33 | Motivation in Second Language Learning

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KEY QUESTIONS

➤ What does it mean when we say that a learner is motivated?
➤ What is the role of motivation in language learning, especially in classroom contexts?
➤ How can language teachers actively promote their students' motivation?

EXPERIENCE

When enthusiastic novice teacher Erin Gruwell started her teaching career in a high school in Long Beach, California, she soon realized that she had been assigned the lowest-performing students in the school, with all the students in her class labeled at-risk inner-city youths, also known as "unteachables." Cliques formed among the students according to their ethnic backgrounds, fights broke out, and the drop-out rate was high. Not only did school management not help in this situation of violence, racial tension, and underachievement, but the head of her department even refused to let her use actual books in class in case they got damaged or lost. To make a long story short, it is difficult to imagine a more desperate situation for a beginner teacher, yet Erin Gruwell not only survived the first year but became so successful that all 150 of her "unteachable" students graduated from high school and many went on to college. As a result, her inspirational story was turned into a Hollywood film in 2007, *Freedom Writers*, starring Oscar-winner Hilary Swank. After leaving her high school job, Erin Gruwell became a distinguished teacher in residence at California State University, Long Beach; published several teacher-training books based on her experience (e.g., Gruwell, 2007a, 2007b); and started the Freedom Writers Foundation, which aspires to spread the Freedom Writers method across the country.

How did Erin Gruwell achieve the almost unachievable? Of course, she had to have a natural gift for teaching with a uniquely compassionate and, at the same time, stubborn personality, but that would not have been enough to beat such impossible odds. As becomes clear from her writings and from the well-scripted film, with no available resources and support all she had at her disposal was a range of creative educational strategies to raise the students' motivation and promote group dynamics in her classes—and she used these to great effect. The ultimate lesson from Erin Gruwell's story is that motivational and group-building strategies can work even in such a tough environment, and therefore an understanding of the motivational dimension of classrooms can offer teachers very powerful tools to combat a range of possible problems, from student lethargy to an unproductive classroom climate.

WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

Motivation is a word that both teachers and learners use widely when they speak about language learning success or failure, and normally it is taken for granted that we understand what the term covers. This seemingly unambiguous understanding, however, contrasts starkly with the perception of motivation as a technical term in the psychological and applied linguistics literature. Although it is used frequently, the meaning of the concept can span such a wide spectrum that sometimes we wonder whether people are talking about the same thing at all. In fact, there have been serious

doubts as to whether motivation is more than a rather obsolete umbrella term for a wide range of variables that have little to do with each other. Indeed, motivation has been considered as both affect (emotion) and cognition; it has been used as both a stable variable of individual difference (i.e., a trait) and a transient-state attribute; and it has even been characterized as a process that is in constant flux, going through ebbs and flows. Furthermore, motivation has been considered as both a factor internal to the learner (e.g., individual curiosity or interest) and a factor externally determined by the sociopolitical setup of the learner's environment (e.g., language attitudes influenced by the relationships within language communities).

Perhaps the only thing about motivation that most researchers would agree on is that it, by definition, concerns the fundamental question of why people behave as they do. Accordingly, motivation determines the direction and magnitude of human behavior or, in other words, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it. This seems to be fairly straightforward: Motivation is responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it. So, what is the problem?

The complex relationship of motivation, cognition, and emotion

The basic problem with conceptualizing motivation as the foundation of human behavior lies with the fact that human behavior can be influenced and shaped in a wide variety of ways, ranging from external motives, such as rewards and incentives, to diverse types of pressure, threats, and punishments. From an internal point of view, there is also a broad spectrum of reasons for doing things: we can be motivated by the love of money or power, the love of people and the world around us, or the love of peace and freedom. Our principal motivation can also be centered around our faith, our family, our profession, or our car. To make things even more complex, several of these motives can affect us simultaneously, interacting with each other on a temporary or on a permanent basis.

There is, however, some good news amid all this perplexing complexity. In spite of what lies behind our motivation, the actual state of being motivated is clearly discernible from a phenomenological (i.e., experiential) perspective; we simply know and feel when we are motivated and when we are not, and we can even grade this distinct experience of wanting (e.g., "It wouldn't be bad" versus "I really-really-really want it!"). Further good news is that people typically have no problem distinguishing this motivational experience from emotional experiences such as feeling happy, sad, or angry, even though those experiences are also gradable (i.e., you can be a bit sad or really angry). Finally, both motivational and emotional states can be relatively easily separated from thoughts, which are not gradable in terms of their intensity either in a positive or negative direction and have therefore sometimes been referred to as the "cold intellect." Thus, it has long been established—ever since Plato, in fact—that phenomenologically we can separate three areas of mental functioning: cognition, motivation, and affect (or emotions). This warrants their use as primary organizing principles of learner characteristics.

So, we can safely conclude that motivation *does* exist but that, in accordance with the hardware of our human mind being a highly integrated neural network, motivation constantly interacts with cognitive and emotional issues and that complex motivation constructs usually include cognitive and affective components. For example, classic expectancy-value theories of motivation hold that individuals are motivated to do a task if they expect to do well on it and if they value the task outcome (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). In this case, a key component is our appraisal of the task and its consequences, which is a primary cognitive function; for such reasons, most modern motivational theories have been largely cognitive in nature (for a review, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In addition to the motivation-cognition link, motivation is closely related to affect; we do not need much justification to assert that emotions such as joy, happiness, fear, anger, and shame profoundly shape our behavior. And, of course, to close the circle, emotions also have a cognitive dimension, which can be clearly seen when we become angry, for example, after we have cognitively appraised a situation and come to the rational conclusion that some major injustice has been done. Indeed, R. Buck (2005) is clearly right when he concludes, "In their fully articulated forms, emotions imply cognitions imply motives imply emotions, and so on" (p. 198).

