

The Importance of Motivation

The term motivation refers to “some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” (Harmer, 2007, p. 98). In other words, to succeed at something, one has to want to do that thing. This internal desire may be referred to as motivation. In the context of second language learning, motivation refers to “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (Gardner, 1985, p. 10). In this view, a motivated learner is one who is willing and eager to invest his or her efforts to achieve the goal of learning a language. Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1959, 1972), made the distinction between two types of motivation, integrative and instrumental. When an L2 learner has the desire to integrate himself into the L2 speech community, he is said to be integratively motivated. On the other hand, if the learner studies the language for practical reasons such as fulfilling a college language requirement, getting a job, etc., he is said to be instrumentally motivated. Another distinction has been made in the literature between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation reflects an internal desire to engage in a learning activity for its own sake without worrying about an external reward. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, “is fueled by the anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self” (Brown, 2007, p. 172). In other words, extrinsically motivated learners engage in a learning task because they wish to receive some external reward such as grades, prizes, or even a positive feedback. Regardless of motivational dichotomies, most researchers agree that motivation plays a significant role in second language learning success. In the language classroom, teachers can positively contribute to their students’ motivation through the use of different motivational strategies. Zoltan Dornyei and Kata Csizer (1998) surveyed two hundred Hungarian teachers of English on the strategies they find more

important. The two researches came up with a set of ten strategies which they called the 'ten commandments for motivating language learners':

- Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
- Present the tasks properly.
- Develop a good relationship with the learners.
- Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
- Make the language classes interesting.
- Promote learner autonomy.
- Personalize the learning process.
- Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
- Familiarize learners with the target language culture. (p. 213-218)