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

☐ <u>Positive task orientation.</u> The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges and has confidence in his or her success.

☐ <u>Need for achievement.</u> The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.

☐ <u>Goal orientation.</u> The learner is aware of the goals of learning and directs his efforts towards achieving them.

☐ <u>Perseverance.</u> 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

📪 typical of young children, tends to deteriorate with age

📪 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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