Motivational conglomerates

So, even if motivation is recognized as a valid category, it always manifests itself in a dynamic interplay with cognitive and emotional factors. I have suggested (Dörnyei, 2009b) that a particularly fruitful approach to conceptualizing motivation, rather than trying to identify individual motives in isolation (as has been the typical practice in motivation research in the past), is to focus on motivational conglomerates of motivational, cognitive, and emotional variables that form coherent patterns or amalgams that act as wholes. While this may sound very abstract, well-known concrete examples of conglomerates, such as interest, indicate that such patterns/amalgams do exist and have traditionally been seen as significant motivational factors. Interest, for example, is clearly a motivational concept and, accordingly, has been included as a key component in various mainstream theories (e.g., expectancy-value theories or self-determination theory), yet it also involves a salient cognitive aspect (curiosity about and the engagement with a specific domain) as well as a prominent affective dimension (the joy associated with this engagement). Therefore, when people say in everyday parlance that someone is "interested" in doing something, they actually are referring to this complex meaning using a single term as a shortcut because they intuitively know that the constituents of the concept hang together in a way that forms a whole. The validation of this assumption is that the interlocutors have no problem understanding what is meant. In the next section, I describe a new motivation theory for learning foreign or second languages that is based on a motivational conglomerate of this sort: the learners' visions of their future self-image.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION

In a long-term learning process such as the mastery of a second language, the learner's ultimate success always depends on the level of motivation; therefore, the concept of second language (L2) learning motivation (L2 motivation) has been the target of intensive research in second language acquisition (SLA) for over five decades. During this period, several approaches have been pursued.

The first famous theory was R. C. Gardner's (1985) social psychological paradigm, in which attitudes toward the speakers of the target language community were seen to play a key role in determining the learner's *integrative motivation* (i.e., the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community to communicate with members of the community and sometimes even to become like them). In the subsequent cognitive period, the best-known theory was Noels's (2001) adaptation of self-determination theory to language learning contexts, highlighting two motivational dimensions: *intrinsic motivation,* performing a behavior for its own sake (e.g., to experience pleasure or to satisfy one's curiosity), and *extrinsic motivation,* pursuing something as a means to an end (e.g., to receive some extrinsic reward such as good grades or to avoid punishment). In the late 1990s, there was a growing interest in looking at motivation as a dynamic concept that is in constant change and displays ongoing ebbs and flows, the process-oriented approach (see Dörnyei, 2005); this has culminated in contemporary attempts to adopt a dynamic systems perspective in motivation research that integrates the various factors related to the learner, the learning task, and the learning environment into one complex system (for a review, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Because motivation theories intend to answer the ultimate question of why people behave and think as they do, it is not at all surprising to find such a richness of approaches. In this chapter, however, I focus on one recent theory in particular, the *L2 motivational self system* (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009a). This is partly because this theory offers a comprehensive perspective that builds on several previous constructs and is compatible with the emphasis on motivational, cognitive, and emotional conglomerates discussed earlier and partly because the framework it provides is practical and lends itself to classroom application.

Possible selves and the L2 motivational self system

In 2005, I proposed a new approach to the understanding of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005), conceived within an L2 motivational self system, which attempts to integrate a number of influential SLA theories with the findings of self research in psychology. The new initiative was rooted in the important psychological concept

of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which represents people's ideas of what they *might* become, what they *would like to* become, and what they *are afraid of* becoming. Thus, possible selves involve people's vision of their likely or hoped-for (or even dreaded) selves in future states, not unlike an athlete envisaging himself or herself stepping onto the Olympic podium one day in the future. In this sense, possible selves are more than mere long-term goals or future plans in that they involve tangible images and senses; if we have a well-developed possible future self, we can imagine this self within vivid and realistic future scenarios.

From the point of view of learning and teaching, one type of possible self, the *ideal self*, is of particularly relevance because it involves the characteristics that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e., it concerns hopes, aspirations, and wishes). If a person has a well-established and vivid ideal self—for example, a student envisions himself or herself as a successful business person—this self-image can act as a potent future self-guide with considerable motivational power. This is expressed in everyday speech when we talk about people following or living up to their dreams. A complementary self-guide that has educational relevance is the *ought-to self*, which involves the attributes that someone believes he or she ought to possess (i.e., it concerns personal or social duties, obligations, and responsibilities). This self-image is particularly salient in some Asian contexts where students are often motivated to perform well to fulfill some family obligation or to bring honor to the family's name (see Magid, 2012). These two self-guides form the basis of the proposed L2 motivational self system, but to make the theory comprehensive, a third dimension has been added, representing the motivational influence of the students' learning environment (i.e., the motivational impact of various facets of the classroom situation, such as the teacher, the curriculum, and the learner group). This is justified by the observation that for some language learners the motivation to learn a language does not come from internally or externally generated future self-images but from successful learning experiences—after all, nothing succeeds like success, as the saying goes.

Accordingly, the proposed L2 motivational self system consists of the following three main constituents (for a more detailed discussion, see Dörnyei, 2009a):

1. *Ideal L2 self*, which concerns the L2-specific facet of the learner's ideal self. If the person the learner would like to become speaks an L2 (e.g., the person is associated with traveling or doing business internationally), the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator for the learner to succeed in learning the L2 because he or she would like to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and ideal selves.
2. *Ought-to L2 self*, which concerns the attributes that the learner believes he or she ought to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes and that, therefore, may bear little resemblance to his or her own desires or wishes.
3. *L2 learning experience*, which concerns the learner's situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the positive impact of success or the enjoyable quality of a language course).

