Maintaining Learner Motivation

Craig Thaine
Task: What motivated you to come to this session?
“I have this difficult class at the moment – they’re just not motivated at all”
“I’m really keen to develop as a teacher and I love coming to workshops”
“I thought the topic looked sort of interesting”
“My DoS said I had to come”
“If I stay late for this workshop, I can get a ride home later”
“Everybody else was coming so I thought I might as well come too”
“I feel in a rut with my teaching – any PD is worthwhile”
Outline

• Look at different kinds of learner motivation
• Trace the history of motivation in second language teaching
• Explore ways of thinking about motivation
• Show practical suggestions on how teachers can help learners with motivation
Task: What motivates our learners?
Possible answers

“I just love the sound of English”
“I want to be able to cope better the next time I travel abroad”
“I want to do my Masters in an English medium university”
“She’s the best teacher I’ve ever had – in any subject”
“I really like the facilities at this school”
“All my best friends study English and this is the coolest school to go to”
“I can follow everything the teacher does and I feel like I’m making progress”
“My parents said I have to do this course”
“I like the way they mix classroom activities with online activities at this school”
History of motivation in language teaching

• *Social psychological period* (1959 – 1990)
• What motivates someone to learn a second language?
• **Integrative motivation**: to be able to communicate with people in an L2 community
• **Instrumental motivation**: the usefulness of an L2 for study or work purposes
• Robert Gardner
  (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014)
History of motivation in language teaching

- *Cognitive-situated period (1990s)*
- Learner confidence and the way s/he attributes success or failure
- Situation-specific factors: the course, the teacher, the learning environment
- Zoltán Dörnyei
(Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014)
History of motivation in language teaching

• *Socio-dynamic approaches (noughties)*
• Process-oriented, dynamic approach – motivation changes over time
• L2 Motivational Self System
  (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014)
History of motivation in language teaching

L2 Motivational Self System

• Ideal L2 self: the kind of L2 user you would like to become
• Ought-to L2 self: the kind of L2 user you think you should become – perhaps in relation to other people’s expectations
• L2 learning experience: situation-specific motivation connected with the learning context

(Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014)
The melting pot: ways of looking at motivation

dynamic process
The melting pot: ways of looking at motivation

Individual motivation

- Integrative and instrumental needs
- Confidence and anxiety
- Attitudes towards L2 and L2 community
- Motivational selves
Curriculum motivation
• Learning materials and resources
• Methodology
• Assessment
• Teacher
• Learning environment
The melting pot: ways of looking at motivation

Real-time motivation

- As a lesson unfolds
- Tasks and activities
- Teacher behaviours
- Teaching skills
Task

1

How can I understand this listening at 7 o’clock on a Friday night?
I want to be able to understand Taylor Swift’s lyrics.

Individual Curriculum Real-time
I can’t stand it when he goes on about pronunciation all the time!
I did badly in the test because we didn’t have enough time to study all the material.
Individual Curriculum Real-time

I don’t understand what I have to do with this task.
Task

I know I’d learn this better online

Individual Curriculum Real-time
Task

7

I can see I’ll handle overseas holidays better in future.
Task

I don’t like working in pairs with him.
1 How can I understanding this listening at 7 o’clock on a Friday night?
2 I want to be able to understand Taylor Swift’s lyrics.
3 I can’t stand it when he goes on about pronunciation all the time!
4 I did badly in the test because we didn’t have enough time to study all the material.
5 I don’t understand what I have to do with this task.
6 I know I’d learn this better online.
7 I can see I’ll handle overseas holidays better in future.
8 I don’t like working in pairs with him.
1 How can I understanding this listening at 7 o’clock on a Friday night? C / R
2 I want to be able to understand Taylor Swift’s lyrics. I
3 I can’t stand it when he goes on about pronunciation all the time! R
4 I did badly in the test because we didn’t have enough time to study all the material. C
5 I don’t understand what I have to do with this task. R
6 I know I’d learn this better online. I / C
7 I can see I’ll handle overseas holidays better in future. I
8 I don’t like working in pairs with him. R
“… I think that most students’ motivation can be ‘worked on’ and increased. Although rewards and punishments are too often the only tools present in the motivational arsenal of many teachers, the spectrum of other, and potentially more effective, motivational strategies is so broad …”

