniques can communicate a lot about a speaker and her message. A speaker can display her emotions, identify the differences and points of agreement she has with the audience or other speakers, and emphasizes the significant issues in her speech. Eventually, speakers must develop their
nonverbal communication skills to make their presentation consistent and effective. For instance, a speaker can hold the attention of the audience with eye contact and facial expressions that reveal emotions. She can, then, create a powerful presence through the utilization of movements and the appropriate body position. Also to effectively persuade, a performer must consider nonverbal communication as seriously as the verbal content of her message, in order to get rid of confusing or alienating her listeners.

In simple words, every aspect of behavior signals something. Ever since the noteworthiness of non-verbal signals became worthwhile, psychologists have been experimenting on their impact on the way hearers comprehend messages. All of this research confirms the significance of non-verbal elements of communication. As Turk (1985: 146) notes down the way how Michael Argyle measured the non-verbal signals and how they affected listeners’ attitudes:

Non-verbal cues had four three times the effect of verbal cues on shifts in rating… it appears that we normally use two channels of communication, verbal and non-verbal, which function simultaneously; conscious attention is focused on the verbal, while the ‘silent’ non verbal handles interpersonal matters, including feedback on what is being said… One advantage of interpersonal matters being dealt with non-verbally is that things can be kept vague and flexible about one another.

As a result of work such as this, Turk (1985: 147) points out that Michael Argyle developed a theory about non-verbal signal. Essentially, he suggests that “language evolved and is normally used for communicating information about events external to the speakers, while the non-verbal code is used by humans and by non-human primates, to establish and maintain personal relationships”. The conclusion we must make is that they are therefore especially important in speaking, just because speaking is a personal
relationship in which the attitudes of the speaker to her subject, and to her audience, are a major factors in effective communication of her material.

Now we are going to explore how a speaker can use her entire body as a powerful instrument of speech and how to make her body speak as eloquently as her words. In the realm of body language, the major elements of nonverbal communication for successful public speaking include: eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and poise.

4.4.3.2.1. Eye contact

According to Shuster and Meany (2014) eye contact is considered essential to an effective presentation. In that, it is the single most successful nonverbal communication technique a speaker has. “It reaches out to an audience and pulls them in, bridging the physical distance between the speaker and her audience”. Eye contact, then, can personalize a speech. That is, a speaker must not look at every person in a crowded room during her presentation, but she should look in each direction of the room. Doing so let listeners know that her message is for everyone, not just for those directly in front of her.

As a matter of fact, eye contact is valuable. Simply because individuals first learn communication through eye contact, i.e. when we were babies, our parents held us close when speaking to us. The members of an audience will expect a similar kind of communication, a personal touch, even if a speaker is not standing or sitting next to them. Eye contact, therefore, is crucial for the speaker’s credibility. It connects her to the audience and establishes trust.

At times, many public speakers do not utilize eye contact for they are anxious or embarrassed. Others rely too heavily on their notes and make the mistake of reading their speech. Some stop using eye contact when they talk about serious or painful topics. As Shuster and Meany (2014: 37) point out that it is very significant when a
speaker begins her introduction (the opening), to look directly at the audience. Because one of the major errors new speakers make is that they look down at their notes or away from the audience as they begin their speech. “This is like looking at the ground when shaking hands with someone for the first time. It shows a shyness or awkwardness. The audience needs to be welcomed to the speech; looking down disinvises them”.

Additionally, Turk (1985) highlights that when dealing with others, it is the eyes more than any other part of the face or body which the audience watches. Not just the duration of eye contact, but the speed and direction of eye movement all communicate. Thereafter, he stresses that the eyes are such an important component of non-verbal signaling between people, that when someone refuses to display their eyes, hiding their eyes, hiding their expression in downward stares, we think of them as uncommunicative. Eye contact is vital in normal conversations, for instance. Passing friendly eye contact seems to be an essential component of assured communication between individuals. Most of us are intuitively aware of this, and the normal habits of non-verbal signaling through eye expression and direction of gaze are well established. But our concern here is not with day to day social intercourse between people, it is with how the rules of eye contact should be interpreted when speaking to an audience. We must again utilize the evidence from psychological research to discover not merely what is normal, but also what others comprehend from eye contact. Speakers can then utilize this knowledge to be more skillful manipulators of the code when speaking.

Important work on eye contact and direction of gaze has been done by Michael Argyle and his colleague at Oxford (as cited in Turk, 1985: 152). He summarizes his research by stating clearly that “gaze is a non-verbal signal itself, but a rather special one, since it does two things at once. It is a signal for the person looked at, but it is a channel for the person doing the looking (…)”.
In a related context, Price (2012: 98) highlights that eye contact is the most important nonverbal tool a speaker has, it is the cement that bonds a speaker with her audience. As the Yiddish proverb asserts “eyes are the mirror of the soul”. Precisely, when a performer speaks, it is the caliber of her eye contact; more appropriately termed “eye communication”, that tells listeners how she feels about them, her message, and herself. That is, hearers look to her eyes first to see if she is sincere, enthusiastic, and confident. In simple words, eyes more than any other nonverbal cue, can make a speaker’s presentation seem personable, authentic, friendly, conversational, and connected. Conversely, there is no surer way, then, to break that bond than by failing to look into the eyes of her audience members. Eventually, a lack of eye contact implies a list of offenses: disinterest, detachment, insecurity, insincerity, shiftiness, or arrogance.

Moreover, Price (2012) reports that while presenting, a speaker’s eyes can also function as a control device. Simply by looking into the eyes of her listeners, she has an influence on their attentiveness and concentration. On the other hand, if she does not look at them they will tend not to look at her, and the effect of her message will suffer. That is, the speaker has to create rapport by enveloping everyone with her eyes. For it is the best way of knowing whether or not she is connecting with them.

Another benefit generated by an effective eye contact is that it creates a speaker’s own personal comfort. In that, eye contact to and from her audience is a tremendous source of strength and encouragement; it aids dissipate any nervousness or tension she may feel. In a way, when a presenter sees how interested her listeners are in what she has to say, she gets an encouraging boost of confidence and enthusiasm (Price, 2012). She, then, sheds light on the point that, the speaker, certainly, has to feel free to utilize notes during her presentation. It is fine, thus, to glance down at them occasionally, but she does not allow notes, slides, or visual aids to stand between her and audience. She is
the best visual aid, and her audience is there to see and hear her. And remembering that
the speaker has to keep her eyes on her listeners. That is, a skillful presenter’s attention
is always on the audience.

4.4.3.2.2. Facial expressions

For an effective facial expression, McCarthy and Hatcher (1996) express that
people read a great deal from a speaker’s facial expression. That is to say, if a speaker
has a characteristic facial expression; a frown or smile, her facial muscles begin to set
into those positions and that frown or smile can be read as a permanent expression.
They, then, suggest that a presenter has to make the effort to smile, and suffuse her face
with warmth and color when she walks before an audience. It is easy to allow her nerves
to deaden her expression; she has to take the time to look alive and vital. Nonverbal
research published as long ago as 1969 but still true today, revealed that relaxed
expressions are read as more persuasive than tense ones. So, it is recommended for a
speaker to relax her expression, smile, and breathe deeply before her expression. In this
respect, Price (2012: 102) summarizes and highlights the noteworthiness of facial
expression in the following Chinese proverb: “a man without a smiling face should not
open a shop”. To be more precise, when a presenter speaks, her face serves as a
billboard communicating to others her attitudes, feelings, and emotions (Price, ibid).
Which means, individuals recognize almost every emotion simply by observing a
person’s expressions; feelings as distinct as surprise, fear, happiness, confusion,
excitement, anger, interest, disbelief, nervousness, confidence, pleasure, sadness, and
apathy.

❖ Smile

Accordingly, Price (2012) emphasizes that people are drawn to people who have a
genuine smile. While frowns, scowls, and deadpan expressions all push people away.
The smile draws them in making a speaker attractive to her audience, simply because a genuine smile conveys interpersonal warmth, empathy and friendliness. It shows, therefore, that the presenter is interested in the audience and the topic; it expresses a glad-to-be-here attitude. Moreover, smiling is contagious. That is, if a speaker smiles easily, her audience is likely to as well. Once again, Price (2012: 103) states that smiling also has a side benefit. “It is a natural drug that sends endorphins and other positive chemicals through your body. It relaxes you and has a calming effect on the audience”. She, then, pushes speakers to try this technique. For example, when a presenter begins her presentation, she locks eyes with one person, i.e. smile, and say her first utterance. Like for instance, “good morning and thank you for joining us for today’s presentation”. Then, she can move to another person. Look her in the eye and smile. Then, completing another utterance while smiling.

4.4.3.2.3. Natural gestures: visual punctuation

For Price (2012: 104) a gesture is “any physical movement that helps express an idea, opinion, or emotion”. That is, gestures are bodily indicators of a speaker’s own personality. They are highly individual, say; regardless of a speaker’s natural style (conservative and reserved or casual and animated) the goal is to have her motions match her message. Specifically, Price (ibid) points out that gestures are the punctuation marks of body language. Imagining how jumbled and confusing the written language would be if all the words on a page ran together without the utilization of periods, commas, exclamation points, hyphens, parenthesis, and colons. Instead, these useful marks of emphasis give meaning and interpretation to the words around them. The same is true of gestures, surrounding the spoken words. They support a speaker’s message and aid the audience interprets her meaning. Hence, they are regarded marvelous tools of communication. When used effectively, gestures increase a listener’s understanding,
attentiveness, and retention (Price: ibid: 104) and since much of the impact of a speaker’s message stems from her body language alone, confident gestures contribute significantly to her effectiveness as a presenter. Basically, no other kind of physical action can reinforce a presenter’s message in as many various ways as gesturing.

In the same line of thought, McCarthy and Hatcher (1996: 116) report that “kinesics” (kinesics indicators) “is the technical word for all aspects of gesture and expressive movement that the speaker uses”. Essentially, a speaker’s utilization of kinesic code is a strong indicator of her personality and an important component of her presentation skills. Hence, gestures should, of course, appear spontaneous and always aid the viewer to focus on the meaning of her message. Small and fidgety movements or gestures, especially if they are repeated, become mannerisms and irritate audiences, whereas strong generous gestures are living communication. For instance, Shakespeare had a great understanding of nonverbal communication as well as verbal communication, and Hamlet’s advice to the players is still sound advice: “suit the action to the word, the word to the action” (McCarthy and Hatcher, ibid: 117). Significantly, practice is the most important aspect of gestures, i.e. a speaker has to practice until she perfects a natural and spontaneous repertoire of gestures, but practicing during preparation time. That is, does not concentrate on gestures in her actual presentation, say, working to free her body can help to free her voice, so, too working to make her voice more expressive will help to free her body movement and gestures.

For example, gestures include hand movements, which a speaker might utilize to stress a significant word or idea. By planning her gestures in advance and use them in a well thought out, organized way to support key features of her speech. Furthermore, other common gestures can help the audience follow her organization. For instance, a speaker might count on her fingers when she gives an overview of the “three major
points” she will cover. She might open her arms to embrace the opinions of the audience. She might gesture very slightly in the air to punctuate the final words of her conclusion. As an example, each of these words might get a quick and subtle gesture as a speaker powerfully announces: “Now… is… the… time… to… act!” (Shuster and Meany 2014: 31)

Additionally, they report that facial expressions and head movements, such as smiles and nods or shaking the head to display disagreement, are effective gestures that add to a speaker’s credibility. However, a speaker should not smile while presenting a serious subject. Smiling while discussing human rights violations or war crimes, for instance, will make the audience think that she does not take her speech seriously or that there is something wrong with her. A speaker’s facial expressions should match the subject. They should support the emotion or attitude she would like to convey. She should be pleasant, professional, and formal, but there are occasions for passion, drama, and anger. The audience will better construe her message when her nonverbal communication and spoken words work together to express her ideas.

In this respect, Bryant and Wallace (1947) emphasize that utterance accompanied by gestures of the hands and arms usually has greater variety and force than speech without gestures. That is, the more parts engaged in performing an activity, the better each part works. Bryant and Wallace (ibid: 338), then, stress that “gesturing influences the voice because the body works best when functioning as a whole. (…) Speaking at its best requires the whole man”. Turk (1985: 162) clarifies this in the following figure:
4.4.3.2.4. Body positioning and movement (posture)

The fifth component of the non-verbal signaling system, after the way a speaker directs her gaze (eye contact), facial expressions, and gesturing, is the signals given off by the rest of her body. Accordingly, Price (2012: 108) puts forward that good speaking posture involves a speaker’s whole body from head to toe. She, then, posits that:

It is a revealing indicator of self-assurance, attitude, and energy level. It demonstrates your command of the situation and shows you are balanced, stable, and in control. Not only does good posture make a positive visual impression on your audience, but it also helps you sound your best. Good posture aligns your body to optimize breathing. This allows you to project your voice more effectively.

Similarly, Turk (1985) asserts that every aspect of a speaker’s posture and movement will communicate a mental state to the audience. He, then, proposes that the best posture for a presenter, though, is neither aggressive domination, nor flippant self-assurance. The message a performer usually desires to communicate is one of relaxed
competence. This is best achieved by a natural posture, which expresses awareness, as well as control. Simply because naturalness is the crucial component. That is, it is natural to change position from time to time to stretch and relax, i.e. it must be alert and natural, no more. Turk (1985: 157), then, displays some typical postures in the following figure:

![Figure 10: Good postures for the speaker](image)

Once again, McCarthy and Hatcher (1996: 111) posit that “posture is one of the main indicators of your power and confidence. It is, therefore, of particular importance for it to carry the meanings which most support your message”. That is, the speaker is capable to do a great deal to relax her body and correct her posture.

Interestingly, Shuster and Meany (2005) emphasize that effective public speakers establish a line-of-sight with the audience. They utilize their body position, posture, and movement to attract and hold the attention of their listeners. For example, a performer
has to position herself in the center of the room, but she has to feel confident enough to
move (just a small movement; avoid pacing around the room) to the side of a lectern or
desk to deliver a section of the speech. That is, usually this means standing in the front
and center of a room; in some classrooms, though, this way not be the best location. The
speaker has to select the position that makes it easiest for the audience to see her.
Hence, the movement will provide a welcome break for hearers, who will quickly tire of
watching the presenter deliver an inter speech from one spot. As an instance, imagine a
television show, videogame, or movie in which a person stands in only one spot while
speaking. Would anyone be excited about watching it? Her audience will not pay
attention to her unless she considers appropriate body movement. Thereafter, Shuster
and Meany (ibid) add that if a presenter cannot move from one spot because of space
constraints or technical limitations, she can utilize eye contact and nonverbal messages
to get the audience’s attention.

To sum up, Shuster and Meany (2005) suggest that before a speaker begins her
presentation, she has to determine her starting spot, the place in the room from which
she will speak. And since good posture is important, she has to stand with her feet
firmly on the floor, her weight evenly balanced, and her knees slightly bent. She can
pull her Shoulders up and back, and lift her head. This is, then, a comfortable and
confident pose. And if her weight is balanced, she will not shift from side to side or rock
back and forth, which distracts the audience.

In this context, Fisher Chan (1999: 88) illustrates more the point by providing the
following figure about body position and facial expression:
4.4.3.2.5. Poise

Shuster and Meany (2005) express that the best public speakers have poise. In that, when a presenter has poise, she shows confidence, and professional conduct. That is, poise is often associated with leadership potentiality. Precisely, Shuster and Meany (ibid: 32) elucidated that “poise is the quality of being in control, having direction and motivation, and staying focused on the task at hand”. In other words, a performer who acts in a respectful and responsible manner has poise. It means, the poised speaker displays self-confidence but is never arrogant. For instance, in a debate a poised speaker will be a gracious winner and an honorable loser. To conclude, Shuster and Meany (ibid) suggest that it is good for a speaker to rehearse the nonverbal portions for her presentation just as she would for the verbal parts of her speech. By practicing
positioning, movement, eye contact, gestures, and poise. Thus, this will aid remembering how and when to utilize appropriate nonverbal techniques.

4.5. Structuring a speech: (how to develop an effective opening, body, and close)

Following the “tell them” principle (Price, 2012: 39) a persuasive talk, presentation or speech consists of three sections delivered in this order: the opening (tell them what you are going to tell them), the body (tell them), and the close (tell them what you told them). In other words, telling the audience what you are going to say, say it, then tell them what you have said. It is worth, then, elaborating this point, let us look at each section in some detail; with some illustrations and learn how this structure would help the presenter (speaker) and the audience by providing an easy-to-follow framework.

4.5.1. Preparing the opening

Tell them what you are going to tell them. The opening is where the speaker establishes contact with the audience, set the tone, and convey her most important message. Fisher Chan (1999: 57) sees that a good opening relaxes the audience, gets people’s attention, and prepares them for what is coming. For the present context, Smith (2008) reports that there are really no rules about how to start a speech. Only one thing is certain; that everyone will be paying attention for those few moments. The performer also wants to be sure she has this part (the opening) learned so well (not necessarily memorized word for word). In this respect, Price (2012: 40) recommends that before diving into the main crux (the main body) of the presentation, the performer has to set the stage by providing the audience with a well-organized opening consisting of three key elements: powerful introduction, attention-getter, and executive preview.

4.5.1.1. A Powerful introduction

Price (2012) explains that the introduction of the opening should, in one minute or less, warmly welcome the audience and thank them for their presence (attendance), and
clearly state the purpose of the talk or the presentation. That is, quickly establishing credibility, motivation and enthusiasm. In addition, she states that it is crucial for the speaker to briefly introduce herself, i.e. to briefly position herself as an experienced authority on the subject. Moreover, it is a bonus if the performer can tell the audience why she is glad to be there and excited to share the message with them. Let us briefly note down and summarize how to develop a good opening of a speech:

- Offering a warm welcoming and thanks to establish rapport and to display appreciation.
- Giving a brief self-introduction to establish the credibility and experience.
- Stating the purpose of the presentation to provide focus for the audience by telling them exactly how they will benefit from the talk (message).

Significantly, Fisher Chan (1999: 58) provides the following guidelines for effective openings. The opening is so important to any presentation, hence, it is worth taking time to get it right; in that first impressions are lasting impressions. Here are some points to consider:

- **“Always prepare your opening”**. No matter how comfortable the speaker is with the subject matter, the situation, and the audience, she must always decide ahead of time how she will begin. That is, at a minimum, she can write out the first sentences she will speak. Then list the other points to include in the opening. It is also helpful to write out the sentence she will use to make a transition to the body of the speech. As for instance, “let us begin with a quick look at the ways in which the reorganization will affect you…” Another example, if the performer is using an anecdote in the opening, it can be helpful to write out the beginning, she can note the key story points, and write out the end.
• “Tell people what the presentation is about”. An important purpose of the opening is to prepare the audience for what they are going to hear or do or learn. In most situations, the speaker will deliver the most significant point in the opening. As for example, “during the next hour and a half, I will show you how our new project planning software can help you keep your projects on track and achieve your project goals”.

• “Keep the opening short and simple”. Generally, people have not come to hear the opening, they have come to hear what the speaker has to say about the topic. Maybe all the performer needs is something like, “good Morning. I am … from Human Resources, for instance, and I am here to tell you how to apply for retirement benefits”. The speaker has, just, to remember that the purpose of the opening is to launch the presentation. In other words, the primary effect will ensure that what the performer says in the first few sentences will be among the best remembered parts of the talk.

• “Only use anecdotes that are relevant”. Broadly speaking, stories can be interesting and they can make the audience laugh. But those are not good enough reasons to include them. The performer can utilize anecdotes to introduce, illustrate, or explain her primary message. Even the most interesting, or funniest, story should be left out if it does not serve this function.

• “Use caution with personal experiences”. Personal experiences can draw an audience in, i.e. something which will make the audience gasp with admiration, and sit up to take notice for the rest of the talk. Also introducing or clarifying points, and help people relate to what the speaker has to say. As an instance, the performer has to avoid revealing anything personal that might make the audience feel uncomfortable, such as an embarrassing situation that still makes her feel embarrassed.
• “Stay away from inappropriate humor”. Humor is great when it works, and when it does not offend or embarrass anyone. To be precise, the performer has to make sure humor fits the situation and does not seek laughs at the expense of anyone’s ‘gender’, ‘race’, ‘ethnic origin’, ‘physical characteristics’, ‘age’, ‘religion’ or other personal characteristics. Also the speaker has to keep in mind that not everyone tells jokes well.

Additionally, Fisher Chan (1999: 58) highlights what a successful opening can offer. Here is what an effective opening accomplishes:

• Gets the audience’s attention and helps people settle down.
• Sets the tone: formal; informal, friendly, casual, funny, serious.
• Helps establish rapport.
• Provides essential background information.
• Tells the audience who you are and establishes your credibility.
• Tells the audience why you are there.
• Lets you deliver the main point (“tell them what you are going to tell them”)
• Lets you acknowledge and address people’s concerns.
• Provides a “preview” of the presentation content and format.

The following extracts are examples of two openings provided to compare them and to decide which one could be considered an effective opening.

Opening one

“Good morning, everyone. My name is Sara Woo, and I’m the project leader for the Time Minder development team. I know you all expected the Time Minder system to be ready for launch in October. During the next forty-five minutes, I’m going to explain why we’ve moved the launch date to January 15, give you an overview of the
development process, and try to answer the questions you’re dying to ask” (Fisher Chan, 1999: 57).

**Opening two**

“I guess you’re wondering why I’ve called you here today. (Pause) well, anyway, how many of you, people out there would like to know more about the time-Minder System? Yeah? All three of you? Well, I’m going to tell you anyway. I’m Jason Trent, and they told me bring you up to date on what’s up with Time Minder, so that’s what I’ll try to do. Hold on a minute while I set up the first slide” (Fisher Chan, 1999: 57).

We suppose that opening one is an effective opening (the best one). In that, it seems to us that Sara Woo utilizes her opening to set a friendly tone, tell the people who she is and why she is there, and “preview” her presentation. Her opening is concise, relevant, and to the point. In this case, she can easily and directly move into the crux of her presentation, i.e. the main body.

Unfortunately, Jason Trent’s opening (opening two) is liable to confuse and even alienate his audience. He begins with a bad-and unnecessary- Joke. He waits too long to tell people who he is, and he does not convey his main point or tell people what to expect. He refers to a vague “they” whose instructions, he appears to be following without much enthusiasm. Instead of moving right into the content, he asks his audience to wait while he fiddles with the machinery.