Theoretical and research support

Over the past five years, several studies have employed and tested the L2 motivational self system in a variety of learning environments (e.g., see the selection of papers in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) and the emerging picture consistently supports the validity of the theoretical construct. In studies that specifically compared R. C. Gardner's traditional concept of integrativeness with the ideal L2 self, the latter was found to explain the criterion measures better (typically explaining more than 40% of the variance, which is an exceptionally high figure in motivation studies), and the construct seems to work equally well for different age groups, from secondary school pupils through university students to adult language learners. This is good news, but we need to ask a further theoretical question: Is the proposed system compatible with the dynamic and complex nature of motivation discussed earlier?

Although so far we have looked only at the motivational capacity of future self-guides and images, the possible selves present broad overarching constellations that blend together motivational, cognitive, and affective areas. Previously, the originator of the concept, Markus (2006), has pointed out that the possible self-structure could be

seen as a "dynamic interpretive matrix for thought, feeling and action" (p. xi), and indeed, MacIntyre, MacKinnon, and Clément (2009) have underscored the emotional aspect of possible selves: "When emotion is a prominent feature of a possible self, including a strong sense of fear, hope, or even obligation, a clear path exists by which to influence motivation and action" (p. 47). Furthermore, as we see in the next section, the effective functioning of these self-guides is dependent on several cognitive components, most notably on the learners' appraisal of their own capabilities and their personal circumstances to anchor their vision in a sense of realistic expectations. Last but not least, learners also need a good repertoire of task-related strategies that can be activated by the ideal language self—after all, even Olympic athletes need coaches and training plans in addition to their vivid vision of achieving excellence. All this points to the conclusion that effective future self-guides come in a package with a vision component that activates appropriate emotions and a variety of task-specific cognitive plans, scripts, and self-regulatory strategies. As such, future vision can be seen as the ultimate motivational conglomerate.

Conditions for the motivational power of vision

It has been widely observed that, although visionary future self-guides have the capacity to motivate action, this does not always happen automatically but depends on a number of conditions. The following list contains some of the most important prerequisites; this list is highly relevant when we consider ways of generating an L2 vision in the learners because vision-enhancing strategies are geared at ensuring that these conditions are met.

- *The learner has a desired future self-image.* People differ in how easily they can generate a successful possible self, and therefore not everyone is expected to possess a developed ideal or ought-to self-guide.
- *The learner's future self is sufficiently different from the current self.* If there is no observable gap between current and future selves, no increased effort is felt to be necessary and no motivation emerges.
- *The learner's future self-image is elaborate and vivid.* People vary in the vividness of their

mental imagery, and a possible self with insufficient specificity and detail may not evoke the necessary motivational response.

- *The learner's future self-image is perceived as plausible.* Possible selves are effective only to the extent that the individual does indeed perceive them as possible, that is, to be realistic within the person's individual circumstances. Thus, a sense of controllability (i.e., the belief that his or her action can make a difference) is an essential prerequisite.
- *The learner's future self-image is not perceived as being comfortably certain to be reached, that is, to be within his or her grasp.* The learner must believe that the possible self will not happen automatically, without a marked increase in expended effort.
- *The learner's future self-image is in harmony (or at least does not clash) with the expectations of his or her family, peers, and other elements of the social environment.* Perceived social expectations or group norms that are incongruent with the self-image (e.g., language learning is for girls) are obviously counterproductive, as are ideal and ought-to self-images that are in conflict with each other.
- *The learner's future self-image is regularly activated in his or her working self-concept.* Possible selves become relevant for behavior only when they are primed by frequent and varied reminders.
- *The learner's future self-image is accompanied by relevant and effective procedural strategies that act as a road map toward the goal.* Once the learner's vision generates energy, he or she needs productive tasks into which to channel this energy.
- *A learner's desired future self-image is offset by a counteracting feared possible self in the same domain.* Maximal motivational effectiveness is achieved if the learner also has a vivid image about the negative consequences of failing to achieve the desired end state.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

Luckily, most teachers do not have to face teaching situations as adverse as Erin Gruwell did at the beginning of her career; nevertheless, research has shown that many teachers find that problems with motivating pupils are the second most

serious source of difficulty (the first is maintaining classroom discipline), outranking other, obviously important issues such as the effective use of different teaching methods, a knowledge of the subject matter, and the competent use of textbooks and curriculum guides (Veenman, 1984). If you have ever tried to teach a language class with reluctant, lethargic, or uncooperative students, you know that the results of these surveys of the impediments to learning are quite accurate. This being the case, teacher skills in motivating learners need to be seen as central to teaching effectiveness. The key question is this: Can motivational skills be consciously developed, or is the motivational and inspirational capacity of a teacher solely the consequence of a natural talent that the person has been born with? My past research and experience suggests that, while having a natural flair always helps, there is no doubt that motivational skills can be developed in teachers as part of purposeful training. Furthermore, there is a growing body of research that shows that, once such skills are in place, they have a significant impact on student motivation (e.g., see Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). Let us start the exploration with several key motivational principles.

