

# Pedagogies fostering non-material orientations

## Origin of recommendations

This supplement offers a practical section which suggests pedagogical activities and pathways to foster non-material motivation, again addressing specific motivational needs in turn. These recommendations are anchored in the motivation theory of SDT, and empirically, they are selected because they have been successfully applied in compulsory language learning contexts to improve learner attitude and motivation. One of the most promising pathways to increase learner motivation is to make non-material benefits more tangible to learners. The pedagogical challenge, then, is to do this for the great diversity of learner needs and learner profiles that exist in all contexts.

This supplement for language teachers returns to the principles of Self Determination Theory (SDT,) asking what universal basic human needs the engagement in language learning might fulfil.

All approaches and activities presented here have been empirically tested in some form (e.g. Graham & Macaro, 2008, Graham et al., 2020; Forbes et al., 2011; Lanvers, 2020; Lanvers et al., 2019). Thus, there is evidence on the *effectiveness* (i.e. having the desired effect) of such approaches, evidence on *efficacy* (long-lasting effect and relation to effort) remains scarce though, due to the nascent nature of such interventions. Many activities have been tested with Anglophones learning LOTEs (a learner group most in need of motivation), but most activities can be adapted to speakers with different L1s.

## Using the recommendations

The motivational activities suggested in this section are ordered by the core needs recognised by the: competence, relatedness and autonomy. All three needs correspond to, first and foremost, personal non-material rationales for language learning, and secondly, to societal non-personal rationales. The activities are listed, firstly, by human need addressed, and secondly (some activities address more than one core human need: if so, this is indicated), by nature of activity: overall approaches, and free-standing activities. Free-standing activities may be used as 'add ons' to

regular teaching, but the more they are integrated into regular teaching, the more likely they are to be effective, especially if the aim is to address negative fixed mindsets about learner abilities (Lanvers, 2020). As for how and when they may be introduced, all have been applied at, and are thus suitable for, secondary school level. Many can also be applied at the upper primary level. Teachers should use their professional judgement to decide how their class might best engage with the theme (whole class, group discussions, etc.). Likewise, sources for teaching materials are suggested but not prescribed.

## 1. Fostering Competence

Pedagogical approaches designed to foster a sense of competence and self efficacy are well generally documented (Burnette et al., 2023). Evidence on changing self efficacy and changing negative mindsets about language learning shows that they are most successful if they offer learners a realistic vision of a sense of competence (Graham et al., 2020). Anglophone learners often harbour the misconception that they are inherently poor at language learning - this can, in part, be addressed by making Anglophones aware of the systemic challenges they face compared to learners of English (Lanvers, 2020). A related misconception is that languages are 'only for the brainy': in schools adopting LEPs which stipulate that only high achievers are selected to continue with language study, students display lower motivation than in those where all are subject to the same LEP (Parrish & Lanvers, 2019). Given the detrimental effect of such LEPs, such positive selection of this kind should be avoided (Lanvers & Graham, 2022).

### 1.1. Teaching approaches to foster competence

Raoofi et al.'s (2012) meta review confirms the importance of self-efficacy in language learning, for which positive experiences, positive frame of mind, supportive social environment and virtuous learning circles are deemed necessary conditions. The meta review concludes that a teaching environment which is free of anxiety but supports learner language learning reflection and strategy development all help self efficacy. Furthermore, educators should resist the temptation to lower targets in the hope of creating 'can do' experiences, as can happen in Anglophone contexts (Lanvers & Graham, 2022). To experience self efficacy, the learner needs to experience the task as *relevant and meaningful*. Graham (2022: 199f) stipulates:

*'to develop self efficacy, acquired knowledge needs to be integrated as part of a self-regulatory cycle, in which a combination of knowledge, skills and strategies is applied to the execution of a challenging and valued task'.*

### 1.2. Free-standing activities to foster competence

### Activity 1: Comparing LEPs internationally

*Objective:* the objectives of this activity are to foster self efficacy, including among low achievers, to normalise language learning for *all* abilities, and to make learners aware that globally, language learning in a formal school setting is compulsory, ubiquitous, and applicable to *all* abilities. The activity is especially suited to learners harbouring beliefs that language learning is for a minority elite only (e.g. in many Anglophone contexts).

