

Featured Article

特集



Self-access and Motivation

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Summary要約

本文は、自律学習施設の学習環境において、学習意欲を高める12の方法について説明しています。うち11の方法は、授業以外で語学学習に対する内なる(本質的)興味を育てることに着目しています。11の方法として、(1)社会的交流の促進、(2)学習を更に促進するようなフィードバックの提供、(3)個々の学習者の好みや学習活動に応じた魅力的かつ快適な学習施設の提供、(4)学習者が目標設定し目標達成の成功体験を得られるようにするための支援、(5)学習者が自分で学習意欲を維持できるようになるためのトレーニングの提供、(6)学習者が自分の学習を管理できるようになるための自律言語学習の促進、(7)自律学習施設の運営への学習者の関与、(8)魅力的な学習教材やアクティビティの提供、(9)スタッフと学生の良い関係の構築、(10)学習言語とその言語圏の文化を施設の装飾や教材、言語交換(Language Exchange)や人との交流により提供すること、そして、(11)コミュニティの発展を促進し、学習者の想像力を高めること、を挙げています。12番目の方法は、外からの動機付けに関するものです。外からの動機付けは多岐に渡りますが、多くは各種試験や将来の仕事、勉学に関係しています。しかし、もし学生に極めてやる気がなく、上記のどの方法も効果的でない場合は、良い学習習慣を形成させる為に必要最低限のSALC時間を組み入れることを検討するのも良いでしょう。その他、ポイントカードや報賞のような動機付けは、注意して行われるべきです。なぜなら、学習者が既にやる気を持って行っている活動に対して報賞を付随させることは、それが廃止された際、学習者のやる気を阻害してしまう影響があると数十年に渡る研究が示しているからです(Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999)。

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A number of authors have examined factors that contribute to an engaging language classroom environment and ways in which teachers can develop learners' motivation in class. These papers have drawn upon years of research in educational psychology and second language motivation.

However, few articles have focussed on how to develop motivation in an outside class self-access centre environment and in this short article I will examine, in general (i.e. not overly academic) terms, ways in which institutions can promote foreign language motivation outside of class via a self-access centre. I define a self-access centre to be a place which provides outside support for language learners and promotes learner autonomy and language development.

1. Social interaction

Language learning is a social process and a self-access centre should provide opportunities for language learners to interact easily. Learners need to practice the languages they are learning and also discuss their learning with others (either in the target language or other languages). Language learners frequently report that interacting with others in the target language is the most motivating aspect of language learning. One practical way to provide opportunities for social interaction is by providing a conversation lounge. To increase opportunities for interaction further, the lounge could be staffed by teachers or students throughout the day.

2. Feedback and encouragement

In order to be able to sustain motivation to continue to work at a foreign language, learners need feedback and encouragement. In class, this feedback and encouragement comes from teachers and classmates. In a self-access learning environment, feedback and encouragement are probably more important and can be provided by either learning advisors or teachers taking on an advising role. Analysis of advising dialogue shows that in addition to facilitating reflection and promoting learner autonomy, learning advisors regularly encourage learners. Follow up research involving interviews with learners revealed that the encouraging comments were particularly valued by learners (Mynard, 2012). Students hired as peer mentors can be trained to provide users with encouragement for their self-access work.

3. Inviting environment

A Self-Access Language Centre (SALC) needs to be inviting and non-threatening. An environment that makes a learner anxious or feel that he or she does not belong does not contribute to a learner's motivation for sustained language learning. When designing a centre, care must be taken to include spaces that appeal to different kinds of learners and different kinds of learning activities. For example, the arrangement of the furniture could suggest how the space could be used: soft sofas for a conversation area; comfortable chairs for a reading lounge; and separated desks for individual study areas. Even in the smallest of spaces, the use of colour and soft furnishings can make a big difference. In addition, a centre must make it clear through its branding and marketing that it welcomes all learners - not just those good at a language, or those who need extra support. The institution must make a decision as to whether signage and materials using the students' L1 should be included in a centre.

4. Goal setting

Research shows that having a goal motivates learners to continue studying a language. Goal setting can be a daunting and difficult process for some learners, particularly those who have never had the opportunity to develop learner autonomy. One important role of a learning advisor (or a teacher working with learners in this way) is to help learners to analyse their needs and set achievable goals. The goals should be specific and guide the self-directed learning (Morrison & Navarro, 2014). Ideally, a learner can then create a learning plan and implement it outside of class, drawing on the available facilities and resources - including other learners. Learners should have the chance to discuss their goals and plans frequently with learning advisors or teachers. Having a specific goal and achieving it is very satisfying for learners and often prompts further self-directed study.

5. Motivation strategy training

In order to be able to sustain motivation, learners should be able to draw upon a range of strategies themselves. Learners may already be aware of some of these strategies, but sharing and explicit teaching of other strategies could be highly beneficial. The strategies might include the following: goal-setting, rewards, making a task more fun, future L2 self visualization (see Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013), and positive self-talk (Oxford, 2011). This kind of training can be done in class, offered as stand-alone workshops in a self-access centre, or introduced in different ways, for example, through advising, via social networks, on posters, or as activity sheets available in the self-access centre.

