

Motivation from within, motivation from without

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paradox

It was crowded and yet at the same time peaceful. This was a paradox she often remarked on.

(Collins COBUILD Students' Dictionary)

Motivation needs to be internally driven,
yet it must be socially mediated.

Motivation needs to be internally driven

- *Story 1: When I was a little girl ...*
- The importance of 'motivation from within' (Deci 1996)
- Intrinsic motivation:
 - doing something as an end in itself, for its own self-sustaining pleasurable rewards of enjoyment, interest, challenge, or skill and knowledge development

Intrinsically motivated learners are likely to

- display much higher levels of involvement in learning
- engage in more efficient and creative thinking processes
- use a wider range of problem solving-strategies
- interact with and retain material more effectively
(Amabile & Hennessy 1992; Condry & Chambers 1978; Fransson 1994)

Intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation

- Integrative/instrumental motivation are forms of extrinsic motivation (Gardner 1985)
- Value and effectiveness of some forms of extrinsic motivation
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors working in concert (van Lier 1996)
- **Internalized and self-determined** (rather than externally regulated) motivation

How to promote motivation from within?

- Dangers of external regulation
- *Story 2: An old Jewish fable ...*
- Paradox: motivation needs to be internally driven, yet it must be socially mediated
- How can we get learners to want to do what they do not want to do (e.g., hard work)?
- *Story 3: A lesson from Tom Sawyer ...*

The dynamic of social participation

“I just like learning the language because – if there’s stuff out there that other people are doing you’d want to have to do it yourself – because everyone’s doing it [...] It’s harder to work on your own than working with the class.”

(Ushioda 2003, p.92)

- Learning and thinking are made possible only by participating in a particular sociocultural setting (Bruner 1996, p.xi)

Vygotskian sociocultural theory

- Higher order cognitive functions are internalized from social interaction with more competent others (Vygotsky 1978)
- E.g., the child learns how to do jigsaw puzzles through successive experiences of doing jigsaw puzzles with older brothers and sisters or parents

Motivation for culturally valued goals and activities

[Vygotsky] assumed that individuals have innate motivation for self-regulation and independent action, but that motivation to control specific situations and reach specific goals is acquired from others who transmit knowledge about which values and goals are approved by the culture. To a great extent the child learns what to want.

(Bronson 2000, p.33)

Social mediation of motivation

- Motivation is not located solely within the individual, but is socially distributed, created within cultural systems of activities involving the mediation of others
(Rueda & Moll 1994, pp.131–132)
- Participation in experience, endorsement and internalization of goals and values
- Autonomy, involvement in decision-making
- *Story 4: When I was a very little girl ...*

A classroom example from Ireland

Context:

- Secondary teachers and learners working with the European Language Portfolio (ELP)
(Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002; Ushioda & Ridley 2002)

3 components of the ELP:

- Language Passport
- Language Biography
- Dossier

For information about the ELP, see Council of Europe website: <http://culture.coe.int/portfolio>

Irish ELP (Authentik 2001): Checklist of Target Skills

- derived from syllabus objectives
- expressed as 'can do' statements classified according to Council of Europe's common reference levels (Council of Europe 2001)
 - I can understand numbers and prices
 - I can understand times and dates
 - I can follow simple directions (e.g., how to get from X to Y) on foot or by public transport
 - I can grasp the essential elements of clear simple messages and recorded announcements

Learners:

- I think it's a great idea setting your own goals because [...] it makes class more enjoyable for us and makes us want to learn French as a group instead of being told what to learn in class.
- If we pick things we like we will enjoy learning it and we will learn it better.
- If we set our own targets we are willing to do French and things we are able to do according to our own ability.

Teachers:

- There was an improvement in attitude to the learning when learners were deciding what they would do next.
- The students are constantly pushing themselves to attain the goals they have indicated in their folders.
- Some of them are pushing themselves as they want to fill up the Dossier; that is surprising in my school.

Implications for classroom practice

Sociocultural theory highlights the crucial distinction between:

- external regulation of motivation (through motivational tricks and strategies)

and

- mediation of its internal growth and self-regulation

Implications for research

- Broadening the unit of analysis to embrace the interaction between the individual and the social setting (Ushioda 2003, 2006)
- More classroom-based practitioner research
- Learner stories: the future direction of L2 motivation research?