Three fundamental motivational principles

Principle 1: There is much more to motivational strategies than offering rewards and punishments. Although rewards and punishments are often seen as the only tools in the motivational arsenal of teachers, a closer look at the spectrum of other, potentially more effective motivational strategies reveals that we have an array of varied techniques at our disposal to increase our learners' enthusiasm for L2 learning. In fact, most educational psychologists would consider rewards and punishments too simplistic and rather undesirable tools. The "carrot and stick" approach may work in the short run, but rarely does it lead to real long-term commitment. For example, books have been written about the potential damage of grades, which are by far the most often used forms of rewards and punishments; getting rewards—and good grades in particular—can become more important than learning, and students can easily
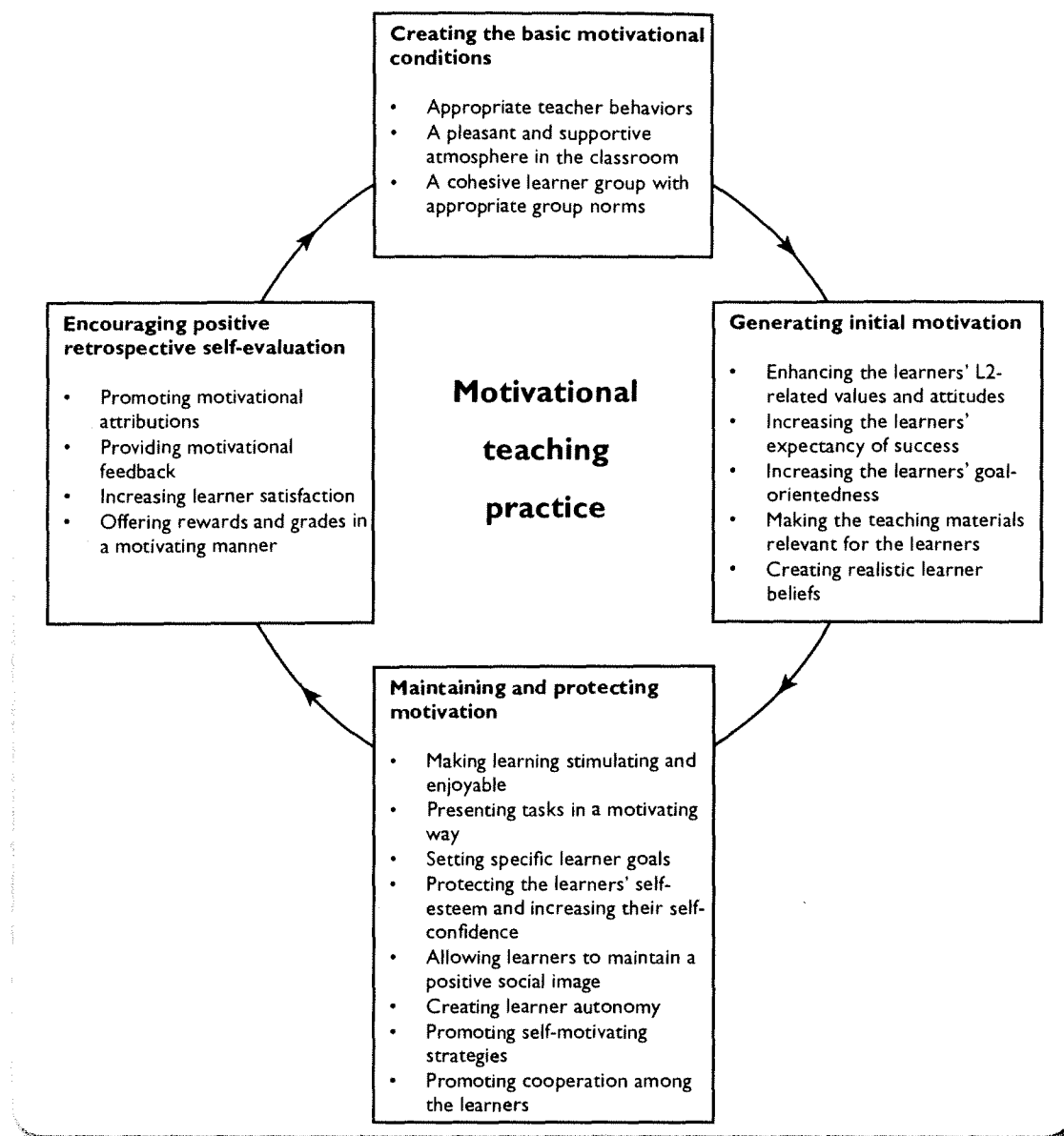
become grade-driven. Therefore, I encourage teachers to start experimenting with other motivational techniques, such as making the learning process more engaging or promoting the learners' language-related vision. The variety of ways by which human learning can be promoted is so rich that teachers should be able to find something that works in most learning situations.

Principle 2: Generating student motivation is not enough in itself—it also has to be maintained and protected. In everyday parlance, motivating someone equals generating the initial motivation in the person. In educational contexts, however, this is not the whole picture. Although generating motivation is a crucial aspect of any motivational teaching practice, unless motivation is actively maintained and protected during the lengthy process of L2 learning, the natural human tendency to lose sight of the goal, get tired or bored with an activity, and give way to attractive distractions will result in the initial motivation gradually petering out. Thus, motivation needs to be actively nurtured, which means that any motivational practice needs to be an ongoing activity.

Principle 3: It is the quality (not the quantity) of the motivational strategies that we use that counts. One of the challenges of looking at the richness of the motivational strategies in the literature is that we become aware of the great number of useful techniques available that we are not applying consistently in our own teaching practice. Is this a problem? Not necessarily. There is so much that requires our constant attention in the L2 classroom that we simply cannot afford to continuously strive to achieve super-motivator status; if we try to do so, we will end up being burned out. I have come to believe that what we need is quality rather than quantity. A few well-chosen strategies that suit both teachers and their learners may be sufficient to create a positive motivational climate in the classroom. Indeed, some of the most motivating teachers rely on only a handful of techniques.