*Material:* 2020 EUROSTATS<sup>1</sup> table on percentage of dual linguists across the EU at lower secondary level in different EU nations.

*Description:* learners should be given the opportunity to interpret the table in their own time, and educators should assist with interpretation. Discussions should include: *How do students manage to learn two foreign languages? How does language learning in country X compare to my own country and my own school? Do all students need to learn two languages in country Y? Why? How do the lower ability students cope?* etc. All discussion should be steered towards a) normalising language learning for all abilities b) cross-fertilisation in the learning of several languages. Statistical information on the global dominance of multilingualism, as opposed to monolingualism, is suitable for similar purposes. The website Ethnologue contains freely accessible, reliable and up to date information on this.

### Activity 2: My language learning journey

*Objectives, target learners:* the objectives of this exercise are to foster resilience at times of motivational deficit, to develop realistic learning expectations and to relativise setbacks in language learning (Lanvers, 2020). The activity is especially suitable for amotivated and demotivated learners, and learners at risk of discontinuing language study.

*Material:* a visualisation exercise and worksheet which displays their language learning as a journey. Two metaphors lend themselves especially: language learning as a road or a river, with easier (e.g. river: rapids, confluences; road: smooth, downwards) and harder (river: dry, polluted; road: poor surface, obstacles, roadworks) phases.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Foreign\\_language\\_learning\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Foreign_language_learning_statistics). Accessed 1 August 2023.

*Description:* the educator supplies a worksheet with a sketched river or road. Students draw their own language learning journey and annotate how, when and why they experienced peaks and troughs. The educator participates in the activity and shares their own language learning journey with the class, to emphasise that even successful learners experience motivational difficulties at times. A following class discussion should focus on normalising experiences of setbacks.

### Activity 3: Where do English words come from?

*Objectives, target learners:* this exercise is designed for Anglophone learners with low self efficacy. The objectives of this exercise are to activate recognition of cognates and thus foster self efficacy.

*Material:* a pie chart displaying the etymology of the English lexicon.<sup>2</sup>

*Description:* Learners should be given the opportunity to interpret the chart in their own time, and educators should assist with interpretation. Learners should come to their own realisation that they can recognise many words in French or German from the English cognates. Discussions should then focus on how to incorporate cognate recognition into vocabulary learning of French and German.

### Activity 4: Peer mentoring (also targets relatedness)

*Objective, target learners:* the objectives of this exercise are to develop realistic learning expectations and to engage with credible role models (Lanvers, 2020). The activity is especially suited for learners at risk of discontinuing language study.

*Material:* Stories and insights from slightly more advanced language learners (e.g. 2 years ahead, within the same school) who opted to continue with their language study.

*Description:* examples and role models of (somewhat) successful learners can foster learner confidence (Graham et al., 2020). Slightly older, more advanced learners of the target language (in the same or a neighbouring school) offer more credible role models to school students than adults. The teacher should brief the role models on the goals of a free-flowing discussion with the younger learners. The role models should discuss with younger peers the reasons why they have continued their study, learning strategies, highs and lows of their learning experience, informal contact with

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<sup>2</sup>Available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Origins\\_of\\_English\\_Words.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Origins_of_English_Words.svg). Accessed 1 August 2023.

target language speakers etc. The educator should hand over the management of class discussions to the older peers as far as possible.