6. Learner autonomy

Although one of the main purposes of a self-access centre is to promote language learner autonomy, this also has a positive effect on motivation. Being in charge of one's learning means a high degree of investment and motivation on the part of the learner. Actively choosing to go to a self-access centre will empower a learner. The extent to which learners are able to direct their own learning will vary significantly and this does not necessarily correlate with language proficiency level. Learning advisors and teachers can work with learners in ways appropriate to the amount of metacognitive awareness that they have. Helping learners to reflect and develop an awareness of how to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate learning will help them to develop a sense of awareness and control of the language learning process (Benson, 2011). This kind of awareness-raising is ideally done in a one-to-one situation, but some activities can be incorporated into class. One practical way to provide individualised attention is through a written exchange between the learner and the teacher or learning advisor on written reflections of the learner's self-directed work.

7. Learner involvement

Learners should be involved in running a self-access centre for several reasons. Firstly, this will ensure that the services are meeting the needs of the student body. Secondly, it will ensure that

there are always learners in the centre which encourages others learners also to come in. This in turn will create a sense of community (see #11). Taking a leading role in managing an aspect of a self-access centre will also be an opportunity to exercise control - a real example of autonomy in action. Finally, learners running a self-access centre are realistic role models for other learners (Yamaguchi, 2011). Learners might participate as administrative staff, peer mentors, materials writers, conversation leaders, materials reviewers, events coordinators, presenters, authors, or take other roles (see Navarro, 2014).

8. Engaging activities

One motivational strategy that learners and teachers often draw upon is to make learning fun and engaging. A self-access centre should include a range of enjoyable resources and activities in the target languages (Cooker, 2010). Examples of resources are movies, dramas, music and games. Activities could include parties, competitions and gamification.

9. Rapport with staff

Another motivating factor is for learners to feel a sense of rapport with staff working in a self-access centre, so staff training should ensure that casual, friendly interactions with visitors to the centre are a normal part of the job. These short, but vital interactions have been referred to as micro-counselling (Shibata, 2012) and may also result in small shifts in thinking.

10. Connection with target language culture

It is important to connect learners with the target language community through resources, activities, and (if possible) international people. This will help learners to see the broader purposes of language learning which in turn contributes to their motivation. This connection could be made through decor, posters, furnishings, language use and staffing. Activities could include conversation circles, cultural performances, language exchanges and international collaboration initiatives.

11. Communities and imagination

Being part of a community is one of the factors that ensures engagement and sustained motivation for self-directed learning (Hughes, Vye, & Krug, 2012). Successful self-access centres often look and feel very different from other learning environments and provide opportunities for learners to engage with 'imagined communities'. Such communities are people we connect with through the power of imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Murray, 2011). Imagination also allows people to conceive of their 'possible L2 selves' such as an 'ideal self' and 'ought to self' and a 'possible future self' (Dörnyei, 2005; 2009) which can be powerful motivators. Imagination needs "freedom, energy, and time to expose ourselves to the exotic, move around, try new identities, and explore new relations" (Wenger, 1998, p. 185). In practical terms, a self-access centre which provides opportunities and freedom for learners to try out resources related to popular culture through movies, television and magazines helps learners to expand their imagination and identities (Murray, 2011).

12. Extrinsic motives

The previous 11 points mainly promote a sense of internal (or intrinsic) motivation. What about learners who are just not that motivated to learn a language? Perhaps they are forced to take a language class but have no real interest? Some of the above points might help, but sometimes an external motive could be more effective. An example of external motives are learning in order to pass an exam, or doing well on a job application. Self-access centre staff could find out what some of these external motives are and provide materials and support for them. Materials might include exam practice tests, diagnostic activities, and job information. Support could take the form of advising services, workshops, and awareness-raising of techniques for rewarding one's own effort. An institution might consider building in minimal required SALC time in order to help good study habits to form. Some self-access centres allow learners to collect points or stamps as an incentive to visit. I would suggest that these kinds of incentives should be used with caution. One compelling reason to avoid rewarding self-access attendance is that it might reduce existing intrinsic motivation. Decades of research shows that rewarding an activity that is already motivating has a negative impact on a person's willingness to continue the activity once the reward is removed (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999).

To summarize, there are several factors that developers could consider in order to ensure that a self-access centre is a motivating space. Simply providing a room stocked with language support materials is unlikely to motivate learners to engage in self-access learning. Using this short article as a checklist may be a good place to start if you want to ensure that your centre attracts and motivates learners.

About the author

Dr. Jo Mynard is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies. She has an M.Phil in Applied Linguistics from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and an Ed.D. in TEFL from the University of Exeter, UK. Her research interests are learner autonomy, self-access, motivation, affect, self-directed learning, and advising. She is the founding editor of *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal* and the co-editor of four recently published books on advising and learner autonomy.

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