

Shift in Focus from Motivation to Engagement

Saturday 2 September 2023 10:00 (40 minutes)

Motivation is a major focus in second language education research in which educators search to understand learners' thoughts about action and inaction. However, even students with motivation to learn a second language can easily become distracted, and good intentions do not always turn into action. Language learning pedagogical paradigms such as communicative learning and task-based learning emphasize that meaningful action with language develops learning therefore, intention that leads to action is essential in language learning. The construct of engagement shifts the focus from learners' intent to learn toward learners' active involvement in learning. Interest in engagement research has grown in general education and more recently in language education also.

Engagement is active involvement in learning tasks within a learning environment. Engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes behavior and cognitive dimensions along with affective and social dimensions. Engagement is influenced by teachers, peers, and curriculum design. Although engagement may be something many teachers can identify intuitively, learning about it can improve our efforts to intentionally engage learners.

This presentation will explain the engagement construct, and show how researchers are seeking to understand, measure and increase language learner engagement. The presenter will share examples of observing increases in learner engagement with a vocabulary learning curriculum. The end of the presentation will offer participants a choice, either learning some engagement practices for communication classes and discussing them, or viewing samples of engagement measurement tools and discussing their application.

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