## 2. Fostering relatedness

SLA research has repeatedly emphasised the need to offer learners meaningful interaction with target language communities, including online engagements. As there is, by now, a considerable literature on pedagogical examples and practices to provide learners with target speaker-specific contacts, this section focuses on the somewhat more challenging task of fostering relatedness in language learning more generally, that is via appreciating cultural and linguistic diversity *per se*, and sustaining curiosity for such diversity. One of the most effective ways to help to counter ‘English (as L1 or L2) is enough attitudes’ is to introduce learners to our diverse, multilingual world (Buckingham, 2021).

### 2.1. Teaching approaches to foster relatedness

#### 1. Intercultural learning

There are few studies investigating how the pedagogical objectives *international posture* and *global citizenship* may be translated into classroom practice, and how motivation in both teachers and learners might be improved by discussing global demographic and linguistic changes and fostering a curiosity for ‘otherness’. Largely, then, this motivational potential remains a ‘known unknown’ in the field. Exceptions are Osler & Starkey, (2005, 2015) and Lanvers (2020), studies which suggest that classroom interventions can indeed foster such attitudes. Furthermore, the *European Centre for Modern Languages*<sup>3</sup> currently offers the richest range of resources for teaching intercultural communicative competence, global citizenship and openness to *otherness*. I draw special attention to the *Plurimobil*<sup>4</sup> free resources (teacher guides, lesson plans...) to support plurilingual and intercultural learning, accompanied by a real or virtual student exchange.

#### 2. Plurilingual pedagogy (also supports competence)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ecml.at/>. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<sup>4</sup> <https://plurimobil.ecml.at/>. Accessed 10 January 2024.

Following the multilingual and translanguaging turn in language education, the last decade has seen a proliferation of pedagogical research on plurilingual pedagogies. This has furnished us with insights into the problems inherent in implementing such approaches (Griva et al., 2016), their socio-political relevance (Erling & Moore, 2021) along with a plethora of teaching materials (Council of Europe, no date). Plurilingual pedagogies aim to reduce the perception of a strict separation of different target languages (Henry, 2017), and to

*make learners more metalinguistically aware of, and strategic in, cross-linguistic knowledge construction, relationship building (across linguistic systems), activation, and performance, thereby expanding their communicative repertoires and identities and their facility with language(s) more generally.* Duff (2017: 602)

The conceptual framework of DLC applied in this Element is highly compatible with plurilingual pedagogies, whereby learners are encouraged to capitalise on prior language experience and activate cross-linguistic knowledge. Plurilingual pedagogies can help to ‘burst monolingual bubbles’ and provide an ideal starting-point for learners to develop a broad motivational profile, including international posture and an intrinsic curiosity for languages (Gao & Lamb, 2021). They can also help learners to appreciate that full competency via formal L2 education is, in most cases, neither the objective, nor is it feasible, a harmful fallacy which persists in many learning contexts (Reagan & Osborn, 2019). In other words, this type of pedagogy can also help learners to redress chauvinistic and monolingual language ideologies.

## 2.2. Free-standing activities to foster relatedness

### Activity 1: Languages of the future

*Objective, target learners:* the objectives of this activity are a) to value languages and language speakers other than English, b) to understand how world languages change over time. The activity is especially well suited to learners who harbour ‘*English (as L1 or L2) is enough*’ attitudes and lack awareness of how global languages and lingua franca change.

*Material:* D. Graddol (2004): *The Future of Language*: Graph p. 1329<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Graddol, D. (2004). The Future of Language. *Science*, 303(5662), 1329-1331.

*Description:* learners should be given the opportunity to interpret the graph in their own time, and educators should assist with interpretation. Discussions should include questions such as *Are you surprised by the size and development of some of these languages? Which languages are increasing? Why? What will be the biggest languages in 20, 30, 40 years' time when I am an adult? How will this affect my life? Will I get by with only English in the future?* Students should be helped to understand how world languages other than English are increasing in importance, and how different the distribution of world languages will be in their adulthood. This should foster openness and curiosity towards other languages and cultures.

### Activity 2: Languages of the world

*Objective, target learners:* the objective of this activity is to counter 'English (as L1 or L2) is enough' attitudes.