**4.5.1.2. A compelling attention-getter**

The first important fact to grasp is that there are a number of factors which affect attention, and can be used to control it. As the length of time concentration is needed, the time of the day, and the amount of arousal and motivation the performer can communicate to the listeners. Motivation, in turn, is affected by the audience’s sense of security, and how much enthusiasm the speaker displays. In effect, Turk (1985) points
out that the reason why talks (speeches) are arranged for limited lengths of time is not merely because of peoples’ other appointments, but because the average of individual’s span of attention is limited. He explains that the simple fact is that about five to ten minutes is as long as most people can listen without a short day-dream. After a brief holiday to catch up with all the other thoughts floating around their head, listeners come back to the talk but as time goes on these rests get longer and more frequent, and eventually it becomes impossible to listen any more. More precisely, research shows that “this limit is around an hour, depending on the subject and individual. That is why most talks and lectures are scheduled to last for an hour or less” (Turk, 1985: 121). There are, then, physical reasons why talks are limited in length. This means, the audience is simply unable to listen usefully beyond a certain limit. In addition to that, Turk (ibid: 121) clarifies that research, shows, too, that “the span of memory is limited, as well as the span of attention”. The plain fact, then, is that the audience will not remember what the speaker said if she drone on for long after the appointed finishing time, so no good purpose is served. Briefly, a key factor which affects the audience’s attention is the sheer length of time they are expected to listen.

It is worth noting that, it is significant for presenters to get presentations start in a way that engages the audience and makes them want to hear what she is going to say next. It means, the audience cannot make themselves listen, they must be made interested. In this respect, Turk (1985) emphasizes that after making clear who the speaker is, she has to launch into her subject without delay, i.e. get into the meat of the subject straight away. That is, moving on directly, to the crux of the presentation. One way of starting the speech is to put a question, in the audience’s minds (making a rhetorical question, in order to stimulate their attention and arouse interest. Like for instance, “do they know how the raw material for the process is prepared? Have they
thought about whether the I/O routine can be speeded up? Do they realize the financial drain on profitability which spoilage causes? Turk (ibid: 74). Such a tactic, thus, focuses the audience’s attention on the issue, and helps them to listen positively to the information which follows it. Additionally, he notes that asking questions is the best way to bolster up thought. Such questions may be only rhetorical, and not expect an answer from the audience, but Sime and Boyce (cited in Turk, 1985: 75) explain that rhetorical questions raise the level of attention and improve the amount of learning. In that, “we are so conditioned to provide answers to sentences in question form, that our minds are subconsciously aroused towards an answer, even if we remain silent”. Asking questions, then, is an effective way of introducing a topic.

Another way of directing audiences’ (listeners) attention might be a photograph of a structure which has collapsed. It is also beneficial to point out how the current talk fits into previous talks (presentations), and a question related to the last presentation will help to remind the audience of what they already know, and how this new presentation will fit in (Turk, 1985). In fact, all these tactics seem to have one central aim to make sure the listeners realize what the purpose of the talk is, hence the speaker can fit the novel information she is being given during the talk into a familiar conceptual pattern. Because speakers often ignore this need to bring the subject into sharp focus at the beginning of the talk. In that, in many presentations the consequences of neglect of the ideas and information are, then, described at the end, rather than the beginning. For that, Turk (ibid) provides an easy to comprehend example. For instance, in one lecture on dietary control, slides of the deformities which resulted from malnutrition were shown at the end; he explains they would have been better shown at the beginning, thus the audience could visualize the problems to be solved. These display what can happen;
what can we do to prevent it? Therefore, they would have made an excellent opening to
the talk (speech).

Furthermore, Turk (1985) points out that other methods may also be used to
promote interest and arousal as an example, advertisers typically utilize irrelevant
messages about status and emotions before selling their product. In the same way; in a
speech opening, a stimulating factor picture will arouse the audience and improve their
reception of a quite different message which may follow. Hence, the job of the
introductory sentences is to arouse interest, what the performer is going to tell the
audience, by telling them. Then the talk can go on to expand the subject, assured of
attention from the listeners.

In this sense, the need to arouse and prepare the audience is confirmed by
psychological research. For the present context, Turk (ibid) notes down that many
experiments display that unless the receiver is guided in how to decode the message, she
may perceive something different. Precisely, psychologists have shown that knowledge
about what a person is going to hear can, eventually, change what she thinks she does
hear. In a related context, the English psychologist David Bruce (cited in Turk, 1985:
75) did an experiment which illustrates the importance of raising listeners’ attention by
introducing the topic in advance; in the introductory sentences in the opening. Bruce
recorded a set of noise so intense that the voice was just audible, but not intelligible. He
told his listeners that these are sentences on some general topic, supports, and asked
them to repeat what they heard. He then told them that they would hear more sentences
on a different topic, which they were also to repeat. This was done several times. Each
time the listeners repeated sentences appropriate to the topic announced in advance.
When at the end of the experiment Bruce told them that they had changed was the topic
they were given, most listeners were unable to believe it. In the main, Turk (ibid: 75)
states clearly that “with an advance hypothesis about what the message will be we can tune our perceptual system to favor certain impressions and reject others”.

From our point of view, we may think that the experiment was unfair on the listeners; in that they were merely attempting to please when they invented sentences! But the central fact remains; we hear what we expect to hear. Therefore, if what is going to be said in a talk is announced at the beginning, the listeners more easily receive the message. The point to be made here is that, what the audience is told about the subject to the talk will condition what they construe the speech to be about. This is why it is so significant for the speaker to arouse interest in the subject, and to be clear about what the purpose and content of the performance is going to be, in the first few minutes of the talk. In this sense, Turk (1985: 76) emphasizes the point by saying that:

Telling people what they are about to perceive will radically affect what they do perceive. The conclusion for the speaker is clear. Telling your audience in advance what to expect is an essential part of presenting information to them.

In the face of such clear evidence, it is inexcusable to omit the preparation and warning phase of the talk. The subject (the topic) must be made clear in the opening moments of the presentation.

In a similar vein, Price (2012: 41) illustrates this point by providing list features of attention getters. The following list features her top twenty favorite attention getters:

1. Startle them with a surprising statistic of fact related to your topic.
2. Refer to a newsworthy event or current headline.
3. Ask a rhetorical thought provoking question followed by pause.
4. Ask a question and invite audience responses.
5. Conduct a survey and ask them to raise their hands.
6. Recite a relevant quotation.

7. Tell a brief personal story.

8. Use an analogy, metaphor, or anecdote.

9. Ask the audience to imagine a scenario.

10. Give an interesting or creative definition of a key word.

11. Use a prop or creative visual aid.

12. Recount a historic event that relates to your topic.

13. Use humor, which may include an amusing personal story, funny saying, witty example, short cartoon, or clean joke.

14. Perform a magic trick and relate it to your topic.

15. Show a photo.

16. Use an audiovisual aid such as an audio or video clip.

17. Compliment the audience on special awards, achievements, or recognition.

18. Conduct a quiz, game, activity, or exercise.

19. Motivate by showing them a progress report such as before-and-after results.

20. Use the mirror technique. That is, reflect back to the audience an intimate understanding of who they are as it relates to your topic. Show them you know them by immediately stating several facts about them, such as listing their key business issues, performance numbers, or corporate values.

To recap, Price (2012: 41) states clearly that “the attention getter is a magnetic tool that hooks your audience and keeps them watching”. In simpler words, it grabs attention and holds the audiences’ interest.

4.5.1.3. A strong executive preview

Importantly, the executive preview displays a speaker’s decision-making to the audience that she is organized and prepared with a well-thought-out plan. That is, they
immediately see that the performer is going to lead them down a logical path and not waste their time. Price (2012: 43) specifies that the preview is where the speaker tells the audience what she is going to tell them: “Tell them what you are going to tell them”. Price (ibid) clarifies the point by stating that this technique is utilized very successfully in the entertainment industry. As for instance, when someone is in a movie theater, snuggled into his seat, popcorn in hand, lights down, and all eyes on the screen in rapt attention. Does the movie begin right away? No, what precedes the feature presentation? Previews of coming attractions. And, based those previews, one may say to herself, “oh, I want to see that one!” In a moment of anticipation while her attention was captured, they sold another movie ticket based on a preview.

Similarly, a performers’ executive preview of any talk (a speech) offers in advance a few clinching clips of what is to follow in her full-length feature presentation. According to Price (2012: 43) it consists of “a few sentences that state the purpose, points, and benefits that lie ahead for the audience, in essence, what is in it for them to listen attentively”. Additionally, Price (ibid: 44) provides the following guidelines for the preview that would help prepare the audience for what they are about to hear:

- Provide a road map or agenda and explain how the presentation is organized in order to accomplish the previously stated purpose. This entails highlighting the key points the speaker will be covering.

- Mention any logistical issues, if necessary, such as confirming the time length of the presentation (whether the performer will take questions during or after the presentation), whether she will provide handouts or copies of the slides afterward.

- We have one hour allotted for this presentation. Does that still work with everyone’s schedule? [Audience nods yes]. In respect of your valuable time, my presentation will only last twenty minutes. Please feel free to ask questions or offer
comments throughout. This will leave the remainder of the hour to discuss what is most important to the speaker. In addition, are there questions or comments before we move forward?

- Make a transition statement that leads to the body of the presentation.
  ➢ Okay, let us move to key point number one and review the findings.

4.5.2. Developing the body

Tell them, the time to develop the crux of a speaker’s massage is the body. Price (2012: 44) points out that the body of a presentation consists of three key elements: key points, supporting material, and transition statements.

4.5.2.1. Select three key points (follow the “rule of three”)

According to Price (2012) “the rule of three” is a proven communication technique. A presenter may have scads of information she feels she needs to cover. Price (ibid), then, specifies that it is fair to ask, why not four points, five, seven, even ten?” what if a performer has many valid points to communicate during her presentation? Why limit it to three? Because adhering to the rule of three works. Price (ibid) states that it is an age-old principle in communication that suggests when things come in a pattern of three, they are inherently more satisfying, easier to remember, even funnier. More precisely, Price (ibid) postulates that ancient three-word Latin phrase “omne trium perfectum” means everything that comes in three is perfect, or, every set of three is complete. This means that, the “rule of three” reflects the natural way in which individuals mentally follow and store information. She explains that it is a learning method that begins in childhood. As for instance, receiving information in “threes” with the ABCs, Reading/wRiting/aRithmetic, and numerous children’s stories such as: the three blind mice, three little pigs, three Billy Goats Gruff, Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Furthermore, she states that the rule of three is the basis of comedic
timing. A series of three is often used to create a progression in which the tension is created, then built up, built up even more, and finally released hence, most every joke has three parts or characters, with the third serving as the punch line.

A well-known example of the rule of three in written political rhetoric is the U.S. Declaration of Independence appeal to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. Also, the Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, he argues for a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” The rule of three is a prominent technique used in oratory and writing (Price, 2012: 46). In addition to these illustrations, she provides an easy to comprehend example that most American names come in three parts: First, middle, and last. The calendar is broken into morning, noon, and night. Standard mealtimes are breakfast, lunch and dinner, which people eat using a knife, spoon, and fork.

Most significant for performers’ purposes, the rule of three aids the audience remembers their key points. Rather than presenting an array of numerous ideas that randomly swirl in their listeners ‘minds, the ‘Rule of Three’ crystallizes their message into the three most essential points they want to make. Specifically, it demonstrates the adage “less is more” (Price, 2012: 46). That is to say, the more a presenter tells people, the less they will remember. The less she tells them, the more they will remember.

Price’s (2012: 46) audience studies and surveys indicate that “twenty-four hours after a speaker’s presentation, her audience will remember, at best, only ten percent of what she said”. In a way, the presenter has to make sure that ten percent is composed of her three big ideas. Then, she labels three buckets with those big ideas and put everything related to each big idea in its bucket. This means, if something does not relate to a big idea, a speaker does not put it in the bucket just she leaves it out.
4.5.2.1.1. Select audience-focused key points

Price (2012: 46) notes down that the following questions help the performer select the three most important key points:

- What points would pique my audience’s interests and address their needs?
- What points will best support my objective and call to action?
- What points do I want this audience to remember most?

4.5.2.1.2. Use a logical sequence to label key points

In this sense, Price (2012) reports that after a presenter has identified the three main points, it is time to sequence them in a logical order that makes sense to the audience and is easy to remember. In that, listeners will not remember all of her presentation. A speaker has to ask herself, “what do I most want’ my audience to remember from my message? Which tune do I want them whistling when they leave the room? Then, based on those answers, a presenter would select and sequence her key points in an easy-to-follow, easy-to-remember method.

4.5.2.2. Add supporting material to your three key points

In her view, Price (2012) illustrates this point by saying that, if one has even watched those courtroom dramas when the lawyer spends the last ten minutes of the show persuading the judge and jury to see it her way? As an attorney, for instance, she presents evidence that substantiates her case. The same thing, then, can be done by an effective presenter. In simpler words, the proof a presenter offers to her audience will determine whether they agree or disagree or act or ignore. Price (ibid), then, draws attention to the point that ‘evidence’, essential for a powerful presentation comes in two types: ‘qualitative and quantitative’, precising that, there are feelings and facts, abstract and concrete; heart and head. For instance, as one may know from personal experience, a consumer’s first response to a television commercial is based on how they ‘feel’ about
it. If they feel positively toward the product, then they listen for facts and finding to validate their feelings.

As a matter of fact, a persuasive presenter seeks first to connect on an emotional level by eliciting positive feelings from her listeners, and then she offers concrete evidence to confirm those feelings. As Price (2012: 50) states it clearly that, “the key to persuasive supporting material is to balance feelings and facts, emotion and logic, head and heart”. We can return to where a performer can find supporting material. Price (ibid: 51) sees that the list is almost endless, but here she presents a several information-rich sources that may offer a presenter convincing supporting material:

- The internet: search engines and online research sites
- Presenter’s personal experience, education, observations, and insights
- Presenter’s intranet, files, videos, and libraries.
- Media reports and documentaries
- Annual reports budgets financial
- Newspapers
- News letters
- White papers
- Collateral material
- Catalogs and sheets audio and video programs
- Books
- Interviews/ surveys
- Libraries
- Dictionary
- Magazines applicable to your subject

**Applying the ACT Test**

Broadly speaking, a performer has so much information, yet so little time. Hence, she has to select which information to utilize in her presentation.
In this respect, Price (2012: 52) sheds light on the utilization of the ACT test. A presenter would put each piece of supporting evidence to the test the ACT test. This means, weighing its value in terms of her “Audience, Content, and Time allotment”. Price (ibid: 52) proposes that a presenter asks herself these questions:

- **Audience**: how does this piece of information help my audience? Does it specifically address their needs? Does it state or imply a benefit to them? Is it stimulating and thought-provoking?

- **Content**: does this piece of supporting material arouse my audience’s interest? Is it specifically and directly relevant to a key point? How well does it support or prove the point? Does it elicit emotion or offer concrete evidence? How will it help me reach my objective and urge the audience to say “yes” to my call to action? Is it “must-know” material or just “nice-to-know”?

- **Time**: do you have time to include this piece of supporting material? Keeping in mind all the other material she must present, can this piece of information be delivered within the allotted time? Can she make it concise and simple to understand?

Remember, less is more.

### 4.5.2.3 Include transition statements between key points (preparing transitions)

The third element of the presentation body is transition statements between key points. Transitions make a significant critical contribution to the success of a presentation. Simply because, they are bridges, they take the presenter/audience from place to place without interrupting the journey. In that transitions link a performer’s points and alert the audience that she is moving on. For example, writing one transition, the one that takes the audience from the opening to the body of the presentation.

In this respect, Fisher Chan (1999) elucidates that if a presenter has a well-developed presentation outline, she will know exactly where she needs transitions...
because she already has a logical sequence of points. She will, then, need a transition when she moves from key idea to key idea, and when she moves from a discussion into an activity. She will utilize transitions to introduce slides or demonstrations. Furthermore, transitions offer opportunities to take breaks or elicit questions. Thereafter, Fisher Chan (ibid: 60) provides some examples of transitions:

- “Now that you know the project history and goals, I will go through the development process step-by-step”.
- “Before we examine reasons for setting up a face-to-face meeting with the client, let us take five minutes to practice asking those open ended questions we have been discussing”.
- “Next, I will discuss the stages of the construction process. First, does anyone have any questions?”

In other to clarify more this point, Price (2012) illustrates it by imagining a scenario of someone who is driving along in her car at about forty five miles an hour when suddenly the driver of the car in front of her comes to a dead stop in the middle of the road and then proceeds to turn left without signaling. She would have appreciated some advance notice of his decision, right? And depending on the distance between her car and his, she might notify him of his inconsideration via her horn. Similarly, if audience members has horns, a few of them would probably want to use them every time a presenter fails to “signal” a change in direction (Price: ibid). Like a turn signal, a transition between key points notifies the listener that the performer is about to change the course of direction. It leads her audience from one key point to the next by briefly summarizing what she has just said and introducing what she is going to say next. Here are a few examples of transitions (or signals) offered by Price (ibid: 52):
Now that we have taken a look at the benefits of realization study and uncovered some of the deficiencies in the current process, let us move to key point number two and see how an integrated solution can solve these issues and deliver measurable savings.

We have talked about how job safety is good for business and how it prevents injury to our employees; now let us move on to the third and most important point: how it can save your life.

Therefore, transitions can be as simple as a single sentence or phrase. Yet they are significant signals, in the sense that they alert listeners that the message is progressing and shifting gears. To be more precise, the presenter knows when she is making a change, i.e. leaving one point and moving on to the next. But her audience does not without clearly stated transitions. She can be halfway into her next point before the audience perceives a change, which causes them to miss out on vital information. Thus, building transitions into the presentation and effectively using one between each key point makes the presenter, appear organized and in control. Her audience will appreciate her guiding them from one point to the next and keeping them on track.

**4.5.3. Preparing the closing**

‘Tell them what you told them’. Finally, it is time to conclude the presentation with a powerful persuasive close. As Price (2012: 53) states clearly that a successful closing consists of three key elements: summary, call to action, and appreciation.

Price (2012) specifies that it is essential to follow the body of a presentation with a compelling convincing close. At first the speaker has to summarize the key points and the benefits of the message. Next, she tells the audience exactly what she wants them to do in response to her message. And finally, she has to thank them for their time and attention. Following now let us look at each element in more detail:
4.5.3.1 Tips for developing a successful summary

Price (2012) points out that the performer can begin her summary by saying for instance, “in conclusion” or “in summary”. This sends a signal to the audience that the presentation is coming to an end and heightens their attention level. Next, briefly she summarizes the key points and benefits she has presented. This is the final chance in her presentation to reiterate what is in it for them. She, then, has to be sure to include the key takeaway she wants the audience to remember. In addition to that, she wants to launch the close as she did the opening, by capturing attention and provoking thought. Therefore, she should refer to the attention-getter she used in the opening. For example, if she opened with a quote, story, or illustration, she alludes for it. Price (ibid) emphasizes that this approach, places bookends on her presentation and ties the presentation together with persuasive logic. Price (ibid: 54), then, presents the following guidelines when developing the summary section of a close:

- Briefly recap your presentation’s key points and benefits
- Refer back to your opening attention-getter to bookend your presentation
- Repeat the one thing -the key takeaway- that you want your listeners to remember.

In this context, Fisher Chan (1999) stresses that for some presentations, the closing is almost as important as the opening. Fisher Chan (ibid: 61), then, proposes the case of Beniamo as an example. Beniamo is a member of the Big Brothers Organization. He has organized a brown-bag lunch to explain the organization’s goals to his colleagues at work and motivate people to volunteer. Beniamo gave an interesting presentation, during which he used slides to display various Big Brothers and Big Sisters sharing different activities with their Little Brothers and Sisters. Here is how Beniamo closed the presentation:
Well, that’s about it, and it looks like we’re out of
of time. I’d like to thank you all for coming—and
hope you enjoyed your lunch. I'll be in my office
later if you have any questions. That's it.

Thanks again

Fisher Chan (1999) explains that Beniamo had the impression that people enjoyed
the presentation; they were attentive throughout and gave him a round of plause when
he finished. But he was disappointed that no one came up afterward to volunteer or even
ask for more information. Fisher Chan (ibid), then, specifies that part of the reason
might have been the way Beniamo closed the presentation, i.e. something was missing!
Afterwards, he clarifies more the point by saying that although Beniamo's closing was
friendly and polite, he needed the crucial “call to action” that might have stimulated
sign ups. Moreover, he made a common mistake by assuming that if people paid
attention to the presentation, they would sign up for his program. But he left the
audience without a clear understanding of what was supposed to happen next, so people
simply drifted away. Furthermore, Fisher Chan (ibid: 62) states clearly that Beniamo
might have had better results if he closed this way:

As I mentioned at the beginning, we have a long list of children
wailing for a Big Brother or Big Sister. If you agree that this is a
worthwhile, rewarding cause, please help. You don't have to make a
commitment today but if you're at all interested, sign the sheet on the
table at the back of the room. I'll get in touch with you in a couple of
days with more information. Thanks very much for coming, and I
hope you'll seriously think about joining us. It's a great feeling to
help a child.
4.5.3.2. Tips for a convincing call to action

According to Price (2012) a call to action tells the audience exactly what the presenter wants them to do. That is, the closing is where the presentation should produce results. Precisely, it leaves no doubt about what the performer wants her audience to do with the information she has presented. Price (ibid: 54) highlights that “the call to action is the twin sibling of your single clear-cut objective”. As for instance, specifying that at the end of this presentation, I want my audience to…., i.e. here the call to action is a speaker's chance to go for it. Moreover, Price (ibid: 54) provides a sample call-to-action beginnings:

- “I encourage you to...”
- “I urge you to give your unanimous approval to...”
- “I ask that you...”
- “I request you...”
- “I implore you to heed the safety measures just discussed...”.

4.5.3.3. Show Appreciation

Significantly, Price (2012) stresses this point by mentioning that audience members give the presenter one of their most valued resources; their time. In other words, for several minutes (usually an hour or more) they offer the performer their attention, thought, and consideration. To be more precise, the speaker has to tell the audience that she is grateful for the opportunity. Simply because everybody likes to feel appreciated. Individuals also prize recognition. For example, if appropriate, the presenter can publicly recognize and credit people in the audience who helped make the presentation possible; perhaps persons who invited her to speak or helped with setup. Also acknowledging volunteers, i.e. anyone who offered assistance, or anyone who deserves recognition for an outstanding achievement relevant to her subject matter.
Price (ibid) also specifies that at last the presenter has to be sure to express a sincere desire to work together and serve as the prospects partner in success. Then, Price (ibid: 55) present elements of the appreciation section of the close:

- Thank them for their valuable time and attention.
- Acknowledge those who invited you and who made the event possible.
- Express a sincere desire to work with them and support their success.

In this respect, Fisher Chan (1999: 62) provides some guidelines for closings. Here are some points to consider when preparing the closing for a speakers’ own presentation:

- **Always prepare a closing.** Even a brief presentation needs a closing. Decide what you want to say-and write it down. It is easy to feel rushed, towards the end of your presentation, and you want to be sure not to forget the important points you need your closing to include.

- **Always restate the main point and, perhaps, the key supporting points.** In your opening, you told people what you were going to tell them. Now restate what you told them. It helps to circle to the beginning by referring to something you said in the opening (“when we began, I asked how many of you… I hope that you now understand why it is so important to…”).

- **Say clearly what happens next.** Do not assume that people will know what they or others are going to do. Tell them clearly what they are supposed to do next or what they can expect to happen (“next week, I will send each of you a summary of the points that were brought up today…” or “please complete your research by May 1 and bring your findings to the next meeting”)

- **If appropriate, make a call to action.** Tell people what you want them to do, why they should do it, and how to do it.
❖ **Thank the audience.** A presentation only happens when there is an audience. Let the audience know that you appreciate their attendance and attention and make sure your thanks are sincere.

