Instructional Design for Language Teachers

Marcel VanAmelsvoort

Abstract
Motivation is now much better understood and research findings on motivation are providing proof that a web 2.0 approach to language learning can be one way to maximize student motivation. The type of approach, the type of activities and the role of the instructor can all have a great impact on motivation. These can all be manipulated to increase student motivation.

Introduction

Motivation is the “why?” of learning. It is the driver of the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior (Geen, 1995). This question of “why?” can be rephrased as “why do people try to learn anything, in particular, languages?” In pondering the enormity of this question, we begin to see the enormity of the phenomenon and get a sense that motivation might not be so easily understood, managed, or manipulated. It is an enormous topic with so many possible variables and so much happening in the black boxes of the minds of individuals as they interact with other learners, the instructor, the material, and their own sense of self. In addition to the intimidating number of motivations and variables that have been found to be significant, the general approach to motivation in second language settings historically assumed that much of what we call learner motivation is beyond the reach of the instructor or the institution. It consists of orientations and motivations that the learner already has and brings to the classroom. This was probably the result of too great an emphasis on the early work of Robert Gardner and his associates who originally focused on attitudes of learners toward the speakers of the target language. But over the years, our knowledge of motivation has changed, and the world has changed. It has become easier to travel to other countries for many learners and the Internet has opened up new opportunities for exposure and participation in other groups and cultures. Motivation researchers have also found that there are an enormous number
of motivating factors, and that motivation “...can be multiple, contradictory, and changing” (Canagarajah, 2006, pg. 14). As researchers have come to understand motivation better, and as technological advances and new approaches have facilitated communication beyond the walls of the classroom, we are challenged to rethink our entire approach to the way language education is commonly conducted. This paper will wade through SLA motivation research and other learner and training motivation research and best practices to see what the literature has to say in support of an approach to language learning that makes use of new web applications with a greater focus on student-generated content and computer-mediated communication (CMC), an approach that is often called a web 2.0 or e-learning 2.0 approach.

The Big Question

But let's start with that really big question: why do people try to learn languages? Here we can answer with some really big generalizations that will help to organize all of the different ideas that will be covered about motivation in the following pages: people learn because they need to; and/or because they are required to; and/or because they want to.

People will feel the need to learn an additional language if it is part of their environment because biologically humans, like other animals, are wired to be sensitive to cues in the environment. Knowledge of the space around us is “central” to the behavior of all animals extrapolates Kandel, after years of examining the most basic operations of the Aplysia sea slug (2006, pg. 307). Learning of what is in our environment is not an optional activity; it is biologically required of us. It is the important activity of understanding the space/environment around us, which for socially-oriented humans includes the social landscape, which often requires ability with an additional language to navigate. Schumann (2001) frames it similarly: learning is a type of foraging and humans forage for information, knowledge and skills in the same way that animals forage for food. In fact, the same neurobiological mechanisms are employed in both kinds of foraging and that is evidence they evolved to meet important needs. And Maslow, the developer of the most widely discussed general theory of motivation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, outlines a series of "needs" that humans are inherently motivated to meet, including learning (Maslow, 1943). Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) in summarizing a vast amount of
psychological research, identify three psychological needs as part of their Self-determination theory. The first is autonomy, or the need to feel that one's life is being self-determined ("I am making this choice; I am not a pawn"). The second is a sense of competence, a notion closely related to the need to know about the space around us. Competencies help humans think they understand and can deal effectively with their environment (I can do this. I'm in control). The third is relatedness, which is a social need humans have to be connected to others, esteemed by others and belong to a larger social whole (I belong here and people like and respect me.)

**Needing to learn** is involuntary but many of the motivating impulses people feel they feel because they are trying to achieve set or perceived goals. People are required to learn languages for myriad reasons. Many of these reasons are, to use Gardner's term, instrumental (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). That is, people seek to learn languages as a means of achieving goals such as getting a job or gaining social recognition. For that reason, the concept can be loosely grouped with another one used to describe motivation coming from outside the individual, perhaps from an institution, extrinsic motivation. This is motivation that arises as the individual tries to meet conditions imposed or perceived as set by forces outside the individual. Often this motivation is framed in terms of positive motivation to achieve goals (set by someone) or negative motivation to avoid punishments or problems.