*Material:* Ethnologue graph of the 10 most spoken languages in the world<sup>6</sup>.

*Description:* learners should first be engaged in speculating about and discussing openly about the likely 10 largest world languages. Then, the graph is revealed. Discussions should focus on questions such as *Which language(s) am I surprised by? Which did I guess right? Why is language X so big? Why is language Y not listed? Will I get by with English only if I travel to country X or Y?* This activity should foster openness and curiosity towards other world languages and cultures.

### Activity 3: miscommunications in English

*Objective, target learners:* increase awareness of communication difficulties between English L1 and L2 speakers, foster curiosity about other cultures and languages. The activity is especially suited for demotivated English monolinguals.

*Material:* image of Merlion statue<sup>7</sup> and the phrase *He did the merlion!*

*Description:* the teacher shares the image of the Singaporean statue and the above phrase, inviting students to speculate on its meaning in Singaporean English. Students are likely to guess the meaning 'to vomit violently'. Discussion then should focus on *If*

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<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://www.ethnologue.com/insights/ethnologue200/>. Accessed 1 August 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Available at <https://www.google.com/search?q=merlion+statue&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=2ahUKEwiEyYWWoKyAAxWvcfEDHSGkDVEQ0pQJeqQIDhAB&biw=1723&bih=691&dpr=1#imgsrc=o5SRnUm-6jqQjM>. Accessed 1 August 2023.



*I speak British/US/AUS... English, would I understand this meaning? If I talk to speakers of Singaporean English, could I follow? What are my main problems talking to people who use English differently to me? Is my kind of English the most common one today? and in the future?* This activity should increase curiosity for non-UK or US varieties of English.

#### Activity 4: English in the world

*Objective, target learners:* the objective of this activity is to counter ‘*English is enough*’ and English chauvinistic attitudes.

*Material:* *English Today* map of *Who speaks English?*<sup>8</sup>

*Description:* the world map offers information about proficiency in English globally. Learners should first engage with the map in their own time. Discussions should focus on *Where is English spoken today and why? Where not? If you travel to a non-English speaking part of the world, how do you communicate? Would you find English speakers everywhere? How would you go about finding an English speaker if you needed to in a far away place? Will I get by with English only if I travel to country X or Y?* By the end of this activity, students’ willingness to engage with speakers of other languages, and to use translanguaging practices to communicate, should increase.

### 3. Fostering autonomy

Much has been written about autonomy in language learning (Benson, 2013). At its core, giving learners autonomy in the language classroom demands an act of relinquishing some control and trusting the learner to take control over their learning. For this reason, granting learners autonomy in language learning concerns the political dimension of LEP (Reinders, 2010). Fostering a sense of autonomy necessitates a holistic pedagogical approach more than is the case for the other two core human needs of SDT: increasing autonomy in one small way (e.g. permitting students choice between two essay topics) while keeping tight control over other areas might result in a zero-sum game. Ideally, autonomy-fostering pedagogy should be aligned across method, assessment, material, objectives, curricula and LEP. Ideally, autonomy-enhancing pedagogy LEPs would give teachers flexibility to adjust their teaching and

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<sup>8</sup> Available at <https://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/english-today>. Accessed 1 August 2023.

assessment to local contexts and student needs, including the freedom to learn and teach a variety of target languages, and to provide greater choice over teaching content and assessment formats (Lanvers & Graham, 2022).

In the -less than ideal- real classroom context, accompanied by prescribed assessments, curricula and learning outcomes, the remit for introducing autonomy is limited. The following recommendations focus on two approaches, both suitable: a) enabling increased choice via teaching method, and b) facilitating learner self-control via teaching strategies.

