# Differences between learners

# What affects the success in learning a FL?

- □ the methods and materials
- the teacher's qualities and personality
- the learning conditions (e.g. age, time, learning outside school, opportunities for authentic contact with L2)
- the personality of the pupil
  - tolerance of ambiguity
  - a high capacity for empathy
  - willingness to take risks
  - a high level of self-esteem
  - □ a low level inhibition

Overall, language aptitude and motivation are the two most influential factors in terms of success in learning a FL.

## Ability to learn

There is a link between general intelligence and second-language learning.

Success in learning L2 is related to language-specific set of learning abilities called language aptitude:

- the ability to identify and remember sounds
- ☐ the ability to memorize words
- the ability to recognize how words function grammatically in sentences
- the ability to induce grammatical rules from language examples

### **Motivation**

Positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in L2 learning.

Motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner makes progress, how much energy he devotes to learning, how long he perseveres.

? Remember a concrete "motivated" and "unmotivated" pupil from a class you teach.

What characteristics and behaviours do we associate with the image of these learners?

### **Motivated learner**

Motivated learner: one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress.

#### **Characteristics of motivated learners**

- Positive task orientation. The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges and has confidence in his or her success.
- Need for achievement. The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.
- ☐ Goal orientation. The learner is aware of the goals of learning and directs his efforts towards achieving them.
- Perseverance. The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.

## Types of motivation

#### **Integrative**

A learner with integrative motivation has a genuine interest in the second language community. He wants to learn the language in order to communicate and to gain closer contact with the people and their culture.

#### **Instrumental**

- A learner with instrumental motivation is more interested in how the second language can be a useful instrument towards furthering other goals, such as gaining a necessary qualification or improving employment prospects.
- ? Can you apply this classification to your own motivation for learning a foreign language?

## Types of motivation

#### **Extrinsic**

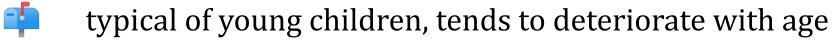


derived from external incentives, can be affected to a certain extent

#### Intrinsic



the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake



largely rooted in the previous attitudes of the learners

# Ways of affecting extrinsic motivation

Some aspects cannot be affected, e.g. peer-group influences, the wish to succeed in an exam.

Teachers can work with success and failure:

#### **Success**

- learners who have succeeded in past tasks will be more willing to engage with the next one, more confident and more likely to persevere
- teachers should also recognize the investment of effort and care
  - ? In what ways do you inform your pupils of their success?

# Ways of affecting extrinsic motivation

#### **Failure**



learners should be aware that they are failing if they have done significantly less than they could have



too much anxiety hinders learning, a certain amount can stimulate a learner to invest more energy in the task – so called facilitative anxiety (just enough tension to get the job done, slight feeling of nervousness)

# How to create interest in lessons and learning English:

- clear goals (both short and long term)
- varied and meaningful topics and tasks
- contact with authentic L2 situations (native speakers, a trip to the UK, Internet...)
- appealing materials (visuals, booklets, realia...)
- fun activities (games, jokes, stories, songs, video clips...)
- personalisation (tasks that have to do with the learners' opinions, experiences, ideas; teacher must show interest in these, be open, accepting and encouraging)
- needs analysis (find out and take into consideration)

## The top motivating techniques

What technique or activity has proved to be highly motivating for teenage English learners?

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