And like the perceived reasons for being required to learn anything, people also have many reasons for wanting to learn something. Some reasons may involve the pure pleasure felt from learning. This is the sort of learning—problem solving, decision-making, hypothesizing and strategizing—that is so fun that people spend billions of dollars per year on computer games that allow them to do it. (Gee, 2006). For language learning, people might want to try to learn for the pure joy it affords. The term widely in use for this type of learning for personal interest or self-accomplishment is intrinsic motivation (originally from Deci and Ryan, 1985) and it is widely thought to be the ideal (from a teacher or learner's perspective) type of motivation (Canagarajah, 2006). Learners might be motivated to learn because they want to get or be closer to a group of people who use the target language. Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) introduced the term integrative motivation for motivation that pushes a learner to get closer to the target language users. Though similar in some ways and probably overlapping (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998), integrative motivation deals mostly with inter-group and
intercultural feelings while intrinsic motivation deals more with feelings toward the immediate learning situation (Noels, 2001b). But both of these influence what individuals decide they want to do.

The purpose of this need to/want to/required to organization of motivation is not to try to simplify motivation too greatly, but to get a grasp of the variety of motivations that can influence the behaviors of learners (for we must remember that motivations only affect the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior but it is the behavior that, over time, results in proficiency). You have no doubt already begun to notice that items in these categories bleed together a little, no matter how I try to keep them separate. Do we do things to satisfy ourselves, for example, or to satisfy societal expectations? The answer is it is usually both, even when it is more of one than the other. But organizing motivations this way also helps us to see them more positively from the beginning. That is, motivation is a force whose default setting is switched to “on” and most learners are in classes with a predisposition to learn, for various reasons. And, by making use of this natural inclination and understanding how it can be influenced, educators can indeed influence motivation.

Motivation Theories in Second Language Acquisition

Dörnyei (2005) identifies three distinct periods of motivation research and thinking, the social psychological period, the cognitive-situated period, and the process-oriented period. The three should not be seen as three completely separate periods, but rather as three phases in a long process of expansion as researchers have tried to improve on our understanding of motivation by identifying an increasingly large number of variables and understanding the scope of the influence of each and the way they are inter-related. In fact, when we look at the theories of the latest period, we can find the theories of the earlier periods nested within.

The Social Psychological Period

Motivation research and beliefs in second language acquisition were largely established by
Gardner and Lambert (1972) and the Socio-Education Model of SLA they introduced has had a long and lasting effect (Ellis, 1994, Canagarajah, 2006). In looking at the language acquisition of Canadians learning French or English, Gardner saw that language achievement was affected by language aptitude and something he called integrative motivation. Integrative motivation represents an emotional identification with the L2 group in its simplest interpretation, and in later models the sum of attitudes toward the learning situation, plus that emotional identification, plus possibly other factors as well, all of which in turn affect motivation (action), which over time affects language achievement (2001). Taken the way Gardner intended it, the model is flexible and has general predictive power when applied to sustained formal language learning settings (2001). Unfortunately, the theory is often misinterpreted by emphasizing the importance of instrumental motivation and setting it up in contrast to integrative motivation, something that is not correct and has caused considerable confusion (Dörnyei, 2005). As more research followed and cognitive psychological approaches to understanding learners began to dominate, however, Gardner's hypotheses were criticized for the way the data were collected and interpreted (Au, 1988), or the model was seen as being useful only for understanding the motivational mindset of large learner communities and not able to explain what individual learners—who might belong to any number of groups or communities at any one time—were experiencing as they learned a language in a specific situation (Dörnyei, 2005).