The range of motivational strategies

As noted previously, there is a wealth of potential motivational techniques available to teachers for use in the language classroom; Figure 1 presents 20 motivational facets of motivational teaching

Creating the basic motivational conditions

- Appropriate teacher behaviors
- A pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom
- A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms

Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation

- Promoting motivational attributions
- Providing motivational feedback
- Increasing learner satisfaction
- Offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner

Motivational teaching practice

Generating initial motivation

- Enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes
- Increasing the learners' expectancy of success
- Increasing the learners' goal-orientedness
- Making the teaching materials relevant for the learners
- Creating realistic learner beliefs

Maintaining and protecting motivation

- Making learning stimulating and enjoyable
- Presenting tasks in a motivating way
- Setting specific learner goals
- Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence
- Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image
- Creating learner autonomy
- Promoting self-motivating strategies
- Promoting cooperation among the learners

Figure 1. The main components of Dörnyei's (2001) framework of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom.

practice, grouped into four broad, successive stages (Dörnyei, 2001):

1. *Creating the basic motivational conditions.* Motivational strategies cannot be employed successfully in a motivational vacuum; certain preconditions must be in place before any further attempts to generate motivation can be effective.

2. *Generating initial motivation.* Unless we are singularly fortunate with the composition of our classes, student motivation will not be automatic for everybody, and we need to actively generate positive student attitudes toward L2 learning.

3. *Maintaining and protecting motivation.* We can initially whet the students' appetites with appropriate motivational techniques, but unless motivation is actively maintained and protected, it is likely to decrease in strength over time and can even disappear altogether (see Principle 2).

4. *Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.* A large body of research has shown that the way learners feel about their past accomplishments significantly determines how they approach subsequent learning tasks. Strangely enough, the students' appraisal of their past

performance does not depend only on the absolute, objective level of the success they have achieved but also on how they subjectively interpret their achievement. Using appropriate strategies, teachers can help learners to evaluate their past performance in a more positive light, take more satisfaction in their successes and progress, and explain their past failures in a constructive way.

The introduction of the L2 motivational self system has further broadened the motivational repertoire at the disposal of language teachers because it highlights the significance of the learners' language learning vision. The possibility of harnessing the powerful motivational capacity of vision opens up a whole new avenue for promoting student motivation by means of increasing the elaborateness and vividness of self-relevant imagery in the students. The reality of such an approach has been evidenced in the field of sports psychology, where vision and imagery are generally seen as highly effective performance-enhancement techniques. Thus, language teachers interested in promoting their students' motivation can now choose from a variety of techniques based on their personal preferences as well as the needs and characteristics of their learners. The L2 motivational self system suggests that these motivational strategies can be divided into two main groups: (1) strategies focusing on the learners' vision of their ideal and the ought-to L2 selves; and (2) strategies that concern the improvement of the learning experience. Furthermore, it makes sense to subdivide Group 2 into two levels, the first associated with the individual learner and the second related to the learner group as a social unit. Let us take a closer look at these three clusters (vision, individual learner experience, and learner group experience).

Motivational strategies focusing on the learner's future vision. While virtually every successful athlete in the world applies some sort of imagery enhancement technique during training and competition, having the students in the area of language learning focus on vision is a relatively recent development. Dörnyei (2009b) has proposed a multicomponential framework to develop in the learners an attractive vision of their future language selves and thus to establish effective motivational self-guides for learning. This visionary program consists of six components. Moreover,

Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013) have recently compiled a teachers' resource book that offers 100 practical classroom activities centered around the six stages.

Creating the vision. The first step in a motivational intervention that follows the self approach is to help learners to construct their ideal L2 self, that is, to create an L2-related vision. The verb *construct* here is, in fact, not entirely accurate because it is highly unlikely that any motivational intervention will lead students to generate an ideal self out of nothing. Realistically, the process is more likely to involve awareness raising about, and guided selection from, the multiple aspirations, dreams, and desires that the students have already entertained in the past while also presenting powerful role models to illustrate potential future selves.

Strengthening the vision. Even if a desired language self-image exists, it may not have a sufficient degree of elaborateness and vividness to act as an effective motivator. Methods of imagery enhancement have been explored in several areas of psychological, educational, and sports research, and the techniques of visualization and guided imagery can be used to promote the students' ideal L2 self-images.

Substantiating the vision. Effective visions share a mixture of imagination and reality; therefore, to go beyond mere fantasizing, learners need to anchor their future self-guides in a sense of realistic expectations. This substantiating process requires honest and down-to-earth reality checks as well as a consideration of any potential obstacles and difficulties that might stand in the way of learners' realizing the vision.

Operationalizing the vision. Future self-guides need to be part of a package consisting of an imagery component *and* a repertoire of appropriate plans, scripts, and specific learning strategies. This is clearly an area where L2 motivation research and language teaching methodology overlap.

Keeping the vision alive. Warm-up activities or ice-breakers and other classroom activities can all be turned into effective ways of reminding students of their vision and thus to keep the enthusiastic students going and the less-than-enthusiastic ones thinking.

Counterbalancing the vision. People do something both because they want to do it and because not doing it would lead to undesired results. Regular

reminders of the limitations of not knowing foreign languages and highlighting the duties and obligations the learners have committed themselves to as part of their ought-to selves will help to counterbalance the vision with a feared self.

Motivational strategies focusing on the learning experience: Individual learner level.   How can the L2 learning experience be made more attractive to individual learners? The following 10 strategies offer a representative selection of the techniques and approaches available to the teacher.

Whetting the students' appetite.   The key in generating interest in learning is to whet the students' appetite, that is, to arouse the learners' curiosity and attention to create an attractive image for the L2 course. This is very much a "selling" task in which the teacher may point out challenging, exotic, or satisfying aspects of L2 learning; connect L2 learning with activities that students already find interesting or hold in esteem (e.g., computer-assisted learning); highlight the variety of activities that L2 learning may involve; and provide a demonstration of some particularly enjoyable tasks (e.g., games, simulations, or competitions).