### 4.6. Speech Anxiety

Studies and surveys display that the fear of public speaking ranks right up there with the fear of death. In other words, broadly speaking people are more afraid and anxious of speaking in public than of dying. Only twenty percent of people rarely get nervous when they give a speech and even professional speakers can get butterflies before a major presentation (Smith, 2008). Within a similar vein, Fisher Chan (1999) stresses also that it is not only beginners who experience presentation fear. Experienced speakers often find that they feel some tension in the days and weeks before an important presentation. Even people who feel confident when they walk into the presentation room at times discover themselves unexpectedly nervous when they stand up to speak. Moreover, Shuster and Meany (2005: 33) confirm that “public speaking is one of people’s primary fears (…)”. In that, many people attempt to avoid speaking in public or experience significant anxiety before they do so. A speaker may feel dizzy, has a dry mouth, sweaty palms, a racing pulse, a thin or squeaky voice, knotted or queasy stomach, clammy hands and feet, blushing, difficulty concentrating or remembering things, or even legs and hands trembling. As a matter of fact, Shuster and Meany (ibid) clarify that these are normal reactions, but anxiety can be identified and managed, even reduces. Hence, no matter what a presenter’s anxiety symptoms might be, there are many things that can be done to calm down and to speak confidently.

What most people do not realize, also, is that this state of panic will subside naturally in a short time, i.e. “when fear injects adrenaline, the ‘parasympathetic nervous system’ compensates and calms the body down”. The time it takes to return to
normal depends on the severity of the reaction and fortunately, the speaker has the capability to regulate that. Once she gets into the speech and takes her mind off her fears, the symptoms will subside gradually anyway (Smith, 2008: 2).

4.6.1. Reasons for presentation fear (anxiety)

Accordingly, Fisher Chan (1999) put forward that beginning presenters often assume that any fear (anxiety) they feel about making a presentation will disappear once they have more experience. While it is true that confidence that comes with experience reduces such feelings, it seldom eliminates them. For it is not uncommon for people who have made dozens of presentations to find themselves unexpectedly be set by the symptoms of presentation fear. Fisher Chan (ibid: 15) then lists some of the common reasons that people who experience presentation anxiety and fear have:

- **Fear of being judged unworthy:** We all want people to consider us knowledgeable, confident and competent. That is particularly important when there are people in the audience whose approval and respect we want and we need.

- **Fear of appearing foolish:** People worry they would make embarrassing mistakes that would make them appear foolish to the upper managers. They want them to think well of them. We all want that, we want people to think that we are smart and interesting. We certainly do not want people to laugh at us or feel sorry for us because we say or do something embarrassing. Even comedians and clowns want people to laugh with them, not at them.

- **Unfamiliarity with the subject.** We can speak with confidence only about topics we know well. If we have only a superficial understanding of and little knowledge about the topic of a presentation, it is impossible to bury the nagging fear that we will say the wrong thing, leave something important out, or provide dumb answers to smart questions.
• **Lack of sufficient planning and preparation.** Giving a presentation without careful planning and preparation is like jumping into a pool without knowing the temperature of the water or what lies beneath the surface. That can be fun but it can also be dangerous. Similarly, an unplanned presentation can be a recipe for disaster.

**4.6.2. Dealing with anxiety**

It is natural to feel some presentation fear. That is, a little anxiety or nervousness can even be helpful by signaling that the presentation is significant to the speaker and motivating her to do her best. But worrying will not ensure a successful presentation. And too much presentation fear will make it difficult or impossible to focus on the business at hand. A presenter will find that carefully planning, preparing, and practicing her presentation will make the delivery a lot less stressful.

**4.6.2.1. Prepare mentally**

The point to be made here is that a speaker can see herself sitting calmly in the room of her presentation and breathing deeply and freely. Now she is standing confidently and walking to the front of the room; she looks purposefully out and smile at her audience before she begins (McCarthy and Hatcher, 1996). This is the image a presenter must keep with her at all times. It is well known that most people, faced with the idea of presenting to listeners, feel real fear. It is also comforting to know that a performer can overcome fear if she prepares for it. If she is prepared, listeners will not, cannot, hear her heart beating or feel her palms sweating; if she is focused on the purpose of her message, and if she appears confident, she will be assured of making contact with her audience.

McCarthy and Hatcher (1996) stress that now we have at the least an educated guess about these listeners and their frames of reference, about the context of this presentation. We have now to prepare to know about the speaker; a presenter has to
prepare to know herself. A presenter has to prepare to know herself. Let us begin that preparation.

4.6.2.1.1. Know your strength

McCarthy and Hatcher (1996) suggest that the speaker begins by recognizing her strengths. Writing them down. It is sure that, if she is fair with herself, she will realize that she could write a long list of her strengths and potentialities. For instance, most people can generate a great deal of power with a warm smile, so, a presenter has to relax and smile, in that she needs to know how it feels. Imagining herself standing in front of her listeners and smiling before she begins to speak. If she breathes deeply, and smile, she already has a good beginning, i.e. a good first impression (unless, of course, she wants to set up a sombre atmosphere). McCarthy and Hatcher (ibid: 48), therefore, propose to begin by listing a speaker's strengths:

- It is highly likely that you know your topic well and can speak easily on it in conversation. If the topic is a new and challenging one, make sure that you have researched and become familiar with it.

- You are certainly capable of making the hard decisions and selecting only the best points to fit the time you have available

- It is also highly likely that you can structure those ideas lucidly with careful preparation, and style them appropriately.

- You can think about the best phrasing for points which are difficult. If you practice speaking those phrases on audio cassette, you can listen to your presentation and this will help you to remember useful words and images for when you speak to listeners. Remember, the audio cassette is for the speaker as the word–processor is for the writer. It is what you use to make the drafts of your presentation, just as a writer makes drafts of a text.
Additionally, McCarthy and Hatcher (1996) postulate that it is also beneficial for a speaker to list her fears too. Asking herself if they are rational fears which are worth worrying about? If her answer is yes: are there ways in which she can resolve them? The presenter has to remember though, that she will always make some mistakes in the presentation, but she must be able to let go of those mistakes, she must not dwell on them. Allowing her mistakes to wander off and the memories of her strengths to linger on.

4.6.3. Controlling Nervousness and Anxiety: from stage fright to stage might

Price (2012: 90) sheds light on the fact that, “truth be told, you do not want to get rid of the butterflies because they are carries of energy and enthusiasm. Adrenaline is your friend”. She, then, explains that, years ago, one of the best speech coaches she ever trained with said to her, “welcome the nerves, Darlene. They are a sign that you care and want to do a good job”, to which she replied, “Boy, I sure care a lot”. “The key is to control, harness, and focus that surge of adrenaline so that it works for you”. Price (ibid), then, discusses that if a speaker finds herself fighting nervousness when she presents, and is afraid she will end up frozen stiff or passed out at the front of the room, she can try the following tips to aid herself train those butterflies. Price (ibid: 90), therefore, created an acronym labeled “STAGE MIGHT” featuring her top ten favorite techniques for managing anxiety:

- Smile at yourself in the mirror before you speak, when you are introduced, and during your speech as appropriate. The physiological effect of smiling emits brain chemicals that calm the nerves and promote relaxation. Always remember that a smile is the shortest distance between two people. It shows your audience that you are happy to see them and the message.
➢ Talk positively to yourself (self-talk positively) and visualize your success. Even though you might not feel one hundred percent confident at first, tell yourself you can do it!

Experts in sports psychology have proven that an athlete’s self-talk and visualizations create self-fulfilling prophecies, good or bad. Thoughts create action, and actions create outcomes. Therefore, why not make your thoughts positive and reap the rewards? See in your mind your confident stride, warm smile, and adoring audience. Say to yourself, “I am a dynamic speaker”. “I am enthusiastic and engaging”. “I am liked by my audience”. “I am prepared and confident”. “I am smart enough! “ It really works.

➢ Acknowledge the three audience truths: (1) they believe you are the expert. The audience perceives you as the recognized authority simply because you are the one speaking. Plus, you know more than they do about the topic. (2) They want you to succeed. The audience really wants you to be good and add value; otherwise it is a waste of their time. (3) They do not know what you are going to say. In the unlikely event you forget something or reorder your points, do not announce the error or apologize.

➢ Greet the audience before you speak. Shake hands with and meet as many people as possible ahead of time. This shows the audience you are approachable and personable. It relaxes you and turns “public” speaking into “personal” speaking, which makes the presentation feel like a continued conversation.

➢ Exercise lightly backstage or privately before you speak. This will ride your body of excess adrenaline. It is critical to prepare the body for the physical activity or public speaking. Do some light stretching, a few knee-bends, or take a brisk walk
around the building, take a few deep breaths: inhale through the nose on a slow count of three, and then exhale through the mouth on a slow count of three.

- Memorize the first and last minutes of your presentation. Knowing the first words that will come out of your mouth gives you confidence and calms your nerves. It also enables you to look directly into the eyes of your audience and optimize the first impression when you begin. Likewise, if you nail the closing, they will remember you as confident and self-assured. Know your material.

- Give, give, give. Focus on giving to the audience. As a speaker, think about your presentation as a gift to the audience, one they will actually enjoy, that is full of valuable information, helpful ideas, and meaningful content. The mental attitude of giving empowers you and frees you to focus on the purpose of the presentation, to inform and enrich the audience.

- Hold a dress rehearsal. Comfort breeds confidence. The more you do it, the better you get. There is no better way to ensure a winning presentation or speech than to walk through it, say it aloud, practice your body movement, go through the slides, warm up your voice, and familiarize yourself with the content and flow. Ideally, you should videotape or audiotape the rehearsal and review your performance, also, time the rehearsal to ensure you stay on schedule.

- Trust yourself. There was a time when she was paralyzed by the fear that she would not have all the information she needed when making a presentation. One of her cherished coaches said to her, “Darlene, when you are making vegetable soup and you chop up ten carrots and place the pieces in the pot to simmer, do you worry the carrots will be missing when you return an hour later to serve it?” She answered, “of course not”. He said, “If you just relax and trust yourself, your content will be like the carrots. If you have prepared it, it will be there for you when you lift the lid to serve, just believe
in yourself”. Trust yourself to be outstanding and you will likely live up to your expectations.

Eventually, Price (2012) expresses that those are her tried and true tactics for turning stage fright into “stage might”. Putting them into practice will aid tame speakers butterflies and teach them to fly in information.

4.7 Conclusion

Speaking holds a very significant place in foreign language learning, therefore. Because through speech much language could be learned and messaged are conveyed. Speaking skills, then, play a vital role in communication process. In that, good communication abilities are essential skills for success in and outside the classroom. Eventually, speaking skills cover a wide range, from engaging in simple conversation to formal public speaking. It is, thus, the most fundamental and the most challenging skill of the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, and it is conducive for learning them. Fairly obvious, hence, universities need to put more emphasis on it and develop a more demanding approach to help students become good English speakers. The point to be made, therefore, is that speaking is a medium through which much language could be learned and a skill which merits to be sufficiently paid close attention in foreign language settings.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH SITUATION ANALYSIS

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5.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and the analysis of the data obtained through the implementation of the present research. The analysis concerns the data obtained from two Questionnaires. Students’ questionnaires: self-talk questionnaire {appendix I} and personal goal-setting questionnaire {appendix II}, and teachers’ questionnaire {appendix III}.

First, the situation design will introduce the population to whom the questionnaires are administered. Second, we will move to the description, analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires, which in turn will allow us to confirm or disconfirm our hypothesis about the potential effects of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting on learners’ oral performance.

We will also present our findings concerning students’ successful oral performance and the utilization of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting, analysed and discussed in this chapter.

5.2. Methodology

It is worth to re-state our research hypothesis.

5.2.1. Research hypothesis

Our research hypothesis posits that: if learners are sensitized about the significance and the usefulness of utilizing positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) as effective ‘self-management’ learning strategies, they would be more autonomous and persistent, and would guide themselves to enhance positively their oral performance (speaking skill).
In other words, if students self-talk positively and self-set goals they would bolster up their oral performance, i.e. produce more natural proficient English conversations.

5.2.2. Population (participants)

For the present study, we have dealt with a sample of twenty E.N.S.C. students, from a total population of one hundred first year students of the Department of English, at the Teacher Training School of Constantine (ENSC). The ages of the students enrolled in the first year range from about eighteen to twenty. At the time of the study, all of the students have already studied English for about five years (during their Secondary education).

It is, therefore, assumed that the participants, in our study, would provide a homogeneous sample in terms of their instruction input and cultural environment. The reason for choosing to work with first year students is that, the first academic year at the university is of great importance in learning the basics of the English language and those students need to pay close attention to the cognitive- motivational aspect in their learning. They have also to learn to use some learning strategies that would foster their academic performance and achievement, generally, and their oral performance, particularly, right from the first year. Like, for instance, positive self-talk and personal goal-setting, as self-management learning strategies that would help learners make the necessary effort to learn how to increase their conversational skills.
5.2.3. Procedure: (the description of questionnaires)

For the present piece of research we devise three questionnaires; one for instructors and two for students. Teachers’ questionnaire is composed of thirteen items about self-management learning strategies. Precisely, about the potent role that cognitive-motivational strategies; positive self-talk (P.S.T.) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S.), play in improving students’ conversational skills (oral performance). Eventually, we attempt to construe the instructors’ attitudes and beliefs about the impact of these learning strategies on students’ learning (performance), generally, and their oral performance, particularly.

Concerning students’ questionnaires, the first one is composed of two sections: a) section one is composed of four items about motivation and learning; b) section two is composed of thirty four items about students’ inner-speech (self-talk). Hence, it is about learners’ beliefs about the significance of positive self-talk in increasing their oral performance. That is, their attitudes vis-à-vis the role of positive self-talk, as a cognitive-motivational strategy, in fostering students’ conversational skills. The second one is composed of seventeen items which highlight the potential impact of personal goal-setting in fostering students’ speaking skill.

As stated earlier, we administered the questionnaire to the participants (students) in their classroom, with the presence of the teacher. In part one section one, it is interested in probing further all the possible reactions of students towards their beliefs about the importance of motivation and mainly, self-motivation in the process of learning. Whereas, in section two the items are all meant to investigate
learners’ true attitudes vis-à-vis their awareness about the significance of self-talk, positive inner-speech, in promoting successful oral performances.

In this questionnaire students were asked to answer the questions by reading the statements attentively and simply answering them by ticking the appropriate box, and making full statements whenever necessary.

The results of the questionnaires serve to investigate the correlation between students’ self-talk and their oral performance to help learners focus more on cognitive-motivational strategies beside the potentialities they can have, to learn how to foster their academic performance, in general, and their conversational skills, in particular.

The personal goal-setting questionnaire is mainly devoted to probe learners’ attitudes towards the role of goal-setting in the process of learning and also to evaluate how personal goal-setting is used by learners, whether it is used effectively or whether they are not yet aware of its importance in fostering their academic performance (the oral performance). This questionnaire consists of one main part about students’ concern with the significance of personal goal-setting in enhancing their learning; precisely, the speaking skill.

The seventeen items of the questionnaire are all meant to investigate whether much attention is given to the cognitive-motivational aspect of learners are taken into account while learning, and whether students do, really, consider the powerful effects of personal goal-setting on their oral performance.
5.2.4. Administration of the questionnaire

With some pleasure and enthusiasm fifteen instructors, who are experienced teachers at the Department of English ENSC (teacher training school of Constantine), and the majority of them have taught Oral Expression module and a great majority of them instruct at the University of Frères Mentouri, Constantine), and a twenty first year English Students (from a total of one hundred first year English Learners at the English Department, ENSC) accepted to complete the questionnaires. Their eagerness to participate in our piece of research helped us to get more reliable data, we do believe.

Students are given uniform instructions, before the completion of the questionnaires, on how to complete the questionnaires and for which purpose they are designed. They are informed that: a) the completion of the questionnaires is an essential part of a scientific investigation; b) their participation is very appreciated and acknowledged; c) there are no right or wrong answers to the statement, only their view points; d) the obtained responses would be handled with absolute confidentiality, coded with identification numbers; e) it was not a test; f) the results would be of great importance to the researcher. Furthermore, it is important to mention that, they are not required to identify themselves in the questionnaire. We do so to guarantee confidentiality, to a great extent, and to obtain personal answers, with all these instructions we can state with some confidence, that our questionnaire is administered in good conditions. In addition to that, we do not administer our questionnaires from the very beginning of the year, for the simplest reason that, students received a detailed range of lessons about self-talk and goal-setting; as the
training program and they have not been told that these lessons are a part of research, but rather as extra additional lessons that would help them learn better, i.e. learning some cognitive-motivational strategies. For that, we administered the questionnaires some time later, nearly at the end of the year. It took the students about sixty minutes to complete the questionnaires which were, then, collected to encode for analysis.

5.3. Global analysis of students’ questionnaires

As a global understanding of learners’ and teachers’ questionnaires results, we can construe easily that students and instructors’ answers are quite positive. Simply because, when we have looked globally to the two sections in the ‘Self-talk Questionnaire’ and the section in ‘Personal Goal-setting Questionnaire’, we directly understood that teachers’ and students’ opinions, attitudes and responses vis-à-vis our statements are entirely supportive to our previously stated hypothesis concerning the significant correlation between learners’ positive self-talk and personal goal-setting and their potent role in bolstering up their oral performance. That is, the potential impact of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting in improving students’ oral performance. (cf. the detailed discussion and analysis of the full results of students’ and the teachers’ questionnaires). For instance, concerning students’ questionnaires (motivation questionnaires; Mot Quest, and personal goal-setting questionnaire; Per Goal Set Quest., below). Basically, out of fifty four questions that we have analysed fifty answers (90% of positive responses). And concerning teachers’ questionnaire, out of thirteen questions that we have investigated thirteen answers were quite positive (100% of answers were in the direction of our predictions and expectations). In sum, this indicates, interestingly, that instructors
and students are supporting greatly our assumptions with regard to the potent effect of cognitive-motivational strategies (positive self-talk and personal goal-setting) in enhancing learners’ academic performance in a variety of tasks and activities while learning, generally, and precisely bolstering up their oral performance.

5.3.1. The students’ questionnaire analysis

Following now is the description and analysis of some precise items of Self-talk Questionnaire (Sel Tal Quest) and personal Goal-setting questionnaire (Per Goal Set Quest).

5.3.1.1. Self-talk questionnaire

In section one, the items deal, considerably, with learners’ beliefs and awareness about the importance of self-motivation and its association with successful learning. The questions are as follows:
5.3.1.1.1. Motivation and learning

The very first question we asked the population of students (who are freshman students at the ENS, Constantine, the Department of English) is whether they consider motivation as a significant aspect or a critical component of effective learning. Of the total respondents (55%) said yes, against (45%) who said no.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 12: Self-motivation is considered as a critical component of effective learning.
5.3.1.1.2. Students’ beliefs about whether it is enough for them to be merely extrinsically motivated or a motivation of an intrinsic kind would be crucial

Because of the significance of motivation, in general, self-motivation (intrinsic motivation), in particular, in the current research, we did not hesitate to ask them about their belief whether they consider extrinsic motivation insufficient, for an effective learning, and hence intrinsic motivation would be quite beneficial for them. (100%) of total respondents (N=20) said yes.

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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 13: Even though students are, from time to time, extrinsically motivated, it is not quite sufficient and they need to be intrinsically motivated.
5.3.1.1.3. Intrinsic motivation and effective learning

In the same line of thought, we want to ask them about their belief, about the significance of intrinsic motivation for any effective learning to take place. Of the total respondents (100%) said yes.

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<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 14: If yes, hence, effective learning, in general, and successful oral performance, in particular, is unlikely to take place in the absence of intrinsic motivation.
5.3.1.1.4. Questioning learners’ about the existence of some interfering thoughts before, and during an oral performance

Concerning this question, we want to comprehend whether students have ever noticed that there exist some interfering thoughts that come to their minds, before and during an oral performance. (100%) of total respondents answered yes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Have you ever noticed that there are some interfering thoughts that come to your mind, before and during an oral performance?
5.3.1.1.5. Asking students whether the interfering thoughts affect their oral performance

Furthermore, we asked them about the impact of interfering thoughts on the oral performance. (95%) said yes, against (5%) who said no.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Do they affect your oral performance?
5.3.1.1.6. Questioning learners about these interfering thoughts and whether they have a positive role to play or negative

The following precise question is to see their viewpoint about the effect of the interfering thoughts, whether they have a positive or negative impact. (95%) said negative and (5%) said positive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 17: Do you think that these interfering thoughts have a positive role to play or negative one?
5.3.1.1.7. Students’ awareness about their inner-speech and its significance in facilitating their learning

The related question to the previous one is to know whether learners have ever been aware about their Self-talk and its importance in the process of learning. (90%) said no, and (10%) said yes.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Have you ever been aware about your self-talk and its significance in facilitating your learning?
5.3.1.1.8. Students’ opinion concerning the thoughts hindering them from speaking fluently

Accordingly, we put our next question on whether there exist negative self-statements that prevent learners to improve their oral performance. (80%) said yes, against (20%) who said no.

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<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Is there some negative self-statements that hinder you from improving your speaking skill?
5.3.1.1.9. Students’ belief about the relation between negative self-talk and unsuccessful oral performance

Furthermore, we asked them if they believe that increases in successful oral performances are associated with decreases in negative inner-speech (90%) said yes, against (10%) who said no.

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<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 20: Do you believe that increases in good oral performance are related to decreases in negative self-talk?
5.3.1.1.10. Students focus point when learning English

The other question is about the focal point of interest when studying the English language. (40%) said is to speaking fluent English, (30%) said to get the diploma, and (30%) said all of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obtaining good grades</th>
<th>Speaking Fluent English</th>
<th>Getting the Diploma</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 21: Do you see that your focus point when learning the English Language would be on:
5.3.1.1.11. Students’ beliefs about the impact of inner-speech on learning and speaking

Because of the significance of self-talk in the process of learning, in general, and the oral performance, in particular, in the present research, we did not hesitate to ask them about their belief about the influence of inner-speech in learning and in the oral performance. Of the total respondents (100%) said yes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
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Table 22: Do you believe that your inner-talk would have a powerful effect on your learning, in general, and your speaking skill, in particular?
5.3.1.12. Students’ opinion about the influence of positive self-talk in reducing their anxiety and enhancing their oral performance

This question is an attempt to know whether learners believe that positive self-talk would reduce their anxiety and foster their oral performance while studying. (100%) of the total respondents said yes.