The Cognitive-situated Period

The next phase, the cognitive-situated phase is filled with a growing list of possible motivations and attempts to untangle them to identify which are most important (see Noels, 2001b for an overview) or combine them and organize them into a grand theory with greater explaining power (see again Noels, 2001a, or MacIntyre, MacMaster & Baker, 2001), often it seemed, using Gardner's model as a base. The period also featured a greater emphasis on the learner, however, and what was happening in the heads of individual learners and groups of learners, and the contextual factors of the actual learning situations (and a greater emphasis on what learners are doing, rather than just how they report they are feeling). Research showed that the learning experience itself could affect motivation and that communicative approaches and activities that allowed for greater learner control and open-ended outcomes tended to be
more motivating (Dörnyei, 2005, in a general summary of the period). Noels (2001a) found that teachers that were not controlling but instead provided autonomy support and informative feedback led to an increase in the students' feelings of intrinsic motivation. Also, the act of being actively engaged in studying leads to more positive attitudes (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002). Thus, in general, the findings of this period supported the theory of a task-based communicative approach to language learning and underlined the need to give learners more control over their learning and in a supportive environment provide tasks that are engaging by providing the optimal level of challenge control and interest (Egbert, 2003)

The Process-oriented Period

This third and present phase grew from a realization that motivation has a dynamic character and great temporal variation (Dörnyei, 2001) and that it had to be viewed as something constantly in flux because of the number of potential factors and the varying effects they have at the different stages a learner goes through in the process of learning a language. The model acknowledges three stages that are associated with mostly different motivations: a preactional stage where motivation needs to be generated and choices made in selecting goals; an actional stage where the generated motivation needs to be maintained and protected so the learner can keep up a level of activity that will lead to benefits; and a postactional stage where the learner undergoes a retrospective evaluation and reinterprets his effort and feelings toward the subject now that it has been learned successfully or not (Dörnyei, 2005). At each stage, there are many motivational influences (Dörnyei, 2005). For example, in the preactional stage, the attitudes the learner has toward the L2 and its speakers, expectations of success, the relevance and proximity of the goal, and the value the learner attributes to the learning process and its consequences all influence motivation. In the actional stage, the quality of the learning environment, the learner's sense of autonomy, the attitudes and behaviors of the learner group, the knowledge and use of self-motivation strategies, and the classroom reward and goal structure bear on motivation. And in the postactional stage, how the learner attributes success or failure, the type of feedback the learner receives, and the self-confidence of the learner can all influence how the learner feels and can all affect future motivation.
The other major advance in this period is the growing awareness of the sense of self in language learning and its influence on motivation. All learning—and perhaps particularly language learning because of the basic social relevance of communication—involves a change in personal identity. To know something and, especially, to become able to do something, affect how we view ourselves and our place in the world, as Deci and Ryan outlined (1985, 2000). To freely choose, to master a skill, and then to be recognized by others for that is appealing to all humans and helps to form our sense of self. This sense of self, or self-system, is “at the heart of motivation and action, creating an intriguing interface between personality and motivational psychology” (Dörnyei, 2005, pg. 98) because our self-system allows for the possible self, the self we can see our present self becoming and which becomes a manifestation of our motivation and an image that has a powerful reality for a learner. This certainly helps to translate goals and intentions into sustained actions because the learner can connect the dots between her present and ideal possible self and that ideal self becomes a concrete, visible target and yardstick of success (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