Increasing the learners' expectancy of success.   The notion of expectancy of success has been one of the most researched factors in motivational psychology for the past four decades. This is due to the undeniable fact that people do things best if they believe they can succeed in them. Whether a student expects success in a given task is a rather subjective matter; therefore an effective way of motivating learners is to put them in a more positive or optimistic mood. Of course, the best way of ensuring that students expect success is to make sure that they achieve it consistently; in addition, it also helps if the success criteria are clear, the students are provided with sufficient advance preparation, and they are aware that they can rely on ongoing assistance both from the teacher and their peers.

Making the teaching materials relevant to the learners.   One of the most demotivating factors for learners is to have to learn something that has no apparent relevance to their lives. This experience is, unfortunately, more common than many of us would think. Accordingly, much of the motivational advice offered to teachers in the educational literature boils down to the following general principle:

find out what students' goals are and what topics they want to learn about; then build these into the curriculum as much as possible.

Breaking the monotony of learning.   Even in classes characterized by a mixture of interesting teaching approaches, there is a danger of settling into familiar routines, which then can easily turn into a monotonous daily grind. To prevent monotony, teachers need to vary as many aspects of the learning process as possible (e.g., the focus and nature of the tasks, the type of student involvement, the learning materials, and even the arrangement of the furniture). Of course, trying to continuously change all the aspects of teaching becomes the perfect recipe for teacher burn-out; rather, teachers should look at these factors as cooking ingredients and make sure that they do not serve exactly the same meal every day.

Making the learning tasks more interesting.   Not even the richest variety of tasks will motivate students if their content is not attractive, that is, if the students find the activities boring. The literature contains an abundance of suggestions on how to make tasks interesting; for example, tasks that offer some challenge, contain interesting topics, or include novel, intriguing, exotic, humorous, or fantasy elements are always welcomed by learners.

Increasing the learners' self-confidence.   Learning a new language is to a large extent a "confidence game." Confident learners can communicate using surprisingly limited L2 resources, whereas no amount of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge will help someone to speak if his or her confidence is lacking. Two key aspects of confidence building are providing regular encouragement and reducing language anxiety. Teachers should never forget that the language classroom is an inherently face-threatening environment where saying even a simple sentence carries the danger of making big mistakes. Helping learners to accept that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process is already half the battle.

Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image.   For most schoolchildren, the main social arena in life is their school and their most important reference group is their peers. Adult learners can be similarly self-conscious. Therefore, it is unlikely that students will be keen to do a task that puts them in a situation where they are made to look small in front

of their classmates. This might involve performances that require free, unscripted speech in front of the others; learners in some cultures might be particularly self-conscious about their accented pronunciation in such situations. On the other hand, if teachers provide an opportunity for everybody to play the protagonist's role in one way or another (e.g., by creating situations in which students can demonstrate their particular strengths), the "positive hero" image might work as a stimulant.

Creating learner autonomy. Students are more motivated to pursue tasks when they feel some sort of ownership. This can be achieved by teachers' allowing them to make real choices about as many aspects of the learning process as possible, handing over various leadership/teaching roles, and adopting the role of facilitator rather than drill sergeant. Autonomy and motivation go hand in hand.

Increasing learner satisfaction. I have noticed in myself, and also in many other teachers, a tendency to show far less emotion when something goes right than when it goes wrong. The problem with acknowledging accomplishments in such a cool manner, but making failures or difficulties tangible, is that teachers miss out on the celebratory part of learning and reduce the amount of satisfaction they may feel. Celebrations and satisfaction are crucial motivational building blocks because they validate past effort, affirm the entire learning process, and in general provide the bright spots along the road toward the ultimate goal. So teachers should take the time to celebrate any student victory.

Offering grades in a motivational manner. Although many teachers and researchers would love to get rid of assessment, realistically speaking, grades are likely to remain a fact of life for the foreseeable future. Therefore, an important task for teachers is to find ways of offering grades and rewards in a motivating manner. The following guidelines may take teachers some way toward this end: (1) make the assessment system completely transparent, with clear success criteria, and create opportunities for the students to also express their views; (2) make sure that grades reflect effort and improvement, and not just objective levels of achievement; (3) apply continuous assessment that does not rely solely on pencil-and-paper tests; and (4) encourage accurate student self-assessment by providing a variety of self-evaluation tools.

Motivational strategies focusing on the learning experience: Learner group level. When a teacher faces a motivationally challenging classroom situation (like Erin Gruwell did in Long Beach in the 1990s), it is usually evident that trying to cater to the individual learners' motivational needs is not enough because the learner group as a whole has such a powerful influence over the members that it can, and often does, override the individual students' personal preferences. Therefore, motivation also needs to be tackled at the group level. This is where lessons from group dynamics become invaluable (see Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003).

In the social sciences, group dynamics concerns the scientific analysis of the behavior of small groups and involves overlapping disciplines such as social, industrial, organizational, and clinical psychology; psychiatry; anthropology; sociology; and social work since all these fields involve groups as the focal points around which human relationships are organized. Because in instructional contexts most organized learning occurs in some kind of group (classes, seminars, workshops, discussion groups, etc.), group dynamics is highly relevant in education, including language education. An awareness of the principles of group dynamics can make classroom events less threatening to teachers and can help them develop more efficient methods of classroom management and thus consciously facilitate the development of creative, well-balanced, and cohesive groups. All this, of course, has a significant motivational impact.