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table 23: Does positive self-talk reduce your anxiety while studying and enhance your oral performance?
5.3.1.1.13. Learners’ view point whether they consider negative inner-talk as the prime cause which prevent them from speaking in Oral Expression sessions

The other question was about the point of view of students concerning the main cause that hinders them to speak freely in Oral Expression sessions. (75%) of total respondents said yes, against (25%) who said no.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Table 24: Do you think that your negative inner-talk is the prime cause for creating and maintaining high level of anxiety that prevent you from speaking in Oral Expression sessions?
5.3.1.1.14. Asking students whether negative self-talk influences negatively their motivation, mood, anxiety and oral performance

After that, we ask them whether their negative self-statements impact really their motivation, anxiety, mood, and consequently affect negatively their oral performance. (95%) of total respondents said yes, and only (5%) who said no.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 25: Negative self-talk affects negatively your motivation, mood, anxiety and oral performance
5.3.1.1.15. Students’ belief about the effect of positive, self-talk in helping them change their underestimation of their potentialities

Right after, we asked them whether they think that positive inner-speech would help them change their underestimation of their abilities to learn, which in turn would foster their speaking skill. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 26: Do you believe that positive self-talk would help you to change your underestimation of your current potentials, to improve your speaking?
5.3.1.1.16. Students’ trial to control their inner-speech after becoming more aware about its importance in improving their oral performance

Afterwards, we move to ask students whether they try to control their self-talk, once they have become aware about the role it plays in fostering their oral performance. (35%) of total respondents said often, (25%) said always, (25%) also said sometimes, (10%) said rarely, against (5%) who said never.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 27: Once you have become more aware about inner-talk significance in enhancing your speaking skill, how often do you try to control it?
5.3.1.1.7. Students’ potentialities to learn to speak fluent English alone are insufficient without positive self-talk

Furthermore, we asked the question of whether it is insufficient for learners to have great capabilities to learn to speak fluent English without motivating themselves through positive inner-speech. (5%) said they agree with the point, (45%) strongly agreed, against (5%) who said they are indifferent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Table 28: Having great abilities to learn to speak good English is insufficient in the absence of motivating oneself through positive self-talk.
5.3.1.1.18: Students’ negative self-talk is the problem behind their unsuccessful oral performance

Here again it is about learners’ self-talk, and precisely about whether students’ negative self-talk is considered the main obstacle behind students’ ineffective oral performance. (30%) said they agree, (55%) said they strongly agree, (10%) disagreed, against only (5%) strongly disagreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Table 29: Negative inner-talk is the problem behind all problems concerning students’ unsuccessful oral performance; even if they have great abilities and a good mastery of the language.
5.3.1.1.19. Students’ regular use of positive self-talk and its role in decreasing their anxiety and increasing their attempt to speak out the language

With the next question, we want to know about learners’ point of view about when they self-talk positively, in a regular basis, if that would decrease their anxiety, and in turn, would increase their chance to attempt to speak out the English language inside and outside the classroom. Of total respondents (100%) said yes.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Table 30: Students’ regular use of positive self-talk would decrease their anxiety; thereby increase their opportunities to try to speak the language
5.3.1.1.20. Taking conscious control of self-talk as the key to foster learners’ speaking skill

A question about students’ control of their inner-speech is necessary. We are eager to know about the key to enhance students’ speaking skill, i.e. whether it is by taking conscious control of their self-statements. (50%) said they agree, (40%) said they strongly agree, against (10%) who said Indifferent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31: The Key to improve students’ speaking skill is to have conscious control of their self-talk
5.3.1.1.21. Students’ feelings towards themselves and their abilities to learn to speak fluent English

Accordingly, we put our next question on what do students say to themselves, that is their feelings towards themselves and their potentialities to learn to speak more fluent English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can never improve</th>
<th>I am not competent enough to speak in front of my classmates</th>
<th>I will make a lot of stupid mistakes</th>
<th>My teacher start correcting a lot of mistakes</th>
<th>I am the most dumb students in the classroom</th>
<th>My vocabulary is very poor</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32: What are your feelings towards yourself and your capacities to learn to speak more Fluent English? What do you say to yourself?
5.3.1.1.22. Negative self-talk that comes to students’ minds when having an oral examination

When asked about some examples of negative self-messages that come to learners’ mind before and during their oral expression exam. Of the total respondents, (40%) said they will panic, (25%) said that their classmates will speak better than them, (20%) said they are not competent enough to speak fluent English, (10%) said their pronunciation is very bad, against (5%) who said they are sure they cannot do it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I’m sure I cannot do it</th>
<th>I’m not competent enough to speak good English</th>
<th>My pronunciation is very bad and I will make a lot of mistakes</th>
<th>My classmates will speak better than me</th>
<th>I will panic and I will not be able to say a word</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 33: What is the negative self-talk that comes to your mind when having an oral exam (before and during)?
As a matter of fact, up to this point we can state that a great majority of students really encounter negative self-talk before and during oral performance, which affect negatively their conversational skill, as it is displayed clearly in this figure. As a result, this question confirms all the previously answered questions (from the part of learners concerning the impact of self-talk; either positive or negative, on their oral performance).

5.3.1.1.23. Students’ opinion about how to combat and overcome negative inner-speech by replacing it with positive affirmations

Additionally, we asked them about their viewpoint concerning how to get rid of negative self-statements by substituting them by positive affirmations (self-talk). (50%) of the total respondents agreed, and (50 %) said they strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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</table>

Table 34: Do you think that one excellent way to combat and overcome negative self-talk is through using positive affirmations instead?
5.3.1.1.24. Some examples of positive affirmations that learners prefer to use to replace their negative inner-speech

Then, we want to know about what students do prefer from the above positive affirmations in order to use them instead of their negative self-talk. (40%) of total respondents preferred “I am a positive person and I create a positive life”, (30%) said all of them, (20%) preferred “I am a wonderful person of immense value and who deserves to be loved”, and (10%) preferred “I like myself”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I like myself”</th>
<th>“I am a positive person and I create a positive life”</th>
<th>“I am a wonderful person of immense value and who deserves to be loved”</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Table 35: If you agree, which from the following positive affirmations you do prefer to use to replace these negative self-talk messages.
5.3.1.1.25. Students’ belief about whether they can improve their potential through hard work and practice

About the belief of students, whether they think that they can bolster up their abilities by hard work and practice, (90%) of students said yes, against only (10%) who said no.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Table 36: Do you believe that your abilities can be improved by hard work, study and practice
5.3.1.1.26. Students’ point of view about the effect of positive self-statements in increasing their desire to practice more the language

The other aspect we want to know is whether positive self-messages push students to exert more effort and enhance their desire to try out the language. (90%) of students said yes, against (10%) who said no.

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td></td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Table 37: Words like: “I am good enough”, “excellent”, “great job”... push me to exert more effort and increase my desire to practice the language
5.3.1.1.27. Students’ self-efficacy to speak fluent English and their successful learning to the English language

Concerning the above question, we want to construe whether students think that if they believe strongly in their potentialities to become fluent English speakers, they will learn English effectively. Of the total respondents (100%) said yes.

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Table 38: If I believe strongly in my abilities to speak good English, I will learn English successfully.
5.3.1.28. Learners’ positive inner-speech and its effect on their motivation, persistence and energy

In the same line of thought, we want to ask them, if they feel relaxed, motivated, pleased, persistent, and full of energy, whenever they talk positively to themselves. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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Table 39: I feel pleased, relaxed, motive, persistent, and full of energy, when I talk to myself more positively

In section two, the items deal, primarily, with learners’ concern with the significance of self-talk in successful learning and their attitudes vis-à-vis enhancing their performance through positive inner-speech (self-talk).
5.3.1.129. The significance of students’ self-efficacy when facing any pitfall in speaking fluent English

The other question is about the importance of students’ belief in their potential to face difficulties that they encounter when trying to speak English. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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Table 40: It is quite important that students’ believe in their capabilities to face any difficulty in speaking good English
5.3.1.1.30. The view point of students whether positive self-statements would bolster up their oral performance

Right after that question we want to know about their opinion concerning whether their positive self-talk would foster their speaking skill, by improving their attentional focus, self-confidence and self-esteem, energy, desire, persistence, and reduce their anxiety and negative shyness. (35%) said ‘all of them’, (25%) said ‘self-confidence and self-esteem’, (20%) said ‘reducing their anxiety and negative shyness’, (5%) said ‘attention’ (focus), (5%) said ‘energy’, (5%) said ‘motivation’ (desire), and (5%) said ‘persistence’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attentio (focus)</th>
<th>Self-confidence and Self-esteem</th>
<th>Energy</th>
<th>Motivation (desire)</th>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>Reduce their anxiety and negative shyness</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 41: Do you think that positive self-talk would improve students’ speaking skill
5.3.1.1.31. Phrases that may help students change their negative self-talk to more positive inner-speech

Right after that question we want to know whether students could change their negative inner speech to positive inner speech, for more successful oral performance, through self-talk like: “I am smart” “I can do it”, “I have a great potential”. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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</table>

Table 42: May students change their negative self-talk to more positive inner-talk for better oral performance, by saying positive self-statements
5.3.1.1.32. Students’ feelings when they use some positive self-affirmations inside the classroom

As a last question in this questionnaire, we asked them about their feelings mainly; when they are practicing positive self-talk inside the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Fears and doubts go away</th>
<th>The exertion of more effort appears</th>
<th>Your attempt to try to use the English language improves</th>
<th>Your hesitation disappears</th>
<th>Your desire is enhanced</th>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 43: When you use some positive self-talk affirmations (mainly, inside the classroom) you feel that.
5.3.1.2. Personal goal-setting questionnaire

In this questionnaire, the items deal, primarily, with learners’ view points, awareness and their consideration of the significance of personal goal-setting in any effective learning, in general, and their speaking skill, in particular. More precisely, students’ concern with the tremendous impact that goal setting can have on their intrinsic motivation, attentional focus, persistence, effort exertion, hard work and practice.

5.3.1.2.1. Positive self-talk and personal goal-setting and its importance in Students’ learning and oral performance

The very first question we asked the population of students, is whether they do consider positive self-talk and personal goal-setting of primarily significance for effective learning, in general, and successful oral performance, in particular. (95%) of total respondents (N=20) said yes, against only (5%) who said no.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 44: Positive self-talk and personal goal-setting are considered of primary importance in learning, in general, and in learning to perform well orally, in particular
5.3.1.2.2. The interrelation between personal goal-setting and motivation to facilitating learning (speaking)

Here again it is about Students’ opinion about the relation between goal-setting and motivation and their influence in facilitating learning and learning to speak fluent English. (95%) of students said yes, against (5%) who said no.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 45: Personal goal-setting and motivation go hand in hand to facilitate learning (speaking skill)
5.3.1.2.3. Personal goal-setting as a potent intrinsic motivational factor associated with students’ oral performance

Afterwards, we asked them whether they think that personal goal-setting is a significant intrinsic motivational factor which is linked to their oral performance. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Table 46: Personal goal-setting is an important intrinsic motivational factor that is essentially linked to oral performance
5.3.1.2.4. Students’ goal-setting as an effective learning strategy used to increase their desire for more successful oral performance

We geared to ask students whether they think that goal setting could be considered as an important learning technique used to raise their incentives to study more effectively and also to foster their learning skill as their speaking skill. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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<th>Yes</th>
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</table>

Table 47: Goal-setting is a learning technique used to raise incentives (drives) for students to study more effectively and to improve, quickly, their learning skills such as speaking
5.3.1.2.5. The absence of goal-setting and its effect in hindering students to improve their speaking skill

Right after that question, we want to know whether students believe that when they do not set learning goals right from the very beginning of the academic year, they cannot bolster up their speaking skill. (80%) of students said yes, against only (20%) who said no.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 48: The majority of students do not set learning goals, from the very beginning of the academic year that is why they cannot improve their skills (speaking)
5.3.1.2.6. Students’ opinion about the reason behind not persisting in overcoming pitfalls while attempting to become fluent English speakers

The following question is to know their viewpoint whether they think that when they do not set goals right from the beginning of the year, as the prime cause of not persisting to overcome the difficulties they face when attempting to speak more fluent English. (75%) of students said yes, against (25%) said no.

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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Table 49: If yes, do you think this is the first reason, that they do not persist in overcoming difficulties in trying to speak more fluent English?
5.3.1.2.7. Increasing students’ effort and practice through personal goal-setting for better oral performance

With the next question, we want to know whether learners believe that when they set goals to themselves would foster their effort and practice more the language, which in turn would lead to effective oral performance. Of total respondents (100%) said yes.

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Table 50: Personal goal-setting leads to better oral performance by increasing effort and practice
5.3.1.2.8. Directing students’ to focus their effort on the potent point through goal-setting

The related question to the previous one is to know, whether learners are aware that setting learning (speaking) goals direct them to know more the important points they should focus their attention and effort on. (100%) of students responded yes.

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Table 51: Setting learning (speaking) goals direct students to know the significant points they should focus their effort on.
5.3.1.2.9. Students’ viewpoint about the exertion of more effort when they encounter a setback while they are working on their goals

After that, we asked them about their point of view concerning their attempt to attain their learning goals, whether they should exert more effort and they have to work even harder whenever they face setbacks. (100%) of learners said yes.

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Table 52: When working on my goals, I should put in maximum effort and work even harder if I have suffered a setback.
5.3.1.2.10. Students’ opinion about whether they have to set learning goals and objectives for better learning

Accordingly, we put forth our next question on whether learners must set learning goals and objectives for any successful learning to take place. (95%) of total respondents said yes, against (5%) only who said no.

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<td>95%</td>
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Table 53: I must regularly set learning goals and objectives to achieve my vision for my studies
5.3.1.2.11. Learners’ viewpoint concerning the significance of talking positively to themselves about setting learning goals

Furthermore, we asked them about their reaction towards thinking positively about setting learning goals. (95%) of students said yes, and (5%) said no.

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<tr>
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Table 54: I have to think positively about setting learning goals.
5.3.1.2.12. Students’ use of rewards for keeping themselves focused and motivated to achieve other goals

Then we want to know whether they see that when they attain one goal, they have to motivate themselves through rewards in order to keep themselves focused to achieve other learning goals. Of total respondents (100%) said yes.

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Table 55: When achieving one goal I have to use rewards to keep myself focused and motivated to attain other goals
5.3.1.2.13. Learners’ awareness about deadlines when setting learning; speaking goals

Because of the importance of deadlines in the process of goal-setting, we did not hesitate to ask them whether they have to pay attention to deadlines and about getting things done, when they set learning; speaking goals. (100%) of students answered yes.

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Table 56: In setting learning, speaking, goals I have to worry about deadlines
5.3.1.2.14. The satisfaction of knowing they have done great job as the biggest rewards after attaining a goal

The other aspect we want to know is students’ concern about whether they consider the satisfaction of having done a good job as the main reward they can have after fulfilling something. Of total respondents (100%) answered yes.

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Table 57: My biggest reward after completing something is the satisfaction of knowing I have done good job.
5.3.1.2.15. When an unexpected event threatens students’ goal and their practical solutions

The other question was about whenever students encounter some threatening events vis-à-vis their goals, whether they tend to walk away, set other goals by moving in a novel direction. (40%) of the total respondents answered yes, against (60%) who responded no.

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Table 58: When an unexpected event threatens my goal, I tend to walk away, set a different goal, and move in a new direction.
5.3.1.2.16. Students’ point of view about whether they have to worry when they cannot attain their goals and find some practical solutions to attain them

This question is about the belief of students, whether they have to worry about not achieving their goals, and whether they have to find some practical solutions to attain them. (100%) of total respondents said yes.

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Table 59: I have to worry about why I will not reach my goals, and find some practical solutions to attain them.
5.3.1.2.17. Students’ opinion about having a powerful vision of their future success before embarking on a new goal

As a final question in our analysis we wanted to know students opinion whether they have to create a vivid vision of their future success before starting to work on a new goal. Of total respondents (100%) said yes.

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Table 60: I have to create a vivid and powerful vision of any future success before embarking on a new goal.
5.3.1.2.18. Discussion

The different answers that students (participants) gave in this questionnaire do really reveal about some aspects concerning their attitudes towards the significance of cognitive-motivational strategies and also reveal the effect of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting in fostering and promoting students’ academic performance, in general, and the oral performance, in particular. Moreover, their answers strengthened more the background ideas we developed in this piece of research, mainly the importance of both self-talk and goal-setting in the process of learning and allows us to be somehow confident in the prediction of our hypothesis. If we consider again the answers of the respondents we can say that all learners’ attitudes towards the significance of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting in bolstering up their oral performance, except some learners, a minority who responded negatively, display a positive significant correlation with the effectiveness of their performance. As the answer in table 03, 14, 15, 19, 26, 27, 29, 44, 46, and finally table 49, all indicate the association between cognitive-motivational strategies; self-talk and goal-setting, and the enhancement of students academic (oral) performance.
5.3.2. The Teachers’ questionnaire analysis

For the time being we are about to discuss and analyze teachers’ responses:

5.3.2.1. Consideration of ‘self-management’ strategies as a key factor of successful learning

The majority of the fifteen instructors are teachers at the Department of English, University Frères Mentouri, Constantine. The majority of them are Oral Expression teachers. Most of them teach at E.N.S.C. The very first question we asked them is whether they consider ‘self-management’ learning strategies as a critical component of efficient learning. The total participants (N=15) (100%) said yes.

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Table 61: Do you consider “self-management” learning strategies as a critical component of efficient learning?
5.3.2.2. Standpoint about the utilization of some learning strategies to facilitate learning

The next question is about their opinion whether learners attempt to use some learning strategies that would help them learn better. (80%) of the total respondents said yes; against (20%) who said no.

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<td>80%</td>
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Table 62: Do you think that students, generally speaking, exert almost no effort to utilize some learning strategies that would facilitate the learning enterprise for them?
5.3.2.3. Students’ need to use ‘self-management’ learning strategies

Afterwards, we moved to ask the population of teachers about their opinion whether university students, need to utilize some ‘self-management’ learning strategies, in addition to their instructors’ direction, help and encouragements, in order to boost their performance, namely, their speaking skill. (73.33%) of total respondents strongly agreed, and (26.66%) agreed.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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Table 63: Do you see that university students need to use some ‘self-management’ learning strategies, in addition to their instructors’ direction, help and encouragements, so as to bolster up their performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?
5.3.2.4. The necessity of teaching and encouraging students to use self-management strategies to facilitate the learning/teaching operation

The related question to the previous one was to know, whether it is essential that teachers (namely Oral Expression teachers), teach and encourage their learners to use some beneficial self-management learning strategies to facilitate the teaching / learning enterprise. Of the total respondents, (53.33%) strongly agree, (40%) agreed, against (6.66%) who disagrees.

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Table 64: Do you believe that it is necessary (primordial) that instructors, in general, and Oral Expression teachers, in particular, teach and encourage their students to utilize some useful self-management strategies, in order to facilitate the learning / teaching operation?
5.3.2.5. The utility of introducing to students some learning strategies to create a successful learning experience

Then we want to know whether they consider it worthwhile to invest some few minutes, attempting to present them some useful learning strategies to make their learning process more successful. Of the total participants (40%) strongly agreed with the statement and (60%) also agreed.

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Table 65: When you teach, do you think it is worthwhile to invest few minutes in some sessions and try to introduce to your students some beneficial learning strategies, in an attempt to create an effective learning experience?
5.3.2.6. Raising students’ awareness about utilizing positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S)

Right after that question we gear then to ask whether they have ever devoted some time attempting to inculcate in their students’ minds the utility of using some potent self-management learning strategies (positive self-talk and personal goal-setting). That is, raising students’ awareness about their significance. (73.33%) of total respondents said yes, against (26.66%) who said no.

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Table 66: Have you ever devoted some time trying to inculcate in your students’ minds the idea of utilizing P.S.T and P.G.S as potent self-management learning strategies?
5.3.2.7. Displaying to learners the significance of applying P.S.T and P.G.S as potent cognitive-motivational strategies

In the same line of thought, we asked the population of teachers whether they have ever attempted to display to their students the significance of using P.S.T and P.G.S as cognitive-motivational strategies that would enable them perform better generally, and perform better orally, in particular. The total respondents (60%) said yes, against (40%) who said no.

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Table 67: Have you ever tried to display to your learners the importance of applying ‘positive self-talk’ and ‘personal goal-setting’ as cognitive-motivational strategies that would boost their performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?
5.3.2.8. Self-talking negatively and not self-setting goals and difficulties in persisting to go beyond obstacles when trying to perform well orally

With the next question, we want to know whether teachers see that the majority of students do not set personal goals (learning goals) and they self-talk negatively, considering it the primary cause of not persisting to go beyond pitfalls when attempting to perform well orally. (73.33%) of the total participants agreed with the statement, (20%) who strongly agreed, against (6.66%) who disagreed.

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Table 68: Do you think that the majority of learners do not self-set learning goals and they self-talk negatively, that is why they do not persist in overcoming difficulties, in trying to perform well orally?
5.3.2.9. The utilization of P.S.T and P.G.S and students’ effective oral performance

The other question is about their viewpoint whether they think when learners self-set some learning goals and self-talk positively, this would greatly aid them foster their oral performance (conversational skills). (13.33%) of the total respondents answered that they would enhance their self-confidence and self-efficacy, (13.33%) said they would increase their self-motivation, (6.66%) said their persistence would be promoted, (6.66%) said that they would boost effort exertion, and (60%) reported that P.S.T and P.G.S would enhance: self-confidence and self-efficacy, self-motivation, persistence, effort exertion, enthusiasm (all of them).

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<th>Self-motivation</th>
<th>Persistence (perseverance)</th>
<th>Effort exertion and energy</th>
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Table 69: In your opinion, would self-setting some learning goals and self-talking positively, truly help students’ improve their [oral] performance in the sense that they would enhance their:
5.3.2.10. Negative and positive self-talk and their impact upon students’ learning (generally) and their oral performance (particularly)

The other question is to see whether they think positive or negative self-talk have a potential impact upon learners’ learning process broadly speaking, and their conversational skill, particularly. The total respondents (100%) answered yes.

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Table 70: According to you, would students’ self-talk (either positive or negative) have a powerful effect upon their learning in general, and their oral performance, in particular?
5.3.2.11. The interfering thoughts (negative self-talk) and how they affect students’ oral performance before and during the oral performance

Concerning this question we want to be more specific and precise by trying to know their opinion concerning the negative self-talk (the interfering thoughts) that students encounter before performing orally and at the moment they are presenting and their destructive impact in preventing them from performing effectively. (53.33%) of the total respondents said they strongly agree, (40%) said they agree, against (6.66%) who disagreed.

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Table 71: Do you think that the interfering thoughts (negative self-talk) that come to students’ minds before and during an oral performance would hinder them produce successful oral performance?
5.3.2.12. Learners’ negative self-talk and the preventive effect it causes in hindering them from speaking in oral expression classes

About the destructive effects negative self-talk causes, we want to know how exactly this happen inside the classroom and how can N.S.T hinder students from practicing the language through active participation in Oral Expression session. (13.33%) of total respondents said it increases anxiety, (6.6%) answered that it promotes shyness, (13.33%) said it fosters hesitation, (6.66%) said that it increases students’ underestimation of their potential, and (60%) stated all of them.

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Table 72: In your opinion, can we consider that students’ negative self-talk would prevent them from trying out the English language in Oral Expression sessions, in that it increases their
5.3.2.13. Teachers’ major role in helping students conquer and substitute their negative self-talk

As a final question concerning the major issue of negative self-talk. We asked the population of teachers whether they believe that they can play a major role in helping students combat their negative self-talk (destructive self-talk) and replace it with constructive one (positive self-talk). (43.66%) of the respondents strongly agreed, and (53.33%) also agreed.