The concept of possible self is perhaps best viewed as an extension of Deci and Ryan's Self-determination theory (1985) where the individual has a sense of self, an identity, and is constantly assessing herself in relation to the community to which she belongs. It gets a little complicated, however, because learners belong to many communities at the same time and there are different levels, or modes, of belonging (Wenger, 1998, explained below). Norton (2001) in examining immigrants found that they imagined themselves belonging to several communities at the same time—the classroom community, the L2 community, their immigrant community, etc—with images of ideal or possible selves in each, something that she found useful from a pedagogical perspective and encouraged them to do. Many years ago, when Gardner's Socio-Education model was widely accepted, Japanese learners proved to be something of a puzzle. They scored high on tests of integrative orientation, though there was no community of English language users for them to integrate into. This seemed to indicate a rather fuzzy notion of the L2 community on the part of Japanese learners, who likely identified with the cultural values associated with the language as well as the speakers themselves, or envisioned a global English-speaking community that could be joined (Dörnyei, 1990). Several studies found similar results (Nakata, 1995a, and Yashima, 2000). Kimura, Nakata & Okamura (2001) found a blending of instrumental and integrative motivation they labeled the Intrinsic-Instrumental-Integrative
Motive and saw it as the result of the globalization of English and its widespread use by some of the strongest economies in the world as well as the technological advances (in particular computers and the Internet) made by English-speaking countries. It seems that as information and culture flow, so too do the possible communities learners can identify themselves with or wish to join. These communities may be as small and well-defined as a book club or as large and vague as global English users; indeed, it is not even the actual size or organization of the community, but the image the learner has of that community and the extent to which she identifies with it that are significant.

Wenger has written extensively about the social nature of learning and is well known for introducing the concept of communities of practice (Wenger and Lave, 1991), something that has helped to validate e-learning 2.0 methodology. It seems clear that participating in a community actively can enhance learning (see Wenger, 2005 for a general outline and Toohey, 1998, and Morita, 2004 for examples in language learning settings). Wenger identifies three modes of belonging to a community, each with its own associated actions: engagement, imagination, and alignment (1998). It is alignment that is of most interest since it is through this process that individuals begin to identify with the group and “invest” in it (Norton, 2001), actively promoting belonging to it (Wenger, 1998). Peirce (1995) also talks about investment to describe this motivation that grows as learners gain symbolic and material resources as benefits of being part of a community. This alignment or investing is a powerful type of intrinsic motivation since it comes with concrete goals and a practically ready-made schema that forms a detailed plan of action for learners (As a member of this group, these are the sorts of things I do) and thus promotes the transition from orientations to action motivation.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Willingness to Communicate is a concept that has been gaining increasing attention in the last few years (Macintyre, 1994, Macintyre & Charos, 1996, and Yashima, 2002, among others). It holds a special position because it is seen as a personality trait in the L1 but something much more complex in the L2. It has come to be seen as both a factor in motivation and one of the goals of L2 instruction. WTC is connected to a learner's sense of self (self evaluation of com-
petence) and personality (anxiety) (Hashimoto, 2002). In addition, Kang (2006) found that WTC was influenced by the interaction of psychological conditions (excitement, responsibility, and security) and situational variables (topic, interlocutors, and conversational context). Thus, because of its influence on both motivation and proficiency and because of the fact that it allows for a clear measurement of the possible self and the emotional challenges that must be overcome to reach that self, it can be seen as a kind of flashpoint for the notions of self and community in language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). If educators are to encourage learners to join communities and give them the computer tools to do so, it is the willingness to communicate that must then become one of the focuses of attention.

Back to Maslow and the Business World

Motivation studies in business have focused on getting employees to be more diligent and thus work harder and more carefully. Over the years, coercion, reinforcements and rewards, and many other theories tied to practical techniques have been tried to improve productivity and sometimes employee satisfaction. What became clear through the work of Maslow (1943) and Herzberg (1959) on self-actualization, Vroom (1965) and others on aspiration, and McClelland (1964) and others on achievement is that intrinsic motivation is the most powerful type of motivation and modern businesses need to be able to activate this type of motivation if they want to get the best work from their employees. Put more simply: coercion doesn't work and you have to treat people as individuals and match the needs of the enterprise to the needs of the employee and let them have control and be creative and do what they aspire to do.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) is a theory that has had an enormous influence on motivation thinking in general. It was presented as a pyramid or ladder of needs starting with physiological needs (food, sleep, etc) and then moving up to safety needs and then love/belonging/social needs, and then self-esteem needs (confidence, achievement, respect), and finally self-actualization needs (cognitive, aesthetic, creativity, and moral needs) and transcendence needs (doing good or helping others). The belief was that as one level of needs is met, humans can focus on the other "higher" levels. As it turns out, however, humans do not go up a ladder of needs but seek to satisfy all of the needs at the same time, yet there is still a tendency on
the part of people to see the list as a hierarchy from base needs to lofty, noble needs (Heath & Heath, 2007). In addition to this, according to Heath and Heath, when people are asked to identify what is motivating to others, there is a very strong tendency to suggest physical or security reasons (such as money or job security or grades or course credit) while identifying their own motivations as being for more lofty reasons (need to express creativity or achieve personal growth or to meet a personal challenge). If this is true, educators might do well to wonder whether or not they are failing to really see the lofty personal goals many students have and whether or not this is robbing these educators of "... the chance to tap more profound motivations" (pg. 185).