(Dörnyei 2001)
Working on individual motivation

- Goal setting: tutorials, written e-communication, LMS
- Learners reflect on their individual needs: needs analysis, tutorials, post-test feedback
- Imagining future L2 selves: in class activities, writing tasks
- Find out about learners’ ought-to selves: needs analysis, tutorials, written e-communication
- Manageable activities that give learners confidence: planning lessons, in class monitoring, positive feedback
Task: Working on individual motivation

How, if at all, can a teacher respond to these learner comments?

1 “I want to speak very, very good English – like native speaker”
2 “My future self passes the grammar test next month”
3 “That role play was easy – maybe a bit boring”
Working on individual motivation

1 “I want to speak very, very good English – like native speaker”

• Make sure that learners’ goals are realistic and achievable.
• For example, “I want to be able to chat and talk about myself to new English speaking friends I make..”
Working on individual motivation

2 “My future self passes the grammar test next month”

• Future selves are “real world” selves. Because this involves *imagining*, it’s all right if the scenario is a bit ambitious. Learners may need help on how to do this kind of visualisation
“Imagine one that is most important to you: work, study, friends, travel … now imagine yourself in the situation … where are you? … in an office, in a meeting, on the phone, with friends, in a university …”

(Dörnyei & Hadfield 2013; Dörnyei & Kubanyiova 2014)
3 “That role play was easy – maybe a bit boring”

• Make sure you balance manageability with a suitable level of challenge. Learners want to be able to accomplish tasks and have a sense of purpose at the same time.
• However, how well did the learner do the role play?
Task: What could be problematic about this material?

Speaking
Work in pairs. Tell your partner what you know about Buenos Aires in Argentina.

Reading: Buenos Aires – City of Music
Did you know Buenos Aires is one of the world’s top cities for music? And it isn’t only tango orchestras you can hear, but all kinds of music.

It’s easy to find good classical music in Buenos Aires. Top orchestras from all over the world play in Teatro Colón and you can also see first class operas. It’s not cheap, but you pay less if you get a ticket for the whole season.
Farming in India
Farmers in India work very hard. Farming families live together and work in the fields every day. Many farmers get up at 4.00am. They work in the fields from 7.00am to 6.00pm. At 9.00am, they always stop for breakfast. They stop work for a rest at midday. In the afternoon, grandchildren help grandparents. In the evening, families don’t eat together.
Task: What could be problematic about this material?

1 Listening.
*Listen to the dialogue. Why is Kurt surprised?*

Kurt: Look have you seen this article? It says Buenos Aires is one of the world’s top cities for music. I didn’t know that.
Bea: Well, there is a lot of good music.
Kurt: I haven’t been to any of these places and I’ve lived here for years. Like Jazz y Pop. It says it’s a famous jazz club, but I’ve never heard of it. Have you been to Jazz y Pop?
Bea: Yes I went there two weeks ago.

2 Grammar: Present perfect
*Listen and repeat*

1 Have you seen this article? 2 I haven’t been to any of these places
3 I’ve lived here for years. 4 I’ve never heard if it.
Task: What could be problematic about this material?

4 Practice
Put the words and phrases in the conversation in the correct order. Listen and check your answers.
A: you and your family do / how often do / things together?
B: a week / about once.
A: you do / what do?
B: we usually / to a restaurant / go for a picnic or.
A: do that at / do you / the weekend?
B: but we sometimes / go to the cinema / yes every Sunday.

5 Speaking
Say examples about people. Use the present simple.
Cambridge English

Visual interest to engage learners

BUENOS AIRES: CITY OF MUSIC
Today, we continue our series about daily life around the world with the Chopra family in India. One in six people in the world lives in India. Many of them live in big modern cities, but over 263 million of them – including the Chopras – work on farms across the country.