Group dynamics

The two areas of group dynamics that most concern the motivational state of group members are group cohesiveness and group norms. Group cohesiveness is the strength of the relationships linking group members to one another and to the group itself; group norms are the implicit and explicit rules of conduct that regulate the life of the learner group and that make joint learning possible.

Group cohesiveness. The motivational significance of a cohesive classroom becomes obvious if we consider its opposite, a classroom with cliques and a lack of proper communication among students. So, how can we avoid such a situation and consciously

promote a cohesive classroom climate? Here are some relevant points to consider.

Learning about each other. This is the most crucial and most general factor to foster inter-member relationships; it involves the students' sharing genuine personal information with each other. People do not accept others without knowing the other people well enough; images of others as enemies or a lack of tolerance very often stems from insufficient knowledge about the other people.

Proximity, contact, and interaction. Proximity is the physical distance between people, a contact is a situation where learners can meet and communicate spontaneously, and an interaction is a special contact situation in which the behavior of each person influences the behavior of others. These three factors are effective natural gelling agents that highlight the importance of classroom issues such as the seating plan, small-group work, and independent student projects.

Shared group history. The amount of time people have spent together and statements such as "Remember when we . . ." usually have a strong bonding effect.

The rewarding nature of group activities. Rewards may involve the joy of performing the activities, approval of the goals, success in achieving these goals, and personal benefits (such as grades or prizes).

Group legend. Successful groups often create a kind of group mythology that includes giving the group a name; inventing special group characteristics (e.g., a dress code) and group rituals; and creating group mottos, logos, and other symbols such as flags or coats of arms.

Public commitment to the group. Group agreements and contracts spelling out the common goals and rules of the group are types of such public commitment; wearing school colors or T-shirts is another way of achieving this.

Investing in the group. When members spend a considerable amount of time and effort contributing to the group goals, this increases their commitment toward these goals and, subsequently, to the group.

Extracurricular activities. These represent powerful experiences—indeed, even one successful outing may be sufficient to create the group,

partly because during outings students lower their "school filter" and relate to each other as civilians rather than students. A positive experience will prevail in students' memories, adding a fresh perception to their school relationships.

Cooperation toward common goals. Superordinate goals that require the cooperation of everybody to achieve them have been found to be an effective means of bringing together even openly hostile parties.

Intergroup competition. Games in which small groups compete with each other within a class can produce a powerful type of cooperation; people will unite in an effort to win. Teachers can group students together who would not normally make friends easily and mix up the subteams regularly.

Defining the group against another. Emphasizing the differences between "us" and "them" is a powerful but obviously dangerous aspect of group cohesiveness. While stirring up emotions against an out-group to strengthen in-group ties is definitely to be avoided, teachers might occasionally allow students to reflect on how special their class and the time spent together are compared to the experiences of other groups.

Joint hardship and common threat. Strangely enough, going through some difficulty or calamity together (e.g., carrying out some tough physical task together or being in a common predicament, such as having to take an exam) can have a beneficial group effect.

Teacher as role model. Friendly and supportive behavior by the teacher is infectious, and students are likely to follow suit.

Group norms. The best way to illustrate the motivational role of group norms is to consider a situation where things have gone wrong. In many contemporary classrooms, we come across the norm of mediocrity, that is, there is often peer pressure on fellow students not to excel academically; if they do excel, they will be made fun of and called names such as "nerd" or "brain." This is a clear-cut illustration of group norms directly affecting students' individual levels of motivation, sometimes in a dramatic way. So, how can we make sure that the norms in our classroom promote rather than hinder learning? The key is that real group norms are inherently social products; for a

norm to be long-lasting and constructive, it needs to be explicitly discussed with and accepted by the students as right and proper. Therefore, it is beneficial for teachers to include an explicit norm-building procedure early in the group's life by:

- formulating potential norms
- justifying their purpose to enlist support for the norms
- having the norms discussed by the whole group
- eliciting further potential norms from the learners and subjecting these to discussion too
- explicitly addressing unproductive norms and changing them by consensus
- agreeing as a group on a mutually acceptable set of class rules that can be displayed on a wall chart

Norm-building efforts will really pay off for the teacher when someone breaks the norms, for example, by behaving inappropriately or not doing something expected. The more time a group spends setting, negotiating, and modeling the norms, the fewer people in the group will go astray; and when group members do break the norms, it is usually the group that brings them back in line. Having the group on the teacher's side when coping with deviations and maintaining discipline is a major help. Members can usually bring considerable group pressure to bear on errant members and enforce conformity with the group's norms. Teachers should never underestimate the potential power of the group.

FUTURE TRENDS

Contemporary research on L2 motivation is moving into a new phase characterized by a concern with the situated complexity of the L2 motivation process and its dynamic interaction with a multiplicity of internal, social, and contextual factors in our modern and increasingly globalized world. Indeed, over the past decades the world of the L2 learner has changed dramatically—it is now characterized by linguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity, where language use, ethnicity, and identity have become complex topical issues and the subjects of sociolinguistic and social psychological research. To address this changing global reality and, in particular, to account for the motivation to learn global English as a target

language of people aspiring to acquire a global identity, L2 motivation is currently being radically reconceptualized in the context of contemporary notions of self and identity. The first part of this chapter provided a sense of the emerging new theoretical focus.

With regard to practical developments concerning the methods of increasing learner motivation, I believe that the concepts of vision and future self-guide will play a key role in the next decades. Techniques are currently being developed to use self-enhancing activities, visualization, and guided imagery in the language classroom (e.g., Arnold, Puchta, & Rinvolucri, 2007; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Magid & Chan, 2012), and the initial positive perception of the self-based approach by teachers in many settings suggests that this is a direction that may activate considerable creative energy at the classroom level. This will be very welcome because, as every reader of this chapter will probably agree, the way we currently approach classroom processes and events—and more generally, the psychological reality of the language classroom—has for some time been due for a major overhaul.