Another business model of motivation is James March's (1994) economic model for decision making. According to March, humans make decisions by first calculating the consequences, weighing the alternatives and then choosing the one that yields the most value, and then making the final decision based on identity by asking three questions: Who am I?; What kind of a situation is this?; and What do people like me do in this kind of a situation? Here we have what appears to be a nice mixture of economic theory and the self-system. Learners will be motivated to action if it seems worth their effort and matches with the view they have of self.

Drawing Conclusions

All learners can be motivated to initiate behaviors, or to change the direction, intensity and persistence of behavior. At the most basic level, they will do so if they are feeling sufficient intrinsic or integrative motivation or if the learning matches with their sense of self and view of possible self and promises a reasonable return for their effort. For a more particular list of what educators can do, looking at what can be done in each of the stages in Dörnyci's process-oriented model (2005) is a useful way of organizing interventions.

In creating the basic motivational conditions, educators can ensure that a system of learning is in place that will allow for motivation growth. Specifically, this means a system that will enable learners to have sufficient control over their learning and a very supportive environment. For this, web 2.0 tools and tasks can provide a system with ample room for student control.
Motivation and Web 2.0 Language Learning

but do not necessarily have the support that is necessary (see Van Amelsvoort, 2006 for a fuller discussion of what types of activities this approach typically uses and why it requires considerable teaching of micro skills). Institutions and instructors will have to work hard to ensure students get this. A web 2.0 approach is fundamentally an extreme form of task-based, communicative language learning. I say extreme because it is considerably more open-ended than classroom activities, has quite a lot more learner control over the entire experience, and involves a wide range of skills and knowledge (at least some of which are not language related), often at the same time. This means, first of all, that it is not an approach that should be suddenly employed at some point in a program, but rather should be seen as a goal or a system that will lead to proficiency, something like willingness to communicate or overseas language learning programs where learners must learn new ways of functioning and participating. The focus at this stage should be to ensure that a program-wide system for learning the skills that will be needed later (language and computer skills) is in place. In addition, the whole program should be assessed for its ability to foster a system of learner autonomy and independence. As the instructor can also greatly influence motivation, it is essential that positive and effective instructors are in place.

In the next phase, creating initial motivation is the goal and here educators need to enhance the learners' L2 related values and attitudes to increase integrative orientations and help the learner begin to define her possible self. At the same time, educators need to help learners construct realistic levels of expectancy of success and increase their goal-orientatedness. Finally, care must be taken to ensure that tasks and materials are relevant for learners and at the appropriate level. In a web 2.0 approach, this requires considerable teaching of micro skills and fostering learner autonomy. The micro skills involved include familiarizing learners with basic computer operation as well as several specific software applications or skills (Internet browsing, file saving and transfer, use of audio and video recording and editing software, blogs and wikis and other collaborative writing applications, etc.) since intimidating amounts of technology or being suddenly immersed in a group of learners who are linguistically or technically too far advanced can reduce motivation quickly (Ellis, 2003, and Hampel, 2006). It is thus important to introduce the technology in stages beginning early in the program. This will develop skills and build confidence. As a general progression, making use of the Internet for image searches and Power Point for simple student presentations at even the lowest levels is a good way to
begin. With those skills, use of social interaction applications becomes considerably easier.