### 3.1. Approach to foster autonomy

Task based language teaching (TBLT) (East, 2021b; Ellis, 2018)

A core principle of TBLT is to give students autonomy in relation to text materials, learning outcomes and, to some extent at least, mode of learning (e.g. group, pair, individual). Learners are not directed towards the precise language they need to acquire: they decide themselves what L2 expertise is necessary to complete the task. Furthermore, learners can also draw on their preferred resources to complete the task (East, 2021b: 47). These freedoms give learners autonomy over the precise learning outcome and means to achieve the outcome. For the overworked language teacher working in an assessment-oriented context, applying TBLT principles is nonetheless possible at times, if not always. As so often, freely accessible materials for teaching via TBLT are much more abundant for English (see British Council<sup>9</sup>) than for other languages, but for free TBLT materials to teach LOTE, the European *Centre for Modern Languages* is once again a good source.

### 3.2. Free-standing activities to foster autonomy

Strategy instruction

Providing learners with language learning and metacognitive strategies to take control of their learning can be a powerful motivator (Graham, 2022; Vandergrift, 2005). The Education Endowment Fund<sup>10</sup> holds excellent resources for teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies (beyond but including those for language teaching). The

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/articles/task-based-approach>. Accessed 10 January 2024.

<sup>10</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/> Accessed 4 January 2014.

following strategies can each be introduced and exemplified in class piecemeal or in larger chunks, as deemed suitable for the students' age and ability. Teachers should give examples and discuss which strategies they themselves use(d). The following 3-part functional classification of strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) is not meant to be exhaustive: they are selected here because of their suitability for compulsory school language learning context.

*Cognitive strategies* help to optimise memorisation, recall and skills. (e.g. ways of memorising grammar rules). Examples:

Mnemonics examples for learning grammatical gender, vocabulary, rules:

Visualisation: imagine *der Tisch* (table, German masculine noun) with a beard, *la lune* (moon, French feminine noun) with long hair ...

Sound: make a tongue clicking sound when saying *lecker* (tasty in German)

The key here is to start learners off with examples and invite them to invent many themselves, and to remind students that in mnemonics, there are no rules about association to help you remember: the sillier *your* mnemonic connection, the more easily you might remember.

Mnemonic aids for learning English grammar and spelling rules, a traditional staple of the FL teacher, can be found on the British Council website. Once again, free online resources for LOTE are poorer, but *mnemonic.devices.com*<sup>11</sup> and websites aimed at (primary) school learners of the target language<sup>12</sup> offer good material.

*Metacognitive strategies* help self-regulation, self-awareness (e.g. of weaknesses and strengths), identifying and coping with lacuna, bridging knowledge gaps etc. Examples include:

Compensation strategies: *Imagine you want to say: The dinner was disgusting but don't know the word in French. What would you use instead?*

Vocabulary guessing strategy: Both *Teachit* (for teachers of English)<sup>13</sup> and TES<sup>14</sup> (for LOTE) offer a range of materials for teaching guessing strategies.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mnemonic-device.com/> Accessed 10 January 2024.

<sup>12</sup> For German, see <https://grundschultricks.de/top-15-eselsbruecken-deutsch/>. Accessed 3 January 2024. For French, see <https://www.francaisfacile.com/exercices/exercice-francais-2/exercice-francais-75628.php>. Accessed 6 January 2024.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.teachit.co.uk/> Accessed 9 January 2024.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/blog/mfl-memory-teaching-resources> Accessed 8 January 2024.

Keeping a learning log helps learners to reflect on progress and thus can answer needs for both autonomy and competence (Hu & Zhang, 2017).

Reward strategies such as planning regular breaks and snacks offer learners control over their learning.

*Social affective strategies* can help to self-motivate and seek learning opportunities (Reinders, 2010). For example, teachers may illustrate how to safely connect with tandem learners online, practice target language with your friend or sibling at home, in breaktime etc. Finally, the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (Oxford, 1990<sup>15</sup>), is a good tool for teachers wanting to ascertain their students' current use of language learning strategies.

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<sup>15</sup> An adapted version is available online at <http://homework.wtuc.edu.tw/sill.php>. Accessed 10 January 2024.