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Table 73: Do you see that the instructor can play a major role in aiding his/her students conquer and substitute their negative self-talk, by fostering their self-efficacy, self-confidence and their self-motivation and thereby encourage positive self-talk to take place?
5.3.2.14. Discussion

With respect to practitioners’ responses, a large number of answers were quite positive in the sense that they strengthened more our ideas; they reveal some useful points about the teaching and learning situation. It is reasonable to think that, though the participating experienced teachers are noticeably well aware about the significance of the attitudinal psychological and affective side of their students (emotions, feelings, attitudes, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation), and well aware also about the importance of learning strategies in the operation of effective learning (mainly, self-management learning strategies; such as cognitive-motivational strategies; positive self-talk and personal goal-setting), a certain number of teachers (26.66%) do not devote some time attempting to inculcate in their students’ minds the idea of using P.S.T and P.G.S, as potent self-management learning strategies in order to bolster up their conversational skills (oral performance), i.e. raising students’ awareness about their significance (cf. tables 6, 7)

Significantly, we have to mention also that teachers’ answers have shed more light on the necessity of utilizing some self-management learning strategies, precisely P.S.T and P.G.S in association with teachers’ help, encouragements and direction, so as to encourage efficient learning to take place (cf. tables 1, 3, 4). As a matter of fact, it is primordial to say at first that something must be done (from the part of learners and teachers) in order to enhance the application of these potent cognitive-motivational learning strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S), in order to influence positively the affective and the cognitive sides of learners which play a considerable role in bolstering up students’ performance, generally, and students’ oral performance, particularly.
Last but not least, we can say that our preliminary analysis of the data of the questionnaire reveals strong agreements with what we have set before as questions and hypothesis, that indeed positive self-talk and personal goal-setting impact positively students’ oral performance. In that, when learners self-talk positively and self-set some learning goals (namely speaking goals; the focal point of interest in the present research) their oral performance would be improved and enhanced.

5.4. Conclusion

Throughout the estimation of the data of the questionnaires (teachers and learners questionnaires), it has become clear that indeed positive self-talk and personal goal-setting (as cognitive-motivational strategies) play a major role in improving students’ oral performance (the speaking skill). Therefore, they should not be atomized in just making the learner merely succeed in his/her studies. But rather learners would become, not surprisingly, outstanding students. In that, they adopt self-management strategies in order to foster their academic performance, generally, and their conversational skills (oral performance), particularly.

Moreover, and as a global understanding of the questionnaires’ results, we can construe with some relief that the learners have also understood that successful students use self-management (cognitive-motivational) strategies as positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S). They also display a great deal of awareness vis-à-vis the significance of these cognitive-motivational strategies. Hence, our hypothesis has been confirmed about the potent effects (potential impact) of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting in enhancing students’ academic performances (globally) and their oral performance (specifically), throughout the results of teachers’ and students’ questionnaires.
CHAPTER SIX: FIELD WORK

SENSITIZING STUDENTS ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK AND PERSONAL GOAL-SETTING: AN EXPERIMENT

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6.1. Introduction

This research reflects our special interest in examining the usefulness of positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) in language learning settings, by exploring the tremendous impact they can have on students’ performance. As a matter of fact, the experimental method seeks the cause and effect relationship and it is, probably, one of the best ways, if well controlled, to investigate human behaviour, namely learners’ behaviour. We are particularly interested in changes associated with the application of such cognitive-motivational strategies, as positive self-talk and personal goal-setting.

This chapter, then, is consecrated to the presentation and analysis of the experiment, i.e. the training program. First, we will describe the research design which is introduced to learners. Then, the subjects’ population and sampling will be presented. Finally, the two proposed self-management learning methods (P.S.T and P.G.S) will be discussed described, and analysed in some detail.

6.2 Research design

In the present study, a quasi-experimental design is used. The following description and analysis of the experiment, treatment, is conceived around the idea of attempting to sensitize students about the significance and potent role of P.S.T and P.G.S in bolstering up their academic performance, by taking one skill (speaking) from the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for investigation and measurement. This training program is also a trial to bring some evidence that; in fact, these self-management learning strategies (S.T and G.S) would be of great help
for learners in a variety of skills, beside their learning potentialities and language mastery.

In our investigation we have used one experimental or treatment group (a follow up study of one group) which has received a training program about self-talk (S.T) and goal-setting (G.S), i.e. our main variables. The dependent variable is students’ oral performance, since it would depend on the proposed treatment. Whereas, the use of cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) are the independent variables.

To be more precise, students ignored completely that they are subjects to an experiment, for the simplest reason, that from the very beginning of the year we consecrated Thursdays’ sessions to “free talks”, i.e. group discussion about different topics, in which we have introduced and implemented the treatment in terms of extra beneficial lessons with some tasks and activities about self-talk and goal-setting, with a clear explanation that these self-management strategies would aid them learn more diligently.

Students’ have first undergone a pre-test. Then, a treatment is carried out, i.e. “positive self-talk” (P.S.T) and “personal goal-setting” (P.G.S) strategies are introduced, presented and proposed to be implemented by learners while studying. The treatment takes place in E.N.S.C English Department; it lasted four months (2nd of February 2012 to May 31st of 2012). After having presented and proposed the two cognitive motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) for implementation, we assessed our student’s levels of oral performance by means of a post-test. We do that believing that differences will clearly be observed. After that, the pre-and post-test
scores are compared. This means that, comparing students’ grades before the experiment, or the training program, and after being taught the two strategies.

6.3 Subjects’ population and sampling

First year E.N.S students of the English Department at Constantine Institution, is the target population of this study. There are a hundred of students inscribed at this level, in the academic year 2011-2012, divided into five groups with an average of twenty students per group.

Deciding to work precisely with 1st years stems from our strong belief that building and raising students’ awareness about some efficacious learning strategies, i.e. cognitive-motivational ones, would work better for the first level (since it is the basic university level learners go through). As a matter of fact, students would apply these in the next levels too (i.e. 2nd, 3rd, Master, Doctorate levels).

Because it would be very difficult to work on the whole population, we have chosen to work with a representative homogenous sample. Twenty students were randomly selected. This has been done by choosing randomly to work with the first group among first years E.N.S.C. students which represent a fifth of the whole population.

On the whole, the subjects’ ages vary from eighteen to nineteen years old, with the exception of one repetitive student, who is twenty years old. Moreover, as far as sex (gender) is concerned, the total number 100% of the participants are female students; they are all Algerians but from different regions of the country, since the
group is selected randomly, we did not take into consideration the variable ‘region,’ for we do not believe it poses any doubt concerning bias.

For the sake of validity and reliability, it is worth mentioning that, throughout the four months during which we conducted our experiment, the training being built upon raising students’ awareness to utilize self-management learning strategies\(^1\) in the process of learning. And the irrelevant variables that might intervene in the experiment and might influence the results are taken into consideration, such as students’ boredom, demotivation, and mood swings…and so forth. For that purpose, we tried to make our instruction, precisely, in an-hour-and-a-half-a-week “free-talk” sessions as relaxing and stimulating as possible, in that students have ultimately been taught basic knowledge about self-talk and goal-setting genres. To be precise, subjects have been taught the supposedly more familiar concepts first like “motivation” and “self-motivation” in order to introduce the less familiar concepts: “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting”.

Additionally, we have carried out some tasks and activities, which go hand in hand with the training program lessons, which involved subjects’ participation inside the classroom so as to create a kind of personal involvement from the part of the learner and to ensure that the “intervention” is on the right track, and the irrelevant variables do not interfere, intervene, as a consequence, the participants

\(^{1}\) Like cognitive- motivational strategies which are the chief interest of our present research, precisely self-talk and goal-setting.
may better construe the lessons\(^1\) being taught and would apply them in the other classes\(^2\) or courses too.

### 6.3.1 Participants and situation

By the time when the training program was about to be conducted, (in the second semester), the participants were eager, we do believe, to be introduced to our chief self-management learning strategies\(^3\). Our convictions behind the experiment could be summarized as follow:

1. Could we manage to sensitize students about the significance and the utility of the cognitive-motivational strategies in bolstering up their learning productivity and performance?

2. Could we be able to make them, principally, pay more attention to their self-talk (inner-speech), control it and mainly get rid of the negative interfering self statements (negative self-talk) which hinder them produce successful [oral] performance?

3. Can personal goal-setting as a self-management learning strategy be of great help for learners to manage their time more appropriately, direct their efforts, energy and focus to meet their learning [speaking] purposes and objectives?

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\(^1\) Providing students with a detailed overview about self-talk and goal-setting.

\(^2\) The other modules concerning other skills like: written expression, grammar, vocabulary (listening, reading and writing).

\(^3\) Positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S)
4. Are students going truly to consider and utilize these self-management strategies in their learning after having been made more aware\(^1\) of their potent usefulness?

As a matter of fact, we opted for the observation of the participants’ behaviours, in addition to the analysis of the results of our experiment (as it would be stated below)

6.4. Experimental design

6.4.1. Description of the pre-test

The pre-test was designed to assess learners’ potential to dialogue and express themselves in the English language, say, their oral performance. To be precise, it took place before conducting the intervention, training program (before the first examination). Psychologically speaking, it makes a good sense to give learners an opportunity to practice and try out the language, i.e. a psychological preparation for the forthcoming exam (1\(^{st}\) examination).

Our pre-test lasted for three hours. In a motivating, relaxed and warm atmosphere, i.e. a self-presentation was carried out. Each student took approximately eight to nine minutes to perform. We wrote topics on small pieces of paper, we folded them and then asked students to pick up one piece randomly and to try to speak about the main ideas of the chosen topic for about eight minutes. The proposed topics are as follows:

\(^1\) This applies that, after being trained for about four months about self-talk and goal-setting.
➢ Internet craze (influence)
➢ Leisure time
➢ The importance of reading
➢ TV influence
➢ Success in life
➢ Eating habits
➢ Freedom
➢ Child labor
➢ Domestic violence
➢ Parents guidance
➢ Culture of other countries

As a matter of fact, the obtained grades of the pre-test are considered as the raw information (data) for the t-test analysis and interpretation (as stated below).

6.4.2. The Training program: (intervention)

A training program has been undertaken to explore the effects of “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting”, as self-management cognitive-motivational strategies, on first-year E.N.S students’ [oral] performance. Precisely, this training
principally aims at sensitizing the subjects about the importance and the usefulness of such methods in encouraging learners to produce more successful oral performance.

As a matter of fact, we tried, tentatively, to check whether, indeed, applying these learning methods would bolster up students’ academic performance.

6.4.2.1. Organization of the training program

Given that Oral Expression module (course) has two sessions a week, that is, three hours a week. One hour and a half for Tuesdays’ sessions undertaken in the laboratory. Whereas, Thursdays’ sessions were about one hour and a half carried out in the classroom. Our training program took place on Thursdays’ sessions, i.e. Thursdays’ courses were consecrated only for the training. Within that day we divided our training into well prepared detailed lessons.

On the whole, for the preparation of our experiment, i.e. the training program, we have taken a period of four months to make subjects aware about the potent role that “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting” can play in promoting their [oral] performance, by attempting to instill in their heads the idea that they should not rely merely on teachers’ orientations concerning some learning strategies and methods but rather to try out some self-management learning strategies that would intensify and strengthen their learning (speaking) effectiveness.

1 By taking the “speaking skill” as one important skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), as an example in this research for scientific measurement.
For this experiment, we have chosen to work, precisely, on cognitive-motivational strategies so as to inculcate in the participants’ minds the sense of responsibility to awaken their true potential for learning, i.e. activating the hidden potentialities they possess. It means that students in particular can reprogram their minds for the sake of performance enhancement through the utilization of “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting” methods.

Thus, the participants, we do believe, would logically be satisfied and convinced (throughout the training program sessions) that indeed these unexploited learning methods have to be consolidated and fortified in learning settings.

6.4.2.2. A Detailed description of lessons content

Before introducing the training program itself, the participants\(^1\) have been first introduced to a general overview about ‘motivation and mainly ‘self-motivation’\(^2\) to simplify and clarify things for them (from the very beginning of the training), warming them up by making them more lively and enthusiastic to receive the training lessons more effectively.

A more detailed description of the training program lessons can be stated as follows:

Part one (I) is totally devoted to self-talk lessons, and part two (II) is entirely consecrated to goal-setting lessons. At first, the subjects were informed before that all the remaining Thursdays’ sessions of the second semester, would be devoted to

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\(^1\)A sample of twenty students have been selected from the target population (as noted earlier)

\(^2\)That is, intrinsic motivation, since it is the focal interest in the present research.
the instruction of two important concepts, that are extra lessons we proposed for them (which are not included in the curriculum): “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting” that would be of great help for their learning effectiveness, in general, and the conversational skill, in particular. That is, they will learn a lot of beneficial techniques and methods which would foster their learning productivity, engagement and creativity in different skills.

**Part I**

This is a detailed description of “self-talk” lessons, explained in successive sessions (and to avoid redundancy, all minute details about the training lessons would be found in the previously discussed chapters: the literature review), which would be displayed as the following:

- **The first session**

  This is the first step in our training program in which we have starting by introducing, first, the two different types of “motivation”: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (self-motivation), after defining and clarifying what is meant by the concept of motivation (as an introductory warm up session (cf. chapter one: section on motivation defined and its two types).

  After that, we have emphasized its significance in the process of learning a foreign language (namely the English language). Mainly, in learning how to speak more fluent English. Simply because students were studying the listening and speaking course (Oral Expression).
Additionally, it is important to note that subjects were invited to participate in the presentation of these lessons, since they are considered free talk sessions, by exchanging ideas, asking questions, responding to questions and providing some concrete examples from their learning experience, i.e. enriching the lessons trough personal involvement and participation which in turn would give them more opportunity to practice the English language and improve it; for it is an Oral Expression course.

Thus, we tried in this introductory lesson to inculcate, in students’ minds, the idea that they should not rely, entirely, on extrinsic motivation.

Our focus was directed mainly to intrinsic motivation, for the simplest reason that, eventhough students receive, every now and then, many forms of extrinsic motivation, either through obtaining extra marks from the part of their instructors, or through hearing some rewarding expressions from time to time such as “praising words” like “good, excellent, great…etc.” or encouraging statement such as ‘good job, well done, brilliant ideas’…and so forth, in order to boost their self-efficacy (self-confidence in common sense terms) to work hard and to exert more effort.

Hence, self-motivation, significantly, remains the most potent one, mainly for students, in that students’ extrinsic motivation does not last for a long time or at times learners would not receive any kind of extrinsic motivation. Thus, it would be insufficient for them to be merely extrinsically motivation but rather they need to have this self-motivation to find a kind of willingness to push themselves forward by encouraging themselves, and using extra support, i.e. extrinsic motivation, whenever provided.
Last but not least, after we have discussed the concept of motivation for about an hour we have demonstrated to students’ how to enhance, enthuse and sustain their intrinsic motivation (cf. section on intrinsic motivation, in the 1st chapter). Moreover, subjects’ attention has been directed, in purpose\(^1\), to the potent cognitive motivational strategies “positive self-talk” and “personal goal-setting” as learning methods that have a powerful impact on promoting and fostering their self-motivation. It means that, students were told that these strategies would be discussed in depth in the forthcoming sessions.

Noteworthy, inside the classroom, we have observed that from this first session, students displayed a kind of eagerness to participate, talk and discuss their ideas about the things they know about the concept and focused their attention even to minute details, concerning intrinsic motivation, which in turn provided us with some relief to continue our detailed elucidations and explanations, and which made things clear for us that the idea has been well grasped and all that fuel our forthcoming sessions.

\* The second session

Before embarking in describing what has been done in the second lesson, it is important to stress our attempt and willingness, from the very beginning of the session, to build and raise subjects’ awareness about the potent impact of the concept

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\(^1\) In fact, to draw the subjects’ attention to make a kind of connection between self-motivation and forthcoming concept, “self-talk” and “goal-setting” and their influence in enhancing intrinsic motivation.
of “self-talk” or ‘inner-speech’ on their entire learning process, in general, and their oral performance, i.e. speaking skill, in particular. The students were, first, stimulated, i.e. intrigued to guess what is meant by “self-talk” in scientific terms, i.e. its precise definition, and instead of starting ‘directly’ defining the concept, it was preferable for us to begin with an intriguing question in terms of a task, in order to boost their self-motivation.

**The task**

Students were asked to stop doing anything and to close their eyes and listen to their self-talk, inner-speech inside their heads for about a minute. And thereafter to guess what is going on in their minds and trying to specify what it is and define it.

The subjects tried, eagerly, to participate to give their answers. Some of them specified the process as “thinking or talking to one self”, others responded by saying that it is a range of ideas and thoughts that keep turning around in their heads. But what was noticed precisely is that students were, entirely, amazed how little they were paying attention to their mental chatter before. Moreover, they asserted that they have never tried to stop and listen to what they are saying to themselves, and that they were totally ignorant about its potent effects on their mood, motivation and their behaviors, in general, and their academic productivity and performance, in particular.

As a matter of fact, they were made aware that ‘self-talk’ or ‘inner-speech’ is of crucial importance, a key factor, in their lives, learning and well-being. For that, it has clearly been stated that the ‘inner-dialogue’ (cf. self-talk definition: chapter two) is like a radio, subtly, influencing their mood, mental state, thereby their behaviors
without their conscious awareness. Thereafter, we pushed for specificity by noting that the term “self-talk” or “inner-talk”, generally speaking, refers to the mental chatter that goes on continuously in our minds. And that some persons talk to themselves out loud at times, but everyone “talks” to him/herself silently. It means that, inner talk can be heard from others (loud) or cannot be heard (silent).

Furthermore, it has been made explicit that this mental chatter (inner-speech) gives us a continuous play-by-play commentary on our lives, at times we are aware about the content of our self-talk. Like saying for instance “what a dumb mistake!” after making an error. At other times, its content remains largely unconscious, as for example keep saying negative things to one self without even noticing, unconsciously, like “I am a passive incompetent person”…and so on.

Additionally, it has been elucidated, in this lesson, that sometimes ‘inner-talk’ occurs in first person format “I”, as in this previous example, at times in the second person format “you” as for instance “you probably cannot do it” “watch what you are doing! Girl, are you behind schedule, today! “. Moreover, we highlighted through this session the fact that what we say to themselves does, in fact, affect us. In that, for decades now psychologists, analysts’, and many others have used “self-talk” as a means to help people gain control of their lives. Thus, the same thing for students, simply because they can utilize ‘self-talk’ as cognitive-motivational strategy to bolster up their academic performance namely, oral performance (we will have more to say about this later).

Significantly, through classroom observation subjects were taking notes of the points they found important, while we were writing, from time to time, on the board
key words, labels or tasks/activities instructions. They were also provided by some detailed definition of self-talk (cf. this section in the second chapter).

The third session

The third lesson was, principally, consecrated to elucidate that self-talk takes many forms. It can be negative, positive or neutral. And since the neutral inner-talk poses no problem, because it does not affect negatively individuals, for it could be simple ideas, information, knowledge, thoughts…etc but the surprising thing is that most of our self-talk is negative. That is, most of it sounds pretty negative. And this negativity has a tremendous effect on us (as it would be mentioned further down).

Thereafter, negative self-talk has been defined, and its five kinds\(^1\) have been stated, explained and illustrated by a range of examples (all details are mentioned in chapter two).

After that, the subjects have been introduced to ‘positive self-talk’, its definition and its three kinds (optimistic, realistic, nowistic self-talk) with some positive self-talk examples (cf. this section in chapter two)

Students’ active participation and increased motivation to follow our detailed instruction and discussion about the two kinds of self-talk was obvious from classroom observation.

\(^1\) Awfulistic self-talk (awfulizing), catastrophic self-talk (catastrophizing), overgeneralizing self-talk, polarized thinking, (self-talk) should have self-talk (shoulding)
In order to maintain the subjects’ intrigue and enthusiasm, we opted for a very useful activity to involve them more in the lesson and in order to make them construe more the concept through practice.

**Activity**

Students were given instruction to write a brief note on the negative phrases, words, conversations or statements they, generally or most of the time, say to themselves:

Take a sheet of paper and jot down negative words, phrases, or statements about the things you say to yourself without any embarrassment, since it is happening to everyone to self-talk negatively from time to time. After that, say what do you feel after saying them to yourself and say whether your negative self-talk is exceeding positive self-talk (frankly speaking, in that it is not a test it is a free conversation (group discussion).

Accordingly, the time given to complete this task was about a quarter or so. And from immediate observation, we noticed that participations were, truly, eager to conduct the activity. Thus, there is no doubt concerning honesty when answering. After finishing the task and collecting students’ papers (cf. Appendix IV) subjects were very motivated to participate and talk about their feelings right after saying negative self-statements. Almost all of them expressed that these self-statements are quite common, for them, they sound critical, harsh, or limiting. They make them feel defeated, powerless, bad and zero-energy.

To be precise, our inquiry about their exact feeling after saying negative things to themselves was exclusively meant to awaken them to the fact that, indeed, these
negative self-statements (negative self talk) did really affect their feelings, emotions, motivation, behaviors and academic performance (through their personal experience).

❖ The fourth session

Purposefully, it has been attempted, in this session, to highlight that self-talk awareness, indeed, does not require any special equipment and it does not cost anything. Thereby all that is required is the willingness to stop one’s negative inner-dialogue. We also emphasized another positive aspect of self-talk, is that we can utilize it no matter how busy we are; in that it can be done in our “spare time”. We displayed, mainly, that self-talk (positive inner-dialogue) is considered one of the most powerful methods for emotional; behavioral self-management and for self-improvement. For instance, enhancing and fostering ones:

➢ Self-confidence
➢ Self-efficacy
➢ Self-respect
➢ Self-worth
➢ Self-esteem
➢ Self-help
➢ Self-motivation.

1 The influence of self-talk on emotions, behaviors and performances would be discussed further down in the forth-coming session.

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Thereafter, we elucidated that when an individual takes control of her self-talk, she then takes control of her entire life, thereby making anything possible. That is to say, everything begins as a small idea in the mind, all that can be or do should first be a possibility in the mind, i.e. the whole universe begins in the mind.

Additionally, some detailed elucidations have been provided to make things clear for subjects about how exactly self-talk\(^1\) (inner-speech) affects us. To be precise, the ‘subconscious mind’, is constantly listening to every word we say to ourselves. The subconscious mind just accepts everything we tell it and responds accordingly. This means, it considers all the self-talk (self-messages) as the truth, even if it is not, and then goes about creating the circumstances to match, even though we may not be consciously focusing on our inner-speech, our subconscious mind is listening to everything we say to ourselves. In the main, words and thoughts have their own energy, including ‘self-talk’, i.e. our self-talk either positive or negative affects our emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health. Not surprisingly, negative\(^2\) self-talk has an instantaneous effect on every cell in our bodies and can drain us of vital energy. In other words, when we keep self-talking negatively, we feel that we have no energy. And negative self-talk attract other negative self-messages.