CONCLUSION

In an inherently social process such as language acquisition, the learner cannot be meaningfully separated from the social environment within which he or she operates, and therefore the challenge for future research on motivation is to adopt a dynamic perspective that allows us to consider simultaneously the ongoing multiple influences between environmental and learner factors in all their componential complexity. Erin Gruwell's response to the challenges she faced involved taking exactly such an integrated approach; she addressed motivational issues, at both the individual learner and group levels, that ranged from designing creative learning tasks and ensuring adequate resources to developing a classroom climate characterized by cohesiveness and a norm of tolerance. But she also knew that to turn around such hard-to-reach students (or "unteachables") she needed to impact the learners' whole identities by offering them a new, attractive vision. The Freedom Writers project showed that such goals are not merely idealistic fantasies but can actually work;

the L2 motivational self system described in this chapter offers a useful theoretical framework to pull together a wide range of issues concerning the internal desires of the learner, the social pressures exercised by significant or authoritative people in the learner's environment, and the learner's actual experience of being engaged in the learning process.

On a more practical level, my experience is that motivational issues still do not receive their due importance in language teacher education. One consequence of this is that teachers are expected to meet the challenging demands of managing complex classrooms without sufficient awareness and training to tackle the psychological level—this is a little bit like sending soldiers to war without enough ammunition. It is hoped that this situation will change, and this chapter has outlined a wealth of strategies and approaches that language teachers have at their disposal to motivate their learners. However, let me reiterate here that striving to achieve super-motivator status can easily lead a teacher to burnout; instead, it is sufficient for teachers to choose a few strategies that suit both them and their learners to create a positive motivational climate in the classroom. Some of the most motivating teachers rely on only a handful of techniques.

SUMMARY

- ➤ Motivation concerns the fundamental question of why people behave as they do, that is, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it.
- ➤ With a long-term learning process such as the mastery of a second language, learners' ultimate success will depend heavily on their level of motivation.
- ➤ Because motivation always manifests itself in a dynamic interplay with other personal and contextual factors, a particularly fruitful approach to conceptualizing motivation is by focusing on motivational conglomerates of various motivational, cognitive, and emotional variables that form coherent patterns and, as such, act as wholes.
- ➤ One motivational conglomerate that offers a particularly useful framework for language educators is the learners' future vision of themselves.

- ➤ Language-specific vision is operationalized within the broader construct of the L2 motivational self system, which highlights three primary sources of L2 motivation: the learners' vision of themselves as effective L2 speakers; the social pressure coming from the learner's environment; and the learners' positive learning experiences.
- ➤ Skills in motivating learners are central to effective teaching; relevant motivational strategies can be divided into three main clusters, focusing on: (1) the learner's future vision; (2) the individual's learning experience; and (3) the group's learning experience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it meaningful to use the term *motivation* to refer to such divergent purposes as learning an L2: (a) to be able to make more money and (b) to be able to read a sacred text in the original? Or (c) to get good grades and (d) to expand one's mental horizon?
2. What happens to a learner's overall motivation when the ideal language self and the ought-to language self come into conflict (e.g., the learner experiences conflict between personal and family plans, or faces negative peer pressure at school)? How can such a conflict be handled in a constructive way?
3. Why are most motivational strategies underutilized and most language teachers not overly concerned about motivating their students? What is your personal experience with this issue?
4. How universal are motivational strategies? Can some strategies be effective in one learning environment and counterproductive in another?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. The following four strategies are part of the vision-building sequence described earlier in the chapter. Think of your past experiences as a language learner and/or teacher, and imagine how you might be able to apply some of these strategies:
   a. construction of the ideal L2 self: creating the vision
   b. imagery enhancement: strengthening the vision

c. developing an action plan: operationalizing the vision

d. activating the ideal L2 self: keeping the vision alive

2. You want to give your students controlled practice of a grammar point (e.g., *since/for* + present perfect tense). Think of ways to make the inherently boring drill task more interesting by exploiting the following elements:

a. some kind of a challenge

b. interesting content (i.e., related to the students' interest)

c. some novelty element

d. some exotic/fantasy element

e. some personal element (i.e., personalizing the content)

Factors promoting group cohesiveness	Current group	Past/future group
Learning about each other		
Proximity (physical distance)		
Social contact and interaction		
Cooperation		
The rewarding nature of group experience		
Joint hardship		
Intergroup competition		
The teacher's role in modeling		
Investing in the group		
Defining one's group compared to another group		

3. The chart on this page contains a list of factors that can positively contribute to group cohesiveness. Using a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 = not relevant/applicable/practical and 5 = highly relevant/applicable/practical), mark how relevant/practical/applicable each factor is: (a) in the learner group you are currently a member of; and (b) in the context you have come from and/or where you are planning to teach in the future. Summarize the results together in class on the board and discuss them.

4. Watch the film *Freedom Writers* (2007, Paramount Pictures), and write down two examples of each of the following instructional strategies used by the teacher, Erin Gruwell:

a. group-building activities

b. vision-building activities and practices

c. creative learning techniques

FURTHER READING

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

This is the most detailed description of the L2 motivational self system to date, discussing its genesis, theoretical validity, and main features.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Longman.

This book offers an accessible overview of everything teachers want to know about motivation, from theory and research to applications and motivational strategies.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*, 954–969.

If you want to read one psychological work on possible selves and future self-guides, this is the one.

Ushioda, E. (2008). Motivation and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 19–34). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

This is a concise overview in a very useful volume.