Once these are in place, the emphasis in the next stage is on maintaining and protecting motivation. It is here that the instructor can really make a difference by making learning stimulating and presenting tasks in a motivating way. Heath and Heath (2006) provide guidelines for doing exactly that. They suggest that by using a number of techniques, instructors can greatly increase the attention learners give and the emotional impact and understanding that learners experience. In addition to keeping the message simple and concrete, Heath and Heath recommend adding unexpectedness, highlighting the emotional attraction of content, demonstrating the credibility of the tasks or content, and making good use of stories. These are very teachable and learnable techniques, which the authors claim to have deduced from thousands of advertising campaigns and proposals (2006). In addition to increasing the appeal of the activities and content of the course, the instructor must play an important role in helping learners set specific goals while protecting their confidence. For a web 2.0 approach, the key word here is community. The instructor must also help to create a good community of learners (or, when web 2.0 activities allow, help learners begin to integrate into communities that they are interested in). This involves a mixture of promoting learner autonomy, helping learners achieve a positive social image, and promoting cooperation among learners. Finally, actively promoting the acquisition and use of self-motivating learner strategies can help learners gain control over their motivation and keep a more positive and realistic outlook (Dörnyei, 2001).

As with willingness to communicate, learners must be encouraged to participate actively in any group, and this may involve the direct teaching of skills and language, helping learners to understand the culture of the group and the need for active participation to establish a sense of belonging, and encouragement to learners to remain focused on their possible selves when they experience the inevitable doubts of progress or success.

As the course progresses and finishes, the instructor can help to encourage positive retrospective self-evaluation. This becomes a system of providing meaningful feedback, including appropriate grades, of course, but also a useful summary of what the learner did well and not so well; that is, formative as well as summative evaluation. For web 2.0 approaches, this includes monitoring the participation in any groups and helping learners to see what they could have done better. It also includes communicating the notion that communities often continue
regardless of courses and programs. Learners should be encouraged to see that the world is full of communities that they can join and enjoy and that web 2.0 tools and the Internet give them the power to do so. In a sense, the goal at this stage is to make the instructor and the program and the institution irrelevant as the learner moves toward complete autonomy.

Appropriate action at each stage in the learning experience can make a tremendous difference in motivation. As a general principle, the institution and instructor need to facilitate the creation and salience of learners' possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). First, the possible self needs to exist, and this means a learner seeing herself as a future competent L2 user. The learner needs a concrete image on which to base her vision of a possible self. That image needs to be primed by some event or invocation that draws the learner onto a path toward that possible self. Next, the possible self will only be possible if the learner can understand and engage in the types of activities at the proper level of intensity and persistence to make the vision become real. Here the instructor needs to help learners create realistic goals and practices. And finally, the attractive possible self must be set in contrast with the unattractive possible selves that can result from unsuccessful attempts lacking in the necessary amounts of persistence and intensity. For this self perspective to be properly motivated, both Dornyei (2001c) and Ushioda (2003) agree with Wenger (1998) that social mediation with proper modeling by the instructor, mentor, or peers, and the power of the peer group will prove most successful. It is this philosophy that adherents of the web 2.0 approach have embraced and are now trying to make the most of.

It seems clear that from a motivational point of view, a web 2.0 approach can be superior to more traditional classroom-based communicative or task-based approaches, in that it allows for more learner autonomy, more opportunities for meaningful communities of practice and perhaps a more concrete vision of a possible self. That is not to say that a web 2.0 approach will be necessarily better. As we have seen, the role of the instructor and the facilitation of appropriate motivation at the different stages of learning are also very important. But certainly at this point it can be said that more is understood about motivation and how institutions and instructors can affect it and a web 2.0 approach offers some exciting new options for affecting that motivation.
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— 14 —


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