Up to this point, students were following the lesson with a remarkable concentration, and they were asked to just imagine the impact of listening all day long to some of the negative self-statements tapes stored in the subconscious mind. And whether they have ever had a day when everything seemed like it was too much

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\(^1\) Whether positive or negative counter-statements.
to handle and they could barely drag themselves through the day? What kind of self-talk you think you were listening to on those days? And what about the days when your anxiety level made you feel like your nervous system was wired so tight that something was going to snap? Could it have been the result of negative self-messages traveling through your nerves?

Overall, we tried to put the subjects in the picture, as much as we could, by highlighting the powerful effects of self-talk, that is, self-talk either positive or negative impacts greatly: inner needs, inner strength, inner, peace, inner desires, inner dreams, inner hopes, inner health, inner wealth, and inner joy.

❗ The fifth session

In this fifth session we provided two exercises to give the subjects an opportunity to practice some concrete examples about negative self-talk, thereby to experience their potent effects in influencing their mood, energy and feelings.

1st Exercise

Students were given ten minutes to conduct the practice. They were asked to say the following example of typical ‘negative self-talk’ to themselves (once, twice…or more):

“I am not good enough to do anything I set my mind to. Everything goes wrong for me. I always have such bad luck! I cannot trust anyone. I get upset and mad all the time! My health is always poor, and I will probably end up with some horrible disease? The cancer rate these days is really high…!”
After completing the practice, students were asked: Does it make you feel uncomfortable? They answered (all of them) yes exactly. Students also have noticed that after saying similar things to themselves they felt disappointed and in a bad mood and have no energy to do anything. Accordingly, we have elucidated that this example is extreme, but it demonstrates that words are not just words; they have energy just like everything else. And as a result, they will affect the mood and the energy (as it has been explained in the previous lesson).

2nd Exercise

Say the sentence below to yourself. Say it several times, and when you do, notice how it makes you feel. Notice the sensations and reactions in your body. How does it affect your mood? Give it a try for about a quarter: “I am silly, so useless and pathetic. I am no good at anything, and everything goes wrong. Nobody loves me that much why would they? I am always broke. I am ugly and obese. It would be just my luck!!”

When students practiced the passage several times they were asked: okay, so now how do you feel? Some of them said “I noticed my body suddenly feeling very heavy after saying this just once” (let alone about saying similar things in a constant basis).

Then, we explained that these sorts of conversations go on in our heads day in, day out, but it is usually so automatic that we do not even notice it. That is, individuals just assume their self-talk is positive. But in fact, the majority of most peoples’ mind chatter is negative rather than positive. So can you imagine the effects that constant negative self-talk can have on you over a period of time, it does not
only affects your emotions, but can also manifest into physical symptoms. After all, thoughts and emotions are energy just like everything else, and the low vibrations of ongoing negative self-talk will decrease your vitality and can lead to anxiety symptoms. (We will have more to say about this later in the forthcoming sessions).

We, then, stressed that obviously all of us say negative things to ourselves at times, and this is quite natural and normal. It is impossible to expect to say only positive things to oneself on a constant basis. The occasional negative self-talk is nothing to be concerned about, but when our negative self-talk exceed the positive it is time to take action.

Up to this point, the emphasis has been primarily to focus on the demonstration of the predominant type of self-talk (negative) and its destructive effects moldering and devastating ones energy, vitality and potentiality to do anything, say, smashing ones entire life. As for learners, negative self-talk hinders them from performing successfully, in that it is a major contributor of general anxiety (it will be discussed further down).

❖ The sixth session

In this session, we did not hesitate to ask the students how they can deal with negative self-talk, since they are more aware about the destructive effects of it; it serves as a major contributor of anxiety (cf. the section on anxiety in the fourth chapter). And whether they think that it is quite possible to control their self-talk (negative) and ease their anxiety, for better learning.
As a matter of fact, some of the subjects were totally afraid that it is not possible to take control of it. For that, we have clarified for them, the fact that each and every one of us has the key tool we need: "our brain". That is to say, the awesome power of the human brain has become more almost fully understood and strategies (technologies) such as self-talk have been developed to tap into this power. In other words, everyone is capable to make the changes to herself, she has always wanted to make. Hence, you have access to the tool\(^1\) that can actually change you from the inside out, improving your life in every area you desire.

Moreover, we tried to display to students, that there is a question that all of us are always asking; whether it is truly possible to master our self-talk (inner-speech) entirely, or even if that is desirable. What is quite known for a fact is that it is totally possible to change our negative self-talk that no longer serves our best interests. Eventhough, changing self-talk is one of the most difficult and challenging things in the world to do. But through a strong determination and motivation one can easily transform or neutralize the power of negative self-talk (cf. chapter two: awareness and motivation to change negative self-talk)

\[\begin{align*}
\textbf{The seventh session}
\end{align*}\]

We, tentatively, tried in this lesson to guide learners and display them how to transform their negative self-talk. For that, we provided two behavioral approaches to transform or neutralize the power of negative self-talk (cf. chapter two). Thereafter,

\(^1\) This means, positive self-talk method.
we clarified for them how to substitute negative self-talk (N.S.T) with positive self-talk (P.S.T) as a means to change their destructive negative self-talk (cf. replacing N.S.T with P.S.T: chapter two). After that, students have been shown how to review and reinforce their new self-talk\(^1\) (cf. reviewing and reinforcing your new self-talk; chapter two).

It thus appears that, students were eager to implement the previously mentioned ways to transform and change their negative self-talk to a more positive constructive self-talk. In simple words, we have noticed that the subjects became more aware, and recognized the major impact of positive self-talk (P.S.T) on their studies, and on their entire lives, and decided that it is time to change their negative self-talk (N.S.T) to a more creative positive one. This brings us to the provision of the forthcoming practice.

**Practice**

Thereafter, we asked the subjects to try to say the following sentence to themselves several times:

‘I am good enough and so proud of myself. I put my best effort into that exam, and I know I will do well. I am so grateful for all the wonderful people around me, and I really appreciate all the wonderful things in my life. And what a beautiful day it is outside today! I feel great…!’

After that students were asked: ‘after saying this to yourself, how do you feel? Students took approximately about a quarter practising these positive self-talk

\(^1\) This means, positive self-talk.
examples. After finishing, they actively participated to express how, exactly, they felt after saying these positive self-messages. Students, amazingly, communicated that they felt wonderfully, light, good, happy, full of energy, anxiety-free, highly motivated and self-confident… and so on.

Considering all the points discussed up to this point, and from classroom observation, we decided to provide our students with a detailed lesson about the influence of self-talk on emotions, behaviors, and performance (the next lesson would be of a great help for the participants).

❖ The eighth session

It is important to note that in this last lesson in part one, we want, tentatively, to highlight the point about the potent impact of self-talk on individuals' (namely students) emotions, feelings, behaviors, and thereby their performance (as in this case students’ oral performance). For that reason, we consecrated some detailed explanations and descriptions about:

- How does self-talk influence my emotions and behaviors (cf. chapter two: positive self-talk)

- Managing yourself (cognitive influence on behavior (cf. chapter two)

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1 Self-talk lessons of the training program.
Using cognitive influences (self-talk) to improve performance (how the way we talk to ourselves can change the way we work: chapter two).

At this point, it should be reemphasized that all the points covered concerning the significance of self-talk were meant to make the subjects bear in mind that if they want to change current behavior, say, performance, they first have to change the negative self-talk stored in the subconscious part of the brain and substitute it by positive constructive inner-speech, through mind programming, i.e. brain washing.

Part II

The following is a detailed description of personal goal-setting lessons, elucidated in successive sessions.

❖ The ninth session

In this first lesson about goal-setting we started at first, by introducing to students the importance of goals. That is, we placed a strong emphasis on setting learning goals from the very beginning of the academic year to give direction to their learning process, and to make them know where, precisely, they should focus their efforts, say, the points that need improvement and betterment. We emphasized that goal-setting is a potent process for thinking about their ideal future, and for motivating themselves to turn their vision of this future into reality. This process also helps them choose where they want to go in life. By knowing precisely what they want to achieve or attain (from their learning process). By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, they can measure, assess and take pride in the attainment of those
goals, and they will visualize and envisage toward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind\(^1\). They will, then, bolster up their self-efficacy and self-confidence, as they recognize their own potentiality and competence in reaching or attaining the goals that they have self-set. Setting goals also gives students long-term vision, focuses their knowledge acquisition, and aids them to organize their time and their resources so that they can make the very most of their long-life-learning.

After illuminating the process of goal-setting by puzzling out its significance for the participants, it has been observed that there was an active participation inside the classroom. Students were expressing their viewpoints at ease concerning this useful learning strategy (personal goal-setting) and they were, really, very motivated to know and learn more about it\(^2\).

\* The tenth session

Before embarking upon describing our chief process ‘personal goal-setting’, it is important to go for defining first what a goal is? We preferred allowing the participants guess first its meaning at the beginning of this lesson. We asked them to provide some simple definitions. Some of them have defined it as “an objective or a target somebody wishes to reach”. Other students said that “it is a purpose or an aim

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\(^1\) Tiring, boring activities which take a lot of time. 
\(^2\) We will have more to say about personal goal-setting further down, in the forthcoming sessions, i.e. providing some detailed explanations and descriptions.
someone hopes or wants to accomplish”. Overall, there was a remarkable exchange of ideas and opinions.

To specify more the concept of "goals" we presented several definitions from different authors (cf. goals defined chapter three: personal goal-setting).

After that, we have restated and recapitulated that a goal is simply a dream with a deadline. This means, the objective has to be attained in a given time, either immediate, near or remote. And from this summary we have introduced, systematically, to students that there exist long-and short-term goals, and thereby we provided them with detailed explanations (cf. section of proximity: chapter three). Thereafter, learning and performance goals have been introduced and expounded to students. (cf. chapter three: the section about types of goals)

Overall, the subjects were asking questions, answering to some questions, taking notes of the main points and key words and definitions. In sum, they found the detailed elucidations concerning the two types (performance and mastery goals) very beneficial for their learning process.

❖ **The eleventh session**

In this lesson, we tried to specify to students a good key to bear in mind that would help them set actionable achievable goals. This means, some characteristics of goals. A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the S.M.A.R.T mnemonic (acronym). While there are plenty of variants (some of which we have included in parenthesis). Hence, we have explained that SMART usually stands for:
Thereafter, we have provided a range of SMART goals; including academic, social, occupational, and personal goals, and each one of the examples is specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and timely (cf. SMART goals: chapter three).

❖ The twelfth session

Our concern in this lesson was about expounding to the students the significant point of goal properties. In that, goals by themselves do not systematically lead to more successful learning and performance. Rather, certain properties of goals affect task performance (cf. detailed section about goal properties: chapter three). Goal properties which foster self-perception, motivation and learning are:
- **Goal specificity**: It means that, specific well defined goals have clear standards for attainment.

- **Goal difficulty and Challenge**: This means, difficult challenging goals lead to higher level of performance than do your best goals. In that, greater efforts are exerted to attain a goal that is perceived hard or difficult than an easy one.

- **Proximity**: (proximal and distal goals)

  It means that, distal (long-term goals) keep individuals directed toward their ultimate goals. Proximal (short-term goals) thus, are close at hand quickly achieved and result in greater motivation toward goal attainment.

  At last, students were taking some notes about the novel information asking questions, giving some examples and so forth.

❖ **The thirteenth session**

  A very important factor in goal attainment has been elucidated in this lesson. It is goal commitment. Generally speaking, goals would never be achieved if there is no commitment. Hence, to ensure an effective goal-setting and to ensure that students achieve their previously set goals, they have to be committed to them.

  Broadly speaking, we can set forth that goal-commitment means an individual's determination and conviction to pursue a given goal by taking the necessary steps (actions) that lead to the goal.
Moreover, we did clarify the point of ‘goal intensity’ (cf. chapter three) in a detailed explanation. In addition, ‘goal participation’ (cf. chapter three) has been explained too. Furthermore, self-set-goals also have been described and illustrated (cf. chapter three).

After that, subjects were introduced to ‘goal choice’ and goal progress feedback (cf. chapter three) for the whole detailed lesson.

❖ The fourteenth session

In this lesson we moved on to introduce to the students our chief concept; process "personal goal-setting".

First we started by defining "goal-setting" (cf. goal-setting defined: chapter three) and the subjects were also introduced to how to set personal goals. (cf. setting personal goals: chapter three).

And for the sake of giving students the opportunity to start setting some personal goals, i.e. setting lifetime goals, they have been guided and demonstrated that they have to set their goals on a number of levels:

- First, they create their "big picture", say, spend some time brainstorming, of what they want to do with their life (or over, say, the next ten years), and identify the large-scale goals that they want to reach.
Then, they break these down into smaller and smaller targets (aims) that they must hit or go through to achieve their lifetime goals, i.e. create a one-year plan, six-month plan, and a one-month plan of progressively smaller goals.

Thereafter, create a daily to-do-list of things that they have to do today to work towards their distal (long-term) goals.

Finally, once they have their plan, they begin working on it to attain their goals. And they review their plans, from time to time for any modification or adjustment, and make sure that they fit the way in which they want to fulfill their goals.

Hence, this is why they have to start the progress of personal goal-setting by looking at their lifetime (long-range) goals. Then, they work down to the things that they can do in, say, the next five years, then next year, next month, next week, and today, to begin moving towards them.

**Activity**

Students are asked to take a sheet of paper and start practicing what has been done in the lesson, by writing down some goals they want to achieve; either long-term (distal) goals or short-term (proximal) goals. And to give a broad, balanced coverage of all significant areas in their lives, they were asked to set goals in some of the following categories (or in other categories of their own):
➢ Education

Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to have in order to attain other goals?

➢ Career

What level do you want to achieve in your career, or what do you want to reach?

➢ Financial

How much do you want to earn, by what stage? How is this relates to your career goals?

➢ Physical

Are there any athletic goals that you want to attain, or do you want to have a good shape with a good health? What steps are you going to take to fulfill this?

➢ Attitude

Is any part of your mindset holding you back (like negative self-talk)? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? (If so, set a goal to improve your behavior or which changes your self-talk or the way of perceiving things?).

Students were given approximately half an hour to complete the task. Thereafter, their responses were collected (cf. appendix V). To be precise students were oriented and guided throughout their goal-setting practice. This means that, we were turning around communicating with each student, clarifying things for each and
assessing what has been written in their papers, and what they have set as personal goals.

❖ The fifteenth session

In this lesson we wanted, tentatively, to shed light on the pitfalls, difficulties or obstacles that goal-setters could encounter while attempting to attain their desired goals. Thereby, we have expounded to students some potential obstacles to reaching goals in details (cf. chapter three). It was exclusively meant, to inform and prepare them, making them aware about some obstacles that would hinder their goal-attainment.

After stating some obstacles for them, they were introduced to some methods that would aid them achieve their previously set goals. Eleven strategies were demonstrated and illustrated. (cf. section on ‘eleven strategies to optimize reaching your goals’: chapter three).

What we have observed at that moment is that the subjects were interested, focused and curious to learn and construe even minute details concerning these strategies in order to apply them when setting some (learning) goals.

❖ The sixteenth session

Before moving on demonstrating the influence of goals and goal-setting in promoting and fostering students learning and performance, we would like first to
bring to light the potent factor in goal-setting which is self-management. The latter includes:

- Setting priorities.
- Planning: (key planning steps)
- Time-management.

Each of which has been elucidated in depth, for students, in order to facilitate for them more the process of goal-setting. The whole part of ‘self-management’ would be found in chapter three.

❖ The seventeenth session

This last lesson was devoted to the description of the motivational effects of goal-setting, that would be of great help for students, for it would display them exactly how their self-motivation, mainly, would be enhanced via goal-setting for an effective learning.

This detailed explanation about the motivational effects of goal-setting would be found in chapter three.

Thereafter, we did provide a detailed explanation about the conditions under which goal-setting can promote learning. (cf. chapter three). We did so to show to learners how they can greatly benefit from this cognitive-motivational strategy “personal goal-setting” in their learning in general, and in improving their speaking fluency, in particular. By knowing where exactly they should concentrate their efforts while learning to bolster up their (oral) performance.
5.4.3. Description of the post-test

The aim behind conducting a post-test was to inspect veracity and authenticity of our research questions and hypothesis. It has been conducted right after implementing the treatment (training program) to our single group of learners. In three hours\(^1\) of time, the twenty students were given instructions to choose a topic from the following topics\(^2\):

- Sport and health
- Hygiene of life
- Etiquette
- Breaking bad habits
- Learning and intelligence
- Things that make you happy
- The confident speaker
- Time management
- Positive thinking
- Mass media

\(^1\) Each student performed separately for about eight to nine minutes.

\(^2\) We have utilized, exactly, the same procedure as in the pre-test (cf. pre-test)
Thereafter, the post-test scores would be of great utility for the t-test, i.e. the data of the t-test (mentioned below).

5.5. Choice of the test: (t-test)

The t-test is conceived as one of the most widely used statistical procedures. In simple terms, it is a robust parametric test and its other name is students’ t-test or t-statistics test. It comes in two basic types: the paired (related) t-test and the independent t-test. We opted for the utilization of the t-test to examine the obtained data from the pre-test and the post-test and view whether there exists a worthy difference in students' performance. We conceive that t-test is the most convenient tool for our quasi experiment.

Before embarking in any computational analysis, we would like first to illuminate that in our experiment a paired (related) t-test was used since we involved a single group (one sample; paired design). That is, a one sample t-test compares a single group of subjects before an intervention [training] and after via the pre-test and the post-test; a concise, but not exhaustive description of the different scores (means) are then reported, analyzed and interpreted. Precisely, it is a one tailed test, simply because we expect the impact to be in a certain direction, say, would appear an improvement in students' oral performance after receiving the intervention.

5.6. Procedures

Miller (2005: 80) proposes the following procedure for the calculation of the t-test for related samples (one-tailed):

---

1 For the sake of exploring the effect of the adapted positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) on students' oral performance (speaking skill).
I. Calculate the difference, \( d \), between each pair of scores \(( X_1 - X_2)\) subtract consistently and be sure to record the minus signs.

II. Calculate the mean difference using:

\[
\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{N}
\]

III. Calculate the standard deviation of the differences using the formula:

\[
S_d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N} - \overline{d}^2}
\]

IV. Substitute the value of the mean difference \((\bar{d})\) the standard deviation of the differences \((S_d)\), and the sample size \((N)\) in the following formula and calculated:

\[
t_{N-1} = \frac{\bar{d}}{S_d / \sqrt{N - 1}}
\]

V. Find the critical value of \( t \) for the desired level of significance using table II, (page 174). This value will depend on (1) the number of degrees of freedom \((N-1\) in this test) and (2) whether the direction of the difference between the two conditions was predicted before the experiment.

VI. If the observed value of \( t \) is equal to or greater than the critical value, reject the Null hypothesis in favor of the alternate hypothesis, i.e. conclude that the independent variable has an effect on behavior.
5.6.1. Presenting the data

This table is a representation of students’ grades earned from the pre-test and the post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Differences squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>X₁ (score)</td>
<td>X₂ (score)</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>d²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>15.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6.25</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d</th>
<th>d²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 74: Students' pre-test and post-test scores.
The null hypothesis $H_0$, states that the results will be due to pure chance, even though the manipulation of the I.V is rigorously conducted.

5.6.2. Computation

1- Calculating the difference $d$.

To calculate the difference $d$ we made use of the following formula:

$$d = X_1 - X_2$$

2- Calculating the mean difference.

To calculate the mean difference we used:

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{N}$$

$$\bar{d} = \frac{51}{20}$$

$$\bar{d} = 2.55$$

3. Calculation of standard deviation of the differences.

To find the standard deviation of the differences, the following formula is used:

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{135}{20} - (2.55)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{6.75 - 6.50}$$
\[
\begin{align*}
\sqrt{0.25} &= S_d = 0.5 \\
4. Calculating t \\
In order to find t we substitute the values of the mean difference (d) the standard deviation of the differences (S_d), and the sample size (N) we use the following formula:
\end{align*}
\]
\[
t_{N-1} = \frac{\bar{d}}{S_d / \sqrt{N - 1}} = \frac{2.55}{2.54 / \sqrt{20 - 1}} = \frac{2.55}{2.54 / \sqrt{19}} = \frac{2.55 \times 4.35}{2.54} \\
t_{N-1} = 4.47
\]
5- Calculating the degree of freedom (df).

To obtain the value of the degree of freedom, the following formula was used:

\[ df = N - 1 \]

\[ = 20 - 1 \]

\[ df = 19 \]

This value will be used to find out the critical value of \( t \) in the t-table.

6- Searching for the critical value of \( t \) in the t-table

To uncover the value of \( t \) we have to go back to t-table and verify the value which match with the 19 the degrees of freedom for 0.05 level of significance.

For 19 degrees of freedom the value of \( t \) needed for 0.05 level of significance is 2.093. Because our test is one-tailed the found \( t \) should be divided by two (Miller, 2005). That is, the value of \( t \) that would be compared to the computed \( t \) is 2.093/2 = 1.046. The following table will clarify the way how we read the \( t \)-table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Df</th>
<th>.10</th>
<th>.05</th>
<th>.02</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>.10</th>
<th>.05</th>
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<td>120</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td>1.980</td>
<td>2.358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 75: T Table
5.6.3. Discussion of the results

In order to inspect the effectiveness of our intervention\(^1\), we opted for a pre-test and a post-test to measure the degree of change occurred as a result of the training. To measure that, a t-test was conducted so as to infer some statistical analysis of the data obtained that could then determine if the intervention has a significant effect. After reporting, calculating and analyzing the data gained from their pre-test scores and the post-test scores by using the t-test, the t-obtained value of t, has been found higher than the t-tabulated, the critical value of t [\(4.47 > 1.046\)]. This then allows us to say that the independent variables (P.S.T and P.G.S\(^2\)) indeed have a potent impact on the dependent variable (oral performance). This in turn, made us draw a clearer conclusion that, in fact, there is a significant difference between subjects' performances before the training [pre-test] and after the training [post-test]. This means, since the obtained value of t at 5\% level of significance and with 1 degree of freedom, is higher (\(4.47\)) than the required value for significance (\(1.046\)), we can say that the results obtained are significant, and consequently they are in the direction of our hypothesis (\(H_1\)), hence the null hypothesis (\(H_0\)) is rejected.

To be more precise, we can conclude by saying that the positive impact of the training program\(^3\) proves our research prediction that a considerable utilization of cognitive-motivational strategies\(^4\) genuinely bolster up students' oral performance.

---

1 Training program or treatment
2 The two adopted cognitive-motivational learning strategies
3 The intervention about "positive self-talk" and "personal goal-setting"
4 Self-management methods as "self-talk" and "goal-setting".
5.7. Conclusion

In the light of all what has been said and discussed, it has become clear that indeed cognitive motivational strategies (positive self-talk and personal goal-setting) can be of great help for learners, in order to promote and improve their (oral) performance. In fact, they have, generally, been found effective self-management methods that can fully be exploited by our students to become outstandingly successful learners. For the simplest reason that, they aid students activate the power of their brains (cognition) by awakening them to stretch their full hidden potential. This is exactly the idea we wished to inculcate in students’ minds (the subjects of the experiment) via the training.