Garjan Chopra is a farmer in a small village near Delhi. He lives with his wife, Anjani, his children and grandchildren. They work in the fields every day. Garjan and Anjani get up every morning at 4:00 am. They work in the fields from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. At 9:00 am they always stop work for breakfast. They don’t have their breakfast together because in their culture men and women don’t usually eat together. They stop work for a rest at midday when the sun is very strong. In the afternoon, their grandchildren usually help them. In the evening, the family never eats together. First, the men and children have dinner, then the women of the family eat together in the kitchen. They often go to bed at around 9:00 pm, ready for another busy day on the farm.
Logical sequencing of tasks

**Grammar**

**Present perfect or past simple**

a 3:53 Match the questions with the answers. Listen and check your answers.

1. Have you ever been to *Jazz y Pop*?
   - a. Yes, I have actually. I went there last year.

2. Where’s *The Roxy*?
   - b. Yes, of course I have. We all went there for Antonia’s birthday.

3. I bet you’ve never been to the *Teatro Colón*.
   - c. Yes, I went there two weeks ago. They had really good music.

b Answer the questions about 4a.

1. Which two tenses do the speakers use?
   - a. present simple  
   - b. present continuous  
   - c. past simple  
   - d. present perfect

2. Which tense do we use:
   - a. if we don’t say when something happened?
   - b. if we say when something happened?

3. Which tense do we use with:
   - a. *ever* and *never*?
   - b. time expressions (*last weekend, a month ago*)?
Personalisation of language

5 SPEAKING

a Think of a group of people you know well. Think of things you do together every day, week or year. Make notes.
   My mum – have a cup of tea every morning
   Rob and Andy – usually go on holiday every June
   My classmates – study English three times a week

b Talk about what you do with the people you know well and how often. Look at the conversation in 4e to help you.
Curriculum motivation

• Support lesson materials with striking visuals that motivate learners
• Texts with topics that are of interest to learners – a human interest angle often helps
• Sequence activities in a logical manner so learners are supported through a learning cycle
• Provide learners with opportunities to personalise new language
Task: Would you say these things to learners? Why / why not?

1. T: OK, a role play. Student A you’re a pilot and Student B you’re the captain of a ship. Talk about your jobs. Start talking now.
   Ss: [silence]

2. T: What’s the problem? Why aren’t you talking?
   S: Diego is my friend. I know the music he likes.

3. S: I’m not sure. Can I use present perfect or past simple?
   T: Don’t worry too much. I understand what you’re saying.
Real time motivation

- Set up activities clearly and give learners time to get underway
- Think carefully about pairings / groupings of learners
- Monitor attentively and respond to needs as they arise (information and language)
- Vary teaching skills e.g. balance explanation with questioning; correcting on-the-spot vs. delayed feedback
Motivation for learning comes from …
… the *individual* learner
Summary

Motivation for learning comes from …
… the *individual* learner
… the *curriculum* she is following
Motivation for learning comes from …
... the **individual** learner
... the **curriculum** she is following
... the lesson as it unfolds in **real-time**
Summary

Individual motivation
Curriculum motivation
Real-time motivation

They are all **dynamic processes** that change over time, during a course and during a lesson.
Individual motivation
Teachers need to maintain a ‘motivation dialogue’ with their learners during a programme of study and be aware of the ways in which their motivation changes. Teachers can also provide activities that allow learners to explore motivation by means of different selves.
Summary

Curriculum motivation
Teachers need to provide learners with resources with a strong visual element. They should use texts that will interest and engage learners. They should also sequence activities so they build to a concrete learning outcome that ideally involves some kind of personalisation.
Real-time motivation
Teachers need to manage classes effectively and deploy a broad range of teaching skills as lessons unfold. They need to be in tune with their learners’ developing needs over the course of a lesson.
Maintaining Learner Motivation

Craig Thaine

Any questions or comments?