As a matter of fact, due to the influence of the awareness building, there is an obvious difference in students’ performance (before and after the training), which point to one explicit conclusion that the experiment results support, greatly, the research hypothesis.

Through our precise constant classroom observation during the four months of training, we perceived that our subjects, really, were amazingly enthusiastic and pretty motivated to apply those potent strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) in their learning process\(^1\), in general, and the conversational skill, in particular. For most reasons, we think that remarkable eagerness results in an active participation, unstoppable attentional focus and a sincere answering to the training program tasks and activities.

\(^1\) Apply them in the other skills and disciplines.
GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General Conclusion

Throughout this thesis we attempted to inspect whether or not self-management learning strategies, positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) (our independent variables) have a significant impact on students’ [oral] performance (our dependent variable). The focal interest is to determine the effectiveness of these cognitive-motivational methods in EFL classrooms. Aiming to put our learners in a better position to become successful language learners. The current study, then, has covered the issue of how self-talk (inner-speech) and goal-setting effect students’ self-motivation, self-efficacy, self-confidence, meta-cognitive potentialities (functioning), autonomy and persistence, which in turn, would impact learners’ speaking proficiency (oral performance). As a matter of fact, the present study is basically interested in checking and testing in real classroom settings whether or not these learning strategies really impact learners’ speaking skill by aiding them attain a good level of performance.

The results of this study reinforce the strong link between students’ self-talk and goal-setting and their level of achievement (oral performance). They also support the validity of utilizing these self-management learning strategies by students’ in order to improve their oral performance. Our research findings, then, shed a little more light on their significance, to markedly account for EFL learners’ successful oral performance, and accordingly our research hypothesis is confirmed. More precisely, the results of the present study are in the direction of our previously set
hypothesis, that if students self-talk positively and self-set learning goals they would bolster up their oral performance.

It is worth pointing out that, throughout the whole thesis, the main perspective adopted points, basically, to the suggested awareness building/raising of the utilization of these two potent significant learning strategies (P.S.T) and (P.G.S) by EFL students. In this respect, the results of this descriptive correlational type of research reveal the potential value and benefits of these cognitive-motivational strategies in the content of effective learning. This study, therefore, provides a detailed account of how (P.S.T) and (P.G.S) can be applied to improve the quality of students’ oral performance. As a matter of fact, the issue of whether learners’ self-talk (S.T) and goal-setting (G.S) report high correlation with their level of oral performance, is explored through students’ and teachers’ view points in the three questionnaires, in conjunction with a four month\(^1\) follow-up training program (intervention).

Overall, the intervention is found to positively impact students’ [oral] performance and their increased awareness about the significance and the usefulness of utilizing such self-management learning methods (P.S.T and P.G.S) to bolstering-up their speaking fluency (conversational English). Within a short period of time (four month-follow-up study), we managed to help reduce the number of students who are, obviously, very anxious, reluctant and shy to try out the language i.e. to participate and talk in Oral Expression sessions. This effect is further supported by

\(^1\) It is important to stress that due to time constraints, a period of four months of training was a bit unsufficient to implement the idea of interest in the current research (inculcating the strategies in learners’ minds), the potent learning self-management strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S)

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the finding that the number of students who are hesitant and less confident to speak, remarkably, improved their oral performance within the same period of time, suggesting that these cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) prove to be very effective in fostering students’ oral performance. That is, these self-management methods provide practical benefits for students, in general. In sum, the results of the experiment (intervention) helped students to both increase the importance they placed on developing P.S.T and P.G.S and to strengthen their intention to continue fostering their oral performance by applying these self-management learning strategies.

We abide by the idea that students’ varied perceptions of their potentialities, and self-efficacy to study English effectively and with confidence in the self, can differentiate between successful and less successful students, in terms of effort exertion, persistence, commitment, risk taking, learning initiative, and the tendency to use some learning strategies and reasonably contribute to their different achievements. Moreover, students’ positive conceptions of their role in the language learning process as being independent, autonomous and active agents in the language learning entail taking initiative in learning, since it is a learner centered-instruction, to develop one’s own skills and potential and to assess one’s own progress and improvement. Precisely, such a conceptualization of students’ own responsibility in the language learning process considers that high achievers outstanding learners display a higher sense of responsibility (internal attributions) for their learning and exercise self-directed behavior; in that, they tend to choose some learning strategies that would aid them learn better and at the same time facilitate the process of learning. In other words, they have learnt how to use some cognitive-motivational or
metacognitive strategies such as “positive self-talk” (P.S.T) and “personal goal-setting” (P.G.S), to monitor their own learning processes, organize and direct their own learning issues (problem solving), and end up by assessing their own strengths and weaknesses.

Evident enough, students who most of the time self-talk positively perform better academically. That is, they perform better on achievement tests, as in oral performance, have higher grade point averages, and have higher graduation rate. As Wilson and Dobson (2008: 17) express it explicitly that “the manner in which you mentally talk to yourself impacts your performance (…)”. Likewise, learners who self-set goals produce more successful performance. Simply because goals provide direction for learners, they help them focus their attention on the important points that need improvements, they aid them exert the necessary efforts and they guide them to focus on their tasks and activities. Goal-setting and strategic planning occur when students analyze the learning task, set specific goals, and plan or refine the strategy to attain the goal (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2004). And without well-defined constructed goals, the life of a student is governed by whim or the urgency of the moment. But specific clear goals would provide the learner with the internal control (self-evaluating skills) to make things happen the way they want them to. “Goals are the points on your road map where you can apply your talents and energies” (Wilson and Dobson, 2008: 9). As we have seen, when certain types of goals are set, the level of performance tends to be higher. And areas such as hope, academic optimism, and personal goal-setting affect students’ achievement. Obviously, by creating and attaining goals a student gains greater autonomy, independence, and control in dealing with day to day challenges and setbacks.
In the fact of it, the conclusions drawn so far display how positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) and language learners’ successful oral performances are intimately intertwined. In addition to that, these potent cognitive-motivational methods (P.S.T and P.G.S) are, in fact, interrelated i.e. complementing each other in the sense that, students’ positive self-talk, as for instance: “I can do it and I will do it as I have done it before”, push them to be committed, self-persistent, confident, self-efficacious, and self-motivated to attain their learning goals. And students’ attainment for a previously self-set goals make them say positive things to themselves, i.e. self-talk positively, as for example, “you have done a great job” “great achievement” and … so forth, which in turn push them to self-set novel learning goals that would in turn direct and facilitate their learning process for a more effective learning, in general, and successful oral performance, in particular.

In the light of all this elucidation, it should be made quite explicit that this thesis extends what is already known about the significance of learning strategies in promoting students’ successful performances. But what makes this research, particularly, unique in its content is that, it deals with two of the most remarkable self-management cognitive-motivational strategies (P.S.T and P.G.S) and it displays, obviously, their utility and usefulness in real classroom settings. Further studies about P.S.T and P.G.S in learning contexts would continue to reveal significant information that would impact learners and ultimately the teaching/ learning process. Hopefully, this study would point to a novel and fruitful direction to study these cognitive-motivational strategies and their enormous consequences in learning settings.
The findings of our current study suggest a number of recommendations for change and further study; attempting to bring about positive change among future learners, specifically, in the Algerian universities. To be more precise, aiming to put [language] learners in a better position to successfully implement “positive self-talk” (P.S.T) and “personal goal-setting” (P.G.S) as efficient cognitive-motivational learning strategies. Additionally, the findings provide some pedagogical implications on how instructors can influence students’ intrapersonal competence and performance. Our recommendations can be stated in some detail in the following section:

2. Recommendations

A point we want to highlight first is that parents have a major role to play in inculcating positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S) in their children’s mind from an early age (from early childhood, since it is the appropriate and critical age), by emphasizing their significance in life, in general, and in the learning process later on, in particular. Through creating positive discourses (communicating with their children) in an early age like addressing them with praising words, affirmations or positive labels like: “you are a very smart, clever boy/girl” “it seems obvious that you would become somebody in the near future” “my son/daughter is very intelligent” “you will obtain A grade for sure!” “You can succeed at anything you set your mind to”. By doing so children’s subconscious mind would receive and register positive messages and affirmations from an early childhood from their parents, which in turn would be inculcated in children’s minds to be realized in the future; all this would foster their self-esteem, self-
confidence, self-efficacy, self-motivation and positive self-talk when they become pupils and students. Moreover, parents can also play a considerable role in helping their children develop goal-setting process from an early childhood (four, five… years) by eliciting them to choose what they want to become in the future, through motivating, directing and guiding them to set a goal in an early age. For instance, giving them examples of being: a leader, an explorer, a researcher, an instructor, a physician,…and so forth, and by doing this parents instill the idea of setting specific goals from an early age; including learning goals and how they can plan their lives the way they want from an early age (personally, I am applying this with my children; the girl is seven years old and the boy is four years old. Attempting each time to inculcate P.S.T and P.G.S and I am already reaping the benefits). In the light of all this, it appears logical that parents, in fact, can pave the way, from an early age for their children (future students) to learn and perform better through inculcating positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S), and which in turn would facilitate the process of teaching for instructors, since learners are already self-motivated and ready to learn, and thereafter teachers can reinforce parents’ efforts and attempts and help in raising students awareness to utilize P.S.T and P.G.S as potent learning strategies.

Making the promotion and the development of students’ positivity and self-motivation within the broad policy of educational authorities (higher education institutions) is very necessary. More precisely in EFL contexts, by integrating them in the entire curriculum, by making them among their main objectives and adopting in the classroom a teaching methodology based on the practices assumed to foster students learning strategies. Particularly, sensitizing students to utilize P.S.T and
P.G.S, as effective cognitive-motivational strategies, through explicit and implicit implementation.

- Even if teachers set the stage by making themselves and their classrooms attractive enough to students and by focusing their attention on individual (personal) and collaborative learning goals, they cannot expect them to sustain much self-motivation, enthusiasm and grit or commitment to learn unless they view learning as meaningful. The key to making students’ learning experiences worthwhile, we believe, is to focus on making them use self-management learning strategies such as cognitive-motivational strategies: P.S.T and P.G.S in order to plan their own learning to reach the desired outcomes.

- Encouraging a sense of collaboration and cooperation among instructors and learners by shifting the power balance within the classroom from teacher-centered to learner-centered, say, transferring and formulating roles and assigning tasks and responsibilities to learners; since teachers’ role is not a mere disseminator of knowledge but rather a negotiator, counselor, facilitator and motivator, so as to create a space for students to act autonomously (independent, self-reliant learners)

- Instructors’ awareness of their students’ positive self-talk (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting (P.G.S), as potent learning strategies, in language learning can have a significant positive effects upon their approach to learning, their practices, and their level of performance. More precisely, bolstering up students’ P.S.T and P.G.S through encouraging and guiding learners to use some learning methods as autonomous independent students, able of fulfilling considerable achievements (success) in language learning, does not display any disagreement or incompatibility
with instructors’ role as motivators, guider and facilitators whose basic work is to lead students to the best ways and tools to actively learn the language and to have learning goals, aims and plans, from the very beginning of the academic year to pursue a long-lasting learning process. As well as designing classroom activities and tasks with the objective of directing and assisting students to become self-reliant, independent and autonomous in order to foster and develop their cognitive and meta-cognitive processes for better [oral] performance.

- It is equally important to raise students’ awareness to take part in the learning process by applying some helpful methods and strategies to make themselves better equipped and self-motivated to better learn and perform, also to monitor and solve their encountered learning problems/difficulties. That is, exploring ways that would boost students [oral] performance, the conversational skill, by fostering cognitive-motivational strategies; P.S.T and P.G.S.

- To be more precise, P.S.T and P.G.S as positive educational tools/strategies have to be taught to students and they have to be sensitized about their significance and usefulness, not merely to improve their speaking skill, but also as potential procedures that would foster learners’ other skills and life-long learning. By encouraging learners to become responsible and self-reliant to utilize some self-management learning strategies in order to manage their time appropriately and develop and acquire the required necessary skills, i.e. managing and monitoring their own learning, because it has been found that the majority of students ignore those self-management learning strategies which they need, not solely to improve their performance/achievement but also to become autonomous outstanding learners.
It is quite important that instructors find some time to teach some helpful learning strategies, precisely, P.S.T and P.G.S to their students, as extra additional hints that would aid them learn and perform better, by incorporating free talks (conversations and discussions) in Oral Expression sessions mainly. As a matter of fact, teachers have to draw students’ attention to try to self-manage their learning process through utilizing cognitive-motivational strategies such as (P.S.T and P.G.S), this then might be an excellent opportunity to inculcate the idea of using self-management learning strategies. In that, Oral Expression teachers, in particular, have much chance to tackle and discuss with their students any interesting topic about some insights, tips and recommendations about how to learn more effectively, which is of course difficult in a literature or linguistics classes, for instance. Furthermore, the chances to speak out the English language would be enlarged, and enhanced inside the classroom; when it comes to motivational topics and, in turn students’ self-motivation would be fostered.

As an easy to comprehend example, instructors in general and Oral Expression teachers, in particular, when instructing goal-setting (goal-setting lessons) have to focus on effective goal characteristics that are supported broadly (specificity, difficulty, intensity… discussed in detail in goal-setting chapter) aiming to facilitate the rapid acquisition of new skills and strategies. In that, learning is accelerated if the learner employs personal goal-setting. Goal-setting instruction can be applied in the form of classroom discussion presented informally by assisting students in conversations, for instance providing some questions; asking students to write one or more personal goals. That is, students set goals that they hope to attain; they have to be asked to set the goals themselves.
Teachers can play a major role in aiding students to focus their attention on setting personal learning goals, in addition to collaborative learning goals. Specifically, during lessons, say, at any given time when students are working on assignments individually, the instructor will need to keep his/her students’ attention to get the best results. Precisely, if teachers help students frame their personal learning goals in terms of acquiring the knowledge or skills that they intend to teach, not just in terms of completing tasks or obtaining particular grades, this will encourage students to take more responsibility to managing their own learning by actively setting priorities and develop workable strategies, i.e. setting goals, developing plans, seeking to construct understandings, persisting in their efforts to overcome confusions, assessing and reflecting on what they have learned. And ultimately, this would influence their self-regulation, self-motivation. This is so, because goals and goal-setting play a central role in self-regulation, influencing learning and motivation (Alderman, 2004), by affecting motivation through five processes: directing attention and action, mobilizing effort, promoting persistence and effort overtime, promoting the development of creative plans and strategies to achieve them, and providing a reference point that provides information about one’s performance.

In fact, it is not uncommon to work with students who despite setting appropriate learning goals and developing a variety of pathways to accomplish the goal, fail to get started in the goal pursuit. This difficulty in getting started might indicate that a student needs support in building his agency thinking\(^1\). It is such

\(^1\) Agency thinking refers to “the beliefs or self-talk that facilitate a student’s ability to get started and follow the pathways to a goal”. (Curran & Reivich, 2011: 3).
agency thoughts, “positive self-talk” that provide the motivation, persistence, and commitment necessary for goal attainment. Simply because, students high in agency thinking often encourage themselves through statements, such as: “I can do this”, “I really want this and I am not going to let anything stop me” or “I am going to keep at this until I reach my goal”. In contrast, students low in agency thinking undercut their resilience and success through counter-productive self-talk such as, “there is no way, I cannot do this”, “I will never make it”. Additionally, agency thoughts are highest when the goal is meaningful to the individual, the task complexity is at a high enough level to keep interest but not so high that it undermines motivation and feedback is used in a manner to encourage learning and increased self-efficacy.

 As a matter of fact, the instructor can help students develop agency thinking by teaching learners to monitor their self-talk with optimistic thoughts (positive self-talk), and to use P.S.T as a way to enhance motivation and resilience when students notice that they are beginning to feel disengaged from the goal, are procrastinating, or are encountering setbacks. Evident enough, positive self-talk and personal goal-setting (as learning strategies) complement each other, say, go hand in hand or are interrelated, in helping language learners learn and perform better [orally]. Therefore, agency thinking (P.S.T) without goals will go nowhere, goals without agency thinking will be difficult to accomplish and will fail frequently (Curran and Reivich, 2011). In order to develop language proficiency, there must be an intentional development of goal-setting and agency thinking (P.S.T). Hence, we have to offer opportunities to students to learn to use these strategies. Since these learning strategies promote the behaviours and dispositions associated with self-regulation
and boost students’ skill development. In that, outstanding instructors provide their learners criteria for an effective learning strategy.

- One possibility for teachers is to emphasize that learning tasks may have multiple outcomes or goals. “When a person has more than one reason for participating in an activity, motivational power is increased, providing a type of motivational insurance” (Alderman, 2004: 108). In that, successful teachers have a special ability to involve students in goal-setting, in identifying with learning problems, and in generating a kind of a sense of personal excitement for novel ideas. That is, motivating learners to learn better through own goal-setting.

- Moreover, instructors and parents can cooperate together in aiding students attain their learning goals. For school psychologists, working with teachers and parents to assist students in developing an increased number of strategies to accomplish goals is critical (Curran & Reivich, 2011). This can be done by breaking long-term goals into subgoals or steps and discussing the strategies needed for each step, “chunking” or “stepping” helps students to gain confidence in reaching the goal because it counters unhelpful beliefs that goals must be accomplished “all at once”, which often generate procrastination and anxiety. In addition to breaking goal into smaller chunks and identifying the pathways to accomplish each step, it is important to help students identify the likely obstacles at each step and to plan strategies for working around these obstacles. Anticipating barriers and planning ‘work arounds’ builds a student’s confidence and belief that she can continue on the path toward her goal even when barriers occur. In summary, increased pathways for a specific goal will help in building a person’s self-efficacy, will lead to better performance and
likelihood of achievement. Simply because, overtime these changes will begin to produce the positive life outcomes that are associated with higher levels of hope self-efficacy and pathways thinking\(^1\).

- Although both the instructor and the learner have to play active roles in the goal-setting process, the responsibility for facilitating it lies with the instructor. In that, instructor’s role is to ensure that learner’s goals fit within the framework of learning setting reality, as well as the student’s capacity and talent. Thus, teaching successful goal-setting strategies to learners is critical for students’ success in and outside of the classroom. That is, teachers have to utilize the approach of instructional goal-setting.

- Of importance for instructors interested in facilitating students’ goal-setting skills to impact achievement is to employ proximal goals in the form of some expected performance, such as expected course grades, number of problems to be solved… etc. As has been made explicit by Morgan (1987) interventions to develop students’ goal-setting skill have positively affected achievement. For example, students who set goals and record study activities earned significantly higher grades than no treatment group. Precisely, mastery-oriented goals\(^2\) were positively related to persistence, students’ efficacy beliefs (self-efficacy), actions, achievement outcomes, and the deep processing of course materials.

\(^1\) Pathways thinking refers to “an individual’s perceived ability, to develop strategies and routes to accomplish a desired goal” (Curran & Reivich, 2011: 02)

\(^2\) (cf. Chapter three on goal-setting).
Since goals can play an important role in increasing students’ competence, motivation and performance, instructors should not assume that students know how to self-set effective learning goals, they, rather, have to present some guidelines for using goal-setting. Students can be taught how to set long-term goals and multiple goals and taught also how these distal goals can be broken down into proximal short-term goals. “Goal-setting has been found to be effective at all levels of schooling (…). However, some research indicates that few students use effective goal-setting techniques. “An important role for the teacher is to teach students how to set goals” (Alderman, 2004: 130).

To be more precise, if multiple goals are to be productive, they must be coordinated and not in conflict. The crucial factor is aiding students balance their goals, so as they trace directly to their academic performance and success, is to self-set goals and objectives. Simply because, goals are most likely to contribute to students’ academic competence when they correspond with the instructor’s goals and expectations.

Instructors who are smart about facilitating the goal-setting process move their learners’ thinking to a different, deeper place of insight and truly create a collaborative learning experience from beginning to end. As for instance, motivating learners to focus on their future possibilities by sharing with their students their personal experiences and stories of successful people, in order to build the learners’ confidence, by setting high standards for achievement and expressing positive expectations. That is, offering a road map for the future; by helping them aligning

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1 Introducing this concept as a warm up activity in Oral Expression sessions or other modules or teaching it as a separate module like creating reading module and goal-setting module.
learning goals with their personal values. And making sure that the goal really matters to the learner; by focusing more on the why than how. Also, taking time to talk about time-management by determining the goals that can be accomplished within the time frame set, and making sure that the goal is a worthy investment of their time. Furthermore, facilitating goal-setting process by making students ask questions like:

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What is the important goal for you to achieve this year?
- Why is this goal important to your future development?
- How is this goal going to contribute to your development?
- What do you believe you need to do or learn to get there?
- What skills and talents are you underusing?
- Are you on the right path?
- Is this the goal you ought to be working on right now?
- Is the time frame you have set realistic for accomplishing the goal?
- What process can you put in place that would help you stay on track, engaged?

❖ Instructors have to aid learners setting S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable action-oriented, realistic, and timely) learning goals eventhough setting SMART goals seem to be the most daunting challenges students face. Therefore, the goal is to
create a reciprocal learning relationship in which the instructor and the learner work collaboratively to achieve learning goals. The instructor does not drive the process of goal-setting but facilitates it. For there is a huge difference in assigning goals and self-setting goals. To achieve optimal results, instructors must be smart in what they do and how they go about facilitating the process of formulating learners’ driven SMART goals. When the learner sits back and waits for an instructor to drive the goal-setting process, the learner develops little ownership of the goals; and even the energy for achieving them dissipates.

- As a matter of fact, teachers have to aid learners to set and attain realistic goals, since realistic goal-setting is in itself something each individual must learn. And for a teacher to manage a classroom that each learner sets realistic goals is one of the most important tasks of effective teaching. Moreover, teachers can aid learners in making and evaluating progress towards goals. Once a goal has been set, making progress toward that goal and knowing that progress is being made are the most stable and reliable intrinsic motivation to mankind (namely students). Thus, the teacher has to be available to help the learner make progress or to readjust her goals in line with her potentialities.

- It would also be equally important to elucidate that goals should not be so rigid that necessary adjustments cannot be made. If the standard for goal attainment is too difficult or rigid, there is likely to be a drop in motivation. In addition, goals would contribute to learners’ perceptions of their potential (self-efficacy) to accomplish tasks. As a matter of fact, goal-setting and goal attainment combine to establish in the mind of the learner an “I can” attitude toward challenges.
Furthermore, goals are seen as having a stress management role. In that, setting well-defined, realistic, performance-oriented goals that the learner can work progressively toward and literally see herself advancing toward motivates effort and persistence (Locke et al., 1981) while reducing the anxiety of failure and encouraging the use of strategies to overcome barriers.

- Goals are concerted efforts on the part of the learner to accomplish a specific task/activity. Goal-setting would force or push the learner to analyze the demands of the task, plot the time that leads to achievements, and enlist the use of appropriate cognitive/behavioural strategies such as: self-talk to enhance the process. Selecting suitable stepping stones communicate to the learner the old adage: “the longest journey begins with a single step” (Anderson, 1997: 04). Goal-setters (learners) would, then, ask what are the parts they need to learn, what should be done to improve each part: “do I have the skills and learning prerequisites, and what learning tools can I use to make progress?” The planning process, therefore, would display to students how mature learners methodically plot their progress and work diligently and persistently toward clearly identified goals.

- As a consequence, one way to maximize learning in EFL classrooms is through setting specific goals and focusing on the attainment of those goals, since goals have been conceptualized as aims and purposes that guide action, regulates behaviour and enhance performance. Another way is through self-talking positively (positive self-talk or inner-speech) that would, greatly, foster effective learning and successful [oral] performance.
Additionally, it is noteworthy to stress that university students have to self-set learning goals in relation to instructional goals\(^1\) from the very beginning of the year. For the simplest reason that, students who self-set effective goals utilize appropriate strategies, and evaluate the requirements of learning tasks adequately tend to achieve at higher levels than other students. In that, research indicates that goal-setting is related to different types of performance and achievements.

It is equally significant to emphasize that learners need to care for themselves. By surveillance of their self-talk (inner-speech), they can improve and enhance their feelings about themselves, and their emotions about themselves, their emotions in learning settings, which in turn, would foster their academic (oral) performance. For that, we have to clarify more the point to learners that it is crucial for them to try hard to combat the enemy within, which is negative self-talk (negative inner-speech), which is considered the primary source of students’ unsuccessful [oral] performance, stress, anxiety, and unproductivity. In that, it is reasonable to point out that if students are struggling with negative self-talk and no help is received (from the part of the teacher\(^2\)), they might develop feelings of hopelessness and hesitation that would hinder them produce efficient oral performance. It should come to no surprise that students should try hard to replace\(^3\) their negative self-talk;

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\(^1\) That is, not relying entirely on instructors to assign them goals. But rather self-setting goals like: “I will improve my listening comprehension and my speaking fluency (oral performance) by practicing every day and listening to native speakers” “I will monitor my progress after each performance”

\(^2\) Special attention should be paid to the psychological, cognitive, affective aspect of learners while instructing.

\(^3\) As has been mentioned and discussed in detail in self-talk chapter
substitute it with more constructive helpful positive self-talk, in order to become more creative and outstanding learners, precisely, fluent English learners.

- This means that, learners can change the station in their heads and tune to positive one instead, i.e. substituting negative self-talk (N.S.T) with positive self-dialogue (P.S.T). This can be implemented by learners when they are performing [orally]. For instance, they should focus their attention on their speech, on the ideas they tend to communicate, instead of sending negative messages to themselves (self-talking negatively) like saying “I will make dull mistakes” or “I am not a good English speaker, I am not fluent or my enunciation is not good enough”, at the moment they are performing.

- Hence, it seems legitimate to argue that students can, to a great extent, transform and conquer their negative inner-voice (self-talk). This could allow us to express it clearly to students that: “If you hear a voice within you saying ‘no matter how you try, you cannot do it’, then try by all means and do it and that inner voice (negative self-talk) will be silenced!”. At this point, the influence of self-talk on the speaking skill is, then, evident and learners need to be aware of its potent impact and its significance.

- It should be reemphasized that instructors (namely Oral Expression teachers) can also have a major role to play in building students’ awareness about the potential impact of positive self-talk in improving students oral performance. In fact, we can suppose that to ensure effective confident communication, teachers have to consider the role of cognitive-motivational strategies when instructing. As for example, introducing the construct of self-talk and its significance for their students
whenever they have free discussion (open talk), inside the classroom. As additional or extra beneficial information, instructors need to foster students’ self-motivation and self-efficacy for more effective learning. By integrating all the possible and basic factors, motivational, cognitive, and affective. They have also to remind their learners, repeatedly, about the possibility of using such learning strategies, as self-management cognitive-motivational methods that would aid them, greatly, to produce successful English [oral] performance. Evident enough, learning to speak English as a foreign language is a very demanding task, and most students, if not all of them, spend a good amount of time thinking and planning before they try out the language.

- A last point can be made about the significance of the present study for further investigations which, in their turn, might bring more evidence on the suggested cognitive-motivational learning strategies (P.S.T) and (P.G.S). Hence, we will encourage “research works” in the area of ‘self-motivation’ among learners, specifically searching for strategies, procedures and methods that are associated with improving the quality of learning, achievements and performance. Moreover, the research work in addition to its implications for further research in learning strategies has also possible implementations for instructing the speaking skill, which can also involve the instruction of some self-management learning strategies to students in our universities.

Considering all the ideas discussed up to this point, we would wish that this thesis would be a starting point for future research in the area, not just being on the shelves of our libraries.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Students’ Questionnaires

Dear Learner,

These questionnaires are parts of a research work. Aiming at investigating the powerful effects of positive self-talk and personal goal-setting in improving students’ oral performance.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaires. Please, tick (√) the appropriate box (or boxes), and make full statements whenever necessary. Your answers will be valuable for the completion of this research work.

May I thank you in advance for your collaboration.
APPENDIX I
Self-talk Questionnaire

Section one: motivation and learning

1. Self-motivation is considered as a critical component of effective learning.
   Yes □  No □

2. Even though students are, from time to time, extrinsically motivated, it is not quite sufficient and they need to be intrinsically motivated.
   Yes □  No □

3. If yes, hence, effective learning, in general, and speaking fluency, in particular, is unlikely to take place in the absence of intrinsic motivation.
   Yes □  No □

Section two: self-talk (inner-speech)

1. Have you ever noticed that there are some interfering thoughts that come to your mind, before and during an oral performance?
   Yes □  No □

2. If yes, what are they?
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do they affect your oral performance?
   Yes □  No □
4. If yes, in which sense.
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Do you think that these interfering thoughts have a positive role to play or negative one? Explain in few words;
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Have you ever been aware about your inner-talk and its significance in facilitating your learning?
   Yes □     No □

7. Is there anything that hinders you from improving your speaking skill?
   Yes □     No □

8. If yes, state it;
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you believe that increases in speaking fluency are related to decreases in negative thoughts?
   Yes □     No □

10. Do you see that your focus point when learning the English Language would be on:
    • Obtaining good grades. □
    • Speaking fluent English. □
    • Getting the diploma. □
    • All of them. □

11. Do you believe that your inner-talk would have a powerful effect on your learning, in general, and your speaking skill, in particular?
    Yes □     No □
12. Does positive self-talk reduce your anxiety while studying and enhance your oral performance?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

13. Do you think that your negative inner-talk is the prime cause for creating and maintaining high level of anxiety that prevent you from speaking in Oral Expression sessions?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

14. Does negative self-talk affect negatively your motivation, mood, anxiety and oral performance?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

15. Do you believe that positive self-talk would help you to change your underestimation of your current potentials, to improve your speaking?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Once you have become more aware about inner-talk significance in enhancing your speaking skill, how often do you try to control it?
   Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never ☐

17. Having great abilities to learn to speak good English is insufficient in the absence of motivating oneself through positive self-talk.
   Agree ☐ strongly agree ☐ indifferent ☐ agree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

18. Negative self-talk is the problem behind all problems concerning students’ weak oral performance; even if they have great abilities and a good mastery of the language.
   Agree ☐ strongly agree ☐ indifferent ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

19. Students’ regular use of positive self-talk would decrease their anxiety; thereby increase their opportunities to try to speak inside and outside the classroom.
   Yes ☐ No ☐

20. The key to improving students’ speaking skill is to take conscious control of their self-talk.
   Agree ☐ strongly agree ☐ indifferent ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

21. What is your feeling towards yourself and your capacities to learn to speak more fluent English? What do you say to yourself:(you may choose more than one answer)
• I can never improve
• I am not competent enough to speak in front of classmates
• I will make a lot of stupid mistakes
• My teacher will start correcting a lot of mistakes
• I am the most dumb student in the classroom
• My vocabulary is very poor
• All of them

22. Can you state some of your negative self-talk you, frequently, say to yourself;

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

23. What is the negative self-talk that comes to your mind when having an oral exam (before and during):
• I am sure I cannot do it
• I am not competent enough to speak good English
• My pronunciation is very bad and I will make a lot of mistakes
• My classmates will speak better than me, therefore, they will get good grades
• I will panic and I will not be able to say a word
• All of them

24. Are there any effective ways, you know or have experienced to remedy and change your negative self-talk that keep on affecting your anxiety, thereby your oral performance.

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………

25. Do you think that one excellent way to combat and overcome negative self-talk is through using positive affirmations instead?
Agree strongly agree indifferent disagree strongly disagree

26. If you agree, which from the following positive affirmations you do prefer to use to replace negative self-talk;
• “I like myself”
• “I am a positive person and I create a positive life”
• “I am a wonderful person of immense value and who deserves to be loved”
• All of them
27. Do you believe that your abilities can be improved by hard work, study and practice?
Yes [ ] No [ ]

28. Words like: “I am good enough” “Excellent” “great job” … Push me to exert more effort and increase my desire to practice the language.
Yes [ ] No [ ]

29. If I believe strongly in my abilities to speak good English, I will learn English successfully.
Yes [ ] No [ ]

30. I feel pleased, relaxed, motivated, persistent and full of energy, when I talk to myself more positively.
Yes [ ] No [ ]

31. It is quite important that students’ believe in their capabilities to face any difficulty in speaking good English.
Yes [ ] No [ ]

32. Do you think that positive self-talk would improve students’ speaking skill, because they would enhance their:
- Attention (focus) [ ]
- Self-confidence and self-esteem [ ]
- Energy [ ]
- Motivation (desire) [ ]
- Persistence [ ]
- Reduce their anxiety and negative shyness [ ]
- All of them [ ]

33. May Students change their negative self-talk to more positive inner-talk for better speaking fluency, by saying similar phrases: “I am intelligent” “I can do it” “I have a great potential”
Yes [ ] No [ ]

34. When you use some positive self-talk affirmations (mainly, inside the classroom) you feel that:
- Your fears and doubts go away [ ]
- The exertion of more effort appear [ ]
- Your attempt to try to use the English language improve [ ]
- Your hesitation disappear [ ]
- Your desire is enhanced [ ]
- All of them [ ]
APPENDIX II

Personal Goal-setting Questionnaire

1. Positive self-talk and personal goal-setting are considered of primary importance in learning, in general, and in learning to speak more fluent English, in particular.
   Yes  No

2. Personal goal-setting and motivation go hand in hand to facilitate learning (speaking skill).
   Yes  No

3. Personal goal-setting is an important intrinsic motivational factor that is essentially linked to oral performance.
   Yes  No

4. Goal setting is a learning technique used to raise incentives (drives) for students to study more effectively and to improve, quickly, their learning skills such as speaking.
   Yes  No

5. The majority of students do not set learning goals, from the very beginning of the academic year, that is way they cannot improve their skills (speaking).
   Yes  No

6. If yes, do you think this is the first reason, that they do not persist in overcoming difficulties in trying to speak more fluent English?
   Yes  No

7. Personal goal-setting leads to better oral performance by increasing effort and practice.
   Yes  No

8. Setting learning (speaking) goals direct students to know the significant points they should focus their effort on.
   Yes  No

9. When working on my goals, I should put in maximum effort and work even harder if I have suffered a setback.
   Yes  No
10. I must regularly set learning goals to achieve my vision for my studies.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

11. I have to think positively about setting learning goals.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

12. When achieving one goal I have to use rewards to keep myself focused and motivated to attain other goals.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

13. In setting learning, speaking, goals I have to worry about deadlines and getting things done.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

14. My biggest reward after completing something is the satisfaction of knowing I have done a good job.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

15. When an unexpected event threatens my goal, I tend to walk away, set a different goal, and move in a new direction.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

16. I have to worry about why I will not reach my goals, and find some practical solutions to attain them.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐

17. I have to create a vivid and powerful vision of my future success before embarking on a new goal.
Yes  ☐   No  ☐
Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire is part of a research work. Aiming at exploring whether and to what extent positive self-talk and personal goal-setting, as cognitive-motivational strategies, would aid in bolstering up students’ oral performance.

You are invited to answer the following questions. By providing an answer that best expresses your opinion for each item.

Thank you in advance for your valuable answers!

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1. Do you consider ‘self-management’ learning strategies as a critical component of efficient learning?
   a. Yes  b. No

2. Do you think that students, generally speaking, exert almost no effort to utilize some learning strategies that would facilitate the learning enterprise for them?
   a. Yes  b. No

3. Do you see that students (namely EFL learners), need to use some self-management learning strategies, in addition to their instructors’ direction, help and encouragements, so as to bolster up their performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?
   a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

4. Do you believe that it is necessary (primordial) that instructors, in general, and Oral Expression teachers, in particular, teach and encourage their students to utilize some useful self-management strategies, in order to facilitate the learning/teaching operation?
   a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

5. When you teach, do you think, it is worthwhile to invest few minutes in some sessions and try to introduce to your students some beneficial learning strategies, in an attempt to create an effective learning experience?
   a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

6. Have you ever devoted some time trying to inculcate in your students’ minds the idea of utilizing positive self-talk\(^1\) (P.S.T) and personal goal-setting\(^2\) (P.G.S) as potent self-management learning strategies? (raising students’ awareness about their significance)
   a. Yes  b. No

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\(^1\) P.S.T means positive self-statements that can be encouraging and praising to the individual, like for instance: “I can do it” “I can succeed at anything I set my mind to” “I’m a very smart person”...etc

\(^2\) P.G.S. is the process whereby individuals’ targets and objectives are established.
7. Have you ever tried to display to your learners the importance of applying ‘positive self-talk’ and ‘personal goal-setting’ as cognitive-motivational strategies that would boost their performance, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?

a. Yes  b. no

8. Do you think that the majority of learners do not self-set learning goals and they keep talking negatively to themselves, that is why they do not persist in overcoming difficulties, in trying to perform well orally?

a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

9. In your opinion, would self-setting some learning goals and self-talking positively, truly help students’ improve their [oral] performance, in the sense that they would enhance their:

a. Self-confidence  b. self-motivation?  c. persistence?  d. effort exertion  e. enthusiasm?  f. all of them?  
and self-efficacy?  (Perseverance)  and energy?  (Participation)

10. According to you, would students’ self-talk\(^3\) (either positive or negative) have a powerful effect upon their learning, in general, and their oral performance, in particular?

a. Yes  b. no

11. Do you think that the interfering thoughts (negative self-talk) that come to students’ minds before and during an oral performance would hinder them produce successful oral performance?

a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

12. In your opinion, can we consider that students’ negative self-talk\(^4\) would prevent them from trying out the English language in Oral Expression sessions, in that it increases their:

a. Anxiety?  b. shyness?  C. hesitation?  d. underestimation of their potential?  
e. all of them?

13. Do you see that the instructor can play a major role in aiding his/her students conquer and substitute their negative self-talk, by fostering their self-efficacy, their self-confidence and their self-motivation and thereby encourage positive self-talk to take place?

a. Strongly agree  b. agree  c. disagree  d. strongly disagree  e. don’t know

\(^3\) Self-talk means the ongoing internal conversation with our selves or the running dialogue inside our heads.

\(^4\) N.S.T means negative self-statements; negative thoughts in the form of criticism that are discouraging and self demeaning to the individual.
APPENDIX IV

Students’ Responses about Their Negative Self-talk

- I am the most stupid person on earth.
- I can’t do anything right.
- Why am I so naive and believe everybody?!
- I am a loser.
- I am weak, I can’t face my problems.
- I am a lazy, unreliable person, I can’t do anything by myself and it
  also said, I’ll do it in the wrong way.
- It is absolutely impossible that I can achieve this goal.
- I wish I die because I am useless, why and living? I am
  torturing myself.
- People are suffering being around me! I am brought
  only misfortune.
- I am unlucky! My luck is the reason behind my misery.
- I am broken, happiness escapes from me.
- I’ll die soon! I am sure I will!
I know I won't make it

Why all this happen to me

I am cursed

Life is unfair

I don't know why it never works with me

I'm not lucky

I am always facing obstacles in my life

I have never got something without suffering

I am so bad

'Oh! My God! I shouldn't do that'

I will not tell because I'm always criticized by others

I fear judgments

How stupid I am

I hide myself the most

Extreme state

I hate who I am really
APPENDIX V
Students’ Response about their Personal Goals

I am eager to attain my ultimate goal, which is fulfilling my studies and being an outstanding instructor. And to attain it, I suppose I have to exert tremendous efforts, for it is not easy to achieve. Hence, I have first to plan what exactly to do, how to start, how to manage time and how to prioritize. At first I have to divide my personal goal into subgoals i.e. proximal goals (short goals), and distal goals (long term goal) to facilitate the attainment of my goal of being a good teacher in the near future. At last I hope I will manage to attain my goal and I will set other personal goals when I achieve it.
Before I wished to be a president, and it was a strange dream or goal, and my friend were laughing at me when I first stated that I am dreaming big.

For the time being my goal is to be a successful person, and as a student in ENSc I want to be a competent teacher and I want to master the English language, i.e. to understand native speakers, to write it in a very good style and to speak fluent English, so as to manage to instruct in an effective way.
Résumé

L’auto-parler positif et le but assigné à soi-même sont actuellement considérés comme les stratégies d’apprentissage les plus efficaces de l’auto-management, et également comme des facteurs essentiels, en psychologie de l’éducation, qui peuvent être pleinement exploités par les étudiants, de manière à renforcer leur performance en général, et leur performance orale en particulier. La présente recherche est une tentative pour sensibiliser les apprenants sur l’importance et l’utilité de ces stratégies d’apprentissage qui, en définitive, les aident à tenir des conversations en Anglais plus naturelles, et démontrer que ces types de stratégies cognitivo-motivationnelles ont généralement été prouvées être efficaces quant au renforcement des performances des étudiants en diverses habiletés (telle l’habileté dans la conversation). Le but principal de cette thèse est d’explorer les effets potentiels de l’auto-parler positif et le but assigné à soi-même sur les étudiants de l’Anglais comme langue étrangère, en termes de performance orale dans la conversation. Un autre aspect de ce travail de recherche est de montrer dans quelle mesure ces stratégies cognitivo-motivationnelles sont utilisées par les étudiants aussi bien que la sélection d’un certain nombre de stratégies d’auto-management par les enseignants de manière à améliorer la performance dans la conversation, et faciliter de cette manière l’opération enseignement/apprentissage. L’hypothèse de travail est que si les enseignants construisent et éveillent la conscience des étudiants sur l’importance et l’efficacité de l’auto-parler positif et le but assigné à soi-même (si les étudiants projettent leur but et leur auto-parler positivement), ceci renforce leur autonomie et leur persistance dans l’effort d’apprentissage, et leur performance orale sera vraisemblablement plus réussie. Dans cet objectif, nous avons élaboré un pré-test, suivie d’une intervention qui a duré quatre mois avec un groupe d’étudiants (éveiller leur conscience pour l’utilisation de l’auto-parler positif et le but assigné à soi-même), et enfin un post-test. A cela, il faut ajouter une série de questionnaires donnés aux étudiants de 1ère année et aux enseignants de l’Ecole Normale Supérieure. Les résultats obtenus supportent l’hypothèse. Ainsi, les résultats suggèrent que l’auto-parler positif et le but assigné à soi-même ont un rôle important sur le plan cognitivo-motivationnel, et donc d’un effet positif sur l’habileté en conversation ; ce que les résultats des questionnaires confirment à leur tour. De plus le questionnaire destiné aux étudiants a révélé que plus de la moitié ne savent pas encore ce que ces stratégies pourraient avoir comme effets potentiels, sur leur performance. Sur la base des résultats obtenus, nous soulignons l’importance et l’utilité des stratégies étudiées dans une conversation. Nous espérons que les recommandations seront utiles pour les étudiants et les instructeurs quant à l’usage des stratégies cognitivo-motivationnelles dans l’enseignement de l’Anglais comme langue étrangère en général, et l’expression orale en particulier.

Les mots clés :

l’auto-parler positif; le but assigné à soi- même ;la performance orale
ملخص

يعتبر الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات، وتحديد الأهداف الشخصية من الاستراتيجيات التعليمية الأكثر فعالية في التسليطات، المتباعدة في الوقت الراهن، وهم من أهم العوامل في مجال علم النفس التربوي، التي يمكن أن يستغلها الطلبة في تعزيز مستوى أدائهم الدراسى عموما والشفوي خصوصا.

ويهدف هذا الفصل، بالخصوص، إلى كشف الغطاء عن التأثير الكامن لكل من الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات وتحديد الأهداف الشخصية على الأداء الشفوي لطلاقة اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث يهتم جانب آخر من هذه الدراسة بعلاقة فيما إذا كان الطلبة يعتمدون على هذه الاستراتيجيات ولأي حد بلغ استعمالهم لها، كما يتم توضيح أهمية تلبية الطلبة مجموعة من استراتيجيات التسليط الشخصي لتحسين مهاراتهم في المحادثة، وبالتالي تيسير عملية التعليم/التعليم. وتقوم فرضية البحث على أنه إذا عزز وعي الطلبة بأهمية وفعالية استعمال الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات وتحديد الأهداف الشخصية، فهذا من شأنه أن يزيد من استقلاليتهم وأصرارهم على التعلم، وأنه إذا تكونوا الطلبة مع ذواتهم بشكل إيجابي وحدوا أهدافهم شخصيا، فسوف يحققون نجاحا أكبر في مجال التعبير الشفوي. وفحص صحة هذه الفرضية، اعتمدنا اختبار قبلي، متابعة دامت أربعة أشهر لفوج من الطلبة (خلق إدراك لديهم أهمية اعتماد استراتيجية الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات وتحديد الأهداف الشخصي للأهداف) واختبار بعدي، بالإضافة إلى مجموعات من الاستبيانات، ووجهت للطلبة السنة الأولى والأساتذة بالمدرسة العليا للأساتذة بقسنطينة. وقد أثبتت النتائج صحة الفرضية، حيث أوضحت أن لهاتين الاستراتيجتين دور معرفي وتحفيزي كبير (تأثير إيجابي) على مهارة الطلبة في المحادثة، وهو الأمر الذي يشاطرتنا فيه الرأي الأساتذة المستجيبين. وعلاوة على هذا، بنتائج الاستبيان الموجه للطلبة بأن نصف الطلبة المستجيبين لا يدركون الأثر الذي يمكن أن تحدثه هاتين الاستراتيجتين. وعلى ضوء هذه النتائج، نؤكد أهمية وفعالية وجدوى الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات والتحديد الشخصي للأهداف، بالنسبة للطلبة، في الحصول على محادثات أكثر فضاءة وطلاقة باللغة الإنجليزية. وبالرغم من محدودية مجال البحث، إلا أن النتائج توحي بجدوى هاتين الاستراتيجتين التي يمكن أن ينتهجها الطلبة للتمكن من مهارات التعبير الشفوي، ومن طرف الأساتذة كوسيلة تعليمية اتجاه طلبهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية
الحوار الإيجابي مع الذات، تحديد الأهداف الشخصية، الأداء الشفوي